



SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

WEEK 4
09.24.17

FOCUS VERSE

II Chronicles 7:1

Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

LESSON TEXT

II Chronicles 6:12–14, 18–21, 40–42

12 And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands:

13 For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,

14 And said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:

.....

18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

19 Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:

20 That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place.

21 Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

.....

40 Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

41 Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

42 O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.

II Chronicles 7:1–3

1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house.

3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.



FOCUS THOUGHT

God honors our
prayers of dedication
unto Him.



CULTURE CONNECTION

Dedicating Myself to God through Prayer

We who are Christians sometimes have what we call dedicatory prayers. These may occur when opening new faith-based facilities, consecrating new church buildings, or dedicating our newborn children to Jesus Christ. The point is we are offering to God our ministries, our facilities, or our children. We are saying to Him, “Lord, we dedicate or consecrate this to You for Your service.”

However, prayer is not nearly so much about us as it is about Christ in us. It is not about getting our will and plan enacted by God as much as it is conforming through prayer our will to His. Prayer is about

submission to God’s ideas, God’s plans, and God’s will.

In the book *If Ye Shall Ask*, legendary author Oswald Chambers observed, “It is not so true that ‘prayer changes things’ as that prayer changes me. . . . God has so constituted things that prayer on the basis of redemption alters the way a man looks at things. Prayer is not a question of altering things externally, but of working wonders in a man’s disposition.”

Through prayer we align our attitudes and ambitions with God’s eternal plan and purpose, and we submit to Him.

OUTLINE

- I. SOLOMON STOOD ON COVENANTAL PROMISES**
 - A. Solomon Aligned Himself with God’s Will
 - B. Solomon Rested in Covenant Promises
- II. SOLOMON SOUGHT GOD’S PRESENCE**
 - A. As Moses
 - B. As David
- III. SOLOMON CALLED FOR THE ARK**
- IV. SOLOMON’S PRAYER**
 - A. Prayer Content
 - B. Personal Relationships
 - C. Specific Requests
- V. GOD’S GLORY FILLED THE TEMPLE**

CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

Imagine being a member of the crew responsible for disassembling the Tabernacle in the wilderness, carrying it to the next stop, and reassembling it—over and over and over again. It was a never-ending job. It was just

part of the immense task of a wandering people carrying with them their place of worship, a portable tent of multiple layers of linen and badger skins, not to mention the silver sockets, poles, and other components. It must have been a bone-wearying, labor-intensive job. How they must have longed for a permanent house of God and place of worship!

The building and ultimate dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem was a historic time and event for the nation of Israel. To build God a permanent dwelling place had been upon the hearts of the people for hundreds of years. David may not have been the first Israelite to express a desire to build a house for God, but his desire and expression surely must have caught the imagination of the people of God and encouraged them toward that eventual goal. With great anticipation and longing, they looked toward the day it would be fulfilled. But God would not allow David to build the Temple, for he had been a man of war and shedding of blood (1 Chronicles 28:3). His son Solomon would be the one to bring life to the long-held dream of the people.

Israel’s journey toward the dedication of the Temple was indeed a long and winding

road filled with tumultuous events. Among the significant events during these turbulent times was the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines about one hundred years prior to the building of the Temple. At first, the enemies of Israel tried to keep the Ark, setting it in their own places, but it brought them nothing but trouble. Their idol Dagon was mutilated by the presence of the Ark, and the people of Ashdod were severely attacked and afflicted. It was so severe that the men of Ashdod insisted they remove the “ark of the God of Israel” (I Samuel 5:7).

The Philistines decided to send the Ark to Gath. Shortly afterward, “the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction” (I Samuel 5:9). Consequently, they sent the Ark on to Ekron (I Samuel 5:10). But the people of Ekron had heard of the terrible events associated with the Ark; they cried out against the Ark being with them:

“They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven” (I Samuel 5:10–12).

After seven months in Philistia, the Philistines had enough of the Ark of the Covenant. They returned the Ark to Israel along with treasures of gold as a “trespass offering” (I Samuel 6:3). (See I Samuel 6:1–21.) After a short stay in Bethshemesh and great loss of life due to their looking into the Ark, the people of Israel moved the Ark to Kirjathjearim where it remained for the next twenty years.

