

1 Kings 11

Introduction

1. In the first 10 ½ chapters of 1 Kings, Solomon has served as the model of faithful love and obedience toward the LORD:
 - a. When we are introduced to him in 3:3, we are told, **“Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statues of his father David...”**
 - b. When the LORD appeared to him in chapter 3 and offered to grant him whatever he wished, he asked the LORD only for a **“listening heart”**—one that would be inclined to obey the LORD so that he could discern good and evil and govern the LORD’s people, Israel
 - c. He acknowledged the importance of faithfully obeying the LORD’s command in his prayer of dedication for the temple saying, **“O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart,”** (8:23)
 - d. He even prayed that the LORD would continue to hear the prayers of Israel and forgive them when they would sin and repent (READ 8:46-50)
 - e. After the dedication, he blessed Israel with these words (READ 8:57-61)
2. It’s not until we get to the second half of chapter 10 as we did last week that we begin to suspect that something is wrong, and even then, it’s a bit subtle and not very overt:
 - a. The LORD provided Laws specific to the kings of Israel:
 - 1) They must be Israelites, not foreigners
 - 2) They must not multiply gold and silver for themselves
 - 3) They must not multiply horses for themselves, especially purchasing them from Egypt
 - 4) They must not multiply wives for themselves
 - 5) And finally, they were to personally hand-write a copy of these specific laws for themselves, in the presence of the priests, so they could reflect on it throughout their days
 - b. Last week we saw how Solomon, presumably later in his life, began to disregard these laws: he had multiplied not only gold and silver for himself, but horses and chariots, and even acquiring them from Egypt and selling them to Israel’s enemies
3. Not even these things, however, prepare us for what we learn in chapter 11:
 - a. Solomon FORSAKES the LORD (11:1-8)
 - b. Solomon FACES the LORD’s anger (11:9-13)
 - c. Solomon FAILS to repent (11:14-43)

A. Solomon FORSAKES the LORD (READ 11:1-8)

1. We learn about the DANGER of Solomon’s sin in vs. 1-2:
 - a. Not only did the LORD forbid kings from multiplying wives for themselves, but he warned all of Israel about associating and intermarrying with the foreign inhabitants of the land of Canaan (READ Deuteronomy 7:1-5)
 - 1) The instructions were pretty simple: they were destroy them

- 2) They were not to make covenants with them, show favor to them, or intermarry with them
 - 3) If they did, they would be tempted to turn away from the LORD to serve other gods and ultimately face His anger
- b. Right out of the gate in the first verse we are told that Solomon violated the LORD's command in this regard:
- 1) In addition to his first wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, we are told that Solomon "**loved many foreign women**" from the forbidden nations
 - 2) The author is quick to remind us of the dangers in associating with, and certainly marrying, these women and God's warning (2): "**for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods**"
 - 3) Solomon disregarded the LORD's command, and tragically wasn't immune to the consequences as we'll see in a moment
- c. The end of v. 2 says, "**Solomon held fast to these in love.**"
- 1) At first glance, "**these**" would appear to refer to the women, meaning Solomon held fast to these foreign women in love
 - 2) However, if that were the case we would expect the pronoun to be in the feminine gender, but it's not
 - 3) It's actually a masculine plural and normally that would mean it refers either "**gods**" or "**nations**", both of which are masculine plural
 - 4) In other words, just as Solomon loved many foreign women, he also loved their gods
2. We now learn about the DEGREE of Solomon's sin in v. 3a:
- a. Solomon didn't marry just a handful of foreign wives; He had seven hundred wives and 300 concubines!
 - 1) The wives are described as "**princesses**" which likely means they were of royal lineage, probably marriages arranged through covenants and treaties with other nations which was common in the ANE
 - 2) Concubines were essentially wives of lower status, often slaves or servants, who didn't share the same rights or privileges of a legal wife
 - b. There's more involved here than adultery or violating the LORD's commands against multiplying wives—these marriages violated the LORD's command against making covenants with the nations from which these women came
 - c. Solomon's sin can only be described as grave disobedience
3. That leads us to the DEPTH of Solomon's sin in verses 3b-8:
- a. Just as God had warned, "when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods" (3b-4a)
 - b. His heart was no longer "**wholly devoted to the LORD his God as the heart of David his father had been**" (4b)—this is repeated in v. 6b
 - c. He "**went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Amorites**" (5):
 - 1) Asherah/Ashtoreth was the chief female deity of the Canaanites, associated with the moon, and consort or wife of Baal, the sun-god; she was also the goddess of love and war and worshipping her generally involved sex and ritual prostitution

- 2) Milcom, also known as Molech, was primarily an Ammonite god and depicted as part human, part bull (with horns); the primary means of worship involved infant sacrifice so brutal and horrific that I won't describe it here
 - 3) Another god, "Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab" is mentioned in v. 7; little is known about him but in 2 Kings 3:27, the king of Moab murdered his firstborn son on the wall of the city as a sacrifice to Chemosh
 - 4) It's no wonder these gods are described as "detestable" and Solomon's behavior as doing "**evil in the sight of the LORD**" (6)
- d. There's one last thing the author mentions that describes the depth of Solomon's sin: He was all in (7-8):
- 1) He built high places to worship Molech and Chemosh on a hill just east of Jerusalem
 - 2) He did the same for all of his wives so they could worship their gods
 - 3) Think about this for a moment—these were places to engage in some of the most detestable forms of worship including sex and even child sacrifice!
 - 4) As a result, Solomon was directly responsible for leading all Israel into sin (READ 11:33 and notice "**they**" refers to the tribes of Israel from vs. 32)

