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# Solomon's Prayer of Intercession
# First Kings 8:31-61 and
# Second Chronicles 6:22-42

**Solomon's prayer of intercession DIG: How can Isra'el reverse the curses of disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-24)? What does this passage say about repentance and salvation? Why are spoken words so important? Would private faith, unexpressed and silent, be just as powerful? What was the reason the Jews turned and faced God's house when they prayed?**

**REFLECT: Do you consider affliction to be punishment for sin – always, sometimes, or never? In what cases? What prayers do you want to direct toward God's heavenly Temple? Do you first need to confess some sin? Have you taken advantage of the promise of "rest" given to God's people? Who are you interceding for? What intercessory prayer do you need now?**

**Every request that Solomon prayed for is answered in Yeshua Messiah.**

As he relates in his commentary on **First Kings**, Philip Ryken writes that there are many notable **"sevens"** in the Bible, including some that really do reach perfection. In **seven** days at the beginning of the world, **God** created everything there is, and then rested from His work. Noah brought **seven** pairs of clean animals with him on **the ark (Genesis 7:2)**. **The blood sacrifice** was sprinkled **seven times** to make complete **purification (Leviticus 16:14** and **19). Messiah** performs **seven** miraculous signs in the Gospel of **John**, and there are **seven** letters to **the seven** churches in the book of **Revelation**, where **seven** is also the number of the fullness of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh (Revelation 5:6).**

Then there is **the prayer** that **King Solomon** offered up when **he** dedicated **the Temple** in Jerusalem, which contains **seven requests** for **the people** of **God**. According to **Yeshua, the Temple** should be **a house of prayer (Luke 19:46)**. Thus, it was appropriate for **Solomon** to dedicate **his Temple** with a long **prayer**. **The king** opened by praising **ADONAI** and asking **Him** to keep the promises **He** had made to **his father David**. Then **he blessed the people** and **God** (**to see link click Bm – Solomon's Prayer of Dedication**). But the heart of **Solomon's prayer** consisted of **seven appeals** of *future* confession. **The mention of the Temple, or "this house," is crucial. The reason God established the Temple as a place to pray for forgiveness was that it was where the sacrifices were made for sin.** Knowing how certain **his people** were to **sin**, **the king** anticipated the trouble **they** would get **themselves** into and interceded for **their** forgiveness, even *before* **they sinned**! Standing in front of the bronze altar where atonement was made for **sin, he** asked **Ha'Shem** to listen to **the prayers** for **the Israelites** and forgive **them** for **their** many transgressions: **Hear from where You live in heaven; and when You hear, forgive (1 Kings 8:30).**

**Solomon's prayer** is a model for our own intercession. It teaches us how to **pray**, both for ourselves and for **the people** of **God**. It also reminds us how **Yeshua prayed** for us as our **Savior**. Thus, **Solomon's prayer** is everything that anyone could ever want in a **prayer** – a sevenfold perfection of intercession. There is a request for everyone somewhere in this **prayer**.[173]

**The first request – a prayer for justice: If a person sins against a fellow member of the community, and he is made to swear under oath, and he comes and swears before Your altar in this house;** protect the sanctity of **the oath** and **hear it in heaven, act, and judge Your servants, condemning the**

**wicked, so that his way of life devolves on his own head, and vindicating the one who is right, giving him what his righteousness deserves (First Kings 8:31-32; Second Chronicles 6:22-23; Exodus 22:6-12; Leviticus 5:21-24).** The situation **Solomon** described is a familiar one. In fact, one that **the king** had already dealt with **himself** (see **At – A Wise Ruling**). **Sin** is all too common; it happens every day. But what if there are no witnesses? How will **justice** ever be done? Not even **Solomon** in all **his** wisdom could adjudicate everything. Therefore, **Solomon prayed** that when **an oath** is brought before **Ha'Shem, the Judge of all the earth (Genesis 18:25)**, would **judge** the guilty party and established the innocence of the other.[174]

