**HEAR THE SUPPLICATION OF YOUR SERVANT**

1King 8:22-53

Key Verse 30

“Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.”

**Introduction**

After the ark was brought into the temple inner sanctuary, Solomon prayed as a representative prayer servant. But he was not a priest and he was not cut out to be entering into the holy place called priest court. However we can learn from his heart moving prayer topics on behalf of the Israelites. May the Lord help us to learn of his priesthood prayer spirit and offer unceasing prayer for America until we may see God’s glory!

1. Read verses 22-30. What did Solomon confess about God in his prayer? (22-24) What did he ask God in his prayer? (25, 26) What kind of place must the temple be for the people and for God? (27-30)

1-1, Read verses 22-30.

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven 23 and said:

“Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. 24 You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

25 “Now Lord, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.’ 26 And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

27 “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! 28 Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. 29 May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. 30 Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

1-2, What did Solomon confess about God in his prayer? (22-24)

***Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven 23 and said:***

* First, he did not enter the temple proper because he was not allowed to do so according to the laws of God. He spread out the hands toward heaven, posturing in a surrender, openness, and ready to listen to God.

***“Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. 24 You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.***

* Solomon called God as “Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below.” He confessed that God is unique compared to other gods that other nations worshiped.
* “You who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way” The first and foremost characteristic of the God of Israel is to keep His covenant of love with His servants if they continue wholeheartedly in His way.
* “You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand have fulfilled it-as it is today.” Solomon gave all the credit to the Lord God from A to Z although he labored a lot to build the temple for more than 7 years. He admitted that it stemmed from God and was fulfilled according to His will and strength.
* Above all he gave thanks to the Lord, God who faithfully kept His promise to his father David!

1-3, What did he ask God in his prayer? (25, 26)

***“Now Lord, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.’ 26 And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.***

* Solomon called upon God to keep the promises that He made. This is the great secret to power in prayer – to take God’s promises to heart in faith, and then to boldly and reverently call upon Him to fulfill the promises.
* He recalled what his father had told him based on what God had promised him on 2 Samuel 7. Nothing is more important than remembering God’s words of promise in prayer rather than manufacturing and demanding God with what we want.

1-4, What kind of place must the temple be for the people and for God? (27-30)

***“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! 28 Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. 29 May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. 30 Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.***

* Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of the king and the people when they prayed toward the temple. For this reason, many observant Jews still pray toward the temple in Jerusalem.
* Solomon knew that the most important thing Israel needed was forgiveness. This was the greatest answer to prayer that Israel could expect from God.
* The temple was too small for God to dwell in it only. But it is the house of prayer for all nations. Especially it is the place where all people from all nations may come in God’s prescribed way to be sin forgiven and prayed before Him.
* Solomon prayed that the purpose of the temple may be accomplished through prayer. All people may restore their relationship with God. Then he prayed further in great detail in the following verses.

1. Read verses 31-40. What did Solomon ask God to do when anyone would wrong their neighbor? (31-32) What did he ask God to do when the Israelites sinned and their enemies defeated them? (33-34) What did he ask God to do in regard to the lack of rain and other disasters? (35-40)

2-1, Read verses 31-40.

31 “When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple, 32 then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence.

33 “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple, 34 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors.

35 “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 36 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

37 “When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, 38 and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts, and spreading out their hands toward this temple— 39 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart), 40 so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.

2-2, What did Solomon ask God to do when anyone would wrong their neighbor? (31-32)

***31 “When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple, 32 then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence.***

* The inner court of the temple was used as a place to verify and authorize oaths. Solomon asked that the temple (before the altar of the temple) would be a place to properly swear by.
* Hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants: Solomon asked the God who can see what man can’t (the hidden heart and motive of man) to enforce from heaven the oaths made at the temple.

2-3, What did he ask God to do when the Israelites sinned and their enemies defeated them? (33-34)

***“When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple, 34 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors.***

* Many times in their history, Israel suffered defeat and could only cry out to God. It was even worse when the defeat was because they had sinned against the LORD Himself.
* “When they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in the temple, then hear in heaven.”
* Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of a defeated, yet humble and repentant Israel. God answered this prayer of Solomon, and He forgives and restores His defeated people when they come in humble repentance.
* This prayer might have been fulfilled after Babylonian exile and the Israelites came back to the promised land to rebuild the temple as well as the wall.

2-4, What did he ask God to do in regard to the lack of rain and other disasters? (35-40)

***“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 36 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.***

* Drought was a serious threat for the agriculturally-based economy of Israel. If there was no rain, there was no food. Israel relied on spring and fall rains.
* When they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven: Solomon doesn’t take it for granted that God would forgive and hear His repentant people.

***37 “When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, 38 and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts, and spreading out their hands toward this temple— 39 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart), 40 so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.***

* Solomon recognized that some plagues are easily seen, but other plagues come from our own hearts and it is not easy to know it.
* Many are cursed by a plague that no one else can see, but Solomon asks God to answer such a plague-stricken man when he humbly pleads at the temple.
* A man did not have to be sinless or righteous to have his prayer answered at the temple. He could be a guilty man, stricken by the plague of his own heart, and still find a gracious God when He came in humble repentance.

1. Read verses 41-53. What did Solomon pray for the foreigners who would know God’s name? (41-43) What did he pray about going to war? (44-45) What did he pray for those who were enslaved by an enemy nation? (46-53) What can we learn from his faith in God and his shepherd heart for the people?

3-1, Read verses 41-53.

41 “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— 42 for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple,43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name. 44 “When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the Lord toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, 45 then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. 46 “When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to their enemies, who take them captive to their own lands, far away or near; 47 and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; 48 and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; 49 then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. 50 And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their captors to show them mercy; 51 for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace. 52 “May your eyes be open to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. 53 For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign Lord, brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”

3-2, What did Solomon pray for the foreigners who would know God’s name? (41-43)

***41 “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— 42 for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple,43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.***

* The temple was in Israel, but it was always intended to be a house of prayer for all nations ([Isaiah 56:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+56.7&t=NKJV)). God wanted the court of the Gentiles to be a place where the nations could come and pray.
* Jesus was angry when the gentile court of the temple was filled with merchants and their money change table. (John 2, Matthew 21)
* Hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You.
* Solomon asked God to hear the prayer of the foreigner out of a sense of mission. He knew that when God mercifully answered the prayers of foreigners, it drew those from other nations to the God of all nations. Amen!
* It may remind us of Jesus’ high priesthood prayer in John 17. May the Lord help us to grow in the same spirit and pray with a world mission mind.

3-3, What did he pray about going to war? (44-45)

***44 “When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the Lord toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, 45 then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.***

* Solomon prayed with the idea that God should answer the prayers for victory made in foreign lands towards the temple, but only when they battled as God sent them. This was not a blanket request for blessing on every military adventure.

3-4, What did he pray for those who were enslaved by an enemy nation? (46-53)

***46 “When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to their enemies, who take them captive to their own lands, far away or near; 47 and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; 48 and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; 49 then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. 50 And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their captors to show them mercy; 51 for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace. 52 “May your eyes be open to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. 53 For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign Lord, brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”***

* When they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive: Solomon also asked God to hear Israel’s prayer from captivity in a foreign land.
* This recognized that the God of the Temple could answer prayers although they were made away from the temple.

3-5, What can we learn from his faith in God and his shepherd heart for the people?

* “No one who does not sin” reminds us of Romans 3 that everyone has fallen short of God’s glory. Solomon knew how weak the people were like himself. He asked God’s mercy and forgiveness in each and every prayer topic.
* Likewise he shows his shepherd heart for the people and his personal faith in God. May the Lord help us to pray in the same way.
* All 7 prayer topics are very practical and realistic prayer topics for the people of Israel and foreigners and war slaves and so on.

**Conclusion**

This passage reminds me of 1 Timothy 1:15-17, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. **16** But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. **17** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” May the Lord help us to grow as warriors of prayer to serve all nations as a kingdom of priests!

**One word: When you hear, please forgive us!**