

2 Chronicles 7 • God's House

Introduction

If we carefully study all the biblical teachings and references to the tabernacle and temple, we'll see that God is trying to teach us what it means to live in His presence, to dwell continually with Him. It's a series of examples of what the condition of our heart should aspire to, as well as what things truly characterize a close and right relationship with Him.

¹Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. ²The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD'S house. ³All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, "Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting."

[Read 7:1-3]

Q: What is the immediate context in which this event took place?

A: The ark of the covenant has been brought into the newly built temple and the temple has been dedicated to the Lord (chapter 5). King Solomon has just dedicated the temple through his prayer (chapter 6).

Q: In verse 1, "fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices." What were the other two occasions in which fire from God consumed an offering, and why is this event with Solomon significant?

A: Although fire has come out of heaven on many occasions and consumed things (e.g., Sodom and Gomorrah, rebellion of Korah), the only two other occurrences where God sent fire to consume an offering involved Moses and Aaron (immediately after the dedication of the Aaronic priesthood; Leviticus 9:22-24) and the prophet Elijah (and the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel; 1 Kings 18:38). The significance here is that fire has now come down and consumed offerings from priest (Aaron, the greatest priest), prophet (Elijah, the greatest prophet) and king (Solomon, the greatest king). Jesus Himself held the offices of priest, prophet and king, only He was "greater" in all aspects.

[Read Leviticus 9:22-24]

Q: In this same vein, turn and read Leviticus 9:22-24, and compare.

A: With Moses and Aaron, the consumed offering took place at the tabernacle. With Solomon, it took place at the temple. The comparisons are a signal for the people to realize that God is in their midst.

²²Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. ²³Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴Then fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

[Read 7:11-22]

¹¹Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's palace, and successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the LORD and in his palace.

¹²Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. ¹³If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from

Q: Who is speaking in verses 12-22, and to whom?

A: The Lord is speaking to Solomon. This is the second appearance of the Lord to Solomon. The first took place while the tabernacle was still located at Gibeon (2 Chronicles 1:7) when the Lord gave Solomon the gift of wisdom.

Q: What would cause God to do the things He threatens to do to His people in verse 13?

A: This is interpreted from verse 14. Obviously, the people are proud and haughty, have not been dependent upon the Lord and praying, have not earnestly sought the Lord's face, and have been involved in wicked unrighteous things.

heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. ¹⁶For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

¹⁷“As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, even to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, ¹⁸then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel.’

¹⁹“But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, ²⁰then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ²¹As for this house, which was exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ ²²And they will say, ‘Because they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers who brought them from the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this adversity on them.’”

Q: Who is the subject in verses 13 and 14, and can verse 14 be legitimately applied to our nation today?

A: The subject is “My people.” In the specific context, God’s people are the Israelites, and this verse does not apply specifically to the heathen nations around them. The **principles** of verse 14 can be applied today, of course, and we know that from the NT as a whole. But the **specific subject** does not change... “My people....” So although the principles of this verse can be applied in general today, they apply specifically in context only to God’s people, which is Israel. There is the general teaching of this passage, but also the specific application.

Q: In view of the conclusion above, in what state is “the church” in our country today? Be specific, and relate to the four specific sins stated in verse 14.

A: Open answer.

Q: What is the promise of God in verse 15?

A: He will hear our prayers.

Q: Verse 16 states that God’s presence will be “forever” and “perpetually” in the “house.” How does this pan out in the events of the last few centuries of the Israelite nation?

A: Obviously, it doesn’t. The “house” (temple) is destroyed and we know that just before the destruction of the temple the Shekinah glory left it (Ezekiel). There are a number of possible interpretations.

(1) The meaning of “forever” and “perpetually” are not to be taken as “eternally,” but rather refers to “always there as long as God intends.” (There are many examples of this in the OT.)

(2) The promise was conditional upon the warnings issued throughout the text.

(3) The principle **is** true and exists today, only we are the temple, or house of God, the tabernacle and temple always being “patterns” of what was to come about in the NT.

Q: To whom specifically do verses 17 & 18 refer to?

A: The house of David though Solomon (the Davidic Covenant).

Q: What are the two specific sins mentioned in verse 19?

A: Turning away from God’s commandments and seeking other gods.

Q: In verses 20-22, what are the consequences from the warning of verse 19?

A: The Israelites will be cast out of the land and the temple will be reduced to rubble.

Point: Even though one of the major functions of the temple and the priesthood involves the ritual sacrifices, note that in v.15 God does not say He will pay special attention to the sacrifices but says, “Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the **prayer** offered in this place.” It’s the condition of the heart that concerns God, not following rituals, and this is an especially important teaching directly from God to us in this regard. The sacrifices are meant to be the end of the process, a visible indicator of our inward condition and how we’ve reconciled to Him.



Overall Application

If the principles of the OT still apply to Christians today, how are these verses applied...

- *To the church?*
- *To individual believers?*