

PERSONAL APPLICATION

SOLOMON

Pray the Holy Spirit will guide you today in your study of King Solomon.

Review:

1. From your notes, list some of the elements of true brotherly love.

2. Why was the love Jonathan had for David so remarkable?

1 Kings

3. Read 1 Kings 1:28–40. Who was Solomon's mother?

By what act did David indicate Solomon was to be the next king?

What did Zadok do to seal the kingship for Solomon? (1 Kings 1:39)

How did the people respond to David's choice of a king?

4. In what exemplary way did Solomon deal with his mother? (1 Kings 2:19)

5. Give the names of the three men Solomon eliminated (1 Kings 2:20–46). For what reason?

6. In 1 Kings 3:1–15 we see the character of Solomon.

How did Solomon reflect the training of his father? (1 Kings 3:3)

In his dream, what did the Lord allow Solomon to do?

For what did he ask?

What two-fold response did the Lord give to this request?

7. Describe the example given in 1 Kings 3:16–28 about the wisdom of Solomon.

8. What kind of reign did Solomon enjoy? (1 Kings 4:21)

What one thing about Solomon caught the attention of everyone? (1 Kings 4:34)

9. How did Solomon again show respect and loyalty for his father David? (1 Kings 5:5)

10. The Book of Proverbs was written by Solomon. In Proverbs 1:1–7, what thought particularly caught your attention?
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11. In 1 Kings 6, we find the description of the temple. List some of the details you find in this chapter.
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12. How did the Lord indicate His acceptance of the temple in 1 Kings 8:10–11?
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13. In his dedicatory prayer, Solomon made some important observations. Express them in your own words:

1 Kings 8:23 _____

1 Kings 8:27 _____

1 Kings 8:33–34 _____

1 Kings 8:46 _____

1 Kings 8:56–57 _____

Describe the emotions the people had on this day of dedication. (1 Kings 8:66)

14. 1 Kings 10 reports the visit of the Queen of Sheba. How did she summarize the kingship of Solomon in 1 Kings 10:9?
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15. Give the Bible's summation of Solomon in 1 Kings 10:23–24. _____

16. Describe the unhealthy situation described in 1 Kings 11. How many wives did Solomon have? _____
 What was the sad result of his marriage to so many women and what punishment did God pronounce upon Solomon? (1 Kings 11:11–12)
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17. How did God propose to carry out his promise to David (1 Kings 11:13)? What does this tell you about God?
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18. What positive example of Solomon's might you choose to follow?
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We all need a wise and understanding heart to be able to use the blessings God gives in a way that will be a blessing to us and to others.



SOLOMON – TRUE BLESSEDNESS

Remember the story of King Midas? He made a wish that everything he touched be turned to gold. His wish came true. His chair, his bed, his table, and everything on the table turned to gold. This king found himself surrounded with gold, delighted that he was now rich beyond his wildest dreams. Just think how rich a person would be today if everything he possessed was made of solid gold!

For King Midas, however, his “golden touch” became a big problem. When he touched his food, it also turned to gold. This was terrible, for who wants to eat a gold sandwich, gold vegetables or a gold piece of cake? Then one day his daughter ran to hug him, and she too turned to gold. Dreadful!

The story of King Solomon is almost a corollary of the legendary King Midas but not in the same way, because it was the Lord who blessed Solomon. He did it because He truly loved Solomon. Solomon became one of the richest men the world has ever known. We wonder why the Lord allowed Solomon to become that rich because his wealth was nearly his undoing. You can see at once that our study today will offer some very thought-provoking ideas. Solomon's life challenges us to consider the nature of TRUE BLESSEDNESS.

THE YOUNG KING

Perhaps we need first to answer the question: “What is true blessedness?” All of us sense that this is something we really want and need, but if we

were asked what it is, we might find it difficult to define. We will be helped by looking at the young King Solomon, son of David and Bathsheba, who had been designated as the successor to his father.

The account in 1 Kings 3:5–14 gives us a clue about true blessedness. You can imagine how unprepared Solomon must have felt when he was thrust into the position of king over the vast empire that his father had established. It was at this time that the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said, “Ask what I shall give you.” Solomon did not say as King Midas had, “Grant that everything I touch may turn to gold.” No, King Solomon asked the Lord to give him a wise and understanding heart in order that he might rule his people well.

We sense at once that his request pleased the Lord very much. As a result, He gave Solomon a wisdom that became renowned in the world. The Lord added even more. He gave Solomon such wealth, as the world had never known. We are told the whole world came to see King Solomon.

TRUE BLESSEDNESS

What a great lesson for us is the attitude of King Solomon! Who of us would rather be a King Midas instead of a King Solomon? Here is the choice between being a man of great wealth that has no value or of being a man of great wealth upon whom the Lord smiles with His evident blessing. There are plenty of both kinds of people living today. There should be no doubt which you would choose. We all need a wise and understanding heart to be able to use the blessings God gives in a way that will be a blessing to us and to others.

The Scriptures are explicit in telling us what makes for true blessedness. In 1 Kings 1:36–37, Benaiah said he wished for Solomon that his throne would be greater even than that of the great King David, who had subjugated all the nations round about. But listen! “Blessed...are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28). When does God’s

blessing rest upon us? When we listen to the Word of God and then live according to it. Why do many people who are rich and successful have children running wild, spouses suing them for divorce, friends turning their backs on them, until they perhaps contemplate suicide? Does this sound like a success story? What is missing? The blessing of God, the blessing that comes from hearing the Word and keeping it; the blessing that came to Solomon who loved the Lord and meditated upon His Word. Solomon even wrote books that became part of the Bible, such as Proverbs.

“Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust” (Psalm 40:4). As we hear the Word of God, we realize more and more the need to put our complete trust in God and to get away from the Midas-like desire that all we touch would turn to gold. I love the words of King Solomon, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge [wisdom]; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

This leads us at once to the statement, “Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments” (Psalm 112:1). This adds a new dimension to true blessedness — fearing the Lord. This is not a slavish fear, a terror, a fright of God, but a reverential awe for the Lord. We have true blessedness in our relationship with God when we delight in doing His will because we know how great His love is for us. The story of Solomon’s life shows us a man who truly delighted in pleasing the Lord.

“Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Psalm 32:2). This tells us why we need not be afraid of God. It is because we know that we are at peace with the Lord, not by our efforts, not by keeping the commandments, not by our living according to the Golden Rule. We are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for He has earned forgiveness for our sins; He has removed the

curse of sin from us; He has freed us from death and hell, the punishment for sin. To know that and to believe it with all our hearts is true blessedness.

Now we can understand Psalm 1 when it says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” Doesn’t that sound like true blessedness?

SOME EARLY ACTS OF SOLOMON

When Bathsheba came to speak to King Solomon, the respect he showed her is worthy of our attention (1 Kings 2:19). He had a seat placed at his right hand, so that when people came to show their respect for him, they would also honor his mother. It was a noble example and one of the reasons the Lord blessed this young king. This is but an application of what the Lord says in the Fourth Commandment, “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (Ephesians 6:2–3).

Another thing that surprises us is that, at the outset, Solomon saw fit to eliminate three people who had caused him much difficulty:

- His step-brother Adonijah, who had visions of being king;
- Abiathar, the chief priest, a descendant of Eli, of whom God had said that He wanted no service from his children (1 Sam. 2:31–35); and
- Joab, the captain of David’s army, a ruthless man with blood on his hands, who did not fit into the peaceful reign that Solomon intended to promote. You can read about these people in 1 Kings 2. The young king showed he had complete control.

Solomon’s reign as king is described in 1 Kings 4:21. He reigned over all the nations that David had

subjugated. These nations paid tribute to the young king providing the source of his great wealth. This continued through the forty years of Solomon’s rule showing us that the Lord was truly blessing him.

The peaceful condition in his land also gave Solomon the opportunity to deal with many of the social problems of his day. He did this with such wisdom that his reputation was known everywhere and his capital city became the huge tourist attraction of his day (1 Kings 4:34).

SOLOMON, THE TEMPLE BUILDER

King David had desired to build a temple to the Lord in Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel. But the Lord did not allow this because his hands were filled with blood from the warfare during his reign. It was certainly fitting that Solomon could now undertake this great venture because peace reigned in the land.

David made the plans for the temple and no doubt made the arrangements for much of the material that would be needed to erect the temple. Solomon now carried out those plans (1 Kings 5:5). Only the best material went into the construction of this temple (5:17–18). Since much of the material had to come from foreign countries, the peaceful relationships that Solomon had with these countries allowed a free flow of supplies.

The size of the temple was not large. It was roughly 110 feet long, 35 feet wide, and 50 feet high at its apex. But the splendor of it was beyond description. Remember that the people gathered for worship did not meet inside the temple building. It would have been of inadequate size for the whole nation of Israel. Surrounding the temple were porches and it was here that the worshippers gathered. Jesus’ favorite porch was the one called Solomon’s porch.

