

SECOND CHRONICLES SEVEN, FOURTEEN

Intro: This is a verse which everyone who lived during World War II will remember. It became a verse expressing the hope of at least the Christians in America that, by turning to the Lord, the war would come to an end.

I would like to examine this verse with you tonight so that we can see what it really means, and how it should be applied.

I. THE SETTING.

If you were to read from the beginning of 2 Chronicles, you would discover that the first 9 chapters deal with the life of Solomon.

Solomon was the son of David who succeeded him on the throne of Israel.

He is remembered for two things:

- 1) His great wisdom.
- 2) He was the one who built The Temple which David, his father, had wanted to build.

David had charged Solomon to do this. In 2 Chron. 5:1 the work which took seven years was finished. Ch. 5 tells how it was furnished--with special emphasis on the ark of the covenant. Chs. 6, 7 tell about the dedication.

His prayer begins in 6:12-21. Here is the wisest man who ever lived (except for our Lord) and his prayer manifests his understanding of spiritual truth in two ways:

- 1) He realized that God was too great to be contained by any building he might construct. Note how the beginning of his prayer has so much about God in it.
- 2) He knew that there was nothing about a building that could guarantee blessing for His people.

Therefore, his prayer is really for the people. AND 2 CHRONICLES IS THE VERY HEART OF GOD'S ANSWER TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER. Solomon's prayer indicates that he was very familiar with the books of Moses--especially Deut. 28. And God's answer indicated that He was thinking about what He had told Moses too.

In addition, Solomon knew about the children of Israel and their journey from Egypt to Canaan! He knew also about the times of the Judges, and about Samuel, and about Saul, and about David, his father. AND SO HE REALIZED THAT THE ONLY THING WHICH COULD HINDER THE BLESSING OF THE LORD WOULD BE THE SIN OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Note how Solomon speaks to the people of Israel in 6:4-11 before he begins to pray. Vv. 5-9 are God's words, AND THE MESSAGE HAS TO DO PRIMARILY WITH THE NAME OF GOD! It is important to remember this as we come to our text for this evening.

What was Solomon's great concern?

It was for the blessing of his people--not only during his reign, but throughout the years ahead. Deut. 28 did not give a very bright picture of the future. In fact, it spoke of dispersion and persecution among the Gentile nations. Solomon knew the people well enough to know that this would most likely be the case. BUT HIS PRAYER WAS THAT GOD WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE THEM HOPE EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT SIN!

II. THE VERSE (2 Chron. 7:14).

The word, "If," does not appear in v. 14, but in v. 13. So v. 14 should begin with an and, and the whole statement is found in vv. 13, 14.

- A. With whom is God concerned? "And my people, who are called by my name." Remember 6:5-10.

What grace! God had not chosen any people but Israel. He had not chosen any city but Jerusalem. He had not chosen any place but The Temple. He had not chosen any king but David (and his family). AND UPON THESE GOD HAD PLACED HIS NAME!

We like to say, "The Lord is my shepherd." But think how the Lord must have sounded when He said, "My sheep . . ." (John 10:27).

But the point now is this: THE KEY TO GOD'S BLESSING IS TO BE SEEN IN WHAT HE IS ABLE TO DO IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE. This is why the most important thing that a pastor can do is to feed his people on the Word of God and to pray that they will walk in that Word.

- B. What does God say His people will have to do in such a time as is indicated by verse 13?

There are four things:

1. "Shall humble themselves." This comes at the beginning of the verse in the Hebrew. It means that they are to bow down upon their knees as one does when he is subdued.

This is where we should be all of the time! What a rare trait this is among the people of God, and yet what blessing it always brings. Cf. 1 Peter and James.

2. "And pray." This is just a very common word for prayer. It indicates so clearly that this is what the people had not been doing. They had been doing things for themselves--not conscious of their great dependence upon God. When the people of God stop praying, trouble is not very far away.
3. "And seek my face." This means to seek God's favor, but it also means TO SEEK GOD HIMSELF.

How easy it is for us to loose sight of Him! Cf. Gal. 1:6; Jer. 2:13.

4. "And turn from their wicked ways." Sin had become a way of life to them.

God must come first, and then in turning to Him they must also turn from their sins. Cf. Prov. 28:13.

C. What God promises to do.

1. "Then will I hear from heaven." Think of this statement in view of all that we have seen about The Temple. It indicates that God is not there. BUT ANY TIME HIS PEOPLE TURN BACK TO HIM FROM ANY PLACE ON THE EARTH, HE IS ABLE TO HEAR THEM.

Contrast Isa. 1:15; 59:1-3 with 1 John 5:14, 15. The distance is not a problem, but the sin is!

2. "And will forgive their sin." The word that God uses here indicates why sin is sin--because it is not what He wills for His people. It is missing the mark.

"Forgive" means to take it away, to remove it. Cf. Psa. 103:12, which David wrote: "As far as the east is . . ." This is forgiveness.

3. "And will heal their land." Note, "their land." In v. 20 God speaks of it as, "my land."

What does this mean? It means restoration--restoration of blessing.

Concl: What does this verse have for us today?

- 1) It means that there is a deep inclination in man toward
- 2) It means that sin brings judgment--not necessarily right ^{sin.} away, but it will come if our ways become "wicked ways."
- 3) It means that everything depends upon how we as the people of God respond to Him. There are no impossible cases with God. The only question is: Will we turn to Him?
- 4) It means that God is concerned about us, and that He is waiting in heaven to hear our voices when we turn to Him in prayer.
- 5) It means that God, and God alone, is able to make things right once we have made them wrong by our disobedience to Him. Therefore, He is the One we need.

Concerning the world, especially as we think that Israel is really the key to world-wide blessing, we can see from this verse that IF GOD IS TO BRING BLESSING TO THE WORLD IT WILL BEGIN IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE. If you are concerned about someone who needs to know the Lord, before you look for a time to speak, be sure to look for something which the Lord may need to do in your own heart.

Undoubtedly, this verse points the way to blessing.