

Worship Material
Making space for God to turn up
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 25th August

Begin with opening prayer

Here in this place, we gather to worship God.
For here, our time together is linked to eternity;
our worship renews the holiness within us and around us.
Let us praise the giver of all good things.
To God be all praise!
Amen.

Read 1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11),22-30,41-43

Bible notes

The newly completed Temple (see 2 Chronicles 3-4 for a description of its grandeur) is now consecrated for the exclusive use of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. Until now, Israel's worship was fragmented. The Ark of the Covenant, which contained the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, resided in the city of David, and the Israelites under Solomon continued to worship at the grandest high place of other deities.

This chapter graphically depicts the transition and consecration of a place Israelites recognised as their place of worship. More importantly, God also recognised it as his home and dwelling place. Here gathered the leaders of the ancestral tribes of Jacob's 12 sons (Gen 49:28; Exodus 24:4). The priests who brought the Ark from Jerusalem also came from a long line of Levites, descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother. Here it was not the pageantry or symbolism that mattered; it was following the statutes and stipulations of God on their preparation for handling the sacred things and entering the Holy of Holies.

God was supposed to show up there, on the mercy-seat above the Ark. However, the whole Temple belongs to God, who would not be confined to the Holy of Holies or restricted to the prescribed orders and rituals.

The king deployed God's gift of wisdom and understanding (1 Kings 3.9) to take charge of the ceremony. He acknowledges God's greatness as incomparable (v.23) and his faithfulness both to the covenants and his father, David (vv.23-26). Covenants also entail answers to prayers – those directed towards the Temple. He dedicates three verses to foreigners (vv.41-43); these are not the foreigners who resided in Israel, but those who travel from afar – their prayers should also be answered. Then they will know that the God of Israel is above all other gods.

Prayer

O Holy God, here in this place we worship together,
and we feel your presence bringing joy to our hearts.
May this time together remind us of your promise that
you are with us, always, to the end of time.
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Go out in peace:

may the presence of the God you have experienced here
travel with you into the world and bring peace to others.

Amen.