

2 Chronicles 7-9

We took the time last week to just sort of graze through chapter 6 in examination of Solomon's prayer of dedication regarding the temple that he had built for the Lord there in Jerusalem. and It was really a prayer about prayer, interceding on behalf of the future failures of the nation of Israel. That as they would see their sin, recognize it, confess it and repent of it that God might hear their cry, maintain their cause and forgive their sin.

Chapter 7 picks up a the conclusion of Solomon's prayer of dedication and returns to God's consecration of the temple itself in showing His Divine approval of the goings on there, the program, the prayer, and the sacrifice. and Really that's a point in itself (and I'm sort of dancing on semantics here but I think you'll understand what I'm seeking to communicate) because really only God can truly consecrate a thing, or a person as something/someone holy. I can lead a life of strict dedication, but apart from God qualifying that, placing His approval upon it; it's not really in anyway consecrated, set apart or holy. Only God can qualify me as holy, or something I've dedicated to Him as holy. Think about it, any other day of the week it would've been a simple desert shrub and some dirt. But on that day when God showed up He told Moses to take off his sandals because the place he was standing was holy ground. Why was that place holy as opposed to any other shrub or area of ground in that desert? Because God was there, His presence was being made manifest in a tangible way. So a life that's dedicated isn't necessarily a life that's consecrated, holy, or sanctified. That's the work of Christ in my life. So Solomon could dedicate the temple, but it took God's approval, and acknowledgement of that to consecrate it or make of it a holy place. In me, that is in my flesh there is no good thing that dwells, it's God's presence in my life that makes me holy, that makes you holy. In Christ He gives us His approval, His acknowledgment; He fills us with His presence and consecrates our lives over to Him. So we read here beginning in verse 1.

Vs1-3

This was no doubt a truly amazing scene, we have God's glory showing up, fire coming down from heaven and consuming the sacrifice. God's "stamp" (if you will) of approval upon the happenings of that day. But not an *every* day type of happening to be sure, there are only a few other times recorded in scripture whereby God caused fire to fall from heaven and consume a sacrifice. You recall that on the day the priesthood was inaugurated there in Lev chapter 9 the same thing happened then. There was a celebration going on, a consecration of the priesthood and of the tabernacle, Aaron lifted his hand toward the people and blessed them, came down from offering the sin offering, the glory of God showed up, the fire of God came down and consumed the sacrifice. The people shouted and rejoiced and then fell on their faces in reverence. Of course that same day Nadab and Abihu (Aaron's sons) were literally "burned out" from the ministry as well as they offered profane fire before the Lord and fire came out from before the Lord and devoured them. and We read that Moses spoke to Aaron and said, "*This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'*" So Aaron held his peace." Leviticus 10:3

So often we get caught up in the love and grace of God, as well we should because God is gracious and God is loving, but how important that we don't forget that God is holy as well, and should be honored, and revered as such. But fire came down and consumed David's sacrifice near this same place some yrs prior to this on the threshing floor of Ornan which was David's "signal" so to speak that this is where God wanted the temple built.

God consumed the sacrifice of Elijah before the prophets of Baal. So throughout the history of the scriptures this radical type of happening has only occurred 3 or 4 times. So this is a special occasion to say the least.

And when the people saw the glory of God having filled the temple, moving about, and upon the temple, the fire falling from heaven consuming the sacrifice, you might think that they would've been filled with a sense of the power and judgment of God. But instead it seems that they were filled with awe and a greater sense of the goodness and mercy of God for having visited them in such a way. and So much like on that day when God showed up so powerfully and profoundly at the tabernacle the people responded in such a way as to praise God, and fall on their faces before Him saying, "For He is good, For His mercy endures Forever." and So we note that as people find themselves in the presence of God, the result is awe/reverence and worship.

