

## **A Call to Repentance 2 Chronicles 6 – 7**

### **A Call to Repentance Introduction**

- In 1 Kings, we looked at Solomon's dedication of the newly built temple.
- Today we will read his prayer of dedication again.
  
- This time around, our focus will be less on Solomon's prayer and more on God's response to it.
- The Lord hears his prayer, but highlights the need for both Solomon and the people to be rightly connected with him.
  
- Chapter 7 is central to the message of 1 – 2 Chronicles.
- It is also central to the whole Old Testament.
- It offers hope to any who would desire to be completely reconciled to God.
  
- Leading up to Chapter 6, we should note:
  - The ark was brought into the Temple.
  - The priestly musicians were praising the Lord.
  - The Shekinah glory filled God's house.

### **Solomon Addresses the People 6:1-11**

- We might describe what Solomon says as the Story of How the Temple Came into Being.
- Ultimately, Solomon's focus is on the fact that the Lord has been faithful to fulfill all his promises.

### **Solomon's Prayer 6:12-42**

- Solomon begins his prayer by recognizing the greatness of God.
- We are often too hurried, to the point that our prayers are nothing but a list of quick requests.
- If we consider Christ's model prayer that begins with "Our Father," the personal requests don't come until a bit later.
  
- Much of the rest of this prayer can be described as a request for God to hear the prayers of his people.
- It is a prayer that God will hear prayer.
  
- For a bit more on this entire section, see the message from back in November entitled "Dedicating the Temple."
- It is also listed as 043 1 Kings 8 (mp3, pdf, pptx).

### **Fire from Heaven 7:1-3**

- The fire and Shekinah glory are repeated themes.
- The glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle that Moses constructed in the wilderness.
- Fire from heaven consumed the sacrifice that Elijah offered on Mt. Carmel.

### **The Dedication Feast 7:4-10**

- The animals offered at the feast were considered a sacrifice.
- The combination of prayer, sacrifice and joyful feasting was common in the Old Testament.
- The model still holds true for Christians today.
- Linking Prayer and Sacrifice:
  - *“Worship needs an outer form as well as an inner heart, and for prayer to be accepted it has to be accompanied by a visible sacrifice for sin. Christians can pray precisely because Jesus has offered on final and complete sacrifice for their sins.”*
    - Martin J. Selman, lecturer in Old Testament, Spurgeon’s College, London.

### **The Lord Appears to Solomon 7:11-22**

- We previously saw that the Lord appeared to Solomon at Gibeon.
- This was the time when Solomon first asked for wisdom.
- Here the Lord assures him that he intends to bless his efforts.
- 7:14 God’s aim is to forgive and heal.
- Humble repentance on our part is a necessary part of that process.
- This verse is specifically directed toward people who have sinned and know they are already under God’s judgment.
- 7:14 No other nation stands in exactly the same relationship with God as did Israel in the Old Testament.
- Still, God takes an interest in each nation’s spiritual welfare.
- Further, the spiritual health of any nation is strongly linked to the spiritual health of the Christians within it.
- 7:14 The New Testament also places great emphasis on the spiritual health of churches.
- God sees us not merely as a collection of individuals, but as individuals collected into groups.
- Here is where our concern should truly begin.
  - *“My concern is with the Church. The erosion of its theological character, its unwitting worldliness, its inability to think clearly and incisively about the culture, and the growing barbarism of that culture”*
    - David Wells, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

- Nupanga Weanzana emphasizes:
  - *“God’s promise is not a blank cheque. God clearly spells out the conditions on which he makes it. The conditions in 7:17-18 are introduced by as for you (singular) and are addressed to Solomon personally ...*
  - *“The conditions in 7:19-22 are addressed to a plural you, and thus apply to all the people. They too must be obedient. If they are not, they will face consequences.”*
- The four-part pattern in 7:14 is consistent with the Gospel and the New Testament.
  - Humble ourselves
  - Pray
  - Seek the face of God
  - Turn from sin
- We’ll conclude by taking each one of these individually.

### **A Call to Repentance    Epilogue**

- *“While the years of Solomon’s reign were undoubtedly Israel’s greatest in terms of wealth, fame, and political power, they were also the worst in terms of spiritual devotion to the Lord. Yes, Solomon began his reign at the altar, sacrificing to the Lord and asking Him for wisdom, but that didn’t continue.”*
  - Warren Wiersbe
- 1 Peter 4:17(ESV)      “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

### **A Call to Repentance    Conclusions**

- Here are those points once again:
  - Humble ourselves
  - Pray
  - Seek the face of God
  - Turn from sin

#### **Humble ourselves**

- In a culture that prides itself on self-sufficiency, it seems improper to humbly admit that we desperately need God.
- Still, admitting that we are broken, lost and useless without him is a perfect place to start.

#### **Pray**

- Our relationship with the Lord should be the closest, most significant relationship that we have.
- Prayer is perhaps the most ideal way to express our dependence upon him – and to highlight his significance.

### **Seek the face of God**

- To understand what it means to seek God, we might start with the situation of Adam and Eve in the garden.
- After they sinned, they hid themselves.
- We need to open ourselves up before him, desire him more than anything, long to know him like we never have before.

### **Turn from sin**

- Seeing our sin for what it is and confessing it is necessary, but not yet sufficient to satisfy God's intentions for us.
- We also need to turn from sin.
- Turning is the truest expression of repentance.
- Until the day when we can only talk about our sin in the past tense, we have not yet turned quite far enough.
  
- Here they are once more:
  - Humble ourselves
  - Pray
  - Seek the face of God
  - Turn from sin
  
- Let's conclude our time together by spending a few moments praying together in small groups.
- Let's also make 2 Chronicles 7:14 a key part of those prayers.