

SOLOMON'S LIFE — AND WHAT WE CAN LEARN

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Scripture tells us that God desires all men to come to The Truth and be saved. We probably all desire that ... but it isn't going to happen.

Some will end up in the Lake of Fire and suffer eternal punishment (in death). It will be their choice.

One famous man in the Bible — who wrote 3 books of the Bible — is likely to be one of those: King Solomon.

Today I want to take another look at the man — his life — his death — and see what lessons we can learn.

I've spoken 2 or 3 times before on my views of Solomon — which prompted slightly more feedback than I usually get! One man accused me of heresy ... being a danger to the Church ... and demanded that I be “named and shamed” ... never allowed to speak at any service ... and when the minister who ordained me anointed anyone for healing — God wouldn't hear that minister's prayers.

To be fair (to myself) I'm only saying what I see in scripture! To me ... the Bible account of Solomon's life — and death — comes to only one conclusion — the Lake of Fire. But I'd be delighted to find I'm wrong and Solomon ends up in God's Kingdom.

Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. He was Israel's 3rd (and last) king — Saul/David/Solomon. Immediately after Solomon's death ... the kingdom was split. God divided His Holy people.

The Bible doesn't give us his age when he started to reign. Jewish tradition says 12 years old. Josephus says 14 years old. Most commentators suggest somewhere in his teens. We don't know for certain.

The first indication that we have of a problem with Solomon is that he reigned 40 years ... so he must have died fairly young ... in his mid-to-late 50's? That's not a good age for a man of God to die. Compare:

Psalm 91:14-16

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;

I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will deliver him and honor him.

16 **With long life I will satisfy him,**

And show him My salvation."

Dying in your 50's is not a "long life"? To me that is a little bit of a hint that something went wrong in Solomon's life.

Let's review Solomon's journey.

1 Kings 3:3-15

3 **And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.**

4 Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

5 **At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"**

6 **And Solomon said:** "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

8 "And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted.

9 **"Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"**

10 **The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.**

11 **Then God said to him:** "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,

12 **"behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.**

13 **"And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honour, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.**

14 **"So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."** *(God has not blessed him with long life at this stage)*

15 Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

God's first appearance. God gave wisdom and riches and honour to Solomon. But not yet LONG LIFE — that was conditional: "IF".

This is a great start to Solomon's reign. Great too for the nation. The wisest king to ever live!

Wisdom shown in:

1 Kings 3:16-28

16 **Now two women who were harlots came to the king, and stood before him.**

17 And one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house.

18 "Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we were together; no one was with us in the house, except the two of us in the house.

19 "And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him.

20 "So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 "And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne."

22 Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." And the first woman said, "No! But the dead one is your son,

and the living one is my son." Thus they spoke before the king. **(No witnesses ... who is right?)**

23 And the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.' "

24 Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other."

26 Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!" But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him."

27 So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother."

28 **And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.**

1 Kings 4:20-21

20 **Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing.**

21 **So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.**

Good days! Good times!

1 Kings 4:25-34

25 **And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.**

26 Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

27 And these governors, each man in his month, provided food for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table. There was no lack in their supply.

28 They also brought barley and straw to the proper place, for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge.

29 **And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore.**

30 **Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt.**

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

32 **He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five.**

33 Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish.

34 **And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.**

Peace and wisdom. Fame in many nations.

We can admire Solomon's great wisdom — directly from heaven — but it's available to us too!

James 1:2-8

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**

6 **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.**

7 **For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;**

8 **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

Wisdom from God is a promise.

And 1 Corinthians 12 even refers to one of the gifts of the spirit as the "Word of Wisdom". It implies that God still gives wisdom as a special gift on occasions (in addition to James 1).

Let's jump ahead in the story to see the impact of Solomon's wisdom ... wealth and fame.

1 Kings 10:1-10

1 **Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.**

2 **She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.**

3 **So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her.**

4 **And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,**

5 **the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.**

6 Then she said to the king: **"It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.**

7 **"However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.**

8 "Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom!

