

HOW WILL YOU FINISH?

King Solomon: The Wisest Man Who Ever Lived Teaching Important Lessons For People Today I Kings; II Chronicles

I Kings 1:28-30, 33-35, 37, 47-48; I Kings 12:1-4

KEY VERSE:

“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin.”

~Nehemiah 13:26

King Solomon was the *wisest man who ever lived* and also *one of the most foolish*. God *gifted* him with unsurpassed *wisdom*, which Solomon *squandered* by *disobeying* God’s *commandments*.

Born around **1010 BC**, Solomon was the *tenth son* of **King David** and the *second son* of **Bathsheba**. His name means *“peaceable.”* His *alternative name* was **Jedidiah**, meaning *“beloved of the Lord.”* Even as a baby, Solomon was *loved* by God. Like his grandfather, **King Saul**, and his father, **King David**, **King Solomon reigned for 40 years** in one of the *highest* and *most prosperous periods* in Israel’s history... called by many, *“The Golden Age”* of Israel.

King David died from *natural causes* in **961 BC** and was *buried* in **Jerusalem**. It was through the *lineage of David* that *the eternal kingdom of God was established*. Before his death, **David anointed Solomon** as his *successor* and gave his *final admonition* to his son, **Solomon**, saying...

“Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the Lord may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’...for you are a wise man.”

~I Kings 2:2b-4, 9b

A *conspiracy* by Solomon's *half-brother Adonijah* tried to *rob Solomon* of the *throne*. To *take the kingship*, Solomon had to *kill Adonijah* and **Joab**, David's *key general*.

Once Solomon's *kingship* was *firmly established*, God *appeared to Solomon* in a *dream* and *promised him anything* he asked. Solomon chose *understanding* and *discernment*, asking God to *help him govern his people well* and *wisely*. God was so *pleased with the request* that He *granted it*, along with *great riches, honor, and longevity*.

“God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days. If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days.’ Then Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. And he

came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and made peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.”

~I Kings 3:11-15

Solomon's *downfall* began when he *married the daughter* of the **Egyptian Pharaoh** to *seal a political alliance*...a *violation* of God's *command* for him not to have a *foreign wife*. He *could not control his lust*. Among Solomon's **700 wives** and **300 concubines** were *many foreigners*, which *angered* God. The inevitable happened...just as God had *warned*...they *lured King Solomon away* from **Yahweh** into *worshipping false gods and idols*.

Over his **40-year reign**, **Solomon** did *many great things*, but he *succumbed to the temptations* of lesser men. The *peace a united Israel enjoyed*, the *massive building projects* he headed, and the *successful commerce* he developed became *meaningless* when **Solomon stopped pursuing** God.

KING SOLOMON'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Solomon set up the most *organized state* in **Israel's** history, with *many officials* to *assist* him. The country was *divided into 12 major districts*, with *each district providing* for the *king's court* during *one month each year*. The system was *fair and just*, *distributing the tax burden evenly* over the entire country.

Solomon built the *first temple* on **Mount Moriah** in **Jerusalem**, a *seven-year task* that became one of the *wonders of the ancient world*.

The **Queen of Sheba** heard of **Solomon's fame** and *visited* him to *test his wisdom* with *hard questions*. After seeing with her own eyes all that **Solomon** had built in **Jerusalem**, and *hearing his wisdom*, the queen *blessed* the God of **Israel**, saying:

“...It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard’.”

~I Kings 10:6-7

Solomon, a *prolific writer, poet, and scientist*, is credited with writing much of the **book of Proverbs**, the **Song of Solomon**, the **book of Ecclesiastes**, and *two Psalms*. **First Kings 4:32** tells us he wrote **3,000 proverbs** and **1,005 songs**.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE:

Solomon is *credited* in the Bible with the *planning, funding, and executing* of *the building of the Temple* to house the **Ark of the Covenant**...*fulfilling the desire* of his father, **King David**, and God. The *building of the Temple* is recorded in **I Kings** and **II Chronicles**, with the *ground-breaking beginning* in the *fourth year of his reign*, and *construction* being *completed seven years later* with an *elaborate dedication*. In the *seven-day celebration*, **Solomon sacrificed 22,000 oxen** and **120,000 sheep** to *celebrate* the *Temple's completion* and God's willingness to *dwell among them*.

The *architectural design* of *the Temple* was *modeled after* the **Tabernacle** that had *housed* the **Ark of the Covenant**. Quite *lavish*, it was *double the size* and *built mainly from stone*, with *cedar paneling* to hide all masonry, which was *overlaid with gold*. The *inside* of the *Temple* was *decorated* with *elaborate carvings* (gourds and open flowers), **golden lampstands**, an *altar of incense* (also called “*the golden altar*”), and *two bronze pillars* among other embellishments. In a *less-advanced architectural age*, at *over 100 feet long* by *40 feet wide* by *60 feet high* and with *outer doors of ivory*, **Solomon's Temple** must have seemed an *impossibility*. Yet, a *miraculous achievement* for those **Israelites** who *saw it*.

