

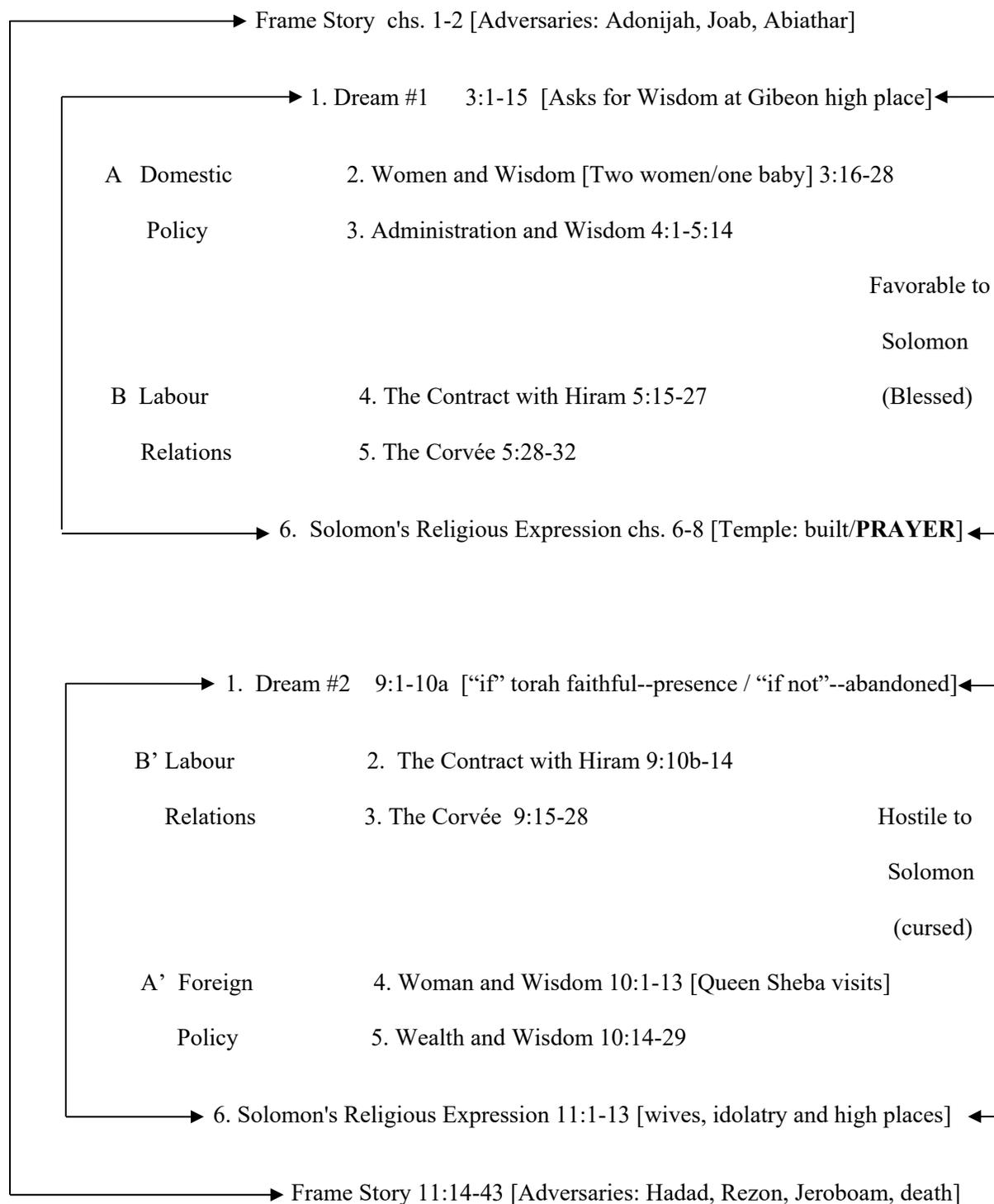
The Temple Prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 8:1-9:9)

By Ted Hildebrandt

The Temple Prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8 and the divine response in 1 Kings 9 create one of the longest and most fascinating prayer narratives in the Old Testament. There are several questions we will seek to explore in this presentation paper. How does this prayer fit into the 1 Kings 1-11 narrative? What may be learned from ancient Near Eastern parallels concerning kings building and dedicating temples? What kinds of intertextual influences have impacted the shape of this prayer? How is one to understand the elusive character of Solomon from his prayer? How are the suppliants portrayed in the prayer? What do the seven Prayer Occasions (8:31-51) reveal about the types of situations which prompt prayer? How is God portrayed in this prayer?

How does Solomon's Temple Prayer fit into the literary structure of 1 Kings 1-11?

In order to understand the framework of the Solomonic narrative of 1 Kings 1-11 in which the temple prayer is set, the literary structure should be noted before jumping into the prayer itself. The following is a useful chiastic structural diagram giving an overview of this narrative (adapted from Parker, 43; Williams, 66).



Jobling wisely cautions against seeing this text as a simple bifurcation with the first unit (1 Kgs 2-8) being positive and the last section (1 Kgs 9-11) being negative (Jobling, 67).

