

PENN FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Bible Study : 21st June 2017

1 Kings 8:28-32

**CHRIST IS
THE TRUE TEMPLE :
THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN
GOD AND MEN AND THE
JUDGE OF OF ALL MEN**



**“My Name shall
be there”**

**KEY TO
THE LAYOUT
OF THIS STUDY**

**The verses being
studied are in
bold type**

*Supporting and
illustrative Scripture
texts are in italics*

The explanation and
commentary on the
verses being studied
and of the
supporting texts
are in normal typeface

v28. “Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day”. The Temple has recently been completed, and the nation is now gathered together for the dedication of the new building. This is the one place on all the earth where God has chosen to grant a special manifestation of His presence. Solomon addresses the people from a specially erected pulpit in the court of the temple. Although heaven itself cannot contain the immensity of God, yet, prays Solomon, might the Lord be pleased to hear the prayers of a mere worm such as he, as he prays from this newly built house of God. So let us note Solomon’s total lack of presumption. He does not presume on God’s ongoing blessing, but humbly pleads that in the coming days the Lord might continue to manifest His presence in the Temple to the comfort and support of Israel. How aware Solomon is that both he and the people must fulfil their covenant obligations, if they expect to receive the Lord’s ongoing aid and protection.

v29. **“(May) thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place”**. The Lord has declared concerning the Temple, “My Name shall be there”. What a privilege Israel has. It is not of course that God’s presence will be confined to this building (the almighty, omnipresent God who is Spirit could never be so confined), but it is God's will that for the foreseeable future this special building be the central focus for Israel's worship. Here especially He will speak to the people and receive their prayers. Here He will be approached through the sacrifices upon the altar, which atone for sin.

The Temple, then, is the appointed means through which Israel has access to God. It is the unique place of mediation between heaven and earth. As such, it foreshadows the Person and work of Christ, who in His own Person is the unique Mediator between men and God. “The human nature of Christ is the (true) temple in which dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; therefore ... all prayer must be offered to God through Him” ¹. So as we consider the Old Testament Temple, it is preparing us to understand the role and status of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the Israelite prayed to God through the Temple, so we today pray to God through the true temple which is Christ.

v29. **“(May) thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there”**. This temple is the place where God will continually manifest His glory and power. This is where He will meet with His people, and will always hear their prayers. The Temple represents God with Israel. It thus anticipates the work of Christ, who is Immanuel, God with us, the true Temple, the One who literally is God manifested in the flesh, He who reveals to us what God is truly like. Just as God’s Name was in the Temple, so His name, His glory, His character and revelation of Himself are supremely in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). We discover God’s glory by coming to Jesus Christ, by availing ourselves of His mediation. When the Israelites were absent from Jerusalem, in whatever other part of Israel, or whatever foreign country, they turned in the direction of the Temple in order to pray. This was what God required. And so Daniel, living in captivity in Babylon, which was then under the rule of Persia, kept this commandment to pray facing the Temple in Jerusalem, even when a written decree was issued demanding that no one in the kingdom offer up prayers to any god other than to the Persian emperor.

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime” (Daniel 6:10). Daniel thus realised the symbolic significance of the Temple. It represented God’s presence upon earth, and the place of access on earth to heaven. Daniel therefore prays *towards* Jerusalem. Likewise today, men must turn to Christ, that their prayers might be heard. There is no other means of access to God.