An interesting fact about the temple was that all the pieces for its construction were prepared offsite. It was so well planned and designed that when they

were brought, every piece fit perfectly so there was never the sound of construction tools while it was being built (1 Kings 6:7). When the structure was completed, it was overlaid with gold and precious jewels. This temple is listed among the ancient wonders of the world. All the furnishings inside the temple were made of gold.

While Solomon was engaged in this venture, he was also building palaces for himself and his officials. Of course, Solomon would need quite a palace for himself and all his wives and children. Again, no expense was spared.

First Kings 8 describes the dedication of the temple and shows us Solomon at his best. You have his words of dedication in 1 Kings 8:12–13 with his great prayer beginning at verse 22. Like most prayers, he begins with words of praise to the Lord, acknowledging that there is no other god. He goes on to say that God is everywhere and is not confined to a temple like this one, and yet such a temple is necessary that people may know where the Lord can be found (vv. 27–29).

Next Solomon speaks wonderful words about the need his people have for God's forgiveness, saying among other things that there is no one who does not sin (vv. 34–36). He asks God to be gracious to them (v. 50) and reminds God once again that they are His people. At the close of his prayer, Solomon spoke a benediction over the people in verses 56–57, and concluded the dedication with an exhortation to the people of Israel to be faithful to the Lord (v. 61).

It was a day long remembered by the people. At the close of the day, they acknowledged what a blessing Solomon was to them. "On the eighth day he sent the people away, and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people" (v. 66).

THE LAST YEARS OF SOLOMON'S REIGN

In 1 Kings Chapter 10, we are told of the visit of the Queen of Sheba, one of the many people of royalty who came to Jerusalem to show their respect for King Solomon. She gives her impression of what she saw and we could summarize it as "the half was not told me" (10:6–9). David was a warrior but Solomon was a builder and the reign of these two men was the Golden Age in Israel's history. Egypt, Assyria and Babylon were weak at this time.

The wealth of King Solomon is described beginning at 1 Kings 10:14. A "talent" of gold weighed 75 pounds (1200 ounces). If one were to multiply 1200 ounces by the value of gold per ounce (more than \$1000 in 2016), then multiply that figure again by 666, Solomon's annual gold revenue, one would arrive at a staggering sum! Everything he possessed was gold. Verse 23 says that he "excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom." Five years after Solomon's death, all this wealth was taken by the King of Egypt. Well could Solomon say as he does in his book of Ecclesiastes (1:2), "Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

Chapter 11 tells us that Solomon married a multitude of women from different nations and cultures, many of them no doubt for political reasons. In fact, he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Can you imagine the utter confusion in that household? Surely, there were many children too.

The sad thing was that in the weakness of his old age, these wives were able to turn the heart of Solomon away from his God who had blessed him so abundantly. This man of great wisdom, who seemingly enjoyed every blessing that life could offer, began to worship other gods who had done nothing for him. It is clear that he had not completely forsaken the Lord, but his zeal for the

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Lord was not the same. It says, “he did not wholly follow the LORD.”

All this was “evil in the sight of the LORD” (11:6). The Lord was disappointed in Solomon and angry. As punishment, the Lord took the kingdom away from Solomon and his descendants. However, since the Lord had promised David that his sons after him would be kings, He preserved one tribe for Solomon’s heir. In 1 Kings 12, we are told how his son Rehoboam so offended the people that all but the tribe of Judah forsook him.

The death of Solomon is reported in 11:43. The statement is simply made that he slept with his fathers. We sincerely hope this means he died in the faith of his fathers because we know what the final dimension of true blessedness is: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’” (Revelation 14:13).

CONCLUSION

Perhaps we need to ask one more question: When can we hope to have true blessedness? King Solomon can be a real help to us. He did

not enjoy his blessings because he was such a wonderful man, because in many ways he disappointed the Lord. He was not worthy in himself to be thus blessed by the Lord. So there has to be another reason why he received these blessings.

True blessedness comes to us only by the mercy of God. The Holy Spirit was able to work in King Solomon a deep love for the Lord. He was able to bring even this great king to realize that actually he was nothing in the sight of the Lord. We see him on his knees on that great day of dedication of the temple seeking God’s forgiveness. The reason he could ask for this pardon was that he believed the promise of God that eventually He would send a Savior “who would free His people from their sins.”

So really, what does it come down to? TRUE BLESSEDNESS is mine only when the Holy Spirit brings me to faith in Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I can fight Him and resist Him, but when I do, I close the door to true blessedness. It ends up with one plea, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).