

King Solomon

Given Wisdom, yet made mistakes



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Overview

SOLOMON ASKED GOD FOR WISDOM

Solomon's story is told in 2 Samuel 12:24-1 Kings 11:43. He is also mentioned in 1 Chron. 28-29; 2 Chron. 1-10; Neh. 13:26; Psalm 72; Matthew 6:29; and Matthew 12:42.

Wisdom is only effective when it is put into action. Early in his life, Solomon had the sense to recognize his need for wisdom. But by the time Solomon asked for wisdom to rule his kingdom, he had already started a habit that would make his wisdom ineffective for his own life—he sealed a pact with Egypt by marrying Pharaohs daughter.

She was the first of hundreds of wives married for political reasons. In doing this, Solomon went against not only his father's last words, but also Gods direct commands. His action reminds us how easy it is to know what is right and yet not do it.

It is clear that God's gift of wisdom to Solomon did not mean that he couldn't make mistakes. He had been given great possibilities as the king of God's chosen people, but with them came great responsibilities; unfortunately, he tended to pursue the former and neglect the latter.

While becoming famous as the builder of the temple and the palace, he became infamous as a leader who excessively taxed and worked his people. Visitors from distant lands came to admire this wise king, while his own people were gradually alienated from him.

Little is mentioned in the Bible about the last decade of Solomon's reign. Ecclesiastes probably records his last reflections on life.

In that book we find a man proving through bitter experience that finding meaning in life apart from God is a vain pursuit. Security and contentment are found only in a personal relationship with God. The contentment we find in the opportunities and successes of this life is temporary. The more we expect our successes to be permanent, the more quickly they are gone. Be sure to balance your pursuit of life's possibilities with reliable fulfillment of your responsibilities.

Son of David by Bath-sheba

Samuel 12:24

And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him.

David did not continue to dwell on his sin. He returned to God, and God forgave him, opening the way to begin life anew. Even the name God gave Solomon (*Jedidiah*, “loved by the LORD”; 2 Samuel 12:25) was a reminder of God’s grace. When we return to God, accept his forgiveness, and change our ways, he gives us a fresh start. To feel forgiven as David did, admit your sins to God and turn to him. Then move ahead with a new and fresh approach to life.

Perhaps the most bitter experience in life is the death of one’s child. For comfort in such difficult circumstances, see Psalm 16:9-11; Psalm 17:15; Psalm 139; Isaiah 40:11.

Solomon was the fourth son of David and Bathsheba (1 Chron. 3:5). Therefore several years passed between the death of their first child and Solomon’s birth. Bathsheba may still have been grieving over the child’s death.

1 Kings 1:13

Go and get thee in unto King David, and say unto him, didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign?

The Bible does not record David’s promise that Solomon would be Israel’s next king, but it is clear that Solomon was the choice of both David (1 Kings 1:17, 30) and God (1 Chron. 22:9-10).

1 Kings 1:17

And she said unto him, my lord, thou swears by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

1 Kings 1:21

Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

Named Jedidiah, by Nathan the prophet

2 Samuel 12:24-25

And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

This is the second time in his farewell speech that Samuel reminded the people to take time to consider what great things God had done for them (see 1 Samuel 12:7). Taking time for reflection allows us to focus our attention upon God's goodness and strengthens our faith. Sometimes we are so progress and future-oriented that we fail to take time to recall all that God has already done. Remember what God has done for you so that you may move ahead with gratitude.

An ancestor of Joseph

Matthew 1:6

And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

In the first 17 verses we meet 46 people whose lifetimes span 2,000 years. All were ancestors of Jesus, but they varied considerably in personality, spirituality, and experience. Some were heroes of faith—like Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, and David. Some had shady reputations—like Rahab and Tamar.

Many were very ordinary—like Hezron, Ram, Nahshon, and Akim. And others were evil—like Manasseh and Abijah.

God's work in history is not limited by human failures or sins, and he works through ordinary people. Just as God used all kinds of people to bring his Son into the world, he uses all kinds today to accomplish his will. And God wants to use you.

Succeeds David to the throne of Israel

1 Kings 1:11-48

Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not?

Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. Go and get thee in unto King David, and say unto him, didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign?

