

THE WHOLE STORY

From Genesis to Revelation

2 Chronicles 5-7

Introduction:

As we have been following through *The Whole Story* we have seen God chose a man, a family, and a nation as his own, committing to always be with them. In 2 Chronicles 5 through 7 we witness God coming to be with his people Israel in a unique way - dwelling in a house built in the midst of Israel, the temple.

No matter what season God's people have found themselves in, he has always given them a way to experience his presence. However, the temple was not important for Israel because it was grand and ornate; the temple was important and holy because God dwelt in it. The people of Israel didn't celebrate because of the beauty of the temple but because God, who is good and shows steadfast love, was with them.

This Week's Main Focus:

***Even the grandest temple is not worthy of God,
yet he meets us where we are so that we may be with him.***

When Solomon and the people finished the temple, their response was worship to God through songs that declared his character. God fulfilled his promise to Israel by bringing them out of Egypt and providing them with a place to worship and a leader. In the end, Solomon even confesses that this temple isn't worthy of God's presence because even heaven can't contain him. As we look at the dedication of the temple, the Chronicler gives the account in four parts:

- The ark being brought to the temple.
- Solomon addresses the people of Israel.
- Solomon prays.
- The dedication ceremony of Israel.

As you study Solomon's dedication of the temple in 2 Chronicles 5-7 take notice of the refrain that the people continually repeat, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." This is how chapters 5 and 6 end and how chapter 7 begins. This temple was only a shadow of the better fulfillment of God's presence being made available through Jesus Christ. Jesus guaranteed not only that we could pray to God, but that he would always hear and accept his people.

****This is a longer section of Scripture. Many people in your group will have just read this in The Whole Story reading plan. However, it would be helpful to read again before coming to your small group time. This will correlate with Question 2 below.*

Introduction Question:

1) Thinking about the upcoming election, economy and faith; where do you see people in our nation putting their hope?

Bible Study Questions:

2) Have your group retell the events of the dedication of the temple using the general outline provided in the introduction.

3) For what reasons does Solomon offer for the people to pray towards the Temple in chapter six, verse 18 through 40? What is a common thread through all the reasons?

4) Who are God's people in this passage? Who are God's people today?

5) Solomon himself admits that no matter how extravagant the Temple is, it cannot come close to containing the presence of God. What are some other ways God has and does dwell with his people?

6) At the end of chapter seven God is responding to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. He both confirms his blessing and warns Solomon of the consequences for turning away from God. How is it helpful for you to know that there are consequences for faithfulness and faithlessness?

Group Application Questions:

7) The temple was meant to be a sign to the Israelites that God was present with his people. In what ways do you experience God's presence with you? In what ways is God present in your walk and how are you abiding in him daily?

8) Hoping in God is not a one-time action - it is a continual trusting and abiding in who God is and what he has done through Christ. How can your small group help you to continually hope in God? How can you help the people in your group to continually hope in God?

Prayer: *Read 2 Chronicles 7:14*

- Pair up and pray with 1 to 2 other people in your small group.
 - Ask God to show you areas of your heart that are not humble towards him or others.
 - Remind yourself (through quoting or looking up) of God's character according to his word.
 - Confess one specific way you need to repent from turning away from God.
 - Thank God that he is able to both hear and heal all of our affliction.