

BIBLE BRIEFING

“Benediction”

First Kings 8:54-61

1 Kings 8:54 And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

1 Kings 8:55 Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying:

1 Kings 8:56 “Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.

1 Kings 8:57 May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us,

1 Kings 8:58 that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.

1 Kings 8:59 And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require,

1 Kings 8:60 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God; *there is* no other.

1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.”

- being changed to bring change -

Introduction

King David’s passion was to build the Lord a Temple to replace the Tabernacle. God would not allow David to be its builder. Instead of being discouraged, David drew up plans and began to save towards the building of the Temple. He must have shared the plans, and his passion, with his son, Solomon. Solomon took up the task.

Solomon asked for Hiram, the king of Tyre in Lebanon, to provide cedar logs. Then he conscripted 180,000 workers and 3,300 supervisors to gather the stone and timber that would be needed. The work on the Temple was supervised by Hiram, a craftsman from Tyre whose mother was an Israelite.

At its completion, the Ark of the Covenant was moved from the Tabernacle to the Temple amid a ceremony of worship led by Solomon. When the Ark was installed in the Holy of Holies, the cloud of God's presence filled the place so much that the priests could not continue their duties!

Solomon presented the Temple to the Lord, then blessed the assembly. The Temple was then officially dedicated, with a ceremony involving thousands of burnt offerings, followed by a feast lasting two-weeks.

Solomon's blessing upon God's people is especially precious. Though spoken by the king, the words indicate the ways God wants to bless His people.

Do you want to be blessed? Then stay in a position to be blessed; and see God's passion to bless.

Stay in a position to be blessed. Solomon knelt; he stood; he walked.

He knelt in verse fifty-four:

1 Kings 8:54 And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

- being changed to bring change -

Kneeling indicates submission. The first 'step' in being blessed is to kneel in submission. It can be physical; but it must be spiritual. You must maintain a heart-position of submission to the will and the ways of God.

1. God's will is often not your will. He is teaching you spiritual lessons; wanting to create spiritual depth and stamina. Thus you submit to His will when it is contrary to your own.
2. God's ways are certainly not your ways! The people and the places and the circumstances He chooses to bring into your life are by His divine design – seeing the end of the matter.

Outstretched **hands spread up to heaven** take submission one step further. They indicate you will receive and grasp and carry whatever God hands you from heaven.

Do you feel burdened? What you see as your burden is probably what God has given you to learn how to carry. Remember that Jesus said He would be your yokefellow; that He would carry your burdens; that His burdens were light.

Solomon stood:

1 Kings 8:55 Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying:

He became a voice for the Lord; he was a conduit through which God could speak to others. The person who rises from his knees, having received whatever the Lord gave him, speaks to others of God's grace and compassion and mercy and love.

Solomon walked:

1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."

Walking is symbolic of your day-to-day, moment-by-moment experience of life on earth. If you are a believer, it is a walk you can take with God. Whatever you encounter; whoever you encounter; God's **statutes** and **commandments** can guide you safely and successfully along.

Babies learn to crawl; then stand; then walk. So do we – as believers – only we never stop crawling!

More knee-time is needed. You might spend more knee-time if you understood God's passion to bless you. The remainder of the verses describe what God wants for you.

We take this perspective seriously. We sing a song in our worship,

Righteousness, righteousness is what I long for
Righteousness is what I need

Righteousness is what You want for me

It was originally written, righteousness is what You want *from* me. I understand the pursuit of godliness; and godly discipline. But we don't portray God as standing over you, demanding that you get it together!

What does God want for you?

1 Kings 8:56 "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.

God wants for you to *rest according to all that He promised*. Whatever it is that is stirring you, keeping you agitated, there's a promise for it in God's Word.

The thing you must realize, though, is that God is more interested in your spiritual growth and development than in the material and physical dilemmas that agitate you. Although He could easily calm the storm around you, He wants you calm in the midst of the storm.

1 Kings 8:57 May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us,

God wants for you to experience His presence. You can; but it must be by faith. You must believe, based on the certain truth of God's Word, that He will never, ever, not ever, leave you or forsake you.

It's not a matter for your feelings. You may not feel God's presence; or you may feel He has left you. But often that is because you do not want to be calm in the midst of the storm! You can be so busy trying to row out of the storm that you miss the experience of God's presence in it and through it.

1 Kings 8:58 that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.

Notice carefully the order of what was said: God *inclines our hearts to Himself*, *then* these other things can occur. In other words, this reveals what God wants *for* you.

How does someone incline your heart to themselves? You can't explain it apart from a sense of the romantic. God does things; and He says things; that are romantic in order to incline your heart towards Him.

We talked about some of those things last week, when we pointed out the Lord's extravagance in things like creation. God is always seeking to get your attention.

It is precisely because your heart is inclined towards Him, *by Him*, that you want to do these other things: *to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.*

1 Kings 8:59 And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require,

How do you read that? Do you read it as if you are somehow hoping God will hear you?

We've already established that the context is God romancing you; so it cannot be true that you must only go through life hoping He hears you.

- being changed to bring change -

In fact, the understanding I have of this is that God delights to hear your voice, your words. He can replay them anytime He wants and He does so – just to hear you!

He hears; and He responds by providing His grace to *maintain* your *cause* – whatever it is. *As each day may require* reminds you to take one day at a time, believing God's grace is sufficient in it no matter what comes along.

1 Kings 8:60 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God; *there is no other.*

God makes Himself known through you. Specifically, He makes His love for *all the peoples of the earth* known through you, as you reveal His love for you.

Think of your testimony and witness for Christ. Would someone conclude that there are a lot of things they must do **for** God?

Or would they see that there are unlimited blessings to be had **from** God?

Conclusion

I titled the message, *Benedictionary*. It's a real word, meaning a collected series of benedictions. A benediction is a blessing.

God wants to bless you. He wants your life to be a collected series of His benedictions. You are His benedictionary.