Behold, while thou yet talks there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. [16] And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, what wouldest thou? And she said unto him, my lord, thou swares by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

And Nathan said, my lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.

But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. And the king sware, and said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

Even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, let my lord king David live forever.

And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. The king also said unto them, take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:

And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow you with the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon.

Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. [36] And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. [38] So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save King Solomon. [40] And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar? And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringeth good tidings.

And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:

And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed. And also thus said the king, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

1 Kings 2:12

Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

1 Chron. 23:1

So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

Although David couldn't build the temple, he could make preparations, and he took that job seriously. He not only gathered funds and materials for God's house, he also planned much of the administration and arranged the worship services. The original readers of Chronicles were rebuilding the temple after it had been destroyed by invading armies, and this information about its procedures was invaluable to them. The next five chapters demonstrate that organization is essential for smooth and effective service.

David Exhorts the People to the Fear of the Lord

1 Chronicles 28:1-10

During David's last sickness, many chief priests and Levites were at Jerusalem. Finding himself able, David spoke of his purpose to build a temple for God, and of God's disallowing that purpose. He opened to them God's gracious purposes concerning Solomon.

David charged them to cleave stedfastly to God and their duty. We cannot do our work as we should, unless we put on resolution, and fetch in strength from Divine grace. Religion or piety has two distinct parts.

The first is knowledge of God, the second is worship of God. David says, Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. God is made known by his works and word.

Revelation alone shows the whole character of God, in his providence, his holy law, his condemnation of sinners, his blessed gospel, and the ministration of the Spirit to all true believers.

The last two chapters of 1 Chronicles present the transition from David to Solomon as king of Israel. The writer doesn't mention Adonijah's conspiracy or David's frailty (1 Kings 1-2). Instead, he focuses on the positive—God's plans for Israel and his promise to David's descendants.

He Gives Instructions for the Temple

1 Chronicles 28:11-21

The temple must be a sacred thing, and a type of Christ; it must be framed by Divine teaching. Christ is the true temple, the church is the gospel temple, and heaven the everlasting temple; all are framed according to the Divine counsels, and the plan laid in the Divine wisdom, ordained before the world, for God's glory and our good. David gave this pattern to Solomon that he might go by rule. Materials were provided for the most costly utensils of the temple. Directions were given which way to look for help in this great undertaking. Be not dismayed;

David advised Solomon not to be frightened about the size of his task as king and builder of the temple. Fear can immobilize us. The size of a job, its risks, or the pressure of the situation can cause us to freeze and do nothing. One remedy for fear is found here—don't focus on the fear; instead, get to work. Getting started is often the most difficult and frightening part of a job.

Eccles. 1:12

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

Solomon had a purpose for writing skeptically and pessimistically. Near the end of his life, he looked back over everything he had done, and most of it seemed meaningless. A common belief was that only good people prospered and that only the wicked suffered, but that hadn't proven true in his experience. Solomon wrote this book after he had tried everything and achieved much, only to find that nothing apart from God made him happy. He wanted his readers to avoid these same senseless pursuits. If we try to find meaning in our accomplishments rather than in God, we will never be satisfied, and everything we pursue will become wearisome.

Solomon's kingdom, Israel, was in its golden age, but Solomon wanted the people to understand that success and prosperity don't last long (Psalm 103:14-16; Isaiah 40:6-8; James 4:14). All human accomplishments will one day disappear, and we must keep this in mind in order to live wisely. If we don't, we will become either proud or self-sufficient when we succeed or sorely disappointed when we fail. Solomon's goal was to show that earthly possessions and accomplishments are ultimately meaningless. Only the pursuit of God brings real satisfaction. We should honor God in all we say, think, and do.

Many people feel restless and dissatisfied. They wonder:

- (1) If I am in God's will, why am I so tired and unfulfilled?
- (2) What is the meaning of life?
- (3) When I look back on it all, will I be happy with my accomplishments?
- (4) Why do I feel burned out, disillusioned, dry?
- (5) What is to become of me? Solomon tests our faith, challenging us to find true and lasting meaning in God alone.

As you take a hard look at your life, as Solomon did his, you will see how important serving God is over all other options. Perhaps God is asking you to rethink your purpose and direction in life, just as Solomon did in Ecclesiastes.