“(No man) knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (Matthew 11:27). When God the Father draws unbelievers to Himself, He draws them to His Son. He draws men no other way.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father; he hath declared him” (John 1:18). It is only through the mediation of Christ that men learn about the nature of God the Father. When God appeared to the Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Isaiah, it was the Second Person of the Trinity who communicated with them, revealing the Father’s nature ². Christ is the Word, God’s communicating with men.

v29. “... mayest (thou) hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place”. So Solomon asks that the Lord might always hear his prayers, as he prays *towards* the Temple at any time, day or night. It is through the solemn activity taking place within the Temple that God will deign to hear the people’s prayers. Sin creates a barrier between man and God, but in the Temple the priests offer up the slain sacrificial beasts upon the altar. This satisfies God’s justice upon sin. Thus is God’s mercy procured, for in the shedding of blood there is remission of sins, and where sins are forgiven, the barrier to prayer being heard is removed. It was in the Temple that the high priest approached the very presence of God on behalf of all the people, sprinkling the blood of the sin offering upon the mercy seat. Because of this approach, reconciliation between men and God was accomplished, and so the people’s prayers could be heard. All of this anticipates the work of Christ, our great high priest, who offered up His own blood to atone for the sins of the world.

“He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). Right now at the Father’s right hand the Lord Jesus Christ is representing all who believe in Him, pleading the merits of His death on the Cross on the sinner’s behalf. The ultimate sacrifice for sin has now been offered up, the penalty for sin has now been fully paid, a way of access to God has been now opened up. God will now hear men’s prayers for mercy. All this New Testament truth was prefigured by the Old Testament Temple.

v30. “Hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive”. We see here that, although Solomon speaks of praying towards the Temple, he still refers to God as inhabiting heaven. He knows that the Temple is not the confinement of God, but rather the place where He manifests His glory. Likewise, the Lord Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh, God appearing on the earth, but not without the Father still being present in every place on the earth, and still inhabiting the glories of heaven. Note also in this v30 the complete absence of presumption on Solomon’s part. He knows that men are sinful by nature and need God’s mercy, and that God can only be approached, if the Temple sacrifices have first been offered. The Temple, then, is the place of mediation, foreshadowing the work of Christ, the only Mediator between God and men.

v31. “If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house : v32. Then hear thou

in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants”. Here we learn of a further role of the Temple under the Old Testament economy. It was the court of final appeal, the place where God’s perfect justice would be determined. At the Temple, before the altar, the Israelites would take oaths in God’s name in order to establish the truthfulness of their words. This was in effect to say, What I have just spoken is my testimony in the presence of God; may he be my Judge, if I speak not the truth. So the Temple was the place where the Israelites came before God as the arbitrator of their affairs. God is able to men’s judge, for He knows, not only their actions, but also their hearts. Here at the Temple God would uncover those who were harbouring falsehood in their hearts.

“Give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest, for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men” (1 Kings 8:39). The Temple, therefore, represents the presence of God in his office as the supreme Judge of Israel. Likewise the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Temple, is the Judge of all flesh. His presence amongst men separates the wheat from the chaff; it sorts out those who truly love God from those who do not. The Lord Jesus Christ knows the hearts of men. He demonstrated this during His earthly ministry.

“Certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?” (Matthew 9:3-4).

“This child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34). How a man responds to Christ determines whether He will be eternally saved or eternally condemned.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

v32. (Solomon prays) “... Condemn the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justify the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness”. Here at the Temple the holy and the unholy would be separated and made known. All pretence would be exposed. In this the Old Testament temple, being the place of perfect judgement, foreshadows the true temple, the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Judge.

The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:22-23).

“God ... now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31). The risen Christ is returning to this earth as Judge of all, and none will escape His all-seeing eye.

Conclusion

The Old Testament Temple was the place of mediation between man and God, and as such it foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between the holy God and sinners. Christ is the true Temple. He is God dwelling with men. When the Israelites turned towards

the Temple to pray, it was towards the one place where atonement for sin could be made. Likewise, when we pray today, it must be through Christ, who shed His blood to atone for sin.

The Temple was also the place where the Israelites came before God for arbitration and final judgement. Likewise the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Temple of God's presence amongst men, is the supreme Judge of all. He alone alone knows the hearts of men.

So Christ is the true temple, God manifested in the flesh amongst men as our Mediator and our Judge.

ENDNOTES

¹ Adam Clarke on 1 Kings 8:30

² J. C. Ryle on John 1:18