

THE LORD'S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE

WEEK ONE



"BLESSED BE THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN REST TO HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL, ACCORDING TO ALL THAT HE PROMISED. NOT ONE WORD HAS FAILED OF ALL HIS GOOD PROMISE, WHICH HE SPOKE BY MOSES HIS SERVANT" (1 KINGS 8:56).

PRAYER EMPHASIS 2025

THE LORD'S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE

“Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant” (1 Kings 8:56).

Solomon begins his benediction by reminding the people of God's steadfast love and faithfulness. He reminds them that the only reason the temple exists, the only reasons the nation exists is because the Lord always keeps his promises, without fail.

“Not one word [promise] has failed” — The Lord was perfectly, absolutely and unconditionally faithful to fulfill every promise he made to his people.

Here Solomon echoes his words in verses 23–24:

O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart; you have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day.

Solomon mentions God's promises to his father, King David. But the promises go back much further than that. The promise of the land and of “rest” was a long time coming. They spent the 430 years as slaves in Egypt. It was 480 years from the exodus to Solomon (1 Kings 6:1). God's covenant promises actually went back all the way to Abraham.

Imagine all they had been through, the patriarchs, slavery in Egypt, 40 years wandering in the wilderness, conquest,

the judges, King Saul and King David. Now here, more than 1,000 years after the promises to Abraham and almost 500 years since the promises to Moses, and the Lord remained faithful to keep every single word of his promises.

And the Lord remains faithful to his people. Through the ups and downs, the highs and lows, the good and bad, the Lord has been faithful to his promises to us.

But we must remember that we are only here in our church, in any church, because God has been perfectly faithful to his promises to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth. Promises that were fully realized in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

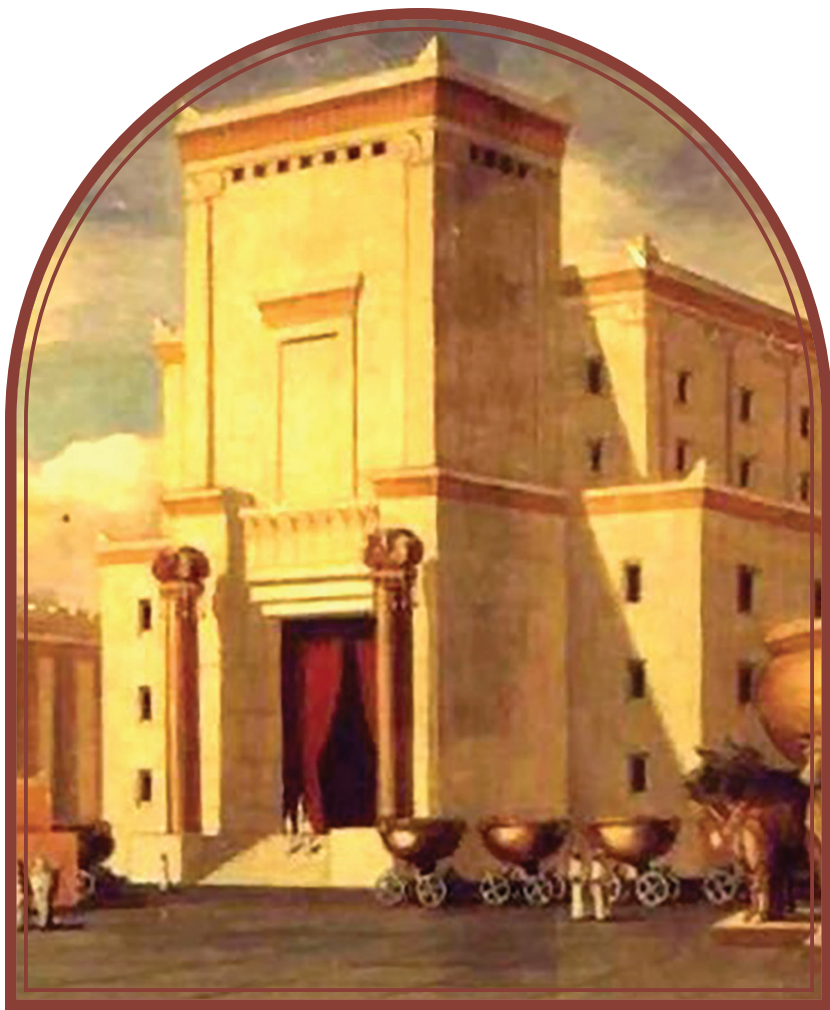
And his faithfulness to keep his promises in the past assures us that he will keep his promises in the future; ultimately and gloriously his promise to one day return and resurrect all of creation.

THIS WEEK, AS YOU PRAY:

- Praise the Lord that he is always perfectly faithful to keep all his promises.
- Thank the Lord for all the promises that are ours in Christ.
- Thank God for his faithfulness to your church.
- Pray the Lord will help you and your church to faithfully reflect and proclaim his faithfulness.

THE LORD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

WEEK TWO



"THE LORD OUR GOD BE WITH US, AS HE WAS WITH OUR FATHERS. MAY HE NOT LEAVE US NOR FORSAKE US, THAT HE MAY INCLINE OUR HEARTS TO HIM, TO WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS AND TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, HIS STATUTES, AND HIS RULES, WHICH HE COMMANDED OUR FATHERS" (1 KINGS 8:57-58).

PRAYER EMPHASIS 2025

THE LORD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

“The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers” (1 Kings 8:57–58).

Here, Solomon points to God's abiding presence with his people. In verses 27–29, an earlier part of this prayer, Solomon recognizes God's transcendence. He proclaims the Lord's omnipresence, that the Lord is fully everywhere all the time. He knows that this temple, no matter how glorious, cannot contain the infinite God.

But again, he holds forth one of God's promises — “my name shall be there.” While God is fully everywhere all the time, he promised to manifest his presence with his people in a special way. Solomon's temple would be the house of God, the place where Yahweh dwelled amid his people.

Just as God was with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Just as he was with Moses, Joshua and Samuel. Just as he was with King David, so he would be with his people and the temple would serve as a reminder of that presence.

The greatest blessing for God's people is not health, wealth, prosperity, safety or comfort. The greatest blessing for God's people is to know and obey the Lord. In fact, it is the presence of the Lord that brought them peace, prosperity and safety.

Solomon knew what people were like and that unless the Lord stayed near to them and worked in their hearts and

minds, they would drift away from him. This is still true of us today. We need God's presence in our lives to constantly draw us near and to conform our hearts and hands to his good will. We can do nothing without him (John 15:5).

The beauty of the gospel is that God's presence once manifest at the temple, is now manifest in his people. Because of our union with Christ through faith, we have God's abiding, eternal presence not just with us, but in us through the Holy Spirit.

If God's manifest presence at the temple was such a blessing to the Israelites, how much greater is our blessing of the indwelling presence of God — the Holy Spirit who teaches, counsels and conforms us to be more like Christ.

THIS WEEK, AS YOU PRAY:

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit who resides in us.
- Pray the Lord will incline our hearts toward him to obey his commands.
- Praise God for his transcendence and omnipresence.
- Pray the Lord will manifest his presence in a special way in your church.

THE LORD'S PATIENCE TOWARD HIS PEOPLE

WEEK THREE



"LET THESE WORDS OF MINE, WITH WHICH I HAVE PLEADED BEFORE THE LORD, BE NEAR TO THE LORD OUR GOD DAY AND NIGHT, AND MAY HE MAINTAIN THE CAUSE OF HIS SERVANT AND THE CAUSE OF HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL, AS EACH DAY REQUIRES" (1 KINGS 8:59).

PRAYER EMPHASIS 2025

THE LORD'S PATIENCE TOWARD HIS PEOPLE

“Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires” (1 Kings 8:59).

The people of Israel were sinners, and they would sin, sometimes egregiously so. Solomon recognized this and preemptively prayed for God's patience and mercy toward weak and frail people. In fact, this is an idea that pervades nearly half of Solomon's prayer of dedication.

No person, no church is perfect because we are all weak and frail people, rebels who sin against our good and holy God. But the Lord is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6). And as patient, gracious and merciful as the Lord was toward Israel, he is even more so toward us in Jesus Christ.

We must not forget that the temple and all that took place there points us to something, someone greater than the temple. The thousands of sacrifices in the temple were place holders to forebear the wrath of God until a final perfect sacrifice could be made.

Everything about the temple in Jerusalem, every vessel, every implement, every ceremony, every offering, every drop of blood that was shed and every death pointed to the One who was the true and greater temple. Everything in Solomon's temple and everything that took place there foreshadowed the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world by his once for all, perfect,

complete, infinite, eternal, atoning death on the cross.

We are all sinners in need of a Savior lest we suffer God's just wrath for our sins. And in Jesus Christ a way was made for us to be fully and finally forgiven for our sins, but even more to be declared perfectly righteous before God.

All we must do to take hold of this forgiveness and all the glorious blessings and promises that come with it is to believe. To have faith — to turn from our sin to trust — that Jesus Christ has done all that is necessary for us to be forgiven. He took our place. He bore the penalty our sins deserved. And he gave us his righteousness in return.

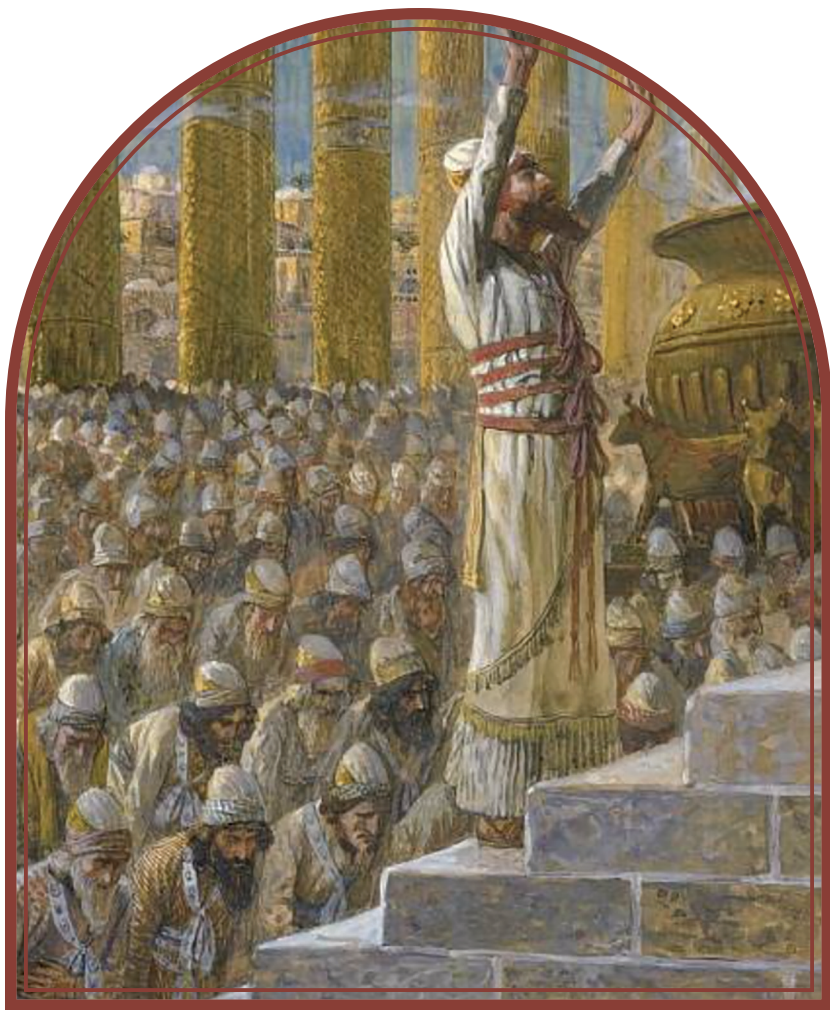
Solomon prayed for the Lord's patience toward his people. But now, for we who are in Christ, the Lord is infinitely and perfectly patient toward us. Eternal peace with God is the glory to which Solomon's temple pointed, a glory that was realized in Jesus Christ.

THIS WEEK, AS YOU PRAY:

- Praise God for his merciful, gracious and long-suffering nature.
- Thank God for the patience he has shown you and your church.
- Pray that the members of your church will embody the Lord's patience in their interactions with one another.
- Pray for the Lord's patience and forbearance in the life of friends and loved ones who have not yet put their faith in Christ.

THE LORD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS PEOPLE

WEEK FOUR



"THAT ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD;
THERE IS NO OTHER" (1 KINGS 8:60).

PRAYER EMPHASIS 2025

THE LORD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS PEOPLE

“That all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other” (1 Kings 8:60).

This brings us to the final aspect of Solomon's prayer — the Lord's purpose for his people.

“That all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other.”

Perhaps the most important aspect of the temple was that it was a beacon, a light on a hill, showing Israel and the unbelieving world around them a glimpse of the glory, majesty and greatness of God.

The temple was the house of the Lord, built for his glory and acclaim alone. Listen to Solomon's earlier words in verse 43:

Hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name (1 Kings 8:43).

The Lord was not some local God or tribal deity. He was and is the “the King of Glory; the Lord strong and mighty,” “Ruler of Heaven and Earth.” So, a central purpose of the temple was that God's name would be known and praised throughout the earth — that many from every tribe, tongue and nation would worship him.

In the same way, this church does not exist for our comfort, safety, blessing, preferences, pride, etc. (though we may find some of those things here). It is not

for us! It exists for the glory of God, for the worship of his majesty and the proclamation of his greatness in the world. God's glory is paramount.

But there is one fundamental difference in the temple of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament. In the Old Testament the call was for the nations to come to Jerusalem to see the glory of God in the temple. In the New Testament the call is “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

The temple was “Come and see!” — The church is “Go and tell!”

The purpose of the church has not changed in 2,000 years. Our job is to proclaim the riches of God's glory in Jesus Christ and his gospel (Colossians 1:27). And that will be the purpose of this church for the next 2,000 years should Christ tarry.

Remember, your church is not Solomon's temple. The lost and unbelieving will not come here to see. We must go to them and tell of the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

THIS WEEK, AS YOU PRAY:

- Thank God for the privilege of proclaiming the gospel.
- Pray the Lord will make your church a light on a hill proclaiming the glory of God in Christ in all you do.
- Pray the Lord will move in the hearts of your church members to proclaim the gospel near and far.
- Pray the Lord will raise up faithful pastors and missionaries from your congregation.