



2 Chronicles 4-6

Tape #7131
II Chronicles 4-6
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to II Chronicles, chapter four. Solomon is building the temple, we are told concerning the dimensions of the buildings. In chapter four, we start to get into the furnishings of the temple. So the furnishings, the first thing that is mentioned, is the altar of brass. The altar on which the sacrifices were burned.

This altar of brass was thirty five feet long, and thirty five feet wide, and fifteen feet tall (4:1).

The temple that was built by Solomon was much larger than the tabernacle built by Moses. About three times the size, and thus the furnishings were much larger in the temple, than they were in the tabernacle. The altar is much larger.

Then he made also this molten sea of brass, [This was the bath, or the areas for the priests to bathe, prior to their offering of the sacrifices.] this molten sea was ten cubits from brim to brim, [Or a diameter of ten feet] and a circumference of ten cubits [Which would be fifteen feet. And a circumference of thirty cubits, or twenty cubits, thirty feet. As I said, there will be a lot of that tonight. This molten sea of brass was,] five cubits high; and around the rim there were these engraved oxen, and then they made these oxen of brass to set it on, twelve of them, and three of them facing in each direction: and this sea [this brass sea] was set on the top of these oxen. The thickness of the brass was the handsbreadth, [So, about four inches or so thick. Big brass basin, or bath, or pool for them to bathe in.] which would hold three thousand baths of water. [Which is about eight gallons. So, it's a good size swimming pool of about twenty four thousand gallons. If any of you have swimming pools, you know that, that's a pretty good sized pool, if you have twenty four thousand gallons in your pool. So this big brass laver for the priests to bathe in, prior to their making their offerings and going in before the Lord. It describes the work around the top.] the top brim like a cup, with the flowers, lilies; and these engraven little oxen around. [the thing] it held three thousand baths (4:2-5).

Or eight thousand, or which three thousand times the eight gallons, twenty four thousand.

He also made ten smaller lavers, put five on the right hand, and five on the left, [that was] to wash the offerings: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed them; but the big sea of brass was for the priests to wash in. [Instead of one candlestick, like in the tabernacle.] He had ten candlesticks of gold according to their form, [That is the form of the candelabra that was in the tabernacle.] and five were on the right hand side, and five were on the left hand side. He also made ten tables, [Instead of the one table] of shewbread, he placed them in the temple, five on the right side, five on the left. And then he made a hundred basins of gold. Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and then the great court, and the doors for the court, he overlaid them with brass. Then he set on the right side of the east end, over against the south. And Hiram had made the pots, and the shovels, [The shovels were to remove the coals, after the fire on the altar.] the basins. And Huram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God; To wit, the two pillars, the pommels, and the chapters [Or these top sections of these big brass columns.] and the wreaths, [and all] the four hundred pomegranates; [And the whole ornamentation] that was around these brass pillars. And he [Hiram had] made all the bases, the lavers the sea, and the twelve oxen under it. The pots, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, did Hiram make for king Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass. He made these in the plain of Jordan [On the other side of the river. Which means that then they had to transport them all, but evidently the clay down there was great for casting. So,] they cast them, in the clay ground that was between Succoth and Zeredathah. And Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: out of brass, so much that it could not be weighed (4:6-18).

It was just you know, defied the scales.

Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the holy place, were made of pure gold; The flowers, and the lamps, the tongs, he made of gold, perfect gold; And then the snuffers, and the basins, the spoons, and the censers were of pure gold: and the entry of the house,

the inner courts thereof for the most holy place, the doors of the house of the temple, were of gold (4:19-22).

So surely a very magnificent building, and as we pointed out, the cost was into the billions of dollars, as far as the gold and the silver, and the metals that were used.

Chapter 5

Thus all of the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished: and he brought all of the things that David his father had dedicated; all of the silver, the gold, the instruments, he put among the treasures of the house of God (5:1).

So, finishing the temple, now they bring in all of the rich treasure that David had gathered for it.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, to Jerusalem, in order that they might bring this ark of the covenant up out of the city of David, which was below the temple mount (5:2).

It was lower on the sides of mount Moriah, the city of David, there on what they call, "Ophel". They were going to bring the ark of the covenant from the tent that David had made, and placed the ark of the covenant in. They were gonna bring it on up now into the temple, into the Holy of Holies of the new temple.

