

Doctrine of Survey of the Bible

Solomon and the Temple

1. Beginning with the reign of King David, Israel entered into her Golden Age. It would last for 80 years.
2. After Solomon, the Golden Age was tarnished, and then it turned to rust. The United Kingdom became the Divided Kingdom.
3. David's fourth son, Adonijah (Heb. "my Lord is Jehovah"), might have considered his claim to the throne superior to that of Solomon, following the death of Amnon and Absalom.
4. However, God had foreordained that Solomon should rule over Israel after the death of David.
5. Adonijah had himself declared king while David was still alive. The story is told in 1 Kings 1.
 - 1 Kings 1:5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? And he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom. 7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him.
6. Not all the leaders of Israel agreed with the attempt of Adonijah to claim the kingdom for himself.
 - 1 Kings 1:8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.
7. Among those who did support Adonijah was Joab, one of the most trusted military leaders under David.
8. Among those who did not support Adonijah, was Nathan the prophet.
9. The potential for a civil war was forming in Israel as individuals chose sides.
10. David had sworn an oath to Bathsheba that Solomon would inherit the throne. When David heard what Adonijah had done, he moved to put down this coup.

- 1 Kings 1:32 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. 33 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: 34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. 35 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.

11. After Solomon was announced to be the successor of David, the king called Solomon in to exhort him in righteousness.

- 1 Kings 2:1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; 3 And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: 4 That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

Special Note.

On a national talk show, the actor Burt Reynolds was asked, “When do you know you are a man.” What was being discussed was the transition from being a boy to being a man. Reynolds answered the question by saying, “When your father says you are.” There is an unspoken tension among young males who long to be taken seriously, and be treated as an adult. By speaking to Solomon after establishing him as the next king, David was saying in essence, “You are now a man. Act like one.”

12. David focused attention on the responsibility of being a king, which was to be obedient to the law. Solomon was to walk in God’s ways, “to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses.” Solomon was to do this in order to “prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.”
13. In this way the kingdom was transferred from David to Solomon. The rebellion was crushed, and the enemies of Solomon were eliminated. Solomon was the undisputed king of Israel.
14. It would be nice to read that Solomon took to heart the exhortation of David, and committed himself to obeying the Law of the Lord. What is revealed is that Solomon had a divided heart. His mind was not wholly on the Lord, and on gospel obedience.
15. The evidence for this is found in 1 Kings 3.

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. 2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord, until those days. 3 And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

16. There is danger in having a divided heart.

- Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment.” (Matt. 22:37-38)
- James said, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:8)

17. Because his heart was divided, Solomon engaged in political marriages which led to embracing pagan forms of worship. Solomon loved the Lord, but, he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

Special Note.

Perhaps there can be some sympathy when we encounter Christians who struggle with a particular besetting sin. If it can be said of Solomon that he loved the Lord, but committed sin, it can be said of someone else. If the truth were told, often, what is condemned in another person is condoned in self. Care must be taken not to be self-righteous in our dealings with others.

18. The fact that Solomon was willing to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings in high places is a foreboding of terrible things to come. It was foolish for Solomon to do this. Great harm was going to come to him, and to the kingdom God had entrusted to him.

19. The irony is that the name of Solomon is united with wisdom. We speak about, “The wisdom of Solomon.” Solomon is the author of a large portion of Scripture: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the Psalms. He was famous for his wisdom.

20. Yet, from the very beginning of his reign, Solomon was not wise in specific areas. He was not wise in his marriages. He was not wise in what he allowed in worship.

21. It was Aristotle who observed, that, in the brain of the wisest of men, there is a corner of the fool.

22. In the brain of Solomon, there was a corner of the fool. The Bible does not hesitate to record this fact as it records the virtues, and faults, of all of the heroes of the faith.

23. Solomon is like a Shakespearean character in that he has a fatal flaw, a fatal blemish upon his character that brings him to ruin.

24. At the beginning of Solomon's reign, he manifests extraordinary wisdom, and a deep devotion to the Lord, and to the Law of Moses.

25. However, by the end of his reign, he is offering children in sacrifice to Moloch.
26. David had inaugurated the Golden Age of Israel by expanding the borders from Dan to Beersheba. Solomon increased the borders, strengthened the treasury, built up the military, invested in Israel's infrastructure, cemented foreign friendships by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh, and built the magnificent temple to the Lord.
27. In all of this, Solomon ruled with extraordinary wisdom given to him in answer to prayer.
- 1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 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. 7 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. 8 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. 9 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?

Special Note.

Solomon was self-discerning. He realized his distinct personal limitation. Solomon began his reign with humble dependency upon the Lord. He knew he needed wisdom to follow in the footsteps of his father, and be able to rule well. Therefore, Solomon asked for wisdom. He did not ask for power, a long life, money, or fame. He asked for wisdom. Solomon wanted to be godly, and wise. And God was pleased.

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 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; 12 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.

Special Note.

Not only did God honor Solomon's prayer request, he gave Solomon more than he asked for. Such is the nature of grace. God gives, and gives some more.

13 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. 14 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. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

28. For a time, life was good under Solomon's reign.

- 1 Kings 4:25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

29. But then, something terrible happened. Solomon's heart was drawn away from God, by degrees, by his 700 wives and 300 concubines.

- 1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

30. It was not the 700th wife, or the 300th concubine, that turned Solomon's heart from God, it was the 1st wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. God had told Israel not to intermarry with the pagan nations, but, Solomon was youthful, he was idealistic, and he was rebellious.

- Deuteronomy 7:3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be

31. There is a lesson in this. Once the heart is turned away from God, apart from gospel repentance, it continues in a wayward direction, and accelerates in intensity.

32. It was the 1st wife that led Solomon to worshipping in high places, a term associated in Scripture with pagan worship.

33. God had warned Israel what His attitude would be towards those who worshipped in high places, and what He would do to any generation that engaged in worshipping in high places.

- Leviticus 26:30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

34. To be loved by God is sweet, and precious. To be abhorred [Heb. gaw-al, to detest; to reject] by God should be terrifying to the soul.

35. Before the reign of Solomon was over, God let him know that he was going to be rejected. His kingdom was going to be torn in sunder. God detested what Solomon was doing.

Special Note.

The question arises. "Are you doing something which God detest?" "Will God reject you in the day of ultimate judgement?" Jesus warned that, "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:20)

36. Despite his faults, Solomon did accomplish something magnificent. He built a temple to the Lord after entering into an agreement with Hiram, the king of Tyre. Hiram provided the material needed to build the temple.

37. On the day of dedication, Solomon manifested a life of devotion to the Lord.

- 1 Kings 8:22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: 23 And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: 24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

38. Then, in 1 Kings 11, we begin to see the decline of Solomon's integrity.

- 1 Kings 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 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.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 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.

5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an 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. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

39. The end result was predictable.

- 1 Kings 11:9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. 11 Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

40. As despicable as the sexual sins of Solomon were, there was something else he did. In his zeal to make the kingdom great, Solomon instituted the corvee, or, slave labor. The term corvee is a form of unpaid, forced labor.
41. What was so wicked was that Solomon enslaved people in order to build the house of the Lord, his own house, and the wall of Jerusalem.
- 1 Kings 9:15 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.
 - 1 Kings 9:20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, 21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service unto this day.
42. While Solomon did not initially make bondmen, or slaves, of the children of Israel, he did conscript them into the military, and used them for his servant.
- 1 Kings 9:22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.
43. With this being recognized, the Bible also records that Solomon did conscript native Israelites to work in Lebanon, perhaps out of fear that the Canaanites, who were working on his building projects, would escape if they were sent to Lebanon alone.
- 1 Kings 5:13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. 14 And he sent them to Lebanon ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy. 15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; 16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. 17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. 18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.