Vs4-5

Of course this amount of blood sacrifice is almost too much for the likes of our minds to comprehend. 22,000 bulls, and 120,000 sheep, we're talking a massive BBQ, and sometimes people want to take issue with the amount of animals sacrifices, "It's too much, over the top, unnecessary," they say. Isn't it interesting how we are so quick to say something is a "waste" when it comes to the amount of work, or sacrifice that's made for the Lord, but there's no such thing as over doing it when we're doing it for ourselves. We want the best we can do for us, there's no effort too large for the quality I want, the commitment I want, the end result I'm looking for. But if it's something we're doing for the Lord people want to say, "Don't you think that's a bit extreme, why spend so much, why put so many hours into it, why would you sacrifice so much?" Because the Lord is worthy of our very best and then so much more, I suppose that when I'm gone if what's said of me is that I always went "over the top" anytime I was doing something unto the Lord; that'll be just fine. If I'm going to put my hand to it, and attach God's name to it, or represent God through it, I want it to be the best I can produce.

But beyond all that I think we should see in this the overwhelming cost found in the sacrifice of Christ. In a relatively brief period of time here 142,000 sacrifices were made yet it didn't even put a dent in the necessary price to be paid for the sin of Israel much less the sin of the world. The price that Jesus paid for our sin through the shedding of His blood is overwhelming, incomprehensible.

Something else this shows us is that even though the praise was terrific, and the program was going great, there's still no approach to God apart from blood sacrifice. Be it for atonement, or to have fellowship with Him, there's no remission of sin apart from the shedding of blood.

Vs6-10

You know not that we're not to be confronted with conviction when we go through God's word but ultimately to a degree this should always be our desire and the result of our coming together to worship and spend time with the Lord. When services are over we should be being sent to our "tents" joyful and glad of heart for the good that the Lord has done for you, and for me, His people.

But what we have happening here is that Solomon held the dedication ceremony just prior to the Feast of Tabernacles and then joined the Feast of Tabernacles to it and then ended the celebration holding a solemn assembly on the Sunday and then sent everyone home. So 7 days of celebrating the temple straight into a 7-day Feast of the Tabernacles rounding out with a solemn assembly (or church like service we might say) and then sending everyone home, 15 days total.

And verse 8 tells us that all of Israel was in on this together from one end to the other, they were united of heart and purpose. and Of course we realize that God calls for unity in the body of Christ, behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. A house divided against itself can't stand; Christ calls us to unity of heart and mind in Him.

There in verse 7 we're told that because of the amount of sacrifices taking place Solomon went ahead and had the middle of the court set apart to receive sacrifices as well, there were more than likely all kinds of altars spread throughout there with all the priests being on duty and working just as fast and hard as they could to offer the various burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord.

Vs 11

Now we realize that when it says that he accomplished all that was in his heart to make concerning both the Lord's house and his own that it means a # of yrs have gone by. Because he spent 7 yrs on the temple and 13 yrs on his own palace. So Vs 12 is a # of yrs beyond Vs 11. and Again we commend him for being one that finishes what he starts, he not only began well, but he finished well also.

Vs12-14

Of course this is a familiar passage of scripture that we hear quoted from time to time. and There are a few things we want to note here. 1st of all back in Vs 12 I want to draw attention to the fact that God said, "I have heard your prayer." Regardless of how articulate or how profound Solomon's prayer was it would've been absolutely powerless and pointless if God hadn't heard it. But as we see there in verse 14 God does in fact hear the prayer of his

people who are walking in humility. Now Solomon had uttered his prayer regarding the temple yrs earlier, and just now God is “getting back with him” so to speak to encourage him with the fact that He’s heard him and will honor his request. God will always answer the prayers of His people, oh it may not happen in the time we want and it may not be the answer we want to hear, but He’ll answer. You may’ve prayed for something yrs ago, and timing is just now coming around for God to respond to you in a directive, or affirmative manner. But when the time is right He’ll let you know.

The basic thrust of what’s going on here is that God is saying, “Solomon I’ve heard your prayer, your desire for the forgiveness of Israel. and When the time comes that My people sin, and they are chastened by Me because of it, that when they humble themselves, confess their sin and repent of their wicked ways, I will indeed hear from heaven, I will forgive their sin, and heal their land.”

