

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“A Divided Heart; A Divided Kingdom”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): 1 Kings 11:1-11; Deut. 17:14-20; 1 Kgs. 3:4-10; 8:56-61; 10:26-29; Eccl. 12:13-14; Gal. 6:7

Introduction

Spiritual decline is not always easy to recognize at first. It may begin during a season when life appears fruitful, stable, and successful. Outwardly, everything may seem healthy while inwardly our devotion is slowly being weakened by choices we have learned to excuse. Israel's later descent into widespread idolatry did not begin with Ahab and Jezebel. Its roots can be traced back to earlier decisions made during Solomon's celebrated reign.

Solomon did not set out to reject ADONAI. He began as a humble young king who understood how desperately he needed God. Over time, however, dependence gave way to self-confidence, self-confidence made room for compromise, and compromise eventually reshaped his heart. His life warns us that a divided heart can affect far more than our own spiritual condition. The choices we make today can shape the lives of those who follow us.

1. SOLOMON BEGAN WHOLEHEARTED: HE KNEW HE NEEDED GOD

When ADONAI invited Solomon to ask for anything, Solomon did not request wealth, military strength, or personal greatness. He confessed his limitations and asked for wisdom to lead God's people well: *“So give Your servant a mind of understanding to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil”* (1 Kgs. 3:9). His request pleased the Lord because it came from a heart that understood both the weight of his calling and his inability to fulfill it alone.

This dependence was also reflected in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. He urged Israel, *“Let your heart, therefore, be wholly devoted to ADONAI Eloheinu”* (1 Kgs. 8:61). Yet there is a difference between knowing how to speak about wholehearted devotion and continuing to live it. As Solomon became more experienced, admired, and successful, he gradually began to rely upon the wisdom he possessed rather than the God who had given it. We must continually ask whether success has made us more grateful and dependent—or simply more confident in ourselves.

2. SOLOMON BECAME HALF-HEARTED: HE BEGAN RATIONALIZING DISOBEDIENCE

Long before Solomon became king, the Torah warned that Israel's kings must not multiply horses, wealth, or wives. The king was also commanded to read God's instruction continually so that his heart would remain humble and obedient. These commands were not intended to limit Israel's success. They were meant to protect the

king from placing his confidence in military power, financial abundance, political alliances, or his own importance.

Solomon eventually pursued nearly everything the Torah had warned against. His decisions probably appeared reasonable: horses provided security, wealth strengthened the kingdom, and marriages created alliances. Nevertheless, human reasoning could not overturn what God had already said. This is one of compromise's greatest dangers—it often presents itself as mature, practical, or necessary. A divided heart still speaks respectfully about God, but it begins reserving certain areas in which His authority is no longer welcomed. Each time we rationalize disobedience, our resistance to the next compromise becomes weaker.

3. SOLOMON'S BECAME HARD-HEARTED: WHAT HE TOLERATED EVENTUALLY RULED HIM. The Lord had specifically warned that foreign marriages would turn Israel's king toward other gods, yet Solomon clung to those relationships. Eventually, *"his heart was no longer wholly devoted to ADONAI his God"* (1 Kgs. 11:4). He did not move from devotion to idolatry in a single decision. He first allowed influences into his life that slowly weakened his loyalty. What he believed he could manage eventually gained influence over him.

Solomon then used his resources to build places of worship for false gods. His private compromises became part of Israel's public life. This reminds us that sin rarely remains private. The choices of parents, leaders, teachers, and spiritual mentors help create the environment in which others live. Solomon's heart became divided, and eventually his kingdom followed. As Scripture warns, *"Whatever a man sows, that he also shall reap"* (Gal. 6:7). Tragically, Solomon's family and nation also shared in the harvest of what he had planted.

CONCLUSION

Solomon's story is painful because he began with so much promise. He had wisdom, opportunity, influence, and encounters with God that few people have ever experienced. Yet yesterday's faithfulness could not substitute for present obedience. Solomon knew the Word, but gradually treated his own judgment as more trustworthy. Because the consequences were delayed, he may have assumed his choices were harmless. God's patience, however, was not approval; it was an opportunity to turn back.

This is an invitation to examine our own hearts before compromise becomes deeply rooted. Where have we become less prayerful, less responsive to Scripture, or more willing to excuse what once troubled us? What are our choices teaching our children, our families, or those who look to us for guidance? We do not have to continue down the same path. A divided heart can be made whole, and a hardening heart can become tender again. Let us come before ADONAI without excuses, surrender what we have withheld, and ask for grace not only to begin well, but to finish faithfully.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Solomon's request in 1 Kgs. 3 reveal about the kind of heart God desires in those who lead?
2. Why were Israel's kings commanded to remain continually rooted in the Torah?
3. How did Solomon's apparently wise and practical choices become acts of disobedience?
4. Where might success, experience, or personal ability be weakening your dependence upon God?
5. What spiritual patterns are your present choices creating for your family or those influenced by your life?

Closing Prayer

ADONAI, search our hearts and reveal every place where our devotion has become divided. Forgive us for trusting our own judgment above Your Word and for excusing choices that draw us away from You. Give us hearts that listen, obey, and remain dependent upon Your wisdom.

Make our lives a faithful inheritance for those who follow us. Restore tenderness where our hearts have begun to harden, and give us courage to turn from compromise while we can still hear Your voice clearly. By Your grace, help us walk wholeheartedly with You and finish our race faithfully. In the name of Yeshua, amen.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.