

2 Chronicles 7:14 Is So Much More Than What We Tend to Think

We've read, quoted, and clung to 2 Chronicles 7:14 when the spiritual and moral decline of our country beckons us to beg God to deliver us from ourselves.

But 2 Chronicles 7:14 calls us to do more than just cry out to God for deliverance.

Let's take a look at a bit of context to this power-packed passage of Scripture in order to see how we got to 1 Chronicles 7:14:

Chapter 7 actually began with God the brilliant and glorious, jaw-dropping manifestation of God. The Lord showed up at the end of Solomon's prayer, fire came down from Heaven and God's glory filled the temple in such a powerful way that the priests weren't even able to enter in.

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

IF My people

who are called
by My name

will humble themselves,

and **pray**

and **seek My face,**

and **turn from**

their wicked ways,

THEN I will hear

from heaven,

and **will forgive**

their sin

and **heal their land.**

Solomon's prayer was one of Dedication and consisted of:

- An acknowledgment of the greatness of God
- An appreciation of the power, character and covenant of God
- A recounting of the faithfulness and the goodness of God
- A plea for the promise of God to be fulfilled
- A confession of the need to consistently confess sins
- A cry for God to hear and see His people
- An appeal for God to arise, take notice, and remember His promise to His people.

That was the basis of the prayer. And then God showed up as Solomon dedicated the temple leaving them all stunned by His glorious presence.

Then... in verse 12-14, we read...

¹² Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. ¹³ When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴ if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:12-14

The Lord appeared to Solomon. He spoke specifically to him and told him He heard his prayer and made an important choice. He claimed the temple as His house... where sacrifices would be made.

And then He gives some instructions beginning with **WHEN** (*not IF*)...

- I shut heaven and there is no rain.
- When I command the locusts to devour the land.
- Or when I send pestilence among my people.

Why did God say **WHEN**? And why would God do that to His people?

I don't pretend to speak for God, but we do know from what we have seen in Scripture that God's people tend to be hard-headed and hard-hearted. They easily turn from God and God consistently calls them back to Himself.

Unfortunately, sometimes, it means that He has to get His children's attention and remind them of their need for God.

We don't know for sure, but God did say **when** and not **if**.

Unfortunately, this verse has been misinterpreted far too often. So, now that we've gotten a glimpse of the context, let's look at what this verse is really saying.

Probably the first thing we need to realize is that 1 Chronicles is a conditional promise.

- If My people...
- Then I will...

Then we need to keep in mind that while this conditional promise was made to Solomon and the children of Israel regarding the temple, it is a promise we can apply to our own lives.

We are able to apply this power-packed passage because we know that 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us all Scripture is given by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness. And we find in 1 Corinthians 10:11-12, that the things we find in Scripture happened as an example for our instruction. And 1 Peter 2:10 reminds us that while we were at one time Gentiles, that we are now the people of God.

While there is one translation, there are also many applications. Applying 2 Chronicles 7:14 would be one of those applications, I believe we can apply to ourselves for our instruction.

Let's look at what God is calling us to in 2 Chronicles 7:14...

IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME

This is a direct declaration from God to His people. Not to the world... not the lost... but specifically to His people. In this dispensation of grace, if you have been born again, you are His. The Church is His. So, today, if we are to apply this passage, we need to understand that it is a call to the His people.

SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES

Humbling ourselves before God not only means to acknowledge His authority, but to submit to it. Humility is the opposite of pride, and unfortunately, we are a culture of proud people. Arrogance in our own abilities and the need to make a name for ourselves has permeated the church. Our name. Our way. Our rights. Our glory.

We've made ourselves our own idols and God is calling us to humble ourselves and submit to God... the only One worthy of all glory. It's time that we, God's people, quit idolizing ourselves and humble ourselves before God.

AND PRAY

Praying is humbly going to God with petitions as we intercede for ourselves and others. It's not just saying we are going to pray. It's not liking a social media meme about prayer. It's not just praying a fleeting prayer without truly thinking about what we are saying. Oswald Chambers once said, "Prayer is the greatest work." And E. M. Bounds declared, "God shapes the world by prayer." If we are going to see God answer prayer, we must first pray.

AND SEEK MY FACE

Seeking God's face means **to strive after, beg for, hunger and thirst for His presence**. It's not a casual kind of seeking that is content with a possible glimpse of God at work in our lives. It is an insatiable appetite that aches for God in such a way that nothing else can satisfy until we know we've met with God.

- We have to ask ourselves... When is the last time we really sought God's face?

AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS

We tend to combine humbling ourselves with praying and then cling to that as if that was the promise. But we leave off seeking His face. We totally miss the fact that we have to repent from our wicked ways if we want to see God show up like He promised in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

We need to repent, not just as a nation, but individually. You and I (the church - His people) must turn from our wicked ways. Wicked ways vary from bad, mischievous, disagreeable, to evil, vicious, wicked. We need to repent from all things that God deems wicked.

- What is it that you need to repent from today?

THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN

Then I will hear comes from the same word found in Deuteronomy 6. It's the word *shama*. **It means to give attention to, to listen with the intent to respond.**

If we do our part - if we meet God's conditions as set forth in the beginning of verse 14, God will then do His part to fulfill His promise to His people and respond to the cry of their humble and repentant hearts.

AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN

The issue we have all had to come to grips with is that we are sinners. That's why Jesus died so that He could save us from our sins. But, as much as we wish it was true, we don't stop sinning when we get saved. We still get tangled up in selfishness and pride. We still insist on our own ways. We still deal with attitudes and behaviors that are contrary to God's Word and God's will.

Positionally, we are fully forgiven. But practically, we need to consistently confess (agree with God about) our sins. 1 John 1:9 reminds us of that need.

When God hears us, He responds with forgiveness... our first need for right fellowship to be restored between us and our Heavenly Father.

We need forgiveness as individuals and as a people before we can ever see healing take place in our land.

- What do you need to confess?
- What are some things we, the church and our land needs to be forgiven of?

AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND

To heal means to restore health. It's the Hebrew word *rapha*!. The same Hebrew word found in God's name, YHWH-Rapha (He Is Our Healer).

God, who is our Healer, will heal our land when we do what He calls us to do.

IF we will...

- Humble ourselves.
- Pray.
- Seek His face.
- Turn from our wicked ways.

THEN He will...

- Hear from Heaven.
- Forgive our sin.
- Heal our land.

What are you doing to live out 2 Chronicles 7:14 today?

How can we reach out to the church corporately in a united plea for church-wide humility, prayer, hunger for God's presence, and repentance?