

2 Chronicles 6:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?
behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain
thee; how much less this house which I have built!

Analysis

Solomon's prayer echoes his earlier statement (2:6) with expanded emphasis: 'But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!' The progression - heaven can't contain God, much less an earthly temple - highlights the incarnation's miracle. 'Dwell with men' (shakan im-adam) is the verb root for Shekinah (dwelling presence). God's transcendence makes His immanent dwelling pure grace. This reaches ultimate fulfillment when the Word 'dwelt among us' (John 1:14 - same root in Greek, skenoo - tabernacle). The temple pointed to Christ, who perfectly mediates God's presence.

Historical Context

Solomon's dedicatory prayer (c. 960 BCE) acknowledged both the temple's glory and limitation. This theological sophistication prepared Israel to understand that even when temple stood, God remained transcendent, and when destroyed, He remained accessible.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the incarnation - God dwelling in human flesh - exceed even the temple's glory?
2. Where do you need to experience God's presence dwelling 'with you' in your earthly circumstances?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	הָאֱמֹנָה	יֹשֵׁב	אֱלֹהֵי יִם	אֶת	הָאָדָם	עַל	הָאֶרֶץ
H3588	in very deed	dwelt	But will God	H854	with men	H5921	on the earth
	H552	H3427	H430		H120		H776
הֵנָּה	הַשָּׁמַיִם	הַשָּׁמַיִם	הַשָּׁמַיִם	לֹא	יִכְלֹל וְיִכְלֹל		
H2009	and the heaven	and the heaven	and the heaven	H3808	cannot contain		
	H8064	H8064	H8064		H3557		
כִּי	אֵלֶּכָּה	הַבַּיִת	הַזֶּה	אֲשֶׁר	בָּנִיתִי		
H637	H3588	thee how much less this house	H2088	H834	which I have built		
		H1004			H1129		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 66:1 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

2 Chronicles 2:6 (Parallel theme): But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

Acts 17:24 (References God): God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

2 Corinthians 12:2 (References God): I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

2 Chronicles 32:15 (References God): Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?

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