

SESSION 5

The Story of Solomon

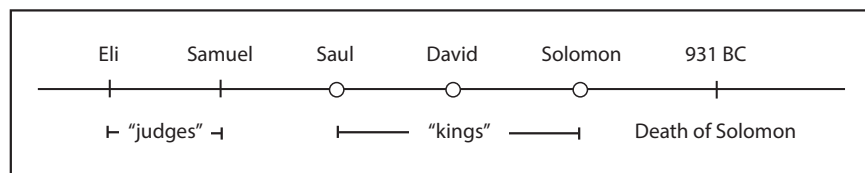
I. PRAYER

II. PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE

A. Movements 1-6

PANORAMA: TWELVE MOVEMENTS	
Movement	Biblical Books
1. Prologue	Genesis 1-11
2. Patriarchs	Genesis 12-50; Job
3. Redemption Wanderings	Exodus, Leviticus Numbers, Deuteronomy
4. Conquest	Joshua
5. Apostasy	Judges, Ruth
6. Kingship: United Monarchy	1-2 Samuel, 1 Kings (Pss, Prov, Eccl, SS)

B. Timeline: Movement 6: United Monarchy



III. MOVEMENT 6: UNITED MONARCHY

A. Key Personalities

Name	Tribe	Office
Eli	Levi	Priest-Judge
Samuel	Levi	Priest-Judge-Prophet
Saul	Benjamin	King (First)
David	Judah	King (Second)
Solomon	Judah	King (Third)

B. Biblical Books (Historical)

1. 1 Samuel

1 SAMUEL		
Chaps	Key Personalities	Roles
1-7	Eli and Samuel	Transitional Judges
8-15	Samuel and Saul	1st King Anointed
16-31	Saul and David	2nd King Anointed

2. 2 Samuel

2 SAMUEL	
Chapters	Topic
1-10	King David: Looking Good
11-24	King David: Looking Bad
Pivot: Chapters 11-12 / Affair with Bathsheba	

3. 1 Kings (Session 5)

1 KINGS	
Chapters	Topic
1-11	Rise of Solomon: United Kingdom
12-22	Death of Solomon: Divided Kingdom

Seven Distinctive Features:

- 1 Kings 1-11
 - a. Solomon's prominence (wisdom, buildings, splendor)
 - b. Solomon's construction of the Temple
 - c. Solomon's grievous failures
- 1 Kings 12-22
 - d. Rehoboam's rash treatment of the northern tribes
 - e. Split of the kingdom (Israel and Judah)
 - f. Institution of calf-worship (Jeroboam); later Baal-worship (Ahab and Jezebel)
 - g. Elijah the prophet

IV. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT: THE STORY OF SOLOMON

A. Solomon's Life: Described Biblically (1 Kgs 1-11)

The third (and last) king of the United Monarchy was Solomon, son of David by Bathsheba. His task would be to continue the Davidic dynasty in alignment with the provisions of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7).

Solomon would face at least seven major challenges in his rule. As the chart (on the next page) demonstrates, each challenge presented an antagonist (whether a person or a crisis situation) as well as the eventual outcome of the challenge.

Insight:

Solomon is known best for his wisdom and glorious kingdom. But even so, the wisest of men was also morally and spiritually lacking. How can the wise be so foolish?

The best answer to the dilemma is to recognize that one may be wise in the truest Biblical sense of the word, yet be lacking in the obedience to that wisdom. Head knowledge alone cannot insure heart knowledge. Solomon painfully shows the truth of this statement.