9 **"Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."**

10 Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba — one of the greatest royal processions of all time? She came about 1,500 miles?

She was real! Jesus confirmed that the Queen of Sheba came "from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom" ... although — He said — "A greater than Solomon is here".

How far are people willing to go today to hear the wisdom of Jesus? How much effort? How much careful Bible reading?

The average American home owns 4.4 Bibles. Less than 20% of churchgoers read their bible daily. One in 5 churchgoers never read it at all. Quite a contrast to the Queen of Sheba?

How about you? Me?

Verse 10 gives a hint of her wealth — she gave Solomon gold worth about \$175m!

1 Kings 10:14-15

14 **The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold,**

15 **besides that from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.**

666 talents of gold each year. Basic income! Approximately \$1 billion at today's prices.

1 Kings 10:23-25

23 **So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.**

24 **Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.**

25 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armour, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

Solomon had UNBELIEVABLE wealth ... great fame ... the greatest man on earth. He had everything?

Maybe we envy him at times? Yet we know Jesus' warning — "what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world ... and suffers the loss of his own soul?" If you had to make a choice ... it would be better to be poor and live with God forever ... than to be fabulously wealthy and die before you are 60 years old ... and end up in The Lake of Fire?

We'll see soon how he seems to have turned onto the path that leads to death.

But first ... a great achievement in Solomon's life.

1 Kings 5:2-7

2 Then **Solomon sent to Hiram, saying:**

3 You know how my father David could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the wars which were fought against him on every side, until the LORD put his foes under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence.

5 And **behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to my father David**, saying, "Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name."

6 Now therefore, command that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon; and my servants will be with your servants, and I will pay you wages for your servants according to whatever you say. For you know there is none among us who has skill to cut timber like the Sidonians.

7 So it was, when **Hiram** heard the words of Solomon, that he **rejoiced greatly and said**,

Blessed be the LORD this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people!

The Temple is to be built.

1 Kings 5:13-18

13 **Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel; and *the labor force was thirty thousand men.***

14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adoniram was in charge of the labor force.

15 **Solomon had *seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried stone in the mountains,***

16 besides ***three thousand three hundred from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies***, who supervised the people who laboured in the work.

17 And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple.

18 So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried them; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.

There were nearly 200,000 construction workers!

Over 8 million pounds weight of gold — worth approximately \$15 billion. Plus 76 million pounds of silver ... plus all of the timber etc.

Overall — the total cost was probably \$200 billion!

The construction work started in the 4th year of Solomon's reign (Solomon aged around 16-22?). It took 7 years to build and had to be extremely precise. Solomon was still in his 20's when it was finished.

For over 400 years up until then ... Israel only had the Tabernacle — a tent. Now ... a glorious temple ... probably one of the finest building in all of man's history?

All in all ... it's a great start to Solomon's reign.

But ... then there is another hint of a problem??

1 Kings 7:1

1 But **Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house; so he finished all his house.**

Thirteen years to build his own house. Twice as long as it takes to build God's Temple. Maybe just less urgency? Or ... maybe some self-importance coming through?

1 Kings 9:1-9

1 **And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house,** and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do,
2 **that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time,** as He had appeared to him at Gibeon.

3 **And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.**

4 **"Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments,**

5 **"then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father,** saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

6 "But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them,

7 "then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

8 "And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?'

9 "Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'"

20 years for the building work. Just half-way through his reign. God's 2nd appearance.

We can see A CLEAR STRONG WARNING here. "BUT IF YOU TURN AWAY" ... calamity will come. There was no warning the first time.

Now Solomon has completed 2 great building projects ... is famous world-wide — the wealthiest man alive (ever?). Which way will he go?

1 Kings 11:1-3

1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites--

2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

1,000 women?! Not wise!

1 Kings 11:4-8

4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.

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

6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David.

7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.

8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

“When old” ... so sometime after 40 ish?

WHOLESALE IDOLATRY! Close to the beautiful temple?

