

**People of the Promise:
Solomon, Part 2: Wise Man's Folly
1 Kings 11**

Introduction

1 Kings 10:23-25

²³ Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. ²⁴ And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. ²⁵ Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.

1 Kings 9:6-8a

⁶ But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ^{8a} And this house will become a heap of ruins.

¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning

which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.

1. Divided Love (1 Kings 11:1-3a)
2. Heart Led Astray (1 Kings 11:3b-4)
3. Worship of Idols (1 Kings 11:5-8)
4. Delayed Consequence—Loss of Northern Ten Tribes (1 Kings 11:9-13)
5. Immediate Consequence—Adversaries (1 Kings 11:14-40)

1. Divided Love (1 Kings 11:1-3a)

¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines.

This is the second reference to what Solomon loved. Here's the first:

1 Kings 3:3a Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father.

It was not that Solomon never loved the Lord. He did. And God Himself testifies to that truth even after he had already married Pharaoh's daughter from Egypt (context). But His love was divided. Solomon loved Yahweh, but he loved many foreign women too.

It is likely he married these foreign women in part to strengthen political alliances. And it was certainly the custom for ancient kings to display their power and wealth by acquiring many wives and concubines. Even David had indulged himself that way, contrary to what God had directed regarding how Israel's kings should behave.

Deuteronomy 17:17

And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

A king, however powerful, however blessed by God, is still a human, prone to human pitfalls. God had warned Israel against alliances with the nations of Canaan and especially against intermarriage with them, because of how such binding connections would pull them into idolatry and the judgment idolatry brings.

Exodus 34:11-16

11 "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **12** Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. **13** You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim **14** (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), **15** lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, **16** and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.

Deuteronomy 7:3-4

3 You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, **4** for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

Solomon had access to these Scriptures and was duty bound to pay attention to them as king. But the divided love of his heart led him

into violating these commands. Despite all his wisdom and wealth, despite all the good that he did, the divided love of his heart produced a bitter harvest.

It is striking that although King Solomon's excessive indulgence was plain for all to see, God identifies the root of it all at the heart level. What he loved. People pursue what they love. Loving the Lord leads you down paths of righteousness. *If the love of your heart fastens on something that becomes more important to you than God and His commands, that love will lead you terrible places you nor others ever thought you'd go.*

This is the wise king who wrote
Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

He knew better than he practiced. That is true generally of all of us.

2. Heart Led Astray (1 Kings 11:3b-4)

3^b And his wives turned away his heart. **4** For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

All those wives, all those years. Little compromises here and there. Build them a palace. Build them shrine for their gods. And by the time Solomon is old, he finally gives in to joining with them in their idolatry.

His heart turned away after other gods.
His heart was not wholly true to Yahweh.
His heart could not nurture its divided love without it's harming him and the entire nation.

Nehemiah 13:26

Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin.

3. Worship of Idols (1 Kings 11:5-8)

⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. ⁸ And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

These idols are fertility gods whose worship involved immoral worship and child sacrifice. Horrific cult practices.

What Solomon did was common enough among the surrounding nations, but it was evil in Yahweh's sight. Solomon's participating in these abominations was turning back from following Yahweh with all his heart.

*Sin is not just wrong. It's also harmful.
Harmful to the one who indulges in it.
Harmful to those connected with him.
Harmful not just today, but tomorrow too.*

4. Delayed Consequence—Loss of Northern Ten Tribes (1 Kings 11:9-13)

⁹ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the 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 commanded. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. ¹² Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ However, I will not tear away all

the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”

Solomon’s divided heart led to a divided kingdom. The northern kingdom was idolatrous from the start. The southern kingdom wavered back and forth. The northern kingdom ended in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians conquered the ten tribes. The southern kingdom fell to Babylon in 605 B.C. Both fell because of idolatry, so God took them into the territory of idolaters to learn what a scourge idolatry is.

It would have been worse, except for the Lord’s regard for Solomon’s father, David, the man after God’s own heart.

Your faithfulness has far-reaching consequences. And so does your sin, if you refuse to repent from it.

5. Immediate Consequence—Adversaries (1 Kings 11:14-40)

Hadad the Edomite

¹⁴ And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal house in Edom. ¹⁵ For when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, he struck down every male in Edom ¹⁶ (for Joab and all

Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom). ¹⁷ But Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain Edomites of his father's servants, Hadad still being a little child.

Rezon of Syria

²³ God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah. ²⁴ And he gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band, after the killing by David. And they went to Damascus and lived there and made him king in Damascus. ²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing harm as Hadad did. And he loathed Israel and reigned over Syria.

Jeroboam

²⁶ Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also lifted up his hand against the king. ²⁷ And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built the Millo, and closed up the breach of the city of David his father. ²⁸ The man Jeroboam was very able, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had

dressed himself in a new garment, and the two of them were alone in the open country. ³⁰ Then Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹ And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and will give you ten tribes' ³² (but he shall have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), ³³ because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did.

Solomon's name means peace, and the kingdom enjoyed peace for many years, but Solomon's divided heart ended up destroying that peace even when he was still alive and for generations to follow.

In what ways has the Lord blessed you? Do not destroy the benefit of His blessing with a heart divided and led astray.

Conclusion

Wise Man's Folly

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Ecclesiastes 4:13 Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice.

Ecclesiastes 10:1 Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.