<p>B. Solomon FACES the LORD's anger (READ 11:9-13)</p>
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1. Once again the author doesn't pull any punches: the LORD was angry with Solomon (9-10):
 - a. The LORD was Israel's God; He chose them to be His people, brought them into the land and chose Jerusalem to bear His name, and He even chose Solomon to build him a house where all Israel and the world could come to worship Him
 - b. He had appeared to Solomon on two occasions, and spoke to him on a third
 - c. He even warned and commanded Solomon not to go after other gods
 - d. But, Solomon chose to disregard the LORD's warning and commands
2. So, the LORD is angry with Solomon and informs him of the consequences of his sin: "**I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant**" (11):
 - a. We learn in the final verses of our passage that the servant to whom the LORD is referring is Jeroboam, the son of one of Solomon's servants
 - b. Solomon certainly should have been aware of what would happen if he forsook the LORD:
 - 1) His father David warned him (1 Chronicles 28:9): "**As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of our father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understand every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.**"
 - 2) The LORD had warned him as well (READ 1 Kings 9:4-9)
 - c. There are two caveats, however, to the consequences, and both are purely a reflection of God's mercy and grace:
 - 1) The first is in v. 12: He wouldn't rip the kingdom out of Solomon's hands directly, but out of the hand of his son, Rehoboam
 - 2) The second is in v. 13: He wouldn't rip all of the kingdom out of Rehoboam's hand:
 - a) He would leave him the tribe of Judah for the sake of David and Jerusalem
 - b) We learn later that the LORD did this because of David's faithfulness so that he would "always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen for Myself to put my name" (11:36)

C. Solomon FAILS to repent (11:14-43)

1. While the LORD informed Solomon that He would delay ripping the kingdom out of his hands until after he died, he did face immediate consequences for his sin
2. Verses 14-39 describe how the LORD raised up adversaries against Solomon and Israel:
 - a. The first one mentioned is Hadad the Edomite (summarize 14-22): he was the son of the king of Edom during David's reign; David's military commander wiped out all of the men of Edom, but Hadad survived when he was sent away to Egypt where he grew up and gained the favor of the Pharaoh; when he learned David and Joab had died, he moved back to Edom and would ultimately become an adversary to Solomon and Israel
 - b. The second adversary is a man named Rezon who was the king of Aram (described in 23-25)
 - c. The last adversary mentioned is Jeroboam, the son of one of Solomon's servants and the one who would become king over the 10 northern tribes of Israel (READ 26-39)
 - d. It's impossible to miss that all of this was orchestrated by God and a result of Solomon's own sin
3. How might we expect Solomon to respond to the LORD's rebuke? We have the answer in verse 40 (READ):
 - a. I must have read over v. 40 a dozen times before something hit me: the very last act of Solomon that the Bible records is an attempt to kill someone to circumvent God's plan (READ 40-43)
 - b. Unlike his father David who responded to the LORD's rebuke with remorse and repentance, with Solomon there's no sign of either
 - c. Let that sink in for a moment: everything we've learned about Solomon suggests that he lived most of his life in faithful obedience to the LORD only to forsake Him in the end
 - d. What a terrible way to be remembered; in fact, the last time Solomon is mentioned in the Old Testament it served as a warning to Israel (Nehemiah 13:26): **"Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God gave him to be king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin."**

Conclusion

1. A question that is often asked, and even vigorously debated, is whether or not Solomon was saved. Is he in heaven?
 - a. Some are convinced that Solomon ultimately repented at the end of his life and was saved:
 - 1) They claim verses like 2 Samuel 7:15 where God declared to David, **"My lovingkindness shall not be removed from him [Solomon] , as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you."**
 - 2) They also claim that Ecclesiastes was written by a repentant Solomon and cite Ecclesiastes 11:13: **"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person."**
 - b. The challenge to this is that the Bible never says that Solomon repented:
 - 1) As we've just seen, the last thing the Bible says is that he forsook the LORD

- 2) In addition, after his death, with the possible exception of a brief mention in 2 Chronicles 10:17, he's never used as a positive example of faith anywhere else in the rest of the Bible, OT or NT
 - 3) I'm also of the conviction that the book of Ecclesiastes wasn't written by a repentant Solomon, but rather an unnamed author as a warning to his son by depicting an unrepentant Solomon who was in despair at the end of his life due to having forsaken the LORD
- c. Ultimately, I don't believe we can know for sure whether Solomon repented and came back to the LORD before he died; I hope and pray that he did but only God knows for sure
2. So, what do we do with this?
 - a. The Bible promises us that if we are truly saved, the LORD will be faithful to us and we will inherit eternal life
 - b. However, the Bible is also filled with warnings about remaining steadfast in our faith which means we cannot just blindly claim to be saved and disregard the need for diligence and obedience in our faith:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:58: **"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"**
 - 2) Galatians 5:1: **"It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Therefore, stand firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."**
 - 3) Philippians 4:1: **"Therefore my brothers, loved and longed for, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved."**
 - 4) Colossians 1:22-23a: **"but now He reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel..."**
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:14: **"Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless..."**
 3. If there's one overarching lesson we can learn from Solomon, it's the need to remain steadfast and faithful in our love for the LORD:
 - a. Solomon allowed his love toward God to grow cold and his heart to be turned away to other things
 - b. Notice the first and last things we were told about Solomon:
 - 1) 1 Kings 3:3: **"Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David..."**
 - 2) 1 Kings 11:1: **"Now King Solomon loved many foreign women..."**
 - c. Jesus warned about this (Matthew 24:7-13): **"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. 9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."**