

Personal Meditations on Powerful Texts

by Rodney Tolleson

Rodney Tolleson emphasizes the significance of God's presence, prayer, and joyful sacrifice in the life of believers through the lens of Solomon's temple dedication.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 6:12

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Rodney Tolleson preaches on the significance of Solomon's temple dedication, emphasizing four important truths: the temple as the place of God's presence, a house of prayer for all nations, the altar as the place of God's kindling, and a place of sacrifice and rejoicing. He highlights the need for believers to focus on meeting with God above all else, to live lives of constant prayer, to seek the fire of God's Spirit to ignite their hearts, and to find joy in sacrificial obedience to the Lord.

Transcript

"When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven" (2 Chronicles 7:1).

After the nation of Israel had passed through the fire of exile, and the many difficulties of returning to the land of their fathers, God inspired the author of Chronicles to retell the history of their nation. God knew that they needed to be reminded of His great grace. Second Chronicles 7:1 is the climax of the retelling of the dedication of Solomon's temple. It reminded the people of God of four important truths.

First, the temple was the place of God's presence. We are told that "the glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (5:13-14). What an amazing fact! God Himself had graciously chosen to reside with humans. The temple itself was magnificent. The dedication was a celebration never before equaled in Israel's history. The musicians were wonderful, the food delicious, and everyone probably wore their best clothes. But when God showed up, all of these things must have seemed like cheap stage props. God had come!

Today we need to be reminded that we gather as God's people only to meet with Him. We all too easily have our attention captured by the music, the order of service, the activities or attire of others, or even the sermon. It is easy to forget that, when we assemble ourselves, we have come to meet face to face with the living God at heaven.

Second, the temple was a house of prayer for all nations. Solomon's prayer focused on the temple as a place of prayer much more than a place of sacrifice and ritual (6:12-42). Solomon prayed for God's name

to be lifted up, for prayers to be heard and answered, for forgiveness, healing, victory, restoration, and fruitfulness. What a model of prayer for revival! If the temple was the place of prayer in the Old Covenant, and we are now the temple of the Holy Spirit, then our lives should be lives of constant prayer. Isn't this what Paul means when he encouraged us to "pray without ceasing"?

Third, the altar was the place of God's kindling. The fire of God, in response to our prayers, is what is most needed in modern churches. God was willing to ignite the sacrifice that the people had placed on the altar (7:1). What a sad state of affairs it would have been if a priest had to set fire to the sacrifice in the middle of all the magnificence of the dedication, as if God would not notice what His people had done. And what a sad commentary it is on us when we seek all manner of emotional, fleshly, and worldly methods to ignite our hearts instead of asking God in faith for the fire of His Spirit to descend on us and revive His church once again.

Fourth, the altar became a place of sacrifice and rejoicing. After the people observed the fire fall from heaven, they gave so many sacrifices to the Lord that the altar could not contain them all (7:7). When the Spirit of God answers our prayer for the manifest presence of God in our lives, sacrifice becomes a joy! Indeed the Israelites had to be sent away from God's house and this great celebration. Would to God that we would not be able to get people to leave the place of worship in our day! When the Israelites did go, they went away "joyful and glad of heart" (7:10). Even though our flesh fights against sacrificial obedience to our Lord, the place of brokenness, contrition, and yielding of our will is the place of the greatest joy on earth.

May God grant us grace and joy as we seek Him for fire from heaven!

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