It’s easy to sorta slip into a mind frame of perceiving this as sort of a 4 step formula for revival; #1 Humble myself, #2 Pray, #3 Seek God’s face, and #4 Turn from my wicked ways. But in reality it’s all one fluid motion, God is simply describing what it means to humble ourselves before Him. God requires only 2 things of us in order that we be revived and renewed in Him, #1 We have to be His to begin with, we have to be “called by His name.” and #2 We need to humble ourselves before Him, and the net effect of one who truly humbles him/herself before Him is that they will pray, seek the Lord, and repent of their sin, turn from their wicked ways, that’s what humility before God does. There is something innately humble in the simple nature of prayer in general, because I’m seeking God’s face, God’s heart, I’m recognizing and realizing that the solution to my particular situation doesn’t lie in myself, the answer is in the Lord. and Anytime I’m looking outside myself and unto the Lord for the answer, for my help, my strength or whatever, that’s a move of humility. and Obviously the interpretation of this Vs belongs to Israel, but certainly there’s application for any believer, because God is into responding to the humble cry of His people.

In Luke 18, Jesus having developed the principle of persistently pursuing God in prayer said, “...*shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.*” Luke 18:7-8 God reacts, and responds to the cry of His people. But in keeping with our current context our sin separates us from Him, and repentance is a must in the turning of His ear back toward us, there must be a *turning* from our wicked ways. The bible says, “*He who covers (or even seeks to justify) his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*” Prov 28:13 So God’s forgiveness is predicated upon our repentance.

Vs15-22

So one way or another God will be acknowledged in His dealings with Israel; be it in His exalting of them as a nation, or His chastising them as a nation, but either way His hand in the matter will be undeniable.

Now there's something I want you to see here; God gives Solomon both an encouragement and a warning. He says, "If you walk before Me as your father David walked, keeping My statutes and My judgments, then you'll not fail to have a man of the lineage of David on the throne. But if you turn away from Me to serve and worship other gods, then there's going to be some serious ramifications." Now Solomon may be thinking, "God save Your breath, how could I ever forsake You, look at this temple which I've built for You, I'll always serve You, and be committed to You." Like Peter, "Lord I'll never deny You, I'm prepared to die with You!" and Yet the very area in which Solomon would fall, which Peter would stumble, is in the very area that the warnings came. and I've discovered that I've never fallen but that the Lord hasn't warned me 1st. How we need to learn to heed the Lord's warnings. That check in your spirit, or Vs that's shared with you, or that hesitation that God places upon you, warning signs, warning signals, so often we ignore them, thinking there's no need for them and inevitably we fall in the area that we were warned to steer clear of in the 1st place. God will not warn you, or warn me for no reason, if the warning comes it's because you're going to be confronted and challenged in that area and God is seeking to prepare you for it in advance.

Think about it, when did Solomon receive this warning? It was on the heels of a season of great blessing and accomplishment in his life. So often the enemy strikes during seasons of rest, having come from a time of great victory or reward and so we decide it's time to relax for a while. David was supposed to be out to war, he decided to relax this yr after a season of great blessing and accomplishment, that's when the whole Bathsheba incident took place. You remember after the Mt of transfiguration when the disciples came down from that Mt top experience, there was the demon possessed man at the base of the Mt. Watch out, here God so graciously gave Solomon a fresh revelation of Himself, no doubt to help serve as an anchor to him, to help him in his hour of need. Yet he would fail. He would serve other gods, turn from the Lord's statutes and worship other pagan gods. As long as he was occupied he stayed safe, as long as David was fighting the good fight things were good, but when they came to that time in their lives when they decided they were going to kick back and take it easy for awhile, that's when problems arose. Taking a break is one thing, taking a break from the Lord, seeking Him, serving Him, that's quite another, we're not to take a break from Christ; we're to *abide* in Christ. Jesus said, "*Abide in Me, and I in you.*" John 15:4 Stay occupied with Jesus, abiding in Him and in His word.

What else does this show us? That regardless of how "great" a work that God may accomplish through us that it doesn't grant us some type of immunity from temptation, various struggles, or sin. Again we've got to abide, that is be ever presently pursuing the Lord, not relying on past accomplishments or experiences to sustain us in the present. God said that He would hear the prayers offered in that place, how much more will He hear from you as you're abiding *in* and building a relationship *with* Christ? It's so important.

Ch 8

Vs1-3

This is really the only mention of any type of war that ever took place under Solomon's reign. His reign was one that was marked by peace.