Anointed king a second time

1 Chron. 29:22

And did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest.

Solomon surpassed his father's wealth and splendor. David's legacy resulted from his vital relationship with the Lord, and he passed his spiritual values on to Solomon. Any money or power we leave to our children are far less valuable than the spiritual legacy we pass on. What spiritual inheritance will your children receive?

His prayer for wisdom, and his vision

1 Kings 3:5-14

In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

2 Chron. 1:7-12

In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people that is so great?

And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

Wisdom is the ability to make good decisions based on proper discernment and judgment. Knowledge, in this verse, refers to the practical know-how necessary for handling everyday matters. Solomon used his wisdom and knowledge not only to build the temple from his father's plans, but also to put the nation on firm economic footing.

God's offer to Solomon stretches the imagination: "Ask for whatever you want me to give you" (2 Chron. 1:7). But Solomon put the needs of his people first and asked for wisdom rather than riches. He realized that wisdom would be the most valuable asset he could have as king. Later he wrote, wisdom "is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her" (Proverbs 3:15).

The same wisdom that was given to Solomon is available to us; the same God offers it. How can we acquire wisdom?

First, we must ask God, who “gives generously to all without finding fault” (James 1:5). Second, we must devote ourselves wholeheartedly to studying and applying God’s Word, the source of divine wisdom.

Second, Solomon could have had anything, but he asked for wisdom to rule the nation. Because God approved of the way Solomon ordered his priorities, he gave Solomon wealth, riches, and honor as well. Jesus also spoke about priorities. He said that when we put God first, everything we really need will be given to us as well (Matthew 6:33).

This does not guarantee that we will be wealthy and famous like Solomon, but it means that when we put God first, the wisdom he gives will enable us to have richly rewarding lives. When we have a purpose for living and learn to be content with what we have, we will have greater wealth than we could ever accumulate.

Covenant renewed in a vision after the dedication of the temple

1 Kings 9:1-9

And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do,

That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. [6] But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them:

Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:

And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house?

And they shall answer, because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.

God appeared to Solomon a second time; the first was at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4-15). For more on the conditions of God's great promise to David and his descendants

2 Chron. 7:12-22

And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attempt unto the prayer that is made in this place. [16] For now have I chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments;

Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.

And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to everyone that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house?

And it shall be answered, because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

His rigorous reign

David's Dying Charge to Solomon

1 Kings 2:1-4

David's charge to Solomon is, to keep the charge of the Lord. The authority of a dying father is much, but nothing to that of a living God. God promised David that the Messiah should come from his descendants, and that promise was absolute; but the promise, that there should not fail of them a man on the throne of Israel, was conditional; if he walks before God in sincerity, with zeal and resolution: in order

David stressed to Solomon the need to make God and his laws the center of personal life and government in order to preserve the kingdom, as God had promised to do (2 Samuel 7). This promise from God had two parts. One part was conditional and depended upon the kings' actions. The other part was unconditional.

God's conditional promise was that David and his descendants would remain in office as kings *only* when they honored and obeyed him. When David's descendants failed to do this, they lost the throne (2 Kings 25). God's unconditional promise was that David's line would go on forever. This was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, a descendant of David who was also the eternal Son of God (Romans 1:3-4).

David, whose life exemplified obedience, gave well-seasoned advice to his son, the next king. It would be up to Solomon to follow it.

Solomon builds the temple

Solomon's Agreement with Hiram

1 Kings 5:1-9

Here is Solomon's design to build a temple. There is no adversary, no Satan, so the word is; no instrument of Satan to oppose it, or to divert from it. Satan does all he can, to hinder temple work. When there is no evil abroad

When David offered to build a temple, God said no through the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7:1-17). God wanted a peacemaker, not a warrior, to build his house of prayer (1 Chron. 28:2-3).

The Building of Solomon's Temple

1 Kings 6:1-10

The temple is called the house of the Lord, because it was directed and modelled by him, and was to be employed in his service. This gave it the beauty of holiness that it was the house of the Lord, which was far beyond all other beauties. It was to be the temple of the God of peace, therefore no iron tool must be heard; quietness and silence suit and help religious exercises

In honor of God, the temple in Jerusalem was built without the sound of a hammer or any other tool at the building site. This meant that the stone had to be "dressed" (cut and shaped) miles away at the quarry. The people's honor and respect for God extended to every aspect of constructing this house of worship.

