

1Kings 11:1 ¶ But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

1Kings 11:2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

“loved” = Hebrew: “to have affection for (sexually or otherwise)”

Sad to say, but Solomon, a man gifted with the greatest wisdom, did not stay committed to serving the LORD God in faith and obedience. He “loved” many strange/foreign women. Besides his Egyptian wife, he was infatuated with women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites. The LORD had commanded the people of Israel not to “go in” or consort with or take spouses from these nations. The LORD knew that such relationships would result in turning His people to the worship of their false gods. Solomon, however, ignored that command and married many women from those nations.

Deuteronomy 7:1–3 “When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.”

1Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

1Kings 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

Solomon eventually ended up with 700 wives/princesses and 300 concubines. The IVP Commentary provides this explanation regarding concubines: “Not all wives in a harem, however, were of similar social rank, and those from lesser families would have been designated as concubines, whose children would not have been in the royal succession.”

As the LORD had forewarned, these women turned his heart away from the LORD. The writer clarifies that Solomon’s choice to turn away from God occurred when he was “old.” He never completely rejected the LORD, but his heart could not have been at peace with the LORD because he had divided loyalties. David served the LORD with singleness of heart. Solomon tried to maintain a relationship with the LORD while also showing honor to the false gods worshipped by his wives.

Solomon provides a perfect picture of so many in the “Christian” world today.

They say they want to serve the LORD, yet they still want to pay homage to the idols of the culture of our day. The truth is that God is only pleased when we serve Him with ALL our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5 "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Mark 12:29–30 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

1Kings 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

1Kings 11:6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father.

The writer notes that Solomon followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom, the disgusting (from the Hebrew for "abomination") false god of the Ammonites.

It is clearly noted that Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD because he did not heed the example of his father David and follow the LORD with his whole heart. Yes, David sinned; but he always turned back to the LORD in repentance with a heart to obey. Solomon made a pretense of serving the LORD while also following after these false gods. The truth is, however, that to serve the LORD as LORD is to serve Him only.

1Kings 11:7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

1Kings 11:8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Solomon even built a high place in the hill before Jerusalem (the Mount of Olives) for the worship of Chemosh, the disgusting false god of Moab, and for Molech, the disgusting false god of the Ammonites.

In fact, he made high places for all the false gods of his foreign wives to enable them to offer burnt incense and sacrifices to them.

Guzik made an important observation: "This is a tragic example of the power of the lust of the flesh. Because of lust, Solomon found himself in a place where he *never* thought he would find himself. He found himself burning incense at the altars of depraved pagan gods. He found himself at the altar of *child sacrifice* unto the god Molech. This is the power of lust – it can capture us in a spell, in a fog of spiritual confusion until we do things we *never* thought we would do."

1Kings 11:9 ¶ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was

turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 1Kings 11:10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

Point is made that the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from Him, the LORD God of Israel. Solomon's actions were even more provoking in light of the fact that the LORD had appeared to him personally two times. The writer doesn't even mention how God had blessed Solomon so abundantly with wisdom and material things. The fact that the LORD had chosen to appear to him twice was an even greater blessing.

The LORD had commanded Solomon specifically not to follow after false gods, but he deliberately chose to disobey the LORD. He chose to follow after these false gods in spite of the fact that he had experienced the presence and supernatural blessing of the one true God, the God of Israel. To know the truth and turn from it to deliberately choose to sin is far worse than sinning without knowledge of that truth.

It seems that instead of growing his relationship with the LORD and seeking to show his love and gratitude to God for His many blessings, Solomon began to take those blessings for granted. Isn't that what many of us often do? Once we begin to lose sight of our many blessings, we begin to disregard the Source of those blessings. The less we invest in our relationship with the LORD, the more likely that we will fall into the sin of following after false gods just as surely as did Solomon.

1Kings 11:11 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.

1Kings 11:12 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.

1Kings 11:13 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.

"The Lord said unto Solomon" – How? We are not told. It is clear, however, that he heard from the LORD.

The LORD told Solomon that He was going to take the kingdom away from Solomon and give it to "his servant" because he had chosen to disregard God's commands. There are many times in scripture in which the LORD references a man through whom He has chosen to accomplish His purposes as His servant whether or not he is a follower of God, e.g. Nebuchadnezzar.

Jeremiah 25:9 "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual

desolations."

He told Solomon that this would not happen in his lifetime for David's sake. The LORD had promised David that He would not take his mercy away from his son as He had Saul.

2 Samuel 7:14–15 "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: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."

Solomon's son would be the one to suffer the consequences of his father's sin. However, the LORD declared that Solomon's son would be allowed to rule one tribe—again, for David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake because He had chosen to put His name there.

It's a hard fact to swallow sometimes, but true nonetheless. Children often suffer consequences of the sins of their parents. It doesn't mean that the LORD is punishing the child, though it might seem that way from our perspective. Neither does it mean that the child cannot personally experience God's blessings. Each person, no matter their circumstances, has the opportunity to rise above those circumstances to garner spiritual blessings for sure and sometimes material blessing as well. It's all about investing in a personal relationship with the LORD.

Solomon was told that his son would be allowed to rule one tribe. This is a bit confusing since we know that he ruled over Judah and Benjamin.

2 Chronicles 11:5–12 "And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah....And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side."

Commentators note that they were probably considered one since their land inheritances were mixed together. They also note that this could mean that the meaning was one tribe along with Judah, his own tribe.

As we go into the next section it is important to remember that these adversaries that the LORD stirred up against Solomon were not allowed to upset the peace of his reign until he was "old" and in the latter part of his reign when he chose to follow false gods.

1Kings 11:14 ¶ And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he *was* of the king's seed in Edom.

