



ANNE O'BRIEN BIBLE STUDIES

SOLOMON

COMPLETE STUDY SERIES PARTS 1-9



Estuary Elim

ONE CHURCH MANY PEOPLE

Reading: Read 1 Kings chapter 1

Key Thought: Putting God's will above our rights. Don't worry or run after things - seek God first, and the rest will be added to you. **(Matt 6v33 - Paraphrase)**

Context: King David had reigned for 40 years over Judah, and for 33 years over Judah and Israel together; and at the age of 70 his life was near the end. God's hand was at work both in the ancestors of David – Ruth and Boaz, and in his descendants too. After all, this was the line of Jesus the Messiah. It always surprises me who God chooses to use. So ... Ruth was a Moabitess (not even an Israelite); David was the youngest of seven sons; and Solomons mother, Bathsheba, had committed adultery with David (Bathsheba became David's 8th wife).

But God chose Solomon for a reason and for a purpose. Under his rule Israel was to know peace for 40 years. However, there was to be trouble. Solomon was one of David's youngest children. Adonijah (David's eldest surviving son, the first three had died), saw himself as the rightful successor to the throne.

Content:

King David was near the end of his life, and in attempt to secure the throne for himself Adonijah took things into his own hand. He wasn't only taking the throne prematurely from David, but also from God's chosen successor.

As was the custom, David had a young woman, Abishag, to keep him warm in bed (and not for any other reason). But Adonijah coveted her as well. Adonijah used the army to try and effect a coup d'etat. However, the prophet Nathan – a godly man who was trusted by David - heard of this and devised a plan with Bathsheba to bring it before David's attention, with a view to seeing Solomon made king with immediate effect.

I believe that David and Nathan understood God's will in this action. (Read 1 Chronicles 28v1-7). And so, Solomon is paraded in the streets on a donkey, anointed by the priest, given a trumpet fanfare. And there was singing and dancing, and shouts of 'Long live the King' (1 Kings 1v28-40).

On hearing this Adonijah became afraid for his life and sought asylum at the altar.

Challenges:

- In this situation of 'fighting for our rights', would we be more like Adonijah or Solomon? Do we take things into our own hands or wait for God to work out his purposes?
- Nathan the prophet and Bathsheba spoke up for Solomon. Do we look to people who are older and spiritually wiser than us for guidance and advice?
- Nathan acted on the prophecy from 1 Chronicles 28v5. He was fighting for God's will, not predominantly for Solomon's rights. Sometimes, fighting for our rights can be a trap that will lead us away from God. Seeking God for his mind, will safeguard us from making mistakes.

We can only benefit when we seek God first. "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow". (Matthew 6v33&34)

Communicate:

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Reading: Read 1 Kings chapter 2

Key Thought: Walk in God's ways and both you and God's Kingdom will prosper.
Hebrews 12 verse 1: ***Throw off everything that hinders ... and fix your eyes on Jesus.***

Context: David knew his end was near. Having made Solomon his successor, he gave him final words of advice before he died: "If you obey God, you will prosper in all your endeavours to serve him, and the kingdom will be blessed." (Paraphrased) He also advised Solomon to deal with the opposition and to mete out punishment where necessary. And Solomon was also urged to show kindness to those who had shown support for the Kingdom and the Line of David. To use a metaphor, David did not want the 'dead wood' to start a troublesome fire. Solomon was to make a clean break with all opposition right from the start.

Content:

The opposition came from 4 people – Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab and Shimei - each of whom can teach us a lesson.

- **Adonijah (verses 21-23):** He was Solomon's brother – the one who tried to usurp the throne. His reprieve depended on his doing no evil, but his request for Abishag (one of David's concubines) was interpreted as making another claim to the throne. Solomon justly imposed the death penalty. From this we learn the consequences of imposing our will on God.
- **Abiathar (verses 26-27):** Although a priest, he was a traitor and had to be dealt with. This seems to be the end of the Levitical priesthood and the establishment of a new one – that of Zadok (see 1 Samuel 2 verses 30-33). Sadly, Abiathar lost the blessing of priesthood – a sober reminder to us to stay in the place of blessing, or to get back to it.
- **Joab (verse 5):** Joab was the leader of the army. He sought asylum at the altar, but that was only relevant for accidental death – he had murdered Abner in a time of peace to deter the rest of the tribes from coming under David's rule. Under the Law his sin had to be punished. The altar should have been the place of repentance where his sin could have been forgiven.
- **Shimei (verses 8 and 9):** He belonged to Saul's clan and had cursed David, but he was spared on the condition that he stayed in Jerusalem, so that they could keep an eye on him. But he secretly left the city, breaking his oath. At first he seemed to be repentant, but it didn't last. Mercy is there for those who repent – but they must be genuine.

Lastly, we read of how kindness was shown to those who had helped David, and the example is given in the story of **Barzillai** (which you can read in 2 Samuel 17 verses 27-29) where Barzillai organised his people to bring food for David and his troops in battle. God sees when we respond to a person or situation with kindness and will reward us.

Challenges:

Hebrews 12 verse 1: ***Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back (in our Christian life), and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up ... and keep your eyes on Jesus our leader and instructor.*** (Living Bible). Is there 'dead wood' in your life? If Solomon had not obeyed David's charge to 'get rid of the enemy' he would not have had a successful reign of forty years of peace. Obedience brought Solomon blessing and prosperity, and it brought peace after years of war. By disobeying God's ways, we can bring hardship on ourselves and lose the blessing of God on our lives. And then we lose our peace. The good news is that if we are truly repentant and put "those things that entangle us" behind us, then we can be in that place of blessing again and know God using us for the sake of his kingdom. Not all things are wrong, but they might be wrong for us and take our focus away from God's best for our lives.

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Reading: Read 1 Kings chapter 3

Key Thought: **Wisdom and kindness in righteous judgment.** Proverbs 21 verse 21 (ESV):
Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness and honour.

Context: Solomon was young when he became king. We don't know his actual age, but information would suggest that he was in his late teens. He was certainly old enough to marry the daughter of an Egyptian Pharaoh. This was a good move politically, but perhaps not wise spiritually. We also see reference to Solomon using the 'High Places' (verses 2 -4). The High Places were local sacred cult altars, often built upon a rock. They posed a threat to the pure worship of God, representing conflicting loyalty to God. The Israelites had been forbidden to use such places for worship (Deuteronomy 12 verses 2-4). So, we see that Solomon was not quite in the right place spiritually. But he was about to have an encounter with God!

The first part of this chapter shows us how Solomon acted rashly. But the second part reveals that he had a heart for God and a desire to rule the kingdom with wisdom. Solomon's spiritual thinking was in a muddle.

Praise God he sees through the muddle and speaks to the heart!

Content:

This chapter is about God seeing past our outward appearance, past our youth or old age, past our foolishness – and seeing the true intentions and desires of our heart. As a young King, Solomon didn't begin too well ... until he had an encounter with God (verses 5-16). In the dream/vision God promises to give Solomon whatever he asks for. And because Solomon asks for wisdom to govern righteously, he pleased God. So that God promised him wisdom – and added that he would bless him with riches too. (Read next week's study to see the extent of his wealth!) This amazing encounter ended with Solomon worshipping the Lord (verse 15).

In the second half of the chapter, we see how Solomon applies this wisdom. It was not man's wisdom, but Godly wisdom – God's wisdom working through Solomon:

- Solomon didn't reject or pre-judge the women. As prostitutes (especially just having given birth too) they were deemed unclean by The Law (Leviticus 12 verses 1-8) and should not have deigned to enter his presence. But Solomon showed grace and was willing to hear what was on their hearts before he judged them.
- Just as God had looked on Solomon's heart, Solomon now looked to the intentions of the heart in both women. He decreed that the woman who was willing to sacrifice her child to give him life was the true mother. We could argue over whether or not she was the biological mother, but she was the one who had a mother's heart and would care for the child.

Challenges:

We all have to make judgments and decisions every day of our lives. And some of the decisions we make can impact the rest of our lives and those with whom we interact, either for good or bad.

- **Do we ask for God's wisdom to make the right choices and decisions?**
- **Do we ever judge people by their look or way of life, and form opinions based on those factors?**
- **Do we make assumptions before we have heard what they have to say?**
- **What would God see when he looks into our heart?**

It may be that we are the victim of a wrong accusation, like one of the women in the story. How does it make us feel? Are we still able to act with grace? It's easy to act foolishly when we are riled and upset.

- **Do we wish harm on another?**
- **Or do we ask for God's grace to deal with the situation wisely?**

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Reading: 1 Kings chapter 4 verses 20-34

Key Thought: *Blessed are those who find wisdom ... it is more profitable than silver or gold* (Proverbs 3 v 13 & 14)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and not on your own understanding ... and he will guide your paths. (Proverbs 3 verses 5 & 6)

Context: In verses 1-12, we see Solomon's wise administration in action, as he builds a structure of officials and governors across the land of Israel. Each of the twelve governors was required to supply the palace with supplies for one month of the year. God blessed the land with both peace and prosperity, and blessed Solomon with an abundance of daily provisions. There is a clear link between Solomon's desire for wisdom and his prosperity: 1 Kings 3 verse 12 and 13 (God speaking) "I will give you a wise and discerning heart ... I will also give you what you have not asked for ... both wealth and honour". Other people might not notice, but God sees what is in our hearts. This chapter makes it quite clear that, all that Solomon had and became, was a result of his desire to serve God with wisdom.

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So, here we see just how much God blessed Solomon:

- The people multiplied in numbers and were happy (verse 20)
- Solomon himself had an amazing abundance of daily provisions (verses 22-23)
- He had a very large number of horses and charioteers and the world's greatest stables (v26) – he could have won any battle, and yet his reign was a reign of peace (v25).
- Solomon was revered as a great, wise man (verses 29-31). He was a philosopher and a poet (verse 32); a botanist and a zoologist (verse 33); and he was respected by people from all around the world (verse 34). He wrote the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and much of The Book of Proverbs.

God blessed Solomon with every kind of blessing, both material and spiritual. And he desired to serve God with the gifts he had been given. The wisdom of Solomon lives on, even today.

Challenges:

Do we want to move forward in wisdom?

We are not all like Solomon, and we often make unwise decisions that affect the course of our lives, sometimes bringing unhappiness and problems. But ... when we repent, although we still have to live with the consequences of our decisions, God can – and does – bless us. He is willing to forgive and forget our foolish past. And if we really want to change, God will see our hearts and help us to be wiser in the future. We can put our past behind us and be free.

1 John 1 verse 9: If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all the wrong in our lives. If we are truly seeking to live a better life for Christ, the Lord will see our hearts and bless us. He may not bless us in material things, but His Word promises to bless us in many ways when we, like Solomon, seek wisdom. **James 1 verse 5: If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. James 3 verse 17 and 18: Wisdom that comes from heaven is ... pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, merciful ... Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.** Do you need wisdom today? Why not come reverently before God and pray for it now?

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Reading: 1 Kings chapter 5 (and if you like reading, 1 Chronicles chapters 22 and 28).

Key Thought: Building for God is an honour – we should give it our very best.

Context: Solomon's father, King David, had a heart for God. His greatest desire was to build The Temple in Jerusalem, a place for all to worship God and honour His Name. But, because David was necessarily a man of war (fighting for the Kingdom), God told him that he should not be the one to build the Temple. God knew that Solomon was a man of peace and would be the best person for the job. However, it didn't stop David from making plans and preparations. So that firstly, he drew up plans (1 Chronicles 28 verses 11 and 12). And then he began to prepare materials for the building and for the Temple furniture.

In 1 Chronicles 22 verses 14 and 15, David lists what he has already put in place for Solomon to use:

- Vast amounts of gold and silver
- Bronze and iron 'too great to be weighed'
- Wood (cedar) and stone (and he appointed stone masons)
- And from his own personal wealth (1 Chronicles 29 verses 2-4), David gave his vast amount of riches over and above everything else.

David's – and Solomon's desire - was to honour the Lord, and make his kingdom known to the whole world.

Content: The Preparations: Solomon sent a wise and diplomatic message to Hiram, King of Tyre (Sidonia/Lebanon). He reminded Hiram of David's desire to have a Temple built for the honour of The Lord; and he asked Hiram to send cedars so that he could begin the task (the cedars grew to about 100 feet tall and were ideal for spanning long distances – e.g. for roofing).

Note: Although the Israelites were exclusively chosen by God this was never meant to exclude others from God's blessing and service; their special relationship with God was meant to be a witness to the world.

Solomon rewarded Hiram with good wages for the workers (v6), grain, olive oil and wine (v10 and 11). After being cut, the wood was tied into rafts and floated about 100 miles south by sea to Joppa. It would then require thousands of carriers to haul the wood overland to Jerusalem. This was the beginning of a massive work for the Lord. The unemployment rate would have been very low! Solomon used conscripts (30,000, see verse 13); and a further 153,000 men to supervise, cut and carry the large slabs of stone (see verse 15); plus craftsmen for the finer details.

Challenges: Solomon caught David's vision and carried on the work that David had prepared for him. What can we do at church or amongst our friends and colleagues? Since the disruptions of the Covid pandemic there are numerous unfinished tasks, for one reason or another. Churches, and society, are crying out for a helping hand and kindness. This is one way that we can build for God and honour his name. Why not pray about what you could be doing?

Could you be one of the people that can pick up where someone else has left off?

But there is 'another side of the coin'. Although David wanted to build the Temple, God would not let him. We should all be building up God's church, but only when we have sought God and know that the time is right.

Seeking God's will for our lives and for his honour should be our priority.

Do you have a heart to honour the Lord in all that you do for Him? Solomon pushed forward with the preparations because his heart's desire was to bring honour and glory to the Lord. I trust we have that same desire.

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Reading: 1 Kings chapter 6, and chapter 7 verses 41-51

Key Thought: 1 Corinthians 6 verses 19-20: **Do you not know that your bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit ... therefore honour God with your bodies. He is worthy of our best.**

Context: Solomon built the Temple approximately 1,000 years before Christ, and 500 years after Moses had made the Tabernacle. It took 7 years to build. 2 Chronicles 3 verse 1 tells us that it was built on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Significantly, this was Abraham's sacrificial mount where God provided the ram as a substitute for Isaac; and it is not far from the place where Jesus became the final sacrifice for all who turn to him in repentance. The building of the Temple was to be from the very best of materials and craftsmanship, and it was to be built in silence, in reverence to the Lord (1 Kings 6v7). You can read all about it in these chapters.

Content: So, chapter 6 (verses 19-36) describes the details of the building with particular stress on the Inner Sanctuary – the Most Holy Place. Everything here was covered with the highest quality gold (from Parvaim), including the floor. Gold is a very heavy metal – much heavier than iron. There would literally have been tons of gold! Gold symbolised the holiness of God and his presence in the Temple. Why all the splendour, all the gold, all the perfection? Was it just for show, or was there a greater reason? In some small part it represented God's worth. But it also symbolised something yet to come – Christ's church.

In 1 Corinthians 6 verse 19, the apostle Paul writes these words: ***Do you not know that your bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?***

Christians are being built-up by God into a holy temple, for Christ said, "I will build my church". We were bought at an enormous cost – far, far greater than the worth of all the gold in the Temple; we were bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. And we now have the privilege of being the place where God the Holy Spirit chooses to dwell.

Challenges:

If we consider the impact of the fact that our bodies are God's Temple, it brings many challenges.

Solomon's Temple was:

- A witness to the whole world, as it stood on Mount Moriah in all its glory. As 'Temples of the Holy Spirit', this is our purpose too – to reveal God's glory to the world, and to help others to find God and salvation. Jesus said we shouldn't hide our light, but that we should let it shine for all to see. Witness was a fundamental function of the Temple. Is it ours?
- A House of Prayer (see Isaiah 56 verse 7). And the result of this is found in the following verse (Isaiah 56 verse 8) – "I will gather still others to them, besides those already gathered". Prayer was a fundamental function of the temple. Is it ours? As we pray for others, the Holy Spirit will touch their lives.
- The Temple was a place of purity and perfection. Do we keep our selves pure – our thoughts, our reactions, our deeds, our morals, our pastimes, what we hear and look at? Honestly – we are far from perfect. But, as the Holy Spirit dwells within us, so he can help us to be worthy of His presence in our lives.
- An expression of Solomon's devotion to God. What can we build, what can we bring to the Lord's work? How can we honour God in practical ways that will bring glory to His Name?

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Reading: 1 Kings chapter 8

Key Thought: : God has two desires for our lives: That He might dwell in us, and that we would abide in Him. **Galatians 2 v 20** It is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me. **John 15 v 4** Remain in me as I also remain in you.

Context: The Ark of the Covenant. (Verses 6-11) The Temple would not be complete until the Ark of the Covenant was instated into its rightful place – at the centre of the Inner Sanctuary, the most Holy Place, situated behind the partition of the veil (a heavy, intricately woven curtain). In the Old Testament, this was God's dwelling place. But, when Jesus died on the Cross, this veil was torn by the hand of God, from top to bottom, signifying that the Holy Place of God's Presence was open to all who would come to Him, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. No longer were the Old Testament sacrifices needed. But in Solomon's time the Ark was important for their forgiveness – it was the place where atonement was made for the sins of Israel just once a year. And so, we can see why they were so delighted, and happy and thankful for this special day when the Ark took its rightful place. So amazing and awesome was the occasion that the glory of the Lord came down (expressed by the cloud filling the Temple) – and the priests were so overcome that they could not fulfil their duties! (v11) Older translations infer that they couldn't even stand – just as today, some people fall when the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

Content: Although powerful and successful, Solomon didn't take the credit for himself, because he understood that his wisdom came from the Lord. Because of this, his aim was not to build his own empire but to bring worship of God back to Jerusalem, to be at the very heart of Israel. And in this chapter, we see how Solomon achieved three things:

- He situated the Ark of the Covenant in the Inner Sanctuary, the Holiest Place in the Temple. (See above.)
- He, Solomon, delivered a prayer of thanks. He started with PRAISE (see verses 22-24), giving God his rightful place. He then made a PETITION (see verses 27-30) for forgiveness in the nation. Lastly, he stated his PRIORITY – his desire being that God's house would be a place of witness to the whole world.
- He conducted a dedication service (see verses 62-66), making sacrifices of thanksgiving. The glory of the Lord filled the Temple, and everyone fell to the ground and worshipped, thanking God for his goodness.

It was a wonderful accomplishment and a wonderful time. But, with it came a challenge to the people, to think about the purpose of the Temple. It wasn't to be like one of our great Cathedrals and become a visitor attraction. Fundamentally it was a place of bloodshed and sacrifice – a place where people could get closer to God and find acceptance and forgiveness. And the Inner sanctuary was the place where God dwelt among his people, shrouded in cloud. Only one man, The High priest, could enter the presence of God, and only once a year to make atonement for the sins of the nation, by sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice over the mercy seat (the lid) of the Ark of the Covenant.

Challenges:

Jesus is now our High Priest – the one who can bring our forgiveness, by His own sacrifice at Calvary. There is no longer any need for the thousands upon thousands of sacrifices made under the Old Covenant, praise God!

- As Living Temples, is Jesus the very centre of our hearts and lives? Think about it.
- Is our heart a sanctuary where Jesus lives, and where we know we are continually in His presence?
- Have we experienced being in 'the glory' as depicted by the cloud?

Can we say with Paul: It is no longer I that lives, but Christ that lives in me – not just once a year – but all the time.

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Reading: 1 Kings chapter 10

Key Thought: God offers us unconditional love – but are his blessings unconditional too?

Context: Following the Dedication of the Temple, and before we consider Solomon's success and riches, it's worth considering what happened in chapter 9. So, the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time (the first time was recorded in 1 King's 3 verses 1-15, when Solomon asked for wisdom). This time the Lord offered Solomon a conditional covenant. "If you walk before me faithfully ... and obey my laws ... I will establish your throne over Israel forever. But ... if you or your descendants turn away from me ... I will cut off Israel from the Land, and the Temple will become a heap of rubble." (Sadly, during the following 400 years this was to come true. Solomon's legacy was not as successful as his reign: the northern tribes would fall to the Assyrians and the south to the Babylonians).

Content: In chapter 10, we see how Solomon's fame and riches increased. So rich and famous was he that his fame grew internationally, resulting in the visit from the Queen of Sheba and her retinue. A great deal is made of these 11 verses in films about Solomon, but what actually happened? We read here that the Queen brought many gifts for Solomon, including the equivalent of 4 metric tons of gold, exotic spices, and precious stones. Verse 13 tells us that Solomon reciprocated the giving, and then she left. Significantly, The Queen of Sheba didn't just praise Solomon, but she also acknowledged that his wisdom, power and wealth were from the hand of God.

Solomon's riches included:

- Literally, tons of gold (verses 14-17) and everything was made of gold that could be!
- A great throne overlaid with ivory and gold (verse 18)
- A fleet of ships (verse 22) and a shipyard (1 Kings 9 verse 26)
- More and more wealth in the form of presents from visiting Heads of State (verses 23-25)
- Chariots, horses and stables (1 Kings 4 verse 26)

He was a successful King, a very wise leader and an outstanding business man, because God had promised to bless him. However, it should be remembered that this blessing was conditional on him following the Laws of the Lord, and staying close to God – putting God's Kingdom first and not his own.

Challenges:

- **With great wealth comes responsibility.** All that we have comes from the hand of God and his desire is that in turn, we should bless others.
- **With fame comes responsibility.** If it is known that God has blessed us, we should be willing to give Him the glory and to witness to His provision in our lives.
- **With wisdom comes responsibility.** If God has given us wisdom in any field (and most of us have talents - whether it be music, catering, the ability to create things, the 'gift of the gab', ability to study the Scriptures, working with children, singing, cleaning etc etc.) then there is a responsibility on us to share what we can do in God's service.

None of us will ever be like Solomon. But, as part of our Lord's kingdom, we can be Kings in God's eyes. (Read Revelation 1 verse 6 King James version) God promises that he will bless us when we put Him first, and when we obey what he tells us to do. With blessing comes conditions and responsibility. (To understand this, read the parable of the talents – Matthew 25 verses 14-30))

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Reading: 1 Kings chapter 11

Key Thought: Put God first – and never lose focus. *“Thou shalt have not other gods before me.”* (The first of the Ten Commandments, found in Exodus 20 verse 2)

Context: (With reference to 1 Kings 3 verses 5-13 and 1 Kings 9 verses 1-9)

Solomon was privileged in a way that most of Israel's kings were not. God not only spoke to Solomon through prophecy, but He actually appeared to Solomon twice, and spoke directly to him. After such encounters (the second of which was a conditional covenant of promise) we would expect Solomon to stay close to God and His ways – but not so.

Content:

Solomon's wives were his downfall. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines! In the world culture of the time, wives were a statement of success and greatness. They were also a way of forming political alliances with other countries. Solomon had been disobedient to God on two counts. Firstly, he disobeyed God's law on marriage; and secondly, he wanted to please his wives more than he wanted to please God. As a consequence, he began to build altars and High Places for the worship of their gods:- Chemosh the god of Moab; Molek the god of the Ammonites; and Ashteroth the goddess of the Sidonians.

In so doing, Solomon broke covenant with God and there was a price to pay. The wonderful United Kingdom of Israel was about to lose its glory, suffer civil war, and split into two – north and south. Solomon had broken the first commandment. His throne would not stand forever. But God would save the Tribe of Judah as a token of his promise to King David and to protect the Line of The Messiah. God spoke through a prophet to Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officials, to confirm this (see verses 29-32).

After a reign of 40 years, Solomon died (verse 42), and was succeeded by his son, Rehoboam, as king. Prophecy would come true as Jeroboam revolted against Rehoboam, and subsequently the Kingdom was split into two.

Challenges:

God had said, “Put no other gods before me” (Exodus 20 verse 2). It is easy to see what Solomon's “other gods” were – he was greedy for status in the world; greedy for more wives; greedy for more riches; and he gave space for extra gods and even built places of worship to them. You only need to read the Book of Ecclesiastes, to see that none of this brought him true joy or satisfaction.

What things could be “other gods” in our lives?

This answer will be different for each of us. But if there is something we would prefer to do, rather than: have fellowship, worship, pray, or read our Bible, then we need to consider our commitment. If we love our family members (or even our dog, our house or our job) more than the Lord, then we need to question how much we really do love Him. If our goal is anything other than God's Kingdom and a place in His heaven, then we need to be careful. None of the other things are wrong in themselves – but they can be detrimental when they take first place in our lives. Solomon's own advice was: **‘Think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.’**

Sadly, Solomon did not follow his own advice! Solomon died in a time of peace. But, his actions at the end, were to result in division, dissent and war – which ultimately culminated in the fall of the Kingdom of Israel. A sober reminder for us to put God first.

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