



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1886 ~ Solomon's Temple Dedicated.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

In today's *Bible Adventure*, Solomon, the king of Israel, completed the building of a magnificent Temple of God, before dedicating it to God for worship and service.

In building the temple, Solomon organised a huge workforce overseen by supervisors, for preparing the stones and timber that would be assembled on Mount Moriah, just outside Jerusalem. The blocks of stone were cut to shape and size in the mountains and then transported to the temple site. Needed valuable cedar timber was cut in the forests of Lebanon, shipped down the coast and unloaded, before being carted up to the temple site.

Everything was pre-prepared to size and requirements away from the temple site. When assembled on site, each item was put together like a jigsaw puzzle and without the need for hammering or sawing. This arrangement required a great deal of advance planning and took years to organise at the temple site in readiness for assembly.

When the temple was all finished and ready for dedication to God, King Solomon called for the elders of Israel, leaders of the tribes and chief fathers of Israel, to gather in Jerusalem for the moving of God's holy Ark of the Covenant from its designated tent into the Holy of Holies section of the new temple. This occurred one week before the annual Jewish feast of Tabernacles, where the people lived in temporary shelters outside their homes for seven days.

This Tabernacles feast was the last of seven feasts that God had told Moses to teach the people to observe each year. The harvest was completed and the people rejoiced. They remembered God's past goodness and provision for their ancestors during their wilderness journeys, and thanked God for His everlasting care for them by providing them with a good harvest.

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The dedication of Solomon's temple is recorded in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings, Chapter 8, and in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles, chapters 5 to 7. After the priests and Levites had moved the Ark of the Covenant into its resting place in the Holy of Holies and were leaving the temple, the temple was suddenly filled with a cloud that shone with a dazzling light that represented the Lord's presence. The priests no longer could continue their worship service.

King Solomon prayed to the Lord, and then he turned and blessed the people. He prayed to God again, this time kneeling down on a raised platform in the courtyard, and said: "Lord God of Israel, in all heaven and earth there is no god like you. You keep your covenant with your people and show them your love when they live in wholehearted obedience to you." He cited possible situations where the people and king had sinned and God had punished them in the past. But then Solomon asked God to restore the rain if He ever withheld it from the land because of the people's future sins, and that He would do this after they repented and turned back to Him.

Following worship and praise to God, there were many animal sacrifices made, with some being for sin offerings and others for fellowship offerings, which the people could eat. After the closing ceremony for the Feast of Tabernacles, Solomon sent the people back home the following day. They were very happy about all the blessings that the Lord had given them as His special people Israel, and to David and Solomon.

What does all this mean for Christians living today? The focus of Solomon's prayer was centred on the temple that he was, at the time, dedicating. Solomon had no thought that the infinite God of the universe was actually going to live in this little 'house' Solomon had built for Him. God's real dwelling was and still is in heaven. What God had graciously agreed to do was to let His Name reside there in the temple. God was going to be present in the temple in a special way so that sinful men and women could approach Him through the atoning sacrifices they offered at His altar.

The heartfelt concern of Solomon's prayer was his request that God, in the new temple, would continue to show His people the same forgiving love and grace that He had shown them right from the beginning. Solomon asked God for mercy for the Israelites in the event that various afflictions fell upon them as the result of future sin.

Solomon in his wisdom recognised that even though God has forgiven a person, it may still be necessary to discipline that person. For this reason, Solomon asked God to deal with each sinner according to His justice and wisdom; as only God knows a person's heart. Sin is **not** primarily a matter of 'breaking a rule.' It is a matter of sinning against God in one's own heart.

At the conclusion of his prayer, Solomon praised God for giving rest to His people in the Land of Canaan, just as He had promised to do. The rest that Israel experienced at that time was neither final nor complete, however. Only during Solomon's reign did that rest and political security, peace, prosperity and harmony remain. God's true rest for His people didn't arrive until Jesus Christ, God's Son, came to earth to reconcile people's hearts with God. Since Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on behalf of the world's sin, it's only through Him that we can experience lasting rest and reconciliation with God and other people. Many people fail to enter God's rest for one reason only: their unbelief in the need to first accept and receive Jesus' forgiveness and salvation if they wish to enter into God's kingdom of heaven. As a result, such people continue to disobey their conscience and live on in their sin.