SOLOMON'S MAJOR CHALLENGES 1 KINGS 1-11			
Text (Chs)	Challenge	Antagonist (Issue)	Outcome
1-2	1. Succeed David as King	Adonijah	Solomon appointed by David
2	2. Conspiracy to Remove as King	Adonijah (Abishag) (Abiathar) (Joab)	Conspirators Put to Death
3-4	3. Reigning as King	Wisdom to Reign	God Grants Solomon's Request for Wisdom
5-8	4. Building the Temple	Resources (Conscription and Taxes)	Magnificent Temple Completed (Rehoboam's Future Challenge... "Lighten the Load")
8	5. Relocating the Ark	Transporting Safely from Mt. Zion to Temple	Shekinah Glory Filled Temple
9	6. Walk in Integrity Before the Lord	Covenant Faithfulness	Covenant Failure
10-11	7. Maintain His Heart for God	Pride (Syncretism)	Shared His Heart for God (Followed Other Gods)

1. Succession: to David's Throne (1:1-2:12)

In the short life of Israel's monarchy there had been but one transition and it was anything but smooth (Saul and David's exploits—see 1 Sam 16-31). The question before the nation was the identity of Israel's next king.

a. Decline of David's health (1:1-4)

1 Kings 1:1-4

When King David was very old, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. ²So his attendants said to him, "Let us look for a young virgin to serve the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm."³Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. ⁴The woman was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no sexual relations with her.

(1) David is old and physically frail.

(2) David's non-sexual bed partner is the young virgin Abishag (a Shunammite).

b. Ambition of Adonijah (1:5-10)

Adonijah was David's fourth son, the oldest living son. Based upon the culture of the day he would be expected to succeed his father, but the Lord had not chosen Adonijah, nor had David chosen him. In fact, the choice of Solomon had already been made (1 Chron 22:9-10).

(See Appendix E, "Family and Ancestry of King David," p. 166).

1 Kings 1:5-6

Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. ⁶(His father had never rebuked him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?" He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.)

Joining Adonijah in this bold move (even before King David's death) were the following key supporters.

- (1) Joab: former commander of David's armies, now out of favor.
- (2) Abiathar: formerly an influential priest in Israel before the rise of Zadok; may have been ambitious enough to see personal benefits in the kingship of Adonijah.

c. Nathan and Bathsheba before David (1:11-27)

Nathan the prophet informed Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, of the kingly ambitions and activities of Adonijah. He suggested a plan to inform the aged King David. The plan required that Bathsheba first approach the king with the news followed by the prophet's entrance and confirmation that Adonijah had indeed announced his kingship.

1 Kings 1:17-18

She said to him, "My lord, you yourself swore to me your servant by the LORD your God: 'Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne.'¹⁸ But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, do not know about it.

1 Kings 1:22-24, 27

While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived.²³ And the king was told, "Nathan the prophet is here." So he went before the king and bowed with his face to the ground.²⁴ Nathan said, "Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne?

²⁷ Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

d. David Appoints Solomon as king (1:28-40)

- (1) His promise to Bathsheba

1 Kings 1:28-30

Then King David said, "Call in Bathsheba." So she came into the king's presence and stood before him. ²⁹ The king then took an oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, ³⁰ I will surely carry out this very day what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place."

(2) His directions to others

1 Kings 1:32-35

King David said, "Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came before the king, ³³ he said to them: "Take your lord's servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. ³⁴ There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' ³⁵ Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah."

e. Adonijah hears the news (1:41-53)

Adonijah had invited dignitaries and guests to his banquet to secure their loyalty to him and his kingship. The revelry was interrupted by Jonathan (son of Abiathar, the priest). His message was as follows:

- King David had made Solomon king.
- Nathan the prophet had anointed him as king.
- Royal officials had acknowledged Solomon as king.
- King David had spoken: "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today" (v. 48).

1 Kings 1:49-53

At this, all Adonijah's guests rose in alarm and dispersed.⁵⁰ But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar.⁵¹ Then Solomon was told, "Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'"⁵² Solomon replied, "If he shows himself to be worthy, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die."⁵³ Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, "Go to your home."

f. David's charge to Solomon (2:1-10)

1 Kings 2:2-4

"I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, act like a man,³ and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go⁴ and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.'"

- (1) David charged Solomon to be strong (cf. Moses' charge to Joshua, "be strong and courageous" - Deut 31:23).
- (2) David charged Solomon to obedience to the Law (Torah).
- (3) David charged Solomon how to extend the Davidic dynasty (cf. Davidic Covenant—2 Sam 7).

g. David's death (1 Kgs 2:11-12)

1 Kings 2:11-12

He had reigned forty years over Israel—seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem.¹² So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.

