

SOLOMON'S DOWNFALL AND DEATH

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 11:9-43.

LESSON 286 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart" (Proverbs 3:3).

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,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Solomon's Downfall

1. The Lord is angry with Solomon, I Kings 11:9;
Romans 1:18 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 2 **Kings 22:13** ¹³ Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.
2. A broken covenant with God is the reason for the divine anger, I Kings 11:10, 11, 33;
1 Kings 3:14 ¹⁴ And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.
1 Kings 9:2-9 ² That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. ³ And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. ⁴ And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: ⁵ Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. ⁶ *But* if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: ⁷ Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: ⁸ And at this house, *which* is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? ⁹ And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.
Deuteronomy 17:14-20 ¹⁴ When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me; ¹⁵ Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, *which* is not thy brother. ¹⁶ But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

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 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

¹⁷ Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

¹⁸ And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites:

¹⁹ And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

²⁰ That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to the right hand, or to the left*: to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

3. Mercy is shown for David's sake, I Kings 11:12, 13;

2 Samuel 7:11-29 ¹¹ And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

¹² And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

¹³ He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

¹⁴ I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

¹⁵ But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

¹⁶ And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

¹⁷ According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

¹⁸ Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

¹⁹ And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

²⁰ And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.

²¹ For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant *know* *them*.

²² Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

²³ And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God wente to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

²⁴ For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

²⁵ And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said.

²⁶ And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

²⁷ For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

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 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.

²⁸ And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

²⁹ Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it*: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

II The Loss of Peace and the Death of Solomon

1. The Lord stirs up Hadad, I Kings 11:14-22.
2. The Lord stirs up another adversary, Rezon, I Kings 11:23-25.
3. Jeroboam lifts his hand up against Solomon, I Kings 11:26-36.
4. God offers a covenant to Jeroboam, I Kings 11:37-39.
5. Solomon seeks to kill Jeroboam, I Kings 11:40.
6. Solomon dies, I Kings 11:41-43.

NOTES:

Disobedience

Long before the days of Solomon, even before the Children of Israel had reached the Promised Land, the Lord through Moses gave instructions concerning their king. God said, regarding the king: "He shall not multiply horses to himself, . . . Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (Deuteronomy 17:16, 17). Solomon in his old age disregarded these plain instructions of the Word of God and the Lord was angry with him.

According to God's plan Israel's king was to write a copy of this Law with his own hand, and every day he was to read there from, "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deuteronomy 17:20). Not only did Solomon have the words of this Law in his possession, but the Lord had also appeared unto him twice in special revelations and instructed him to keep the commandments.

Not Ignorant

It is plain to see that Solomon could not plead ignorance of the law of God. The instructions were simple and Solomon was filled with wisdom, but he failed to follow the instructions of God's law or to use the wisdom God had given him. Men and women today are also without excuse for their disregard of the Word of God. The Bible has gone into every land, and the Spirit of God is faithful to every soul, but still the majority of people are not walking in the ways of God. Some of them may plead ignorance but they are all without excuse. Even though a person has never had an opportunity of reading the Bible, there is still no reason for him to be ignorant of the knowledge of God: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19, 20).

Special revelations in dreams – like those that Solomon had –

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.

are indeed wonderful, but are not given to every Christian. The great wisdom Solomon had came from the Lord; but a knowledge of the way of salvation does not require wisdom above the average, for it is so plain that even a fool can understand it. It is no wonder that the Lord was angry with Solomon, for he had received special revelations; he had been given wisdom above his fellow men; he had partaken of many wonderful blessings from the hand of God. Anger was justified because Solomon had turned against God, in deliberate disobedience of His commands. We are living in an age of increased knowledge, and America has been especially blessed of God with wealth and great abundance, but the hearts of many today are also lifted up against God.