Surely the effusive praise of Solomon by the Queen of Sheba in chapter 10 details the

blessings manifest in Solomon's wise and prosperous rule. On the other hand, the negative description of Solomon's conscription of his labor force under the iron fist of Adoniram (1 Kgs 5:13-15) has an ironic negative twist when read in light of Adoniram's demise in 1 Kings 12:18. Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter occurs both in the "blessed" section (3:1) and also in the "cursed" section (11:1). Hays exposes the ironic and paradoxical twists in the subtleties of the Solomonic narrative, and properly warns against a simple bifurcated "Solomon under blessing" versus "Solomon under curse" approach (Hays, 171).

A closer five-fold chiasmic structure can be used to trace the particular narrative within which Solomon's Temple Prayer is situated. These sections are often triggered by the choreographic movements of Solomon himself (8:14, 22, 54f.).

A. People summoned to sacrifices and cultic installation of the ark + Theophany (1 Kgs 8:1-13)

B. Solomon blesses the people and praises the Lord (1 Kgs 8:14-21)

C. Solomon's Temple Prayer (1 Kgs 8:22-53)

Opening (8:22-30)

Seven Prayer Occasions (8:31-51)

Closing (8:52-53)

B.' Solomon blesses the people and praises the Lord (1 Kgs 8:54-61)

A.' Sacrifices and Cultic activity and summoned people dismissed + Theophany (1 Kgs 8:62-9:9)

How does the prayer fit with ANE Temple Building/Prayer Context?

Victor Hurowitz in his book *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings* has offered an

important ANE background for temple building and dedication that can help us better understand the movements and expectations found in Solomon's Temple Prayer. After surveying Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian and NW Semitic parallels to temple/palace building projects, Hurowitz lays out the following standardized literary form which closely parallels the Solomonic temple narrative in 1 Kings 5-9: (1) a reason to build or restore a temple/palace along with the command from or consent of the gods to engage the project (cf. 1 Kgs 5:17-19); (2) materially preparing for the building (acquisition of materials, drafting workers, laying the foundation; cf. 1 Kgs 5:20-32); (3) a description of the process of construction of the building and its furnishings (cf. 1 Kgs 6:1-7:51); (4) dedication of the temple/palace with the appropriate festivities and rituals (1 Kgs 8:1-11, 62-66); (5) a prayer or blessing "meant to assure a good future for the building and builder" (1 Kgs 8:12-61); and (6) an optional addition of blessings and curses for those rebuilding or damaging the temple/palace in the future (1 Kgs 9:1-9) (Hurowitz, 64, 109-110, 311). He argues for a genre that he labels as a "building account" based on common language and themes (Hurowitz, 312). 1 Kings 5-9 exemplifies this common literary structure found in the description of ancient Near East temple building projects.

One can illustrate this pattern in the Sumerian Gudea cylinders from which Hurowitz concludes, "It is not difficult to see the great similarity between the structure of the Gudea cylinders and the structure of the story about building the Temple in Jerusalem by Solomon as found in 1 Kgs 5:15-9:25" (Hurowitz, 56; cf. Averbeck, COS, 2:418-33). He then cites similar literary patterns from the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser I, Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon as well as similar structures in Neo-Babylonian times and

at Ugarit. Of interest is Sargon II of Assyria who sets about temple-building and labels himself as “the wise king,” thereby associating wisdom with building (Hurowitz, 71-73; cf. Prov 8-9).

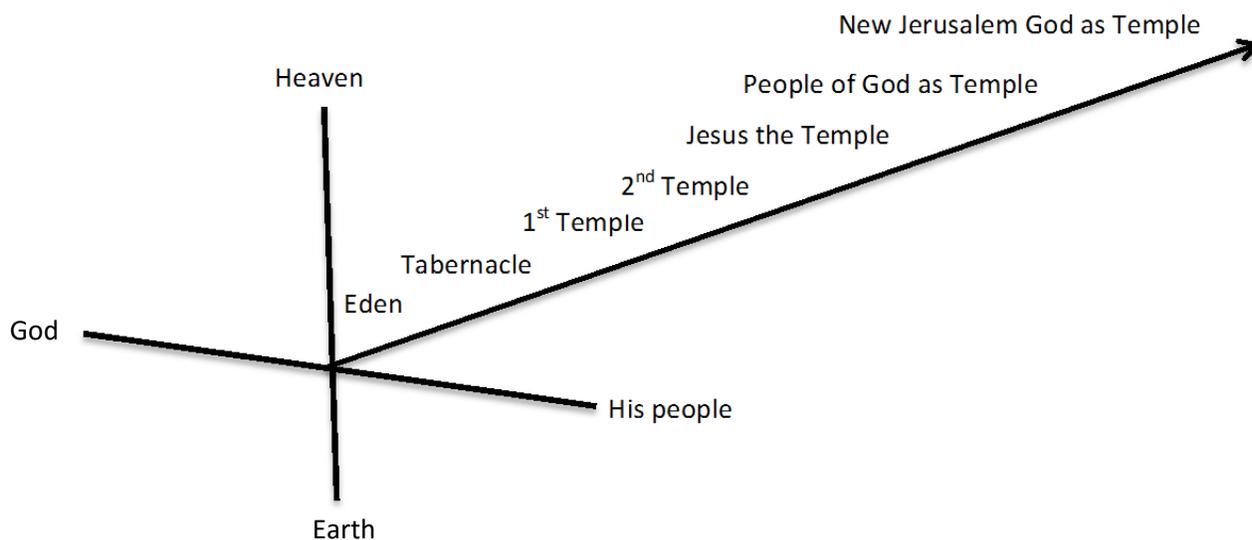
Michael Hundley’s superb work, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*, also provides a necessary architectural and theoretical framework for understanding temple narratives. He writes: “In a dangerous and volatile world, the ancient Near Eastern temple was the primary point of intersection between human and divine. As a principal means of establishing security in an otherwise insecure world, it situated the deity in the midst of human habitation, so that humanity might offer service and gifts in exchange for divine protection and prosperity” (Hundley, 3).

