SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 7

Fire from Heaven

As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house. 3 When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

7:1–11 The Chronicler makes a significant omission of 1Ki 8:54b–61, Solomon's blessing of the people. (TLSB)

7:1–3 Not found in 1Ki 8. The addition of the fire descending from heaven to consume the sacrifices provides the same sign of divine acceptance as was given at the dedication of the tabernacle (Lev 9:23–24) and David's offering at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (1Ch 21:26; cf. 1Ki 18:38). While vv. 1–3 are unique to Chronicles, the Chronicler has omitted Solomon's blessing of the congregation (1Ki 8:55–61). (CSB)

7:1 *fire came down* – God is certainly under no obligation to give signs and wonders to confirm his Word to those who doubt it (Luke 11:29). All the same, there are times when God did give his believers signs to confirm and strengthen the faith he had already worked in their hearts though the Word. When this happened, it was grace upon grace, gift piled high on top of gift. And whenever God did it, it was to show his people where they should look for their help in every time of need. That is why we know that God is present wherever believers gather around Word and sacrament and that when we call on God's name, we are not speaking into thin air but to the God who is there. (PBC)

Probably lightning. God approved the dedicatory "burnt offering and the sacrifices" with fire from heaven, an event also associated with Aaron, Elijah, and David. (TLSB)

glory of the LORD. See 5:14 and note. (*cloud … glory of the LORD.* Cf. 7:1–3. The glory cloud represented the presence of God. It had guided Israel out of Egypt and through the desert, and was present above the tabernacle (Ex 13:21–22; 40:34–38; cf. Eze 43:1–5; Hag 2:9; Zec 1:16; 2:10; 8:3). (CSB)

7:2–3 Recalls 5:11–14 and esp Ps 136:1. This is positive proof that the Lord accepted this temple as His dwelling place. (TLSB)

7:1–3 The Lord shows His approval of the temple by igniting the sacrifices and filling the temple with His glory Today, many people crave such miracles and affirmation for their work and decisions. Remember that in all things the Lord guides us through His Word, which ignites our hearts and fills our minds with His affirmation. His goodness and steadfast love are surely ours in Christ. • Move my heart to trust You, Lord, whether or not I witness miracles. Ever lead me by Your affirming Word. Amen. (TLSB)

The Dedication of the Temple

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the LORD. 5 King Solomon offered as a sacrifice 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. 6 The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the LORD that King David had made for giving thanks to the LORD —for his steadfast love endures forever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry; opposite them the priests sounded trumpets, and all Israel stood. 7 And Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD, for there he offered the burnt offering and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar Solomon had made could not hold the burnt offering and the grain offering and the fat. 8 At that time Solomon held the feast for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt. 9 And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for they had kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. 10 On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their homes, joyful and glad of heart for the prosperity that the LORD had granted to David and to Solomon and to Israel his people.

7:4 *offered sacrifice*. Dedicatory offerings continued for seven days (cf v 8). (TLSB)

7:6 The verse is unique to Chronicles and reflects the author's overall interest in the Levites, especially the musicians (cf. 29:26–27; see note on 1Ch 6:31–48). (CSB)

Uniquely, the Chronicler includes this note as evidence of the fulfillment of David's plans concerning the temple musicians (1Ch 23:5; 25). (TLSB)

7:8 *held the feast for seven days* – We in the West are accustomed to logical outlies, questions and answers, speeches in which the theme is openly stated and where no one is left in the dark as to the point of it all. It was the Chronicler's method – somewhat more commonly found in societies where the force of the oral word is strong (even in our society where basic biblical knowledge is very limited) – simply to tell the story, and retell it, and then tell it again. But hammering away at these themes, this master craftsman of the holy writings has impressed is point on his readers without ever having to say, "Here's the point. (PBC)

from Lebo Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. Not only were the patriarchal promises of descendants provisionally fulfilled under David and Solomon, but also the promises of land (Ge 15:18–21). (CSB)

The kingdom's northern and southern boundaries ("Lebo" refers to Lebanon). (TLSB)

7:9 *eighth day.* The final day of the Feast of Tabernacles. (CSB)

solemn as sembly. Work would stop for the festival. (TLSB)

dedication of the altar. The Chronicler emphasizes the temple as a place of sacrifice as well as prayer. (TLSB)

seven days … seven days. The dedication had run from the 8th to the 14th day of the month, and the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th to the 22nd day. The Day of Atonement was on the 10th day of the 7th month (Lev 16; cf. 1Ki 8:65–66). (CSB)

7:10 Differs slightly from 1Ki 8:66. Note the emphasis on David and Solomon as a continuous headship of Israel. (TLSB)

If My People Pray

11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house. All that Solomon had planned to do in the house of the LORD and in his own house he successfully accomplished. 12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, 14 if my people who are called by my name 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. 15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. 17 And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, 18 then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.' 19 "But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 21 And at this house, which was exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' 22 Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore he has brought all this disaster on them.'"

7:12–22 The Lord visited Solomon a second time. The first visit was at Gibeon (1:3–13). (TLSB)

7:12 *appeared to Solomon.* The second time God appeared to Solomon; the first was at Gibeon (1:3–13; 1Ki 9:2). (CSB)

7:13–16 Unique to 2Ch; the Lord's response to specific petitions of Solomon's prayer (6:26–31; 1Ki 8:35–40). Its inclusion serves the larger purpose of validating the temple as the place not only of sacrifice but also of prayer, and it brings forward the theme of repentance and restoration following rebellion and retribution. (TLSB)

7:13–15 Unique to Chronicles. These verses illustrate the writer's emphasis on immediate retribution (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Purpose and Themes). The Chronicler subsequently portrays the kings in a way that demonstrates this principle (see v. 22). (CSB)

7:14 *called by My name*. In the blessing of the priests, the Lord's name was placed on the people. (TLSB)

I hear...and will forgive – At the beginning of his response, God assures Solomon that he will indeed answer his penitent people's prayers. Words like these are meant to give us the heart to take our needs to God in prayer. Through the Word we understand that God hears us not because our words have been finely crafted, nor because we have proven ourselves worthy of an audience with so great a Lord. He hears us because he has promised. Luther once ended a prayer

saying, “It is not the worthiness of my prayer but the certainty of your truth that makes me firmly believe that (your answer to my requests) will be and remain yes and amen.” (PBC)

humble … pray … seek … turn. The Lord uses a string of verbs to emphasize the actions of sincere repentance. *hear … forgive … heal*. Second string of verbs emphasizes the Lord’s response to His people’s repentance. (TLSB)

7:16 *my heart will be there* – God also promised that he would always have his heart set on the temple. Though the building made by hands has long since disappeared, God’s promise did not fail. Again we hear God’s own voice declare in the NT, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him” (Luke 9:35). In Christ we find God’s gracious heart laid bare. (PBC)

7:17–18 A definite messianic reference is found in the “man to rule Israel” (cf Mi 5:2), a stronger statement than in 1Ki 9:5. The everlasting nature of David’s kingship would not be fulfilled by just any descendant, including Solomon. It would be fulfilled in the great and final Son of David, who lived and died but also rose again and lives forever.

7:19–22 See 1Ki 9:6–9. – In this section the Chronicler has let God himself give us the outline for the rest of his book. Israel and her kings will be unfaithful. They will worship other gods and disobey God’s law. As a consequence, king and temple, people and land will bear the marks of God’s wrath. The Chronicler wrote these words both to encourage and to warn the people of his own generation. A temple building alone was no guarantee of safety and well-being in the Land of Promise. As serious as God was in his promise of love, he was just as serious in his threats against those who despised his love by disobeying his law. (PBC)

The Lord anticipated the people’s rebellion and the exile, recorded at the end of 2Ch. “From the beginning He has utterly uprooted all idolatry. Because of idolatry, He has uprooted both heathen people and Jewish people. To this day He overthrows all false worship, so that all who remain therein must finally perish” (LC I 35). (TLSB)