

After David's death, Solomon was established as king of Israel. Solomon reigned for about forty years. His reign was both very successful and prosperous as well as very tragic. The Lord God granted him both wisdom and riches above all the kings of the earth (1 Kings 10:23). God also gave Solomon peace on all sides during most of his reign (1 Kings 4:20-25). The Lord used Solomon to write the *Song of Solomon*, *Ecclesiastes*, and much of the book of *Proverbs* (1 Kings 4:32). He completed many building projects in Israel of which the greatest and most important was the construction of the great temple in Jerusalem according to the instructions and provisions of his father, David (1 Kings 6; 1 Chron. 22). Solomon's failures were mainly due to his have 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of them foreigners who led him into public idolatry in his old age (1 Kings 11:1-13). For this reason, the Lord told Solomon that He would take the kingdom from him, but, for the sake of David, He would not do so during Solomon's lifetime. After Solomon's death the country was divided into the northern kingdom, known as Israel, and the southern kingdom, known as Judah. Even though this division remained into the future, the Lord God was faithful to keep Judah together until He would send Messiah into the world - *"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be (Gen. 49:10).*

(1 Kings 8:1-3) - When the temple construction was finished, Solomon and all the people gathered together *"that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion."* Just like the tabernacle of old was built mainly to house the ark (Exod. 25:22), Solomon's temple was built for this same purpose. This ark was a physical representation of the awesome shekinah glory of the Lord. The word "shekinah" is derived from a Hebrew word meaning "to inhabit, to settle, to dwell." It refers to the presence of God, where God was pleased to reveal Himself to His people. It describes the dwelling place of the Lord, where God meets with sinners for His glory in His mercy and on the ground of His justice satisfied. This was the highest and greatest manifestation of God's glory to be found on the earth.

(1 Kings 8:4-9) - Under the Old Covenant the place of the shekinah was at the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies (Exod. 25:17-25). The high priest of Israel came into this place one time each year on the day of atonement with the blood of a lamb taken from the altar of sacrifice. He would sprinkle the blood over the mercy seat which covered the ark of the covenant. The ark contained the tablets of the law which exposed the sinfulness and guilt of man. The blood of the lamb was a type, a picture, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, as the Lamb of God. Christ is the *"propitiation"* (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) for the sins of His people. *"Propitiation"* is a Greek word that means essentially the same as "mercy seat" (cf. Heb. 9:5) and describes satisfaction to God's justice accomplished in the death of Jesus Christ for His people. Under the Old Covenant the mercy seat within the Holy of Holies was the greatest revelation of the glory of God to be found on earth. This was typical of the fact that the greatest revelation of God's glory ever to be found in eternity or in time is in the Person of Jesus Christ as *"Emmanuel, God with us"* (Matt. 1:23), and His finished work of redeeming all of God's elect by His death on the cross - *"JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins"* (Matt. 1:21). The *"oracle"* here describes the place where God's wisdom is found and from where God speaks to His people. This shows Christ crucified to be both the wisdom and the word of God (John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:18-31).

The Lord Jesus Christ worked out the righteousness of God to insure and secure the salvation of all for whom He died and arose. God's redemptive character, how God reveals Himself in salvation, is His chief glory. We cannot properly identify the God of redemption, and, therefore, call on sinners to believe unto salvation until we preach the particulars revealing how He justifies the ungodly based on the righteousness of Christ freely imputed and received by God-given faith. Everything we preach by way of encouragement, warning, exhortation, and instruction, whether it be to lost sinners to believe and be saved, or whether it be to saved sinners to persevere in the faith, to use the means of grace and grow in knowledge and obedience, is to be preached in this light.

(1 Kings 8:10-11) - This cloud that filled the temple was the cloud of glory, seen often in the Old and New Testaments, sometimes called the cloud of Shekinah glory. It was the radiant outshining of God's character and presence manifested in a cloud. This was the same cloud that stood by Israel in the wilderness (*Exod. 13:21-22*) and appeared many times whenever God was pleased to reveal Himself to people. This was the cloud present at the transfiguration of Jesus (*Luke 9:34-35*). This was the cloud of glory that received Christ Jesus into heaven at His ascension (*Acts 1:9*). The sense of the presence of God in His holiness was so intense that the priests could not stay in the temple. This showed that in order to approach God, sinners must have a mediator who can satisfy God's justice as pictured in the high priest bringing the blood of a lamb into the Holy of Holies.

As we consider the truth of the shekinah glory of God, meaning God's dwelling place on earth, we must also consider the question Solomon asked - *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"* (*1 Kings 8:27*). Consider also that both Stephen and Paul testified that God does not dwell in temples made with hands (*Acts 7:47-49; 17:24-25*). This shows us that the temple was not a house that could contain or restrict God. This cloud within the temple, especially residing in the Holy of Holies above the mercy-seat, was a typical, symbolic representation and manifestation of God's great glory that could only be found in the glorious Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redemption of His people given to Him by the Father before the world began (*2 Tim. 1:9-10*). Christ is *"Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"* (*Matt. 1:23*). Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh Who tabernacled among us so that we beheld the glory of God full of grace and truth (*John 1:14*). Christ is the One in Whom dwells the *"fulness of the Godhead bodily"* (*Col. 2:9; 1:19*). He is the One in Whose face (His Person and work) the glory of God is revealed (*2 Cor. 4:6*). Christ is *"the brightness of [God's] glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"* (*Heb. 1:3*).

In Christ we see the greatest revelation of the glory of God, His shekinah glory, as both a *"just God and a Savior"* to Whom we are to look for all forgiveness and all righteousness (*Isa. 45:22-25*). In Christ crucified and risen from the dead we see how every attribute of God is honored and magnified in our salvation by God's grace based on the righteousness of Christ freely imputed and received by God-given faith. It is by looking to Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith, resting in Him for all righteousness, eternal life, and glory, that we give glory to God. It is as we see God dwelling, not as being confined and contained within a physical building, but in the revelation and fulness of His glory in the Person and work of Christ. The shekinah glory of God dwells in Christ, and God dwells with us as we see His glory in Christ (*John 17:1-5,24-26; cf. Isa. 40:1-5*).