



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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2 Chronicles 6:12-21 **English Standard Version** **March 11, 2018**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 11, 2018**, is from **2 Chronicles 6:12-21**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(2 Chronicles 6:12) Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands.

The LORD told King David that his son, King Solomon, would build Him a house, a temple that would replace the tabernacle (tent of meeting) that Moses had constructed during the wandering of the Hebrews in the wilderness. Daily sacrifices by the priests were to be made on the LORD's altar, and Solomon stood in front of this altar to pray. King Solomon had completed the building of the temple; therefore, he called all Israel (at that time people from all twelve tribes) to gather for the dedication of the temple. He prayed in the presence of all the people, a prayer for the LORD and the people to hear.

(2 Chronicles 6:13) 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,

King Solomon made a stage large enough for all the people to see him. At four and a half feet high, his upper body would have been higher than the heads of all the people when he was standing. The altar would not block their view because it was behind him, and by being in the center of the outer courtyard people of all backgrounds and tribes could more easily see him. We might assume that the priests and nobles filled most of the outer courtyard. The stage platform was square at seven and one-half feet by seven and one-half feet. When King Solomon bowed down on his knees he acknowledged and proclaimed by His actions that the LORD was his Lord and King. He reverently spread out his hands toward heaven to indicate that he was the LORD's servant who had come before the LORD to praise Him, to lead the people in worship, and to make intercession for them.

(2 Chronicles 6:14) 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,

King Solomon praised the LORD by proclaiming to the LORD before the people the truth about God and God's attributes. Many nations worshiped false gods and idols, but King Solomon stated and prayed before the people that the LORD was their God, the God of Israel, and ONLY the LORD was the God of Israel. We might praise God by praying something like: "Lord, You are my God" or "Lord, You are our God and You are our ONLY God."

King Solomon continued with a confession of his and their faith as Israelites; a faith that was built on the actions of God in freeing the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and giving them the promised land as God had promised Abraham. They knew from God's words in the Law of God (Moses' writings and the prophets), God promises, and God's actions that there is no God in heaven or on earth as great and wonderful as the LORD.

Next, King Solomon praised the LORD for the covenant that God had made with them: that the LORD would be their God and they should obey His commands found in the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch, the Torah). They should love the LORD with all their heart, soul, and strength (see Deuteronomy 6:5).

King Solomon continued his confession of faith by saying the LORD loves His people, and He has shown them His love; however, the LORD can show them His love by blessing them at all times when His people follow Him with all their hearts. When His people rebel against Him and break the covenant and refuse to repent, the LORD must discipline them, and they may not see the LORD's discipline as an expression of His redeeming love (see the continuation of King Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 6:22-42). When the Jews were later sent into exile in Babylon and the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, neither the Jews nor their neighbors saw this destruction as an expression of God's love for the Jews.

(2 Chronicles 6:15) 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.

King Solomon continued to glorify the LORD by telling the people as he prayed to the LORD that God had kept His promise to his father, King David. God kept a "personal promise" to King David, which would benefit all Israel, regarding the building of the temple by his son, and King Solomon recognized that God had fulfilled that promise. He acknowledged the fact that King David considered himself a servant of God, and because he was a true servant of God the Lord made him a personal promise. In addition, King Solomon did not take any personal credit for the completion of the temple, and he gave the LORD the credit for building the temple with His powerful hand. In giving God all the glory for what everyone saw, King Solomon said in his prayer that God gave the promise and God made the promise come true.

(2 Chronicles 6:16) 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.’

King Solomon prayed that the LORD would keep His promise to his father, King David, for the sake of King David, but God was thinking bigger than King David. As he prayed, King Solomon also acknowledged the fact that as one of King David’s sons sitting on the throne of Israel that he (the first in fact to follow King David) and the Davidic kings who followed him must be careful in everything he/they did and that he/they must live the way God’s law told him/them to live, with his father, King David, being his/their example. Wise King Solomon could not say he did not know any better when he turned from God’s law and built temples to pagan gods in the hills around Jerusalem. Indeed, King Solomon and his sons were not careful in everything they did, and they did not live the way God’s law told them to live; therefore, the nation of Israel was divided into the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah with disastrous results. King David sinned, but he repented and returned to obeying the LORD with all his heart (though God still disciplined him as He had warned in His Law). King Solomon did not repent and return to the LORD with all his heart. He did not destroy the high places where he had built temples for the idols that his many foreign wives worshiped, which misled God’s people. After a succession of mostly wicked kings, for many years the Judeans had no Davidic king sitting on a throne in Jerusalem. God’s promises did point to the eventual coming of God’s Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Davidic King, Who is the King of kings.

(2 Chronicles 6:17) Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David.

The LORD’s promise came true, but not as King Solomon hoped, because his sins eventually led to the destruction of both the kingdom of Israel and

the kingdom of Judah. The LORD's promise contained conditions that King David's descendants did not fulfill, not even wise King Solomon, and because they did not fulfill the conditions God stipulated, David's dynasty was removed from providing kings who would continuously reign over Israel. God's promise was ultimately fulfilled when King Jesus, a son of David, lived a perfect life, died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).

(2 Chronicles 6:18) "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!"

In King Solomon's effort to further glorify God in prayer, he speaks about the awesome nature of God. In answer to his first question, the answer is a resounding **YES!** When the Holy Spirit conceived Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the virgin, Mary, God came to live on earth with human beings as fully man and fully God. In some sense, the Holy Spirit inspired King Solomon to be prophetic in his prayer regarding the first coming of the Son of God. The rest of King Solomon's description of the nature of God is true. God is far greater than all creation, and God in His nature is greater than the temple King Solomon had built. Nothing built with human hands can contain the infinite omnipotent omnipresent God.

(2 Chronicles 6:19) 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,

Once again, King Solomon emphasized his humility when he prayed. He did not take God's attention to his prayer for granted. Instead, he reverently asked God, "please pay attention to my prayer," rather than demanding that the LORD listen to him pray. He came before God bowing as the LORD's servant rather than coming as the King of Israel demanding to be heard.

After proclaiming the greatness of God in prayer before God's people, he made supplication; he earnestly cried and begged for God's help.

(2 Chronicles 6:20) 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.

King Solomon asked the LORD to look toward the temple and listen to the prayers of His people throughout the day and night. Your "Name" is another way of saying "LORD" or "a combination of all the Biblical names for God summed up in one word "Name." King Solomon prayed that as God promised He would be available to listen to His people with His steadfast love and power; that God would be ever ready to hear the prayers of His people when they prayed toward the temple. When concluding his prayer, King Solomon listed many situations when the people could and should pray to God toward the temple.

(2 Chronicles 6:21) 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."

King Solomon prayed not only for himself and his dynasty, he also prayed for the people. He prayed that the LORD would show them His favor; which in the New Testament we read as "grace" or "unmerited favor." King Solomon's subjects heard him ask God to listen to them pray when they prayed toward the temple, so they were encouraged to do so. He also once again acknowledged that the temple was too small a place for God to live, so he prayed that when they prayed toward the temple that God, Who lived in heaven, would answer their prayers; furthermore, when He heard them pray that God would forgive them for their sins. In subsequent verses in his prayer, King Solomon gave examples of the situations that might draw them to pray to the LORD. Today, Christians do not pray toward a temple; they pray in Jesus' name.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How did King Solomon glorify and praise the LORD? How can we glorify and praise the LORD?
2. When King Solomon glorified and praised the LORD, what are some of the actions God took in behalf of His people Israel?
3. What did King Solomon say the LORD expected from His people?
4. On what basis did God say King David would always have one of his descendants sitting on the throne of Israel?
5. How did the LORD eventually answer King Solomon's question asked in 2 Chronicles 6:18?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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