2. Establishment: of Solomon's Throne (2:13-46)

a. The plotting of Adonijah (13-21)

Although Adonijah had reluctantly accepted ("bowed down to") Solomon as king (cf. 1 Kgs 1:52-53), he had not rid himself of his kingly ambitions. Adonijah approached the queen-mother (Bathsheba) with a request.

1 Kings 2:15-18

"As you know," he said, "the kingdom was mine. All Israel looked to me as their king. But things changed, and the kingdom has gone to my brother; for it has come to him from the LORD. ¹⁶ Now I have one request to make of you. Do not refuse me." "You may make it," she said. ¹⁷ So he continued, "Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife." ¹⁸ "Very well," Bathsheba replied, "I will speak to the king for you."

Insight:

The request of Adonijah was not expressed from the motive of true love. Abishag had been a part of King David's harem, so to speak, a concubine in his household. In ancient times to sleep with a member of the king's wives or concubines was tantamount to a claim upon the throne (2 Sam 16:21-23; cf. Lev 18:7-8). This is treason in a symbolic way, taking the privilege of the kingship as one's own.

b. The reaction of Solomon (22-46)

1 Kings 2:22-25

King Solomon answered his mother, "Why do you request Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? You might as well request the kingdom for him—after all, he is my older brother—yes, for him and for Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruah!" ²³ Then King Solomon swore by the LORD: "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request! ²⁴ And now, as surely as the LORD

lives—he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised—Adonijah shall be put to death today!”²⁵ So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died.

- (1) Adonijah executed (25).
- (2) Joab (the general) executed (31-34).
- (3) Shimei spared (but placed under house arrest) (36-38).
- (4) Shimei later broke house arrest restrictions and was put to death (39-46).

1 Kings 2:46b

The kingdom was now established in Solomon's hands.

3. Ascent: the rise of Solomon's throne (3:1-8:66)

a. Solomon's request: wisdom (3:1-28)

At the outset of Solomon's reign he made an alliance with Egypt and took Pharaoh's daughter as a wife (common form of treaty negotiations). Additionally, the people of Israel were sacrificing at high places due to the lack of a Temple (yet the law forbade such activities—cf. Deut 12:1-21). Solomon also showed his tainted devotion to the Lord by partial Law obedience, “except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places” (3). Early on, Solomon demonstrated a “divided heart,” a trait that would undo the king at the end of his life.

(1) Wisdom needed

The Lord appeared (first time) to Solomon and asked the king what he wanted.

1 Kings 3:7-9

“Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.⁸ Your servant is here among the people

you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

(2) Wisdom granted

1 Kings 3:10-15

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹²I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." ¹⁵Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

Insight:

- Discernment (3:9, 12)—ability to see between options
- Wisdom (3:12)—skillful knowledge for living
- Riches and honor (13)—unusual measure of blessings
- Long life (14)—a blessing for kingly rule ("Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations" —Ps 61:6)

Note that God's abundant and gracious response to Solomon also carried an obligation...

"...if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands..."
(3:14)

(3) Wisdom demonstrated (16-28)

The Biblical writer followed the request with an example of Solomon's wisdom. The king settled a dispute between two prostitutes over the true maternity of a child. His unusual ruling to split the baby in half exposed the true mother and led to a just (and wise) conclusion.

1 Kings 3:28

When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

b. Solomon's reign: administration (4:1-34)

(1) Officials and governors (1-19)

Saul and David's reigns had largely been characterized by conquest and expansion. Solomon's challenges as king were primarily political and administrative (and religious as he also was meant to be a theo-monarch).

1 Kings 4:7

Solomon had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year.

These districts (see map, page 7) collected taxes that supported Solomon's centralized government. The burden upon governors and the people in their districts was heavy. This taxation policy would become a major issue at Solomon's death for his son, Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12ff).