Vs4-6

Here we're starting to see "chinks" in his armor. Remember what the law said regarding chariots and horses as it pertained to the king? "...*he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.*" Deut 17:16-17 Of course we recognize that Solomon failed in everyone of these areas, but the idea behind horses is that they made for military might. and Chariots were sort of like the "tanks" of the day, and God didn't want them placing their confidence in technology and weapons of warfare as it pertained to the strength of their nation, but that they would trust in Him to be their defense and their strong tower. David said, "*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.*" Ps 20:7 Something Solomon couldn't echo, he had entire cities dedicated to the keeping of his chariots and the cavalry to man them, horses to pull them.

Vs7-11

Some say that Solomon married so many wives for political reasons, you're not likely to attack the nation that your own daughter serves as a queen in. So in part that may be true, but it goes back to the same point, in whom, or in what do you place your confidence, keen political moves or foreign policy maneuvers, or the 1 true Living God? and Both the OT and the new are very clear on not be unequally yoked, united in marriage with an unbeliever. He knew that she was an unbeliever yet he married her anyway and ultimately the bible credits his unbelieving wives with turning his heart away from the Lord to serve the various "gods" that they served. When you can't bring your spouse into the "holy places" of your life, that's a sad and tragic testimony indeed. Never marry someone that you can't enter in to a holy place with, and I'm not talking about a church building, I'm talking about those deep and intimate times that you share with your Savior, the pearls that He gives you. If you can't share in the holy things, that ought to be shouting out to you to cut that relationship off immediately. Now if you're already married that's a different story, the bible is clear that you're to remain with them at that point as long as they'll have you, perhaps they'll be drawn to Christ in you. But if you're not married and the person you're seeing is not a believer but you claim to be a believer, terminate the relationship now before they turn your heart away from worshiping God unto destructive and defiling priorities.

Vs12-18

I would just draw out Vs 16, "All the work of Solomon was *well-ordered* from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished." We serve a God of order, we're to facilitate our work unto Him in a decent and orderly fashion. Solomon is commended here because from the first to the final task it was all orderly and professional, it was a good witness.

Ch 9

Now, as we enter in to Ch 9 I think we do well to recognize the fact that though so often when it comes to Israel what we focus on is their failure, in many ways they succeeded in God's commission to them as well. As we've mentioned before our commission is "Go and tell," their's was to be, "Come and see." We are to take the message to the ends of the earth, they were to shine as a beacon of light that could be seen to the ends of the earth thereby drawing people to Jerusalem that they might inquire of the true and living God.

Chapter 9 shows that in Solomon's day that's the very thing that was happening, people were coming in from literally the ends of the known world to inquire of Solomon and the God he served.

Vs1-4

The magnitude of his splendor took her breath away. Now as for where exactly "Sheba" was there's debate, some stretch as far as Ethiopia (west Africa) others say the southern portion of Arabia known today as Yemen, what everyone agrees on is that this was a massive undertaking on her behalf to reach him by camel caravan. She didn't get on a plane and at the very minimum she traveled just over 1,200 miles to reach him and quite possibly closer to 1,500. So you can see that Solomon's fame was world renown, and by the time a queen is willing to travel 12-1,500 miles across a hot burning desert to interview him that speaks well of what God was doing through the nation of Israel in that day. They were fulfilling their commission, people were coming and seeing from what would seem to be the ends of the earth proverbially speaking. and She came to test him, not just with riddles or test questions that baffled her, but no doubt on a diplomatic, political and ethical level to see if trade and foreign relations was something she would be interested in. and She spilled her heart before him and he was able to explain to her anything she brought to him. Of course we're beginning to see a type here in the greater than Solomon, Jesus Christ who's splendor is breath taking and to whom we can spill out our hearts and He can satisfy the deepest need therein.

Vs5-7

They had access to Solomon, we have access to a greater than Solomon, we're able to tap the very wisdom of Christ Himself, how much more blessed are we? Yet how often we take for granted all we've been given in Christ.

