

09

SESSION 9

Solomon Builds the Temple

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we will see Solomon building a temple for the Lord. We'll learn why he wanted to build the temple, and how the temple bore God's name, manifested God's presence, and represented God's glory to the world. Christians belong to the church, described by the apostles as "the temple of God." In the Old Testament, the temple referred to a place. In the New Testament, the temple refers to a people. We are being built together as God's residence—a beacon of light and hope to the world.

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 5:1-5; 8:10-14,54-61

THE POINT

Far from being a distant deity, God has always desired to dwell among His people.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

Burj Khalifia, located in Dubai, is the tallest building in the world. The building's website states: "More than just the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa is an unprecedented example of international cooperation, symbolic beacon of progress, and an emblem of the new, dynamic and prosperous Middle East. It is also tangible proof of Dubai's growing role in a changing world. In fewer than 30 years, this city has transformed itself from a regional centre to a global one. This success was not based on oil reserves, but on reserves of human talent, ingenuity and initiative. Burj Khalifa embodies that vision."¹

As you can tell from this summary, the Burj Khalifia is not just a building; it's a message. Its significance extends beyond the towering summit. The building is intended to communicate something to the rest of the world.

History has seen its share of large structures—towers, castles, and walls. People have been building things since the Tower of Babel. If you want to get the world's attention, build a large building!

Many of the greatest leaders and the world powers in history have buildings that bear their name. The same was true in King Solomon's day. The surrounding nations had erected temples for their gods. But Yahweh, the God of Israel, was no local deity. He was the God of the whole world (Ex. 9:16). He was the maker and sustainer of the universe, the ruler of all the nations, and Israel was to represent His name and renown before the rest of the world.

- **List some of the great structures and buildings of history. What comes to mind when you think of them? What do these buildings communicate?**

Option 2

Names are important. Think about your last name—it tells about your family of origin, which is your immediate family, including your parents and siblings. You carry the same last name and similar DNA. You represent your family wherever you go because you carry their name with you. As God's children, believers hear His name, show His love to the world, and walk in His ways. We are His representatives to the world around us.

- **What are some words that come to mind when you think of the responsibility of representing God to the world?**

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

Far from being a distant deity, God has always desired to dwell among His people.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God** - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Solomon** - son of David who succeeded him as king over Israel. Solomon is known for his God-given wisdom—having authored many books in the Old Testament wisdom literature—and his building of the temple

PLOT

After looking into what king Solomon had to say in regards to wisdom, we now turn our attention to perhaps his greatest achievement—the building of the temple. Unlike his father, David, Solomon reigns during a time of peace on all borders. As God promised David, Solomon would now have the opportunity to build a temple that would not only benefit all of the people of Israel, but even those to the end of the earth. This temple would be a place where God could dwell among His people and where God's glory would be displayed for all to see.

TIMELINE

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Solomon constructs the temple, and God fills it with His presence.

SOLOMON'S FALL INTO IDOLATRY

Foolish decisions ultimately lead to idolatry.

MEANING OF LIFE IN ECCLESIASTES

Solomon reflects on the purpose and meaning of life.

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

Names are powerful. Mention Adolf Hitler, Steve Jobs, Justin Beiber, Barack Obama, Tiger Woods, or Warren Buffet, and you're likely to start an interesting conversation with people you may barely know. King Solomon knew the power of names too. He knew the esteem and honor that certain names deserve. This is one of the main reasons he wanted to build a house for the Lord.

David, Solomon's father, was unable to build the house because of constant war during his reign. But the Lord gave Solomon rest on every side. The only fitting thing to do now was to build a temple to show the world the might and power of the God of Israel. Look at what Solomon says in 1 Kings 5:1-5:

Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram always loved David. And Solomon sent word to Hiram, "You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor misfortune. And so I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD said to David my father, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.'" (1 Kings 5:1-5)

Up to this point in redemptive history, Israel's God was not associated with any particular place. He had manifested Himself in visions, in a burning bush, a pillar of fire, on the mountaintop, in the tabernacle, and through the ark of the covenant. But until now, there was no established place where His people could point and say, "This is the house of our God."