This detail is recorded not to teach us how to build a church, but to show us the importance of demonstrating care, concern, honor, and respect for God and his sanctuary.

1 Kings 9:10

And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house,

1 Chron. 6:10

And Johanan begat Azariah, (he it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem :)

2 Chronicles 2

Solomon informs Huram of the particular services to be performed in the temple. The mysteries of the true religion, unlike those of the Gentile superstitions, sought not concealment. Solomon endeavoured to possess Huram with great and high thoughts of the God of Israel.

2Chronicles 3

There is a more particular account of the building of the temple in 1Ki 6. It must be in the place David had prepared, not only which he had purchased, but which he had fixed on by Divine direction.

Chron. 7:11

Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

Jeremiah 52:20

The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brazen bulls that were under the bases, which King Solomon had made in the house of the Lord: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

Dedicates the temple

The Dedication of the Temple

1 Kings 8:1-11

The bringing in the ark, is the end which must crown the work: this was done with great solemnity. The ark was fixed in the place appointed for its rest in the inner part of the house, whence they expected God to speak to them, even in the most holy place.

The staves of the ark were drawn out, so as to direct the high priest to the mercy-seat over the ark, when he went in, once a year, to sprinkle the blood there; so that they continued of use, though there was no longer occasion to carry it by them. The glory of God appearing in a cloud may signify.

The darkness of that dispensation, in comparison with the light of the gospel, by which, with open face, we behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.

Solomon gathered the people not just to dedicate the temple, but to rededicate themselves to God's service. Solomon could well be speaking these words to us today: "But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time" (1 Kings 8:61).

What was the difference between the tabernacle and the temple, and why did the Israelites change from one to the other? As a tent, the tabernacle was a portable place of worship designed for the people as they were traveling toward the Promised Land. The temple was a permanent place to worship God after the Israelites were at peace in their land. To bring the ark of the Lord's covenant to the temple signified God's actual presence there

2 Chronicles 6

The order of Solomon's prayer is to be observed. First and chiefly, he prays for repentance and forgiveness, which is the chief blessing, and the only solid foundation of other mercies: he then prays for temporal mercies; thereby teaching us what things to mind and desire most in our prayers.

Solomon offers burnt offerings to the Lord.

2 Chron. 8:12-16

Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the Lord on the altar of the Lord, which he had built before the porch,

Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded.

And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures. Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the Lord, and until it was finished. So the house of the Lord was perfected.

The ward of purification

Neh. 12:45

And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son.

Builds his palace

1 Kings 3:1

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

Marriage between royal families was a common practice in the ancient Near East because it secured peace. Although Solomon's marital alliances built friendships with surrounding nations, they were also the beginning of his downfall. These relationships became inroads for pagan ideas and practices. Solomon's foreign wives brought their gods to Jerusalem and eventually lured him into idolatry (1 Kings 11:1-6).

It is easy to minimize religious differences in order to encourage the development of a friendship, but seemingly small differences can have an enormous impact upon a relationship. God gives us standards to follow for all our relationships, including marriage. If we follow God's will, we will not be lured away from our true focus.

Solomon was building his own house.

1 Kings 7:1

But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

That Solomon took longer to build his palace than to build the temple is not a comment on his priorities. His palace project took longer because it was part of a huge civic building project including barracks and housing for his harem.

2 Chron. 7:11

Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

Months, maybe years had passed since Solomon's prayer of dedication (2 Chron. 6). Several other building projects had been completed after the temple (2 Chron. 7:11; 2 Chron. 8:1). Then after all this time, God told Solomon that he had heard Solomon's prayer. How often do we look for immediate answers to our prayers and, when nothing happens, wonder if God has heard us? God does hear, and he will provide for us. We must trust that God will answer at the proper time.

2 Chron. 8:1

And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the Lord, and his own house,

Eccles. 2:4

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

Solomon had built houses, a temple, a kingdom, a family (see 1 Kings 3-11). In the course of history, they all would be ruined. In Psalm 127:1, Solomon wrote, “Unless the LORD builds the house, its builder’s labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.”

