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Fire from Heaven

First Kings 8:54-66 and Second Chronicles 7:1-10

Fire from heaven DIG: Why sacrifice so many animals? Why can't Isra'el eat fat or blood (Leviticus 3:16-17). How do the bronze and gold alters differ (Exodus 30:6-7)? What feast is celebrated during this time of year (Lev 23:34, 41-43)? What irony do you see in this timing?

REFLECT: What good things has God done for you lately? What sacrifices does God require today and why? What exactly do you worship? Your spouse? Your family? Your job? Your body? A sports team? Your computer? Are you offering God the praise that He deserves?

Just as the Israelites went home praising their God and their king, we too are called to take the joy of the Lord with us everywhere we go.

For every festival there must be a feast. What would a wedding be without a reception, or Christmas without a family dinner, or a youth soccer championship without a pizza party, or a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah without knish at the kiddush after the service? Good food and drink are essential to any grand celebration. Since this is true, then there was only one appropriate way for **Solomon's Temple prayer** to end. **The king** was dedicating the most important building in the history of the world - the one place where **God** promised to meet with **His people**. So, after **the king's prayer** was finished, and **the burnt offerings and sacrifices** had been made, **fire came down from heaven and consumed them**. Then it was time for **a feast**.

To see how **the people feasted**, and why, we first need to hear **the blessing** that **Solomon** gave - **a blessing** that was also **a prayer**. **When Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and plea to ADONAI, he got up from in front of the altar of ADONAI, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven, stood up, and raised his voice to bless the whole community of Isra'el. He said: "Blessed be ADONAI, who has given**

rest to His people Isra'el, in accordance with everything He promised in His covenant with Moshe (see the commentary on [Exodus](#), [to see link click Dd](#) - The Mosaic Covenant). **Not one word has failed of His good promise, which He made through Moshe his servant (First Kings 8:55-56).**

The blessings we need from God:

1. Solomon asked for **God's abiding presence: May ADONAI our God be with us, as He was with our ancestors. May He never leave us or abandon us (First Kings 8:57).** More than all the other **blessings** that **YHVH** has to give, we need **God Himself** in the living presence of **His** grace. All the great spiritual leaders in the Bible understood this. We see it in **Moses**, who was promised that the **God** of the burning bush would go with **him** wherever **he** went (**Exodus 3:12**). We see it in **Joshua**, who was told that **YHVH** would never leave **him** or **abandon him (Joshua 1:9; Deuteronomy 31:6-8)**. We see it in the psalmist, who said: **ADONAI will not abandon His people (Psalm 94:14; Hebrews 13:5)**. In all of life's decisions and difficulties, we need **God** to be with us to help us through.

2. King Solomon had a specific reason for asking **God** to be with **his people**. He wanted **them** to be **holy**. So **he** prayed for **God's sanctifying Spirit: In this way He will incline our hearts toward Him, so that we will live according to His ways and observe His mitzvot, statutes and ordinances which He ordered our fathers to obey (First Kings 8:58).** This **prayer** shows deep insight into the spiritual need of fallen human beings. The sad truth is that because of sin, our hearts are not inclined to walk in **God's** ways, to say nothing of keeping his commandments. Have you ever wondered why it is so easy to sin, and so hard to be holy? It is because our sinful hearts lean away from **YHVH**, not toward **Him**. Therefore, we need a powerful work of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to turn our hearts back in **His** direction. So we pray for **the** sanctifying **Spirit** to make our hearts want what **God** wants.

3. Next Solomon prayed for **God's listening ear: More specifically, he** asked **God** to listen to **his people** when **they** made any of the seven requests **he** just **prayed** (see [Bm](#) - [Solomon's Prayer of Dedication](#)). **May these words of mine, which I have used in my plea before ADONAI, be present with ADONAI our God day and night, so that He will uphold the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Isra'el day-by-day (First Kings 8:59).** **Solomon** was asking **God** to let **his prayer** of dedication stand for all time, so that when **his people** **prayed** for justice, forgiveness, or protection, or

deliverance - whatever **they** asked in faith, at any time of **the day** or **night** - **God** would hear **their prayers** and answer in power.

4. Then **King Solomon** prayed for **God's universal glory**, asking **then all the peoples of the earth will know that ADONAI is God; there is no other. So be wholehearted with ADONAI our God, living by His commandments and observing His mitzvot, as You are doing today (First Kings 8:60-61; Deuteronomy 4:35; Isaiah 45:5)**. This **prayer** was based on the belief that there is only **one God**. The people of **YHVH** declared this every morning in **their** daily confession: **Hear, Isra'el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is one (Deuteronomy 6:4)**. Since this is true - that **God** is unique, that **He** is **the one-and-only God** - then it should be acknowledged everywhere. Therefore, **Solomon** prayed for **God's glory** among the nations, that **He** would be known to be **God** by **all people** in **all places**.¹⁸³



Fire from heaven: Having **finished** with **Solomon's prayer** of dedication, **the Chronicler** continued to follow the account of **Kings**. **He** recorded a powerful display of **God's** acceptance of **Solomon's Temple, prayers, and sacrifices** as **fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices** (to see a video on **the dedication of the Temple** [click here](#)). The descent of **fire** upon a **sacrifice** appears elsewhere as a miraculous display of divine approval. This had happened on two other occasions. First, **fire came down from heaven to consume the sacrifice** that **David** offered on **the threshing floor** of **Araunah the Jebusite** (see the commentary on **The Life of David** [EI - David Builds an Altar](#)), and it would happen again, in a time of crucial decision for **Isra'el** on **Mount Carmel** (see the commentary on **Elijah and Elisha** [Aq - Elijah](#)

and the Prophets of Ba'al) when **ADONAI's** fire came down and devoured the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust, and licked up the water from the trench.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, How magnificent **You** sending **down fire from heaven** to consume **Solomon's** sacrifice, yet how fantastic and awesome will be the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! **Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude - like the roar of rushing waters or like the rumbling of powerful thunder - saying, "Halleluyah! For Adonai Elohei-Tzva'ot reigns! Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready (Revelation 19:6-7). How beautiful will be the bride, the Church (Second Corinthians 11:1), dressed in righteous deeds-white linen. It was granted to her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure," for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints (Revelation 19:8). What joy floods my heart when I focus my eyes and hope on my eternal home in heaven with **You**. Trials are but for a short time, while the joy of living with **You**, our **Loving Eternal Father**, in heaven will be forever! **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18). We love and worship you! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*****

And the Sh'khinah glory of ADONAI filled the house, so that the priests could not enter because the glory of the LORD filled God's house. This **glory** recalls the **Sh'khinah** that previously halted **priestly** services inside the **Temple**. Perhaps the **Sh'khinah** subsided slightly during **Solomon's prayers** and the **priests** tried to proceed with **their** responsibilities. At this point, however, **the priests could not enter because the glory of ADONAI filled God's house. All the people of Isra'el saw when the fire came down, and the Sh'khinah glory was on the house; they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the flooring; prostrating themselves, they gave thanks to ADONAI, "for He is good and His steadfast love endures forever" (Psalm 136). Earlier only the priests sang this psalm , but now the entire assembly added their voices to this song (Second Chronicles 7:2-3). Mention of Solomon (7:1), the priests (7:2) and all the people of Isra'el (7:3) created an ever widening circle of joy. The Chronicler reported how God's response to Solomon's prayer overwhelmed all who were there in order to inspire his readers to re-establishing the Temple and its services in their day. They wanted to exchange their hardships for joy. Yet,**

such splendid festivity could occur only if they followed **Solomon's** example and give due attention to **the Temple**.¹⁸⁴

The priests stood at their appointed stations, while the Levites used the instruments that David the king had provided for making music to ADONAI in order to “give thanks to ADONAI, for His grace continues forever,” by means of the praises David had composed. Opposite them the priests sounded trumpets; and all Isra’el stood up. Then the king, together with all Isra’el, offered more sacrifices before YHVH. Before Solomon’s prayer innumerable sacrifices were made (Second Chronicles 5:6). For the sacrifice of peace offerings which Solomon alone offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. It is impossible to assess whether the enormous numbers of **sacrifices** are to be taken literally or not. Apparently **142,000 animals** would have meant an offering every three seconds for ten hours a day for twelve days. The most that can be safely said is that the numbers were unusually large even for **Solomon’s** time, requiring a special **dedication** of **the courtyard** (see below) and presumably simultaneous **offerings**.¹⁸⁵ **Thus, the king and all the people of Isra’el dedicated the house of ADONAI.** So numerous were **the sacrifices** that **Solomon** arranged to **dedicate the center of the courtyard in front of the Temple; because he had to offer so many of the burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings there. For the bronze altar before ADONAI was too small to receive the burnt offering, the grain offering and the fat of the peace offerings (First Kings 8:61-64; Second Chronicles 7:4-7).**

So, Solomon celebrated the festival at that time for seven days, together with all Isra’el, an enormous gathering; they had come all the way from the northern border at the entrance of Hamat to the southern border at the brook of Egypt. The geographic references in this verse may be unfamiliar to most believers today, but it indicates that the whole nation of **Isra’el** celebrate this feast. **They all** were doing the same thing. **They** were united in **their** praise to **ADONAI** and **His** anointed **king**. In addition to **blessing the LORD, the people blessed their king.** So at the same time **they** rejoiced in **God** and **His** holy **Temple, they** also rejoiced in **Solomon** and **his** royal kingship. **They blessed their king** for the honor **he** gave to **YHVH** in building **a** holy **Temple** for worship. **Solomon** was **the joy of his people.**

But this does not mean this fulfilled the Abrahamic Covenant because much of this territory was under tribute and not under Jewish settlement in peacetime. So people

who use this verse to prove that the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant have already been fulfilled and there is no future promise for Isra'el, do not read these verses in context.

We have a similar, yet greater, **joy** in the Kingdom of **Yeshua Messiah**. The praise we offer to **ADONAI** is centered on our **King, Yeshua Messiah**, both on **His glory** as **the Son of God** and on **His** salvation through the cross and an empty tomb. This **joyful** worship is not just for Shabbat or Sunday, but for every day of the week and every place we go. Just as **the Israelites** went home praising **their God** and **their king**, we too are called to take **the joy** of **the Lord** with us everywhere we go.

On the eighth day, which followed the **seven-day** Festival of Sukkot (see the commentary on **Leviticus Eg - Hag Sukkot**), **the people assembled** for another **seven days**, just before returning to **their** homes, a total of **fourteen days in all**. **Then, on the twenty-third day of the seventh month, the people blessed the king and he sent them away to their tents full of joy and glad of heart for all the goodness ADONAI had shown to David his servant, to Solomon and to Isra'el His people (First Kings 8:65-66; Second Chronicles 7:8-10).**

When **Solomon** and **his people** dedicated **the Temple**, **they** had the volume turned all the way up. With every blessing **they** pronounced and every animal **they** sacrificed, **they** declared the **glory** of **God**. **They** kept the volume up all the way home as **they** praised **their king** and **his** kingdom. How do you go home from worship in the house of **the LORD**? Do you go rejoicing in **Messiah** and **His** Kingdom, offering **Him** the obedience **He** requires and the sacrifice **He** demands? Or does your attention quickly turn to the things you really worship: the relationships, the pleasures, and the entertainments that claim your higher allegiance? Whatever you choose to worship, make sure it is worthy of a feast, as only **Yeshua** is.¹⁸⁶