

God's Glory in the House

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II Chronicles 5:1

Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

Solomon had succeeded in building that great house for God, that great temple. It was one of the most beautiful buildings that ever had been built. It was magnificent.

Once this building was completed the next step was to dedicate it to the Lord (see chapters 6 and 7).

II Chronicles 7:1,2

Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.

Divine Acceptance

God not only heard Solomon's prayer of dedication, but He showed His acceptance by sending fire from heaven. This fire wasn't just a figure of speech. It was a reality. Fire actually came down from heaven. They had prepared the altar for sacrifices, but they didn't set any fire to burn those sacrifices.

This is one of the things God did numerous times when He honored and blessed something: such as in the days of Moses, King David, the prophet Elijah, and here at the dedication of temple in the days of King Solomon.

What does this really say to us? That the temple was dedicated to God, and God was showing His acceptance.

When Solomon had made an end of praying, it seems that the fire automatically fell from heaven. A multitude was gathered that day for this dedication. They all saw this sign that God was pleased that day.

Now, we can have those things in our lives that please God. We can please God by our lives, or we can displease God. In all of our ways this is the thing that we want to know: that we please God. We want to please God in all things. We want our works to be accepted by Him. We want

our prayers to be honored and answered by Him. This should be our heart's desire, the same as it was in the heart of King Solomon that day.

Heavenly Fire

As we read on, we will see that this was more than God lighting the sacrifice. There was a fire from heaven loose in that place, a fire from heaven burning on the altar of sacrifice.

It's not just a fire; remember that. It's not just a fire. They could have set fire to the sacrifice. But this was a divine fire, a heavenly fire. God sent this fire from heaven.

Now, what are we going to do with this fire? Wise men would look at that fire, and say, "God sent this fire. God set this fire, and we're never going to let it go out." Do you understand that?

In the Days of Moses

Exodus 40:34,38

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

When David Bought the Land

There was a fire that came down from God when David bought the land from Oran, the very lot where this temple was built. There was no building then, but David called this place the house of God.

I Chronicles 21:26

And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.

When we think about fire sent from God, would we want to keep it going? To the children of Israel it was their responsibility to keep the fire burning. They weren't to let it go out. After all, it was fire sent from heaven, a fire that was divinely set.

The fire sent from heaven that day consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices. Then there was a second blast of blessing: The glory of the Lord filled the house!

So, the divine fire came down and lit the sacrifice, and then the glory moved into the house: the glory of God.

God's Glory in the House

Now, I can't think of anything in my mind that would be more heartening than to be present when the power and the presence of the Shekinah glory of God comes in and fills the house, filling the sanctuary with His Divine presence.

What would it be like for the glory of God to fill His house? We're talking about God's glory. Not just glory: *God's* glory.

This got started off on the right foot. God sent the fire, and God sent the glory. Do those two things go together? The fire and the glory? In this realm, we could look to see, then, that this was a blessing.

II Chronicles 7:2,3

And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.

Doesn't this sound like a real solemn time? Would you like to have been there that day? Would you like to have seen what they saw that day? Would you like to be caught up in a glory like that?

Maybe you wouldn't want to be that close. Would you want to be right there where the fire of God came down? Would you be scared? Would you run from it? What would you do?

Holy fire. That was holy fire. It was God's acceptance of what was being done that day. We've got to take that to heart. God accepted that house. He accepted the works of the hands of all those who took part in building that house. He accepted the works of King Solomon to see that this was done. It was God's plan, God's will. They did the will of God in building that place.

The Heavenly Pattern

You have to understand that this house is going to mean something for generations to come. It was built with one mission in mind.

The plans to build this temple were drawn by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost took hold of David's hand and directed him in drawing the plans for the temple. It was what God ordered, just as it was in the days of Moses when God gave him the plan for the Tabernacle. He was to build it just exactly as God showed him: because it was the type of things in heaven.

You know, there's a tabernacle in heaven. You know, there's a temple in heaven. We have a picture on the earth of a tabernacle and of a temple. Both are in heaven (see Heb 9, Rev 11:19).

Now, God showed His pleasure in the works of their hearts and their hands. We should take note here. If God takes pleasure in what we do, it's going to really be blessed. And when God divinely orders something or brings to pass something that was His plan, we should expect it will come forth with His blessing. It should come with the fire and with the glory.

That's how God did it that day. How would He do it today? Maybe in the same manner. But, listen, let's just be in this realm:

An Acceptable Sacrifice

II Chronicles 7:4,5

Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

Look at the sacrifices that were made that day. It's almost unbelievable that that many animals were sacrificed at one time.

You know, when it came to sacrifices, God is the one who ordained a sacrifice like this to begin with (in the realm of animal sacrifice in those days). But they were but a shadow of the final sacrifice at Calvary. Since then God has done away with sacrifices. He doesn't want anything to do with them any more.

Hebrews 10:1-6

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure.

They had gotten themselves into the realm where they thought all that God wanted was sacrifices. They thought it was no longer a weighty matter such as loving God, a weighty matter like putting their whole heart into the service of the Lord.

How easy it was to go and throw another carcass on the altar, thinking that would take care of everything, leaving them free to go back to their sinful ways.

When our heart is not in it, then God doesn't want any part in it either. When God is doing something and we're a part of it, He wants us to put our heart into what we're doing and into Him.

So, it doesn't mean anything to God if it doesn't come from our heart. It's just formality, having no ring to it in God's heart and mind.

Back in the Old Testament He eventually was dissatisfied with their sacrifices to the place where He said right out, "Away with them! Don't bring me any more sacrifices."

He no longer wanted their sacrifices because they weren't offering them with their whole heart. But here at the dedication of the temple they really sacrificed from their hearts, and God took great pleasure in that which they did.

Heartfelt Praise

I think this is something we should consider, God taking pleasure in what we do. We want to do that which is right, that which is pleasing.

What will please God? Real deep serious praise and thanksgiving for what He's done for us. This will touch the heart of God because it comes from a heart that loves Him.

Hebrews 13:15

By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.

So we want to be in the place, then, where we have something to offer God which is pleasing to Him. True praise has always been acceptable to God.

We're talking about praise from the depths of our hearts. Like love comes from the heart, so does true praise. These things must come from our hearts if we want them to be acceptable.

There was a day when the temple was being dedicated, where sacrifice was acceptable. It was a day God took pleasure in. He was pleased with their sacrifices that day. Everybody's heart was in this.

Now, look at what Israel gained as the result of that day. It wasn't just having a house that had more gold than Fort Knox probably has. This was the house which was dedicated to God and His service. God's name was going to be in this place.

Today, we're looking for God to send revival: to see the divine power of the Holy Spirit working miracles, bringing forth old-time revival, where the Lord would be pleased and do wonderful things for the sole purpose of bringing glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

We want something that starts with a fire in heaven. It's not the revival that *we* want to start: It's the revival God will start. It's revival that will come as the result of the outpouring of His Spirit, poured out upon us to His glory.

So let's look to God with praise and thanksgiving in our hearts. Let's be ready with open hearts to offer the Lord a great praise offering, giving Him praise and honor and glory for the great things He has done. Let's be ready to glorify Him, to magnify Him.

It's wonderful to see God moving with wonderful works in our midst, to see evidence of His presence. But I want you to know that there may be something which is required of us, something which is expected of us.

II Chronicles 7:12

And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

This deals with another experience which happened to King Solomon. The Lord appeared to Solomon. As a matter of fact, He appeared twice.

Wouldn't it be a blessing to have an encounter like this with the Lord? Actually, it could be as scary as it could be a blessing because you'd be brought into His presence in a way you had never been before.

Now, God had things to say to Solomon that would reveal to the children of Israel what a blessing it would be to them for His house to be there in Jerusalem.

Warning Signs

II Chronicles 7:13

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people

Question: Why would God send things like this to His people? You know what locusts are. My, they can eat a field in no time. They just fly over and eat anything that's green. When they're gone, there's nothing left but bare trees and bare fields.

Question: Why would God shut up heaven so there would be no rain? or send pestilence amongst His people?

When the Navy stops a ship at sea to search it, why do they shoot across the front of the bow? It's a warning. The next one would be shot lower, if there needs to be a next one.

Why would God bring these things upon His people? Because He knew they wouldn't always be as happy and joyous in Him as they were that day when the temple was being dedicated. He knew they weren't always going to be walking in His victory. He knew they were going to let their hearts be drawn back to other things. And all of the glory and greatness of God that was present that day wouldn't mean as much to them.

When Jesus was upon the earth, we find He went into the temple twice to cleanse it. He drove out those people who were making a business out of the house of God. They were all gathered

with their tables trying to make a buck. They were selling animals for sacrifices, and it was a big business.

The temple wasn't meant to be a place of business. It was a house of sacrifice, not a place of business. Jesus was displeased with these money changers. He said they had made His Father's house a house of merchandise, when His Father's house was made to be a house of prayer. You can see the drifting away. God knew this drifting away would come.

Have you ever cooled down, getting cool in your soul and in your spirit? You don't even praise God any more. You skipped as many services as you thought you could get away with without making yourself look too bad. You get cold in your soul, drawing back — and then you're gone. Where did you go?

You see, God knew that days like that would come, because they came in the past. Look at what He had to deal with in the wilderness with the children of Israel.

There in the wilderness they had received the heavenly tabernacle, built after the heavenly pattern. But they didn't always keep up there and keep the victory.

Sometimes God brought strong judgments upon them in the wilderness. A lot of people lost their lives out there because they were playing with God.

He said He would do these things to get their attention: to show them they needed to get their hearts straightened out, needed some old time repentance, getting cleaned up and back with God.

God's Remedy

So this is what God is dealing with here. And here's the remedy:

II Chronicles 7:14

If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

This is the remedy. God will get your attention, and then if you'll turn back to Him, He will bring the blessing back.

It's the only way God can let you know that He's dealing, that things aren't right. And if things all go wrong in our lives we might want to check up and ask the Lord: "Why? Where am I failing? What am I failing to do? Lord, am I doing like the children of Israel did? Have I lost my love, my affection? Have I stopped praising the Lord? Have I started doing other things, putting my heart in those things, instead of in You?"

He's able to get our attention. This is what generally precedes revival. You can't just have a revival. We have to look at what's going on, and say: "God, we know we want revival, but we

realize it seems like heaven is brass; or it seems like it doesn't rain any more; or the bugs are so bad they're eating up all our crops: so many people are getting sick."

We can look at the fact that sometimes it may be that God is knocking at the door: "Look, it's time to settle back now and consider you're not doing good, you're not doing right. You have to get back to Me. You have to put your heart back in Me."

God Wants Our Hearts

God isn't interested in what you offer Him if your heart isn't in it. He doesn't want you to give Him all of you *except* for your heart. He wants your heart, your love, your affection for Him, your devotion. These things are important to God.

So we know our first love means a lot to Him. We should examine our lives to see what He is displeased with. We don't want there to be anything that would cause Him to be displeased. We want His blessing. We want His eye on us. And it should mean a lot to us that our heart stays filled with His love and praise.

Let's take a moment to analyze verse 14. *If My people*: God is talking about His people, Israel. They were a people which were called by His name. *Shall humble themselves and pray*: Now, for God to tell His people to humble themselves and pray is one thing, but He goes on to tell them: *and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways*.

So the address is to God's people to turn away from their wicked ways and turn unto Him in humility.

This is why there had been no rain, and why locusts would eat the fields, and why pestilences would be plaguing the people. All because of that which is spelled out for us here. This should cause you and me to question, "Lord, is there any wicked way in me?"

He doesn't want even one wicked way in us. Not one. If there's any wicked way in us, we should turn.

You know it's a wicked, evil thing to depart from the living God. It's an evil thing to draw back and withdraw your love from God. It's evil, and it will catch up with you. God has His own unique ways to let us know that things aren't right. He tells us here what would happen if we turned from our wicked ways, turning back unto Him: turned back to putting our heart into serving Him.

If we're going to serve God, we will have no other gods, not even the god of self. We look to say, God is looking to have an exclusive relationship with us in this realm. We have the one true God, and we can't share our love with anything or anyone above Him. We can't love God and love the world too.

I John 2:15

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Let's look at all this and consider how we want to keep our hearts open to the Lord and to His ways. We don't want to cool down. It's easy enough to do if we're not careful. But we want to always keep the fire burning.

He would tell us what to do here: Humble yourselves and pray, and seek His face and turn from your wicked ways. This is what will bring results.

How near is God to you? How close? We all need to be very serious about this, putting all our heart into our walk with Him. This is what will bring the greatest results.

We need to let the church be a house of praise, filled with praises unto God. It's hard, sometimes, to get God's people to praise God. They come to church tired from the day's work, loaded down with cares.

But what is God expecting? Let's give Him what He would really expect of us: our love and our praise. Our love, because God so loved us. He has shed such love abroad in our hearts, and He wants that love to return unto Him. Loving us, He wants us to love Him.

I wish I could tell you the kind of revival God is going to bring, but all I've heard from Him is that He is going to give us a revival like we've never seen before. So, how do I compare it? What do I compare it to? When I see it, then I'll know what He has been speaking about.