

1Kings 8:1–21

"A Glimpse of God at His Temple"

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What does God show about Himself at the inauguration of the temple? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 1Kings 8:1–21 prepares us for the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-one verses, the Holy Spirit displays to us our God's holiness, mercy, glory, faithfulness, and nearness!

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 • Read 1Kings 8:1–21

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom did Solomon assemble (v1)? To do what? When did they assemble (v2)? When they came, who took up the ark (v3)? What all did they bring up (v4)? Who else was there (v5)? What were they doing? To where did the priests bring the ark (v6)? Upon what do v6b–7 especially focus? What extended out (v8)? What could be seen where? What was in the ark (v9)? What happened when the priests came out (v10)? What effect did this have (v11)? What filled where? Who speaks in v12? Where had the Lord said He would dwell? But what has Solomon built (v13a)? For what purpose (v13b)? Then to whom does Solomon speak (v14)? What kind of words? What was the assembly doing? Whom do the words bless, while Solomon blesses the people (v15)? What had the Lord spoken and done (v16–20)? For what had Solomon built this temple (end of v20)? For what had he especially made a place (v21)? What was in it?

As the temple is inaugurated, the Lord displays to His people His mercy and holiness, His glory, His faithfulness, and His nearness/presence.

First, the Lord displays His mercy and holiness. This mercy can be seen in that He has provided substitutes to die and burn in their place. It's important that Solomon assembles the elders and heads and chiefs in v1. Just as with the consecration of the firstborn who have to be redeemed in Ex 13, so here when the people see that an innumerable multitude of sacrifices must be offered by their own federal representatives (v5), they realize that it is they who deserve to die. It is they who deserve God's wrath. Each of us needs to learn this about ourself.

The number of the sacrifices necessary for coming near in this earthly temple communicates the great holiness of God. For us to come near to Him in the presence of His glory in Christ, we need an infinite sacrifice (cf. Rom 1:18, 3:25). This is how great His holiness is. And it is communicated also by the fact that only the priests could ever again see the poles of the ark from the holy place (v8), and only the high priest could ever see the ark itself (v7). And the place where he would see it contained not only the ark but the giant cherubim that would communicate to the high priest the holiness of God. Even though he is high priest, he would know himself to be tiny and earthly before even the temple furniture in the holy of holies—let alone before the God Whose holiness that furniture declares.

But the greatness of this holiness proclaims all the more the greatness of His mercy. For it is God Himself, in the Person of the Son, Who has died and Who suffered, upon the cross, the burning fury of the wrath of God against our sin. In this, God has demonstrated His love for us. Jesus Christ has propitiated. He has so entirely endured God's wrath against our sin that God is only and entirely propitious—favorable—toward us now.

Second, the Lord displays to His people His glory. His glory is related to His holiness. To simplify a little bit, we can think of His holiness as His other-ness, and of His glory as the incomprehensible greatness of that other-ness. The most common word for His glory, which v11 uses, is a word that means "heavy." We can borrow a modern physics word and think of it in terms of density. The intensity of the reality of God is so great that apart from His own protection, it is utterly destructive to any creaturely thing that even attempts to be in its presence (cf. 2Th 1:9). Due to the wondrousness of His glory, it's really no wonder that the glory of the Lord filling the house of the Lord rather literally squeezes the priests out of the holy place (v10) so that they could not continue to minister (v11).

And yet even this was only an anticipatory glory, a mere shadow of the glory to come when Christ Himself is the temple of God unto us, and the priest of God for us, having offered Himself as the sacrifice in our behalf (cf. Heb chs. 7–10). How marvelous, then, that the Lord is outfitting His people to be able to stand before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (cf. Jude v24). Those whom He justified, He also glorified (cf. Rom 8:30)! And He has done this because He predestined us not merely to be forgiven but to be conformed to the Son so that at the last, the Lord Jesus in His glory would appear as the firstborn among many brethren who have derived that very glory from Him (cf. Rom 8:29).

Third, the Lord displays to His people His faithfulness. He has made promises, and now He has kept them. He spoke with His mouth (v15). The Lord doesn't have an actual mouth, but the Spirit gives us such anthropomorphic speech to emphasize the reality of those words. And the Lord has fulfilled His Word which He spoke (v20). "Your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My Name" (v19). "I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel" (v20). The Lord spoke, and the Lord fulfilled.

Also, the Lord entered into covenant with His people, and the Lord has sustained that covenant. The ark itself is known as "the ark of the covenant." It's almost as if God's covenant with His people "survives" their rebellion because just as He had done for Noah, so God has done for His covenant: He put it in an ark of safety. It is interesting to note in v9 that the only things left in the ark are the two tablets. Gone is the jar of manna and Aaron's rod that had budded. But these tablets are still called, in v21, "the covenant of Yahweh, which He made with our fathers."

This also helps us understand the ceremonial law that looked forward to Christ, and the civil law that belonged to Israel as a nation-state ("as a body politic" to use the Westminsterian term). They are implications and applications of the moral law for being in covenant with God as a redeeming, sanctifying Savior. The tablets only had "the Ten Commandments" (though Scripture says "ten words" to refer to them). But these commandments are expressive of the character of God Himself and the difference that makes for us both as redeemed creatures (Ex 20) and as redeemed sinners (Deut 5). The Lord isn't just faithful to us. Far more importantly, He is faithful to Himself!

Finally, the Lord displays to His people His presence/nearness. Here, we focus especially on vv12–13, 21. The Lord dwelling "in dark cloud" (v12) does not mean that He is somehow a creature who prefers moist locations of low luminosity. Rather, it communicates the impossibility of our being in His presence.

However, here we are at a temple built for Him to "dwell" among His people (v13). And this isn't just a wishful desire of Solomon's, for the Lord's display of Himself in the glory cloud has already taken up residence (v11)! Whatever else this house (literally, v10, 11, 13, 16 and the same word in the original of v6, 18, 20) is, it is "a place for the ark" (v21). The holy, holy, holy God of incomprehensible and unapproachable glory is making a way for His people to come near. And indeed in Christ, we pass even through the veil into the holy of holies—through the new and living way that is His flesh (cf. Heb 10:19–20). How marvelous will be that declaration at the end: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev 21:4)!

So as we see the Lord in 1Kings 8 displaying His mercy and holiness, His glory, His faithfulness, and His nearness/presence, we are the better enabled to see how great indeed is the greatness of Who Christ is and of what He has done for us and of what He is doing in us and for us!

How do you come near to God on earth? Where are you really coming near to Him and how? In what way will you at last be in His presence? What will it be like then? What will you be like then? How has this been purchased for you? How are you being brought into what was purchased? What are some of the ways that you ought to be responding to the God Who has done this and is doing this?

Sample prayer: Lord, how completely other You are and incomprehensibly great You are! And yet, You have brought us near through Your unfathomable mercy in Christ—faithfully doing all that You have promised. You displayed this already in Solomon's temple, but how much more in the Lord Jesus, who is the reality of which tabernacle and temple were mere shadows. Forgive us for when we draw near to you casually, which makes light of Who You are and what You have done for us in Christ. How marvelous is Your mercy that even for those who commit such heinous sin as this is, You have atoned for our guilt by Christ's cross and are glorifying us so that we may enjoy Your glory forever! Do this work by Your Spirit, we pray through Jesus Christ, AMEN!!

Suggested songs: ARP122 "I Was Filled with Joy and Gladness" or TPH164 "God Himself Is with Us"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

First Kings chapter 8, verses 1 through 21. These are God's words now, Solomon assembled, the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, two, King, Solomon in Jerusalem. That they might bring up the ark of the Covenant of Yahweh from the city of David, which is Zion.

Therefore, all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month. So all the elders of Israel came and the priests took up the ark, Then they brought up the ark of Yahweh that tabernacle of meeting and all the Holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle, the priests and the Levites brought them up.

Also, King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark sacrificing sheep. And oxen that could not be counted or numbered for the counted or numbered for multitude, then the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh to its place into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the most.

Holy place under the wings of the Terabine for the Caribbeans spread. There are two wings over the place of the ark and the cherubim, overshadowed, the ark, and its poles, the poles extended. So that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary.

But they could not be seen from outside And they are there to this day. Nothing was in the ark except The two tablets of stone which Moses put there. That horrib When Yahweh made a covenant with the children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt and it came to pass when the priests came out of the holy place that the cloud filled the house of Yahweh.

So that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud. For the glory of Yahweh filled the house of your way then Solomon spoke. You always said he would dwell in the dark clout. I have surely built you and exalted house and a place for you to dwell in forever and then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel.

While all the assembly of Israel would stand. And he said, blessed be all the way God of Israel who spoke with his mouth to my father, David. And with his hand has fulfilled, it saying, since the day that I brought my people up. Israel, out of Egypt. I have chosen, no city for many tribe of Israel, in which, to build a house that my name might be there, but I chose David to be over my people Israel.

Now, it was in the heart of my father, David to build a temple for the name of Yahweh, God of Israel. But you always said to my father David whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for my name. You did well that it was in your heart.

Nevertheless, you shall not build the temple but your son who will come from your body, He shall build the temple for my name. So you always has fulfilled his word, which he spoke, and I have filled the position of my father, David and sit on the throne of Israel as Yahweh promised.

And I have built a temple for the name of Yahweh, God of Israel. And there I have made a place for the ark in which is this covenant of Yahweh, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them, out of the land of Egypt So far, the reading of God's inspired anderent.