(2) Glories of Solomon's reign

(a) The governed people (20-21)

1 Kings 4:20-21

The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. ²¹And

Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

(b) The daily provisions (22-28)

(c) The wisdom production (29-34)

1 Kings 4:29, 32-34

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

³²He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

³³He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. ³⁴From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

c. Solomon's rise: Temple and Palace (5:1-8:66)

(1) Temple preparations (5:1-18)

Solomon contracted with the King of Tyre to provide building supplies for the planned Temple. Solomon explained the situation to Hiram, the king.

1 Kings 5:3-6

"You know that because of the wars waged against my father David from all sides, he could not build a temple for the Name of the LORD his God until the LORD put his enemies under his feet.

⁴But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster.

⁵I intend, therefore, to build a temple for the Name of the LORD my God, as the LORD told my father David, when he said, 'Your son whom I will put on the throne in your place will build the temple for my Name.' ⁶"So give orders that cedars of Lebanon

be cut for me. My men will work with yours, and I will pay you for your men whatever wages you set. You know that we have no one so skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians."

(2) Temple construction (6:1-37)

1 Kings 6 describes the major features of the first permanent temple. Some key elements follow:

- (a) Dimensions: ninety feet by thirty feet and forty-five feet high (2).
- (b) Promise: if Solomon and the people obeyed God's decrees, the Lord would live with His people and not abandon them (12-13).
- (c) Appearance: limestone, cedar, and gold (impressive and beautiful).
- (d) Time: seven years to build (38).

(3) Palace construction (7:1-12)

It was one thing to build an impressive Temple for the God of the Israelites, but Solomon also built an equally impressive palace for himself and his kingly duties.

- (a) Dimensions: one hundred fifty feet by seventy-five feet and forty-five feet high (larger than the Temple)
- (b) Functions: throne hall, Hall of Justice (where judging occurred), palace living quarters, separate palace for Pharaoh's daughter, Solomon's wife
- (c) Appearance: stone and cedar
- (d) Time: thirteen years to build

(4) Temple furnishings (7:13-51)

Since the Temple was the house of the Lord, its furnishings were to reflect the glory of the Lord.

1 Kings 7:51

When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver and gold and the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD’s temple.

(5) Temple and the Ark (8:1-21)

The Israelites were a covenantal (agreement-bound) people. God had redeemed them from Egypt, constituted them as a nation, and provided the Law for their constitutional guide for national life. At least two major points set Israel apart from other nations:

- God’s presence with His people

Exodus 33:15-16

Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

- God’s presence in the Tabernacle

Exodus 40:34-35

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

The Ark symbolized the presence of God. It was placed in the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place) in the Tabernacle. It was now time to relocate the Ark from nearby Mt. Zion to the Holy of Holies in the newly constructed, permanent Temple.

1 Kings 8:6, 10-12

The priests then brought the ark of the LORD’s covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.

¹⁰ When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. ¹¹ And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. ¹² Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud..."

(6) Temple dedication (8:22-66)

(a) Solomon's prayer to God (22-53)

1 Kings 8:22-24

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven ²³and said: "LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. ²⁴You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today."

1 Kings 8:52-53

"May your eyes be open to your servant's plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. ⁵³For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign LORD, brought our ancestors out of Egypt."

(b) Solomon's address to the people (54-61)

1 Kings 8:56-61

"Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. ⁵⁷May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake

us.⁵⁸ *May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors.*⁵⁹ *And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day's need,*⁶⁰ *so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other.*⁶¹ *And may your hearts be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."*

(c) Solomon's ceremony (62-66)

1 Kings 8:62, 65-66

Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD.

*⁶⁵ So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the LORD our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all.*⁶⁶ *On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the LORD had done for his servant David and his people Israel.*

4. Descent: the fall of Solomon's throne (9:1-11:43)

For twenty years Solomon had been building the Temple and his royal palace. Additionally, he had the responsibility to govern a large empire of twelve districts. At this point, Solomon's reign was a bit more than half completed (it was year twenty-four of a forty-year kingship). He had notable achievements and accomplishments but the greater question was, "Will he finish strong with an undivided heart for God?"

