

January 27

Scriptures: Read 2 Chronicles 7 & 8

Key Verse: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. “ (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Overview

By sending fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifices, the Lord confirmed that He would answer the prayer of Solomon (6:14-42) and that the offerings sacrificed in the new Temple were acceptable to Him. In this same way, God had shown His approval of the Mosaic Tabernacle (Leviticus 9:24) and the altar David had built some years earlier on the Temple site on Mount Moriah, at Oman’s threshing floor (1 Chronicles 21:26).

Accompanying the fall of fire was an even greater manifestation than that which had caused the priests to go out of the enclosed Holy Place (5:13-14). Once again, the Lord showed His glory, but this time the whole congregation of Israel that was gathered around the Temple saw it with their own eyes. With this display of the Lord’s power and presence, all the people fell prostrate before their Holy God and worshipped Him. The main theme of their worship, as King David had taught them, was: “For He is good, For His mercy endures forever” (7:3).

There was an enormous number of animal sacrifices. The figures are confirmed in 1 Kings 8:55-63, and they are identified as peace offerings (Leviticus 3). The great multitude of people gathered in Jerusalem on this occasion were all able to eat from these offerings during the two weeks of feasting. The first week (from the eighth day to the fourteenth day) was a feast for the dedication of the Temple. This included the great Day of Atonement on the tenth day (Leviticus 16:29). The following week was a celebration in observance of the regular Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Leviticus 23:34). It was truly a time of great rejoicing before the Lord (7:9-10).

Following the completion of the Temple and his own palace, Solomon experienced a second revelation from the Lord (1 Kings 9:2), the first being at Gibeon (1:3-13). The Lord came and spoke to Solomon personally, confirming that He would answer his requests which he petitioned unto Him at the dedication of the Temple. God would indeed keep His eyes and ears open to the prayers of His people at the Temple (compare 6:20 and 7:15-16), for as the theme of David’s psalms express, “His mercy endures forever.” If Israel remained faithful to Him, they could count on many blessings, but they were warned of the punishments for unfaithfulness (7:20).

The most famous verse of Chronicles is found in 7:14 (key verse). God knew that periods of backsliding lay ahead for Israel, but He gave a promise with a condition: He promised forgiveness and national healing if they turned to Him. The same is true whether it be in the days of Ezra or our own day. Let us pray for our land, that people would turn to God and live according to His Word; then He will send revival and heal our land.

A burden of responsibility was laid upon Solomon for the spiritual condition of the people. If he (or those kings of the Davidic dynasty after him) served other gods, the nation would even suffer

the punishment of exile. Also, the great Temple would lay in ruins as a testimony of their wickedness in forsaking God and turning to idolatry (7:19-22).

While Solomon was ruling righteously and justly, God blessed his kingdom and gave him an enlarged territory through military victories (8:1-6). Solomon also efficiently organized the work-force of the nation, made up of the heathen who had remained in the land since the conquest under Joshua. These were the main labourers involved in the construction of the Temple. Solomon was faithful in fulfilling his father's desires in not only building the Temple, but in putting into practice the Levitical organization David had established. He was also faithful in observing the regular sacrifices at the Temple and the various feasts.

Prayer

Lord God, we turn to You and away from all wicked ways, calling on You for forgiveness and the healing of our land.