

Solomon and the Temple

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of Israel and the house of David reached their greatest heights during the reign of Solomon. After securing his throne, Solomon secured his place in history as the wisest man that ever lived. His building projects were numerous, his treasury was massive, and the temple he built was unprecedented. Yet at the pinnacle of his wisdom and power, Solomon allowed his heart to drift away from the Lord. He chose to be devoted to his numerous foreign wives and their gods, rather than the God of his father David. The consequences for the kingdom were disastrous. In this lecture, Dr. Sproul discusses the rise and fall of King Solomon.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Kings 1-11

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the characteristics of Israel's golden age under David and Solomon.
2. To trace the impact of prosperity, intermarriage, and idolatry on the heart of Solomon.
3. To link the decline of pure worship in Solomon's reign with the division and collapse of the United kingdom of Israel.

QUOTATIONS

Solomon's covenant with God illustrates the primacy of each individual's relationship to the Lord. Certainly the Bible teaches that God makes covenants with groups like Israel

and the church, but it specifically teaches that the Lord also desires communion with individuals. Those who seek God's presence and help can indeed receive the wisdom they need to do God's will and serve God's people.

—Paul House

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. The kingdom of Israel was in its golden age under David, a tarnished era under Solomon, and an age of rust under the rest of the kings.
- B. David's son Adonijah assumed he would inherit the throne and made himself king while David was still alive.
 1. Adonijah secures the support of Joab, the army commander, and other former supporters of David, to make his claim on the throne.
 2. David had already sworn the throne to Bathsheba's son, Solomon.
 3. David lends his support to Solomon as the heir to the throne, and the people of Jerusalem respond with joy.
- C. David commissions Solomon as king urging him to be obedient to the law of God and insure the Davidic line of monarchs.
- D. "Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem. The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD. Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places" (1 Kings 3:1-3).
 - This is ominous foreshadowing of the descent of Solomon and the nation into religious syncretism.
- E. The name of Solomon is inextricably linked to profound wisdom and insight.
 1. According to Scripture, he is declared to be the wisest man who ever lived.
 2. He is traditionally the author of the Song of Solomon, many proverbs, and a portion of the Psalms.
 3. Aristotle declared, "In the brain of the wisest of men, always resides the corner of the fool."

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- F. Scripture truthfully records the good and evil dimensions of each saint's character.
1. Solomon demonstrated a deep devotion to the things of God at the beginning of his reign.
 2. Solomon exceeded the administrative and construction glories of his father David.
 3. Solomon strengthened the treasuries, initiated ambitious public works and building projects, and empowered the military.
 4. All of Solomon's great accomplishments are tarnished by his descent into idolatry.
- G. The Lord comes to Solomon and asks what he wants from the hand of God.
1. Solomon humbly admits his youth and inadequacy and asks for wisdom to govern God's great people.
 2. Solomon was a young man who had married Pharaoh's daughter in order to cement the political relationship between Israel and Egypt.
 3. Although he was worshipping at pagan altars and had married a foreigner, Solomon is still humble enough to ask God for wisdom.
- H. The Lord grants Solomon the great wisdom he requests and the riches and honor that he does not request.
- The Queen of Sheba came to witness the wisdom and splendor of Solomon because he was internationally known for his insight.
- I. The honor fell to Solomon of fulfilling his father's dream of building a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem.
- A treaty with Hiram, king of Tyre, was crafted to secure building supplies from Lebanon.
- J. Solomon demonstrates his great devotion and piety before the Lord upon the completion of the temple at the dedication ceremony.
- K. Solomon's fade from glory begins with his multiple marriages.
1. He violates the law of God by marrying foreign women.
 2. His multiple pagan wives turn his heart away from devotion to God and turn it towards idolatry.

3. He builds several pagan altars and worships many pagan gods.
- L. The Lord judges Solomon by tearing the kingdom away from him and giving it to his servant.
- M. Solomon instituted the *corvée* amidst his massive building projects.
1. *Corvée* is slave labor that Solomon imposed to complete his building projects.
 2. This imposition of labor on the people alienate them from their once unequivocal support for the house of David.

BIBLE STUDY

1. Right before David's death, which of his sons claimed the throne of David without his approval, and who sided with this son (1 Kings 1:5–10)? Who does David appoint as his successor, and who supports this son (vv. 28–53)?
2. What is the condition for having a son of David and Solomon on the throne of Israel and not in exile (1 Kings 2:1–4)?
3. Solomon is considered traditionally the author or contributor of which books of the Bible?
4. Summarize the accomplishments of Solomon, king of all Israel (2 Chronicles 1:14–17; 8)? Why was God pleased to bless Solomon (1:7–13)?
5. How long did Solomon spend building the temple (1 Kings 6:38)? How long did he spend building his own palace (7:1)? What does this difference say about his priorities? According to Dr. Sproul, what does 1 Kings 3:1–3 add to this understanding of his priorities, and what does it foreshadow?
6. What violations of the Law lead to the decline of Solomon's glory (1 Kings 11:1–8)? What does God do in response to Solomon's disobedience (vv. 9–43)?
7. What foolish decision did Solomon make that alienated the people of Israel from the Davidic king (1 Kings 5:13–18; 12:1–4)?

DISCUSSION

1. Consider Solomon's life and discuss this question: Does a good decision made today guarantee a good decision will be made tomorrow? How can we be sure that we are making decisions according to the wisdom of the Lord?

2. Solomon seemed to have been concerned more for his own glory than for the kingdom of God. What are some of the ways that we manifest a love for our own kingdoms over and above God's kingdom? How can we encourage one another to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33)?
3. We may not be tempted to worship other gods, but today we are all prone to worshipping money, power, fame, sex, and more. What tempts you to turn your devotion away from God and unto idolatry?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Davis, Dale Ralph. *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*
House, Paul. *1, 2 Kings*