

# 2 Chronicles 4-7 • The Temple Completed and Dedicated

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We started 2 Chronicles last week, we covered those first 3 chapters, and so we're going to see where it takes us here tonight. Chronicles is a really interesting book, not tremendously different from 1 and 2 Kings, but different enough, primarily because it was written at a different time.

Chronicles was written much, much later than 1 and 2 Kings and we believe that Ezra was the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles. In the original Hebrew, 1 and 2 Chronicles are one continuous book. We broke them up into 2 books for the study or to better study them. Largely, 1 and 2 Chronicles deal with just the line of David. David was the second king of Israel. Saul was the first king, started off great, ended very badly.

God said, I'm going to raise up a man after My own heart and that was David. (1 Samuel 13:14) And so 1 and 2 Chronicles chart the kings of Israel through the Davidic line. Or, what we mean by that is from David's line or his descendants, and toward the end of David's life it was his deep desire to build a permanent temple for the Lord in Israel.

At that time the Ark of the Covenant was built in the wilderness. Moses had it built while the nation of Israel was wandering in the wilderness, but the Ark of the Covenant was being kept at someone's house. Literally, a guy by the name of Abinadab. And the tabernacle, which was a huge tent, which the Ark was supposed to be in, was off at a different location. And David longed very much to bring the worship of Israel back to the central place where the people of Israel could worship together, that being Jerusalem, and he wanted very much to build the temple. But the Lord spoke to him and said, you are not the one to do it. I am going to have your son do it.

Now Israel, since they are under a stable monarchy, Solomon now is on the throne, the son of David, and he is the one who has to build the temple in Jerusalem. I want to show you this evening, if I could up on the screen, a picture of, it's kind of a cutaway picture of the temple and so I want to put this up on the screen for you.



You're going to have to use your imagination a little bit here because we obviously don't have any pictures of it, photographs, there weren't such things. And this is a drawing based on the measurements that are given to us in the Scripture but the temple itself resembled the tabernacle in a lot of ways. And you'll notice that there are other things that are outside the temple and we're going to be talking about some of those things.

Down in the center on the bottom is a huge washing area for the priests. You'll see 5 wash basins here on the lower left bottom. Those are for washing the sacrifices after the animals were slain. You see on the far-right hand side the altar where the altar of burnt offering which was absolutely huge. And then the temple itself, you'll notice, has a cutaway view.

The large room in the front is what was referred to as the holy place, and then the room in the back, which is where the arc of the covenant would've been, was called the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies.

Now, almost everything took place outside. In fact, only the priests went into the holy place, and they would go there twice a day just to burn incense. And then as far as the Most Holy Place was concerned, or the Holy of Holies, that was only entered once a year when the high priest would go in with the blood of the sacrificial animal, and he would go in 2 times on the day of atonement.

First to sprinkle blood for his own sins, and then he would go and sprinkle blood for the sins of all Israel. And so, this was the central place of worship, and this is essentially what Solomon's temple looked like. Hopefully that helps as

we talk about these things and maybe you'll be able to refer back to some of these pictures, and now what I want to do also is put on the screen for you the chapters that I'm hoping to get through tonight which are chapters 4 through 7 and basically, this is what they cover.

### **What we will cover this evening...**

Ch 4 - Solomon completes the Temple

Ch 5 - The Ark and furnishings brought in

Ch 6 - Solomon's prayer of dedication

Ch 7 - Dedication celebration

In chapter 4, Solomon will complete the construction of the temple. In chapter 5, they will bring the ark and the other furnishings into the temple itself. In chapter 6, Solomon will offer up a prayer of dedication, a beautiful prayer. And then in chapter 7, there will be an actual dedication celebration with the Lord then also speaking to Solomon and appearing to him as well.

We're going to do our best to cover these chapters tonight, we'll see how far we actually get. Let's open up in prayer.

Heavenly Father as we take time to dig into the Old Testament tonight, we pray that You would lead us, we pray that You would guide us, and we pray that You would help us to understand these things from a New Testament perspective.

Lord, we're not under the same Covenant. We're not under the law. We're not under the same restrictions and commands that the Israelites were. But even as we look through these things, Lord, we learn a great deal.

We learn a great deal about You. We learn about how these things pointed toward a greater fulfillment down the road through the person of Jesus Christ. And we just learned a lot about history that helps us to understand the Bible.

We pray tonight that You would help us to learn and help us to absorb the things that we're seeing here in these Scriptures. Guide and direct our hearts, we ask, Father, in Jesus precious name, amen.

In chapter 3 Solomon began the building of the temple and some of the things that went into the temple. As we get into chapter 4, we're going to see them beginning to build this big bronze altar that you saw that picture of.

It says,

*“He made an altar of bronze, twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide and ten cubits high.” (ESV)*

I want to remind you that a cubit is about a foot and a half. if something is said to be 20 cubits, rather than doubling it, you can take half of that and add to it. Something that would have been 20 cubits long would be 30 feet long. Okay, hopefully that works for you.

Maybe this will be a help for you, and again, we're talking about the bronze altar, which is on the right side of your screen, right below where it says Solomon's Temple. And again, this was a huge altar that they had to walk on steps to get up to and this is where the sacrificial animals were placed, where they were burned, where the aroma of those sacrifices ascended to the Lord.

But I want to remind you that most of the activity of the temple took place outside of the temple. It didn't take place inside. Most everything happened outside.



Verse 2 goes on to say,

*“Then he made a sea of cast metal. It was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, (And that would be 15 feet, all right? And that is the thing you see pictured at the very bottom of the screen. He'll tell what they're for in just a bit.*

And it says it was) *and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference.*” It was 45 feet across.

<sup>3</sup> *Under it were figures of gourds, (under the lip of it) for 10 cubits, compassing the sea all around. The gourds were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast. (and) <sup>4</sup> It stood on twelve oxen, (not real animals, but the carvings of oxen) three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The sea (or this big container) was set on them, and all their rear parts were inward. (All these oxen are facing out all right)*

<sup>5</sup> *Its thickness was handbreadth. (And a hand breadth is literally the width of a hand, okay? That's pretty easy to remember) And its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily. It held 3,000 baths.*”

Now, again, this is something that we don't typically use, most of us anyway, but a bath was a measurement of about 6 gallons of liquid. So, you have 3,000 of those, you come up with 18,000 gallons of water that this thing held.

<sup>6</sup> *“He also made ten basins in which to wash, and set five on the south side, and five on the north side. (And those are the small basins that you see on one side of the building and the others are mostly hidden on the other side of the building. And it says let's see) In these they were to rinse off what was used for the burnt offering, and the sea was for the priests to wash in. (All right? And it says,)*

<sup>7</sup> *And he made ten golden lampstands as prescribed, and set them in the temple, (This would be in the holy place) five on the south side and five on the north. (And these lampstands, by the way, were huge) He also made ten tables and placed them in the temple, (presumably for the bread of the presence) five on the south side and five on the north. And he made a hundred basins of gold.”*

Your Bible, if you have a different translation may say golden sprinkling bowls or just golden bowls, and we assume that they were used for sprinkling of blood.

And it says in verse nine, *“He made the court of the priests and the great court and doors for the court and overlaid their doors with bronze.”*

Now, when you look at that picture. You don't see the court. Well, you do, but you don't see it encompassed by anything. You just see kind of some brickwork on the floor there, but what you're seeing there, that court that was closest to the

temple was called the Courtyard of the Priests. And it was really only the priests who would normally get to go in there.

Now during the dedication ceremony, other people were allowed, but after this, it's really just the priests, and by the way, if you have a Roman Catholic background and you're thinking of priests as it relates to the people who minister in a special, get that out of your head because the Jewish priests were completely different. They were an entire family line that came from one of the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi, and all who were descended from Levi were considered to be priests.

In order to be a High Priest, you had to be a descendant, a direct descendant of Aaron's, or excuse me, of Moses' brother Aaron. You have the Aaronic priests, and you have the Levitical priests, and it was the Levitical priests who would be involved in helping with all of these things and it was the Aaronic priests who had actually sprinkled the blood and go into the Holy of Holies.

And there was only one high priest at a time. This area that you're seeing there would be the courtyard of the priests. Then there would be a wall around that courtyard, and outside of that would be the general courtyard or what is referred to as the outer courts, and the outer courts was huge. It was an enormous area and it included places for women. It included places for Gentiles.

There were different needs or concerns that would be taken care of by this outer court and by the way, it was in the outer court that Jesus came in, seeing people buying and selling there, that He overturned the tables of the money changers and drove their animals out of that area because they were actually buying and selling in a corner of the outer court that was reserved for Gentiles, and that was the only place Gentiles could go.

They couldn't go any closer than that outer court area and that little corner that had been designated for them, and the Jews were using it to buy and sell. They turned it into a marketplace and Jesus was quite incensed with that whole process and he drove them out on two separate occasions saying this is to be a place of prayer and you've turned it into a den of thieves. because there was a lot of cheating going on in that area. Anyway, it goes on now, and verse 10, if you look with me, and it says,





*“And he set the sea (which is the huge washing basin at the bottom of the screen there) at the southeast corner of the house. (And here house is a word used for the temple structure) <sup>11</sup> Hiram also made the pots, the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram finished the work that he did for King Solomon on the house of God: <sup>12</sup> the two pillars, the bowls, and the two capitals on the top of the pillars; and the two latticeworks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars;*

*<sup>13</sup> and the 400 pomegranates for the two latticeworks, two rows of pomegranates for each latticework, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the pillars. (This thing was very ornate, and we talked about last week how pomegranates in the Middle East were a very popular fruit and they used carvings of pomegranates in their decorations. Verse 14) <sup>14</sup> He made the stands also, and the basins on the stands, <sup>15</sup> and the one sea, and the twelve oxen underneath it.*

*<sup>16</sup> The pots, the shovels, the forks, and all the equipment for these Hiram-abi made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD. <sup>17</sup> In the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredah. <sup>18</sup> Solomon made all these things in great quantities, for the weight of the bronze was not sought.”*

And that's just simply a way of saying that no one set to figure out how much was used because bronze was so common, they didn't really care. All right.

Verse 19. *“So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of God: (And then he begins to mention them) the golden altar,”* Now the golden altar. Can we see the golden altar in there?



Well, it would have been, you see the stairs that are leading to the, into the Most Holy Place in the back of the building. I don't know that there actually were stairs, but there was a door, a doorway, which was always open, and then a veil that hung between the holy place and the Most Holy Place. But there would have also been an altar right outside that door in the holy place right before you go into the Most Holy Place, but it was not an altar that animals would, were sacrificed upon.

It was an altar that incense was burned on, and that's what the priests did daily, to go in and burn incense. In fact, you'll remember that when John the Baptist's father received a vision, an angelic vision, saying that he and his wife was going to have a son and he was to name him John, he was actually in the temple burning incense because he was on duty. And he was the only one in there because he was of the Levitical priestly line and John the Baptist's father was in doing this work, saw this angel, and then came out. And of course you remember he had to motion with his hands because his ability to speak had been taken away because he didn't believe what he saw.

But he would have been burning incense on that altar right in front of the veil that went into the Most Holy Place. We're also told that the end of verse 19 that, *“the tables for the bread of the Presence,” the lamp stands and they're lamps of pure gold to burn before the inner sanctuary as prescribed; <sup>21</sup> the flowers, the*



*lamps, and the tongs, of purest gold; <sup>22</sup> the snuffers, (meaning to snuff out the lampstands) basins, dishes for incense, and fire pans, of pure gold, and the sockets of the temple, for the inner doors to the Most Holy Place and for the doors of the nave (or the holy place) of the temple were of gold.*”

Must have been amazing. Can you imagine walking in a room and most everything is gold. The walls are gold. The floor is gold. The doors are gold. And it's just crazy, but you'll remember gold was very common during Solomon's reign.

And so, we go on to chapter 5 and it says,

*“Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the LORD was finished. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, and stored the silver, the gold, and all the vessels in the treasuries of the house of God. (And) <sup>2</sup> Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. <sup>3</sup> And all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the feast that is in the seventh month.”*

Now this is the Feast of Tabernacles. By the way, there were actually 3 feasts that happened in the seventh month of the year, but we happen to know, based on when this thing ended, that it was the Feast of Tabernacles. This is a feast that would normally bring people into the city anyway to celebrate it, but Solomon is inviting them in now for an added time of celebration because the ark is being brought into the completed temple.

Let's move on verse 4,

*“And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. <sup>5</sup> And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the Levitical priests brought them up. <sup>6</sup> And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. <sup>8</sup> The cherubim (which are angels, and these are carvings of angels) spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. <sup>9</sup> And the poles were so long that*

*the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.”*

Now, that's an interesting statement. Ezra says, “*they are there to this day.*” He doesn't say the Ark is there, but he says the poles are there to this day, and it is possible. You see, we believe that the Ark of the Covenant was lost by the time Ezra wrote these things down. So, there wouldn't have been any Ark of the Covenant in the temple any longer.

Ezra lived in a time when the temple got rebuilt after it had been destroyed okay. Solomon's temple was destroyed. Ezra lived at a time when a new, less glorious temple was built. It's referred to as Zerubbabel's temple, and it is possible that they actually staged these poles sticking out from the holy place as it looked before but again, there was no Ark, right? Because we believe that it had been lost by that time and it had never been remade.

Verse 10,

*“There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.”*

Now some of you might be thinking, wait a minute, I remember my Old Testament. There was more in the Ark than just 2 tablets. There was also supposed to be a jar of manna, and there was also supposed to be a staff that belonged to Aaron that miraculously budded to show that he was God's chosen man for the high priesthood.

Where were they? Well, they'd been lost. Remember there's been years and years. The Ark has been stolen in the meantime. The Philistines had it for a period of about, I think it was about seven months or so, and who knows? Things could have been taken out. At this point in time, only the 10 commandments on 2 tablets were there in the Ark.

Verse 11.

*“And when the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves, without regard to their divisions,<sup>12</sup> and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters;<sup>13</sup> and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to*

*the LORD), and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever," (It tells us) the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, <sup>14</sup> so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God."*

This is God's way of communicating to the people of Israel that he had accepted the temple that they had purchased, that they'd built rather, and that they, that His Spirit was going to take up residence in this temple in a very real and genuine sort of a way. But when the presence of the Lord came into the temple, it says that the priest couldn't minister, they couldn't go in there and do their work.

They had to leave the temple precincts because the presence of the Lord was so thick. It's interesting, isn't it? When you think about the presence of the Lord, what do you think about? You know, we have different pictures, I suppose, in our mind about what the presence of the Lord is like, what being in the presence of the Lord, by the way, the Jews came to refer to this almost tangible, well, not almost, this tangible presence of the Lord as the Shekinah glory.

It's not a biblical word, but it's a word that comes from an old Hebrew that makes reference to the presence of the Lord dwelling or settling upon something or someone, and it was a word that they would use to describe this sort of a thing. This, the Shekinah glory was first seen when the Israelites were coming out of Egypt and the presence of the Lord went with them in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

This is the Shekinah glory, the resting glory, the settling glory, if you will of the Lord. But interesting, isn't it, that this presence of the Lord is described. I think of the Mount of Transfiguration in the New Testament when Jesus took Peter, James, and John up upon, up to the mountaintop. And there it says that a cloud just began to envelop them. And obviously the presence of the Lord, and in the case of Peter, James, and John, they were all kind of, they were very sleepy and eyes were heavy, but when they came to themselves they began to see what was going on and they saw Jesus glorified, magnified as the presence of the Lord filled that, that area and so forth.

But it's interesting to think about the presence of the Lord, isn't it? As I said, I think we each have a different sort of a description of what that might be. Have you ever felt the presence of the Lord? I'm not necessarily suggesting that it's a feeling because we have to be careful not to make things all about feelings

because then if I feel good, then God's with me and if I don't feel good, He's not with me.

The fact of the matter is the Bible says that God's indirect presence is with us all the time. But there is something about this tangible Shekinah glory, that is different from what you and I might otherwise describe as just the presence of God that is with us at all times. I think as Christians, we have underrated the presence of God.

I think we have minimized what it is to focus on the presence of the Lord, and I think one of the reasons is we just, we're so easily distractible, but we come together as a body, even like we did tonight to worship. We do it on a Sunday morning as well. We come to worship, and you guys know that one of the reasons we turn the lights down in here is to minimize distractions. It's not to focus people on what's happening up here.

It's to help people focus on the Lord, because people are coming in and they're moving around and taking their coats off and this and that, and we just try to minimize that because we want people to be focused on the presence of the Lord. But how often do we come into a church service when we're worshipping the Lord together as the body, by the way where God promises His presence in a very special way.

Jesus says, wherever 2 or more of you are gathered in My name, there I am among you and so forth. (Matthew 18:20) How conscious are we of the presence of the Lord? Are we thinking about it? Are we tuning in if you will, because the presence of the Lord is not something that we're going to understand intellectually. It's not something that we're going to understand with our five senses necessarily. We're going to key in on the presence of the Lord spiritually.

And that right there takes most of us and just we just, we're like spiritually, how in the world do I understand something spiritually? I mean, we're just not used to doing this, but the fact is when we come to Christ, our spirits are made alive. We are literally born again by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us new birth and we now have a connecting point with God through our spirit, and Christians who want to continue to connect with Him on a physical level are shortchanging themselves.

If God, I wish God would just speak to me. You know, He is speaking, but God wants to speak spiritually. He wants to talk, and by the way, do you know that when God speaks to us spiritually it transcends the spoken word by leaps and

bounds. God can communicate something to us on a spiritual level that would, and He can do it in a fraction of a second that would otherwise take an hour to communicate verbally because spiritually it just contains, there's so much more to the spirit realm.

You and I have to wait for words. You know, when I speak a sentence to you, you have to wait, typically from the beginning of the sentence to the end of the sentence to know what I've said, and then I take a breath and I say another sentence and you have to wait until the end. It's not the way it is spiritually. Thoughts and whole ideas can be communicated in a fraction of a second, and we just know, we just know, because we are spiritually connected.

Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria as He's sitting there talking to this woman. She wants to argue about whether, it was proper or best to worship in Jerusalem or there on the mountain in Samaria. And Jesus says to her, He says, the time is coming, and in fact, it's now here when it doesn't matter whether you worship in Jerusalem or whether you worship on this mountain or anywhere else, because here's what God is looking for. He's looking for people who worship in spirit, in spirit and in truth.

So, what does it mean to worship in spirit? What does it mean to be aware of the presence, the spiritual presence of God? And as Christians, do we spend any time trying to key into God's presence? I dare say we spend very little time. We are so keyed in to our five senses. Things I can see, hear, taste, feel, smell, right? I am so keyed in on these things that this whole spiritual dynamic is just left in the dust.

Spiritually? Really? How do I listen spiritually? Well, it's a sixth sense, believe me and it trumps all of the others. It's better, more effective than all of the other senses that you have, and God wants you and I to practice focusing on His presence, learning what it means to worship in spirit because, if you're worshipping in spirit, then it doesn't really matter what you're doing physically.

We get so bound up on physical things. Do you like to stand up or sit down when you worship? Who cares? Well, do you guys, I think real worship is raising your hands. That's what real, clapping your hands, that's real worship, dancing. That's real. That's physical. Jesus didn't say I'm looking for physical worshippers. I'm looking for people who are worshipping in spirit and in truth. And we get all hung up.

I don't like drums in church. Yeah, drums they just bother me. That's a physical thing. Get over it. In Israel, man, if you didn't like drums, you wouldn't like

their worship either. I mean, they were into percussion, believe you, with cymbals and all these other instruments, you know. Anyway, we get so high centered on those things, and we think that's worship. It's not. It's just an expression of worship, but it's not the thing itself. It's not worship itself.

Worship is worship in spirit, recognizing the presence of God. Lord, you're here. You're here. You promised that you would be here. I believe that You're going to be here, and even though I'm having a hard time getting past the guy behind me, two rows who sing in loud and off key, and this gal's perfume over here that's burning my sinuses. You know what I mean? There are things that distract us, right? I'm going to focus in on your presence. I'm going to learn to focus on your presence. It's so important you guys.

## Chapter 6,

*"Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. <sup>2</sup> But I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever." <sup>3</sup> Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. <sup>4</sup> And he said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying,*

*<sup>5</sup> 'Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there, and I chose no man as prince over my people Israel; but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there, and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.'*

*<sup>7</sup> Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>8</sup> But the LORD said to David my father, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it is not you who shall build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.'*

*<sup>10</sup> Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. <sup>11</sup> And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with the people of Israel." <sup>12</sup> Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands.*



*<sup>13</sup> Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court, and he stood on it. Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven, <sup>14</sup> and said, “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart,*

*<sup>15</sup> who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day.*

*<sup>16</sup> Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.’*

*<sup>17</sup> Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David. <sup>18</sup> “But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! <sup>19</sup> Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you,*

*<sup>20</sup> that your eyes may be open day and night toward this house, the place where you have promised to set your name, that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. <sup>21</sup> And listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray (check this phrase) toward this place. And listen from heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.”*

Now, did you catch that? Solomon is praying and he's saying Lord, He says, listen, I know that there's no house, there's no temple on earth that can possibly contain You. You are God. You are the LORD God who created heaven and earth, and I get it. This temple is not your home. However, you have chosen to allow your presence to be here in a manifest way.

I'm asking you when people pray, whether here at this temple or toward this temple, meaning they're not here in Jerusalem, but they're praying toward the temple here, listen to what your servants have to say. And now what he does beginning in verse 22 is he begins to give some examples of how people might pray either at, or toward the temple. He says in verse 22,

*<sup>22</sup> “If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, <sup>23</sup> then hear from heaven and act and judge your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his conduct on*

his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness. <sup>24</sup> “If your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and they turn again and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house,

<sup>25</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to them and to their fathers. <sup>26</sup> “When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you (then look at this) if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, <sup>27</sup> then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.

<sup>28</sup> “If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, (those are all things that would ruin crops) if their enemies besiege them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, <sup>29</sup> whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house, <sup>30</sup> then hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind,

<sup>31</sup> that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers. <sup>32</sup> “Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for the sake of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm, when he comes and prays toward this house, <sup>33</sup> hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.

<sup>34</sup> “If your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to you toward this city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, <sup>35</sup> then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea and maintain their cause. <sup>36</sup> “If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near, <sup>37</sup> yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,

*<sup>38</sup> if they repent with all their (mind) heart and with all their (heart) soul in the land of their captivity to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, <sup>39</sup> then hear from heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you.”*

Stop there for just a moment. Notice that Solomon even includes sins that are so grievous by the people of Israel that they are conquered by an enemy and carried captive off into another land. And we know that actually happened. We know that happened about 500ish years from when Solomon is saying this, a little bit less, and Daniel knew this Scripture. By the way, the temple had been destroyed. He knew that too. But Daniel knew this Scripture.

And every day at the time of prayer, Daniel would open his window in his room, and he'd face Jerusalem and he would pray. And he would repent for the whole nation of Israel, and he would say, God restore your people. That is how David's fellow wise men in the kingdom of Persia knew that Daniel prayed to the LORD God, and that is how they attempted to get him into trouble. You'll remember they tried to find something against Daniel, and they couldn't because he was a righteous man.

And so, they went to the king with this bogus thing saying, well king we think it'd be a good idea if you created a rule so that for the next month anybody who prays to any other god except you, will be thrown into the den of lions, and the king, being a prideful sort of guy, said, oh that's a good idea and so, he made a deal, and so Daniel hears about this too. Anybody who is seen praying to any other god but the king, will be thrown into the lion's den.

So, what does Daniel do? 3 times a day, opens up the window to his room, faces Jerusalem and prays. Oh, LORD God, I repent for the sins of my people. Restore your people Israel one day to their homeland, and he just continues to pray. But he's doing it because Solomon, he remembers this, he knows this, that Solomon besought the Lord and said, if anyone prays, hear from heaven, and respond. It's really a, it's really a beautiful story.

Verse 40 goes on and it says,

*“Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place. <sup>41</sup> “And now arise, O LORD God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in your goodness. <sup>42</sup> O LORD God, do not*

*turn away the face of your anointed one! Remember your steadfast love for David your servant.” (And it says)*

*<sup>1</sup> “As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire (literally) came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house.”*

Isn't that cool? Here's what's really cool. We see that fire came from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and we also know from a New Testament perspective that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, right? Right? In the Old Testament, it was a building. In the New Testament, what is the Church? I had a girl come up to me recently and say, I want to get married in a church, and I said, well, this isn't a church. This is just a building. We're the Church.

I know, you know what I mean. Well, we got the terminology all wrong, right? A building isn't the Church. People are the Church. You are, in fact, the Bible says, a temple of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, what was seen above each of the heads of the believers who were gathered together when the Holy Spirit fell upon those assembled believers? It says strange little tongues of fire were seen literally above their heads. It's the same picture, you guys.

It's this transfer of understanding from the temple as a building to the temple as a person. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit, designated that by this fire that settled over the heads of these first believers upon whom the Spirit fell, and it's a picture pointing back here to 2 Chronicles chapter 7. And it says,

*<sup>3</sup> “When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.” <sup>4</sup> Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the LORD. <sup>5</sup> King Solomon offered as a sacrifice 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. (That's crazy. So) the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.*

*<sup>6</sup> (And) The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the LORD that King David had made for giving thanks to the LORD—for his steadfast love endures forever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry; opposite them the priests sounded trumpets, and all Israel stood. <sup>7</sup> And Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD, for there he offered the burnt offering and the fat of the*

*peace offerings, because the bronze altar Solomon had made could not hold the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat.”*

And that basically is another way of saying Solomon had to come up with another altar because there was just too many offerings going on and they couldn't keep it all going on one place. So, they consecrated a second offering spot.

<sup>8</sup> *“At that time Solomon held the feast for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt. (And that's a way of just saying the widest extent of Israel's borders. People came from everywhere. That's what it's saying.)* <sup>9</sup> *And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for they had kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast (presumably here again, the Feast of Tabernacles) seven days.*

<sup>10</sup> *On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their homes, joyful and glad of heart for the prosperity that the LORD had granted to David and to Solomon and to Israel his people.* <sup>11</sup> *Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house. All that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the LORD and in his own house he successfully accomplished.*

<sup>12</sup> *Then (sometime after this) the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.* <sup>13</sup> *When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people,* <sup>14</sup> *if 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 heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

<sup>15</sup> *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.* <sup>16</sup> *For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.* <sup>17</sup> *And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules,* <sup>18</sup> *then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.’*

<sup>19</sup> *“But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them,* <sup>20</sup> *then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that 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.*

*<sup>21</sup> And at this house, which was exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' <sup>22</sup> Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore, he has brought all this disaster on them.'"*

I want to call your attention, just as we close here, to verse 14 again. It's a very popular verse. You hear it quoted a lot. If my people who are called by my name, and I have a tendency to believe that is a word for all time, for all of God's people who are called by His name, and that would include the Church. He goes on to say, if they do 4 things, notice what they are. Let me put these up on the screen for you here too, because it's good that we see him. He says,

- **Humble themselves**
- **Pray**
- **Seek God**
- **Turn from sin**

If they first of all humble themselves, second of all, if they pray, if they'll just pray. And next, if they will seek my face, to seek God. That means to search, to run after Him to spend time. You know how it is. Are you the person I have a hard time losing things? What I mean by that is if I lose something I like can't move on until I find it, you know and I'll turn a room upside down until I find it, lose this dumb. Every time my grandkids come over, we lose the remote to the TV, like every time.

And I've learned now that it falls under the couch and that's just where I'm going to find it. But until I learned that I was like, remote! I'm one of those people that just can't walk over to the TV and hit the button and I'll just do everything I can, but that's what seeking the Lord means. It means I'm going to turn this thing upside down until I find the Lord. I am going to seek Him until I know that I know that I know, we have met, and that's what he's talking about there.

And then fourthly, he says, if they will turn from their wicked ways or turn from their sin, then God says, this is what I'll do. I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin. Now He goes on to say, I will heal their land. Now, you've got to understand we don't have a land covenant with God, okay? Israel did. They had a physical land covenant. We don't. That doesn't mean God won't bless our land, if we're walking in an attitude of worship and so forth with God.



It doesn't mean that. I think He will, but we don't, we still don't have a physical covenant with God. Ours is a spiritual Covenant all right? But I think there are still, there's enough things in this passage in this verse that shows great insight into how we turn. He says, even after all these things happen, if you will humble yourselves, if you'll pray, if you'll seek my face, and if you'll turn from your old ways and turn to me, then I will, I'll be attentive to your prayer.