Well, the temple is ultimately inaugurated by the Lord taking up his presence there and that was communicated to the people in two ways, especially in this passage one the ark, entering the Holy of Holies. But just so that they so that they would know that they had the Lord himself and not just the Lord's furniture, when the ark was put in the temple in the priests, got out of the way, the glory cloud.

So, filled the temple that there was no room. The priests could not go back in their to minister so great to his glory. So great is His holiness, the fact that the covenant as it were and the communication of the presence of God to his people had to be in an arc also communicates as holiness.

Remember the first arc, the one that Noah built was the one that kept Noah separate. Noah and his family separate from the rest of the world because God had set them apart as holy, Noah had found favor in the eyes of Yahweh. And so the Lord was reserving for himself those whom he was saving while he killed everyone else.

The New Testament tells us that our baptism corresponds to that that it's a mark that God puts on those whom he sets apart into his church, reminding them signifying to them sealing upon them that he knows how to reserve his people to himself while he brings the rest of the world into judgment.

And so the fact that God calls the box, the Ark of the Covenant reminds us that however holy and set apart. His people are from the world. God is infinitely more holy than his people. And there is that arc, which separates him from us. Now, for us, that gives us safety.

So in the picture of the temple, you have the arc but even the arc is where it's in the holy of Holies and the Holy of holies is where it's separated. From the the people, by the holy place. And once the people had seen the priests carry, the ark in, they would never even see, it's poles again and all the priests of every generation.

But one, the only thing they could ever see again was its pulse. And so you have this, this strong communication of God, how holy he is. And so the miracle of the arc, and the temple, and the Covenant, and God, having a people set apart for himself despite the fact that he is.

So, holy as a miracle of mercy, despite his holiness, this is why it's even more amazing that we don't come terrified to the throne of grace. We come with boldness. Why? Because we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens and not only has he passed through the heavens, but he has gone in there as our trailblazer our archaegostees, the Greek word, that you don't know.

The trailblazer is a good word, the captain who takes his unit in and the unit would never make it in if it didn't have this captain. But Jesus is our captain who has led us through the veil, by the new and living way, as Hebrews says, that is his flesh.

And so, in first Kings 8, you have strong communication of the greatness of God's holiness and then therefore the greatness of God's mercy, and they saw that. And they knew that It was only by God's mercy. How do we know? Because as they were bringing the Ark to the temple and Solomon and the people were in front of the ark.

What were they doing? Did you catch it? They were offering so many sacrifices verse 5 that they couldn't even count them sheep and oxen that could not be counted for multitude and yet all of these not only in this moment, but every every blood sacrifice from the animal that was slaughtered in order to clothe Adam and Eve to the last Passover lamb that was slaughtered on the day that Christ himself died.

And then the temple hurting was torn into from top to bottom, from heaven, to earth all of those sacrifices. Put together could never take away sins. They kept having to be repeated and repeated and repeated as a bringing the ark into the temple. There's not a point at which Solomon or the high priest says, oh that's enough.

Our sin has been atoned for. Nope, they just keep going until the ark is in there because only one sacrifice could actually take away sin. So Sophia who died to take away our sins. God died Jesus died. Yes. In fact, in Acts 20 and verse 28, the Holy Spirit, or the apostle, tells the elders from Ephesus that they are to to take heed to themselves and to the flock over, which God had made.

And to shepherd, the flock over, which God has made them overseers of the church, in which God has made them overseers which God has bought with his own blood. Okay. So there's the greatness of God's mercy and the greatness of God's holiness here. There's a greatness of God's glory which is related to the, the holiness.

The holiness is the otherness of God. The glory actually comes from the Hebrew word for weighing. Or wait, it means the intensity or if we can use a physics word to the density, it's almost as if, or perhaps it is true that as you learn physics, you discover that, everything is pretty much made up of space and energy, right?

You keep dividing it and what do you find? You find 99.999% space and a little bit of energy or a lot of energy and then you split it and you destroy cities, but everything is made. It seems of almost nothing. God's glory communicates, the intensity and immensity of his substance to us.

Not that he is made of matter or space or energy but that he has existence in himself so that when he comes and he just communicates in a small way in this, almost material way has presence to the people.

So great is the glory that the priest can't even enter when the glory cloud fills the temple.

So great as His glory, that seraphim can't touch down in Isaiah's. Heavenly vision that he's given as a glimpse of what the presence of God is like but the train of the robe of the holy, holy holy King, who is high and lifted up fills the temple. Even the seraphim cannot stand the greatness of the glory of God in the communication of His presence.

This is our God. Remember in the song of Moses, which we had last week in Exodus 15 or the song of Miriam or the song of the sea, or if we titled it from the front refrain that got himself puts in the song. The song of Yahweh. Oh, Yahweh and one of the great things was that he is our strength and he is our song and that his infinite glory that was displayed as he got glory over Pharaoh and he got glory over the armies of Egypt and their chariots and their horses that that is what has been given to us and exercised for us.