David finally retrieved the Ark and brought it back to Jerusalem where it was placed in a temporary tent until the completion of the Temple under Solomon. The people were jubilant at the eventual return of the Ark to Jerusalem, and their joy became even more ecstatic at the completion of the Temple.

This was the victorious atmosphere in which Solomon stood and prayed his dedicational prayer over the newly built Temple.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. SOLOMON STOOD ON COVENANTAL PROMISES

As Solomon began his prayer outside the newly constructed Temple and its elaborate furnishings, he acknowledged and praised God and the covenants He had made with His people. Solomon referred especially to the Davidic Covenant that God had made with his father, David. It was a covenant that assured the continuing throne of David and his descendants forever. Solomon acknowledged God’s greatness, His mercy, His veracity (trustworthiness for keeping covenant), and His bestowing upon David and upon himself the blessing of the covenant (II Chronicles 6:14–16).

There was no uncertainty in Solomon as he reached out to God. His confidence was anchored securely in God and the truth that God would keep His promises made to Israel. Clearly, Solomon recognized the people’s duty of keeping the laws of God as He had given them (verse 16), but he also exhibited absolute confidence in God—in His greatness, mercy, and truthfulness.

A. Solomon Aligned Himself with God’s Will

Having praised and honored God in his opening words, Solomon immediately stood upon the will of God by referencing His Word (verse 17). Solomon had already pointed to the truthfulness of God in His keeping of covenants, and he proceeded to stand squarely upon God’s own words. He knew God cannot lie; God is true. Therefore His words are true and unchanging. By placing himself squarely in and upon God’s Word, Solomon was acknowledging both the will of God and his own confidence in the complete performance of that will.

The same absolute certainty of the truth of God’s Word remains to this day! We can rest assured God’s Word is true and it shall come to pass as promised.

B. Solomon Rested in Covenant Promises

Solomon seemed to take refuge and solace from his knowledge of God's promises. He seemed certain and confident as he prayed before the people, sure that God would continue to fulfill His part of the covenant. This is the essence of faith—complete trust and confidence in the Almighty.

“Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah” (Psalm 89:33–37).

Believers today also should exude confidence and faith in God through their prayers and daily relationship with Him. We can stand upon the foundation of God's promises and know with certainty the winds of worldly adversity cannot hinder their fulfillment. He will perform His Word. When God has promised it, we have no need to be concerned or fearful. Our trust and faith are anchored in Him.

II. SOLOMON SOUGHT GOD'S PRESENCE

Woven throughout Solomon's prayer was an evident desire for God's presence among the people of Israel. Like Moses and David before him, Solomon recognized the vital role of the presence of God in their victories, achievements, and daily living. The presence of God was not an added benefit to be a comforting addition for difficult seasons of life; it was a vital requirement to their very existence as a people.

A. As Moses

When Moses spoke with the Lord face to face in the Tabernacle in Exodus 33, Moses was unequivocal: “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (Exodus 33:15). (See Exodus 33:11–23.) His encounter with the Lord on Mount Sinai was so overwhelming that he had to cover his face afterwards,

for it glowed with the intense presence of the Almighty and frightened the people (Exodus 34:29–33).

B. As David

David also understood the unique empowerment provided only through the abiding presence of God. Many of David's psalms reflected his intense desire for the Lord's presence in his life.

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock” (Psalm 27:4–5).

III. SOLOMON CALLED FOR THE ARK

After the Temple was completed, “Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God” (II Chronicles 5:1). The final piece to be brought in was the Ark of the Covenant.

At Solomon's request, the Levites took up the Ark of the Covenant and brought it to the Temple. Before the Ark was taken into the Temple, Solomon sacrificed a great number of sheep and oxen to the Lord. Following all the sacrifices, the priests carried the Ark to its place in the Temple. (See II Chronicles 5:2–7.) At this time, only the tables of stone Moses had put therein at Horeb were still in the Ark (II Chronicles 5:10). Missing from the Ark were the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that had budded and produced almonds. (See Numbers 17:8; Hebrews 9:4.) If we stray from God's will, presence, and purpose, we always lose something precious and miraculous. God will restore us if we repent, but some things may never be regained.

