

VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT

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with Pastor Dan Betzer

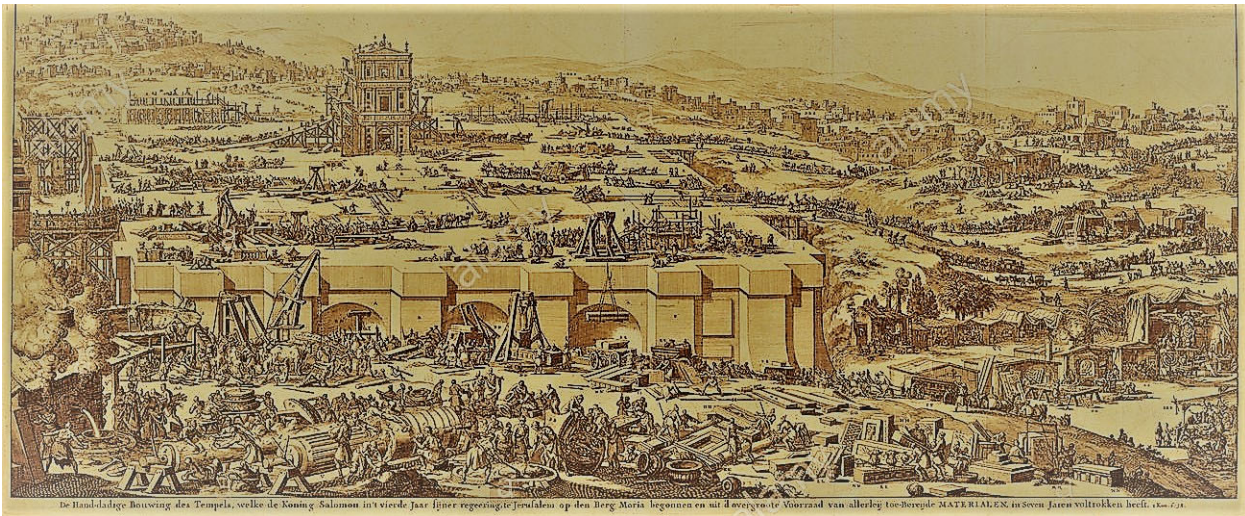
BASIC FACTS ABOUT SOLOMON

His Reign: 970-931 BC
Predecessor: David
Successor: Rehoboam (Solomon's son who split the Kingdom over taxes)
Died: 931 in Jerusalem
Married: 700 times and 300 concubines
Mother: Bathsheba
Key Factors: Wisdom and Wealth
Built the Great Temple in Jerusalem

Remember how Solomon became the King of Israel. In his older years, David became aware of the maneuvering for power all around him. His wife Bathsheba and the prophet Nathan cleverly outfoxed them all and Solomon was made the King. God blessed him and for a few years, he ruled wisely and righteously.

Like many others leaders, before and since, Solomon lost his bearings. Israel's spirituality became mixed with idolatry, the state deeply in debt, and the people without an eternal sense of purpose. Revolt within and a breaking away of vassal states (allied to Israel) surrounding Solomon's kingdom began breaking away from Solomon's irrational leadership. Solomon himself became debauched and cynical, satiated with the sensual and material affairs of life. As he noted late in life, to him it had all become "vanity and vexation of spirit." Ecclesiastes 1:14 ***"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."***

When a person reaches this deadly point in life, it is vital that there be a full return to God and His Word, else all will be lost - as it would be for this ill-fated King.



Artist's rendition of early Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple

(Enter Jeroboam) A fortified part of Jerusalem in that day was called Millo. It had been broken down and Solomon had it restored:

II Chronicles 32:5

Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.

In the process of that reconstruction and repairing some of the walls of Jerusalem, the son of a widow woman proved himself so valuable, named Jeroboam, came to the attention of Solomon himself.

One day, while walking around the city, Jeroboam was approached by a well-known prophet from Shiloh. His name was Ahijah. His cry to Jeroboam was both prophetic and shocking:

I Kings 11:30-38

And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: 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: [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:) [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

1 *of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that*
2 *which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments,*
3 *as did David his father. [34] Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom*
4 *out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for*
5 *David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my*
6 *commandments and my statutes: [35] But I will take the kingdom out of*
7 *his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. [36] And unto*
8 *his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light*
9 *alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put*
10 *my name there. [37] And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according*
11 *to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. [38] And it*
12 *shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt*
13 *walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes*
14 *and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with*
15 *thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give*
16 *Israel unto thee.*

17

18 When this revelation reached the ears of King Solomon, he was enraged
19 and set out to take the life of this young worker, Jeroboam. However, he
20 was foiled in the attempt when Jeroboam secretly fled into Egypt where
21 he received the protection of Pharaoh Shishak until the year 931 when
22 Solomon died.