1Kings 11:15 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;

1Kings 11:16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:)

1Kings 11:17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad *being* yet a little child.

1Kings 11:18 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.

Hadad the Edomite, is identified as the first of three men that the LORD stirred up in opposition to Solomon. Hadad was of the royal seed of Edom (the descendants of Esau). Under the rule of David, Edom had suffered a great slaughter at the hands of Joab, David's chief military commander, and his troops. They stayed a full six months to destroy every male in Edom. It seems that some of his father's servants escaped to Egypt with Hadad, the young heir to the Edomite throne. They traveled through Midian then Paran and on to Egypt to seek asylum with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh took in the young prince and gave him a house, provided food for him and even gave him some land.

1Kings 11:19 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.

1Kings 11:20 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.

1Kings 11:21 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.

1Kings 11:22 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.

Young Hadad became a favorite of the Pharaoh, who eventually gave him queen Tahpenes' sister as his wife. She eventually gave birth to a son, Genubath, whom the queen allowed to stay in Pharaoh's house among the sons of the Pharaoh until he was weaned. When Hadad heard that David and Joab were dead, he asked Pharaoh to let him return home to his own country. The Pharaoh tried to dissuade him, but he persisted in his request.

1Kings 11:23 And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah:

1Kings 11:24 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.

1Kings 11:25 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.

God raised up another enemy to Solomon in the person of Rezon, son of Eliadah, who had fled from the Syrian king Hadadezer. After David had attacked and killed the men of Zobah, Rezon gathered together a group of men that followed him to Damascus to establish and serve under his rule over Syria. He and Hadad evidently served as thorns in the side of Solomon throughout his reign.

Gill adds this note concerning Rezon at Damascus: "Rezon and his men went

thither, not in David's time, for he put a garrison there, but towards the close of Solomon's days, and when Hadad set up in Edom, which gave him the hint to do the same at Damascus, of which he became king, and was the founder of that kingdom; after him there was a long race of kings there."

The IVP Commentary notes re Hadad: "There is little information to suggest that Edom was a national entity at this time. Hadad more likely represented one of the more powerful tribes in the region. His opposition may have taken the shape of raids on caravans rather than wars of independence. There are no references to him in contemporary extrabiblical sources."

1Kings 11:26 ¶ 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.

1Kings 11:27 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.

1Kings 11:28 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.

The third man to establish himself in opposition to Solomon was Jeroboam, son of Nebat, of the tribe of Ephraim, son of the widow Zeruah. He was not a foreign enemy, but a man of Israel.

Solomon ordered the building of Millo and the repair of the walls of the city of David. When he saw that Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor and a hard worker, he made him ruler over the house of Joseph. The writer then tells us why Jeroboam rebelled against his king.

1Kings 11:29 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:

1Kings 11:30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and rent it *in* twelve pieces:

1Kings 11:31 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:

1Kings 11:32 (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:)

1Kings 11:33 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.

One day Jeroboam left Jerusalem and met the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh who was wearing a new garment. They were alone out in the open at the time. Ahijah took off his new garment and tore it into twelve pieces. He told Jeroboam

to take ten pieces because the LORD God of Israel had decided to take the kingdom away from Solomon and make him the ruler over ten tribes. Solomon was to retain the rule over one tribe for the sake of David and Jerusalem (because God had chosen it as His own). This affirms that the LORD considered the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin as one.

Ahijah told Jeroboam that this judgment was a result of Solomon leading the people of Israel to forsake the LORD God of Israel and follow after the false gods of Zidon, Moab and Ammon. They had chosen to disobey the commands of God. They did not choose to follow the example of David and walk according to God's commands and do what was right in obedience to those commands.

1Kings 11:34 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:

1Kings 11:35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes.

1Kings 11:36 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.

1Kings 11:37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

1Kings 11:38 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.

1Kings 11:39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

Ahijah went on to tell Jeroboam that God would allow Solomon to remain on the throne for his lifetime in honor of David, whom God chose to be king and who obeyed the LORD. Jeroboam would be given the rule of ten tribes when Solomon's son assumed the throne. That son would retain the rule over one tribe in Jerusalem to preserve the succession of David's seed in the city where God had chosen to put His name.

Ahijah told Jeroboam that the LORD would be with him and build him a sure house in Israel, as he had for David, if he would obey the commands of God and do what was right before Him. He would be king over Israel and rule according to all he desired. He emphasized that God intended to chasten David's seed, but not forever.

The NIV Commentary notes this on verse 39: "Here is both a reaffirmation of the enduring nature of God's promise to David and a clear statement to Jeroboam and his successors that the house of David would win in the end. There seems to be an implication here that in the future the tribes would all once again be under the leadership of Judah."

1Kings 11:40 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.

We do know that Jeroboam showed himself to be in opposition to Solomon (see v26), so maybe that was the motivation for Solomon to get rid of him. Maybe he knew nothing about the prophecy.

It's also possible that Solomon found out about Ahijah's prophecy to Jeroboam and decided to kill him—as if he could alter the plan of Almighty God. He had already been told that the kingdom would be taken from him and his son only allowed to rule one other tribe. Maybe he recognized Jeroboam as the likely one to threaten the rule of his son.

Whatever the case, the result was that Jeroboam fled to seek refuge under Shishak, the king of Egypt, where he stayed until Solomon's death.

1Kings 11:41 ¶ 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?

1Kings 11:42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years.

1Kings 11:43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

With these last verses, this historical record of Solomon's life concludes by noting that he died and was buried in the city of David with his fathers. Solomon had reigned 40 years in Jerusalem over all of Israel. His son Rehoboam succeeded him to the throne.

Every time I read references to other historical records of biblical times and events, I can't help but wish they were available for our study. We must be content, however, with the biblical record, since that is obviously what the LORD considered important for us to know.