Following the placement of the Ark, there was great fanfare as musicians and singers praised the Lord. The glory of God was so great the priests could not even stand to minister.

“Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:;) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God” (II Chronicles 5:12–14).

IV. SOLOMON'S PRAYER

Solomon's prayer provides many elements that comprise a great model for contemporary prayers today. Consider how his prayer could guide our prayers.

A. Prayer Content

Praise. Solomon began his prayer with praise. In every effort to approach God in prayer, believers should acknowledge the greatness of God and give Him praise for who He is. Why do we pray? Is it not in part because we believe He has the power to answer our prayers, minister to others in need, and supply our own personal petitions? Otherwise, prayer would be an exercise in futility.

We should honor God by acknowledging His greatness—the glory of who He is and of His power. We praise Him first and foremost because of who He is; only on the basis of that is there any hope for His glorious power to operate in our lives. He deserves our sincere and heartfelt praise.

Repentance for future acts. After praising God, we should humbly approach God in genuine repentance for our sins and failures. Notice that Solomon prayed especially for possible future failings. (See II Chronicles 6:22–29.) We would do well to emulate Solomon's humility and genuine contrite spirit

and not view such a request as seeking of a license for future sins.

Too many people today plan their sins and failures for tomorrow. In other words, they are not genuinely repentant. They plan to continue in their sinful lifestyle, which reflects arrogance in the highest sense before God.

Solomon was sincere in his repentance. He knew the human frame, and he was praying for an entire nation of people who were human. He knew there would be failures; he knew there would be sin. He sought God's patience in advance, desiring God to work with them as a nation and people in leading them into the ways of righteousness for His name's sake.

Forgiveness. Solomon also prayed for God's forgiveness. (See II Chronicles 6:21, 25, 27, 30, 39.) When we sin, we need more than only to acknowledge our sins with remorse in repentance; we need forgiveness, or remission. And thankfully God grants forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

Blessing. Finally, Solomon prayed for blessing for the nation. Interwoven throughout Solomon's expressions of repentance and requests for forgiveness were his expressed desires for blessing—that the Lord would watch over the Temple, put His name on the Temple, hear the prayers of the people, answer their supplications, grant forgiveness, pay recompense unto the wicked, send rain upon the land, protect them from the devastation of pestilence and sickness, and clothe the people with salvation and rejoicing. (See II Chronicles 6:20–42.)

B. Personal Relationships

Included in Solomon's prayer were specific requests on behalf of their relationships with their neighbors, with their enemies, with God, and with foreigners.

With neighbors (II Chronicles 6:22–23). Solomon prayed over disputes between the people and their neighbors that God would intervene and judge between the wicked and the righteous, resolving the issues.

With enemies (II Chronicles 6:24–25). Solomon recognized there could be times when the people of the nation would be captured

by their enemies as a result of turning away from God. Solomon prayed that when Israel confessed and prayed for deliverance, God, by His mercy, would forgive their sin and restore them to their lands and houses. (See also II Chronicles 6:36–39.)

With God (II Chronicles 6:26–31). Solomon prayed for the people should they be plagued with drought because of their sin against God. He prayed that if they turned to Him and confessed their sin, He would forgive them and send rain. Solomon also prayed that in the eventuality of pestilence, attacks from enemies, or sickness that when the people prayed, God would hear them “and forgive and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest . . . that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers” (II Chronicles 6:30–31).

With foreigners (II Chronicles 6:32–33). Solomon prayed that the people of Israel could be a positive and shining witness before the strangers (foreigners) in their land. Solomon understood it was God’s desire to reveal His name to all the peoples of the entire earth, and his prayer was that the people of Israel could facilitate that evangelistic effort on behalf of God with grace and exemplary conduct.