That all changed with Solomon. It was time to finally build a structure that would display the glory and renown of the God whose name is majestic in all the earth (Ps. 8). He wanted that name—Yahweh—to be glorified and lifted high for all the nations to see and treasure.

What did Solomon intend to communicate to the world and to Israel through the temple? The answer is in verses 4-5 "But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor misfortune. And so I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord said to David my father, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.'"

- **In what ways do you see people try to honor God's name today? How do you try to honor God's name?** (p. 60, PSG)

GOD FILLS THE TEMPLE WITH HIS PRESENCE

After Solomon completed the temple, he gathered all Israel, along with the priests, Levites, and leaders, to bring the ark of the covenant to the Lord's house (1 Kings 8:1-9). On that day God displayed His glory among His people. As we read our text for this section, imagine that you are standing among the assembly witnessing this spectacular display of God's glory.

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. 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. (1 Kings 8:10-14)

Normally, God dwelled in thick darkness (v.12), in a place where no one could see Him. But now, God had come down to be with His people in the place built for His Name and presence. God was so near and real that day that even the priests had to stop what they were doing.

On that day, Israel received the blessing of God Himself. This is the greatest blessing that God can give to His people—His presence. In fact, we see all throughout the Bible that God's intention has always been to dwell among His people.

Have students turn to the selected passages and summarize how God is seen as dwelling among His people in these verses. A summary has been provided for you. (p. 61, PSG)

- **Gen. 1–3.** (Given the length of these chapters, you may just want to provide a summary for your students). God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden before their sin resulted in banishment from God's presence.
- **Ex. 29:42-46.** God gave Moses intricate details for the tabernacle and the ark in order to establish His presence among Israel and meet with them regularly.
- **Ezek. 10:18.** When Israel failed in their faithfulness to God's covenant, the most severe form of judgment from the Lord was removing Himself from the temple.
- **Matt. 1:23.** God's promise to revisit His people and establish them once again is fulfilled in Jesus, who was called 'Immanuel' (which means, God with us).
- **Rev. 21:3.** At the end of history, when all things are set right, we read this promise from Revelation: "The dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

The great hope of the Christian life is not getting things from God; it is getting God. This is a God who wants to be known and wants us to sense His presence.

GOD'S PEOPLE GO FROM THE TEMPLE TO FULFILL GOD'S MISSION

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 who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was 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." (1 Kings 8:54-61)

As Solomon prays, he blesses the people and offers a prayer for the nation "that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God" (v. 60). This was one reason God chose the nation of Israel. He did not choose them for their own sake. He chose them for the sake of the nations. He is a global God who desires all the nations to be glad in Him (Ps. 67). They were to be a particular people with a universal purpose—to extend the name and glory of God to the ends of the earth (Ex. 19:5-6).

The temple in Israel represented what God wanted to do in the whole earth. He wanted to spread His name and fame, not only to Israel, but also among all the nations so that Habakkuk's words might be fulfilled: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

- **God's purpose is to spread His name for His glory. Are you ever tempted to believe that a relationship with God is all about what God can do for you? (p. 62, PSG)**

TIMELINE

THE SUFFERING OF JOB

The suffering of Job and the mercy of God.

WORSHIP IN THE PSALMS

A look into the psalms and their importance in the Christian life.

Beginning Fall 2016

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

God makes it known that He alone is God.

CHRIST CONNECTION

The New Testament teaches that Jesus is the true temple of God, and that as His followers, we also are the temple of God. God dwells in His people through His Holy Spirit. Consider what Peter said about this:

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
(1 Pet. 2:4-5)

According to Peter, we are now priests who offer sacrifices to God. God’s people no longer have to stand outside a temple. God now meets with us as we gather in His name. The presence of God is manifested where His people are, since the Spirit resides in our hearts.