Humility

Humility is a rare virtue. Solomon was very humble as a young man, and the confession from his lips at that time was, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in" (I Kings 3:7). Solomon also knew the value of humility, for his own words were, "By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life" (Proverbs 22:4). He said, "Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Proverbs 16:19). He knew that "a man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit: (Proverbs 29:23). It has been said that faith get the most, love does the most, but humility keeps the most. To retain the blessings of the Lord, it is necessary to "walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). We are living in the last days when men are "heady, highminded [and] lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:4).

Idolatry and Compromise

When Solomon built altars to Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Molech, the gods of the heathen, he no doubt excused himself by saying he was doing it to please his wives and create friendlier relations with the foreign subjects who came to his court. Perhaps it was somewhat the same idea that the leaders of the United Nations Organization had when they refused to open their meeting with prayer for fear of embarrassing those members who did not believe in God. This spirit of compromise is an abomination to God. "And the LORD was angry with Solomon." Shame on the man or woman who turns from the truth to please a wife, a husband, or anyone else! It is a disgrace for a nation which has for its motto, "In God We Trust," to fail to acknowledge God because of the presence of someone who does not believe in God. Let those who believe in God take their stand as Elijah did, who said: "If the LORD be God, follow him" (I Kings 18:21).

Riches

"Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Psalm 62:10). Solomon received his wealth as a blessing from the Lord, but it is evident that he let his heart become set upon his riches. (**1 Kings 3:13** ¹³ **And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days**) The Israelites complained to Rehoboam that Solomon had made their yoke grievous. From this it would seem that Solomon exacted greater taxes than was necessary in order to increase his wealth and maintain the kingdom. "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be

QUESTIONS

1. Why was the Lord angry with Solomon?
2. Did David or Saul ever turn to idolatry?
3. Why did Hadad the Edomite rebel against Solomon?
4. Why did the Lord delay his judgments upon Solomon?
5. What countries are represented by the three that rebelled against Solomon?
6. What was Jeroboam's position before he fled to Egypt?
7. What was the twofold nature of the promise of God to Jeroboam?
8. What were the conditions upon which the house of Jeroboam was to remain in power?
9. Approximately how old was Solomon when he died?
Do you think that Solomon reaped the benefits of the promise God gave him in I Kings 3:14?

innocent" (Proverbs 28:20). Since God gives the power to get wealth, some suppose that "gain is godliness"; but we are warned against such reasoning, and are told: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:5-10).

Adversaries

"The LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon" (I Kings 11:14). God had built Solomon a great kingdom and had made him a great man, but He that plants can also pluck up that which He hath planted. God gave Solomon peace, but He was also able to take peace away from him. Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy" (I Samuel 28:16). Our worldly enemies can do us great damage, but how serious a matter it is to have as an enemy the One who "after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell" (Luke 12:5).

The first of Solomon's adversaries was Hadad of Edom; these second was Rezon of Damascus; and the third was Jeroboam, a servant of Solomon and ruler of the house of Joseph. The first two enemies threatened from without, the latter from within the kingdom itself. God had promised Jeroboam ten tribes after the death of Solomon, but it seems that Jeroboam tried to take the matter into his own hands during the reign of Solomon. Acting in advance of God's will never brings success. If Jeroboam had followed the commandments of the Lord, his house would have continued, and his kingdom would have been like unto that of David.

Wisdom

Solomon had great wisdom, but he departed from the Lord. Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour – an industrious civil engineer – but he hearkened not unto the commandments of God. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (I Corinthians 1:20, 26). What does the wisdom of this world amount to if it does not lead us to eternal life? It is better to be called a "fool" and enter Heaven at life's end than be thought of as a great man and then finally go to hell.

Solomon searched out everything under the sun. He tried wisdom; he tried wealth; he tried merriment, song, and wine; he even delved into the licentious practices of idolatry. But he summed it all up as "vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:14), and came to a marvellous conclusion. He wrote: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Let us hope that Solomon profited by this final decision and repented before the day that he "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father" (I Kings 11:43).