This book is part of Solomon’s testimony to what happens to a kingdom or family that forgets God. As you examine your projects or goals, what is your starting point, your motivation? Without God as your foundation, all you are living for is meaningless.

Builds his house, The Forest of Lebanon

1 Kings 7:2-7

He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row. And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks.

And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them.

Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.

Builds another house for Pharaoh's daughter

1 Kings 7:8-11

And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch.

All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court.

And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.

2 Chron. 8:11

And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, my wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come.

Ivory throne

1 Kings 10:18-20

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

Why does the Bible place so much emphasis on Solomon's material possessions? In the Old Testament, riches were considered tangible evidence of God's blessing. Prosperity was seen as a proof of right living. In the books of Ecclesiastes and Job this concept is placed in a broader perspective.

In ideal conditions, people prosper when God runs their lives, but prosperity is not guaranteed. Wealth does not prove that a person is living rightly before God, and poverty does not indicate sin.

In fact, a greater evidence that a person is living for God is the presence of suffering and persecution (Mark 10:29-31; Mark 13:13). The most important “treasure” is not earthly, but heavenly (Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 19:21; 1 Tim. 6:17-19). The gift of greatest worth has no price tag—it is the gift of salvation freely offered by God.

Porches of judgment

1 Kings 9:15-19

And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

For Pharaoh King of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether, and Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

At this time, Israel and Egypt were the major powers in the Near East. For many years Egypt had retained control of Gezer, even though it was in Israelite territory. In Solomon's time the Pharaoh gave the city to his daughter, whom Solomon married, putting Gezer under Israelite control. Intermarriage among royal families was common, but it was not endorsed by God (Deut. 17:17).

2 Chron. 9:25

And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

In his later years, Solomon turned away from God and led the nation into worshiping idols.

Provides an armory

1 Kings 10:16-17

And King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target. And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Plants vineyards and orchards of all kinds of fruit trees; makes pools

Eccles. 2:4-6

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: [5] I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: [6] I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

Solomon had built houses, a temple, a kingdom, a family (see 1 Kings 3-11). In the course of history, they all would be ruined. In Psalm 127:1, Solomon wrote,

“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.”

“Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.”

This book is part of Solomon's testimony to what happens to a kingdom or family that forgets God. As you examine your projects or goals, what is your starting point, your motivation? Without God as your foundation, all you are living for is meaningless.

Imports apes and peacocks

1 Kings 10:21-22

And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

Drinking vessels of his houses

2 Chron. 9:20

And all the drinking vessels of King Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: none were of silver; it was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon.

Musicians and musical instruments of his court

Kings 10:12

And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

The splendor of his court

1 Kings 10:5-9

And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine

eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceeded the fame which I heard.

Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

The queen of Sheba came to see for herself if everything she had heard about Solomon was true. Contests using riddles or proverbs were often used to test wisdom. The queen may have used some of these as she questioned Solomon (1 Kings 10:1, 3).

When she realized the extent of his riches and wisdom, “she was overwhelmed” and no longer questioned his power or wisdom. No longer a competitor, she became an admirer. Her experience was repeated by many kings and foreign dignitaries who paid honor to Solomon (1 Kings 4:34).

2 Chron. 9:3-8

And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, it was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom:

Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceeds the fame that I heard.

The queen of Sheba had heard about Solomon’s wisdom, but she was overwhelmed when she saw for herself the fruits of that wisdom. Although Solomon had married Pharaoh’s daughter, he still sincerely tried to follow God at this stage in his life. When people get to know you and ask hard questions, will your responses reflect God? Your life can be a powerful witness; let others see God at work in you.

The queen of Sheba marveled at Solomon, claiming that God must love his people greatly to give them such a king. Israel greatly prospered during Solomon's reign, witnessing to God's power and love for his people.

The good times show God's love and faithfulness. But hard times come to believers, too, and our perseverance and steadfast hope during those times will demonstrate our love and faithfulness to God. How we live will help others see our love for God.

Commerce of Solomon

1 Kings 9:28

And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon.

