

EVIDENCE SOLOMON'S TEMPLE WAS NOT GOD'S WILL

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Abstract

This paper presents evidence that Solomon's Temple was not God's will but was the product of David's flesh. God promised that one of David's descendants would build a "house" for His name through Nathan the prophet. David either misunderstood God's response through Nathan or was so determined to build his temple that he read his own will into what God revealed. Nonetheless, God blessed the temple anyway as a concession.

Definition of Terms

"David's Temple." The first temple is normally referred to as Solomon's Temple. Here it is called David's Temple because he originated the idea, drafted up the plans, provided the materials for it, and gave the initial order to begin its construction, giving Solomon a lesser role.

"In the flesh." God commanded David not to build the temple he proposed. David read his own will into what God had said and carried out exhaustive preparations in a compulsive manner against the will of God. In this sense David was "in the flesh."

"Nathan's Vision." References are made to Nathan's vision (hereby referred to as Nathan's Vision). This is "the Word of the Lord" which came to Nathan the prophet at night in a vision as recorded in 2 Sam. 7:4-17 and 1 Chron. 17:3-15. These passages are distinguished from other dialogs such as that of David and Solomon because Nathan's dialog is clearly identified as being revelation from God. It is "the Word of the Lord" given by means of a vision to a recognized prophet and its message is delivered to its hearers with "Thus says the Lord" (2 Sam. 2:4, 5, 17).

The Narrative

To begin, consider two events: (1) David's proposal to build the temple and (2) David's commission to Solomon to build it. Each event is recorded twice, making four passages total. The first event, David's proposal to build the temple, is recorded in both 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Chron.

17. The second event, David charging Solomon, is recorded in 1 Chron. 22 and 1 Chron. 28-29. The full text is included in Appendix 1 and 2.

Neutral Observations

In the first event, David compared the humble tabernacle which was a mere tent with his magnificent palace (2 Sam. 7:1). He said to Nathan the prophet that he would like to build a nicer dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant (v. 1). Nathan initially told David to “Go, do all that is in your heart,” but doesn’t say, “Thus says the Lord” (2 Sam. 7:3). God then appeared to Nathan at night in a vision and rejected David’s offer, telling the king *not* to build a temple (2 Sam. 7:5-7). This is clearer in the parallel account which plainly reads, “You shall not build Me a house to dwell in” (1 Chron. 17:4). Instead, God told David that He would build him “a house” and that his “house,” kingdom, and throne would be established forever through one of his descendants (2 Sam. 7:11, 16).

In the second event, it can be seen that David believed the “house” God was referring to was a physical temple (essentially the same idea he had initially proposed to God) and that he believed Solomon was the descendant whom God said would build it (1 Chron. 22:7-10). David himself made “abundant preparations” (1 Chron. 22:5). Part of his preparation was that he budgeted and funded it (v. 24), prepared many materials for it (v. 2-4, 14), hired workers and created some level of organization among them (v. 15). These preparations also involved some amount of difficult work, such as hewing stones, smelting iron and logging trees (v. 2-4). David gave the first command to start some amount of construction when he told the people to “arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God” (1 Chron. 22:19). This construction was likely limited to housing the ark and priestly instruments, but, nonetheless, was construction. The last observation is that David also charged Solomon to continue the work he began (1 Chron. 22:6).

Primary Arguments That the Temple Was Not God's Will

Arguments Within the Narrative Itself

The idea for the temple originated with David, not God. David felt guilty when he compared his magnificent palace with the humble tent. God never asked David to build it, nor did He give any instructions. Compare this with the tabernacle. Not only did the idea for the tabernacle originate with God, but God meticulously revealed every detail of the tabernacle to Moses. Moses dedicated over six and a half chapters to God describing how it should be built (Ex. 25:1 through 31:11), nine chapters detailing how the priests were to serve within it (Lev. 1-9), six more chapters explaining how the people actually built it (Ex. 35-40), and passages describing the Lord continually filling it (Ex. 33:7-11; 40:34-38; Deut. 31:15; Ps. 99:7). Additionally, the tabernacle was to be based on the pattern shown to Moses by God Himself on the mountain (Ex. 25:40; 26:30; 39:42, 43; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5). It was to be a copy of the true tabernacle in heaven (Heb. 9:11, 23, 24; 10:22).

