

Introduction: One of God's infinite attributes is that He is everywhere. But, His Word teaches that He is more intensely present whenever and wherever His people have gathered together in gratitude for all He has done for them; and, with a desire to draw near to Him to know, love and serve Him with all they have (Deuteronomy 6:1-18; Ezekiel 37:21-28). *** All too often however, even His chosen people get drawn away from God's Presence by the distractions of daily living in a world still heavily influenced by God's sworn enemy (1 John 5:19-21). This is why God's people are exhorted to regularly assemble together to encourage one another in the hope they have in Jesus The Savior (Hebrews 10:23-25). *** Today's story shows us that when Solomon constructed the Temple to The Name of The Covenant God of Israel according to His Word, and all the people were there, and everything was in its proper place, The Glory of God filled the Temple in a powerful way. *** In the Gospel passage Jesus teaches in symbolic language that His Body, all people who live by The Faith OF Him, is now the True Temple of God. *** Let's go deeper in God's Word to make these truths part of who we are and how we live.

I. Solomon builds a house for The Name of Israel's Covenant God. (*1 Kings 5:1-5; 8:1-5*)

A. Solomon built according to The Word of Yahweh. (*1 Kings 5:1-5*)

1. Then Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his servants to Solomon because he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father because Hiram loved David all the days. (*Verse 1*)

Hiram: Hiram (noble) was king at the city of Tyre (rock) on the Mediterranean Sea some thirty-five miles northwest of the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. He had provided trees and workers for David when he built his palace in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:11).

Solomon anointed: Solomon was anointed king because he did not qualify to be king by birth. All such kings were anointed king by a prophet of God.

2. Then Solomon sent to Hiram explaining that his father was not able to build a house for The Name of God because of all the blood he shed in warfare until his enemies were subdued; but, now Yahweh, his God, has caused him to rest on every side. (*Verses 2-4*)

Not my father David: From the time Samuel anointed David to replace Saul as king, until the Philistines were subdued and Saul died, David had to kill or be killed. After almost fifteen years of a life of warfare, Yahweh told David that his son would build his Temple (2 Samuel 7:8-13).

Gave me rest: But, Yahweh gave Solomon (peace) rest from warfare on every side.

3. Solomon is speaking to build a House for Yahweh his God according to The Word Yahweh spoke to his father. (*Verse 5*)
God's Word: In addition to His Word though Nathan to David, Yahweh gave him the plans for the Temple (1 Chronicles 28:9-19).

B. The ark of Yahweh is brought up to the Temple in the seventh month with sacrifices. (*1 Kings 8:1-5*)

1. Then Solomon gathers all leaders in Israel to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh. (*Verse 1*)

Gathered: He gathered three groups: elders in Israel, heads of all twelve tribes, and leaders of families within tribes to himself in Jerusalem.

Bring up ark: Now that the Temple is complete, they will bring up the ark of The Presence of The Covenant God from where David left it somewhere below Mt. Zion (parched place) on which the Temple has been built (2 Samuel 6:1-19).

2. Then were assembled to king Solomon all the men of Israel in the month of Ethanim (enduring) at the feast in the seventh month, then all the elders came, and then the priests took up the ark. (*Verses 2-3*)

All men: The nation was united as all Israelites participated in bringing the ark of Yahweh's Presence (Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89) into the Temple.

Seventh month: The last annual feast of Tabernacles, seven days of worship, was in the seventh month (after the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement – Leviticus 23:25-43).

Priests and Levites: Only the Levites could carry the Ark of The Covenant with the poles on their shoulders (Exodus 25:10-16; Deuteronomy 10:8; 31:9, 25).

3. Then the priests and Levites brought up the ark of Yahweh, the tent of meeting, all the vessels of the holy place; and, king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel were before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered. (*Verses 4-5*)

Congregation: The people of Israel congregated before their God.

Sacrifice: They were all offering the sacrifices He had instructed them to offer through Moses.

