

“The Beginning of the End”
1 Kings 11:14-43
(Preached at Trinity, January 24, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The Kingdom of Solomon was a kingdom of greatness. It was wealthy beyond description. It was a place of beauty with gardens and even a zoo. It was a powerful kingdom and enjoyed peace and freedom from outside conflict. And it was ruled by an excellent king who ruled with wisdom and justice.
2. How you begin is not nearly as important as how you finish. To finish well is a blessing to be treasured and fought for because there are countless pitfalls along the way. To be able to claim the words of Paul should be the goal of us all. These are the words of one who finished well.
2 Timothy 4:7 NAU - "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"
3. Solomon's kingdom offered such hope. How could it fail so completely?
Unless you understand the problem of sin you will not be able to comprehend the fall of Solomon. Unless you understand the problem of sin you will not be able to understand your own problem. Unless you understand the problem of sin you will not be able to fix your eyes on the One greater than Solomon.
4. **Verses 14-25** describe God's response to Solomon covenant unfaithfulness. The narrator has set before us the years of Solomon's sinful sowing, ending with his great fall into idolatry. As I preached last week, sin that is not dealt with quickly will soon grow and can quickly consume us. Not even Solomon was wise enough or powerful enough to control the ravages of sin once he embraced it. Sin is always crouching at the door and the door must be firmly bolted against it.
5. With sowing always comes reaping.
 - A. Paul describes this in his Epistle to the Galatians
Galatians 6:7 NAU - "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. "
 - B. He speaks of fleshly sowing and spiritual sowing
Galatians 6:8 NAU - "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."
 1. What is fleshly sowing? The flesh speaks of self-indulgence, that which is contrary to the will and purpose of God. This describes Solomon's life. It describes the mindset of this world.
 - a. It is a mindset that lives as if there is no God
 - b. It is a mindset that dismisses the Law of God
 - c. It is a mindset that seeks ultimate fulfillment in this life as if this is all there is. It is a life consumed by the idols of this world.
 - d. It is the mindset that slowly consumed the heart of Solomon – his life became consumed with the sowing to the flesh.

2. This is contrasted with the rare jewel of spiritual sowing.
 - a. This is the mindset fixed upon God, upon His glory, upon honoring Him above all else.
 - b. This is the mindset that loves God's Law. This is precisely what Solomon turned his heart away from.
 - c. For the Christian, it is the life consumed by Christ. Our love for Him shapes all of our priorities and desires.
Galatians 5:16 NAU - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
6. This passage describes the season of reaping that would characterize the rest of Solomon's life. God gave Solomon a promise and a warning.
1 Kings 9:4-7 NAU - "if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you *and* will keep My statutes and My ordinances, ⁵ then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' ⁶ "But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples."
7. Solomon was not faithful. The author states God's displeasure plainly:
1 Kings 11:9 NAU - "Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD"
1 Kings 11:11 NAU - "So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant."
8. What a turn from the previous chapter when Solomon was the envy of the world. It was declared of Solomon:
1 Kings 10:9 NAU - "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."
- I. God began to raise up adversaries against Israel that would lead to their destruction
 - A. This is tragic because they had enjoyed unprecedented peace
 1. There was no war during the reign of Solomon
1 Kings 4:25 NAU - "So Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."
 2. Life in Israel was good
1 Kings 4:20 NAU - "Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; *they* were eating and drinking and rejoicing."
 3. Now God declares His judgment.
1 Kings 11:11 NAU - "So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant."

4. It's interesting, these adversaries were present the whole time. By God's grace while Solomon's heart was fixed upon honoring God they were restrained from coming against him.
How many adversaries does God protect us from each day?
 5. It is also interesting that the Hebrew word translated "adversary" in **Verses 14, 23, 25** is אֹיֵב, the same word used in Job
Job 1:6 NAU - "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them."
 6. And we should also note that although these adversaries had their own motives for coming against Solomon they were instruments of God correcting Solomon.
- B. First, God raised up Hadad the Edomite – **Verse 14**
1. During the reign of David Joab struck down every male in Edom but Hadad fled into Egypt. He was a young boy at the time. How he was a bitter enemy of Israel.
 2. He forged an alliance with Pharaoh
1 Kings 11:19 NAU - "Now Hadad found great favor before Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen."
 3. Now, he was prepared to seek his revenge upon Israel
- C. God next raised up Rezon who had raised up an army of men who had been defeated by David – **Verse 23**
1. They too had a score to settle with Israel
 2. While Solomon reigned they were kept in check but now the restrained was falling away
1 Kings 11:25 NAU - "So he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, along with the evil that Hadad *did*; and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Aram."
 3. It is ironic that Rezon was the ruler of the Arameans. They were among the nations that Solomon sold arms to. Solomon gave his adversary (Satan) the weapons to fight him.
- D. Finally, the author sets before us the first mention of the infamous Jeroboam – **Verse 26**
1. He too saw an opportunity to advance his own interests
 2. The prophet Ahijah revealed to him that he would receive the kingdom
1 Kings 11:28-31 NAU - "Now the man Jeroboam was a valiant warrior, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he appointed him over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ It came about at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had clothed himself with a new cloak; and both of them were alone in the field. ³⁰ Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak which was on him and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹ He said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes'"

3. It came with a wonderful promise – It was basically the same promise God made to David.
1 Kings 11:38 NAU - "Then it will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you."
4. Sadly, Jeroboam would be one of Israel's most wicked kings. Jeroboam the son of Nebat would become synonymous with wickedness. Of several of Israel's kings they are described:
2 Kings 3:3 NAU - "he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin; he did not depart from them."

II. God's Covenant Faithfulness

- A. God remembered His covenant with David
 1. God was about to destroy Solomon's kingdom, but not absolutely
 2. This was in accordance with God's covenant promise to David
2 Samuel 7:12-16 NAU - "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."
- B. God demonstrated His covenant faithfulness by delaying His judgment against Solomon
 1. God states that he was going to take the Kingdom from Solomon
Verse 11 – "I will surely tear the kingdom from you"
 2. But God's judgment did not take place during Solomon's lifetime. It was delayed until the reign of his son. This was because God remembered His covenant.
1 Kings 11:12 NAU - "Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, *but* I will tear it out of the hand of your son."
 3. God's judgment was not absolute – the entire kingdom was not taken away; one tribe would remain, the tribe of Judah.
1 Kings 11:13 NAU - "However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, *but* 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."
- C. God's mercies and covenant faithfulness must be our continual praise
 1. Solomon affirmed God's covenant love when he dedicated the Temple
1 Kings 8:23 NAU - "He said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and *showing* lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart," - רַחֲמֵיךָ

2. This covenant love must never be taken for granted. Solomon squandered it and failed to enjoy its fullness.

Conclusion:

1. Solomon's life is a tragic testimony of the danger of sin if we follow its course. It will lead us further and further from God. Solomon's last recorded act was seeking to overturn the purpose of God, one more sign of his unfaithfulness.
1 Kings 11:40 NAU - "Solomon sought therefore to put Jeroboam to death; but Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt, and he was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."
2. We seldom believe this. We always think we can handle sin, that we can control it. Its like the alcoholic who is in denial. He insists he isn't addicted. He can handle it. But it continues to consume everything in his life. Or the person who insists he doesn't have a problem with food addiction. The pounds continue to mount up while he insists it's not a problem.
Solomon must stand as a constant reminder and warning of the danger of sin.
3. But this text also reminds us that God's redemptive purpose doesn't rest upon the faithfulness of man. Even in our unfaithfulness, God will always be faithful.
1 Thessalonians 5:24 NAU - "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."
2 Timothy 2:13 NAU - "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."