The concept of an “exalted” (1 Ki. 8:13) or “exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious” (1 Chron. 22:5) temple stands in opposition to the philosophy of worship given to Moses. God permitted the people to make altars for their own personal worship, but they were not to cut the stones or use any tools (Ex. 20:25; Deut. 27:5, 6. Josh. 8:30, 31). Rather, they were limited to building an “altar of earth” or “altar of stone” (Ex. 20:24). This is likely so that the worshipper’s attention would be on God alone and not the altar.¹ It seems probable that God would prefer a simple tent-based tabernacle over an “exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious” temple for this same reason.

¹ The command to only build an “altar of earth” or “altar of stone” follows a command prohibiting idol worship (Ex. 21:23-24). The close proximity may indicate that the prohibition was to keep God’s altars distinct from pagan ones.

God clearly told David *not* build the temple (1 Chron. 17:4). Yet David did much (or nearly all) of the work, calling it “preparation.” Three times the text emphasizes David’s preparations: “David made abundant preparations” (1 Chron. 22:5); “I have taken much trouble to prepare” (1 Chron. 22:14); “I have prepared with all my might” (1 Chron. 29:2). He appointed masons and prepared iron, bronze, and cedar in abundance (1 Chron. 22:2-3). He created plans for *everything*: “the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat” (1 Chron. 28:11) and for “the courts of the house of the Lord, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things” (v. 12). He created plans “for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service” (v. 13). These plans were so detailed that he had already weighed out exactly how much gold and silver was to be used for every table, bowl, pitcher, and plate—every item was already predesigned and the exact amount of material was set aside and made ready (v. 11-19). David budgeted it, funded it, created all of the plans, and provided all the materials for it. He even had the location picked out (1 Chron. 21:24-26)! One could argue that David did so many “preparations” that all Solomon needed to do was mouth the word “Start.” However, David did not even allow that much.

It was David himself who gave the first order to begin construction, thus disobeying God’s command. While this construction may have been limited to the sanctuary, it was indeed a command by the acting monarch, King David, to “arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God” (1 Chron. 22:19). Can this honestly be called Solomon’s Temple when David did all the work and even gave the first order to begin its construction?

David made his son promise he would continue the project. Solomon was under orders by his father to build the temple; Solomon didn’t have a choice. “Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel” (1 Chron. 22:6). God’s promise to David was that God Himself would build a house for David (2 Sam. 7:11). However, David did not rest in God’s promise. Instead, David did everything he could to make sure his

hard work came to fruition—even going so far as to make his son publicly promise to finish the project he began.

David was obsessed and utterly consumed with the project. In addition to all of his activity already mentioned, there is also 1 Chron. 29:3: “I have set my affection on the house of my God” and Psalm 132:1-5:

LORD, remember David And all his afflictions; How he swore to the LORD, And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: “Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, Or go up to the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes Or slumber to my eyelids, Until I find a place for the LORD, A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

If this Psalm is indeed talking about the construction of the temple (as “a dwelling place” indicates) and it is not hyperbole, then we have good reason to believe that David had insomnia during this time, something quite common for people suffering from compulsive work addiction.²

Arguments from Elsewhere

Stephen includes the building of the temple in his list of examples of how the Israelites had resisted the Holy Spirit. Stephen said:

Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house. “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me?’ says the LORD, ‘Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?’” (Acts 7:44-50)

² “A number of studies show that work addiction has been associated with insomnia.” See Heather Rudow, “New Tool Aims to Identify Workaholics,” *Counseling Today*, April 24, 2012, <http://ct.counseling.org/2012/04/new-tool-aims-to-identify-workaholics/>.

Coffman was adamant that the temple was met with God's disapproval. He said that the temple's repeated destruction is evidence of this.³ The First Temple was built by Solomon in 957 B.C. and sacked by Sheshonk I (also known as Shishak) during his invasion of Judah between 926 and 917 B.C. It was fixed up considerably under Jehoash in 835 B.C., then stripped by Sennacherib King of Assyria in 700 B.C., and completely destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Second Temple was rebuilt under Zerubbabel at the end of the captivity in 516 B.C. Zerubbabel's humble temple was then remodeled by King Herod around 20 B.C. It was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans and remains in ruins until this day.⁴

