

Solomon: The Challenge of Finishing Well

August 13, 2017

OLD TESTAMENT
ENCOUNTERS
WITH GOD

Open: What are some of the prominent characteristics you remember from Solomon's life? For which of these would you want to be remembered?

Read and Discuss:

1. **Read 1 Kings 3:5-14.** Even though Solomon is about 20 years old at this point, why might he describe himself as a little child (v. 7)? How have you, like Solomon, experienced intimidation in the face of responsibility? God invited Solomon to ask for anything he wanted. What does Solomon's answer reveal about himself (v. 9)?
2. **Read 1 Kings 9:1-8.** The second encounter Solomon has with God includes a very strong warning. (*In verses 4-7, notice the two sets of "if . . . then" clauses.*) How would you summarize these two statements? What do we learn about God from these statements? From what you know of Israel's history, which one of these did they ultimately experience?
3. **Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20, 2 Chronicles 1:14-15, and 1 Kings 11:1-4.** Even before Israel had a king, God, through Moses, gave specific instructions for the conduct of any king that Israel would have. How does Solomon violate these instructions? There are often both natural and spiritual consequences to disobeying God. What ways do you think Solomon may have experienced some of these consequences?
4. **Read 1 Kings 4:22-28.** In addition to wisdom, God promised to give Solomon riches. Contrasting Solomon's riches with the warnings of Deuteronomy 17:16-17, do you think Solomon's wealth reflected the blessing God intended, or something more? Why?
Read Matthew 6:24. How can wealth challenge our affections towards God?
5. **Read 1 Kings 11:9-13.** Here we see the warnings of 1 Kings 9:1-8 comes to pass. How have you seen potential effects of disobedience in your life or in the lives those you know?

Apply: Solomon failed to follow the true God of Israel in the later years of his life. **Read Hebrews 3:12-15.** What steps can we take to remain faithfully obedient to God as life goes on?

Pray: Pray that God strengthens you to follow Him with faithfulness today and every day.

1 Kings 3:5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." 6 And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. 7 And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. 9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. 13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. 14 And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

1 Kings 9:1 As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, 2 the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 And the Lord said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. 4 And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, 5 then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8 And this house will become a heap of ruins.

Deuteronomy 17:14 "When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' 17 And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. 18 "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, 20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel. (ESV)