Ritual also plays an important role in anchoring the ancient Near Eastern gods to their statues and to earth. Rituals such as graduation ceremonies pass the participant from one realm into another. “Similarly, in the ancient Near East, ritual activities in an installation ritual (in addition to being thought of as actually affecting divine presence) mark the transition from the crafting of the divine statue to its taking up its role as god on earth, without which the transition would be considered either incomplete or uncertain” (Hundley, 366). Ritual played a key role in ceremonial movement of the ark, which provided continuity between the old tabernacle and the dedication of Solomon’s new temple. The installation of the ark provides the backdrop for Solomon’s Temple Prayer (cf. ceremony of the brick).

Temple in its Canonical Context

Similarly Beale points out that, in the *Enuma Elish* 6.51-58, Ea “created the king,

for the mainten[ance of the temples]” (Beale, 90). Beale, along with John Walton, has done much to show the cosmic Edenic connections to the tabernacle and temple. The temple ultimately binds heaven and earth vertically and God with his people horizontally (Gen. 2-3; Walton, 147-51, 167). The temple goes through several transformations from Eden to the literal temple, to Jesus who refers to his body as temple (Jn 2:19-21, cf. Perrin), to Paul who references the people of God as temple (1 Cor 6:19; 3:16f.; 2 Cor 6:16) and to the eschatological universal expansion in Revelation 21:22 where “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (cf. Mathewson, Beale). Steven Bryan has demonstrated the pre-70 AD Jewish expectation was that the Messiah would be a builder of the Temple (citing 4QForilegium, the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, as well as the “Herodian messianism implicit” in Josephus’s descriptions of the construction of the temple, Bryan 192).



What intertextual influences have shaped this prayer?

Other biblical texts support an intertextual background to this temple intercessory prayer. Echoes may be heard from the dedication of the tabernacle in Exodus 32-40 (especially 40)/Leviticus 8-9 as well as from the post-exilic inauguration of the Second Temple in Ezra 1-6 (cf. Haggai). While much of 2 Chronicles 6 is drawn word for word from 1 Kings 8 including the seven Prayer Occasions yet 2 Chronicles 6:41-42 swaps out 1 Kings 8:51-53 in favor of Psalm 132:8-10. Parallels with David's bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, and the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 6-7) are also featured in Solomon's own prayer narrative. They share the installing the ark, many sacrifices, and king's leadership with a focus on Jerusalem (Long, 97; cf. Kang 241). One significant difference, however, is the glory cloud filling the temple symbolizing the Lord's entrance, as the ark is installed in 1 Kings 8:10-13. This is not found in the Davidic installation ceremony in 2 Samuel 6. The repeated citations of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7) punctuate Solomon's prayer and its context (1 Kgs 8:20, 25; 9:5) and as Brettler has insightfully noted 2 Samuel 7 is blended with Deuteronomy 12:11 "the place which the Lord your God will choose to establish his name" which refers to the "chosen" place (cf. 1 Kgs 8:44, 48 "chosen city"). This "chosen place" (Deut 12) which is subordinated to the choosing of David (1 Kgs 8:16) is totally absent from the original Davidic Covenant (Brettler, 20f). The theme of the incomparability of God is found in David's prayer (2 Sam 7:22) and echoed in the 1 Kgs 8:23 opening, and 8:60 close (cf. 9:6 warning against idolatry).

Another set of texts that clearly provide a background for Solomon's Temple Prayer are the covenant curses in Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26 and Amos 4:6ff. The curses are clearly reflected in several of Solomon's seven Prayer Occasions (#2 defeat [Deut 28:25]; #3 drought [Deut 28:23f.]; #4 calamity [Deut 28:22, 42, 52ff.], and #7 exile [Deut 28:36, 64]). The phrase "ark of the covenant of the Lord" (1 Kgs 8:1, 6) is not found anywhere in the Pentateuch except in the book of Deuteronomy (10:8; 31:9, 25, 26). It occurs nowhere in the prophets or psalms but does occur in Jeremiah (3:16). Even the rhetorical question of disdain (1 Kgs 9:8) is echoed in Deuteronomy 29:24--"All the nations will ask: 'Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?'" One of the most interesting intertextual references comes from the words "iron-smelting furnace" as a descriptor of Egypt (1 Kgs 8:51). It is found elsewhere only in Deuteronomy 4:20 and Jeremiah 11:4. The connection with Deuteronomy fits the setting of the Feast of Sukkot, although many see these connections as from the hand of the Deuteronomists Dtr1 and Dtr2.

Brettler also sees the influence of Deuteronomy 4:29 reflected in "when you seek him [YHWH] with all of your heart and soul" which he sees reflected in a similar idiom in 1 Kings 8:48. The theme of repentance prominent in Deuteronomy 4:25-31 also fits with Prayer Occasion #7 (8:47f. cf. also Ps. 106:6, Brettler, 30). Levenson provides further details aligning the texts of Deuteronomy 4:39//1 Kings 8:23; Deut. 29:21 and 30:1//1 Kgs 8:41; Deut 4:20//1 Kgs 8:51; Deut 4:7//1 Kgs 8:52, and Deut 4:20//1 Kgs 8:51 (Levenson, 161f). Levenson concludes that 1 Kgs 8:23-53 "most closely resembles, Deut 4:1-40" (Levenson, 162).

There are also remarkable echoes in diction and themes found in Jeremiah. The title, “Lord, God of Israel” is found in 1 Kings 8:15, 17, 20, 23, 25 and in Jeremiah 11:3; 13:12; 21:4, but is totally absent in Deuteronomy. “Mouth” and “hands” as anthropomorphic synecdoches for what God had promised (“mouth”) and what he had fulfilled (“hand”) in Solomon’s day is remarkably parallel to Jeremiah 44:25. “Hand” and “mouth” synecdoches are never combined in this manner in Deuteronomy. The final verse of the divine response to Solomon’s Temple Prayer (9:9) ends with a parallel not found in Deuteronomy but in Jeremiah 32:23 (אָתְּ כָּל־הַרְעָעָה הַזֹּאת) “So you brought all this disaster upon them.”

Who is Solomon the Suppliant?

After reading 1 Kings 1-11 one is struck with how absent Solomon is from the narrative (contra David in 1 & 2 Samuel; Psalm 51, et al). For example, in the succession narrative in 1 Kings 1-2, Walsh correctly points out that it is Nathan and Bathsheba, not Solomon, who are concerned over Adonijah's succession plot at En Rogel. The narrative proceeds with dialogues between Nathan, Bathsheba and David, while Solomon, the “central figure remains off stage” (Walsh, 472). In contrast, Walsh keenly observes that in this same narrative we find out many details about Adonijah, including his mother's name, a physical description of his being handsome, his primacy due to birth order after Absalom, and even David's permissive manner of rearing him (1 Kgs 1:6, Walsh, 473). Yet, we look in vain to find any such detailed communication about Solomon.

We seem to discover who Solomon is from others. Under divine direction, Nathan

nick-named Solomon “Jedidiah” (“Loved by the Lord,” 2 Sam 12:25). We learn more about Solomon from the hyperbolic accolades of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10) and Hiram’s panegyric response (2 Chron 2:12-16) than from his own self-reporting. When his persona is exposed to view it is often in the context of his official capacities: distributing justice for the two women and a baby (1 Kgs 3), the narrator’s grocery listing of his wisdom accomplishments (1 Kgs 4:29ff), or his organizational and bureaucratic achievements (1 Kgs 5). These brief officialese-type insights into Solomon’s identity stand dwarfed by the long chapters extensively detailing the preparations and building of the temple and the royal palace (1 Kgs 6-7; 9:10ff.). Balentine, in his work *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible*, suggests an entry point into understanding Solomon: “Biblical prayer is but one of the means afforded in Hebrew narrative for building character portraits” (Balentine, 49).

So who is Solomon? First and foremost Solomon in this prayer narrative is portrayed as the son of David (8:15, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25; cf. 9:4). This is apparent in his actions which recapitulate the moving of the ark accompanied by many sacrifices just as his father had done earlier (2 Sam 6; 1 Kgs 8:5; Long, 97). In the opening of the prayer the text portrays Solomon as a witness to the fulfillment of what God had promised to his father (8:24, 25, 26). This whole prayer narrative not only repeatedly recalls the Davidic covenant and Solomon’s role in its fulfillment that has already occurred (8:15, 19, 20, 24, 25; 9:5) but also Solomon’s role as the one determining its future direction depending on how he would meet the conditions of the covenant that had not yet happened (8:23, 25-26; 9:6). Reminiscent of the prayer of his father, David Solomon opens his prayer “there

is no God like you” (8:23, 60; cf. 2 Sam 7:22). Ironically, when the celebration is finally completed and the huge assembly is dismissed, the chapter ends not with a reference to Solomon by name, but rather to David: “They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and his people Israel” (8:66). After all the building and dedicatory celebration Solomon still seems to stand in his father’s shadow even in the divine response (1 Kgs 9:4-5).

Secondly, it is as David’s son that Solomon builds the temple that his father was not allowed to build (8:19, cf. 1 Chr 22:8f.). In the “Protocol of Legitimation” (8:15-21, cf. DeVries, 125) there is a string of first person references where Solomon casts himself as the temple-builder and moves out from under his father’s shadow (8:20f.). In Solomon’s brief “Prayer of the Presence” (8:12-13), he celebrates the glory cloud of God descending and filling the temple and says with apparent satisfaction, “I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever.” Note that he asserts it is a place for “you” to dwell (i.e. presence). “The Name,” as will be so frequently found elsewhere in this prayer narrative, should not be restricted to a distant transcendence (8:16-19, 29, 41-44, 48; 9:3; Richter, 29; contra Mettinger, 48). So the narrative casts Solomon as the temple-building son of David.

Furthermore, in the prayer itself he twice juxtaposes his work of building the temple with God’s choosing of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:44, 48). Indeed, in each of the seven Prayer Occasions Solomon features the centrality of the temple he has built as the conduit linking heaven and earth. It was toward that earthly temple the people were directed to pray to God who would hear in heaven (8:29, 31, 33, 35, 38, 42, 44, 48). When

summarizing Solomon's achievements of "all he desired to do," the narrator set it in reference to the buildings he had constructed (temple/palace; 9:1). Even God, in the divine response, acknowledges Solomon's role in building the temple: "I have consecrated this temple which you have built" (9:3). He surpassed his father in that he was the one who built the temple which his father could not (8:19).

In the final B' "blessing/praise" section (8:56-61) Solomon casts his fulfillment in veiled comparisons to Moses, who could not enter the land, and Joshua who gave the people rest (8:56). He parallels that leadership shift with the transition from David, who could not build the temple, to himself who built the temple, thereby completing his father's unfulfilled wishes.

Within the broader scope of redemptive history Solomon construes his achievement as the completion of the whole movement from the exodus and the ark's journey to its final resting place in the temple he had built. He describes that fulfillment in the words and phrases typical of the text of Joshua (8:56-61). References to the exodus also regularly punctuate this narrative's cultic opening (8:9) and the initial and final blessing/praise sections (8:16, 21, 51, 53). There is a movement from Moses (8:9) to David (8:15-26) and then a returning to Moses in the conclusion (8:53) followed by a Moses/Joshua//David/Solomon comparison in the final B' "blessing/praise" section (8:56-61). The divine response like the steady beat of a drum revisits the promise already fulfilled to David (9:4f.) and the conditional future not yet established by David's son, Solomon, and his descendants (9:6-9)

The seven Prayer Occasions (8:31-51) at the heart of this lengthy prayer seem to envision Solomon's intercessory understanding of the types of scenarios for which his people would need divine assistance and may also reflect situations that were of concern to him as king. Notice that Prayer Occasions #2 (defeat), #4 (siege), #6 (war) and #7 (exile) all involve military conflict that may have threatened Solomon as a king of peace and rest. Prayer Occasion #3 focuses on drought and #4 on blight, locusts, grasshoppers and other natural calamities, both of which were situations beyond his control as king and yet of great concern to his people.

Solomon humbly identifies himself as the servant of the Lord. While applying the title "servant" to David (8:24, 25, 26), the people (8:33, 34, 35, 44, 52), and Moses (8:53, 56) he also identifies himself as God's servant (8:28, 28, 30, 52). Solomon's humility is seen not only in his Gibeon request (1 Kgs 3) but also more remarkably in the statement of divine transcendence in 8:27 where he exclaims, "Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built." He seems to be keenly aware that the "magnificent temple I have built" (8:15) is totally incapable of rising to the grandeur of its divine resident. Indeed, the Queen of Sheba and Hiram rave about Solomon's brilliance and abilities, yet Solomon himself seems to follow the sage advice of the proverb: "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth" (Prov 27:2).

The parallel with Jesus is amazing as he too identified himself as the son of David (Mat 22:42-45; cf. Mat 1:1). Similarly, Jesus in the beginning of his ministry is described as the temple builder who would build the temple in three days after it was destroyed (Jn

2:19). Even in his final days Jesus' enemies condemned him as one who claimed he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days (Mat 26:61). However, the temple he spoke of was the temple of his body (Jn 2:21f., cf. Perrin).

Solomon, however, who identifies himself as the temple/palace builder, tragically uses his gifts to go in the opposite direction and builds temples to foreign gods on the hill east of Jerusalem (11:7). Even after being warned in the divine response to his prayer (9:4-9), Solomon still turns his back and does not follow in the steps of his father David-- as the final drum beat of the Davidic Covenant resonates with the announcement of Solomon's doom (11:6; cf. 11:12-13).

What were the 7 Prayer Occasions and Suppliants Expectations (1 Kgs 8:31-51)?