Coffman added that Jesus himself indicated his disapproval of the temple when he called it "a den of thieves and robbers" (Matthew 21:13).⁵ And he further added, "Significantly, the Book of Hebrews bypasses and ignores the Jewish Temple altogether, identifying all of the typical functions mentioned in Exodus, NOT with the temple, but with the tabernacle."⁶ In other words, if God intended that the Temple replace the tabernacle, why does the Holy Spirit speak only about the tabernacle? Lastly, Scripture indicates that it is the tabernacle, not the temple, that will be restored, according to Coffman. He wrote concerning Amos 9:11:

Amos here plainly, spoke of the temple of Solomon as a condition "fallen" from the tabernacle of David. He also viewed the temple of Solomon as "the ruins" of that tabernacle, and he included a promise that "in that day," that is, in the times of the Messiah, the tabernacle would be rebuilt. Amos wrote these words in the eighth century, and yet at that time when Solomon's temple had been standing more than a century, he

³James Burton Coffman, *The James Burton Coffman Commentary Series: The Historical Books, Commentary on 2 Samuel 7* (Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 1974) accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?bk=9&ch=7>.

⁴Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Temple," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 2023-2027.

⁵Coffman, *Commentary On 2 Samuel 7*, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?bk=9&ch=7>.

⁶Ibid.

said, "The tabernacle of David is fallen." That cannot mean that God had replaced it with Solomon's temple.⁷

Possible Objections

Some could argue that the temple was God's will because of the following points.

First, the temple must have been God's will because He filled it with His glory (2 Chron. 5:13; 2 Chron. 7:1-2; 1 Ki. 8:10-11). Why would God fill the temple with His glory if it wasn't His will for it to be built? The answer is simple—it was a *concession*. This is similar to when the people asked for a king. It grieved God that they rejected Him as king, yet God accommodated their request (1 Sam. 8:7). Other examples of concession include polygamy and divorce (Mk. 10:5-9).

Second, David said the Holy Spirit guided him in his plans: "'All this,' said David, 'the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.'" (1 Chron. 28:19) The Chronicler (who was himself inspired by the Holy Spirit) acknowledged the guiding of the Spirit when he referred to David's plans as "the plans for all that he had by the Spirit" (1 Chron. 28:12). This eliminates the possibility that David was lying. The answer is that God did actually begin guiding him at some point as a *concession*.

Third, God alluded to the temple in Moses' day so God clearly intended to replace the tabernacle with the temple. There are verses which speak about how the Israelites were to worship "in the place where the Lord chooses" once they were inside the land of promise (Deut. 12:8-14; 14:23; 15:20; et al.). Apparently, Solomon thought one or all of these passages referred to his temple:

Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, *toward the place of which You said, "My name shall be there,"* that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place (1 Ki. 8:28-29, emphasis added).

⁷ Ibid.

Compare the italicized above with Deut. 12:11:

Then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD.

The answer to this is that God was referring to the final resting place of the tabernacle. There is no indication anywhere in the Old Testament that God would replace the humble tabernacle with a magnificent temple. Furthermore, this language had already been applied to the tabernacle at Shiloh: “Go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first” (Jer. 7:12a).

Fourth, God intended either a double or partial fulfillment of Nathan’s Vision in the person of Solomon. This criticism is important enough to be addressed in its own section.

Double or Partial Fulfillment

Some assert that some prophecies have “double fulfillment” or “multiple fulfillment.”

Attention can be drawn to Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11 to support this view:

The “abomination which makes desolate... The prophecy was originally fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes forced the Jews to sacrifice pigs on the altars and entered the holy of holies in 167 B.C. However, it was fulfilled again in the destruction of Jerusalem and will be fulfilled a final time in the end-time events (Mk 13:14 and par.; cf. Rev 13:14).⁸

Zuck gave an example with Joel:

When Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost, he indicated that the coming of the Holy Spirit then was “what was spoken by the Prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). However, this was only a partial fulfillment, because Joel predicted not only the pouring out of the Holy Spirit but also that people would dream dreams and see visions, and that unusual “wonders in the heavens and on the earth” would occur. Obviously “blood and fire and billows of smoke” and the sun turning “to darkness and the moon to blood” (Joel 2:30–31) did not occur on the Day of Pentecost. Those events are yet to be fulfilled. So we

⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction To Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 265.

have here a partial fulfillment on Pentecost of some of Joel's prophecies, but the final fulfillment awaits the future.⁹

Some think that Nathan's Vision is similar to this—that there is ultimate fulfillment through Christ, but that God also intended there to be *some* fulfillment through Solomon as well.¹⁰

Nathan's Vision reads as follows:

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. (2 Samuel 7:12–14)

If it were true that some type of fulfillment is meant to be found in Solomon, it could be argued that the temple must have been God's will.

Partial Fulfillment View Issues

The double or partial fulfillment view faces several challenges.

First, the phrase "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son" (2 Sam. 7:14) can only be applied to Christ. It is not a trivial statement but a designation of a privileged, unique, close relationship between God the Father and the Son. There are just a few passages in the Bible where this phrase is mentioned, and in all cases it refers to the Messiah. Hebrews 1:5 quotes it while applying it to Christ, saying that not even the angels have such a designation—it is a unique relationship enjoyed by Christ alone. This phrase is also used in Psalm 2. When Paul quotes the Psalm in Acts 13:33, he makes it clear that Jesus is the only fulfillment of this Psalm:

I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

⁹ Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1991), 247.

¹⁰ See Appendix 4 for a list of popular authors who support this view.

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. (Psalm 2:7-12)

At no point does Solomon enjoy such a close relationship with the Father. On the contrary, in his latter years, Solomon strayed far from the Lord and built worship places for many foreign gods. God became very angry with him for this (1 Kings 11:4-9b).

Second, Nathan's Vision contains obvious Messianic overtones. The crux of Nathan's Vision was that God would build David an everlasting house and kingdom. The angel Gabriel in the New Testament clearly indicates that Jesus alone is the king who will reign over this house:

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32-33).

The prophet Isaiah said that the one to sit "upon the throne of David and over His kingdom" forever would be none other than "Mighty God" (Isa. 9:6-7). And Zechariah describes a kingly and priestly "BRANCH" who would sit and rule on this throne (Zechariah 6:12-13). The revelation given under Nathan's Vision fits well into this overall Messianic context. Putting 2 Samuel 7:14 aside (this will be addressed in the next section), these other passages are clearly referring to Messiah alone. Why should Nathan's Vision be any different?

Furthermore, there doesn't seem to be a lapse of time after Nathan's Vision to make Solomon fit even a partial fulfillment. Rather, God's promise of building a house for His name is connected with a distant, future time period *after* David. At a minimum, it was to occur after David had died: "The LORD tells you that He will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom." (2 Sam. 7:11c-12) It is during this time *after* David that this "house" would be built (v. 13). Yet, David did much preparation for the Temple in his own lifetime and personally commanded at least some of the construction to begin.

Finally, the building God promised would be built by one of David's descendants who would be an *everlasting* king ruling *eternally* over an *everlasting* kingdom. Moreover, God's

mercy would never depart from this descendant: “But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you” (2 Sam. 7:15). We cannot find a full or partial fulfillment of this in Solomon as (1) he was not an everlasting king, (2) the rule of his kingdom ended historically with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and (3) God did take His mercy from Solomon as a result of his unfaithfulness like He did with Saul.

Possible Arguments In Favor of Partial Fulfillment

It is possible to identify scholars who assert some type of partial fulfillment of Nathan’s Vision.¹¹ However, the author was unable to find reasons *why* these scholars hold their viewpoint. What follows, then, are the author’s attempt at answering hypothetical arguments in favor of partial fulfillment of Nathan’s Vision in Solomon also.

David said God told him that the son He was referring to in Nathan’s Vision was Solomon (1 Chron. 28:6-7, 10). In fact, David said that Solomon *alone* was the fulfillment of the prophecy: “My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced” (1 Chron. 29:1a). Furthermore, Solomon later said that he himself was the one to fulfill the vision (1 Kings 5:5) and declared at the temple’s dedication: “the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke” (1 Kings 8:20). These words are recorded in Scripture, and Scripture cannot be broken. Therefore, some might assert that there must be at least a partial fulfillment in Solomon.

There may be an easy answer: Solomon and David were misquoting God and/or had an improper interpretation of God’s revelation and the Bible simply recorded what they said. This would be similar to Eve adding to what God said in the Garden.¹² While admittedly an uncomfortable solution, this very well may be within the bounds of biblical inerrancy. Berkhof believed God “guided the writers of the Biblical books in the choice of their words and

¹¹ See Appendix 4.

¹² In Gen. 3:3 Eve said, “God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” However, God did not mention anything about touching it. She apparently added to what God said.

expressions so as to keep them from errors,”¹³ yet, he also believed Eve added to God’s words in Genesis 3:3.¹⁴ Geisler, one of the framers of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, also shared the view that Eve added to God’s revelation.¹⁵ This solution recognizes that only the Word of the Lord given by vision to Nathan the prophet is the revealed will of God in the narrative (2 Sam. 7:4-17; 1 Chron. 17:3-15). The statements made by David and Solomon afterward is their *interpretation* of what God said and their speeches were recorded in the inerrant biblical record because that is what they said.

David also said God prohibited him from building the temple because he was a man of war and had shed blood (1 Chron. 22:8; 28:2). The implication is that if David had not been a man of war, he could have been the one to fulfill the prophecy and the vision would not have been solely fulfilled in Messiah but there would be at least a partial fulfillment in David. However, God never said that. Nowhere in Nathan’s Vision does the Scripture state that David wasn’t allowed to build the temple because he was a man of war or any kind of uncleanness (see again 2 Sam. 7:4-17; 1 Chron. 17:3-15). Would God consider Solomon, with his one thousand wives and concubines who turned his heart away from the Lord, to be more worthy of a vessel for building a temple than David, a man after God’s own heart (Compare 1 Ki. 11:1-9 with 1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22)? Hardly! It seems more likely that David came up with this reason on his own during the many hours he lay awake at night obsessed with the project (Psalm 132:1-5).

Nathan’s Vision in the Samuel account says, “When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men” (2 Sam. 7:14). This is the strongest

¹³ Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 2003), 14.

¹⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1938), 222.

¹⁵ Norman Geisler, “Colossians” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 679.

argument the author can think of in favor of the passage referring at least partially to Solomon because Jesus was sinless. This argument will be dealt with in the next section in detail.

Psalm 89 contains similar “punished with the rod” wording and in that passage it’s clearly talking about David’s sons being punished for their disobedience, so there must be some fulfillment in Solomon. Indeed, Psalm 89 contains strikingly similar wording to 2 Samuel 7:14. It reads, “I have found My servant David” (v. 20), “My mercy shall be with him” (v. 24), “He shall cry to Me, ‘You are my Father’” (v. 26), “My covenant shall stand firm with him” (v. 28), “His seed also I will make to endure forever” (v. 29), and then:

If his sons forsake My law And do not walk in My judgments, If they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, Then I will punish their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes (v. 30-32).

But notice a significant difference. The Psalm speaks of sons, plural, but Samuel speaks of a son, singular. The writer of the Psalm has changed the wording to make it apply in principle to the entire nation. It is not an *interpretation* but an *application* of the principles found in Nathan’s Vision for those worshipping. Similarly, modern Christians may apply principles to their lives today from commands and promises God gave to other people in the Bible.

What To Do With “When He Sins?”

If there can be no double or partial fulfillment of Nathan’s Vision in the person of Solomon, what is one to do with 2 Samuel 7:14? As already mentioned, this verse is the biggest challenge. It reads, “When he sins, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.” The problem is that Jesus never committed sin (John 1:29; 19:6; Mt. 27:4, 24; Lk. 23:37) otherwise he could not be the savior of the world (1 Pe. 1:19; Heb. 9:12, 14). How then can this verse possibly apply to Christ *alone*? There are several possibilities.

The first possibility is a bit ambitious: every English translation we have is a poor translation. Noted 18th and 19th Century scholar Adam Clarke said, “This chapter (2 Sam. 17) is

one of the most important in the Old Testament, and yet some of its most interesting verses are very improperly rendered in our translation.”¹⁶ He translated it this way:

I will be his father, and he shall be my son: Even in His Suffering for Iniquity, I shall chasten him with the rod of men, (with the rod due to men), and with the stripes (due to) the children of Adam.¹⁷

The author finds this view unlikely. Psalm 89:30-32 repeats in essence the elements of 2 Sam. 7:14. If Clarke’s view were correct, that Psalm would also need to be explained. A more plausible option is that it is conditional. The word “when” can be translated “if.” Half of the popular English translations read “if.”¹⁸ The Hebrew for 2 Samuel 7:14 reads:

**אני אהיה-לו לאב והוא יהיה-לי לבן אשר בהעותו והכחתיו בשבט אנשים
ובנגעי בני אדם:**

It is evident that the relative conjunction **אשר** can be translated “if.”¹⁹ But what may be surprising is that the **ב** preposition can be translated “if” as well. Gesenius²⁰ gives a clear example of the “if” usage in Psalm 46:2 (3[H]): “Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” The verb used here is also a Hiphil infinitive construct: **בהמיר ארץ**. The author of Psalm 46 does not intend to say the earth will *certainly* be removed. Rather, the Israelites will not fear *even if* the mountains should be carried into the midst of the sea (but there’s no expectation that is actually going to happen). Gesenius provides another example from Isaiah 1:15: “When you spread out

¹⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible: Commentary On 2 Samuel 7*, accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?bk=9&ch=7>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See Appendix 3, “Major Translations Using ‘If’ Vs. ‘When’ For 2 Samuel 7:14.”

¹⁹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 889.

²⁰ Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles. *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2003), 99.

your hands, I will hide My eyes from you... your hands are full of blood.” This verb is **בפרשכם** and it carries the “if” connotation. Will those whose hands are full of blood spread out their hands? They may or may not—it’s not a statement of certainty. But *if* it does happen, then God will hide His eyes from them. Additionally, both **אשר** and the preposition **ב** have a wide variety of meanings. In addition to “if,” **אשר** can be translated as “which,” “who,” “where,” “because,” “as,” “so,” “when.”²¹ And the **ב** preposition can be translated “in,” “while,” “when,” “because,” or “though.”²² Both “if” and “when” can be supported in translation.

Does the text still present a problem if it reads, “If he sins?” No, because Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-4; Mark 1:12-13) yet He remained without sin. If we bring this understanding to the 2 Samuel 7:14 passage, there does not seem to be any issue with it applying fully and solely to Christ alone—there is no need to look for a partial fulfillment in Solomon.

Some who hold the single fulfillment view simply dismiss the verse altogether. Henry Smith believed this verse is the result of redaction and said the entire passage bears the marks of “evident corruption.”²³ We would expect this from liberal scholarship. However, conservatives James Coffman and George Caird also suspect some type of redaction is involved here.²⁴ At first glance, it may seem suspect. The content in both passages is virtually identical—the *only* substantial exception is this line: “If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.” That line is found only in Samuel. The content of the

²¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic*, 889.

²² Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles. *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 99.

²³ Henry P. Smith, *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments: Samuel* (New York: Scribner, 1899), 301.

²⁴ Coffman, *Commentary on 2 Samuel 7*, accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?bk=9&ch=7> and George Caird, *The Interpreters Bible Volume One* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 1086.

additional line is not trivial. It would seem to be a key part of the message God was trying to communicate to David. Why would something this important be left out of the Chronicles account if Nathan actually said it? It is easy to imagine a scribe coming across this verse and inserting a comment to help others make sense of the Captivity they had just experienced. However, as previously mentioned, Psalm 89 contains several parallels in wording to the rest of 2 Samuel 7:14. This is strong evidence that this line is indeed a part of the original text.²⁵ There is no need to believe it is a scribal insertion.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence to the author that this verse applies to Christ alone is that Solomon was never punished with the rods of men. Some may argue this language in 2 Samuel is figurative. But it is difficult to argue that first part is fulfilled literally in the person of Solomon and second part only figuratively. If Solomon were intended to be a double or partial fulfillment of the verse, when he sinned (and he certainly did), he should have personally been chastised “with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men” (2 Sam. 7:14). At the very least, his armies should have been defeated and his kingdom reduced in some significant capacity. Otherwise, God’s word was broken. Yet, at no time do we read of Solomon coming under the rod and blows of men, but under his reign the monarchy reached its zenith.

Conclusion

It is therefore the author’s view that there was no partial fulfillment of Nathan’s Vision in the person of Solomon. The implications of this are that David misapplied God’s promise to Solomon and should not have initiated construction of the temple.

As we have seen, the temple originated with David, not God, and God clearly rejected David’s proposal to build it (1 Chron. 17:4). Yet David did much or nearly all of the work, under the guise of extensive “preparation,” even giving the first command to begin its

²⁵ See point four under “Answering Partial Fulfillment Critics,” page 13.

construction. God never asked for an “exalted” (1 Ki. 8:13) or “exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious” (1 Chron. 22:5) temple and Stephen includes the building of the temple in his list of examples of how the Israelites had resisted the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, at some point God permitted David to continue, even blessing him in his preparations with guidance from the Holy Spirit (1 Chron. 28:12) and ultimately filling it with his glory (2 Chron. 5:13; 2 Chron. 7:1-2; 1 Ki. 8:10-11).

Appendix 1: First Event (David Proposes Temple)

In this narrative, David proposed to build a temple for God. God answered him through the prophet Nathan in a vision. This is found in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17.

2 Samuel 7

¹ Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, ² that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.” ³

² Then Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you.”

⁴ But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁵ “Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶ For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. ⁷ Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ” ’ ⁸ Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. ¹⁰ Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, ¹¹ since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.

¹² “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. ¹⁵ But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.” ’ ’ ’

¹⁷ According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David. (2 Samuel 7:1–17)

1 Chronicles 17

¹ Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *is* under tent curtains.”

² Then Nathan said to David, “Do all that *is* in your heart, for God *is* with you.”

³ But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, ⁴ “Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: “You shall not build Me a house to dwell in. ⁵ For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another*. ⁶ Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ” ’ ⁷ Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. ⁸ And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. ⁹ Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, ¹⁰ since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies. Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build you a house. ¹¹ And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* who was before you. ¹⁴ And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.” ’ ”

¹⁵ According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David. (1 Chronicles 17:1–15)

Appendix 2: Second Event (David Charges Solomon)

This second narrative occurs later in time, after David had made preparations for the temple. He publically charged his son Solomon to be faithful to build the temple. This is found in 1 Chronicles 22 and 1 Chronicles 28-29.

1 Chronicles 22

¹ Then David said, “This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel.” ² So David commanded to gather the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. ³ And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, ⁴ and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

⁵ Now David said, “Solomon my son *is* young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD *must be* exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it.” So David made abundant preparations before his death.

⁶ Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. ⁷ And David said to Solomon: “My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; ⁸ but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. ⁹ Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. ¹⁰ He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I *will be* his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’ ¹¹ Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. ¹² Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. ¹³ Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed. ¹⁴ Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. ¹⁵ Moreover *there are* workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. ¹⁶ Of gold and silver and bronze and iron *there is* no limit. Arise and begin working, and the LORD be with you.”

¹⁷ David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying*, ¹⁸ “Is not the LORD your God with you? And has He *not* given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people. ¹⁹ Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD.” (1 Chronicles 22:1-19)

1 Chronicles 28

¹ Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor.

² Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people: I *had* it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. ³ But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name, because you *have been* a man of war and have shed blood.’ ⁴ However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah *to be* the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make *me* king over all Israel. ⁵ And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. ⁶ Now He said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon *who* shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father. ⁷ Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.’ ⁸ Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave *it* as an inheritance for your children after you forever.

⁹ “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. ¹⁰ Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.”

¹¹ Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; ¹² and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; ¹³ also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD. ¹⁴ He gave gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all articles used in every kind of

service; also *silver* for all articles of silver by weight, for all articles used in every kind of service; ¹⁵ the weight for the lampstands of gold, and their lamps of gold, by weight for each lampstand and its lamps; for the lampstands of silver by weight, for the lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand. ¹⁶ And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of the showbread, for each table, and silver for the tables of silver; ¹⁷ also pure gold for the forks, the basins, the pitchers of pure gold, and the golden bowls—*he gave gold* by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls, *silver* by weight for every bowl; ¹⁸ and refined gold by weight for the altar of incense, and for the construction of the chariot, that is, the gold cherubim that spread *their wings* and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD. ¹⁹ “All *this*,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing, by *His* hand upon me, all the works of these plans.”

²⁰ And David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—*will be* with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. ²¹ Here are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and every willing craftsman *will be* with you for all manner of workmanship, for every kind of service; also the leaders and all the people *will be* completely at your command.” (1 Chronicles 28:1-21)

Appendix 3: Major Translations Using “If” Vs. “When” For 2 Samuel 7:14

Popular translations use either the word “if” or “when” in their translations of 2 Samuel 7:14. For example, *The New King James Version* translates this passage: “I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. *If* he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men” (emphasis added). And *The New International Version* translates it: “I will be his father, and he will be my son. *When* he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men” (emphasis added).

The following table shows major translations sorted in order of publication date (Old Testament publication date is given for versions where Old Testament was published after the New Testament).

Translations using “if”	Translations using “when”
<i>Douay-Rheims Bible</i> (1609)	<i>The Good News Translation</i> (1966)
<i>King James Version</i> (1611)	<i>The New American Standard Bible</i> (1971)
<i>1890 Darby Bible</i> (1890)	<i>The New International Version</i> (1978)
<i>American Standard Version</i> (1901)	<i>New Century Version</i> (1987)
<i>The New American Bible</i> (1970)	<i>The Revised Standard Version</i> (1989)
<i>The Living Bible</i> (1971)	<i>The Contemporary English Version</i> (1995)
<i>The New King James Version</i> (1982)	<i>English Standard Version</i> (2001)
<i>New Living Translation</i> (1996)	<i>The Message</i> (2002)
<i>The Lexham English Septuagint</i> (2012)	<i>The Holman Christian Standard Bible</i> (2004)

Appendix 4: Scholars Asserting a Double/ Partial Fulfillment

The double or partial fulfillment view is a popular view. Some people and commentaries favoring this viewpoint are:

(1) Matthew Henry: “Some of these promises relate to Solomon, his immediate successor, and to the royal line of Judah... Others of them relate to Christ... The supposition of committing iniquity cannot indeed be applied to the Messiah himself.”²⁶

(2) John Gill: “This is applied to Christ, the antitypical Solomon.”²⁷

(3) John Wesley: “This is intended both of Solomon, as a type of Christ... in those things wherein Solomon was a type of Christ, the sense passes through Solomon to Christ.”²⁸

(4) Warren Wiersbe: “Some of this covenant was fulfilled in Solomon... The ultimate fulfillment of these promises is in Jesus Christ.”²⁹

(5) *Believer’s Bible Commentary*: “This covenant promised that David would have a son (Solomon) who would build the temple; that this son’s throne would be established forever; that when he would sin, God would correct him, but His mercy would not cease.”³⁰

(6) *Keil and Delitzsh Commentary On The Old Testament*: “It is very obvious, from all the separate details of this promise, that it related primarily to Solomon, and had a certain fulfillment in him and his reign.”³¹

²⁶ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 483.

²⁷ John Gill, “2 Samuel 7: 14 Commentaries,” Bible Hub, accessed October 19, 2013, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_samuel/7-14.htm.

²⁸ John Wesley, “2 Samuel 7: 14 Commentaries,” Bible Hub, accessed October 19, 2013, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_samuel/7-14.htm.

²⁹ Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993), 288.

³⁰ William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 2 Sam. 7:12-15.

³¹ Carl Keil and Franz Delitzsh, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 599.

(7) *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*: “Solomon, David’s son and successor, brought an immediate and partial fulfillment to the promise.”³²

³² Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 2 Sam. 7:14.

Appendix 5: Scholars Asserting a Single Fulfillment in Christ

Noted scholar Adam Clarke was an outspoken critic of the traditional view that there was some partial fulfillment of Nathan's Vision in Solomon. He argued against any fulfillment in Solomon and said that the partial fulfillment viewpoint is based on a mistranslation of 2 Samuel 7:14.³³ He concludes there was no fulfillment in Solomon and God was not asking Solomon for a temple. George Caird also said, "The temple may have had its place in unifying national Israel, but it stood in the way of a more lofty and universal faith in God who dwells with the humble and contrite."³⁴ W. H. Bennett said, "There are some traces in the OT of a view that the Temple of Solomon was a mistaken innovation."³⁵ Popular author James Coffman said, "The great disaster in any theory of God's dwelling in some earthly temple lies in the limitation in such a conception, effectively restricting the presence of the all-wise, omnipotent, and omniscient God to some given location."³⁶ Additionally, a handful of individuals have posted thoughts about this online.³⁷ But all in all, it seems that this topic has not been widely discussed.

³³ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on 2 Samuel 7*, accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?bk=9&ch=7>.

³⁴ Caird, *The Interpreters Bible*, 1086.

³⁵ Arthur S. Peake, ed., *A Commentary on The Bible* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1920), 288.

³⁶ Coffman, *Commentary on 2 Samuel 7*, accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?bk=9&ch=7>.

³⁷ I found only two. (1) John H. Paterson, "The Tragedy of the Temple," *The Online Library of T. Austin-Sparks*, accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.austin-sparks.net/mags/ttm17-2.html#33>. (2) Lynette Woods, "A Temple Made by Human Hands," *Unveiling*, accessed October 19, 2013, <http://www.unveiling.org/articles/tabernacle.html>.

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