

# Heaven Meeting Earth

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Preacher: Philip Copeland

[ 0 : 00 ] for this evening. So we're going to turn to our Bible reading. And Phil Copeland is going to be preaching to us once again in the book of 1 Kings.

And we're going to read this evening the whole of 1 Kings chapter 8. So do turn that up. 1 Kings chapter 8, beginning at verse 1.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.

And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ephraim, which is the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

And they brought up the ark of the Lord, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent, the priests and the Levites brought them up. And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

[ 1 : 27 ] Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles.

And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place before the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt.

And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud.

For the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Then Solomon said, The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness.

[ 2 : 30 ] I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever. Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood.

And he said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, Since the day that I brought my people out of Egypt, I choose new city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house that my name might be there.

But I choose David to be over my people Israel. Now, it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.

But the Lord said to David my father, Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.

Now, the Lord has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and I have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.

[ 3 : 48 ] And there I have provided a place for the ark in which is the covenant of the Lord that he made with our fathers when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven and said, 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. Now therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, you shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel.

If only your sons pay close attention to their way to walk before me as you have walked before me. Now therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed which you have spoken to your servant David my father.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built.

[ 5 : 14 ] Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to this, to his plea. O Lord, my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, my name shall be there.

That you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers towards this place. and listen to the plea of your servants and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place and listen in heaven, your dwelling place and when you hear, forgive.

If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they've sinned against you and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers.

When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin when you afflict them, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk and grant rain upon your lands which you have given to your people as an inheritance.

[ 7 : 00 ] If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness is there, whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know according to all his ways for you, you only know the hearts of all the children of mankind that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.

Likewise, when a foreigner who is not of your people Israel comes from a country for a country for your name's sake for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hands and of your outstretched arms, when he comes and prays towards this house, 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 if your people go out to battle against their enemy by whatever way you shall send them and they pray to the Lord toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea and maintain their cause if they sin against you for there is no one who does not sin and you're angry with them and give them to an enemy so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy far off or near yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive and they repent and plead with you in the land of their captors saying we have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly if they repent with all of their minds and with all of their heart in the land of their enemies who carried them captive and pray to you toward their lands which you gave to their fathers the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you and all their transgressions that they have committed against you and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carry them captive that they may have compassion on them for they are your people and your heritage which you brought out of Egypt from the midst of the iron furnace let your eyes be open to the plea of your servants and to the plea

of your people Israel giving ear to them whenever they call to you for you separated them separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage as you declared through Moses your servant when you brought our fathers out of Egypt

O Lord God now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the Lord he arose from before the altar of the Lord where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven and he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice saying blessed be the Lord he 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 the Lord our God be with us as he is with our fathers may he not leave us or 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 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 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God there is no other let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments as at this day then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord Solomon offered as peace offerings to the Lord 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep so the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord for there he offered the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat pieces of the peace offerings because the bronze altar that was before the Lord was too small to receive the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat pieces of the peace offerings so Solomon held feast at that time and all Israel with him a great assembly from Lebohamath to the brook of Egypt before the Lord our God seven days on the eighth day he sent the people away and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had shown to David his servants and to Israel his people amen this is God's words and we'll return and we'll return to it shortly tonight we have reached what is arguably the high point in the reign of Solomon this is what all of the planning all of the building all of the furnishing the decorating of the last few chapters has been for the arrival of the glory of the Lord in the temple now this is a colossal chapter it's absolutely packed full of detail and so this evening we're not going to look at every detail rather

I want us to reflect on four main things so firstly let's reflect upon the temple and the Lord's presence the temple and the Lord's presence now back in chapter 6 as Solomon was building the temple you remember he was interrupted the Lord graciously came to him and he said I will dwell in this house you're building for me when the time comes and by the end of chapter 7 all is finished in the building work and in chapter 8 verse 1 King Solomon what he does is he gathers all of the leaders of Israel to do the final stage of the temple project which is key it's to move the ark of the covenant that special box that the Lord had directed to make which signified his presence with the people they were to move that from the tabernacle and into the temple and so in verse 2 they assemble these men and the king in the month of Ethamun the seventh month which was roughly about this time of year probably September or October and there was a feast taking place probably you know from elsewhere in the Bible that this was most likely the feast of tabernacles which commemorated the years spent wandering in the wilderness and in verses 3 and 4 the leaders the Levites the priests they take this ark and all the other holy vessels used for worship in the tabernacle to the temple verse 5 whilst all of this is going on did you notice they were carrying out sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice costly acts of worship to the Lord so many sacrifices that they lost count of how many they'd carried out all to express their joy this chapter is one of great joy and happiness and thankfulness and gratitude and in verse 6 to 8 the ark is taken and is placed in its proper place the holy of holies in the centre of the temple and once the ark was in place just have a look at verse 10 at what happened next and when the priest came out of the holy place a cloud filled the house of the Lord so that the priest could not stand to minister because of the cloud for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord friends here is a momentous occasion in history [ 15 : 45 ] I mentioned this a few weeks ago but it's just worth saying again the moving of the glory of the Lord from the tabernacle and into the temple it really means that the Lord has brought an end to Israel's wanderings he has established his people he's redeemed them but he's also established them in the promised land and brought them into his rest that's what Solomon prays later on in verse 56 he says blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel according to all he has promised in other words the Lord has brought an end to the exodus and a new chapter of salvation history has begun and in fact friends roughly at this point roughly speaking we are at the moment