<p>Occasion #1: Altar Oath (1 Kgs 8:31-32)</p> <p>1) -Situation: When a man wrongs his neighbor And takes an oath</p> <p>2) Rationale:</p> <p>3) Human Response: Oath Direction: before your altar in this temple [in]</p> <p>4) Call to hear: then hear Div. Location: from heaven</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Action/Response: Judge between your servants Condemning the guilty and bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declare the innocent not guilty, and so establish his innocence.</p>	<p>Occasion #2: Defeat (1 Kgs 8:33-34)</p> <p>1) -Situation: When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy</p> <p>2) Rationale/cause: because they have sinned against you</p> <p>3) Human Response: When they turn back to you and confess your name praying and make supplication to you Prayer Direction: to you in this temple</p> <p>4) Call to hear: then hear Div. Location: from heaven</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Action/Response: Forgive the sin of your people Israel Bring them back</p> <p>6) Location: to the land you gave to their fathers. [outside→ in]</p>
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<p>Occasion #3: Drought (1 Kgs 8:35-36)</p> <p>1) -Situation: When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain</p> <p>2) Rationale: because your people have sinned against you</p> <p>3) Human Response: Confess your name Turn from their sin Rationale: Because you have afflicted them Prayer Direction: When they pray toward this place</p> <p>4) Call to hear: then hear Div. Location: from heaven</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Response/Action: Forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel Teach them the right way to live Send rain</p> <p>6) Location: on the land you gave to your people for an inheritance [in]</p>	<p>Occasion #4: Disaster or disease (1 Kgs 8:37-40)</p> <p>1) -Situation: When famine or plague come to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come</p> <p>2) Rationale: Aware of the afflictions of their hearts</p> <p>3) Human Response: When a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel Spreading out his hands</p> <p>Prayer Direction: toward this temple</p> <p>4) Call to hear: then hear Div. Location: from heaven your dwelling place</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Response/Action: Forgive and act; Deal with each man according to all he does Rationale: since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men) so that they will fear you all the time they live</p> <p>6) Location: in the land you gave our fathers [in]</p>
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<p>Occasion #5: Foreigner (1 Kgs 8:41-43)</p> <p>1) +Situation: Identification: As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel Location: but has come from a distant land</p> <p>2) Rationale: Because of your name For men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm</p> <p>3) Human Response: When he comes and prays Prayer Direction: a) toward this temple</p> <p>4) Call to hear: Then hear Div. Location: from heaven, your dwelling place,</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Response: Do whatever the foreigner asks of you Rationale: so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name And fear you as do your own people Israel And know that this temple bears your name</p> <p>6) Location: this house</p>	<p>Occasion #6: War (1 Kgs 8:44-45)</p> <p>1) -Situation: When your people go to war against their enemies</p> <p>2) Rationale: wherever you send them</p> <p>3) Human Response: when they pray to the Lord Prayer Direction: a) Toward the city you have chosen b) and the temple I have built for your Name</p> <p>4) Call to hear: then hear Div. Location: from heaven their prayer and their plea</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Response: uphold their cause</p> <p>6) Location: [outside]</p>
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<p>Occasion #7: Exile (1 Kgs 8:46-51)</p> <p>1) -Rationale: When they sin against you –for there is no one who does not sin</p> <p>2) -Situation: And you become angry with them And give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive — exile Location: to his own land far away or near</p> <p>3) Human Response: If they have a change of heart Location: in the land where they are held captive Repent Plead with you Location: in the land of their conquerors Confession: a) “We have sinned, b) we have done wrong, c) we have acted wickedly And if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul And pray in the land of their captors Prayer Direction: (cf. esp. #6) a) Toward the land you gave their fathers b) Toward the city you have chosen c) Temple I have built for your Name</p>	<p>4) Call to hear: hear their prayer and plea Div. Location: from heaven, your dwelling place</p> <p>5) Called for Divine Response: Uphold their cause Forgive your people Who have sinned against you Forgive all the offenses they have committed against you Cause their conquerors to show them mercy; Rationale: for they are your people and your inheritance whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace</p> <p>6) Location: out of Egypt [outside land]</p>
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The seven prayer occasions that Solomon imagined were situations that he foresaw as being significant moments of need when his people would offer prayer toward the temple. Several of these are seeking to move beyond specific covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28 to forgiveness. Other times of praying toward this temple seem to be drawn out of Solomon’s experience when seeking justice at the altar (#1, cf. Joab 1 Kgs 2:28) and pious foreigners pilgrimaging to honor God’s name (#5; cf. Queen of Sheba). The goal of prayer seems to be moving beyond the deuteronomic curse beseeching God for forgiveness (8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50) and to act in deliverance upholding the cause for which the suppliant is crying out to the Lord (8:32, 34, 39, 45, 49, 59).

The suppliants prayed to a God who they expected was able to act in history on their behalf. They prayed when they were helpless and needy (drought, war, exile, famine, disease). They called on God who with his “mighty hand and outstretched arm” had acted in the past to deliver Israel from Egypt (8:9, 16, 21, 51, cf. Sukkot; Deut 4:34; 26:8; Jer 21:5; 32:21; Ezek 20:33f.). They celebrated the fulfillment of the covenants to David (8:15, 20; cf. 8:25f., 9:5) and Moses (8:9, 21, 51, 53, 56) in hopes of obligating God to protect the promised land, the chosen city and the “temple I have built for your Name” (8:48, 44; cf. 8:16). They prayed to a God who they believed could “hear from heaven” (8:30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49, 52), forgive and then rescue them so they could live in the land once again (8:34, 36, 40).

Solomon takes the lead role as a suppliant in the prayer which is structured according to his movements as he summons the people into his presence (8:1), turns and blesses them (8:14) and then stands with hands spread to heaven to pray (8:22; cf. 8:38). At the conclusion of his prayer he rises before the altar (8:54) and later dismisses the people (8:66). He, as the “assembler” (8:1, 5; cf. Qohelet), rises to “bless the whole assembly (פְּלִקְהָל) of Israel.” Solomon casts himself as a suppliant raising his voice and requesting to be heard by God (8:28f.).

How are the Suppliants portrayed in this prayer?

Through much of the prayer Solomon is encouraging his people to pray (תַּפִּלָּה ; 8:30, 33) and make supplication or seek God’s favor (הִתְחַנֵּן ; 8:33) toward this heaven/earth-linking temple (8:30, 33, 35, 38, 42 [foreigner], 44, 48). Levenson

comments on the prominence of these two prayer words noting “The Hebrew words for these two acts of worship [prayer and supplication], or their verbal counterparts, recur unremittingly throughout the third address (vv 28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 38, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52). It is as though the author does not want us to forget that this is the one true and enduring aspect of the Temple” (Levenson, 164). The ones praying are viewed as God’s own special inheritance (8:51, 53). Thus God is obligated to hear their pleas or supplications (תְּהַנֵּן ; 8:52). They are also designated as God’s servants (8:36) and his people (8:30, 43, 44, 50, 52, 59). Solomon’s prayer directs his people to think of the temple not just as a place of sacrifice but primarily as a place of prayer (cf. Is 56:7; Jer 7:11; Mat 21:13). The suppliant is keenly aware of the symbiosis between the temple and God’s dwelling in heaven from whence they were calling for forgiveness and divine engagement (cf. “Our Father who art in heaven”).