23

24 The prophet Ahijah was dead right, was he not? For look what no
25 occurred: Rehoboam, Solomon's son, ascended to the throne without
26 opposition. It was at this point when some older and wiser advisors,
27 counseled the new king to reduced the heavy financial weight on King
28 Rehoboam. Sadly, however, after talking with his young advisors,
29 Rehoboam declared:

30

31 I Kings 12:14

32 *And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father*
33 *made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also*
34 *chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.*

35

1 The ten northern tribes of Israel felt they could bear no more and seceded
2 “from the union” - so to speak. And Ahijah’s prophecy was fulfilled.
3 Violence followed, as could be expected. The new King (Rehoboam) sent
4 his chief financial leader to the leaders of the ten tribes. They were so
5 angry at the sight of him, they stoned him to death. King Rehoboam was
6 now very frightened. He jumped into his royal chariot and quickly covered
7 the 40 miles between Shechem (where he had been coronated and ill-
8 advised) to Jerusalem. The enraged northern tribes refused to follow their
9 new immature king. The name Jeroboam was heralded from tent to tent
10 until the whole group named him as their new king. Thus the Hebrew
11 nation was rent in two as Ahijah had prophesied. The ten pieces of the
12 rent garment, according to the prophet, passed into the hands of Jeroboam.
13 The garment had indeed been torn in two (rent).

14
15 So – would all be well now? Hardly. The northern kingdom of Israel,
16 which had split off from the rest of the nation, existed for only a little over
17 centuries. During those short decades, Israel had 19 kings - ALL OF
18 THEM BAD! Can you imagine it? Yes, even Jeroboam ended up bad.
19 Some of those monarchs were worse than bad: Ahab and Omri among
20 them. The nation was conquered by the Assyrians in 721 BC. The
21 southern kingdom fared a bit better lasting until the Babylonians defeated
22 them in 586 BC, completely destroying the nation and taking multitudes
23 of Jews into a 70-year captivity.

24
25 So... back to King Solomon (in the still pretty good old days of a unified
26 kingdom). He felt that God wanted him to erect the Temple on Mount
27 Moriah (the Temple Mountain), where the current, blasphemous Dome of
28 the Rock now stands.

29
30 Solomon’s intentions appeared to be pure and noble. His father David had
31 informed him that God wanted the Temple built:

32

33 I Chronicles 28:9-10

34 *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve*
35 *him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth*
36 *all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if*

1 ***thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will***
2 ***cast thee off for ever. [10] Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee***
3 ***to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.***

4
5 David had originally wanted to build the Temple but God forbade it on
6 the grounds that David's hands were bloody from all his wars and palace
7 intrigues. But David still supplied the major funding and supplies for
8 the construction. It must have been a joy to David to watch his son
9 fulfill this divine mission:

10
11 I Chronicles 29:26-30

12 ***Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. [27] And the time***
13 ***that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in***
14 ***Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. [28] And***
15 ***he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon***
16 ***his son reigned in his stead. [29] Now the acts of David the king, first***
17 ***and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in***
18 ***the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, [30]***
19 ***With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and***
20 ***over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.***

21
22 At the death of the great second king of Israel, Solomon began his major
23 project, the Temple construction:

24
25 II Chronicles 2:1-2

26 ***And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord,***
27 ***and an house for his kingdom.***

28
29 II Chronicles 3:1-2

30 ***Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in***
31 ***mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the***
32 ***place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the***
33 ***Jebusite. [2] And he began to build in the second day of the second***
34 ***month, in the fourth year of his reign.***

1 In spite of all his misfiring as King, Solomon certainly did some things
2 right, including: he didn't put off till tomorrow that which had to be
3 done NOW.

4

5 How many great projects never happen because of procrastination! With
6 all that was on his mind at the time, Solomon got to work on that which
7 he knew he was ordained to do.

8

9 More on this noble venture next time.