1 Kings 10:28-29

And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

In accumulating chariots and horses, a huge harem, and incredible wealth, Solomon was violating God's commands for a king (Deut. 17:14-20). Why were they prohibited? God knew how these activities would hurt the nation both politically and spiritually (1 Samuel 8:11-18). The more luxurious Solomon's court became, the more the people were taxed. Excessive taxation created unrest, and soon conditions became ripe for a revolution. With everything he wanted, Solomon forgot God and allowed pagan influences to enter his court through his pagan wives, thus accelerating the spiritual corruption of the nation.

Although Solomon had clear instructions from God *not* to marry women from foreign nations, he chose to disregard God's commands. He married not one, but many foreign women, who subsequently led him away from God. God knows our strengths and weaknesses, and his commands are always for our good.

When people ignore God's commands, negative consequences inevitably result. It is not enough to know God's Word or even to believe it; we must follow it and apply it to our daily activities and decisions. Take God's commands seriously.

Like Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, we are not as strong as we may think.

For all his wisdom, Solomon had some weak spots. He could not say no to compromise or to lustful desires. Whether he married to strengthen political alliances or to gain personal pleasure, these foreign wives led him into idolatry. You may have strong faith, but you also have weak spots—and that is where temptation usually strikes. Strengthen and protect your weaker areas because a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

If Solomon, the wisest man, could fall, so can you.

Solomon had seven-hundred wives and three-hundred concubines

Deut. 17:17

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, which his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

God was not encouraging Israel to appoint a king to rule their nation. He was actually against the idea because he was their King, and the people were to obey and follow him. But God knew that the people would one day demand a king for selfish reasons—they would want to be like the nations around them (1 Samuel 8).

If they insisted on having a king, he wanted to make sure they chose the right person. That is why he included these instructions both for the people's benefit as they chose their king and for the king himself as he sought to lead the nation according to God's laws.

Israel's kings did not heed this warning, and their behavior led to their downfall. Solomon had everything going for him, but when he became rich, built up a large army, and married many wives, his heart turned from God (1 Kings 11). Out of Solomon's sin came Israel's disobedience, division, and captivity.

The king was to be a man of God's Word. He was to (1) have a copy of the law made for his personal use, (2) keep it with him all the time, (3) read from it every day, and (4) obey it completely. Through this process he would learn respect for God, keep himself from feeling more important than others, and avoid neglecting God in times of prosperity. We can't know what God wants except through his Word, and his Word won't affect our lives unless we read and think about it regularly. With the abundant availability of the Bible today, it is not difficult to gain access to the source of the king's wisdom. What is more of a challenge is following its directives.

Builds idolatrous temples

1 Kings 11:1-8

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father.

Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did him for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Ashtoreth was a goddess that symbolized reproductive power—a mistress of the god Baal. Molech was the national god of the Ammonites, called “detestable” because its worship rites included child sacrifice. Chemosh was the Moabites’ national god. The Israelites were warned against worshiping all other gods in general and Molech in particular (Exodus 20:1-6; Leviticus 18:21; Leviticus 20:1-5).

Military equipment of Solomon

1 Kings 10:26-28

And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.

And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

Wisdom and fame of Solomon

1 Kings 4:29-34

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

And he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springest out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the Wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

The book of Proverbs records many of these 3,000 wise proverbs. Other Biblical writings of Solomon include Psalm 72 and Psalm 127, and the books of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. Solomon's wisdom was known throughout the world.

Solomon Reigns for forty years

2 Chron. 9:30

And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.

For the rest of Solomon's story, see 1 Kings 10:26-11:43. In his later years, Solomon turned away from God and led the nation into worshiping idols.

Death of Solomon

2 Chron. 9:29-31

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?

And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Strengths and accomplishments:

Third king of Israel, David's chosen heir
The wisest man who ever lived
Author of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, as well as many of the proverbs
And a couple of the psalms
Built God's temple in Jerusalem
Diplomat, trader, collector, patron of the arts

Key verse:

"Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women" (Neh. 13:26).

Lesson from life

Effective leadership can be nullified by an ineffective personal life. Solomon failed to obey God, but did not learn the lesson of repentance until late in life. Knowing what actions are required of us means little without the will to do those actions. Wisdom is only effective when it is put into action.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