In this section the Lord will appear again to the king. The stipulations for Davidic Covenant obedience will

be restated. Accounts of his greatness will be given, but the “final chapter” of his life will not prove to be commendable.

a. Lord appears: Davidic Covenant renewal (9:1-9)

1 Kings 9:4-9

“As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws,⁵ I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.’⁶ “But if you or your descendants turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them,⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples.⁸ This temple will become a heap of rubble. All who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’⁹ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them.’”

b. Solomon’s rule: accomplishments (9:10-28)

(1) Sale of towns (10-14)

(2) Labor conscription (15-24)

(3) Temple duties (25)

(4) Ship building (26-28)

c. Queen of Sheba visits (10:1-13)

Sheba was located about 1,200 miles southeast of Israel (near modern day Yemen or Oman). Solomon’s fame and wisdom had reached the ears of the queen. Likely the queen was interested in opening spice trade with Israel, thus a treaty agreement

would need to be instituted. As such, the queen also wanted to see (“test”) if Solomon was as astute as his reputation.

1 Kings 10:3-9

Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. ⁴When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, ⁵the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed. ⁶She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. ⁷But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁸How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to maintain justice and righteousness.”

d. Solomon prospers (10:14-29)

The Biblical text relates a staggering amount of Solomon’s yearly income (about 25 tons of gold per year). Not only was he remarkably wise, he was fabulously wealthy (even as the Lord had promised –cf. 1 Kgs 3:13).

1 Kings 10:23-25

King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. ²⁴The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. ²⁵Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

Further, the king also “accumulated chariots and horses” (10:26). This would have been equivalent to building up military strength and capacity. Was this acceptable?

Insight:

Moses had warned the Israelites concerning the coming day of kingly rule.

Deuteronomy 17:14-17

When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," ¹⁵be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. ¹⁶The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." ¹⁷He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

Note carefully:

- (1) Solomon was qualified to be king (Davidic, Abrahamic lineage).
- (2) Solomon's reign looked very much like the ancient near-eastern kings around him.
- (3) Solomon did acquire horses and chariots (trusting in his own military might).
- (4) Solomon did accumulate great wealth (though perhaps beyond what was promised or needed).
- (5) Solomon did acquire many wives (and his heart was turned away).

e. Solomon's failures (11:1-43)

1 Kings 11 describes the tragic fall of Solomon in **four key events**. But the decline had been foreshadowed in the previous two chapters (1 Kgs 9-10). Note the following:

- The Lord made a second appearance to Solomon and reaffirmed the Davidic Covenant (enumerating the blessings of obedience but also the harsh discipline of disobedience—which, in fact, did occur);

- Solomon expanded the kingdom, yet it came by forced labor and high taxes—which also would prove to be costly in the end;
- Solomon accumulated wealth, horses and chariots, wives and concubines, activities that violated the words of Moses for Israel's kings.

(1) Tragic event #1: failure of Solomon (11:1-13)

(a) Solomon's idolatry (1-8)

1 Kings 11:1-6

King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter— Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ²They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. ⁴As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

(b) The Lord's response (9-13)

1 Kings 11:9-13

The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹So the LORD

said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

¹²Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

- The Lord became angry (9-10).
- The Lord foretold the division of Solomon's kingdom (11).
- The Lord foretold that Solomon's successor and son would lose the "united kingdom."
- The Lord foretold that the son would have but one tribe for his "divided kingdom." (12-13)

Insight: Fate of the "United Kingdom"

The Panorama of the Bible movements illustrate the Biblical reality of "united" to "divided" to eventually a "surviving" kingship.

Movement 6: "Kingship: United Monarchy"

Movement 7: "Kingship: Divided Monarchy"

(Also, within Movement 7, the northern kingdom of Israel is captured and deported in the Assyrian Captivity of 722 B.C. This left the "surviving kingdom" of Judah until her defeat in the Babylonian Captivity of 586 B.C.

Movement 8: "Exile"

(Judah to Babylon; Jerusalem in ruins)

(2) Tragic event #2: Rebellions against Solomon (11:24-25)

(a) God raises up an adversary, Hadad (14-22).