According to Scripture, after the *Temple* was *completed*, **Solomon** had the **Ark of the Covenant** finally *moved from the tent* that **King David** had made for it and *placed it* in its *specialized chamber* on the most *western end* of the *Temple* called, “*The Holy of Holies.*” A *perfect 20 x 20 x 20 ft. cube*, this was the *most sacred room* that *no one* besides the *Chief Priest* could enter without *dying*...and then, only on the **Day of Atonement**. *Spiritually* and *nationally*, it was the *joining of God with His People* through His *mediator*...the *high priest*. The *Temple didn't just house* the *Levitical priests* of God. *Side rooms* and a *courtyard* were constructed around the whole building, with *areas sectioned off* for both the *priests* and the *common people* of Israel.

SOLOMON THE BUILDER:

Being a *builder*, **King Solomon** also engaged in *other construction projects* such as his *personal palace*, the *Palace of the Forest of Lebanon*, the *Hall of the Pillars*, and the *Hall of Justice*. And **Solomon didn't restrict** his projects to **Jerusalem** alone.

- He *rebuilt several cities*.
- He *commissioned fleets of ships* and *built numerous harbors* to accommodate the *bounty* from the *trade routes*.
- He *constructed stables* to *house his thousands of horses and chariots*.
- Finally, he *helped erect* (using the *plunder from the Temple* by the **Assyrians** or **Babylonians**) the famous *Hanging Gardens*...considered one of the legendary *Seven Wonders of the World*.

After *securing peace* with his neighbors, he *built up trade* and *became the wealthiest king* of his time.

SOLOMON'S STRENGTHS:

King Solomon's greatest strength was his *unsurpassed wisdom*, granted to him by God. In one biblical episode, *two women came* to him with a *dispute*. Both *lived in the same house* and both had *recently delivered newborns*. But *one of the infants* had *died*. The *mother of the dead baby* tried to *take the living child* from the *other mother*. Because *no other witnesses* lived in the house, the women were *left to dispute* who the *living child belonged to* and who was the *true mother*. *Both claimed* to have *given birth* to the *baby*.

They asked **Solomon** to *determine which of the two* of them *should keep* the *newborn*. With *astonishing wisdom*, **Solomon** suggested that the *boy be cut in half* with a sword and *split* between the *two women*. *Deeply moved by love* for *her son*, the *first woman* whose *baby was alive* said to the king, “*Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!*”

But the *other woman* said, “*Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!*” **Solomon ruled** that the *first woman* was the *real mother* because she *preferred giving up* her child *to seeing him harmed* (**I Kings 3:16-28**).

King Solomon's skills in *architecture* and *management* *turned Israel* into the *showplace* of the *Middle East*. As a *diplomat*, he made *treaties* and *alliances* that *brought peace* to his *kingdom*.

SOLOMON'S WEAKNESSES:

To *satisfy* his *curious mind*, **Solomon** turned to *worldly pleasures* instead of the *pursuit of God*. He *collected* all sorts of *treasures*, and *surrounded* himself with *luxury*. In the case of *non-Jewish wives* and *concubines*, he *let lust rule his heart* instead of *obedience to God*. He also began to *tax his subjects heavily*, *drafted them* into his *army*, and placed them into *slave-like labor* for his *building projects*.

SOLOMON'S LOSING FAVOR WITH GOD:

Despite all his *great accomplishments*, *Scripture indicate* that the *decline of Solomon* was *similar* to the *fall of Saul* and *David...similar*, in that *personal vanity* and *religious* and *moral compromise* led to *social disintegration* and *strife* within *Israel*. *Solomon didn't obey* the *command* of God.

“Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, ‘You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.’ Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.”

~I Kings 11:1-3

That's when *Solomon slowly began* to see his *relationship* with God *decline*. In order to *appease* his *many foreign wives*, and in order to *protect the prosperity* and *longevity* of his *rule*, he *compromised*. Ultimately...

“When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.”

~I Kings 11:4

Solomon's ungrateful, disloyal actions and *attitude...despite* being the *wisest* and *most blessed* man on the earth...*provoked* the *anger* and *judgment* of the Lord.

“Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not follow the Lord fully, as David his father had done.”

~I Kings 11:6

Although still *able to keep control* of the nation of *Israel* *because of God's promise* to his *father, King David*, *Solomon lost the protection* and *favor* of God that earlier had *provided remarkable peace* and *prosperity* when he was *obedient to God*. *Solomon* soon found *new challenges* from *within* and *without* his kingdom.

“Now the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the Lord had commanded. So the Lord said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son’.”

~I Kings 11:9-12

King Solomon died of *natural causes* in **931 BC** at the *age of 80*. His *son, Rehoboam, inherited the throne*, which led to a *civil war* and caused *Israel* to become a *divided nation* in **930 BC**.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- God must to be our **FIRST LOVE**, and we shouldn't let **ANYTHING** come before him.
- When we worship **POSSESSIONS** and **FAME** over God, we are headed for a **FALL**.
- There is a **HIGH COST** to compromising God's **COMMANDS** (truths). We have seen it with **Saul, David**, and now **Solomon**. (I.e. Marrying an unbeliever...being unequally yoked).