



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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2 Chronicles 7:1-10 **New International Version** **March 18, 2018**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 18, 2018**, is from **2 Chronicles 7:1-10**. **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 7:1) When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

King Solomon dedicated the newly built temple with a prayer that glorified God and restated the conditions the Israelites needed to meet for God to answer their prayers (see 2 Chronicles 6). God answered King Solomon's prayer by sending fire from heaven for all the people to see.

Earlier in their history, with a pillar of fire, the LORD led the Hebrews in the wilderness (see Exodus 13:21), and God sent fire to consume an offering of Aaron (see Leviticus 9:21). Later, when Ahab was king, to contend with the prophets of Baal, God sent fire in answer to Elijah's prayer to consume an offering (see 1 Kings 18:38). When the fire came down, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. As King Solomon had prayed earlier, he knew his temple could not contain the LORD, but in some special sense the LORD was present in the temple and He would hear the prayers of the people when they prayed toward the temple. Jesus spoke of His body as a temple (see John 2:21). On the Day of Pentecost, fire appeared above the heads of Jesus' disciples and the Holy Spirit began to fill the followers of Jesus Christ from that day forth (see Acts 2:1-4). Because the Holy Spirit indwells Christians, Paul wrote: "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people'" (2 Corinthians 6:16). Today, the glory of the Lord indwells the followers of Christ.

(2 Chronicles 7:2) The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it.

The presence of the LORD's glory in the temple made it impossible for the priests to enter the temple. The temple included the innermost chamber, called the "Holy of Holies" or the "Most Holy Place," where God was enthroned above both the ark of the covenant and the cherubim above the ark. When a cubit is equal to 18 inches, the Holy of Holies was a cube that was 30 feet long by 30 feet wide by 30 feet high. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year. The outer chamber of the temple was called the "Holy Place," where other priests (and only priests) could enter. The glory of the LORD sanctified or made the entire temple holy, and for a time it could not be entered by anyone, not even the priests.

(2 Chronicles 7:3) When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."

The glory of the LORD was manifested in the fire (as in the wilderness when the Hebrews were led by the pillar of fire and the LORD gave Moses the Law on the mountain). "To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain" (Exodus 24:17). The fire remained for a time above the temple without consuming the temple or the people in the courtyard as the

fire had consumed the offering. The courtyard was not large enough to contain the thousands if not millions of people present at the temple dedication, but the sight of the glory of the LORD would have inspired everyone to fall on their knees in worship. They showed their humility before the LORD and their unworthiness to look upon His glory by facing the ground as they worshiped. Their true worship included their thankfulness to God for all the reasons they had heard King Solomon list in his Prayer of Dedication and from their knowledge of the history of their ancestors, but especially for God's presence with them, His promises to them, and His willingness to answer their prayers. They praised God for His moral attributes. First, God is good: God is not a combination of good and evil; God is not arbitrary; God is reasonable, and God only does what is good. Second, historically and in their experience, the LORD had shown His faithful love for them, and especially on that day when His glory filled the temple. Furthermore, as they looked to the future, they trusted God's promises and praised the LORD that His love for His people would continue forever (which, as they would learn by experience, would include both God's blessings when they obeyed the LORD and God's discipline when they would not turn from their sins and return to obedience). This verse quotes Psalm 136:1 "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever." As a responsive psalm or reading, Psalm 136

includes the people responding “His love endures forever” after each verse is read (see also 2 Chronicles 7:6 below). Perhaps as the priests read Psalm 136 aloud they led the people in responsive worship.

(2 Chronicles 7:4) Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

The king and the people offered sacrifices to the LORD that most probably were not whole burnt offerings, where the entire animal was consumed by fire. Most probably, they offered parts of the animal and some fat portions while the rest was consumed by the celebrants during the several days of feasting. See more about feasts and offerings below.

(2 Chronicles 7:5) And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand head of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the people dedicated the temple of God.

Considering the number of people worshiping the LORD who would need to be fed for two weeks of celebration, King Solomon needed to sacrifice a great number of animals to feed them. A portion of each animal was first offered to the LORD with thanksgiving, and then the rest of the animal helped feed the people. The dedication feast symbolically represented everyone feasting with the LORD

and in the presence of the LORD who feasted with them as a portion of each animal was sacrificed to the LORD. As Christians, we look forward to feasting with the Lord Jesus in the future. Remember, because Jesus Christ (the expected Jewish Messiah) is greater than King Solomon, Jesus fed thousands of people with just a few fish and a few loaves of bread with basketfuls of leftovers (see Luke 11:31).

(2 Chronicles 7:6) The priests took their positions, as did the Levites with the LORD's musical instruments, which King David had made for praising the LORD and which were used when he gave thanks, saying, "His love endures forever." Opposite the Levites, the priests blew their trumpets, and all the Israelites were standing.

The celebration took on formality and order, which included musical instruments and singing in worship. Many of the Psalms written by King David were set to music for worship, and King David sang and played a "harp" or a "lyre" (depending on your translation), which he also played when a shepherd and in the presence of King Saul. King David had musical instruments made especially for the Levites when praising the LORD, and King David himself used musical instruments when he praised the LORD. Since King David had wanted to build the temple and his son, King Solomon, had done so as God

promised, it was fitting that David's instruments and psalms would be included as part to the temple dedication. In addition to the playing of music, the priests and people sang some of the psalms responsively.

(2 Chronicles 7:7) Solomon consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the LORD, and there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar he had made could not hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat portions.

The entire temple area was consecrated or set apart as holy to the LORD by King Solomon, including the middle part of the courtyard where the priests would offer sacrifices to the LORD. With "burnt offerings," the entire animal was offered in sacrifice, and neither the one offering the sacrifice nor the priest could eat any of the meat: it was all burned in the fire. The hide of the animal was not burned and belonged to the priest. With "fellowship offerings," a portion of the animal could be eaten by the priest and the one offering the sacrifice. For the rules for sacrificing to God, see Leviticus chapters 1-7.

(2 Chronicles 7:8) So Solomon observed the festival at that time for seven days, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt.

Solomon kept the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication, so the entire festival would have lasted 14 days in the Fall and have fed “a vast assembly.” The seven feasts of Israel are described in Leviticus 23.

(2 Chronicles 7:9) On the eighth day they held an assembly, for they had celebrated the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days more.

On the eighth day, all Israel celebrated a “Closing Assembly” and departed for home.

(2 Chronicles 7:10) On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people to their homes, joyful and glad in heart for the good things the LORD had done for David and Solomon and for his people Israel.

The twenty-third day was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the people were so joyful and glad that King Solomon had to send them home from worship and their time of celebration with all God’s people. They rejoiced for all that God had done for their nation’s leaders and for the type of national leadership they had enjoyed through King David and King Solomon. They were at peace and prosperous and they gave thanks to the LORD for all the good things He had done for them as a kingdom, Israel.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Now that the temple has been destroyed, where can we find the glory of the LORD?
2. Compare or contrast the glory of the LORD in the temple and the glory of the LORD in Jesus.
3. What did the worshipers do and say when they saw the glory of the LORD above the temple?
4. Why do you think twenty-two thousand head of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats were offered by King Solomon in sacrifice?
5. Why did King Solomon need to send the people home after the feasts and the dedication of the temple?

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

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