The suppliants are seen as those who have sinned (8:33, 35, esp. 46, 50) and who are in need of confessing his name (loyalty/allegiance; 8:33, 35) after they had turned back to the Lord (וּשְׁבוּ אֵלָיָהּ ; 8:33, 35, 47, 58). From that position of repentance forgiveness is repeatedly requested (8:30, 34, 36, 50). Usually the turning back to God comes as a result of an awareness of their facing the divine afflictions narrated in the prayer occasions reflective of the covenantal curses (Deut 28). The seventh prayer occasion of exile has a hard-hitting trifecta confession: “We have sinned (הִטָּאֵנוּ), we have done wrong (וְהִעַשְׂנוּ), we have acted wickedly (רָשָׁעֵנוּ)” (8:47; cf. Ps 106:6, Brettler, 31). By contrast, in prayer occasion five the pious pilgrimaging foreigner makes

no confession of sin (8:41-43).

Solomon's people are seen as those who are needy and dependent--pleading that God perform his mighty acts of salvation to rescue them in their own day (8:59, 45, 49, 34, 36; cf. "give us this day") as he had done for Israel in the past (8:9, 16, 21, 51, 53). Solomon's Temple Prayer repeatedly calls on God in heaven to hear their pleas and prayers as they pray toward the temple from situations of helplessness and need (8:28-30, 34, 36, 39, 45, 49).

Another aspect of the suppliant is noted in this prayer.: the recognition that divine omniscience penetrates into each suppliant's heart is observed in Prayer Occasion #4 (8:39). The suppliant's response to that divine intimate knowing is "so that they will fear you" (8:40). Wheeler notes that the closest verbal parallel to God's requital based on his unique ("you alone") and complete knowledge of the human heart is found in Jeremiah (Jer 17:10; 32:19; cf. Ps 139:23; Wheeler, 141). Prayer Occasion #5 mentions that the pious pilgrimaging foreigner also is destined to fear the Lord "as do your own people Israel" (8:43).

How is God portrayed in this prayer?

The A section's cultic scene opens with the installation of the ark and concludes with the theophany of the glory cloud filling the newly-constructed temple (8:10f.). Solomon's brief Presence Prayer (8:12-13) designates the temple as "a place for you to dwell forever." There is a heightened sense of God's presence there (8:28) as observed in the cultic close of the narrative where it says the sacrifices are made "before the Lord"

(8:59, 62, 64, 65; vid. Wilson). So in Solomon's concluding blessing/praise he pleads that God be with them "as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us or forsake us" (8:57). This once again features the notion of divine presence.

In the initial blessing/praise section (8:15-21), God is portrayed as the one who had made a promise to David and who now is fulfilling that promise in Solomon, the builder of the "temple for my Name" (8:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, cf. 8:29, 44, 48). The prominence of the Name Theology in the B blessing/praise or "Protocol of Legitimation" (8:15-21) and in the prayer itself (8:29, 42-44, 48) disappears in the concluding B' blessing/praise section (8:56-61) and A' cultic dismissal of the assembly (8:62-66), only to reappear one final time in the post-prayer theophany (9:3). The "Name" was a multivalent or multifaceted metonymy similar, for example, to when we use "Washington" to refer to multiple entities (congress, president, IRS, or a football team). In one semantic domain "the Name" triggers the idea of presence (8:17, 18, 19, 20, 44, 48). In Prayer Occasion #5 "the Name" clearly represents the notion of fame/reputation (8:41-43; cf. Richter) and concludes with the concept of ownership (8:43). In Prayer Occasions #6 and #7 (8:44, 48) "the Name" also stands in for concepts of ownership, possession and authority. In Prayer Occasions #2 and #3, however, "the Name" is confessed more in the sense of loyalty/allegiance (8:33, 35).

In the final theophanic response to Solomon's Temple Prayer, God himself gives an anthropomorphic elaboration on "the Name" when he says, "by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there" (9:3; cf. 8:29). Richter has shown that the dichotomy between transcendence and immanence should not be linked to

“the Name” metonymy (vid. Richter, 80f., 133). The emphasis of this narrative is not the contrast between immanence and transcendence but the subtle sub-text concerning the looming dread of idolatry and unfaithfulness to the Lord (8:23, 60; cf. 9:9).

“The Name” metonymy triggers the concept of virtual presence, with his eyes and heart being attentive to the Solomonic temple. There is also an interesting metaphorical clash when Solomon asks that his “words, which I have prayed before the Lord, be near to the Lord” (8:59). Locating his “words” in a spatial framework (near) is an unusual mixing of semantic domains as words are usually heard and remembered not retained “near.” Spatially, this may be developed as the “here but also there” concept and the modern notion of virtual presence may be helpful for understanding this aspect of divine presence.

This mixing of semantic divergent domains can be paralleled to the divine virtual awareness called for in the opening of Solomon’s prayer with the anthropomorphic clash of eyes hearing. The request is made for “your eyes to be open toward this temple night and day, ... so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays” (8:29). This same anthropomorphic clash of eyes and hearing closes the prayer (8:52). God’s awareness is seen in many of the occasions themselves where defeat (8:33), drought (8:35) and exile (8:46) are a result of God’s judgment for sin.

The call for God to “hear” is ubiquitous in this prayer (8:30 2x, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49, 52). Most often this is expressed as “hear from heaven [your dwelling place]” (8:30, 39, 43, 49). The people pray toward the temple and God is to hear from heaven. This clearly manifests what Walton, Beale, Levenson, and others have noted about the

temple being seen as providing a link, conduit or nexus between heaven on earth.

There are interesting anthropomorphic expressions used to refer to God. The “Protocol of Legitimation” introduces the One “who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth” (8:15; cf. Knafl). This prayer is a call for God to see and hear, and to respond with forgiveness and action. The anthropomorphic reference to his “mighty hand and your outstretched arm” in Prayer Occasion #5 in regard to the pious foreigner (8:42) evokes the exodus. The prayer repeatedly cites God’s promises to David (8:16, 18, 25; cf. 9:5) along with repeated reference to the deliverance of his people from Egypt (8:9, 16, 21, 51, 53). He is a God who makes and keeps his promises. He is a God who has acted in history on behalf of his people and will deliver them again in the future. Hence, he can be called to act on behalf of his people with forgiveness and deliverance presently.

The seven prayer occasions can also be seen as God’s engagement implementing the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28. Solomon seems to use the exodus and the quotations of the Davidic covenant to obligate God to hear and act on behalf of his inheritance, his people (8:51). Ironically, God flips both the Davidic covenant (9:5f.) and the exodus (9:9) to call Israel itself to unique loyalty and responsibility to him in fulfillment of their covenant responsibilities. He is also portrayed as a God who gave the land to their fathers (8:34, 36, 40, 48). He is the one who chose David before Jerusalem (8:16) then subsequently chose Jerusalem (8:44, 48). Finally, it is he who sovereignly “turns our hearts to walk in all his ways” (8:58). Solomon prays to a majestic,

transcendent God who can hear the cries of his people and then act in history on their behalf just as he had promised.

What is learned about prayer from Solomon's Temple Prayer?

When I think about what Solomon's Temple Prayer teaches about prayer and what I have experienced over the last few years praying/begging/pleading/bartering for my Marine son who fought in Iraq and then in Afghanistan at the height of that conflict, I see that Solomon's seven prayer occasions (1 Kgs 8:31-51) arise from situations of desperate need (war, drought, disease, disaster, exile) coupled with helplessness and a deep sense of gravity that drives one to pray with abandon. Perhaps Dr. Block's apt metaphor of wrestling with the divine portrays it best. Solomon repeatedly describes his temple as a house of prayer to God as one who hears the cries of his people and who, though transcendent, yet is near enough for his eyes to hear their words. God is faithful to his word; he fulfills with his "hand" what his "mouth" has promised. He will act in deliverance on behalf of his repentant people, forgiving their sins and rescuing them in time of need.

Repeatedly Solomon prayed seeking to show his erring people how to turn, confess and move beyond the deuteronomic curses to forgiveness and the divine engagement. This Temple Prayer is truly the culmination and apex of Old Testament redemptive history moving from the exodus to the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant by David's son. Solomon celebrates that he built a magnificent temple for God to dwell in (8:13) even as he humbly admits that the heaven of heavens could not contain the majestic divine presence how much less this temple that he had built (8:27). He develops

seven paradigmatic occasions in which prayer is to be offered toward the temple (altar justice, defeat, drought, disaster, pious foreigners, war, exile) and that through prayer the repentant suppliant who prays toward this temple links their need to a God who dwells in heaven and who can hear and deliver them. They must themselves participate in redemptive history as Israel did when they were delivered by the hand of Moses (8:51, 53, 56). Both they and their king must be obedient to the ways of the Lord (8:58; 36; 9:5) as the unconditional Davidic Covenant is called to loyalty by the ever persistent “if” of obedience prescribed by the decrees of the Sinaitic covenant.

This prayer beautifully though briefly lights up the amber sky just before the dark nadir of night sets in as this temple building son of David goes astray using his gifts to build other temples as he descended into idolatry abandoning his own admonitions (8:23, 60; cf. 9:9). The modern readers are left perplexed over how such wisdom and piety could countenance such folly encouraging us to pray that God turn our hearts to him, to steadfastly walk in all his ways (8:58).

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New ideas: Discoveries since writing the paper

Seven occasions: 7 days of Sukkot not creation (sukkot inclusio)

Seven occasions: imagine stereo-typical situation from a covenant standpoint
similar to proverbial way of imagined paradigmatic situations.

Temple Prayer goes back explicitly to Exodus repeatedly and Davidic covenant
repeatedly not really creation (careful about reading too much creation/cosmic
mountain into this prayer (Psalms is a different issue).

Ch. 9: Waiting: second appearance and response after he finished his palace (at least
7 years later).

Pagans as witness of the Name in the temple (Prayer Occasion #5, 8:60) but then they
become witnesses of Israel's rebellion and God's rejection (1 Kgs 9:8-9).

Many split Prayer Occasion #7 off as exilic/post-exilic: show why it should
be seen as a unit with the others. Note exile but temple still there, similar
phraseology bonds with others (uphold ... develop more).

Result of sin (theme). Link to Deut 28 shared with others. Etc

God putting his Name there after the dedication (kind of like the ritual ceremonies
where the idol becomes the expression of the god after the installation ceremony
vid. Hundley. "I have consecrated for my Name" (9:7) thus it was not their
ceremony/ritual that did it but God himself consecrated it.