

A Prayer of Dedication

2 Chronicles 6:12-21
SS Lesson for 03/11/2018

Devotional Scripture: Ps 132:1-18

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

Key Verse: 2 Chron 6:14

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

DEDICATED PREPARATION (2 CHRON 6:12-13)

Prepare by going to God's alter (12)

An alter to learn (Deut 4:9-11)

An alter to hear God's word (Deut 31:10-12)

An alter to agree with God's word (Neh 8:2-6)

An alter to bind together in agreement and oath (Neh 10:28-29)

An alter for consecration (Joel 2:15-16)

Prepare by humbling oneself (13)

Humble because of having name written in heaven (Luke 10:20)

Humble because of being clothed with humility (Col 3:12)

Humble to be rich in faith (James 2:5)

Humble because God didn't have to choose us (Rom 11:20-21)

Humble because of being saved realizing we have been sinful (Luke 18:9-14)

DEDICATED WORSHIP (2 CHRON 6:14-18)

Worship God's greatness (14)

Praise God for His greatness because of His acts of power (Ps 150:2)

Praise God for His greatness because He is the Lord (Ezek 38:23)

Praise God for His greatness because He is worthy (Ps 48:1)

Praise God for His greatness because He is the great King (Ps 95:3)

Worship God's faithfulness (15-16)

A faithfulness that is based on a Divine promise (Heb 11:11)

A faithfulness that should be committed to (1 Peter 4:19)

A faithfulness that is irrevocable (Rom 11:29)

A faithfulness that means it will be done (1 Thess 5:24)

A faithfulness that cannot be disowned (2 Tim 2:13)

A faithfulness that is unswerving (Heb 10:23)

A faithfulness that is just and powerful (1 John 1:9)

Worship God's truth (17)

Truth that convicts me to believe and obey (Rom 16:25-27)

Truth that comes with power and deep convictions (1 Thess 1:5)

Truth that comes with a seal (Eph 1:13)

Truth that brings hope (Col 1:5)

Worship God's Presence (18)

Worship God's presence for His unfailing love (Ps 119:76)

Worship God's presence for His peace (Isa 54:10)

Worship God's presence for His rest (Ex 33:14)

Worship God's presence for His comfort in trials (Isa 43:1-2)

Worship God's presence for His being with us until the end of time (Matt 28:19-20)

Worship God's presence for His warming of the heart (Luke 24:30-32)

DEDICATED PETITION (2 CHRON 6:19-21)

Petition for hearing prayers (19-20)

Heard because God always hears the prayers of His saints (Ps 65:2)

Heard because God knows all before the prayer is spoken (Isa 65:24)

Heard because God is the patient hope of all saints (Mic 7:7)
Heard because God promised that what is asked will be received (Matt 7:7-8)

Petition for forgiveness (21)

Forgiveness because all will face judgment (Heb 9:27)
Forgiveness because of being accountable to God (Rom 14:12)
Forgiveness from a faithful Lord (1 John 1:8-9)
Forgiveness through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)
Forgiveness through God's grace (Eph 1:7)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM L. M. GRANT
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines the setting, substance, and the application in Solomon's **Prayer of Dedication**. The **study's aim** is to recognize that prayer is a unique activity in which we can engage. The **study's application** is to make our daily lives practically one continuous prayer.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: 2 Chron 6:14

And he said: "Lord God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts"

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

5:1. When all... the temple was completed (a construction project that lasted seven years; cf. 1 Kings 6:38), **Solomon** directed that **the furnishings** be brought into the **temple** and also that the offerings **David had** previously gathered (cf. 1 Chron. 22:14; 29:1-9) be **placed** within the temple **treasuries**. So great were David's and the leaders' contributions that Solomon's craftsmen had not used all those metals.