**The second request – a prayer for rescue: Solomon's** second request was **a prayer** for rescue and return. Again, it is clear that **the king** believed in the utter depravity of **the Israelites**. **When Your people Isra'el sin against You and in consequence are defeated by an enemy; then if they turn back to You, acknowledge Your name, and pray and make their plea to You in this house; hear in heaven, forgive the sin of Your people Isra'el, and bring them back to the Land You gave to them and their ancestors (First Kings 8:33-34; Second Chronicles 6:24-25).** According to **Leviticus 26:17** and **Deuteronomy 28:25**, one of the ways **God** will punish **Isra'el** is by allowing **her** enemies to defeat **her**. **Isra'el's** defeat by lowly **Ai (Joshua 7:1-11)**, the constant losses in **Judges**, and the humiliation at the hand of **Philistia (First Samuel 4:1-11)** illustrate this principle.[175] **Solomon** knew that **Isra'el** was likely to experience this kind of judgment again. Sooner or later, **God's people** would be **defeated** in battle and carried off by some foreign army – a theme which he will return in the seventh request. But **Solomon** also believed in the loving mercy of a forgiving **God**. So **he prayed** that when **his people** were **defeated**, **God** would hear **their prayers** at **the Temple**, forgive **their sin**, and bring **them** back to **the Land** that **He** had **promised**.

Because **the Temple** was where sacrifices for **sin** were made, **the king** was **praying** that there would be a way back home for fallen **sinners**, as there always is. **YHVH** is such a loving **Father** that when we finally come back home after wandering far away in our **sin**, **He** will **come running** to meet us (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Hu – The Parable of the Lost Son and His Jealous Brother**). **Yeshua Messiah** is **the Good Shepherd** who comes looking to find every **lost sheep** that belongs in **His** pasture (see **The Life of Christ Hs – The Parable of the Lost Sheep**). When we are lost and far away, **the God** of

mercy will hear our **prayer** for rescue and return.[176]

**The third request – a prayer for provision:** Military defeat was not the only punishment that **God's people** would undergo. Sometimes **the Land itself** would suffer for **Isra'el's sin**. **When they sin against You, and in consequence the sky is shut, so that there is no rain; then, if they pray toward this house, acknowledge Your name and turn from their sin when You have brought them low; hear in heaven, forgive the sin of Your servants and of Your people Isra'el – since You keep teaching them the good way by which they should live – and send down rain on Your Land, which You have given Your people as their inheritance (1 Kings 8:35-36: 2 Chronicles 6:26-27).** Notice that in **his requests**, **Solomon** is dealing with the principles of the Torah with its blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience **(Leviticus 26:19)**. The situation described in these verses is straight out of **Deuteronomy 11:13-14** and **16-17**, which shows how important knowing the Scriptures is to the life of **prayer**. **Solomon** does hope, then, and **his** hope is founded on **God's Word**; but that hope is not wishful thinking or giddy optimism spawned by the excitement of the moment. Rather, it is the real hope that comes from applying the realistic **Word** of a realistic **God**. Anything else is not true hope.[177]

**The fourth request – a prayer for deliverance: Solomon's** fourth request was similar to the third. As **the king** anticipated further difficulties **his people** were likely to face as a result of **their sin, he prayed** for deliverance from disaster. **Solomon** began by listing a comprehensive series of natural disasters: **Famine in the Land (Leviticus 26:19-20** and **26; Deuteronomy 28:25), or blight (Leviticus 26:25), windstorm, mildew (Leviticus 28:22), locusts (Deut 28:38) or shearer-worms; or if their enemy comes to the Land and besieges them in any of their cities, or plague or sickness (Leviticus 26:16; Deut 28:59-61).** We should not necessarily assume every time we see one of these disasters take place somewhere in the world that **Ha'Shem** is punishing a nation directly for its **sin**. The Gentile nations are not in covenant with **ADONAI** in the way that **Isra'el** is.

Nevertheless, there are some biblical judgments against **sin**, all of which call for **prayers** of repentance. So, **Solomon** said: **Then, regardless of what prayer or plea anyone among all Your people Isra'el makes – for each individual will know what is plaguing his own conscience – and the person spreads out his hands toward this house; hear in heaven where You live, and forgive, and act, and, since You know what is in each one's heart, give each person**

**what his conduct deserves (because You, and only You, know all human hearts), so that they will fear You and therefore live according to Your ways throughout the time they live in the Land You gave our ancestors (First Kings 8:37-40; Second Chronicles 6:28-31).**

Like the rest of **Solomon's prayer**, this request was answered later in the book of **Kings**. In the days of **King Hezekiah**, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, besieged Jerusalem **(2 Kgs 18:13** to **19:13)**. The situation was desperate, for in those days Assyria had the world's strongest army. But **Hezekiah** did what **a king** should do when **his** nation is in trouble; **he** went into **the Temple** and **spread out his hands toward God's house** in **prayer,** asking **God** to save **his people (2 Kgs 19:14-19). God** answered **Hezekiah's prayers** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Gw – Then the Angel of the LORD Put To Death a Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Men in the Assyrian Camp**). History actually shows us how these **prayers** actually work, giving us confidence for our own requests. Whenever we are afflicted, we may **pray** for **God** to deliver us. **He** knows what is really in our hearts. If our repentance is sincere, **He** will **forgive** our **sins** and deliver us if that is **His** will.[178]

**The fifth request – a prayer for foreigners:** For **the people** who were present at the dedication of **the Temple**, **Solomon's** fifth request surely must have been the most surprising. Most of them undoubtedly regarded **the Temple** as a house of worship for **the Jews.** Yet **Solomon also prayed** for **the foreigners,** Gentile proselytes, converting to **the God of Isra'el**. **He** said: **Those who do not belong to Your people Isra'el – when they come from a distant country because of Your great reputation, Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray toward this house; then hear in heaven where You live, and act in accordance with everything about which the foreigner is calling to You; so that all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and fear You, as does Your people Isra'el, and so that they will know that this house which I have built bears Your name (First Kings 8:41-43; Second Chronicles 6:32-33).**

**The Temple** was an international house of **prayer**. This is because **ADONAI** has always had a missionary heart for the nations of the world. Even **His** sovereign election of **the Jews** was for the sake of all peoples. The global reach of **His** grace went all the way back to the promise **He** made to **Abraham** (see the commentary on **Genesis Dt – I Will Bless Those Who Bless You and Whoever Curses You I Will Curse**). **They** were a **light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6).** S**olomon** longed

for these **foreigners** to join the family of **God**. Thus, **he** asked **YHVH** to hear and answer **their Temple prayers** , so that everywhere on earth people would know the one true **God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**.[179]

**The sixth request – a prayer for those who are engaged in war but are far away from Isra'el: If Your people go out to fight against their enemies, no matter by which way You send them, and they pray to ADONAI toward the City You chose, toward the house I built for Your name; then, in heaven, hear their prayer and plea, and uphold their cause (First Kings 8:44-45; Second Chronicles 6:34-35). Solomon** was honest about **his people's sin**; **he** knew that often **they** were **their** own worst enemy. But **he** also knew that **they** had other **enemies** as well, **enemies** who would wage war against **them**. So, **the king prayed** that when **his people** went out to battle and **prayed** for the help of **their God, He** would grant **them** the victory. It was not **the Temple** per se that would render **their prayers** effective; it was **Ha'Shem**, who had seen fit to dwell there, who would answer as **they prayed**.[180]

This does not mean that every army that **prays** to **God** will win the battle. The kind of warfare **Solomon** had in mind was a holy war in which **ADONAI-Tzva'ot** explicitly sent **His** own **people** to fight **the enemies** of **His** Kingdom (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Ag – The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh**). Therefore, **Solomon's prayer** has no direct application to any army, either then or now. Where it does have direct application is to the Church of **Yeshua Messiah** in its spiritual warfare with Satan and the powers of darkness. Today we fight our spiritual battles, and when we **pray, God hears** our **plea and upholds** our **case**.

**The seventh request – a prayer for those who have been carried away into captivity: Solomon'**s last request was probably the most important – **a prayer** for total forgiveness, and **Isra'el's** "worst-case scenario." Here's how **the king** began his final request: **When they sin against You – for there is no one who doesn't sin – and You are angry with them and hand them over to the enemy, so that they carry them off captive to the land of their enemy, whether far away or nearby (First Kings 8:46; Second Chronicles 6:36).** Of course, that is exactly what happened. **Solomon's** "if" was really more like a "when." By the inspiration of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, his** last request was a preview of **Isra'el's** future history. **The people** *did* **sin** against **the LORD**, and **He** *was* angry with **them**, and **He** *did* give **them** to **an enemy**, and they *were* **carried away captive**. **Solomon** was **praying** in advance about the tragic events of 586 BC (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Ga – The Fall of Jerusalem**), when

**Jerusalem** and its **Temple** were destroyed by the mighty armies of Nebuchadnezzar, and when **God's people** were **carried off** to **Babylon** for **seventy** long **years** of exile (see **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**).

Yet, **Solomon** believed in the grace of **ADONAI** as much as **he** believed in **God's** justice. Thus, **he prayed** for **Isra'el's** forgiveness, prophesying **the nation's** repentance and **return**, saying: **Then, if they come to their senses in the land where they have been carried away captive, turn back and make their plea to You in the land of those who carried them off captive,** saying, **"We sinned** (Hebrew: *chata*, meaning *to miss the mark*)**, we acted wrongly** (Hebrew: *avah*, meaning, *to commit iniquity*) **, we behaved wickedly** (Hebrew: *rasha*, meaning *to be wicked*)**," if, in the land of their enemies who carried them off captive, they return to You with all their heart and being, and pray to You toward their own Land, which You gave to their ancestors, toward the City You chose and toward the house I have built for Your name; then, in heaven where You live, hear their prayer and pleas, uphold their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned** (Hebrew: *psha*, meaning *rebellion*) **against You – forgive their transgressions which they have committed against You, and give them compassion in the sight of their captors, so that they will show compassion toward them; for they are Your people, Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the flames of the iron furnace (First Kings 8:47-51; Second Chronicles 6:37-39). Solomon** believed in the merciful compassion of a rescuing **God**. Even when we fall into **sin** and wander far away from **God, He** will still hear our **prayers**, and when we **pray**, **He** will forgive, even though we still have to suffer the consequences of our own **sin** in this world. Throughout **his prayer Solomon** put great emphasis on **the Temple**, but **he** did not do so for reasons of vain glory, as though the building was **his** special accomplishment. **His** basic concern was for **his people**. **Now, my God, please, let Your eyes be open, and let Your ears pay attention to the prayer being made in this place, so that You will hear them whenever they cry out to You (First Kings 8:52; Second Chronicles 6:40).** But **God**, who is not confined by a building and who is certainly not dependent upon it, will even survive its destruction and **hear the people's prayers** in exile.[181]

**Solomon's prayer** ends as it began, with hope for the present and the future based on **ADONAI's** past covenant loyalty to **Isra'el**. **He** asks that **the LORD** pay the utmost attention to **His requests**. Why? Solley because **the God of Abraham,**

**Isaac, and Jacob made a distinction between them and all the peoples of the earth by making them His inheritance, as He said through Moshe Your servant when He brought our ancestors out of Egypt (Exodus 19:5; Leviticus 26:40-45). Solomon** concluded **his prayer** by saying: **Now go up, ADONAI, God, to Your place of rest, You and the ark through which You give strength. May Your priests, ADONAI, God, be clothed with salvation; may those loyal to You take joy in good. ADONAI, God, don't turn away the face of Your anointed one; remember the mercies of Your servant David (First Kings 8:53; Second Chronicles 6:41-42).**

**Praying like Solomon: Solomon's** seven requests cover almost everything that anyone could ever need, even in all the desperate troubles of a fallen world. **Solomon prayed** for deliverance from danger, provision for daily needs, and victory over fierce **enemies. He prayed** that even in the worst-case scenario, **God** would bring **His people** back home. **Solomon prayed** this for **his people** who were far away from **ADONAI**, even for **people** who had never known **Him** at all. But most of all, **Solomon prayed** for our biggest need, which is the forgiveness of our **sins** against a holy **God**.

We also make **Solomon's prayer** our own by offering these requests for one another. When **he** made these requests, **Solomon** was not **praying** for **himself**, but for all **the people** of **God**. This was a corporate **prayer**, and we too are called to **pray** for **God's people**. We **pray** that justice will be done in the Church, so that any dispute will be fairly judged, and that the persecuted Church will receive its reward on the last day. We **pray** that **God** will provide for **His people's** needs and rescue them from every danger, including natural disasters. We **pray** for victory over our **enemies: sin**, death, and all the temptations of the Adversary. We **pray** for all **the people** and nations that are far away from **ADONAI**, asking **Him** to create the circumstances that would give them a moment of "spiritual clarity" so they could make a decision to follow **Him**. We **pray** for all the wayward sinning believers whose faith is in a spiritual desert, asking **the LORD** to bring them home from their spiritual exile. These are **the prayers** we offer for all **the people** of **God**.[182]