II. Yahweh fills His House with His Glorious Presence. (*1 Kings 8:6-13 & John 2:19-21*)

A. The ark is placed in the inner sanctuary. (*1 Kings 8:6-9*)

1. Then the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house in the most holy place under the wings of the cherubim, spreading their wings over the place of the ark, above the ark and its poles. (*Verses 6-7*)

Inner sanctuary: The inner sanctuary is literally the 'Holy of Holies'. Only the high priest could enter here, and then only on the Day of Atonement and with a sacrifice (Leviticus 16:1-2; Hebrews 9:6-7). This was where the God of Israel dwelt among His people in all His holiness.

God is present in His Temple

Cherubim: The cherubim are God's worker-servant angels. They guarded the way back to the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). They covered the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 35:22). And they support God's throne in heaven (Ezekiel 10).

2. And the ends of the poles drew out and were seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but were not seen from outside (the Temple), and they are there to 'this day'. (Verse 8)

Poles: The poles were so long that they poked through the veil that separated The Holy Place from The Holy of Holies. 'This day' would be before the Temple was destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC.

3. There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there in Horeb (Sinai), where Yahweh made a covenant with the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt. (Verse 9)

Stone tablets: Originally, there were three items associated with the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The other two were the jar of manna (Exodus 16:33) and Aaron's staff which budded and produced almonds (Numbers 12:1-10; Hebrews 9:3-4).

B. Yahweh fills His Temple with His Glory Cloud. (1 Kings 8:10-13)

1. When the priests came out from the Holy Place and the cloud filled the House of Yahweh, the priests could not stand to minister before the cloud because the Glory of Yahweh filled the House of Yahweh. (Verses 10-11)

Glory cloud: The Glory of The Presence of Yahweh is now present in His Temple and powerfully filling it.

God is present in His Temple

Take Note: If God's chosen priests could not stand before the fullness of The Presence of The Three-times Holy God, we must take care when we gather to worship God. May we have an attitude of grateful humility for what Jesus did and is doing for us. May we be honest about our shortcomings, and may we earnestly pray to surrender them to Him in faith SO He will mature us in the fruit of The Holy Spirit, especially IN His Strong, Life-giving, Life-changing LOVE.

2. Then Solomon said, 'Yahweh has said to dwell in thick darkness (Deuteronomy 4:11; 5:22; Job 22:13; Psalm 18:9; 97:2), I have built an exalted house, a place for You to remain forever. (Verses 12-13)

Dwelling: The word for dwell is 'shakan'. So the term 'shekinah glory' means God's ever dwelling glory with His people whenever and wherever they gather to give Him whole-hearted worship. So, may we seek with all our heart to worship God with His people whenever we are able, because His presence will be with us in His House.

God is present in His Temple

C. Jesus' Body IS The True Temple. (John 2:19-21)

1. Jesus answered and said to them (the Jews opposing Him), 'Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up'. (Verse 19)

Destroy – raise up: Simply put Jesus is saying He can raise up whatever people destroy. But He is saying much more. He is foreshadowing His death on The Cross to pay the penalty for the sins of people AND to raise Himself from death to life to offer His Life to whoever will surrender his or her life to Him to obey Him in humble obedient faith.

2. Then the Jews (opposing Him) said. 'This Temple was forty-six years being built, and will you indeed in three days raise it up?' (Verse 20)

Literal: They are taking Jesus very literally, and assuming He is talking about the glorious Temple that Herod had spared no expense to make magnificent.

3. But, this man (Jesus) was speaking concerning the Temple of His Body. (Verse 21)

Jesus' Body IS Temple: Jesus was emphatically saying that His physical human body, in which all His deity was dwelling, would be raised from the death He suffered on The Cross on behalf of all humanity.

Church: And now after Pentecost, The Church IS The Body of Jesus and God's world-wide Temple made up of all who are IN Jesus by grace through faith.

Jesus' Body is God's Temple

Bottom Line application: May we all find our place in Jesus' Body and seek to fulfill it by grace through faith.

Not just we who are here in person this morning, but all who are watching now, or will watch and or listen at some later time.

Conclusion: When the ark of The Presence of The Covenant God is placed in the inner sanctuary of God's Temple His Presence fills the place in overwhelming Glory. Then the priests could no longer stand before Him, because

God is present in His Temple.

Let us seek Him together so He will make us to be suitable vessels to carry His Glorious LOVE in Jesus to all our neighbors.