

## 1 KINGS 8:1-13

### A. Introduction

1. In our elders' meetings, we're tracing the story of King Solomon, from his coronation to his burial, as recorded in 1 Kings 1-11.

As well as seeing how he points us to the 'one greater than Solomon', we're going to focus in on what we can learn as elders from his life and particularly his downfall, as we seek to lead those whom God has made us overseers over.

2. In 1 Kings 6 and 7, Solomon has used his wisdom to build the temple and to furnish it.

In this, we've been shown how Jesus is building for Himself a temple, the church, and has furnished it by giving every single member of the church an important role to play so that it operates as it is supposed to.

3. With the building of the temple completed, 1 Kings 8 records the dedication of the temple.

There were five parts to this extraordinary worship service.

v1-13: Celebration as the ark is brought into the temple

v14-21: Solomon praises God for keeping His promises

v22-53: Solomon prays for forgiveness

v54-61: Solomon praises God for keeping His people

v62-66: Celebration as the temple is dedicated

4. Looking at verses 1 to 13, what do we learn from the celebrations that accompanied the arrival of the ark at the temple in Jerusalem (which symbolised God's presence with His people)?

### B. God lived with His people in the temple Solomon built

1. The date has something to teach us.

"Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David. All the men of Israel came together to King Solomon at the time of the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month." (1 Kings 8:1-2)

The building of the temple had been completed 11 months earlier. So why was there a delay in bringing the ark into the temple?

It is unlikely that the reason was to ensure that proper preparations could be made.

No, it was so that this special day coincided with an important event on the Israelite calendar, the Feast of Tabernacles.

During this festival, the Israelites remembered God's faithfulness to them during the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness until God brought them into the Promised Land and gave them a permanent place to live.

Now the time had come for God to have a permanent place to live too.

2. The sacrifices has something to teach us.

"When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark, and they brought up the ark of the LORD and the Tent of Meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The priests and

Levites carried them up, and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted." (1 Kings 8:3-5)

The bringing of the ark into temple was accompanied by sacrifices (lots of them!)

If a holy God was going to live amongst His people something needed to be done about their sin.

So the people offer blood sacrifices to God through which their sin can be dealt with, and other sacrifices to praise and thank God for His forgiveness.

### 3. The poles has something to teach us.

"The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today." (1 Kings 8:6-8)

The ark reached its destination in the temple which was the Most Holy Place.

An interesting detail in text is about the length of the poles. They were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place.

Why were these poles so long?

I go along with the suggestion that they provided proof to the priests who served at the temple, who had never seen the ark, that it was still there.

So it assured them that God was still present among His people.

### 4. The cloud and the tablets has something to teach us.

"There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell for ever." (1 Kings 8:9-13)

This isn't the first time or the last time God's glory is seen in the form of a cloud – in the tabernacle, by the Kebar River, at the transfiguration.

Each time, God reveals Himself to His people, He follows this up by telling them to listen to His Word, and that is the case here.

Notice what we are told was inside the ark. Though it had once contained the jar of manna and Aaron's rod, by the time it was brought into Jerusalem, it contained nothing but the two tablets on which the 10 Words were written.

The implication of this is that God's people are not going to be led by seeing God with their eyes, but by hearing God's Word with their ears.

God has made His Will for His people clear in His Word and He expects them to obey.

## **C. God lives in His people in the temple Jesus is building**

### 1. God continues to live in His temple.

But this is now the church. Jesus has given His Spirit to His followers.

2. God continues to require something to be done about His people's sin if He is going to live in His temple.

But this doesn't mean we need to offer so many sacrifices that they could not be recorded or counted. No, we trust in the one perfect sacrifice, the Lord Jesus, which all the Old Testament sacrifices pointed to.

3. God continues to assure His people that He is still present in His temple.

But not with poles, instead a promise. Jesus has promised that He will be with us to the very end of the age.

4. God continues to lead His people by His Word.

Those whom God has revealed Himself to in His Son, Jesus, He leads not by sight but by speech.

His Word is clear, it is sufficient and He expects us to obey it.

5. Application.

Four truths to believe ourselves as elders and encourage those we shepherd with:

That Jesus is with us by His Spirit.

That Jesus has forgiven all our sin.

That Jesus has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

That Jesus leads us by His Word.