A TERRIBLE EXAMPLE TO THE OTHER CITIZENS. Teaching them how to worship these other abominations.

1 Kings 11:9-13

9 So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded.

11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

12 "Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

13 "However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

GOD WAS ANGRY!

He will strip away the actual Kingdom of Israel (not till after Solomon's death).

God immediately raised up external enemies who started to trouble Israel.

Most relevant was that God sent a prophet to appoint Jeroboam to be the new king of Israel (though not to take effect till Solomon was dead).

Solomon soon found out. So what happened then?

1 Kings 11:40

40 Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

This is the last record that we have of Solomon's actions — he's trying to kill the man he knows that God has chosen to be king after his death!! What does that say about him?

1 Kings 11:41-43

41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

42 And **the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.**

43 **Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.**

Solomon dies.

No hint of any repentance. His 1,000 wives had turned his heart to idols. Finally ... he sets out to kill God's new king ... and then he dies.

It looks bleak to me. My personal feeling is that IF Solomon had repented at any point ... God would have ensured there was a record of it. But ... there is nothing.

All we see is idolatry and rebellion.

I hope I'm wrong ... but it looks like Solomon is a strong candidate for the Lake of Fire.

Hebrews 11 gives us a list of the great men and women of faith. Solomon is not there.

That's the basic story of Solomon's life. What can we learn from that?

I have already mentioned that wisdom is available to us — upon request. Not something the world has access to. It should make a big difference.

A big part of wisdom is knowing and heeding the written Word of God. Paying attention to what God has already said. Something we can do. But Solomon failed to do.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

14 "**When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,'**

15 "**you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses;** one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

16 "**But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses,** for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'

17 "**Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.**

18 "Also **it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.**

19 "And **it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,**

20 "**that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.**

Solomon would have written a copy.

Let's look at some of the things written in it.

- Don't multiply horses? 1 Kings 4:26 says that Solomon had 40,000 stalls for horses and 12,000 horsemen!
- Don't go to Egypt for horses. 1 Kings 10:28 tells us that Solomon imported horses from Egypt.
- Don't multiply wives ... lest they turn your heart away. He had 1,000. And his heart did turn away! The advice was good. He ignored it.
- Don't greatly multiply silver and gold for yourself ... he did.
- Read the Word and fear the Lord — he didn't!

The lesson is clear. Man shall not live by bread alone ... but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Solomon failed to do that. We shouldn't.

Another lesson: Wealth and prosperity are temporary ... they don't fill a spiritual vacuum ... and they can lead us to destruction. Solomon is a good example of "what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul".

Most of us don't have mega prosperity ... but even the love of money ... the love and desire for riches ... can be destructive.

Another lesson: It's not how you start the race that matters — it's how you finish — or even whether you finish. Solomon started brilliantly — but his journey ended bleakly ... in darkness.

We're in a spiritual marathon — not a sprint!

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul remained faithful — loyal — to the end. So should we. We want to hear: "Well done — good and faithful servant!"

Finally ... watch your company — your associates. Solomon had 1,000 women. It says that they turned his heart after other gods. Perhaps if he'd stuck to just one ...?

We might think we're "strong enough" to deal with bad influences ... but ...

1 Corinthians 15:33

33 **Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."**

Bad company corrupts "good morals" or "good character". It is dangerous — don't be deceived — don't be a fool!

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

14 **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?**

15 And **what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?**

16 And **what agreement has the temple of God with idols?** For **you are the temple of the living God.** As God has said:

**"I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."**

17 **Therefore**

**"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."**

18 **"I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty."**

Solomon yoked himself to unbelievers. He paid the penalty — eternally!

SUMMARY: Solomon is a good example of a bad example — of one who started well ... and failed to finish the course ... who wasted his calling and opportunities — who turned from The Truth to idolatry and prosperity —

turned his back on his Creator. The last we see of him ... he is trying to kill God's appointed king.

There are plenty of lessons for us to chew over — make sure we don't imitate him in any way!