

I & II Kings



Lesson 3 – Chapters 9:10–11:43

Solomon, a Faith Lost

“And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping My statutes and My rules, then I will establish your royal throne” (1 Kings 9:4–5). When you read these words late in Lesson 2, perhaps they aroused your curiosity. Know this: God compared all future kings to David.

What characteristics did David possess that God might set him as a standard-bearer for others? If you recall David’s adulterous affair with Bathsheba and his premeditated murder of Uriah, you may doubt God’s selection of David as a role model. To be sure, his affair was scandalous. So why did God call David “a man after His own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14)? Recall that following David’s heinous sins, God worked through the prophet Nathan to bring David to repentance and to restore his faith. David’s confession says everything, “I have sinned against the LORD” (2 Samuel 12:13). But so too does Nathan’s absolution: “The LORD also has put away your sin” (2 Samuel 12:13).

Calm before the Storm

Read 1 Kings 9:10–28. Solomon’s massive construction project ended in the dedication of the “two houses, the house of the LORD and the king’s house” (v. 10). In addition to the yearly stipend given to Hiram of Tyre, Solomon gave him twenty Galilean cities as re-imburement for 120 talents of gold. These cities so repulsed Hiram that he called the area “the land of Cabul” or simply “unproductive.”

Solomon’s need for forced labor did not end with the dedication of the “two houses.” He used these forces to build the Millo (perhaps a series of terraces) and the fortified cities of Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Beth-horon, Baalath, and Tamar as well as cities to store grain, cities for his chariots, and cities for his horses. He also built a home for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, and ships for a business venture with King Hiram. Solomon’s wealth grew.

23. While the Israelites were not “forced labor” for these later projects, they did contribute taxes. A storm of dissent was brewing. How might you have felt had Solomon required your services followed by heavy taxes to pay for his building projects?
24. Read 1 Samuel 8:16–18. How did God’s words come true during the reign of Solomon?

The Queen of Sheba

Read 1 Kings 10:1–29. Our text acquaints us with the visit of the Queen of Sheba. Sheba is sometimes identified as a region of southern Egypt or as Ethiopia. Some historians identify this queen as the legendary Hatshepsut, Egypt's female pharaoh who visited "Punt" (Palestine) during her reign.

25. Why did the Queen of Sheba make a journey of more than one thousand miles to visit Solomon (v. 1)?
26. God used Solomon's gifts to point His people to Himself as the gift giver (1 Kings 3:8). How did God use Solomon's wisdom and wealth during the Queen of Sheba's visit (vv. 6–9)? the visit of other dignitaries (v. 24)?
27. Are there gifts God has given you to use in furthering His kingdom? Take a moment to identify them and discuss how you might utilize these gifts.

Before leaving this section of Scripture, verses 14–29 bring Solomon's wealth before us. With his vast wealth, Solomon adorned his House of the Forest of Lebanon and bought chariots and horses, which he traded with other kings (v. 29).

Of Wives and Concubines

Read 1 Kings 11:1–8. Solomon lacked nothing. He possessed riches, wisdom, and power freely given by the hand of God. Yet, for Solomon, having it all was not enough.

28. Describe Solomon's response to God's command not to marry women outside the Hebrew faith (v. 2).
29. Although the Bible recounts Solomon's unparalleled wisdom (1 Kings 4:32–34), which is clearly expressed in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, something dreadful happened, something that we would not expect to happen to such a wise man. What became of Solomon?
30. Preparations for this lesson included research on the goddess Ashtoreth and the gods Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech. What might God find repugnant about the worship of these gods and this goddess?

God's Response

Read 1 Kings 11:9–43. God's anger burned against Solomon because Solomon did not keep God's statutes and commandments as his father David had done (v. 38).

31. We might expect God in His anger to destroy Solomon instantly. What kept God from destroying Solomon, instead showing him mercy when he deserved none (v. 12)?
32. Who is Jeroboam? Discuss what happened during his meeting with Ahijah.

God's Word for Today

The last years of Solomon's life paint for us a frightening picture of one man's battles with Satan.

33. What do Solomon's struggles teach you about yourself? about God's mercy?
34. God provides believers means by which they may remain "grounded" in their faith. What are these Means of Grace?

In Closing

- † In a Bible atlas or other reliable source, locate the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- † Locate the city of Shechem on a Bible map. Discuss the significance of this city at the time of Jeroboam.
- † Read **1 Kings 12:1–16:34** to prepare for the next session