When people harden their hearts and persist in sin, they cut themselves off from God's rest and eternal salvation. Active faith and obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance and instructions as per the Bible's teachings, are required if we're to enter into God's rest. The dedication of Solomon's temple was probably the highest point of honour to God that Israel reached nationally throughout its entire history, right down to the present-day. After the temple's place in society was established as God's means to provide the sinful Israelites with a way to meet Him in His holy presence, Israel sadly turned away and went into a slow decline for the rest of Solomon's life.

Because God the Father, God the Son and the God the Holy Spirit existed from eternity past and will live for all eternity in the future, how does this Trinity work? They have enjoyed a loving, intimate relationship as one with each other, and shared their perfect Godhead in glory, agreement and adoration with one another joyfully.

God the Father is not some abstract quality that we live fearfully under. No, God the Father has a holy, loving Father's heart that desires to create people in His own image and fellowship with these people. This view opposes a belief found in two other single-god worshipping religions that deny the existence of the Trinity. They believe in a solitary god who couldn't be eternally loving, as there was no one else to love. Everything in Christianity is different when it comes to the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Here is a Triune God who isn't lonely, but who has been loving the Son in the Spirit for all eternity and vice versa. Loving others isn't strange for the Triune God, but it is at the core of who He is.

It's He from His heart of goodness who sustains a world that has rejected Him and takes care of people, even when they persist in doing evil. Because the first people God made in the Garden of Eden fell into sin, God provided a global rescue plan that took 4,000 years to establish on earth.

The books in the Bible were written by 40 authors over 1,600 years; they record the history of the world from when it was made until the time God's rescue plan was implemented and the prophecies of final world events were revealed. Across the whole Bible, nearly one third of the verses are about the future from the time that the author was writing. These prophecies revealed a coming Messiah or Saviour and were given so that the people could recognize Jesus Christ when they saw His good deeds. Christ, who was both fully God and fully man, came to earth to rescue whoever understood that they could never pay back God for their sins or cleanse their own hearts from sin. They couldn't earn favour with God or admittance to heaven by their own deeds and desires.

God the Father chose the nation of Israel to be His own special people, and it was through the Israelite families that God sent the Messiah, Jesus. Throughout history, God preserved the Israelite nation, despite their turning away from God and subsequent oppression, slavery and threats to their very existence. Until the Messiah came, God gave the Israelite people requirements about using animal sacrifice that shed blood for covering the Israelites' sins. This was what Solomon's temple was all about. But the Israelites did not remain faithful to worshipping God alone or desiring to be in His presence. After 300 years, God was so displeased with the Israelites worshipping other gods, that He allowed a foreign country to conquer Jerusalem and tragically destroy Solomon's magnificent temple and His meeting place with the people. The most important Israelites were then taken into captivity to Babylon for 70 years.

While exiled in Babylon, God gave a faithful Israelite slave, Daniel, visions of the future that he didn't understand. God then sent the angel Gabriel to explain their meaning to him. In summary, there would be 70 weeks of weeks (or 490 Biblical years of 360 days) divided into 7 weeks by 7 (or 49 Biblical years) for rebuilding Jerusalem, followed by 62 weeks by 7 (or 434 Biblical years) when Jesus Christ would enter Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate on Palm Sunday and present Himself to Israel's leaders as their promised Messiah King; within days after that, He was killed.

Historians tell us that on 14 March 445 BC, King Artaxerxes of Persia made a decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The number of days between then and 6 April 32 AD, are 173,880 days (i.e.  $69 \times 7 \times 360$ ). This was the only occasion Jesus presented Himself to the Israelites as their king. Mathematicians have worked out that the number of these days Jesus' appearance coincided with the prophesied time in Daniel's vision of His arrival to the very day!

Anyone hoping to claim messiahship had to arrive at that specified time. No one showing up years before or years after that time can claim to be the Messiah; and certainly no one today or anyone in the future can. Have you noticed that there are still 7 years outstanding to complete the number of 490 Biblical years?

The first time that Jesus came to earth, He came as a suffering Servant; but He promises that He will return and next time, as a conquering king. He also promised in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, Chapter 5, Verse 9, that He would protect all those who were trusting and relying on Him to escape from God's righteous wrath poured out on the earth during those final 7 years.

Just as Jesus the Messiah or Christ lovingly gave Himself up to a humiliating death on a Roman cross to redeem all people who are not only prepared to trust His finished work for sin but also surrender their core self-centredness to Jesus as Saviour out of love to Him. We must willingly consent to be crucified with Christ, so we die with Him and rise with Him to a newness of godly life. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians, Chapter 2, verse 20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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