

Episode: Kings and Prophets Series No. 8

Narrator: Solomon

Primary Scriptures: 1 Kings 1-11, 2 Chronicles 1-9

Story Summary: Solomon becomes king, marries many foreign wives

Location: Kingdom of Israel

Time: 970-930 BC

Suggested Memory Scriptures: 1 Kings 2:2-3; 3:3, 9; 4:34; 6:11-13; 8:9; 9:8-9; 11:6

Family Issues. Extenuating circumstances. Excuses. King Solomon had all of those by the truckload. He overcame some of those types of things, but not many.

Solomon's father was King David. David had murdered the first husband of Solomon's mother just to cover up the fact that he had gotten her pregnant during an affair, a horrible sin made worse by the fact Bathsheba's husband was a prized warrior away fighting for David. God punished David by allowing that baby to die at birth.

Although it isn't perfectly clear, it is possible that Bathsheba was the last of David's eight wives; Solomon was the oldest of her living children and tenth of David's living sons. Solomon was part of the deadly competition to become David's successor. Through Bathsheba's persuasion, David chose Solomon as his successor, and elevated Solomon to kingship before he died.

Following David's instructions, Solomon quickly eliminated his enemies and consolidated his power. Solomon would rule Israel for forty years, just as his father did.

Solomon's rule continued the Golden Age of Israel. He expanded the borders, kept political peace with other countries, and continued growing the wealth of the kingship and the country. He was known around the world for being wise and wealthy. With God's support, he built the fabulous Temple in Jerusalem. These are the things he is most known for in modern time.

Like the man in Jesus's parable, Solomon built his greatness on a foundation of sand, and after his death it will collapse with a crash. To support his public building projects, he had to conscript labor and raise taxes to a high level. Rather than depending on God for protection, Solomon chose to make costly treaties and marry children of potential enemies. He must have thought he had a lot of enemies to mollify.

Much like his father before him, Solomon married multiple women, but he took it to an entirely new level. He married 700 foreign princesses and had 300 concubines. Solomon began worshiping the many gods of his wives, and so set the stage for the country of Israel to fall into idolatry, thus violating their covenant with God. The country would never recover from this violation, and it would be the eventual cause for the destruction of the country and its special relationship with God.

Discussion Questions:

1. Prior to watching this video episode, how did you perceive of King Solomon? Did you realize that he ruled for forty years, and that he radically changed over that long period of time?
2. Why did Solomon choose to have so many wives and concubines?
3. Do you think that worshiping the gods of his wives and concubines was a sideline of his marriages, or a major part of them?
4. In Deuteronomy 17:14-19, Moses said that the kings of Israel should not have many wives, much gold or acquire many horses. Why would he have said that hundreds of years before Israel had kings?

2. He wanted to establish political alliances with other countries and kings. He likely wanted to enjoy the sexual favors of his wives and concubines, and possibly started enjoying worshiping their foreign gods. 3. 2 Kings 23:13 indicates that Solomon had a massive building program to worship foreign gods since some of those facilities still existed hundreds of years later. 4. Those types of things would turn the hearts of the kings away from God, and keep them from trusting God to provide and protect them and the country. Horses from Egypt would require the Israelites to go back to Egypt where they had been enslaved, and to have dependence on the Egyptians.

Application Questions:

1. Solomon was certainly affected by the negative actions of his father and mother. How have you been affected by your parents' actions and emotions? What have you done to overcome any negative influences they may have had over you? How have you taken advantage of the positive influences they had over you? In what ways have you tried to mitigate this in your own kids' lives?
2. By forming political alliances by marrying the daughters of his potential enemies, Solomon demonstrated that he did not trust God to protect and provide for him and his country. Are there ways that you demonstrate you do not trust God to provide and protect you?
3. Solomon had to build entire cities to house his horses and chariots. Do you have to spend inordinate amounts of money or time to maintain some of the things you own or activities you do?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. In common use, what does the saying, "split the baby" mean? How does that relate to the story of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:16-28?
2. Why do you think Solomon quit following God?
3. How do you think Solomon got along with his many half-brothers and other relatives? Do you think his relatives trusted Solomon's mother?
4. How do you think someone so wise could act so foolishly when it came to relationships?