5:2-6. The only object which had not been put in the temple, but which was indispensable to its true function, was **the ark**. It had remained in a tabernacle **David** had built on Mount Zion (1 Chron. 15:1) but all was ready now for its removal to Solomon's temple. The time chosen for this momentous event was **the festival in the seventh month**, the Feast of Tabernacles in September-October (Lev. 23:33-36). This was in 959 B.C. With great fanfare the tribal leaders gathered to witness the procession **from Zion** (here the southeast portion of Jerusalem; cf. 2 Sam. 5:7, just south of Moriah where the temple was built). Apparently **the ark** had been temporarily removed from Moriah while the temple was under construction there. **The priests who were Levites**, bore not only **the ark** but also David's tabernacle and all its **furnishings** (2 Chron. 5:2-5). Like David before him, **Solomon** celebrated the transporting of the ark by **sacrificing** innumerable animals (v. 6).

5:7-10. When **the ark** arrived at the temple, **the priests**, the only persons authorized to do so, took it into **the most holy place** and placed it **beneath the** overarching **cherubim** (vv. 7-8). When the doors to the most holy place were open the **poles... could be seen** from **the holy place**, but **not from the outside**. The only contents in **the ark** were the **two stone tablets** of the Law (v. 10). The author of Hebrews wrote that the ark also contained Aaron's rod and a pot of manna (Heb. 9:4). This is nowhere attested in the Old Testament (Ex. 16:33-34 and Num. 17:10 state that the rod and manna were placed in front of the tabernacle, not in the ark). But these extra objects may have been added to the original contents sometime later than Solomon. Or perhaps they had been lost by Solomon's time.

5:11-14. After **the priests... withdrew from** the temple, they were joined by other priests and Levitical **musicians** who **stood to the east... of the great altar** (i.e., in front of it) and lifted up their voices and instruments (**120... trumpets**, plus **cymbals and other instruments**) in loud and joyous **praise to God**. On this special occasion all 24 priestly and Levitical **divisions** (v. 11) were represented. They did not follow the prescribed order of ministry (cf. 1 Chron. 24:1-19) because of the unique significance of this celebration. In their praise the musicians sang of the Lord's goodness and **love** (*hesed*, "loyal love"; cf. 2

Chron. 6:14; 7:3, 6; 20:21). **The LORD** showed His approval by filling **the temple** with the **cloud of glory**, which represented His presence in **the temple** (cf. Ex. 40:34-35; Ezek. 10:3-4).

6:1-11. The appearance of the glory of God in the cloud (5:13-14) reminded **Solomon** that God had made His presence known to Moses in the same way though in a much more modest tent, or tabernacle. Now, however, **the LORD... would dwell** in a more permanent magnificence (vv. 1-2). Solomon addressed the people in a blessing (vv. 4-11). First he praised **God** for having **fulfilled** His promises **to... David** by choosing him and his dynasty, selecting **Jerusalem** as the divine “residence,” and permitting the erection of **a temple** (vv. 4-6). The term **name**, which occurs 14 times in this chapter and 14 times elsewhere in 2 Chronicles, refers to God’s attributes or presence (cf. 1 Chron. 13:6). **David** had not been allowed to build **the temple** but God in His infinite grace had ordained that Solomon, David’s **son**, do so and now that **promise** had come to pass (2 Chron. 6:7-11).

6:12-21. After blessing the people, **Solomon** offered a dedicatory prayer (vv. 14-42). Kneeling on a specially constructed **bronze platform... in the center of the outer court** (vv. 12-13), he extolled **the LORD** for His **covenant-keeping** faithfulness (vv. 14-15). **Love** translates *hesed*, meaning God’s loyal love (cf. 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21). The king then implored the **LORD** to continue His favor on David’s dynasty as the people continued to serve Him **according to the Law** (6:16-17). In one of the finest statements of divine transcendence found in the Scriptures, Solomon acknowledged the insufficiency of a mere **temple**, no matter how grand and commodious, to **contain** the Lord of **the heavens** (v. 18). Yet Solomon was persuaded of God’s interest in human affairs. He besought the **LORD** to recognize the **temple** as a focal point of His communion with **Israel** (**hear** occurs five times in vv. 19-21) and to respond **from heaven** (cf. vv. 23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39), His true **dwelling place** (cf. vv. 30, 33, 39; 30:27). Because Solomon spoke of the Israelites praying **toward this place** (6:21; cf. vv. 34, 38), centuries later Daniel faced Jerusalem as he prayed (Dan. 6:10).