C. Specific Requests

In addition to the previous requests, Solomon also prayed that if the people went to war with their enemies, following God’s plan, and they prayed toward the Temple in Jerusalem, that He would hear their prayers and “maintain their cause” (II Chronicles 6:34–35).

We should notice the specificity of Solomon’s prayers. They were not vague, general, broad prayers that could be open to interpretation. Rather, they were clear, specific, and to the point. These are the kinds of prayers that garner God’s attention and please Him.

When we pray, we also should make every effort to be specific and exact in our requests. Whatever we need God to do in our lives or in the life of another, let us be specific and on point. Although God knows what is in our hearts, and He understands what we are trying to say, being specific in our requests is a

point of faith. When we are specific, we are exhibiting faith that God will provide according to that specific need.

V. GOD’S GLORY FILLED THE TEMPLE

Apparently, God was pleased with the building and presentation of the Temple, as well as with Solomon’s prayer in dedicating it to Him, for His glory filled His house.

“Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever” (II Chronicles 7:1–3).

The people of Israel saw how the Lord’s presence came down and consumed the sacrifices and how the presence of the Lord affected all the operations surrounding the dedication of the Temple, and they were amazed. All the people began praising and glorifying God with humility, worship, and praise.

The presence of God has a way of bringing people to their knees in humility and to their feet in exultant worship. God is mighty and glorious, and He is always worthy of our praise.

The great celebration and multitude of sacrificial offerings continued for seven days followed by a solemn assembly on the eighth day (II Chronicles 7:8–9). In this atmosphere of humility, praise, and worship, God spoke to His people a powerful promise to which the people of God hold to this day:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chronicles 7:14).

There is great power in prayer! If we will humble ourselves and pray, seeking God and His will and purpose for our lives, He will hear us, forgive us, and bring healing to our land. This is a promise to those who dedicate themselves to the Lord as did Solomon and the people of Israel at the dedication prayer over Solomon's Temple.

INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

God honors our prayers and dedication to Him. Nothing delights the Lord more than for individuals to present themselves to Him with commitment and dedication, determining they will pursue Him with all their hearts. For the people of God to desire His presence and involvement in their lives above all things is His great delight.

As believers we need to dedicate everything in our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ—ourselves, our families, and our possessions.

Ourselves. First, we need to dedicate ourselves to the Lord. We are in no place to try to lead others if we ourselves are not positioned correctly with the Lord. Our first commitment must be to Him.

Our families. Second, we need to dedicate our children and grandchildren to the Lord.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).

As John observed, most parents and grandparents have no greater desire and joy than that their children and grandchildren be saved and living for God. Pursuits of personal pleasure and material treasures fade in the

light of leading one's family to Jesus Christ. Nothing is more precious, more valuable. They are our greatest treasures.

Our possessions. Finally, we should dedicate our possessions to the Lord. Too many people in our materialistic culture pursue "things" to their own hurt and to the detriment of their families. What is most important and most valuable? Individuals can travel the world gathering the most exotic and expensive treasures, but if they do so to the devastation of their own souls or the souls of family members, what have they gained?

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).



A person should possess his material goods; they should not possess him. James Dobson once told the story of buying a swing set for his children and his experience of putting it together. It was quite an ordeal with so many parts, nuts, and bolts. But even after he had put it all together, he continued to read the instructions to reveal all the necessary maintenance for keeping the swing set in top operable and safe condition. Dobson then wondered to himself, *Do I own this swing set or does this swing set own me?* We must own our possessions and use them for the glory of God rather than our possessions owning and using us to God's shame—and to our own shame. ■

REFLECTIONS

- How long was the Ark of the Covenant in the hands of the Philistines? Why did they want to return it? Discuss the power of God as was represented in the Ark.
- What were the provisions of the Davidic Covenant with which Solomon identified?
- Discuss the vital nature of the presence of God. How did Moses demonstrate his desire for God's presence? How did David demonstrate his desire for God's presence?
- Discuss the four basic elements of Solomon's prayer. How do they relate as a model for our prayers today?
- What was missing from the Ark of the Covenant when the priests placed it in Solomon's Temple? Discuss how this illustrates the need not to stray from God's will, purpose, and presence in our lives.