right in between the exodus and exile which is sadly where we will be going and I pray that one day God willing we will look at the exile in 2nd Kings this period this golden period of rest in the history of Israel it does not last long but for now

I want us to reflect on verse 10 and 11 for they declare to us a wonderful truth about our Lord and that is that he is a God who loves to dwell with his people now friends this is something that we hear regularly at church probably all the time and it just may be that because you're so familiar with it you may be guilty for taking it for granted really these verses verse 10 and 11 they should leave us speechless and fill our hearts with praise and awe at the grace of God he is the God who for some reason loves to dwell amongst his people despite all of their sin despite all of our sin despite all of our shortcomings despite all of our failings our weaknesses all of our mess here is the God of grace who loves to draw near his people and as we look at this scene here the Lord so graciously coming in 1 Kings 8 we're really as I've been saying all along through this series getting a glimpse of something greater a greater coming of the Lord to a later time when the Lord would dwell amongst his people

Israel but this time his glory would not be veiled by the inner sanctuary of the temple neither would it be veiled in a cloud but rather it would be veiled in human flesh just like our bodies and the Lord Jesus Christ the temple we see the one who came at last to come down and once and for all carry out the great sacrifice that all those sacrifices in the temple were merely pointing towards once and for all to make you and I clean and fit to fit us for God's presence forever and more than that when we look at this scene in verse 10 and 11 what we're really getting a glimpse of here is a little glimpse of what will happen to the whole creation the whole creation as the book of Revelation says at the end of history when the Lord Jesus brings in his new creation when he resurrects this earth there will be no temple why?

because the whole of the new heavens and the new earth will be one global temple where the Lord will dwell with his perfected and glorified people in perfection and in paradise forever and ever so friends as we look at this scene and as we see the way the Lord loves to dwell with his people in the midst of them it should fill us with the same joy that clearly gripped the hearts of these men of King Solomon and all the leaders back then it should move us to want to sacrifice our lives for him to offer them up in worship well before we move on let's notice something else about the temple and the Lord's presence very important lesson notice that whilst Solomon knows that the glory of the Lord really does truly dwell in the temple Solomon also knows that the Lord's presence could never be limited to the temple please look at verse 27 this is what Solomon prays he says but will God indeed dwell on earth behold heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you how much less this house

I have built so yes the Lord friends really truly is dwelling in the temple in a special way and yet at the same time the Lord's presence is never limited to it for the Lord is not a big man yes the Lord is the all powerful creator and sustainer of all things the all present all knowing God who transcends both time and space nothing can house the Lord and friends this is the point I really want to drive home here in our thinking of the Lord we must have a very healthy biblical balanced view of God between verse 10 and verse 27 because the Lord God is both the God up there beyond the highest heaven but he's also the God who is down here to use Bob Fies great phrase our God is both the God of Genesis 1 the God up there yet he's also the God of Genesis 2 he's a God of immensity but also a God of intimacy he's both the Lord of history who towers over all things he's also a God who knows each and every one of us his people personally and deeply and intimately he is the God who is with us and friends if we place too much emphasis on one of these and sacrifice the other then what we're going to end up with is a skewed understanding of God the Lord and if we place too much emphasis on his transcendence for example too much emphasis on the fact that he is God up there then we will sink into despair and we might even be tempted to think that God is so far off he is totally unapproachable and unknowable but if we place too much emphasis on the fact that he is God with us we might be in danger of actually reducing God down and belittling him so that he becomes a small flaky God a kind of fluffy close friend to us but nothing more no the wise person who is biblically guided will be the one who has a healthy balance of God's presence just like Solomon does here

