

**Title:** · Select one from Deuteronomy 25:5-10; 2 Chronicles 6:12-21; Psalm 13.

- Complete a Gobbet Preparation Worksheet for me to refer to.
- Exegete and interpret the passage in light of biblical theology. Consider what the passage might have meant for original hearers, then what it means for us as Christians today.
- Please note: you will not pass if you only exegete the text without considering the difference Jesus makes to interpretation.
- Submit sermon and Gobbet Preparation Worksheet via Google Classroom

1500 words; 40%

**Course: Biblical Theology**

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### **DECLARATION**

I certify that this ASSIGNMENT is my own work. I have acknowledged all material and sources used in it, and that I have not plagiarised in part or whole the work of others without stating the references.

## **The House That God Built (2 Chronicles 6:12-21)**

*[Topic introduction, opening prayer of committal to the Holy Spirit's leading]*

Now as regards the setting and background of 2 Chronicles 6:12-21, this takes place during the high point of Israel's presence in the Promised Land. King David had united the kingdom and subdued its enemies, paving the way for a golden age for his son Solomon. David had even prepared the necessary plans & materials for Solomon to build God's temple – and it is at the completion of the building project that Solomon gathers the people to lead them in a corporate prayer and dedication (vv12-13a).

Back in 2 Samuel 7:8-17, God had promised to David that his descendants would forever rule from the throne – *the LORD will make you a house*. And quid pro quo, God also told David that his offspring *shall build a house for my name*.

A brief aside regarding David's house... Archaeological finds at Tel Dan revealed a stela from around the 9<sup>th</sup>-century B.C. with the inscription 'king of the House of David' in Aramaic<sup>1</sup>:



If you use the 'traditional' timeline with a 1446 B.C. Exodus, 1000-900 B.C would be around the period that David and Solomon ruled<sup>2</sup> – making this stela a proud appeal to the pedigree of this earlier period. This is contrary to skeptics who say that King David never existed, that Israel never had a powerful kingdom, that the Biblical narrative is fictional, and so on. Once again, as Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> Biblical Archaeology Society Staff, "The Tel Dan Inscription: The First Historical Evidence of King David from the Bible", *Biblical Archaeology Society* (accessed 01-Oct-2022): <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/the-tel-dan-inscription-the-first-historical-evidence-of-the-king-david-bible-story/>

<sup>2</sup> Steve Rudd, "David's New Spiritual Order", *The Interactive Bible* (accessed 01-Oct-2022): <https://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-maps-timeline-chronology-2samuel-6-7-1chron-13-17-22-king-david-new-spiritual-order-temple-reorganizes-levitical-priesthood-997-964bc.htm>

archaeologist Nelson Glueck puts it: “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”<sup>3</sup>

Back to God’s promise to David – a house for a house. It is this promise that Solomon reiterates as he praises God’s unbreakable faithfulness to His word (vv13b-17). Solomon expresses humility about the majestic temple that he built – how can a mere physical structure contain God to dwell with man on earth, if even the very heavens cannot do so (v18)?

Now, with hindsight we know that Solomon’s utterance is ironic, for one day God really would condescend to dwell among humanity in the form of Jesus Christ! (John 1:14)! The infinite would clothe Himself in finiteness (Philippians 2:6-8), a far smaller ‘house’ than the majestic structure Solomon built. And just as God promised, He would be born from the ‘house’ of David (Matthew 1:1). I’ll return to this line of thought in a moment, but for now let’s get back to the passage.

Solomon’s presuppositions in verse 18 aside, he goes on to ask God for His attentiveness – both to Solomon personally, and to the people of Israel corporately. Solomon also pre-emptively pleads for forgiveness – the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 4:29-34) knows that everyone will eventually stumble, fancy that!

Just flip through your Old Testament and you’ll see the repeated pattern – people fail, for to err is human. From Adam & Eve eating the forbidden fruit; to the wicked generations leading up to the flood and the rebellious people at Babel; to the Israelites who repeatedly broke their covenant with God. Surely this sad history would have been in the mind of Solomon’s immediate audience – the people of Israel who gathered to witness the dedication of the temple – when they listened to him beg for God’s future forgiveness.

And although Solomon didn’t know it when he uttered his prayer, *he himself* would eventually break God’s covenant with David’s line – by giving in to his many foreign wives and turning his heart to their gods (1 Kings 11:1-10). This sordid turn of events would have been in the

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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Pierce, “The Archaeologist: Nelson Glueck”, *HopeChannel* (accessed 01-Oct-2022): <https://www.hopechannel.com/au/read/the-archaeologist-nelson-glueck>

mind of the later readers of the Chronicles – such spiritual unfaithfulness is exactly what led to the destruction of the temple and the exile from which they had finally, painstakingly returned from.

So for any humble or realistic or plain old *sane* Israelite, their thoughts would have been: “Yes! O God, please hear our prayers and our pleas for forgiveness, because we’re gonna need it!” And to any Israelite reading the Chronicles after the time of the exile, surely nagging questions would have been on their minds – Babylonians, Greeks, Romans with their non-Jewish puppet king Herod, oh my! Where was David’s line on the throne? What about God’s faithfulness that Solomon had so extolled?

But isn’t it just so amazing, how great God’s mercy is? Solomon, the Israelites, none of us have earned or deserved God’s forgiveness. We all deserve only judgment, condemnation and punishment for disobeying God’s laws – for breaking His covenants with humanity.