Unfortunately many Christians attend worship gatherings every Sunday and fail to encounter the presence and majesty of God through worship, prayer, giving, and listening to the Word of God preached. Our hearts are filled with distractions from our phones, other responsibilities, and anxiety about the week ahead. But if what Peter is saying is true, then when we gather with God’s people we are engaging in the most climactic event of our week.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Temple of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 12:13). As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we live lives differently than before, bearing the virtuous fruit that comes only by the indwelling work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This indwelling work of the Spirit also equips individual members of the church with gifts for the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:11).

YOUR STORY 10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **Share about a time when you sensed the reality of God's presence.** *Answers to this will vary.*
- **What was it about that time that convinced you it was the Spirit working?** *Answers may include things like: conviction of sin, repentance from sin, a hunger for God and His word, genuine worship, etc.*
- **Talk honestly about your attitude toward gathering for worship on Sundays. What are some things you can do to prepare for worship to make it more meaningful and edifying?** *Answers may include things like: praying that God would prepare your heart for worship; getting a good night's sleep the night before; putting away your phone; etc.*
- **If we are the temple of God today, then we are to represent God to the world. What should our identity as God's temple communicate to those around us?** *The temple, like all architecture, communicated things about God to those that saw it—things like God's beauty, His sovereign power, and His nearby presence. The same should be the case for Christians as well. When people see us and the way we live our lives, they should be able to conclude certain things about God's greatness from His own work in our lives—things like His grace and mercy, His presence, and His power to transform hearts of stone into hearts like His.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION

10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

One of the insights we can take away from this session has to do with the fact that when Solomon decided to build the temple, he was attempting to do something great for God. On one hand, we must recognize that God doesn't need us to do things for Him, as Paul says in Acts 17:24-25. God is not dependent upon us for anything. However, it is also true that even in recognizing our dependence upon Him, we too can have godly goals, dreams, and ambitions that aim to make much of who He is and what He means to us. Solomon had a godly ambition to build the temple, and this ambition was driven not out of a sense of pride or praise for himself, but for God's fame and glory.

- **William Carey is often quoted as saying, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." What do you think he meant by this?** *Answers to this will vary.*
- **What are some "God-sized" goals and ambitions you have? How will those serve to make much of Jesus in your life?** *Answers to this will vary.*



HEART

You can imagine how the Israelites must have felt and the emotions that were invoked upon seeing God's glory fill the temple. The sight of the finished temple would not only have drawn their attention and affections towards God, but seeing God's indwelling would have only added to that experience, resulting in genuine worship. The same should be true of Christians from week to week as well. No matter the place, be it in prayer on the bedroom floor or sitting in the pew at church listening to a sermon, Christians should expect and anticipate God's presence and glory to manifest in their lives.

- **What are some day to day experiences where you can anticipate the presence and glory of God at work?** *In short, every experience—whether it be playing football or eating dinner with friends—all of life's activities for the Christian can point to the glory of God.*
- **How can you seek God's glory in all of those things?** *Answers to this will vary.*



HANDS

As Christians, we are now the temple of God on the earth. God indwells us and fills us (Eph. 2:18-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5) as His missional people. God called us and chose us for the purpose of representing Him on the earth and spreading His fame to the nations. As we think of this great task before us, we must understand that it starts with ordinary Christians having ordinary conversations with ordinary people. It starts with you walking across the classroom and befriending a student you don't know. It starts when you give up time and comfort for the sake of non-Christians. It starts by taking a risk to ask a classmate what she thinks about Christianity. It starts with you choosing each day to live your life on mission and being available for whatever God wants to do through you.

- **What is your greatest fear when it comes to living on mission for the Gospel?** *Answers may include things like: fear of rejection, fear that one won't be able to answer objections, etc.*
- **How does God's heart for the world help you overcome these fears?** *Because God loves the world, and desires for people to be in a right relationship with Him, we should be encouraged as we live intentionally in pursuit of His mission to seek and save that which is lost.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

LEADER PACK

For this session, refer students to pack item #9, which contains an informational graphic of the temple Solomon built, displaying some of the main architectural features and furnishings that it housed.

SOURCES

1. "Vision," Burj Khalifa, accessed December 7, 2015, <http://burjkhalifa.ae/en/the-tower/vision.aspx>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/TGPKingsSUM16)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at

GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit

MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject