

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 6

Solomon Blesses the People

Then Solomon said, “The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. 2 But I have built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” 3 Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. 4 And he said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, 5 ‘Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there, and I chose no man as prince over my people Israel; 6 but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there, and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.’ 7 Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 8 But the LORD said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. 9 Nevertheless, it is not you who shall build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ 10 Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 11 And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with the people of Israel.”

6:1–7:10 Cf 1Ki 8:12–66. The Chronicler adds material from Ps 132; 136 (6:41–42; 7:3b), as well as material characteristic of the Chronicler’s theological interests. (TLSB)

6:1–2 Solomon’s initial address to the Lord. (TLSB)

6:1 *he would dwell* – The first words of Solomon express his awe at what he has just witnessed. After all the meticulous preparations by himself and his father David, after all the effort and skill that had gone into building the temple over these last seven years, Solomon recognizes that, in the end, it is the work of God alone to complete and to dedicate his house. Nothing a human being does can bring God down to us. We might paraphrase Solomon as saying in the first two verses, “My Lord, you gave your word to Israel that you would reveal yourself in this glory-cloud (see Exodus 19:9; Leviticus 16:2). As for me, I have built this magnificent house for you. But you are not here because my great works have called you down. It is only by your gracious promise that you are found here!” God shows his favor to believers also in this respect, that he permits them to take part in work that, properly speaking, belongs to him alone. (PBC)

6:2 *place for you to dwell forever* – The returned exiles could find comfort in these words, even though their house was by no means as magnificent as the one Solomon had built. The sacredness of the site did not depend on dressed stone and gold leaf but on the firm promise of God. We too find comfort in them, especially as we hear them renewed for us in our Savior’s promise “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Temples built with human hands have all gone to ruin, but the presence of the Lord in his temple, the church, endures forever. (PBC)

6:3 *turned around*. Solomon apparently faced the altar and temple when directing his praise and worship toward the Lord. He faced the people to speak God’s blessing over them. *blessed*.

Compare to David's blessing of the people in 1Ch 16:2 (cf 1Ch 15:25–29; 21:26). Like his father, David, Solomon acted as a priestly king. (TLSB)

6:4–11 The Chronicler utilizes material found in God's message to David in 1Ch 17 and David's words in 1Ch 28:2–7. By using this material, he directly links Solomon and the temple's dedication to the Lord's promises to David. (TLSB)

6:5 *prince*. Word choice implies that the Lord is the king. (TLSB)

6:8–9 Cf. David's speech in 1Ch 28:2–3. (CSB)

Notice the following features of this inspired blessing. From the beginning to end, it is centered in God, not in humankind. When Solomon mentions David or refers to himself, it is always as someone who is what he is because of God's gracious choice. Notice also the way that God named names. God did not allow his saving will to float around in the mists of human imagination. (PBC)

He called Israel, Jerusalem, David and Solomon all by name. God is pleased to reveal his grace at specific times to specific people. Similarly, we are able to say with the apostle Paul, "Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight...In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...And he made known to us the mystery of his will" (Ephesians 1:3,4,7,9). (PBC)

Think of all the people in this world today who grope aimlessly in the dark for something to believe in. Now they find it in some self-help book; now they look for it in some charismatic teacher; now they even ransack their own souls in the hope of unlocking some hidden potential. We too were once in the very same predicament. But God set his heart on us from all eternity, forgave all our sins in the precious blood of his Son, called us by name in our baptisms, and made his love known to us through the preaching of the gospel. In the full assurance of faith, we can say, "God chose men to be his own, called me by the gospel of his Son Jesus." Far from being some vague warm, fuzzy feeling, God's love is specifically for me, located in his Son, and brought to me in the gospel. (PBC)

Finally, an important feature in Solomon's initial blessing is the way he points to the connection between God's Word and God's work. What God says, God does. God does not simply keep the promises he makes to ancient patriarchs and Israelite kings. Whatever he says with his mouth to any believe, God will fulfill with his hands. God is faithful: he cannot disown himself (2 Timothy 2:13). To put your trust in his Word is to trust the most certain thing there is. (PBC)

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

12 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. 13 Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court, and he stood on it. Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven, 14 and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, 15 who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. 16 Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of

Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.’ 17 Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David. 18 “But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! 19 Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you, 20 that your eyes may be open day and night toward this house, the place where you have promised to set your name, that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. 21 And listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen from heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive. 22 “If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, 23 then hear from heaven and act and judge your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness. 24 “If your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and they turn again and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house, 25 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to them and to their fathers. 26 “When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, 27 then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk, and grant rain upon your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance. 28 “If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, 29 whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house, 30 then hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind, 31 that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers. 32 “Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for the sake of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm, when he comes and prays toward this house, 33 hear from heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name. 34 “If your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to you toward this city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, 35 then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause. 36 “If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near, 37 yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,’ 38 if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, 39 then hear from heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you. 40 Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.

6:13 Not in 1Ki 8. Some think that the Chronicler may have wished to clarify the fact that Solomon was not “before the altar” (v. 12) exercising priestly duties. On the other hand, the verse may have been dropped from Kings by a copying error: The phrase “spread out his hands” occurs in vv. 12–13; it is possible that the scribe copying Kings looked back to the second occurrence of the phrase, thus omitting the verse. The verse would then be present in Chronicles because it was in the particular text of Kings used by the Chronicler. (CSB)

platform. Rim of Solomon’s dais may have curved upward to resemble a basin. (TLSB)

stood...knelt...spread out his hands – Among the ancient Israelites, standing or kneeling were normal postures of prayers. Kneeling was, of course, a mark of particular humility and reverence, as well as being a way for the king to show his complete dependence upon the Lord. Instead of folding their hands as we do, people in those days lifted up their hands in prayer (Nehemiah 8:6; Psalm 141:2; 1Timothy 2:8). It does not matter a great deal what form these outward preparations for prayer take, so long as they help the believer to hold the body in check while the heart readies itself to talk to God. Real prayer is done as attentively as a good and diligent barber fixes his mind and eyes upon his razor and the hair, and does not forget where he cuts. (PBC)

There is no better place to see the difference between godly and worldly leadership than right here. Godly leaders want to be filled with the vision of God and let God’s Word shape their hearts and minds and will. They do not trust their own wisdom and have no confidence in their own power to change things for the better. Instead they rely upon God, who alone can make things right. The worldly leader strikes the pose of a man who is ready for action. A godly leader often finds himself on his knees, hand held heavenward in prayer. (PBC)

6:14 *and said* – Good prayer is built on God’s promises. (PBC)

6:17 *let your word* – There is no better way to pray than this. It is like saying, “I know it will be true even if all the people on earth and all demons below howl out against it. I know that it will be true even if my own treacherous, sinful heart whispers against it. But I ask that it will be true for me, and that I may believe it with my whole heart. (PBC)

The Chronicler will conclude the prayer with the same theme of remembrance of David (v 42), though 1Ki 8 does not. (TLSB)

indeed dwell with man on the earth – Our God is free. He is bound by no duty to us, nor does he need to repay us any debt. But he has graciously bound himself by his own word. “There am I in your midst,” he says. There, where forgiveness is announced in his name. There, where flesh and blood is born again by water and the Spirit. There, where in bread and wine we receive his body and his blood. “For you,” he says, “for the forgiveness of sins.” By these means he meets with us in the only way we can meet with him: on the basis of his word of forgiveness. (PBC)

Miraculously, the transcendent Lord did dwell amid His people in the temple. Cyr Jer: “His coming down from heaven was not known by men.... For [by comparison] rain, coming down into a fleece, comes down noiselessly: so that the Magi, not knowing the mystery of the Nativity, say, ‘Where is He that is born King of the Jews?’ ” (NPNF 2 7:74). (TLSB)

6:21 *hear, forgive.* God would hear the confession of their sins. (TLSB)

6:22–23 *take an oath* – The first petition has to do with oath-taking, a procedure that was part of the legal system of ancient Israel. Especially in doubtful cases where it would be a matter of one person’s word against another, Moses made provision in his law for an accused person to be put under a solemn oath in the fame of the Lord. This would have the effect either of bringing justice down upon the guilty or of clearing the name of one falsely accused. In times past this procedure had been carried out at the tabernacle (Exodus 22:7-15); now Solomon asks God to dedicate the temple for that same purpose. (PBC)

6:24–25 *people of Israel are defeated* – This is the second petition in times of national defeat because they as a nation sinned against God. At the times when Chronicles was written, its readers were still living with the consequences of the great scattering that had been the Babylonian exile. Solomon’s words were the Chronicler’s gentle way of reminding them, “we may be weak, but we are not without resource. We have God’s house where God has promised to live.” We too live in evil days. In a land where public breaches of morality once brought the disapproving outcry of millions, few now manage to stifle their yawns as they watch the latest outrage revealed on television. But we are not without resource. “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8,9). To us too the Chronicler speaks his word of encouragement, “Call on the name of him who rules all nations! In Christ, God has declared himself for us. Let us confess our sin and depend on his strength to revive us. (PBC)

Important concept in the Chronicler’s unique warfare narratives throughout the history of the divided kingdom is set forth here. Defeat comes as retribution for sin, and repentance will reverse or lessen the consequences of such defeat. (TLSB)

6:26–31 The temple will be a place of prayer and repentance when natural disasters strike the nation. (TLSB)

6:26–27 *heaven is shut* – The land’s physical condition reflected the people’s moral condition. Unlike Egypt with its complex system of irrigation ditches, Israel depended completely on rain to grow its crops. For us, too, famine is not much of a threat. But for people who had no alternative to watching their only food supply dwindle down to nothing in their grain bins, clouds darkening the sky were the most welcome of all earthly sights. They brought the promise of another harvest and another year of life. When they failed to come, Jeremiah graphically describes for the result in 14:2-6. Significantly, Jeremiah makes the same connection between drought and sin that Solomon does, continuing in the next verse, “Although our sins testify against us, O Lord, do something for the sake of your name. For our backsliding is great; we have sinned against you” (Jeremiah 14:7). (PBC)

6:26 *acknowledge Your name*. Calling on the Lord in faith. (TLSB)

6:28–31 See Lev 26:16, 20, 25–26; Dt 28:20–22, 27–28, 35, 42. (CSB)

FAMINE OR PLAGUE...BLIGHT OR MILDEW – The fourth petition sums up all the ills common to humanity that can afflict people at any time and cause them to seek the Lord’s help. Also significant is the anticipated impact on God’s people when God hears and answers the prayers of those in affliction. God’s saving response empowers his people to live god and holy lives. It increases their reverent faith for God and their fervent love for one another. (PBC)

6:30 *according to all his ways ... hearts*. Our ways manifest our hearts and faith. (TLSB)

6:32–33 The prophets also envisaged the Gentiles as coming to Jerusalem to worship the Lord (Isa 56:6–8; Zec 8:20–23; 14:16–21; cf. Ps 87). (CSB)

The temple will be a place of prayer for all people, including Gentiles. Cf Is 56:6–8; Zec 8:20–23; 14:16–21; Ps 87. Israel was to be a light to the world, that all might know the true God. (TLSB)

a foreigner – This is the fifth petition. In typical OT style, Solomon sees the kingdom of God being extended by people coming in, to the land and to the place where God has chosen to reveal himself. We might contrast this with the way we, on the basis of the Great Commission, tend to view the extension of the kingdom of God as a matter of missionaries going out into the world to preach the good news about Jesus. (PBC)

6:33 *all ... may know Your name.* Faith in Yahweh would spread from Jerusalem as Israel faithfully confessed its Lord. (TLSB)

6:34–39 Solomon prophetically anticipated the captivity of the northern tribes in 722 BC under the Assyrians and the southern tribes in 587 BC under the Babylonians. Again the themes of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration are outlines and serve as a paradigm for all of the history of Judah and Israel, esp the final days before and after Babylon (cf ch 36). (TLSB)

6:36 *who does not sin.* See Jer 13:23; Ro 3:23. (CSB)

Luth: “He alone has righteousness whom God mercifully regards as righteous because of his confession of his own unrighteousness and because of his prayer for the righteousness of God and whom God wills to be considered righteous before Him. Therefore we are all born in iniquity, that is, in unrighteousness, and we die in it, and we are righteous only by the imputation of a merciful God through faith in His Word” (AE 25:274). (TLSB)

captive to a land. See 36:15–20; Lev 26:33, 44–45; Dt 28:49–52; 2Ki 17:7–20; 25:1–21.) (CSB)

This is the seventh petition. Though the Israelites may serve their captors with their bodies, they need not serve with their minds. In the land of their captivity, they may have a change of heart and turn to God in genuine prayer. In Advent we sing of how we mourn in lowly exile here. This is not our home, because here nothing lasts, and far too often we find ourselves stumbling in sin again. Soon Jesus will come again to bring us home. That is why the church also sings “Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!” (PBC)

6:40–42 The Chronicler replaces the ending of Solomon’s prayer in Kings (1Ki 8:50–53) with a repetition of Ps 132:8–10, a psalm that deals with bringing the ark to the temple, the theme of this section in Chronicles (5:2–14). The prayer in Kings ends with an appeal to the exodus deliverance under Moses, while in Chronicles the appeal is on the basis of the eternal promises to David. (CSB)

The Chronicler focuses on the theme of David by citing Ps 132:8–10 in vv 41–42a and Ps 132:1 in v 42b. The psalm itself is connected with the temple and the ark, so Solomon’s reciting of it is appropriate. His final clause (v 42b) also reflects Is 55:3b and closes out this portion of the prayer by bringing it full circle to its opening words (vv 14–15). (TLSB)

Often at the end of great pieces of music there will be what is called a coda. The music gradually slows down. Major musical themes are sounded again. We might call Solomon's concluding words here a verbal coda. (PBC)

6:40 *eyes be open...ears attentive* – What a vivid way of speaking about God's active concern for his people! We are not dealing with some impersonal being high above who is indifferent to his people's fate. The true God is a loving father who sees our needs and hears our prayers. (PBC)

6:41 *arise*. While the final words of Solomon's prayer in 1Ki 8:52–53 are not included here, the Chronicler supplies an ending in poetic form, also given in Ps 132:8–10 with minor changes. (TLSB)

go to your resting place – A fruit of that rest is the joy God's people experience in the presence of their God. (PBC)

6:42 *turn away*. In rejection. (TLSB)

Your anointed one! Solomon, the anointed king, entreated the Lord to fulfill the promise of a kingdom forever, made to his father, David (1Ch 17:1–15; Ps 89:49). (TLSB)