[ 22 : 34 ] Ralph Davis speaking about this point says this we can't imagine how the living God could be so immense and yet so intimate at the same time and yet it is delightfully so here is the reason for both trembling and joy for the church I cannot encompass God in his grandeur but I can

engage him in his grace his majesty dwarfs our universe and yet he knows us and he hears and receives our prayers so friends let's have this wonderful biblical balance that we see declared so plainly in this chapter that's the first thing the temple and the Lord's presence here's the second thing to reflect upon the temple and the Lord's promises the Lord's promises so throughout this chapter if you were to go through and highlight every single section where Solomon refers to the Lord keeping his promises you would have a very very very colourful Bible which is actually what my Bible is like because I've done that and it's very very yellow

I've highlighted every section every text that speaks about the Lord being faithful to his promises and it's almost entirely yellow and throughout the chapter of Solomon what he does specifically is he's constantly declaring how the existence of the temple and the fact that it's been built is all down to the fact that the Lord has been faithful to his promises now there are many passages and places as I say we could turn to but for the sake of time let's just look at verse 22 to 24 please let me read them to you again and Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands towards heaven and said 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 your servant David my father what you declared to him you spoke with your mouth and with your hand have fulfilled it this day so here Solomon begins notice verse 22 by saying

Lord you are incomparable there is no God like you and how is he incomparable well verse 23 he says the Lord is incomparable because he has shown himself to be the God who keeps covenant that is here is a God who is utterly faithful to his promises and which promises for instance well verse 24 the promises made to David my father says Solomon and what was that promise well just look back to verse 19 please he says it there the Lord promised David and this is one of the things the Lord promised David there are other things but this is the one Solomon chooses to focus on the Lord promised David that one of his sons would build a house for him and in verse 20 Solomon says that the Lord has fulfilled that promise in two ways a in establishing Solomon on the throne in the place of his father David but b in the fact that he Solomon has been allowed to build this house for the Lord this is what Solomon has in mind in verse 24 when he says to the Lord you spoke with your mouth and with your hand you have fulfilled in other words

Solomon is declaring to us that with the Lord there is no truth gap that is what he speaks with his mouth he does with his hand the Lord has shown himself to be utterly faithful to his covenant promises and having acknowledged all of that that wonderful truth about the Lord just notice what Solomon does next in verse 25 let me read that to you he says now therefore O Lord God of Israel keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him saying you shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel if only your sons pay close attention to their way to walk before me as you have walked before me so yes there is a condition that Solomon and his descendants must fulfill we will look at that next Sunday evening God willing when we get to chapter 9 but you see the prime line of logic here Solomon is saying Lord in verse 25 you have been true to what you have promised

David and this temple is the proof of that please carry on being like that in the future in short Solomon is saying to the Lord act in the future as you have acted up to this point you see for Solomon God's faithfulness in the past has become his basis for expecting the same in the future my friends why do I highlight that well because I think Solomon here has been held up as a model example a model prayer for us to follow and emulate over the years in churches that I've been in I've sometimes bumped into Christians Christians who think somehow that they will have greater assurance and more confidence for the future by looking in here by looking in their own hearts and upon their own lives to see how much progress they've made in the Christian life and you know friends

[ 28 : 16 ] I don't think that is right might be true but on the whole I don't think that is right in my experience people who do that the people who are constantly picking over their own lives and the activity of their hearts looking for more assurance there they usually descend into a morbid and obsessive introspection and the people I've known who've done that have actually only gotten worse they've gotten more fearful and less assured of their future as Christians no the key to having greater assurance for the future is to do what Solomon does here is to look back to look in here to look at the Lord's words to look at his faithfulness of all the things that he said he would do for us in Christ and all of the things that he has done for us in Christ that is our basis as a church and as

individuals for our confidence and assurance for the future so friends make sure that in our lives especially if you are someone who struggles with feeling down frequently there may be lots of reasons why you feel down it's a complex thing but perhaps one of the reasons why you feel down is because you need to remind yourself of what the Lord has done for you because that is the foundation of our assurance for the future and actually when you think about it that's just one of the things that we do when we gather around the

Lord's table together when we have communion it's what we'll be doing in a few moments later in the service as we eat the bread and drink the cup what we're doing is we're proclaiming to the Father in heaven that he has been utterly faithful to all of his promises in Christ so far and at the same time as we eat the bread and drink of the cup we're also proclaiming to God the Father and asking him to carry on being like that faithful in the future to all the promises that have been sealed to us in the blood of his son so friends remember that remember that the Lord's past faithfulness is the grounds of our confidence for future faithfulness don't be looking in here for encouragement because if you're anything like me you won't find much well that is the second thing to reflect upon this evening the temple and the Lord's promises here is the third thing the temple and the Lord's people the temple and the Lord's people now at the center of this chapter in verse 27 to 51 we find really the main chunk of Solomon's prayer where he dedicates the temple to the Lord and he pleads with the Lord to graciously use the temple remember as we said earlier in verse 27 Solomon states clearly that whilst the glory of the Lord does dwell in a special way in the temple Solomon also states that the Lord's presence is never limited to the temple in fact not even the highest heaven could hold the Lord and in verse 28 with that in mind Solomon pleads with the Lord to always keep an eye on the temple from heaven and to always keep an ear open on the temple from heaven as his people pray towards the temple and as they pray in the temple let me just be clear on that let's look at verse 28 let me read this to you this is what he says you have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea oh Lord my God listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house the place of which you said my name shall be there that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers towards this place and listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place and listen in heaven your dwelling place and when you hear forgive did you hear that there do you hear what he's saying whilst the Lord really does dwell in the temple also what's really happening is the Lord is dwelling up in heaven and so he pleads with the Lord whilst you're in heaven listen to the temple and all the prayers that are directed to it and I remember hearing a Bible teacher a very good Bible teacher once try and illustrate this point in a helpful way this teacher was not trying to be irreverent I'm not being irreverent here I'm not trying to be funny I'm trying to teach you a serious point here obviously this is just an illustration but the Bible teacher said that the temple is rather like a glorious phone booth with a receiver in it with a direct line to the heavenly temple to the Lord's heavenly dwelling place and that seems to be what Solomon is asking the Lord to do with the temple here to treat it as the point on earth where people will cry out towards and the

Lord will listen to that temple and the prayers will be carried up to him the petitions of his people you see prayer at this point seems to be directed towards this temple and the temple alone and in verse 31 onward Solomon really describes seven scenarios you can read these later on when you go home and these scenarios are things that will most probably happen to Israel in the future and most of these scenarios these seven scenarios they will only ever come about because of Israel's sin against the Lord actually when reading this prayer at this point I love Solomon I know he's an ambiguous character for most of the way but I think this is one of his best points and he is a realist just look at what he says in verse 46 he says if they sin against you for there is no one who does not sin Solomon knows that everyone sins even the

[ 34 : 38 ] Lord's people even in the future he knows that a time will come when Israel will rebel and Solomon also knows that when that happens the Lord will be faithful to his covenant word and he will discipline his wayward people with covenant curses and that is really what Solomon speaks about in this section in the prayer for example just run your eye over verse 35 he talks about a time when Israel will rebel and as a consequence the Lord brings no rain upon the land a time of drought or in verse 37 run your eye over that please 37 Solomon talks about loads of possible covenant curses that would come upon Israel when not if but when they are unfaithful and rebel the Lord will bring such hardships famine pestilence sickness and invasion and Solomon says Lord when this

happens when the people rebel and end up under curse if they are penitent if they turn to you and repent turning away from the rebellion and in sorrow they cry out to you towards the temple notice then please

Lord hear their prayer as you sit up in heaven that is offered through the temple and when you hear their prayer Lord please forgive in your severity remember mercy and friends you see from this point on in salvation history the temple holds this key significance for the Lord's people it is the place where the Lord's name dwelled and it was also the place where all of their prayers must be directed towards and the expectation that the Lord would hear them just think please later those of you who know your Bibles think about the book of Daniel think about Daniel centuries later he was taken off into exile he was a captive in the land of Babylon what did he do when he prayed every day what did he do as he prayed answer he would open his bedroom windows and he would face towards Jerusalem to the place where the temple once stood because at that time it would have been in rubble and he prayed to the Lord because of this passage here well so what you might be thinking so what you just fill in my head with

Bible knowledge what's the implications for our lives today well friends today we need to remember the severity and the mercy of the Lord that Solomon unpacks here in these middle verses in the prayer yes our God is a loving God of grace but he is also a holy God of the covenant and he still deals with his people covenantally today my friends if we think that as a church or as individuals we can flagrantly disobey God and spurn his grace without him doing anything about it we are mistaken the Lord can and does discipline his church today by bringing it into all sorts of times of difficulty but always always with the purpose of humbling us so that in our despair we will be forced to turn to him and repent and because that is the goal of why

God brings difficulties on the church when we are wayward we can call it a mercy it's severe but ultimately if it makes us turn back to the Lord it is a severe mercy and friends whenever we find ourselves in that situation you and I don't ever have to turn to Jerusalem to the site of where Solomon's temple once stood in order to be heard by the father of course not we don't need to turn to any supposedly holy place in the world in order to be heard by the father for I would argue that there are no such places today the place where we direct our prayers is solely to our advocate in heaven to the great high priest for it is only through the Lord Jesus Christ the true temple that our prayers are heard by our father and when we confess our sins to our father through him what does first John chapter 1 say he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and the blood of

Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin so friends remember that remember the kindness and severity of the Lord but remember that when he does bring us into times of hardship we turn to Jesus here's the final point for us to reflect upon this evening the temple and the Lord's program the temple and the Lord's program now what do I mean by the Lord's program well just think back please to Genesis 12 the very start of the history of the people of God when the Lord came to Abraham and made promises to him one of the aspects of his promise was that Abraham and his family line were going to be crucial for bringing about the fulfillment of God's great saving purposes and program which is to bless all peoples from all the nations Abraham's descendants if you like would be like a funnel through whom the Lord would pour his salvation blessing through and they would be pushed out towards all the nations of the earth and in his prayer in 1st

[ 40 : 28 ] Kings 8 Solomon asks the Lord to use the temple in order to advance this program to bless all the peoples of the earth so please look at verse 41 and 42 let's run your eye over that and I'll paraphrase as we go through Solomon says here Lord you are so glorious the news about what you've done for us in redeeming us and establishing us in the promised land it will not go unnoticed a time will come Lord when foreigners that is Gentiles unbelievers and other countries outside of Israel they will hear about you and what you've done and they will be drawn to you and they will come to the temple and verse 42 when they come and pray towards this house pray towards you through this house then verse 43 Lord hear them in heaven and answer their prayers why well so that they will know that you are the true

God so that they will know your name and fear you that is answer them so that they will trust you and see that you are the true and living God and so that they will then go back to their home nations and spread the word about you drawing in more people to come to you more new converts from the nations as you see Solomon did not expect the temple to remain Israel's best kept secret Solomon expected it to be a kind of mission station if you like an ancient Israel life course he knew that the

temple was God's gift to Israel but he also knew that it was intended to draw those far beyond Israel into the joy of atonement and prayer and again friends it is not surprising that as we look at this aspect of the temple what we get here is another glorious glimpse of the true temple who centuries later was sent into this world as a gift of God's grace yes to

Israel but he was also sent to draw in those far beyond Israel into the joy of atonement and prayer it's actually why most of us are sat here today is it not we are Gentiles by birth most of us yes we are here because the true temple the Lord Jesus was not a best kept secret for Israel but it was actually one who was for the whole world and friend it might be that you are here this evening and you're not yet a Christian and if that is you then it's great that you're with us and friend if you are desperate to find out how it is to anyone can be right with their maker if you're desperate to know how you can receive a fresh new life from your maker from the Lord well again you do not need to turn to some holy site or some religious building somewhere in the world all you need to do is turn to the

Lord Jesus of the Bible and prayer and all those who turn to the Father through Jesus his Son they will receive full pardon for their sin and they will receive a fresh new life that will last forever if that's you this evening if you're truly sorry for the wrong that you've done against God and if you believe that he is the only one who can save you then why don't you turn to him tonight why don't you come and eat at his table with us in a few moments and as you do so you will be proclaiming to the Father that you trust his promises that he sealed in the blood of his Son every outsider who turns to the Father through the Son they will be forgiven and they will be brought into the Lord's people to be forever cleansed and made fit for the Lord forever and ever well friends there's much much more we can touch upon from this chapter and things at the end of the chapter look glorious but you do wonder in your mind how long will it last and next

Sunday evening the Lord will interrupt Solomon again and he will come and remind him once again of what the Lord really wants what's the Lord's top priority for his king and for his people so I hope that we come back to hear about that next Sunday night but in the meantime let's reflect upon these things the temple and the Lord's presence the temple and the Lord's promises the temple and the Lord's people and the temple and the Lord's program amen let's be quiet for a moment bow our heads maybe take some time to respond to the word of God in your own heart and then I will pray for us oh gracious God we praise you that you are a God who delights to dwell with sinful people like us we praise you also for being a God who is utterly faithful to your promises you promised to send your son into the world to die for our sins to deal with our uncleanness to deal with the guilt and the unrighteousness of our lives of our lives and he came just as promised for you are the [ 46 : 27 ] God who is always faithful to his word we praise you that you are the God who lovingly disciplines us as well when we stray and we praise you that when we turn to you and confess our sins then you really are just to forgive us our sins and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness Father thank you for your sustaining grace thank you that he the Lord Jesus is the true temple the true hope of the nations to whom all people can come and receive forgiveness and eternal life and I pray heavenly father that as a church today your people we would be gripped with a burning passion to make him known to all people wherever they're from and we pray this in Jesus name Amen