And God in His infinite wisdom knew it would happen – He already foresaw humanity would fail, so He was already *personally* prepared for our shortcomings. In the giving of the Ten Commandments, God had both copies (Exodus 32:15) of the ‘contract’ placed within the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:16). Now, copies of such agreements were usually kept in the presence of the respective gods of each side – acting as witnesses, guarantors and enforcers of the deal.<sup>4</sup> Thus by holding both stone tablets, God indicated that He Himself would uphold both ends of the Sinai covenant.

Return further, to the promise God made to Abraham (Genesis 15). By right, Abraham should have sworn upon himself and his descendants the bloody fate of the slaughtered animals (Jeremiah 34:18) if they broke the bargain – but Abraham did *not* step through the blood. Instead, supernatural fire passed between the gory pieces twice (Genesis 15:17) – signifying that God guaranteed the promises, twice over.

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<sup>4</sup> For example: “A duplicate of this tablet has been deposited before the sun-goddess of Arinna, because the sun-goddess of Arinna regulates kingship and queenship. In Mitanni land [a duplicate] has been deposited before Teshub, the lord of the [sanctuary] of Kahat. At regular [intervals] shall they read it in the presence of the king of Mitanni land and in the presence of the sons of the Hurri country.” Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul J. N. Laresen, *No. 56A Shattiwaza of Mitanni & Suppiluliuma I of Hatti*, in *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 1:391. Quoted in Carmen Imes, *Bearing God's Name: Why Sinai Still Matters* (IL/USA: IVP Academic, 2019), Perlego Edition, Chapter 2, Written In Stone: Why Two Tablets?

At the same time, God wasn't *cheating* on the covenants – He would still fulfil them *through humanity*. Allow me to use a quote: “God need not change his plan in response to human weakness ... He need not remove humanity ... to accomplish what he wants.”<sup>5</sup>

So on the one hand, perfect God would need *to Himself fulfil* the covenant obligations of imperfect humanity – but on the other hand, God would do this *through humanity*... As a human being. Do you see where I'm going here? Another quote to explain the concept:

In the trajectory of Biblical theology ... one of the necessities of the Incarnation is because we don't have humans capable of fulfilling any of the covenants they entered into with the God of Israel. But those covenants were made with people, they were made with Israelites. And so, for those covenants to be repaired and resolved and fulfilled, you need a human being to fulfil them. Well, the demands of perfection – that's impossible, so you need God to become a man to fulfil those things. Look at the Davidic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, call these terms the Law. So the Incarnation is, in an instance like that, necessary to sort of clean up the fulfilment of the covenants of the Old Testament. ... It demands that the Messiah be a human and also be this second Yahweh figure.<sup>6</sup>

God in human form, fulfilling our covenant responsibilities, taking our guilty place for all the times we failed (Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12... which is quoted and fulfilled in Matthew 8:14-17, Luke 22:37, John 12:37-38, Acts 8:30-35, Romans 10:16 and 1 Peter 2:22-23 if you didn't realize it). And despite what doubts post-exilic Jews might have about God's promise to David, Jesus the Messiah is indeed descended from the line of David (Jeremiah 33:14-22, Matthew 1:1) – and He rules forever (Daniel 7:14, Luke 1:31-33, Hebrews 1:8, Revelation 11:15). Wow, can God get any greater?!

“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!” So said Solomon in verse 18, and boy does God like poetic irony! Not only would God dwell with man on earth as Jesus Christ, now God

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<sup>5</sup> Michael S. Heiser, *Facebook* (accessed 28-Jul-2022): <https://www.facebook.com/378543178874562/posts/pfbid028mUentRqCDTyABKWD7iaJhwDxuzuyf3QA2LLU8TrE7Aw2KtmEbzDKZR3u3W7wql>

<sup>6</sup> Michael S. Heiser, “Dr. Michael Heiser on Old Testament Binitarianism - trinities 098”, *khanpadawan* (accessed 28-Jul-2022): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl3AMS6-BfQ> [39:28 to 40:50].

makes His house not in a stone temple – but in each and every one of us! God’s manifested presence is no longer just in the temple of Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:1-2) – God’s presence is with all of us, making us living temples (1 Corinthians 3:16) filled with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). God’s name was in the temple (Deuteronomy 12:5) – Jesus promised that His name would always be with us (Matthew 18:19-20 & 28:18-20).

And we’re not just God’s house in the sense of a dwelling place – we’re also God’s house in the sense of family. Recall the Tel Dan inscription, ‘the House of David’ – it means the dynasty of David, the family line of David. By accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we are also accepting Him as our ‘big brother’ (Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:10-18) – we are adopted into the family of the Father (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18).

Now Solomon is a great example of God’s blessings and faithfulness to His promises – but as I mentioned, Solomon also serves as a horrible warning! Sometimes we take God’s goodness for granted and forget that we aren’t owed anything – it is only by God’s grace that He blesses us, and only by God’s mercy that he forgives and saves us. *It is the gift of God... that no one may boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). Don’t end up like Solomon who forgot just Who he owed everything to! We’re the temples of God now – live and act in ways that honour the temple, not defile it!

So take this application home with you – always be thankful for God’s faithfulness, what God has done and continues to do for us. And let us live in a way that shows gratitude for it.

*[Closing prayer]*

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