6:22-31. Solomon also prayed that the **temple** might be the place where God would adjudicate **wrongs** between individuals (vv. 22-23), where He would forgive the nation when it was **defeated** in battle because of **sin** (vv. 24-25), and where He would hear their prayers of repentance when drought (vv. 26-27) and other disasters would befall them as a result of divine judgment (vv. 28-31).

6:32-39. In a spirit of magnanimity, Solomon also entreated the Lord to **hear** the prayers of foreigners who might go to the **temple** to seek His face (vv. 32-33). Solomon prayed that in times of **war** the Lord would bless His people in battle (vv. 34-35). If, however, they sinned and were taken **captives to a foreign land** and there repented, Solomon prayed that they would be forgiven (vv. 36-39).

6:40-42. In a closing hymnic refrain, Solomon interceded for the temple (God’s **resting place**), the **priests**, the people (**saints**), and himself as the **anointed** successor to David (cf. Ps. 132:8-11). God should do these things, Solomon suggested, because of His **kindnesses** (pl. of *hesed*, “loyal love”; cf. 2 Chron. 5:13; 6:14; 7:3, 6; 20:21), which He had **promised to David** and to his dynasty.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

It is often said that public prayers should not be used as a vehicle for preaching to others. This is true if the preaching consists of voicing pet peeves or riding personal hobbyhorses. But the Bible is filled with public prayers that proclaim truth. Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple is no exception. The prayer, which runs from 2 Chronicles 6:14 to the end of the chapter (vs. 42), is largely a plea for forgiveness for anticipated future sins on the part of God’s people and for deliverance from the variety of afflictions those sins would bring (vss. 21-42), Solomon knew his people’s propensity for falling away from devotion to the God who loved and provided for them. Ironically, he would be one of the first to do so later in life. But at this moment, the words he spoke were altogether true and unblemished. Although all the pleas that Solomon voiced point indispensably to God’s holiness, grace, and mercy, they are founded upon basic truths uttered at the beginning of the prayer. The text contains the groundwork that Solomon laid in proclaiming the kind of God that Israel had come together at the temple to worship. The first thing to be emphasized about God was His utter incomparability. “There is no God like thee.” The Old Testament makes this point over and over (Exod. 15:11; Deut. 4:35; 2 Sam. 7:22; Ps. 86:8; Isa. 40:25; 46:9, to cite just a few). It was one of the basic truths Israel needed to learn and be reminded of repeatedly. The Lord’s incomparability has no bounds. There is none like Him “in the heaven, nor in the earth.” Even the most hard-bitten pagan would not have made such a claim for any of the gods he bowed down to. It is human nature to try to make God something less than He is and more like familiar things, but this tendency must

be resisted at all costs. God is not just another part of creation; He is totally above it and unique. But this incomparable God also relates to people personally. He keeps "covenant"; that is, He is faithful to keep His promises. He is not like the pagan gods, who say one thing and do another. He does not keep His word only at convenience, as so many people do. God's character is also marked by mercy. Pagan gods could be capricious and cruel, but God shows mercy and kindness in His dealings with His people, "thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts." We might at first think that such people do not need mercy, but no one who walks closely with God would ever be so proud as to think God's mercy and grace were not needed every moment. And it is only by God's mercy that we are enabled to walk before Him in the first place. Unlike Solomon and the Israelites, we do not have a temple to dedicate to the Lord. If we are Christ's and have the Holy Spirit, we are God's temple, and we can dedicate our lives to Him every day. We can do this fully confident that He is a faithful God who will keep every promise He has made to us.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

When someone who has been in a leadership position steps down after many years, the next person in the position often faces a daunting task. This is seen in sports, when a coach of a certain team resigns or retires after being in charge of that team for many years. Perhaps in the process the coach has become something of a legend and has led the team to several championships. That's often referred to as a "tough act to follow" or having "big shoes to fill."

Consider the position that Solomon was in when he became king of Israel. David, his father, was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). This is not to say that David was perfect (as the events involving Bathsheba and Uriah reveal). But the general direction of David's life was one well pleasing to God, and he had gained the admiration and respect of the entire nation. How does one follow such an individual who has set the bar so high? It is certainly to Solomon's credit that he possessed a sense of unworthiness to fill his father's shoes (or sandals): "I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties" (1 Kings 3:7). Then came Solomon's request of the Lord for "a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" (3:9). Thus Solomon recognized an important truth: the key to following in his father's footsteps was to follow his father's God.

One of Solomon's primary tasks as king of Israel was to finish a project his father had prepared for: building a temple to the Lord. This was something that David himself had sincerely desired to accomplish. But God did not permit David to fulfill his desire, telling him in 1 Chronicles 22:8, "You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight." David did, however, provide valuable assistance and resources so that Solomon would have a head start in completing the massive building project (22:5). Today's lesson from 2 Chronicles 6 records a portion of the dedication ceremony for the finished temple over which Solomon presided. As the ceremony began, "while the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them" (2 Chronicles 6:3). He then called attention to the Lord's fulfillment of his promise to David that his son, Solomon, would reign in his place and would build a house for the Lord (6:10). The Lord acknowledged that David "did well to have it in your heart to build a temple for my Name" (6:8), but that was not the Lord's intention. Solomon understood that the completed temple was not a personal accomplishment for him as much as it was the keeping of a divine promise. The king was merely an instrument in the hands of the master builder. The temple's arrangement was similar to that of the tabernacle in that there were three main parts: the Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies), the Holy Place, and the outer courtyard (Exodus 26, 27). Prior to the ceremony of dedication, the priests had carried the ark of the covenant into the Most Holy Place (2 Chronicles 5:7). After they had done so, the temple was filled with a cloud signifying the presence of the Lord. So overwhelming was this presence that "the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God" (5:14).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Dedicated Preparation (2 Chron 6:12-13)

12 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands

13 (for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven);

Prepare by going to God's altar (12)

An altar to learn (Deut 4:9-11)

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. 10 Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children." 11 You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness.

An altar to hear God's word (Deut 31:10-12)

10 Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. 12 Assemble the people — men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns — so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law.

An altar to agree with God's word (Neh 8:2-6)

2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. 4 Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam. 5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

An altar to bind together in agreement and oath (Neh 10:28-29)

28 "The rest of the people — priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand — 29 all these now join their brothers the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord.

An altar for consecration (Joel 2:15-16)

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. 16 Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber.

Prepare by humbling oneself (13)

Humble because of having name written in heaven (Luke 10:20)

20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Humble because of being clothed with humility (Col 3:12)

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Humble to be rich in faith (James 2:5)

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

Humble because God didn't have to choose us (Rom 11:20-21)

20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Humble because of being saved realizing we have been sinful (Luke 18:9-14)

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Dedicated Worship (2 Chron 6:14-18)

14 and he said: "Lord God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.

15 You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day.

16 Therefore, Lord God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.'

17 And now, O Lord God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.

18 "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!

Worship God's greatness (14)

Praise God for His greatness because of His acts of power (Ps 150:2)

2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise God for His greatness because He is the Lord (Ezek 38:23)

23 And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord.'

Praise God for His greatness because He is worthy (Ps 48:1)

48 Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

Praise God for His greatness because He is the great King (Ps 95:3)

3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Worship God's faithfulness (15-16)

A faithfulness that is based on a Divine promise (Heb 11:11)

11 By faith Abraham, even though he was past age — and Sarah herself was barren — was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

A faithfulness that should be committed to (1 Peter 4:19)

19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

A faithfulness that is irrevocable (Rom 11:29)

29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

A faithfulness that means it will be done (1 Thess 5:24)

24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

A faithfulness that cannot be disowned (2 Tim 2:13)

13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

A faithfulness that is unswerving (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

A faithfulness that is just and powerful (1 John 1:9)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Worship God's truth (17)

Truth that convicts me to believe and obey (Rom 16:25-27)

25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him— 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Truth that comes with power and deep convictions (1 Thess 1:5)

5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

Truth that comes with a seal (Eph 1:13)

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Truth that brings hope (Col 1:5)

5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel.

Worship God's Presence (18)

Worship God's presence for His unfailing love (Ps 119:76)

76 May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant.

Worship God's presence for His peace (Isa 54:10)

10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Worship God's presence for His rest (Ex 33:14)

14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Worship God's presence for His comfort in trials (Isa 43:1-2)

1 But now, this is what the Lord says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Worship God's presence for His being with us until the end of time (Matt 28:19-20)

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Worship God's presence for His warming of the heart (Luke 24:30-32)

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Dedicated Petition (2 Chron 6:19-21)

19 Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O Lord my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You:

20 that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant prays toward this place.

21 And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive.

Petition for hearing prayers (19-20)

Heard because God always hears the prayers of His saints (Ps 65:2)

2 O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.

Heard because God knows all before the prayer is spoken (Isa 65:24)

24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Heard because God is the patient hope of all saints (Mic 7:7)

7 But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.

Heard because God promised that what is asked will be received (Matt 7:7-8)

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Petition for forgiveness (21)

Forgiveness because all will face judgment (Heb 9:27)

27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Forgiveness because of being accountable to God (Rom 14:12)

12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Forgiveness from a faithful Lord (1 John 1:8-9)

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Forgiveness through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness through God's grace (Eph 1:7)

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from L. M. Grant

SOLOMON SPEAKS TO GOD AND TO THE PEOPLE (1-11)

Solomon began his inauguration address by first speaking to the Lord, reminding Him that He had said He would dwell in the dark cloud and that he (Solomon) had built this exalted house for the Lord to dwell in.

Then he turned to address the whole assembly of Israel, the people standing at attention. We are told he blessed them, but the way he did this was by saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands what He spoke with His mouth to my father David" (v.3). For if God is blessed, the people will be blessed also. The Lord had said that since the time He brought Israel out of Egypt, He had chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to have a house built suitable for the honor of His name. Nor had He chosen any man to be a suitable ruler for Israel until He gave David that honor (vv.5-6). Now finally God's choice of a city has been made clear. He had chosen Jerusalem, which name means "the foundation of peace," a truly appropriate place for God's dwelling, for the foundation of peace is righteousness. "The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (Isaiah 32:17). In fact, this verse looks forward to the millennium, when Christ the King "will reign in righteousness" (Isaiah 3:11), a wonderful contrast to all the kings who have ever reigned on earth.

In addressing the people, Solomon speaks of David being God's chosen king, therefore Christ is called "the Son of David." Yet it was in David's heart to himself build a house for the name of the Lord, and God did not allow him to, though God commended him that such a desire was in his heart (vv.7-8). But God promised David that his son would build the temple, and now God's Word was fulfilled in the completion of that great project. Solomon added also that he had put the ark in the temple, for it was the ark of God's covenant with Israel, the centre He had chosen.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER (12-42)

Solomon then stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly and spread out his hands. Verse 13 is a parenthesis, speaking of his having made a bronze platform five cubits square and three cubits high, the same size as the altar, where all the assembly could see him. He stood on this, then knelt down and spread out his hands toward heaven (v.13).

He began his prayer by giving God His place of great dignity and honor as the Lord God of Israel, greater than all others, and the One who keeps His covenant with those who keep His covenant also, walking before Him with all their heart (v.14). He shows too his appreciation of God's having kept His promise, no doubt in the fact of Solomon's being put on the throne and enabled to build the temple (v.15).

He prayed therefore that God would further keep His promise to David that he should not fail to have a man sit before God on the throne of Israel, but on condition that David's sons would walk in God's law (v. 16). In fact, this promise will be fully fulfilled in spite of many of David's sons failing to obey God's law. God overrules all the failure in such a way that the Son of David, the Lord Jesus, will take the throne of Israel in perfect righteousness, but this is still future.

Meanwhile, because Israel has not kept God's covenant, they (including David's posterity) are suffering great sorrow and obscurity, and will do so until they finally recognize Jesus as the true Son of David, the Messiah of Israel at the end of their Great Tribulation.

But Solomon asks a pertinent question, "Will God indeed dwell with men on earth?" (v.18). To do so would require an astounding act of grace, for the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain God. He is infinite, without limits, and omnipresent, present everywhere at all times. We cannot understand the greatness of His being. He cannot be confined anywhere, yet in a very real sense He dwelt in the temple, in the holiest of all, though in thick darkness. This is a paradox in which we may rejoice. Solomon implored God's attention and concern as regards his intercession for Israel, with God's eyes open toward the temple. He realized that when Israel prayed, they would have need of forgiveness, and he asks God to forgive.

In fact, each one of the detailed prayers that follow contemplates a condition of failure on the part of Israel, except for verses 32 to 35. In verse 22 the case of one sinning against another is seen and intercession made that God would hear prayer in this matter and judge according to truth (v.23). Verses 24 and 25 deal with prayer being made toward the temple when Israel's sin has caused them to suffer defeat by an enemy, asking that when they pray, God may bring them back to their land.

This was in measure fulfilled when God brought a large number of Judah back from Babylon after the 70 years of captivity. But the true fulfilment of this will be when all twelve tribes are gathered back by the power of the Lord Jesus at the end of the Great Tribulation, when their guilt will practically drive them in repentance to the Lord.

Verses 26-27 contemplate the case of Israel's sin causing God's judgment by withholding rain from the land. In the days of Ahab, Elijah prophesied drought like this, which lasted 3 ½ years (just the length of the future Great tribulation), though we do not read that Israel after this forsook their sin and sought the Lord. Thus, God's grace was even more considerate than Solomon asked. However, in verse 27, Solomon asked for Israel's restoration in order that God might teach them the good way in which they should walk, as well as sending rain on the land. The full accomplishment of this will not be until the introduction of the millennium, when Israel will have the character of being willing volunteers in the day of the Lord's power (Psalms 110:3), and the land will bear fruit abundantly.

Verses 28-31 consider a case of famine in the land, which might follow the withholding of rain, but might be accompanied by pestilence, blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers. This might occur, however, when enemies besieged them in their cities, when they had no access to food. Plagues and sickness could be very prevalent at such a time. If this would drive people in prayer and confession to God, then Solomon asks that God would hear from heaven and forgive Israel's sin, rendering to each individual such mercy as is appropriate, considering the state of each heart (v.30). The desired effect was that Israel would fear the Lord (v.31).

In verses 32 and 33 Solomon prays for any foreigner who had come to Israel from a far country because of his regard for God's great name. If such a person would come and pray in the temple (for the temple court was considered a part of the temple), Solomon asks that God would hear his prayer and answer it, that this might have some real effect on all the peoples of the earth in recognising the greatness of the God of Israel (v.33).

If God should send Israel to battle against their enemies and they would pray toward Jerusalem and the temple there, then Solomon asks that God would hear and answer their prayer, and maintain their cause (vv.34-35). Let us note that he does not pray for this if Israel went to battle without God's direction. We can expect God's blessing only in God's way.

In verses 36-39 Solomon speaks of an occasion when Israel sins against God (not "if they sin", "for there is no one who does not sin") and God's anger causes them to be delivered to the captivity of an enemy, whether near or far. He adds, "when" (not "if") they come to themselves in the land where they are carried captive, and repent and make supplication to God in the land of their captivity, saying "We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness." There is no shadow of doubt that Israel will do this eventually, though centuries have passed since they have been scattered through the world. The pride of man's natural heart is so great that he will stubbornly continue in rebellion against God even while going through the forms of religious observance. But the Great Tribulation will eventually break down their arrogant pride to make such a confession as is seen in verse 37.

It will be a work of God's grace in their hearts that moves all this, causing them to return to the Lord with all their heart and soul in the land of their captivity (v.38). For this prayer of Solomon has in it the element of a

prophecy. Even today the eyes of many Israelites are turned toward Jerusalem, though still in a state of coldness toward the Lord Jesus. But very soon a great change will take place, for the Great Tribulation is certainly not far off.

Solomon prays that God would hear from heaven, and He certainly will, in such a way that the remnant of Israel will be fully restored to their land permanently, with the full, free forgiveness of God (v.39).

The prayer draws to its close with an appeal to God for His kind attention to what is prayed (v.40), and Solomon's desire that the Lord God would, with the ark of His strength, find a true resting place, and that the priests, those who served in the temple, be clothed with salvation, and all the saints rejoice in God's goodness (v. 41).

Finally, and most importantly, he draws attention to the grace of God's Anointed. Christ alone is the Centre of blessing for mankind, God's anointed King. It is in Him that all the interests of believers are maintained, and all God's interests too. The finishing sentence is most precious also, "Remember the mercies of Your servant David." This refers to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 13:34), though Solomon did not realize this significance at the time he spoke.

(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/2-chronicles-6.html>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

As we consider the portion of Solomon's prayer recorded in today's text, we have noted its primary themes. These are (1) God's fulfillment of his covenant promises to David and (2) Solomon's acknowledgment of the temple in Jerusalem as the place where he would put his name. It was a visual reminder of God's desire to hear the prayers of his covenant people Israel. But how does such a prayer apply to Christians? It is important to note the manner in which Solomon begins his prayer: "Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth" (2 Chronicles 6:14). Those words can be prayed with the utmost confidence by any follower of Jesus today. The enduring truth is that there is no god like the God of the Bible. This God is the one who has revealed himself to fallen, lost humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. As Hebrews 1:2 tells us, "In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son." Jesus is the superior and final revelation of God; despite the "many roads to Heaven" heresy that continues to deceive people, if anyone rejects him as Savior, that person rejects all hope of salvation and eternal life (John 3:36; 14:6). God is also still in the covenant-keeping business. The covenant Solomon alluded to in his prayer was mainly the covenant God made with David; the new covenant established by Jesus fulfills that promise to David. God still requires of us, as he did of those under previous covenants, that we walk before the Lord "wholeheartedly" (2 Chronicles 6:14). Paul uses similar terminology when he tells Christians to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Ephesians 4:1). We can also be certain that God will keep his promises to us as he did with David, a point noted by Solomon in his prayer (2 Chronicles 6:15). Paul declared that "no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken" (2 Corinthians 1:20). What God has spoken by his mouth he will carry out with his hand, as Solomon affirmed in 2 Chronicles 6:15. God continues to speak throughout the rest of Scripture, and his words and actions are as dependable for us as they were for Solomon. His God is indeed our God

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. God's power is sovereign. Even kings and rulers bow down before Him (2 Chron. 6:12-13)
2. When we honor God's covenant, He always keeps His promises (vss. 14-15)
3. Sometimes it takes multiple generations to complete a task for God (vss. 16-17)
4. It is an honor for the presence of God to dwell in our house of worship (vs. 18)
5. We should reverence the house of God
6. The house of God is a place of refuge, forgiveness, and healing (vss. 19-21)