

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL
A KINGDOM *established*
GOD ALL WISE
The Foolishness of a Once Wise King

God's Word does not sugarcoat its biblical characters. Today, we study the foolishness of old King Solomon who began his reign as a wise youth. His life began with delighting in the worship of God and fulfilling his father David's heart's desire of building the temple for the LORD Almighty. His prayer at the dedication of the temple was remarkable. And yet, something happened along the way and what happens reminds us of the word of Paul in *1 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV)* ¹² *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.* At 60 years of age Solomon was still chasing a thousand women.

J.R. Miller tells this story, "A sculptor had a vision of Christ, which he reproduced in stone. He believed that he had seen the Christ in his vision, and that the form he had chiseled in the marble, was the very image of the glorious Person who had appeared to him. He grew famous afterwards and was asked to make statues of certain *heathen* deities. But he refused, saying: 'A man who has seen the Christ would commit sacrilege, if he were to employ his art in the carving of a pagan goddess. My art is henceforth a consecrated thing.'

When Solomon had seen the Lord in vision—not once only—but twice—he should have been forever a consecrated man. The *eyes* that looked upon the Lord, should never have lusted after *earth's pleasures*. The *hands* that had fashioned a glorious temple for God, should never have built chapels and altars for heathen deities. *Solomon's sins* were far greater because of the special favors God had granted to him. Have we seen Christ? Has He appeared to us in His Word, or in prayer, or at the holy table? Let us not forget that having seen Christ, should set us apart forever for His service and for holy living."

Foolish choices compromise our full devotion to God.

Read 1 Kings 11:1-8 (ESV) ¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on

the mountain east of Jerusalem. ⁸ *And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.*

Going back to Egypt to marry the daughter of Pharaoh was Solomon's first recorded disobedient foolish choice in a string of foolish choices of marrying many foreign wives. Verse 2 is a quote regarding foreign wives from **Deuteronomy 7:3-4**. Egypt is a biblical picture of the bondage of this world while the Promised Land is a biblical picture of God's rest. Solomon began his reign in the peace and rest of God.

Solomon's second disobedient choice was the purchase of horses and chariots from Egypt (**1 Kings 10:26-29**). Solomon's father, David wrote in **Psalms 20:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*

The purchase of Egyptian horses and the acquiring of many wives was in direct violation of the LORD's command in **Deuteronomy 17:16-17 (ESV)** 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.* God's law was clear. Solomon was a wise man and yet he chose to foolishly disobey the One he began his life by honoring.

God's promises are true. The marrying of foreign wives caused the heart of Solomon to turn away from the one true God. While Solomon clung to his wives in 'love,' his love for the LORD was diminishing. His sin began with immorality and sensuality that eventually became gross idolatry. Solomon gave into sin and that sin divided his heart. **Matthew 6:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *"No one can serve two masters..."*

Though wise in the administration of his kingdom, Solomon began early in his reign to make disobedient choices that would critically affect his kingdom in the years to come. Foolish choices create problems for other people.

Read 1 Kings 11:9-13 (ESV) ⁹ *And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice* ¹⁰ *and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded.* ¹¹ *Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant."* ¹² *Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.* ¹³ *However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."*



v The
Divided
Heart

Wiersbe points out that "since the discovery of the circulation of the blood by William Harvey in the 17th century, everybody knows that the center of human physical life is the heart. But what's true physically is also true morally and spiritually." **Deuteronomy 6:5**

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(ESV) ⁵ *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* Solomon became “too smart for his own good” when he allowed his heart to be divided. In fact, the divided heart of Solomon is a frequent picture of the divided heart of the nation itself. That divided heart would eventually be displayed during the final days of Jesus when one week the people cried ‘Hosanna’ as He came into Jerusalem and the following week cried ‘Crucify Him.’

We are told in **2 Chronicles 16:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him...* When the eyes of the LORD came upon Solomon, the LORD saw a divided heart.

Solomon had gone after Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech. He even built ‘high places’ for them. When the LORD gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He promised regarding the serving of other gods in **Exodus 20:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me.* The once wise king had done a very foolish thing. Solomon’s divided heart would lead to a divided kingdom.

Scripture does not record how God delivered this warning to Solomon; but the warning is clear. After Solomon died, the kingdom of Israel would become two separate kingdoms. The ten northern tribes made their own government and were called Israel with their capital in Samaria. The two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, remained loyal to the House of David centered in Jerusalem. They became known as the kingdom of Judah (from where the word “Jew” was eventually derived).

If it were not for God's covenant with David, the entire kingdom would have been taken away from Solomon's descendants. However, as always God kept His promise to David that his kingdom would not end. This promise was ultimately fulfilled in David’s descendant, Jesus.

Eventually the Northern Kingdom of Israel was overtaken by the Assyrians and later the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity to return after 70 years.

Sometimes people speak of the ‘ten lost tribes of Israel’ indicating that the ten tribes (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Joseph -- whose tribe was divided into the half tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) were forever lost when they were captured by the Assyrians. This conclusion is incorrect. A detailed study of Bible history reveals that remnants of the ten tribes were included in the Babylonian deportation.

We can prove by scripture that the ten tribes are not lost. God will call out witnesses during end time events from each of the twelve tribes as recorded in **Revelation 7:4–8**. Since God knows even the number of the hairs on our heads, it is obvious that God has been keeping track of who belongs to what tribe throughout the centuries. We are specifically told in the New Testament that Anna who testified in the temple to the

baby Jesus being the Redeemer was from the tribe of Asher (**Luke 2:36**). John the Baptist's parents were noted as being from the priestly tribe of Levi (**Luke 1:5**). The Apostle Paul said that he from the tribe of Benjamin (**Romans 11:1**).

As I think back to the time when the Israelites first demanded a king to rule over them, I am reminded how that desire did not work out well for them or their descendents.

Even the wisest of kings needs a greater Wisdom.

Read Luke 11:31 (ESV) ³¹ *The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*

These are words of wisdom from King Jesus spoken to the crowds as they were clamoring for a sign. The queen of the south is a reference to the Queen of Sheba whose visit to King Solomon is recorded in **1 Kings 10**. After a long talk with Solomon who answered all her questions and after she saw all the blessings the LORD bestowed upon Solomon, she said in **1 Kings 10:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.* Many Bible scholars say that her acknowledgment of Solomon's God does not necessarily mean that she made a commitment of personal faith to the LORD since such recognition of foreign deities was common in the literature of the ancient world. Personally, I prefer to think that since Jesus used this Gentile woman as an example to the Jews in their unbelief that she did come to a saving knowledge of Yahweh – the God of Israel from her time with Solomon. I hope I meet her when I get to heaven!

Solomon was a son of David, but Jesus is **the** Son of David. Solomon was rich, but Jesus is the Creator of all riches. Solomon possessed the gift of wisdom, but Jesus is wisdom personified.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:30 (ESV) ³⁰ *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,*

These words are written in Paul's letter to the divided church at Corinth. True wisdom comes from placing our faith in Jesus the Son of God. The older I get, the more I realize how little of this world I actually know. However, God's wisdom reveals this to me: Knowledge, skills and abilities do not get anyone into God's Kingdom—simple faith does. **Ephesians 2:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*

It is wise to learn from Solomon's experience that we cannot worship and please God Almighty with a divided heart and wise to remember **Proverbs 11:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.*