

June 11, 2023
God's Good News Story
King Solomon
Strong Start, Weak Finish

Today we move into the 3rd King in Israel's history. The famous son of David, Solomon. Solomon appears to be the 10th son (of about 20) born to David. His mother was none other than Bathsheba. The woman that David committed adultery with and then had her husband killed. The very fact that God allowed one of their sons to be the King and continue to **bloodline of Jesus Christ** (*remember the Scarlet Thread of redemption*) is a reminder that God is merciful and forgiving and if we truly repent and turn back to God he can and will restore us to a right relationship. However, there are still some ongoing consequences that may remain. The lesson to learn is to obey God the 1st time, completely and stay in right relationship. This will help us to avoid any negative consequences for our sin. Just to remind you though, following God is always best, but it does not guarantee that we will never have problems, it just means that we won't add to the problems that living in a sinful, fallen world naturally brings upon everyone.

Key Point: No matter what you have done if we truly repent and turn back to God He can and will restore us and use us mightily, but, there may be lingering negative consequences.

Solomon came to power after 40 years of his father King David's reign around age 20-24 in the year 970BC (approximately). It is interesting to note that all three of the first Kings of Israel, Saul, David & Solomon all reigned 40 years each. He is the last of the Kings that reigned over a United Israel. Because of Solomon's failures at the end and his son's disobedience, Israel was divided into two parts, the Southern Kingdom composed of Judah and Benjamin, and the Northern Kingdom composed of the other 10 tribes.

Well, let's get back to tracing the rise and fall of this famous King. After the death of David and Bathsheba's illegitimate child, we read this in **2 Samuel 12:24, 25...**²⁴ ***Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and slept with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him,***²⁵ ***and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD'S sake.***

So, Solomon came into this world, loved by his parents, but specifically loved or favored by God. We know him as Solomon (meaning peace or peaceful), but his birth certificate name was Jedidiah meaning "beloved of the Lord".

Key Point: We are all Jedidiahs...*Beloved of the Lord*. Rejoice in that and honor God and love Him in return.

Solomon came to reign in the midst of a power struggle among another of the sons of David (Absalom), but soon found himself, living in a time of peace, just like his name. God blessed Solomon and made him, according to many scholars and writers, the wisest, richest, and most powerful man of all time. So, what happened to bring down this “*man of might*’ who was “*beloved of God*’. Well to get right to the point, what always brings anyone down... SIN AND DISOBEDIENCE.

Well, let’s get back to the good news and accomplishment of Solomon.

Solomon’s father, King David had set him up for success. David had defeated most of the surrounding enemies, he and establish a strong government and he had made all the plans and gathered all the materials to build the great Temple to God.

Key Point: We should do all we can to help others achieve their best for God in their lives. We can be used by God to disciple and mentor others to do great things for God.

Solomon begins to seek the Lord early in his reign and it paid off wonderfully. On one occasion in 2 Chronicles 1 we read where Solomon went to the place where the Tabernacle that Moses had built to offer sacrifices and worship God. (*Note: Scarlet Thread of Redemption connection. Solomon offered 1000 blood sacrifices of animals at this occasion*). Here is where we read about a prayer that Solomon prayer and how God answered.

2 Chronicles 1:8-13...⁸ *And Solomon said to God, “You have dealt with my father David with great faithfulness, and have made me king in his place.”*⁹ *Now, LORD God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.*¹⁰ *Now give me wisdom and knowledge, so that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?”*¹¹ *Then God said to Solomon, “Because this was in your heart, and you did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor did you even ask for long life, but you asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge so that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king,*¹² *wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. I will also give you riches, wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed, nor will those who will come after you.”*¹³ *So Solomon went from the high place which was at Gibeon, from the tent of meeting, to Jerusalem, and he reigned over Israel.*

Key Point: We should pray and seek earnestly help and guidance from God. His wisdom and guidance are far more valuable than all the riches and power the world has to offer.

So, God’s favor of peace and wisdom toward Solomon continues. He amasses large numbers of chariots and horseman. It is stated in **2 Chronicles 1:15...** *The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the lowland.*

So, God's favor along with Solomon's obedience brought Peace, wisdom, military might and great riches. Solomon continues in great success. He follows through on his father, King David's, dream of build in magnificent house or temple for God. Chapter after chapter describes the work and detail for this great temple. What an earthshaking time of worship took place at the opening of this temple. A major trait of Solomon was his faithful and devoted worship of God.

Key Point: When we realize we are "*beloved by God*", worship should characterize our daily lives.

There is so much we have to pass over in the notable reign of Solomon but in summary: Solomon was beloved by God, in return Solomon should his love and respect to God by seeking God's wisdom and guidance. Solomon was teachable, and thus God gave him Wisdom, Peace, Military Might, Riches, and the privilege to lead the whole nation of Israel to Worship God.

People from all over the world came to visit Solomon and seek his wisdom and advice. Sems like Solomon was literally 'on top of the world'. But, as is often the case, too much power and riches can bring us down. That's what seemed to happen. Solomon began to detour from God's perfect plan and law. One area that really got him was the same area that brought down Samson, and David, his uncontrolled desire for women and sexuality. Again, I am not placing blame on women, even though as I said last week there's enough blame to go around for everyone, but it was Samson, David and now Solomon who should have known better.

It is said that Solomon and 700 wives and 300 concubines. He should have heeded God's advice specifically addressed to Kings...

Deuteronomy 17:14-17...¹⁴ *"When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,'*¹⁵ *you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.*¹⁶ *Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'*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.*

This leads us to our next Key Point, but before I state it lets see what the remaining verses say that adds to this point.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20...¹⁸ *"And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests.*¹⁹ *And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,*²⁰ *that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.*

Key Point: God's Word, found in the Bible, is our greatest resource to be in Right Relationship with God and avoid the negative effects of sin. Obeying God's Word would have helped Solomon the Wisdom, Peace, Might, Riches and Worship of God. Obeying God's Word will help us to have the Wisdom, Peace and blessings from God as well.

Sadly, the Strong Start ended with a Weak and Sad Ending. God judged Solomon and punished him...

In 1 Kings 11:6-9 we read...⁶ *So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as his father David had done.* ⁷ *Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abhorrent idol of Moab, on the mountain that is least of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abhorrent idol of the sons of Ammon.* ⁸ *He also did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.* ⁹ *Now 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,*

Strong Start, Weak Finish... That is the sad epitaph of Solomon... a man who was on top of the world, but his disobedience brought his downfall.

Final Key Point: The start of your faithfulness is vital, but the faithful continuance and obedience to God to the very end is just as important. As the Apostle Paul states...

2 Timothy 4:7-8...⁷ *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* ⁸ *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Start Strong...Finish Strong

Recap of Key Points:

Key Point: No matter what you have done if we truly repent and turn back to God He can and will restore us and use us mightily, but, there may be lingering negative consequences.

Key Point: We are all 'Jedidiahs'...Beloved of the Lord. Rejoice in that and honor God and love Him in return.

Key Point: We should do all we can to help others achieve their best for God in their lives. We can be used by God to disciple and mentor others to do great things for God.

Key Point: We should pray and seek earnestly help and guidance from God. His wisdom and guidance are far more valuable than all the riches and power the world has to offer.

Key Point: When we realize we are “beloved by God”, worship should characterize our daily lives.

Key Point: God’s Word, found in the Bible, is our greatest resource to be in Right Relationship with God and avoid the negative effects of sin. Obeying God’s Word would have helped Solomon retain the Wisdom, Peace, Might, Riches and Worship of God. Obeying God’s Word will help us to have the Wisdom, Peace and blessings from God as well.

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