

A row of colorful terraced houses with brick chimneys against a cloudy sky. The houses are in various colors: brick, grey, orange, and white. The chimneys are made of red brick and have multiple flues. The sky is light blue with soft white clouds.

WEEK 4 || *1 KINGS 8:1-9*  
HOME AT LAST?

There's a big difference between a house and a home: somewhere you sleep vs. somewhere you belong. Last week we saw Solomon build the "House of the LORD". But will it be just a building, or a place where God's name really belongs?

For you, what makes your home feel like home? Is it the way you've set things up? The relationships you have there? Something else?

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

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*Read 1 Kings 8:1-11*

1. List the similarities between the completion of the temple here and the previous *completion of the tabernacle*.

What do you think that says about this new temple?

As the temple is finally opened, we get to overhear Solomon's dedicatory prayer. But it's not quite as celebratory as you might expect! We hear how the temple might function as a 'home' for God's name, but also why it might not.

*Read sidebar:  
Covenant consequences for Israel*

In **v31-53**, Solomon makes seven specific requests, each having a similar pattern (read it below, slightly abbreviated):

- 1) v31-32 *When anyone wrongs their neighbour and when they swear the oath before your altar in this temple then hear from heaven and judge between your servants, condemning the guilty and vindicating the innocent*
- 2) v33-34 *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 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors*
- 3) v35-36 *When there is no rain because your people have sinned against you and when they pray toward this place then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people*
- 4) v37-40 *When famines or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew and when, being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts, they spread out their hands toward this temple then hear from heaven and forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you alone know their hearts*

## *Completion of the tabernacle*

Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

**Exodus 40:33-35**

## *Covenant consequences for Israel*

If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you...

The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish... The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder... The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies...

The Lord will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your ancestors. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. You will become a thing of horror, a byword and an object of ridicule among all the peoples where the Lord will drive you.

**Deut 28:15, 22-24, 36-37**



- 5) v41-43 *As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name when they come and pray toward this temple then hear from heaven and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you*
- 6) v44-45 *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 then hear from heaven and uphold their cause*
- 7) v46-51 *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 and if they have a change of heart and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’ and if they turn back to you with all their heart 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 then hear from heaven 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; for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace.*

2. Compare all the ‘*When*’ parts. What do most of them have in common?

Compare them with the *Covenant consequences for Israel*. From Solomon’s prayer, how will Israel go at relating to God? (see v46)

3. Compare all the ‘*And when they*’ parts. What do most of them have in common?

What’s the role of the temple in Israel’s relationship with God?

How about for non-Israelites like us? v41-43

4. Compare all the ‘*Then hear from heaven and*’ parts. What do they have in common?

What’s the only hope for a lasting relationship with God? (compare v28-30)

After this long (and pessimistic!) dedicatory prayer, it's interesting to see how God responds.

*Read 1 Kings 9:1-9*

5. How is the situation actually worse than Solomon feared? v7, 8

Why will this be? v6, 9

What's really needed for the temple to be a 'home' for God's name?

## **FOLLOW THE STORY**

It's true. Israel did forsake their God for other gods (in fact we'll see next week it's Solomon himself who leads them in it!) and so God forsook his temple. In 586BC, God brought the Babylonian army to destroy the temple and take the people into captivity. As Solomon asked in his dedication prayer, God had mercy, the people came back and a new temple was built. But as John's Gospel shows, it didn't change the people's hearts, even by the time of Jesus.

*Read sidebar: Destroy this temple*

6. What's most important to the people in the temple here?

What kind of things tend to be most important to us, in place of God?

How does that show up in your life?

7. When we've put other things above God, where can we go for forgiveness now? (maybe also check out John's first letter, 1:8-2:2)

Is this better or worse than praying toward the old temple? How so?

What can people pray for you out of this session?

## *Destroy this temple*

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

**John 2:13-22**