She says, "I heard it, but I couldn't believe it till I saw it for myself, and yet ½ the greatness of your wisdom wasn't even declared. It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom." Do you ever wonder what the report is that goes out about your words? Your witness? Your wisdom? The proverbs tell us, "*The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man is valued by what others say of him.*" Prov 27:21 She bore witness of Solomon that his witness, words, and wisdom exceeded the fame which she'd heard.

Vs8-12

Of course going back to that “type” you can’t out give the Lord, whatever you give to Him He’s going to return to you pressed down, shaken together, and running over. and Jesus spoke of the queen of Sheba there in Matt’s gospel when He said, “*The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.*” Matt 12:42 I have no doubt that their’s isn’t the only generation that she’ll rise up in judgment over. Because she went all that way, seeking out, desiring to inquire of, and come to meet and know this man whom she’d heard so much of. She took a difficult path and sought him out, yet how many apathetically, lethargically overlook and don’t give a 2nd thought to Jesus Christ? One infinitely greater than Solomon; Solomon’s kingdom doesn’t even compare, shouldn’t even mentioned in the same breath as Christ’s concerning comparison, what Christ offers is infinitely eternally greater than anything Solomon ever could. and Yet look at how he was sought out, how much more should Jesus be sought out, pressed in on and pursued? But people just blow Him off, how can judgment not visit a situation like that?

Vs13-14

Of course we can’t pass this by with out noticing the interesting # that’s associated with Solomon there in Vs 13. 666, as you know there’s only 1 other man associated with that # in the bible and that’s the anti-Christ. and Solomon being associated with wisdom, and we read in Rev 13:18 “*Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.*” What are you saying Jeff? Are you saying Solomon is the Anti-Christ?

No, but I find it interesting, perhaps there’s some clues in there, maybe he won’t start out as this vicious and evil dictator looking to rule the world. But one who has some good, respectable moral and upright standards in him who is eventually corrupt through the cares and riches of this world. He’s one that people will be drawn to and impressed by and if it were possible he’d deceive even the very elect. So I’m not seeking to draw conclusions but it’s some interesting food for thought.

Vs15-22

He had an incredibly exotic palatial estate, but it’s too bad that he’s noted for riches and wisdom in verse 22 as opposed to wisdom 1st and then riches. He started out with a priority on wisdom but it seems that as things went along the priority shifted to riches, and he discovered the vanity and emptiness therein. Only Christ satisfies, read Ecclesiastes for a commentary on the emptiness of life apart from a relationship with the Lord.

Vs23

Again we see that commission being fulfilled, kings coming from everywhere to see and hear from Solomon and the wisdom God had put in his heart.

Vs24-31

Now Solomon began his reign at a relatively young age, so the fact that he only reigned for 40 yrs means that God didn't honor his rule with long life. God had promised him in 1 Kings 3:14 that if he walked in His ways, kept His commands that He would lengthen his days. But Solomon didn't walk in God's ways, so apparently God didn't extend his life either. God is the giver and taker of life. Is Solomon in heaven? I don't know, his heart turned away from the Lord, the bible is very clear about that, he served and worshiped pagan gods, in many ways helped facilitated and reintroduce idol worship to the nation of Israel. Now it does seem that in the end of his life that perhaps he repented, if so we'll see him there. At the end of the book of Ecclesiastes when after he'd not withheld himself from anything that life under the sun had to offer, realizing the emptiness and vanity of every bit of it apart from a right relationship with the Lord he said, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."* Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

So Solomon's reign comes to a close and Israel quickly went from the apex of their existence as a nation to the bottom of the barrel. It doesn't take long, you abandon Christ and you just plummet spiritually, emotionally, morally, and on every level, the slopes are swift and slick. But we'll leave that topic for another study.

Prayer Points:

God it's our desire not to stand in a condescending manner toward Solomon and some of the choices that he made, but rather Lord we realize that You've recorded these things for *our* admonition. We want to learn from them so that his decisions in leaving his 1st love relationship with You doesn't become our own. But that we would seek You and serve You with our whole heart all the days of our lives. and We thank You that You are good and that Your mercy endures forever, that we can confess our sin should we slip and You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness, to renew us and revive us in You. Lord help us to abide in You, and may Your word abide in us to Your glory and for Your name's sake.