Great confidence from the fact of our God's glory. So you communicates his holiness, His mercy, his glory, and his faithfulness, He had made promises to Abraham to bring the people out of Egypt and he brought the people out of Egypt. That's where this arc thing it had begun and he he reminds them of that, especially in verse 9, the covenant that he made with Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt and verse 21, the covenant of Yahweh, which he made with our fathers and he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Now, in the ark there are a couple of things missing that had been in there before one was the jar of mana and one was Aaron's rod that had miraculously budded to show that God was with his people through the particular servants that he had. He had said over them, but the thing that remained was the two tablets, the two tablets are mentioned in verse 9 and then in verse 21, they are called the Covenant of Yahweh.

So there's here, the Lord's faithfulness, He still keeping his covenant, He's been with his people this whole time very similar when he refers to the two tablets of stone, which Moses put their horeb when you always made a covenant with the children of Israel etc. It's kind of like when we say in the night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, There was a historical date on which God had forged this new church that is marked off by the Lord's Supper same with.

He has poured out this and the promises for you and for your children. And it's many as are far off. And that Joel had prophesied about a particular day in Joel chapter 2 and then Peter, preached, that particular day had. And every time we're baptized among all the other things that it seals in its signifies, is that there's a particular day on which the Lord Jesus from his throne initiated forged the New Testament administration of his church.

Well so also God points to his faithfulness. Here, He reminds them that there was a particular day a particular event, When he brought them out of Egypt, the reason they're in this land is because he brought them to this land to be with him and he communicates that to them.

Even as the temple is being inaugurated, he has made promises and he is going to be faithful to them. But he's also made threats and he's gonna be faithful to them as well. He demands faithfulness of us. A faithfulness that can only come by his help by his grace, by his spirit.

This temple. Sadly isn't gonna last even 400 full years before, it's going to be torn down stone, not one stone upon another and the few things that remain in it at the time. Hold off to Babylon and in the New Testament administration of the church, although the church itself will never fail on the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

God demands faithfulness. Remember he was killing believers at Corinth because they were coming unfaithfully to the sacrament in which the Lord presented himself and his faithfulness, and the Lord Jesus threatened, the churches to whom the book of Revelation was addressed and they were not faithful and what the Lord Jesus threatened there.

Also came to pass. So the Lord is faithful to himself and faithful to his promises. And if we are going to be faithful, it must be by his grace. So he displays his holiness. His mercy, His glory his faithfulness. And then, of course, has presence or nearness.

When Solomon says in verse 12, you always said he would dwell on the dark cloud. The idea of the dark cloud communicates, the impossibility of being in his presence. And yet The whole point of the arc and the temple is that God had brought his people to be near him.

That is impossible for the creature. Let alone the center to come near to God. And that's why God took on our creatureliness and took on our sin and by not only the sacrifice of Jesus, putting away our guilt, but the righteousness and the person of Jesus being our worthiness, we can come near to God because he desires to bring us near and to make known to us, his nearness to us.

So he doesn't just make known to them. His holiness, His mercy, his glory, His faithfulness. You also makes known to us as nearness. And when you know that God has brought you near to himself in Jesus, when the Holy Spirit makes you to know the love of Christ for you and to know Jesus as your Redeemer with

to whom you are united forever and ever to know.

God, as your own dear father. In those ways, God makes His nearness known to you. And the final fulfillment of the temple comes because Jesus is the one who is the temple. He said tear down this temple. I will rebuild it again and in three days. And I took 42 years to build this thing.

Well actually that wasn't even true. Jesus wasn't even 42 years old. He was talking about his body but also the Holy Spirit comes and he takes a residence in us as he forges us as he shapes us. Living stones and builds us together onto and into Jesus Christ. As we are all being made a temple on him and in him, but that is how God makes known to us, especially His holiness.

His mercy. His glory his faithfulness and his nearness. So let us ask that the Holy Spirit would make us to know and remember those things from first Kings 8 and from their greater fulfillment in Christ, the Spirit and His church. Let's pray, the Lord help me and my family to know you as holy to another greatness of your glory that we would honor your otherness and that we would not take you lightly.

Who are infinitely? Waiting, We thank you for your mercy and we pray that you would make us to know that. Mercy that you would make us to know Christ and Him crucified and risen and ascended that we would be conscious of the fact that we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens and even from there who sympathizes with our weakness.

So we come to your throne of grace. We come boldly, not just to request and seek but to obtain mercy and to find help in our time of need. We pray, Lord that you would give us this which we need to know you so that we might interact with you and serve you trust you delight in you obey.

You Praise you and all that we do today and help us we pray to have a right heart of worship that we may go from the stated time of worship and continue to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to you and so conform us. We pray not to the world but by your use of your word conform us to Christ in his name, we ask it.

Amen.