So all of the great men of Israel were gathered for this event. And all of the elders came; the Levites took up the ark. And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all of the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, these did the priests and the Levites bring up. And also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, they sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be counted or numbered for the multitude (5:3-6).

So a glorious day, the day of the dedication, as they bring now the ark of the covenant, the final bit of furniture to be brought into the temple. Once it is there, then officially temple worship would be inaugurated. So the sacrifices uncounted.

The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the Holy of Holies, [The oracle is, of course the Holy of Holies] of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims: [That we studied earlier, that Solomon had built in the holy place. These are not the cherubims that were on the top of the ark of the covenant itself.] For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above (5:7-8).

Having placed the ark then, in its position, they pulled out these staves. They weren't to touch the ark. They had rings of gold in the ark and they would put these staves, or these sticks, through these rings of gold, and then they would carry the ark by lifting the sticks. They would hold the sticks, and when they'd set it down, they wouldn't touch it, but would set it down using the posts. Then they'd draw out these sticks from these gold rings, that were on the side of the ark of the covenant. So, having set it in its place...

They then pulled out these gold covered sticks, or staves, and they set them, there in the Holy of Holies (5:9).

Now it is interesting in verse ten, that at this time...

There was nothing in the ark, except the two tables which Moses had put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt (5:10).

So the only furnishing now, or I mean, the only objects within the ark of the covenant, was the two tables of stone. When Moses originally set the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle, he had placed there, and the ark, the ark of the covenant is reference really to the, the two tables of stone. Because therein is the covenant that God made with the children of Israel. The, He established, "If you keep these laws, then I will be your God, you'll be my people". So it was, the covenant that God made was on the two tables of stone. There were the ten commandments engraved by God. So thus the ten commandments being in this little box, it was called the ark of the covenant.

But, when Moses first placed the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle, he also had placed in there a jar of manna, which was to remind them of God's provision for them in their time of need. Then he also had placed Aaron's rod.

You remember when the fellow by the name of Korah, who was of the Levites, rebelled against Moses, got a group of fellows together and said that, "Moses is taken too much on himself. He's practicing

nepotism. He's set his brother Aaron as the high priest. We have as much right to offer to God, as does Aaron, because we're Levites too. Moses is just wrong in this". They came down to Moses complaining. At that time, you remember, Moses said, "Alright let's set out the rods of the priests before the Lord, in the tabernacle. In the morning when they came in, these rods, or uh, staves upon which the fellows would use for walking in the wilderness, Aaron's rod had blossomed, budded, and had almonds on it. Overnight! So, by that they took the indication that God had chosen Aaron, as the one to offer the sacrifices. Thus the high priest was always to be a descendant of Aaron.

So, that was in the ark of the covenant originally. Aaron's rod that had budded, the jar of manna, the two tables of stone upon which the law was written. Now at this point, only the two tables of stone are there. What happened to the rod? We don't know. What happened to the jar of manna? We don't know. It could be that the Philistines ripped it off, when they had the ark of the covenant in the land of the Philistines. But there is no indication as to where the manna, and the rod of Aaron's were, at this point. There was only in it, the two tables of stone.

It is interesting to realize that probably some place on the earth today, this ark of the covenant still exists, no doubt, hidden by Jeremiah. In it still the two tables of stone, upon which God wrote the ten commandments. Talk about archeological finds! This would surely be one of the greatest archeological discoveries in the history of man. If someone could find that ark of the covenant with the tables of stone inside. I'll tell ya, I would pay a pretty penny to be able to view that!

So it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and they did not then wait by course: [All of the priests were participating in this dedication.] The Levites which were the singers, all of them Asaph, Heman, and of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brothers, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, [And the psalteries are stringed instruments, harps.] they stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred a twenty priests as they were sounding their trumpets (5:11-12):)

So a hundred and twenty priests sounding on the silver trumpets. Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, and their group, singing, and using their instruments, the cymbals, and the, no doubt, for percussion, for the rhythm, for their songs, the vials, and the harps.

It came to pass, as the trumpeters and the singers were as one, [The trumpeters were blasting, the people were singing, and it was such a blending, it was like one glorious praise being lifted unto God.] they were making the sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets the cymbals and the instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (5:13-14).

God's presence, often in the old testament represented by a cloud. In the dedication of the tabernacle in the wilderness, made by Moses, when they dedicated that tabernacle, the cloud descended on the tabernacle. They had that same experience where the priests could not stand to minister, because of the glory of the presence of the Lord. Just a wipe out by the glory of God's presence.

So now, in the dedication of the temple, the similar kind of an experience, as God's presence filled the temple. They just could not stand to minister there, by the reason of this power and presence of God. For the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. It's an awesome, and a beautiful scene. Their lifting their voices in praise and thanksgiving unto God. The praising of the Lord simultaneously with the instruments, with the singers, with the trumpets, until there was just that unison, that blending, that oneness of heart, worship, and the subsequent presence of God, and glory of God filling the place.

In the twenty second Psalm, we read that, "The Lord inhabits the praises of His people, Israel". I think that you can also say, that just the Lord inhabits the praises of His people. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst". I think that one of our problems today, is our spiritual dullness, and our failure to discern the presence of God. God is constantly present with us, as we gather to worship Jesus, as we gather to study the word, gathering in the name of Jesus, He is present with us.

But we're not always aware or conscious of the presence of Jesus in our lives. I think that, that is a weakness on us in a spiritual sense. I think that if we were more conscious of the presence of Jesus, that we'd, we would be more careful about the things that we do. If I were aware that the Lord is here, then I would want my actions to be pleasing unto Him. I would not want to do something that would offend Him, I would not want to say something that would be contrary, but I would want to do, and to say those things that would be pleasing unto Him. Thus, I need to have a keener consciousness of the presence of the Lord. I pray that God will help me in this realm, to come to a keener consciousness that the Lord is with me.

Paul the apostle, talking to the Grecian philosophers on Mars hill, said, "As I was going through the streets there in Athens, down below," and from Mars Hill, you look down on the Agoura, the downtown area of ancient Greece. At one end, the marvelous temples, the other end, another temple, of course above you, the temple of Athena, and these temples that were built to the various gods. And, Paul said, "As I was walking through your streets, I came to the realization that you're a very religious people. For I have seen your altars, and your temples, and I did observe one altar, and on it there was the inscription, 'To the unknown God'." You see, the Greeks had deified everything they could think of. They had deified their emotions, they had deified the planets, they had deified just about everything you can think of, they made a god out of it. Just in case they might of missed one, (they didn't want him to be offended), so some fellow built an altar, and he said, "This is to the unknown god. In case you're there, and we don't know you, you know, this is for you". So, Paul said, "I perceive you're very religious, and I saw this one altar down there, that had been inscribed to the unknown god. This is the God I would like to talk to you about. Because this is the God who made the heavens and the earth, and we are His offspring. In Him, we live, and we move, and we have our being. We're surrounded by Him, we live in Him, we move in Him, we have our being. He is our source of life itself!" Paul was consciousness of the presence, the all prevailing presence of God, and so also, need we be conscious of the all prevailing presence of God.

Chapter 6

Then Solomon said, The Lord hath said [Now, at this point, they got the temple furnished, the glory has come down, and Solomon has built this little platform for himself, to stand upon to address the people, and then to kneel upon to pray, as he offers his prayer of dedication. So he is now standing on this little platform, about four and a half feet high, and about seven and a half feet square. Just a little platform that had been made for this purpose. And Solomon, addressing the people said, "The Lord hath said",] that he would dwell in the thick darkness. But I have built a house of habitation for him, a place of his dwelling for ever. And the king turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all of the congregation stood. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth to my father David (6:1-4),

God had promised David that though he could not build the house, that God would give him a son, who would reign on the throne after him, and this son would build a house. So Solomon is aware of this promise to David, and aware of his obligation to build this house. Now it's complete. "Blessed be Jehovah, or Yahweh, the God of Israel, who with his hands has fulfilled that which he spoke to my father, saying",

Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel: But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel (6:5-6).

So, though from the beginning there was no city, nor king, now God has chosen the city of Jerusalem, and God has chosen David as the man to rule over the people.

Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Yahweh, God of Israel. But Yahweh said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well in that it was in your heart (6:7-8):

So that God accounted that which was in the heart of David, as having done it. As God accounts what's in our hearts. Now not always are we able to fulfill what is in our hearts, to do for the Lord. Sometimes through lack of opportunity, and sometimes being unqualified, as David was unqualified to build a house.

Yet, we have this strong desire in our hearts, I desire in my heart to do this for God, and God looks on my heart. He sees the heart's desire, and He accounts that. He gives credit to me for what is the desire of my heart to do.

Now, David surely expressed this as a strong desire of his heart, because when he was not allowed to build the temple, at least he drew the plans, and he gathered the materials, the gold in abundance, and the cedars in abundance, and he had the stones hewn. He had the thing all set, but it was in the heart of David to do it.

Now, that is great, if your heart is right, but if your heart is not right, then God also sees that which is in your heart. God judges us more from the attitudes of our hearts, then from our actions. Because, a persons actions may be perfectly correct, but the attitude of their heart is wrong. God looks on the hearts of man, where man judges from appearances, and man looks on the outward. God looks on your heart, He knows what's in your heart. So Jesus told us that, "Out of the heart proceeds all of this wickedness". God saw in the times of Noah, that the imagination of the hearts of man was continually evil. That is why David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord".

A change of heart! That is what we need. A heart that is after God, rather than a heart that is after the flesh, and the things of the flesh. I need for God to create in me, a clean heart, a pure heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". So, what's in my heart, what's in your heart, that's what's so important. There are cases in the bible, the case of David is, is a classic. Where his heart was right towards God, his actions were often wrong. David was guilty of some bad sins, and yet his heart basically, was towards God, and God saw his heart, and forgave the bad actions. Much preferred to right actions, and a bad heart.

You see, I can be motivated to do things by other motivations than love, a love for God. I can be motivated to do things by fear, I can be motivated to do things by a desire for recognition, and glory. The Pharisees were doing their whole little righteous scene, in order to be seen of men, to receive the praises of men. Jesus said, "Ye are they which seek the praises of men". "You love to go in the marketplace, being called, "Doctor, Doctor", you know, you, you really eat up that stuff. Receiving the honors from man. But He said, "You ought to be more interested in God's opinion of you, rather than man's opinion of you, and God looks at the heart, and He sees what's in the heart". "O God create in me a clean heart. God make me pure, pure in heart." So it was in the heart of David. God said, "Because it's in your heart, you did well".

Notwithstanding [God said. "Though it's in your heart to do it",] you shall not build the house; but your son which shall come forth out of your loins, he shall build the house for my name. The Lord therefore hath performed his word that he has spoken: [God said this today, and now, God has done it. Oh it's always so great when you see the fulfilled promises of God. You stand there, and God had promised, and now it's a reality. For so long, it was just a dream. A lot of times, I've found, in building programs, you can get bogged down, and you think, "Will this thing ever get finished!". But oh that glorious day, when it's all done, you got the final inspection, and you can flip on the lights, and you know the whole thing is now operational. It's always a glorious experience, and now the temple is operational. "We're moving in. God has kept His word! God promised my father David that He would raise up a son, who would build a house, and I've done it! It's complete! Here it is, is all of its glorious splendor! The Lord has performed His word that He spoke."] *for I have risen up in the place of my father David, and I am sitting on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and I have built the house for the name of Yahweh God of Israel. And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which [we] he made with the children of man (6:9-11).*

So, "It's, it's done. You know, God has come down and filled His temple!"

And he stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all of the congregation of Israel, and then he spread forth his hands: For Solomon had made this little brass scaffold, seven and a half feet long, and seven and a half feet wide, and four and a half feet tall, he set it there in the middle of the court: and he stood upon it, as he talked to the people, but then as he went to talk to God, he kneeled upon his knees before all of the congregation of Israel, and he spread forth his hands toward heaven (6:12-13),

So get the picture now. Here is this temple, marvelous, gloriously splendid. Here is king Solomon in all of his royal glory, and wealth. Here is this little brass scaffolding, platform, and now the king is kneeling,

having acknowledged the faithfulness of God, to keep His word. He's kneeling and his hands are stretched up towards heaven, and he begins to offer to God this prayer of dedication, as he dedicates now, this house unto the Lord. So get it in your mind, get the picture. The people are gathered.

And Solomon said, O Yahweh God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven, or in earth; which keeps the covenant, and shows mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts: [David had walked before the Lord with all of his heart, and thus God kept the covenant that He made with David, and God was merciful to David, even as God is merciful to us, if our hearts are committed to Him. "Who shows mercy to the servants that walk before thee with all their hearts."] Thou which has kept with thy servant David my father that which you promised him; that which you spoke with your mouth, you have fulfilled in your hand, and we see it this day (6:14-15).

"This is the fulfillment, we see it, we testify to it."

Now therefore, O Yahweh God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me (6:16).

So, "Lord you've kept your promise, we see the temple, but you also promised my father that there would never cease his seed from sitting on the throne. Now that of course, we haven't yet seen. Here I am, but you know what's gonna happen after me? And, you promised that if his descendants will walk in your ways, there will never cease one from David sitting upon the throne."

Notice that, that is a conditional promise, if they would walk in the ways of the Lord". I count as non-biblical, and non-sensible, the claims of Herbert W. Armstrong, in the world church, that the queen of England today is a direct descendant of David. For it is the only continuing monarchy in that Jeremiah spirited off one of the princes, one of the descendants of David went to England, and there uh, you know that descendant of David became uh, the leader over England. The word, "Ish", in Hebrew is the word for "man", and so you have the ten tribes of Israel having fled, and the "Dan-ish", people are the descendants of Dan. "Dan-ish", the men of Dan. The "Brit-ish", uh, I don't know what tribe "Brit" was, but uh, the "Brit-ish", and so they, they try to make this whole fabricated kind of a story. Because, "God's promise to David you know, thus you have to have someone sitting on the throne, because God said never cease..."

God's promise was conditional, "If they will follow me, and keep my covenant". What happened to Zedekiah? What happened to Jeconiah, and to those? They broke the covenant of God. Read the prophets and see, how that God, because they had broken the covenant, said He was gonna cut them off. He was gonna cut off the monarchy. They did not keep the covenant of God, and thus the promise that was made to David, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and He shall sit upon the throne for ever. But not a physical descendant, sitting as the cigar smoking uh, guy in LA would have you to believe. There are the "Dan-ish" people, and there are the "Swede-ish" people, and there are the "Brit-ish" people and there are the "Fool-ish" people too! Ha, ha!

So, having acknowledged God as kept the covenant, the promise, "Lord, continue to keep with thy servant David my father, that which you have promised him, concerning his descendants thereupon the throne of Israel. If the children take heed to walk in the law".

Now then, O Yahweh God of Israel, let the word be verified, which you have spoken unto your servant David. But will God in deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built (6:17-18)!

He had a true concept of God, and that is that God is omnipresent. He fills the entire universe. Thus God cannot be localized. "If the whole universe cannot contain God, how much less this house that I have built!"

Sometimes I fear lest we have a sense of God being in a certain place. We develop that because there are places where God has revealed Himself to us, or God has met us, and they become a special place, because of an experience that I had with God in that place. There are several places in which I've had a very marvelous experience of the presence of God, where God met me.

Now there is a tendency to sort of make an altar in that place and to begin to worship the place. "Oh I long to go back to that tree! Because, I was sitting under that tree in the evening, worshiping the Lord and the Lord came, and began to deal with me, and deal with the issues of my life. There He challenged me to

commit myself totally to Him, and to serve Him, and I remember that tree, there in camp Radford, where I was sitting there that evening, when God was dealing with me. Glorious!" Sometimes in times of spiritual dryness, you know, and where we've sort of, our relationship with God is sort of cooled a bit. We think, "Oh if I could only go back and sit under that tree again. There's where I can meet God!"

Hey, you can meet God wherever you are! You don't need a tree! "I went back to Radford, and they cut the tree down." "I don't know how they could be so sacrilegious you know! Don't they know God met me there?" But we need to realize that God will meet me anywhere. That God is everywhere. Yes we have this place where we come and meet God, we have this place where God manifests His presence to us. But if this place should burn down, God would still meet with us. If we were out there in the yard, or out in the football field, God would meet with us. If we were on the beach, no matter where, the Lord fills the universe. He doesn't occupy one place in it, but He occupies the entire universe. "If the entire universe cannot hold God, how much less this house that I have built? But yet Lord,"...

Have respect therefore to the prayer of your servant, and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, hearken unto the cry and the prayer which your servant prays before you: That your eyes will be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that you would put your name there; to hearken to the prayers which your servant pray towards this place (6:19-20).

So, "Lord I know that the universe can't contain you, but do let your eyes be upon this place. This place that we have made, and built, and have dedicated unto thee. When people come here to pray, Lord let them really experience the power of your presence, and the answers to their prayers".

Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, an of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when you hear, forgive (6:21).

"So Lord, let them turn towards this place when they pray." Now it became, and is still the custom of the Jews when they pray, to turn towards Jerusalem. No matter where they are, they always seek to face Jerusalem when they pray. You remember, in the book of Daniel, when the decree was made, that, uh, by Darius, that if any man should pray to any other person other than the king, for a period of thirty days, he was to be put to death. Daniel when he knew the king had decided, signed the decree, went as he was accustomed of doing, three times a day, into his home, opened the windows towards Jerusalem, and prayed unto the Lord. But, he was facing, and they always do, they face Jerusalem, because of this prayer of Solomon. "If they turn and face this place Lord, as they pray." So it has become the practice, and the custom of the Jew, to face Jerusalem when they pray. "If they turn towards this place, then hearken, from your place in heaven, and when you hear, forgive."

And if a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and he swears upon the altar, he comes to the altar of God to take this oath and he swears upon the altar in this house; Then hear thou from heaven, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, and by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness (6:22-23).

"So Lord, let there be from here, righteous judgement going forth."

If thy people Israel be put to the worse before their enemies, because they have sinned against thee; [And notice, the problems are equated with sin, and all the way through the problems will be equated with sin. "If the people Israel are put to the worse before their enemies, because they have sinned against thee;"] and if they shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, bring them again into the land which you gave to them and to their fathers. [Now if there come plagues upon the land...] If the heaven is shut up, that there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; [And, again equated with their sins. The judgements equated with sin.] yet if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them; Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way, wherein they should walk; and send rain upon the land, which you have given to the people for an inheritance (6:24-27).

"So whatever happens Lord, if the people will just turn to you and pray, then hear, and answer their prayers."

If there be a dearth in the land, or a pestilence, the blasting, or mildew, or locusts, or caterpillars; or if

their enemies besiege them in the cities of the land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be: Then what prayer and what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of the people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; [“God you see their hearts, and if their hearts are truly open, then Lord help them.”] (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which you gave to our fathers. Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of your people Israel, but if come from a far country because of your great name’s sake, and your mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house; Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth thee for; that all the people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, that they may know that this house which I built is called by thy name. And if your people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, [“If you direct them into war.”] and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and this house which I have built for thy name; Then hear thou from heavens their prayer and supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, [And, then he makes this notation, and note it carefully.] (for there is no man which sinneth not,) [“If they sin against thee, and we know there is no man that sinneth not.” Jesus when was asked what He would do to the woman taken in adultery, He said, “Let you who is without sin, cast the first stone”.] if thou be angry with them, and you deliver them before their enemies, and they are carried away as captives into a far off land; Yet if they tink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and they turn and they pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, we have dealt wickedly; If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their mind in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and they pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou [from heavens] from the heavens, even from your dwellingplace, their prayer and their supplications, maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee (6:28-39).

Now I’d like you to turn for a moment to Daniel, chapter nine. The nation of Israel had been taken captive to Babylon. They had been there for almost seventy years. In Daniel, chapter nine, verse three, he said, “I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and I made my confession, and said, O Jehovah, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and mercy to those that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and from your judgements: Neither have we hearkened unto your servants the prophets, which spoke in your name to our kings, and our princes, and our fathers, and unto all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us is confusion of faces, as this day; to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all of Israel, that are near, and that are far, through all of the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongs confusion of face, to our kings, and to our princes.”

Now notice as Daniel is praying, he is no doubt using what Solomon prayed as the basis. Earlier we read that he was turning and facing Jerusalem, as he prayed. Now as he prays, their in captivity, they’ve been carried away captive, his prayer is first of all the confession of sin. “Lord, it’s our fault!”

Isn’t it interesting how we’re so prone to blame God for anything that goes wrong? Rather than looking at our own sin, and our own selves, and saying, “God I have sinned, I’ve turned away, and you know, I deserve this”. We say, “Why would God allow this to happen to me!” And, we’re always ready to blame God! The forgiveness and the whole process of renewal comes from the confession of sin. “God I have sinned against you.”

Daniel said, “Lord, we have sinned. We haven’t listened to the prophets you have sent. We have sinned against you and you are righteous Lord. It’s we, are the ones who are unrighteous. We have done this. Because, we failed. We are experiencing this calamity, because we failed”.

So, facing Jerusalem, praying, and confessing the sin, Daniel was following the very pattern that

Solomon had declared here. Then Solomon said...

Now, my God, I beseech thee, let your eyes be open, let your ears be attent to the prayer that is made in this place. [“Oh God, keep your eyes here, keep your ear attuned.”] Now therefore arise O Lord, into thy resting place, you, and the ark of your strength: let your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice [with goodness] in goodness. [“In the goodness of God.”] O Jehovah God, turn not away thy face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant (6:40-42).

Glorious prayer of Solomon in the dedication of this temple. Basically saying, “God let this be the place where people can come and receive answers to their prayers”.

Now, you go today to Israel, last week when we were there, going to the western wall, you see the whole wall lined with Jews, praying. They are facing the wall because on the other side of that wall, is where the temple once stood. That’s why when they go to the western wall, they always face the wall, because of Solomon’s prayer. As they turn, their faced towards this place. So if they were on the eastern wall, they would still be facing towards the temple. They always turn towards the temple, towards Jerusalem to pray. That comes from Solomon’s prayer of the dedication of the temple, “If they turn towards this place, and if they pray, then hear thou from thy place in heaven, and answer their prayers. Meet their needs”.

Now, we know that we don’t have to turn in any direction to pray. You know, I don’t have to face east, or I don’t have to figure out which direction Jerusalem is, you know. That we can just offer our prayers to God from just any place. That the position of my body is not at all important or essential to prayer. I don’t have to kneel to pray. I can kneel to pray, I don’t have to. I don’t have to lift my hands to pray. I can lift my hands to pray, but I don’t have to. My prayers are not heard any more readily if my hands are lifted or my hands are down, or if I’m kneeling, or if I’m lying.

There have been arguments you know, uh by religious people, as what position you should be in to pray. I think one fellow thoroughly answered the arguments, as far as I’m concerned, whether you should be standing, or kneeling, or sitting or whatever, he said, “If you should fall headfirst into a well, I bet you you’d pray, head down!” And, I’m sure you would! And, I’m sure it would make no difference to God what position of the body. It’s the heart that God is interested in. What is the condition in my heart when I’m praying unto God? That’s what counts, the heart.

Thus God calls upon us to pray. To spend time with Him, in communion and fellowship. Some churches have a tradition of always facing the altar when they pray. We had a lady here in church one day, who was highly in sensed, she met me at the door, and she was visibly shaken, and she wanted to know why I didn’t face the altar when I prayed. I really didn’t, I was caught by surprise, and so I answered very quickly. “Because, I don’t believe that God lives in the altar.” You know, why should you face the altar? I mean you know, it doesn’t matter which direction you’re facing when you’re praying. God is everywhere, and we can call upon Him anywhere. We should call upon Him at all times. Let’s pray.

Father we’re so thankful for this relationship we have with You in the new covenant, through Jesus Christ. That through Jesus Christ, a better way has been provided. Where we have access, direct access unto the throne of grace, whereby we can come boldly and let our needs and our requests be known, because Jesus has made the way. Through His blood, we’ve been brought nigh. We thank You, Father, for the privilege of prayer. Now Lord, You know our hearts, and you see our hearts, and we ask You, Lord that You would work in our hearts tonight. Make them pure Lord, like You are pure. Give us a heart after thee, even as David had a heart that was after thee O Lord. May we seek You with all of our hearts. May we love You with all of our hearts, and may we serve You with all of our hearts. In Jesus’ name, Amen.