(b) God raised up another adversary, Rezon (23-25).

Solomon may still reign on the throne but cracks are beginning to appear. The descent (fall) of a once-great king continues.

(3) Tragic event #3: Rebellion of Jeroboam (11:26-40)

(a) Jeroboam's place in Solomon's court (26-28)

1 Kings 11:27-28

Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king: Solomon had built the terraces and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father. ²⁸Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the tribes of Joseph.

(b) Jeroboam's encounter with the prophet, Ahijah (29-39)

A prophetic encounter with Ahijah revealed the Lord's will concerning the "united monarchy" under Solomon:

- **First**, the kingdom would split (10 tribes for the north, two for the south) (29-30).
- **Second**, Jeroboam would lead the northern tribes (he was from Ephraim, a northern tribe) (31).
- **Third**, David's successor would have one tribe (plus his own tribe of Judah) (32).

Insight: Causes for the split (11:33)

God clearly explained the reasons for the coming division:

- (1) The people have “forsaken” the Lord and worshiped false gods (Solomon also guilty).
- (2) The people “have not walked in my ways.”
- (3) The people have not “done what is right in my eyes.”
- (4) The people have failed to keep the commands of the Lord (“statutes and laws”).

(c) Jeroboam’s flight to Egypt (40)

1 Kings 11:40

Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon’s death.

(4) Tragic event #4: death of Solomon (11:41-43)

1 Kings 11:42-43

Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.⁴³ Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

B. Solomon’s Life: Summarized

1. Concluding words

Gary Inrig (*1-2 Kings*, 85) insightfully summarizes the enigmatic King Solomon:

Solomon’s life ended in tragedy, and the wounds were self-inflicted. His unwillingness to keep a pure heart before God, along with his refusal to discipline his appetites, led him to commit sins that would have been unimaginable at an earlier point in his life. The great temple builder became a pathetic idol worshiper, bowing before the very idols he had contracted someone to build.

The only way that Solomon could sustain his moral lifestyle was to shrink his view of God. Immorality always partners with idolatry. Solomon not only invented a God who would tolerate his behavior; he also bowed down before the fraudulent creations of human imagination. He turned his back on the true God to grovel before false gods. What a tragic ending for a king who began so well.

2. Concluding chart

SOLOMON'S LIFE			
Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
Rise to Kingship	Request for Wisdom	Royal Construction	Regal Failures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adonijah's claim • David's choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's first appearance • Wisdom granted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temple • Palace • Dedications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's second appearance • Covenant renewal • Covenant disobedience
1 Kings 1-2	1 Kings 3-4	1 Kings 5-8	1 Kings 9-11

V. TAKEAWAYS

A. Selection of Solomon

Adonijah's attempt to seize the throne demonstrates the folly of unbridled pride. The choice was not his to make. God's will always trumps man's ambition and pride.

Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

James 3:13-14

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

Proverbs 8:13

To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

B. Wisdom

Solomon's humble request for wisdom highlights its value for all.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 8:34-36 (wisdom personified)

"Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. ³⁵For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD. ³⁶But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death."

Proverbs 21:30

There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.

C. Heart for God

The story of the first three kings of Israel illustrates their spiritual hearts for the Lord: Saul lost his heart, David misplaced his heart, and Solomon shared his heart. The Scriptures are quite clear.

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Luke 6:43-45 (Jesus speaking)

"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵A good man

brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

D. Riches and Wealth

Solomon was the wealthiest of all the Israelite kings, perhaps one of the wealthiest of the Ancient Near Eastern era. Was the accumulation wrong? Did not God promise him fabulous riches?

And what of today? Is being wealthy wrong? A sin? The Bible does not condemn wealth but offers clear guidance for those who possess it.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

E. Kingship

The appointed kings were theo-monarchs by design, i.e. they ruled the people as God's chosen administrators but always under the will and ways of the Lord. There is but One ultimate Ruler; all others must bow the knee before Him.

Who has the right to rule in your life?

Philippians 2:9-10

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth...