

Abiding Fruit

Informing the Mind & Inflaming the Heart

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Will God Indeed Dwell With Man? 2 Chronicles 6:18

It was always the desire of King David to build a dwelling place for God (1 Chron. 28:2; 2 Chron. 6:7), but the privilege and responsibility for doing this would fall to his son, Solomon (1 Chron. 28:6; 2 Chron. 6:9, 10). David understood the glorious ramifications of being able to build a House for God where the Ark of the Covenant might rest. In fact, David called the abode of God on earth in the proposed House that he desired to build, the *"footstool of God"* (1 Chron. 28:2).

God's response to David was that Solomon would build the Temple and that his kingdom would be established forever. This eternal aspect to the Davidic throne only has reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. It would make no sense for David or Solomon to have an eternal throne themselves when they would no longer be on that throne, nor would their descendants continue forever (except the Person of Christ because He is Eternal). David's throne and David's Kingdom are the throne and kingdom of the Lord Jesus. I dispute whether this is a reference to a physical earthly throne in earthly Jerusalem for ethnic Israelites or Jews. The aspects of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus are spiritual, and entrance into this kingdom is by faith and repentance.

The desire by David to build a House for God led to the pronouncement of the Davidic Covenant. We find this in 2 Samuel 7. David's first major move was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem from Baale-judah. This was not so easily done as David probably originally had thought, since Uzzah was struck down by God for touching the Ark as he sought to steady the stumbling oxen (2 Sam. 6:5 – 7). This frightened David so much that he could not bring himself to move the Ark as it remained in the home of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months. Eventually when David heard that blessing had come to Obed-edom, only then did he and go and bring the Ark to Jerusalem. This time David looked to the Levites to be responsible for the Ark and it was with great joy that the Ark came to Jerusalem. This was a fulfillment of Deuteronomy 12:11.

God responded to David's desire to have the Ark dwell in a magnificent Temple (2 Sam. 7:1 – 17), but told David that Solomon would be the one to perform this task. In 2 Samuel 7, what strikes a person the most is the fact the Ark dwelling in a House built especially for it seems not to have been uppermost in God's mind as He spoke with David. God spoke innumerable blessings upon David. God reminds David of how he came to the throne. It was not David's doing - it was God's. More than this, God promised to make David's name great, and Israel would be blessed by the Lord. David would enjoy rest from his enemies, and when it came time for David to die, God promised him that his line would continue in the same covenant relationship. Solomon's kingdom would be established. Solomon would build a House for God, and his throne would be established forever. God promises to David that his house, his kingdom and his throne would be forever (2 Sam. 7:12 – 16).

David's response to this magnificent promise guaranteed by covenantal relationship was to worship God (2 Sam. 8). The ramifications of this eternal house, eternal throne and kingdom only make sense in the light of the Son who would come and fulfill all of these promises. The Messiah, the promised King descended from David, would take his rightful place as Israel's King.

David's final words to his son, Solomon are very instructive. They show what was prominent in David's mind even as his days came to an end. This is reminiscent of Jacob blessing his sons. His heart and mind were on the promises of God, and so was David's. No earthly father can bequeath a greater gift to his son than to point him to the God who promises and who keep His promises. This is what David does with Solomon. David directs Solomon to first of all, know God, especially the God of your father (1 Chron. 28:9). David can look back on his relationship with God and instruct Solomon to seek his God. Secondly, David instructs Solomon to serve God willingly with all of his heart and mind. He does this because it is God who knows and searches every heart, who understands every plan of man, and every thought of man (2 Sam. 28:9). David's language is marvelous because how can you not be moved by what he says. Thirdly, David provides a warning about forsaking God. If you seek God you will find him, but if you forsake Him, then he will forsake you. This was a warning that as Solomon grew older, he did not heed. Fourthly, David instructs Solomon to be careful about how he should respond, since God has chosen him to build the Temple.

It was not the physical materials that David provided Solomon with that are the most important or the most necessary (1 Chron. 28:11 – 19) for success. It was the spiritual values that he imparted that would sustain Solomon. In his early years, the spiritual wisdom of Solomon is unparalleled in Scripture. God greatly blessed him and gifted him with wisdom, knowledge and wealth. 2 Chronicles 6 is an example of Solomon's deep spiritual understanding of the God of his father, David.

Solomon recounts the history that lies behind his building of the Temple (2 Chron. 6:1 – 10). This is the same as we find in David's account in 2 Samuel 7. Since Solomon had finished building the Temple, he now desires to dedicate the Temple to the Lord. His prayer is matchless and sublime (similar to Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel in Ezra 9, Neh. 9 and Dan. 9).

He begins with adoration and worship of God. He points out the fact that there is no other person comparable to God (2 Chron. 6:14). He stresses the fact that God is a covenant keeping God (vs. 14). He stresses that what God had promised to David had now come to pass (vs. 15). These facts lead Solomon to desire that God would do the same for him (vv. 16, 17).

It is at this point that we reach verse 18. Since God is so great and so glorious, how can He dwell in a small temple, (in comparison to God) magnificent though it is? Solomon points out that not even heaven and earth can contain God (vs. 18) let alone the place that he had made. Solomon understands that God is pleased to dwell with men, and this leads him to invoke the blessing of God upon all their activities both in the present and in the future years (vv. 19 – 39). Solomon concludes his prayer by returning to the covenant relationship that exists between God and himself (vv. 40 – 42).

Solomon's question is the profoundest question any person can ask. Can God dwell with us? Why would God want to dwell with us since we are rebels and sinners? It is for the sake of His Kingly Son, David's Son, that He is pleased to be with us. Anything that comes to us from God comes to us because of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have nothing and are nothing apart from that blessed righteousness. It is an imputed righteousness freely given to all who believe.

Jesus came to dwell with man as a man. He is apart from us only in the sense that He is the sinless God-man. He is fully man, and he lived among us. It pleased God when the fullness of time had come to send forth His Kingly Son so that he might redeem us and deliver us from our sins (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? The answer is a resounding 'Yes'. Jesus is our Immanuel. He dwells with us and in us by his Spirit. Since this is true, how shall I then live? Let us live in Him and with Him day by day since He is pleased to dwell with us. All of God's promises are yes in Jesus, and shall surely come to pass for our good and for God's glory.