

KING SOLOMON'S PRAYER AND THE LORD'S RESPONSE

TEXT: II CHRONICLES 6:12-17

INTRODUCTION:

1. In II Chronicles 5 we read that after King Solomon finished building the temple, he assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, for a dedication service.
2. In II Chronicles 6 we have King Solomon's message, his prayer of dedication, and God's response to his prayer.
3. The message is rather short -- only eleven verses are recorded (6:1-11). In King Solomon's message he emphasizes that God chose Jerusalem as His capital city (II Chron. 6:6).
4. The LORD chose Jerusalem as the location for the temple, and some day, when the Lord Jesus returns, Jerusalem will be the capital city of the entire earth.
5. Psalm 48:2 says, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (cf. Isaiah 2:1-4).
6. King David wanted to build the temple, but God gave that honor to his son Solomon (II Chron. 6:7-11).

I. KING SOLOMON'S PRAYER

1. In the beginning of his reign, King Solomon had a heart for God. Later on King Solomon began to backslide. We read all the sad details of his backsliding, and God's judgment upon him for his backsliding in I Kings 11.
2. But in the beginning of his reign, King Solomon had a heart for God, and that is obvious by studying his prayer.
3. Regarding his prayer, Matthew Henry said, "It was well that he was able to do it, a sign that he had made a good improvement of the pious education which his parents gave him. With all his learning, it seems, he learnt to pray well, and knew how to express himself to God in a suitable manner, on the spur of the occasion, without a prescribed form. In the crowd of his philosophical transactions, his proverbs, and songs, he did not forget his devotions."
4. Notice King Solomon kneeled (6:13). This is the best posture for prayer.
5. Daniel 6:10 says Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God."

6. Ezra said, "I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God" (Ezra 9:5).
7. Luke 22:41 says the Lord Jesus "kneeled down, and prayed."
8. Acts 7:60 says that as Stephen was dying he kneeled down and prayed.
9. Acts 9:40 says Peter "kneeled down, and prayed."
10. Acts 20:36 says Paul "kneeled down, and prayed."
11. In Acts 21:5, Luke says that before they boarded their ship, "We kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."
12. This is a wonderful prayer. Notice Solomon prayed, "Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified" (6:17).
13. In his prayer, King Solomon was saying to God -- you have already promised this (i.e., God's promise that there would never lack a man to sit upon the throne of Israel -- 6:16). Now "let thy word be verified" (6:17).
14. God keeps His promises, and God's promises encourage us when we pray.
15. God keeps His promises, and this encourages us in our prayers to depend upon them and plead them with God.
16. Matthew Henry said, "Those who expect further mercies must be thankful for former mercies."
17. Solomon prayed, "Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified" (6:17). God's promises guide us when we pray, and God's promises are the ground of our hopes and expectations in prayer.
18. David had prayed, "Lord, do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever" (II Samuel 7:25).
19. We too can pray -- "Lord, do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever."
20. In his biography of George Muller, A.T. Pierson said George Muller "used argument in prayer" (chapter 10).
21. "This method of *holy argument*-- ordering our cause before God, as an advocate would plead before a judge - is not only almost a lost art, but to many it actually seems almost puerile. And yet it is abundantly taught and exemplified in Scripture. Abraham in his plea for Sodom is the first great example of it. Moses excelled in this art, in many crises interceding in behalf of the people with consummate skill, marshalling arguments as a general-in-chief marshals battalions. Elijah on Carmel is a striking example of power in this special pleading. What a zeal and jealousy for God!"

22. "Of course God does not *need to be convinced*: no arguments can make any plainer to Him the claims of trusting souls to His intervention, claims based upon His own word, confirmed by His oath. And yet He will be inquired of and argued with. That is His way of blessing."
23. Notice A.T. Pierson said, "Of course God does not *need to be convinced*: no arguments can make any plainer to Him the claims of trusting souls to His intervention, claims based upon His own word..."
24. King Solomon prayed, "Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified" (6:17).
25. Referring to the importunity of the Syro-Phoenician woman, A.T. Pierson said, "And yet He will be inquired of and argued with. That is His way of blessing. He loves to have us set before Him our cause and His own promises: delights in the well-ordered plea, where argument is piled upon argument. See how the Lord Jesus Christ commended the persistent argument of the woman of Canaan, who with the *wit of importunity* actually turned his own *objection* into a *reason*. He said, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the little dogs.'"
26. "Truth, Lord,' she answered, 'yet the little dogs under the master's tables eat of the crumbs which fall from the children's mouths!' What a triumph of argument! Catching the Master Himself in His words, as He meant she should, and turning His apparent reason for not granting into a reason for granting her request! 'O woman,' said He, 'great is thy faith! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'"
27. "We are to argue our case with God, not indeed to convince Him, but to convince *ourselves*. In proving to Him that, by His own word and oath and character, He has bound Himself to interpose, we *demonstrate to our own faith* that He has given us the right to ask and claim, and that He will answer our plea because He cannot deny Himself."
28. AT Pierson said arguing with God is "almost a lost art." Charles Haddon Spurgeon called it a "holy art." It is indeed a holy art, but unfortunately has become a lost art today.
29. And it is clearly taught in the Bible. Isaiah 41:21 says, "Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons."
30. Spurgeon said, "The ancient saints were wont to argue in prayer."

31. Spurgeon also said, "Why are arguments to be used at all? The reply is, certainly not because God is slow to give, not because God needs to be informed of any circumstance with regard to ourselves or of anything in connection with the mercy asked. The arguments to be used are for our own benefit not for His... The best prayers I have ever heard in our prayer meetings have been those which have been fullest of argument. Sometimes my soul has been fairly melted down when I have listened to brethren who have come before God feeling the mercy to be really needed, and that they must have it, for they first pleaded with God to give it for this reason, and then for a second, and then for a third, and then for a fourth and a fifth, until they have awakened the fervency of the entire assembly" (*Effective Prayer*).
32. Eight times, King Solomon said, "Then hear thou from heaven..." (II Chron. 6:21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39).

II. THE LORD RESPONDED BY FIRE (II CHRON. 7:1).

1. Interestingly, the LORD responded the same way when Solomon's father King David offered sacrifices on the very same spot (cf. I Chron. 21:26).
2. Fire in the Bible represents the power of God. Oftentimes it represents the judgment of God, but in this case it signifies that the LORD was pleased with King Solomon's prayer (7:1).
3. It was the LORD's "Amen" to Solomon's prayer (cf. 7:1-3).
4. In Leviticus 9:23 and 24 we read that, "Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."
5. In I Kings 18:37, Elijah prayed, "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."
6. Then we read, "Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God" (I Kings 18:38, 39).

7. Before I move on, let me say the LORD does not need to send fire from heaven to let us know He has heard our prayer and will answer our prayer (cf. Matthew 21:22).

III. THE LORD APPEARED TO KING SOLOMON

1. Second Chronicles 7:12 says, "And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer..."
2. God said that if He chastised His people by drought, or locusts, or pestilence, and they responded by humbling themselves and turning from their wicked ways, He would hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land (7:13, 14).
3. The interpretation of II Chronicles 7:12 is simple -- if the people of Israel turned from God, He would chastise them, but if they repented He would restore them.
4. That is the interpretation. This is the application -- God will deal with any nation that turns its back on Him.
5. One preacher put it this way: "If a culture wants to be free of God, He will let it have that freedom. But freedom from God brings dire consequences. Pagans do not normally turn to God when things get rough. But this Scripture isn't addressing pagans; it is addressing 'My people who are called by My name' (v. 14). The people who are supposed to pray for their nation are God's covenant people. In the Old Testament, His covenant people were the Jews. In the New Testament, the covenant people are the church—the body of true believers who have accepted Jesus Christ as our Sin-bearer and Redeemer" (Tony Evans).
6. In the news these days we are hearing much about the sequester debate. And we hear about China hacking into our computers and stealing and copying the blueprints for everything from automobiles to fighter jets to software.
7. And we hear much about high crime, debate over gun control, high unemployment, high gasoline prices, etc.
8. And we hear much about turmoil and trouble all over the world -- Christians being slaughtered by Muslims in Nigeria, erratic and dangerous behavior from the leaders of North Korea, China, and Iran.
9. Terrorism is all over the Middle East, and some times right here in our own city.
10. Unless America turns back to God, things will get worse and worse.
11. Our country is overrun with homosexuals, adulterers, drunkards, drug addicts, thieves, and liars.

12. Back in 1954, Earle Cairns wrote about some of the dangers facing Christianity, such as liberalism, communism, and evolution. It is far more serious today.
13. Interestingly, Cairns said one of the greatest dangers was materialism.
14. He wrote, “More subtle perhaps than higher criticism, materialism may be defined as the practice in modern society of emphasizing the material values of a high standard of living. To the extent that man’s attention is concentrated on this life, he will neglect the spiritual values of eternal life.”
15. He was right on target and things have gotten much worse since then!
16. Over 40 percent of the babies born in the USA are now born out-of-wedlock. Every year, over a million babies are killed by abortion.
17. The pornography industry generates \$97 billion in annual revenue worldwide, and \$13 billion of annual revenue in the United States.
18. Out of all countries, the United States is the top producer of both pornographic websites and pornographic videos. In fact, the United States has produced 89% of the pornographic web pages in the entire world.
19. The average age of first exposure to Internet pornography is 11.
20. Three hundred and fifty members of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers met in 2002 for an annual conference. Almost two thirds of these lawyers said that the Internet had played a significant role in divorces they had handled during the last year.
21. The problems most cited by the attorneys were:
 - 1) Met new love interest over the Internet - 68 percent
 - 2) Obsessive interest in pornographic sites - 56 percent
 - 3) Excessive time on computer - 47 percent
 - 4) Excessive time communicating in chat rooms - 33 percent
22. I mentioned recently that Beyonce's raunchy performance at the Super Bowl. A friend recently sent me a video where Beyonce admits she has a spirit take over when she performs. This is demon possession.
23. Millions of people listen to her demonic music. Unless America repents and turns back to God it will soon be all over.
24. Jonah preached that message to the people of Nineveh and they repented.
25. Jeremiah preached that message to the people of Jerusalem and they did not repent. So King Nebuchadnezzar and his army came in and burnt the city to the ground.
26. God has given us the remedy (II Chron. 7:14).

27. * "Shall humble themselves" Both James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5 say,
"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
28. * "And pray" Sadly, the midweek prayer meeting has the smallest attendance of all the church services. Let's meet for prayer!
29. * "And seek my face" -- humbly and sincerely.
30. * "And turn from their wicked ways -- in genuine repentance.
31. "Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

CONCLUSION:

A. T. Pierson once said, "There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer."