

SOLOMON'S DOWNFALL AND DEATH

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 11:9-43.

LESSON 286 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (Proverbs 4:4).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 11:9-43 ⁹ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, ¹⁰ And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

¹¹ Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

¹² Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: *but* I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

¹³ Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; *but* will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

¹⁴ And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.

¹⁵ For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom;

¹⁶ (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:)

¹⁷ That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad *being* yet a little child.

¹⁸ And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land.

¹⁹ And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.

²⁰ And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

²¹ And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Solomon's Good Beginning

God appeared to Solomon in Gibeon, that wonderful night as he slept. We read that "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father" (I Kings 3:3). Once again, perhaps ten years later, God appeared to Solomon at the dedication of the beautiful Temple. King Solomon was very close to God as he prayed: "Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart" (I Kings 8:23).

Solomon had been blessed with a God-fearing father who was none other than David, a man "after mine [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22). For a time the early religious training made a deep impression upon the life of Solomon.

Boys and girls who have Christian parents have a decided advantage in life. If they hearken to the Christian teaching, it will help them to get saved as soon as they are old enough to realize they have sinned. Then, as they go on to school, if they remember to pray each morning and each evening, they can keep the love of Jesus in their heart. It is not necessary to backslide and go into sin to find pleasure. No earthly joy can compare with kneeling in prayer while Heaven's blessings are outpoured. The Gospel of Jesus holds the greatest pleasure for the heart of even the very young. There is the Sunday School where they learn more about Jesus and His will; opportunity is given the children to sing and play an instrument in the young people's meetings. They are urged to work for Jesus in many other ways.

Solomon's Failure

We are sure that Solomon loved the Lord when he was very young, and there were many good things ahead for him so long as he followed the Lord. But how sad is the change that came over this great king when he "did evil in the sight of the LORD" (I Kings 11:6)! Let us read a few more verses from our text, which show us that he did not keep close to the Lord: "When Solomon was old, . . . his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father." "Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father." "He kept not that which the LORD commanded" (I Kings 11:4, 6, 10).

When one serves the Lord with all his heart, and his ways please the Lord, God "maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). But when one departs from the Lord, there is sure to be trouble. Because of Solomon's failure, God said to him, "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee." The glory and

Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.

²² Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise.

²³ And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah:

²⁴ And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them *of Zobah*: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus.

²⁵ And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad *did*: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

²⁶ And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up *his* hand against the king.

²⁷ And this *was* the cause that he lifted up *his* hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, *and* repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

²⁸ And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

²⁹ And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two *were* alone in the field:

³⁰ And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and rent it *in* twelve pieces:

³¹ And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

³² (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

³³ Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in mine eyes, and *to keep my* statutes and my judgments, as *did* David

power that Solomon had been given by God, and the opportunity to be king over all the people, were to be taken from him because he was disobedient. He had been warned; he was without excuse; he knew he must have a perfect heart before God as David his father had.

Increased Riches

But the love of the world and its sinful pleasures had crept into Solomon's heart. His life was a constant round of pleasure. He tried to satisfy his soul with merriment, song, wine, and wealth. With gold and precious stones coming yearly from Ophir, costly spices from the faraway merchants, rich cedar from Lebanon, and gold, silver, ivory, and other valuable merchandise every three years from Tharshish, Solomon would "eat, drink, and be merry." But true joy and lasting peace does not come that way. Solomon knew that all too well, for we have his own writings that tell us, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). But it is one thing to know what one should do, and quite another thing to do it. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). God's judgment of Solomon was something like that pronounced upon a certain church: "I will spue thee out of my mouth. . . . though sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:16, 17).

Those who depart from the Lord and disobey His commandments are sure to find trouble. When King Saul disobeyed the Lord, he lost his throne, and in the end he lost his soul. (I Samuel, chapters 15 and 31). King Belshazzar became lifted up with pride, and was dethroned and slain by his enemies (Daniel 5). God deals with people today the same as he did in days of long ago. The blessings of God follow those who obey, but the curse of God follows those who insist upon turning aside from God.

The Giver of Good Gifts

Solomon was a very rich man. It is not sin in the sight of God to have great possessions; there is no harm in having a certain amount of the better things in life. However, in the Bible we are warned that if riches increase, we should not set our heart upon them (**Psalm 62:10** ¹⁰ **Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.**). God expects us to use freely of the good things He gives us to help others. Riches are a blessing to some, but a curse to others. Some people become lifted up with pride when riches increase. It takes greater spiritual power to stand when things are going smoothly than in the face of financial adversity. We must hold with an open hand the things God gives us, and freely share with others our material gains. By doing so we not only help those in need but help spread the Gospel far and near. But the blessing of the Lord does not fall upon those who lavish merely upon themselves everything they possess; for, after all, it comes from the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

God's Great Mercy

In the last days of Solomon we find, however, mercy mingled with judgment. For the sake of his father, David, the Lord was

his father.

³⁴ Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:

³⁵ But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes.

³⁶ And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

³⁷ And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

³⁸ And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

³⁹ And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

⁴⁰ Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

⁴¹ And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

⁴² And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years.

⁴³ And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

good to him, even after he turned from God. God said: "I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake" (I Kings 11:13); "that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there" (I Kings 11:36).

Let us see how King Solomon's last days compare with the last days of David. Of David we read: "He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour" (I Chronicles 29:28). But the words we find recorded concerning the last days of Solomon are: "When Solomon was old, . . . his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father" (I Kings 11:4). What a contrast! We are told that, "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

Solomon did not take heed as much as he should have to the advice of David his father who said, "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many" (Proverbs 4:10). If he had, he, too, would have lived to a good old age. But instead, he died before he reached his "threescore and ten." Let every young person take heed to his ways and hearken to the very first commandment with promise given in God's Word:

**"Children, obey your parents
in the Lord: for this is right.**

**"Honour thy father and
mother; (which is the first
commandment with promise;)**

**"That it may be well with
thee, and thou mayest live long
on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).**

QUESTIONS

1. Tell of the two appearances of the Lord unto Solomon.
2. What did God promise to give him at the first appearance?
3. Why did God say, "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee"?
4. Why was not all the kingdom taken from him?
5. Give the names of those who caused trouble for Solomon.
6. What promise did God make unto Jeroboam?
7. Upon what conditions were the promises based?
8. How long was Solomon king?
9. How do his last days compare with the last days of David?
10. To whom is long life promised?