

# Lesson 22: The Wisdom of King Solomon

## Reading Preparation:

- 1 Kings 1-11

## Outline:

1. [The Book of Kings](#)
2. [Death of David and Solomon's Ascension to the Throne](#)
3. [Solomon Seeks Only Understanding](#)
4. [Solomon's Temple](#)
5. [Dedication Of The Temple](#)
6. [Decline and End of Solomon's Reign](#)
7. [Solomon's Kingdom Given to Jerobom](#)
8. [Two Solomons?](#)
9. [Conclusions](#)

## Lesson Notes:

### [1. The Book of Kings](#)

We begin our discussion of the book of Kings with the following introduction by Victor L. Ludlow and then by Ellis T. Rasmussen.

Victor L. Ludlow states,

*"The two books now known as 1 and 2 Kings originally formed a single work... The book of Kings is not a 'historical' work according to the modern definition of that term. The compiler of the book did not write history as much as he illustrated how the hand of the Lord could be seen in the historical events of ancient Israel" (Unlocking the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 82, 87).*

Ellis T. Rasmussen states,

*"The first book of the Kings continues the narratives of the second book of Samuel. In fact, in their subtitles the books of Samuel are 'otherwise called' the first and second books of the kings; thus the subtitles of [First Kings] is 'Commonly Called the Third Book of the Kings,' and the four books are presented as a continuum." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 274).*

Ellis T. Rasmussen continues,

*"The first half of the first book of Kings (1 Kgs.1-11) relates the transmission of the kingdom from David to his son, Solomon. It recounts Solomon's consolidation and further expansion of the kingdom and the establishment of Jerusalem as the religious capital with a glorious new temple. It accounts for Solomon's acquisition of wealth and fame. But then Solomon declined and fell, as did the previous two kings." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 274).*

# The Book of 1 Kings

Focus	One Nation Becomes Two											
Divisions	Solomon: Third King of Israel		Solomon's Temple Built & Dedicated		Solomon's Fame, Fortune & Failure		The Kingdom Divides: Israel & Judah		Elijah: God's Spokesman in the Days of Ahab		Ahab's Final Days as King in Israel	
	1	4	5	8	9	11	12	16	17	19	20	22
Topics	The King with a Divided Heart						The Divided Kingdom He Left Behind					
	Dedication						Disruption					
Place	Jerusalem						Northern Kingdom: Israel Southern Kingdom : Judah					
Time	About 130 Years											
Author	Believed to be Jeremiah											

(Reference: The Book of 1 Kings, Charts of the Books of the Bible, [www.swartzentrover.com/](http://www.swartzentrover.com/) ([www.holypig.com](http://www.holypig.com)), [www.swartzentrover.com/cotor/bible/Bible/Bible%20Charts/Charts%20of%20the%20Books%20of%20the%20Bible.htm](http://www.swartzentrover.com/cotor/bible/Bible/Bible%20Charts/Charts%20of%20the%20Books%20of%20the%20Bible.htm))

## 2. Death of David and Solomon's Ascension to the Throne

The following information is gleaned from the Old Testament student manual,

1 Kings Chapter 1, begins with Adonijah seeking to be the next King of Israel, succeeding his father, David, who is now “old and stricken in years” (1:1). Adonijah is the fourth son of David. His two older brothers are dead and his third brother, Daniel or Chileab, is not spoken of in the scriptures other than to reference him as a son of David. Solomon is younger in age than Adonijah.

Adonijah seeks to take the honor of being King upon himself. He aligns both the military, Joab, and Abiathar, the priest to support him as being the next King. He does not consult with Prophet Nathan and the Zadok, the chief priest (1:8).

Nathan, knowing the procedure set down by Moses and reinforced by Samuel, that it is the Lord who selects Israel's Kings, intervenes first in private with Bath-sheba and then directly with David, in support of Solomon whom the Lord has chosen to be Israel's next King. (see Old Testament Institute Student Manual: 1 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Salt Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 1982], 1-2).

David reiterates his promise to Bathsheba concerning Solomon. (see 2 Samuel 12:24; 1 Chronicles 22:9-10).

1 Kings 1:30

**30 Even as I swear unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will certainly do this day.**

David clearly understood it was the Lord's will that his son, Solomon, would become Israel's king upon his death. David directs Zadok and Nathan to inform Solomon to “ride upon mine own mule” (1:33).

Adam Clarke states,

*“No subject could use anything that belonged to the prince [king] without forfeiting his life. As David offered Solomon to ride on his own mule, this was full evidence that he had appointed him his successor.” (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth Printing, March, 1991, 337].*

As Adonijah is celebrating his being the king, he hears “noise of the city being in uproar” (1 Kings 1:41). He sends Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest to learn about the celebration. This is Jonathan's report.

1 Kings 1:43-46

**43 ... Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.  
44 ... they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:  
45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have  
anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from  
thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is  
the noise that ye have heard.  
46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.**

If it was Adonijah's plan to thwart the will of the Lord and to become Israel's king, his plan failed. He did not consult with Nathan, the Lord's prophet, regarding his kingship and he did not plan on David living long enough to confer the kingship upon his son, Solomon. To his disappointment, Solomon is now Israel's third king.

Chapter 2:1-11, contains the words of David, Israel's dying King, to his son, Solomon. His farewell charge to Solomon, had he heeded it all his life could indeed have made Solomon an outstanding King.

1 Kings 2:2-4

**2 ... be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;  
3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his  
ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his  
judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the  
law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou  
doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:  
4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake  
concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their  
way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and  
with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he)  
a man on the throne of Israel.**

Unfortunately, Solomon, like many of us, will not heed the words of counsel and direction from the Lord or his father. If Solomon had followed the counsel of his father, Israel would have had a different king.

Adonijah has not given up his desire to take the kingdom from his brother, Solomon. He seeks from Bath-sheba that she requests from Solomon, to give Abishag, the Shunammite to be his wife. Abishag is one of David's concubines (see 1 Kings 1:3-4). To understand why he made this request requires an understanding of Eastern nations laws.

J. R. Dummelow states,

*"Amongst Eastern nations the wives and concubines of a deceased or dethroned king were taken by his successor (see 2 Samuel 12:8; 16:21-22); and so Adonijah's request for Abishag was regarded as tantamount to a claim on the throne." (A Commentary on the Holy Bible. New York: Macmillan Company, 1936, 212).*

Adonijah's request is in direct opposition to his knowledge that Solomon is the Lord's choice and he acknowledges to Bath-sheba.

1 Kings 2:15

**15 And he [Adonijah] said, Thou knowest that the kingdom  
was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that  
I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and  
is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD.**

When Bath-sheba submits Adonijah's request to Solomon, he sees his older brothers plan to gain his throne. He acts quickly.

1 Kings 2:24

**24 Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath  
established me, and set me on the throne of David my  
father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised,  
Adonijah shall be put to death this day.**

Solomon now seeks the release of Abiathar as priest (see 1 Kings 2:27) and the death of Joab, David's military leader (1 Kings 2:28, 34), who had sided with Adonijah. Solomon's actions against Abiathar, Joab, and Shimei were efforts to consolidate his kingdom from within against those who were guilty of treason against the government. It is important to remember that to this point, he remained the Lord's servant and was worthy to fulfill the Lord's promise to David that he be allowed to build the Lord's temple.

Solomon now seeks to extend the boundaries of Israel to the fullest extent of the Abrahamic covenant.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"Solomon extended the domain of Israel from the Red Sea on the south to the Euphrates River on the north... The golden age of Israel, started under King David, continued under Solomon. During the forty long years Solomon ruled as king of Israel, there was peace and unity throughout his vast domain." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual:2 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 1982], 1).*

As part of Solomon's continued efforts to consolidate his kingdom, he elects to marry the daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh.

1 Kings 3:1

**1 And Solomon made affinity [a marriage alliance] with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.**

While in and of itself, this may seem an innocent decision on the part of Solomon, and congruent with the practice of the time, it is, in fact, an early indicator of Solomon's limited faith in the Lord as Israel's defender. Had not the Lord decreed He would protect Israel from her enemies, if Israel would continue to be faithful to His commandments?

### **3. Solomon Seeks Only Understanding**

Solomon has a dream in which the Lord appears to him and states, "Ask what I should give thee."

1 Kings 3:7, 9

**7 And now, O LORD, my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.  
9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?**

The Lord expresses pleasure in Solomon's request for he has not sought for blessings for himself.

1 Kings 3:11-14

**11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;  
12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and a understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.  
13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.  
14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.**

JST, 1 Kings 3:14

**14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments, then I will lengthen thy days, and thou shalt not walk in unrighteousness, as did thy father David.**

Given the gravity of David's transgression with Bathsheba and having caused Uriah's murder, it is highly unlikely the Lord would have held up David as an example to Solomon as someone "walking in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments" as stated in 1 Kings 3:14!

Shortly after Solomon had awoken from his dream and gone to "Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD," (1 Kings 3:15), his judgment is required.

1 Kings 3:16

**16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.**

The first woman presents the case before king Solomon. She states that two women shared a house together. Each gave birth to baby boys within three days of each other. The second woman had her son in bed with her and during the

night rolled on to the baby suffocating her infant. She then got up in the middle of the night and exchanged her dead son for the first woman's alive baby. When the first woman got up in the morning to nurse her son, the infant was dead, and she states to king Solomon, "it was not my son, which I did bear" (1 Kings 3:21).

The second woman does not question the plausibility of how the infant died. Why doesn't she?, we may ask ourselves. Two possibilities present themselves. Either because accidental death by suffocation of a young infant who was in bed next to it's mother was not uncommon or secondly, the woman was herself so emotionally distraught over the sudden death of the infant, she was not able to clearly understand her roommate's explanation of how the death had occurred. All she knew was one of the two babies was dead and that was all that mattered to her. Her roommate concludes her presentation to king Solomon and directed her final remarks to her roommate, "the living is my son, and the dead is thy son" (1 Kings 3:22).

While there is a preponderance of information, it was not sufficient for the king to clearly determine who was the rightful mother of the living infant. Seemingly as if the king has all the information he needs to make a decision in this serious matter, he sends for his sword.

1 Kings 3:25

**25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.**

Both women quickly recognized his dilemma and his accompanying absurd judgment. He is going to divide the living infant in half and give half of the now dead son to each! What a seemingly absurd response!

Immediately, one and then the other woman expressed their opinion regarding his bizarre verdict. The first to speak states, "O my lord, give her [the other woman] the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it" (1 Kings 3:26).

With this final bit of information, the king reverses himself.

1 Kings 3:27

**27 Than the king answered and said, Give her [the woman who sought to spare the infant's life] the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.**

How ingenious were the king's words. By his extreme decision to sever the living child in half, the real mother spoke from the depths of her maternal instincts. It was better her son live than he suffer death, even if it meant she would be deprived of the privilege of raising her infant herself!

Of course, Solomon determined, it was she who was the infant's mother. Only an impostor would choose the death of an infant, rather than its life, in order to win the king's judgment.

1 Kings 3:28

**28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared [respected] the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.**

Not only was all of Israel impressed with the wisdom that Solomon displayed as he ruled, but also those in the surrounding areas.

1 Kings 4:34

**34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.**

Solomon continues the organization of Israel.

Ellis T. Rasmussen notes,

*"Solomon now reorganized his nation into twelve administrative districts, preserving some of the old tribal units but altering others... The officers were to collect the people's contribution of food for the royal household." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 278).*

One district is assigned to provide for the royal household one month of the year.

#### [4. Solomon's Temple](#)

Anxious to fulfill the promise made to his father, David, Solomon now proceeds to build the House of the Lord. We learn previously the Lord had given David revelations concerning the temple which the Lord will share with Solomon if he remains obedient to the commandments.

1 Kings 6:12

12 Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father.

Solomon did not know how to build the Lord's temple. How was he then able to accomplish the task?

Brigham Young states regarding the building of Solomon's Temple,

*"The pattern of [the] temple, the length and breadth, and the height of the inner and outer courts, with all the fixtures thereunto appertaining, were given to Solomon by revelation, through the proper source. And why... because Solomon had never built a temple, and did not know what was necessary in the arrangement of the different apartments, any better than Moses did [know] what was needed in the [construction of the] tabernacle."* (Discourses of Brigham Young. Compiled by John A. Widtsoe. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, 414).

James E. Talmage states,

*"Solomon's Temple and the Tabernacle of the Wilderness were so near alike to be practically identical... The dimensions of the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Porch, were in the Temple exactly double those of the corresponding parts in the Tabernacle"* (The House of the Lord. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968, [Third Printing, Revised Edition, 1969], 6).

The temple of Solomon was unique in many ways. In an effort to show respect for the sanctity of the Temple, even during its building which took over seven years, the stone and many of the materials were pre-fabricated.

1 Kings 6:7

**7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.**

Another difference was its grandeur.

On the American continent, a temple was also constructed. Nephi, a prophet and former resident of Jerusalem, stated,

B/M, 2 Nephi 5:16

**16 And I, Nephi, did build a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine.**

Solomon's temple had a molten sea of brass placed on the back of twelve oxen.

1 Kings 7:23-25

**23 And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.**

**24 And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast.**

**25 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.**

There has been much confusion amongst Biblical scholars as to the purpose of the "molten sea of brass," set upon twelve oxen regarding its purpose.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

*"In Solomon's Temple a large molten sea of brass was placed on the backs of 12 brazen oxen, these oxen being symbolical of the 12 tribes of Israel (see 1 Kings 7:23-26, 44; 2 Kings 16:17; 25:13; 1 Chron. 18:8). This brazen sea was used for performing baptisms for the living. There were no baptisms for the dead until after the resurrection of Christ.*



*"It must be remembered that all direct and plain references to baptism have been deleted from the Old Testament (B/M, 1 Nephi 13) and that the word baptize is of Greek origin. Some equivalent word, such as wash, would have been used by the Hebrew peoples. In describing the molten sea the Old Testament record says, "The sea was for the priests to wash in." (2 Chron. 4:2-6). This is tantamount to saying that the priests performed baptisms in it.*

*"In this temple building dispensation, the Brethren [Leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints] have been led by the spirit of inspiration to pattern the baptismal fonts placed in [their] temples after the one in Solomon's Temple." (Mormon Doctrine. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition, 1966], 103-104).*

## 5. Dedication Of The Temple

After seven years in construction (see 1 Kings 6:38), Solomon's Temple is now ready for dedication. Just prior to its dedication, an event occurred that was a testimony to the people of the Lord's acceptance.

1 Kings 8:10-11

**10 And it came to pass, when the priest were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD.**

**11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.**

It is of interest to note at the time of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in Ohio, on March 27, 1836, there was a similar spiritual outpouring.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"Many present [on this occasion] reported seeing angels and hearing the 'sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and many in the community reported 'seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple' (History of the Church, 2:427). The special events attending the dedication of both temples are signs of the Lord's divine acceptance of the houses built in his name to his honor." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual:1 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 1982], 7).*

Dedicatory prayer excerpts:

1 Kings 8:56-58, 61

**56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.**

**57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:**

**58 That we may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.**

**61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.**

Certainly the desire of the people was to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord, just as their forbearers had. Solomon had completed and dedicated a temple unto the Lord which his father, David, had not be able to accomplish. Israel was at peace and her boundaries had been expanded and her enemies defeated. Unfortunately for Israel and for each of us, our greatest battles are not fought on the battlefields, but in the recesses of our own minds. Our mortal weaknesses require we be ever vigilant and on guard against the temptations of evil or we too will forsake our covenants and promises to the Lord and we as a nation and as individuals will also reap destruction.

For a time Israel will enjoy peace and happiness.

James E. Talmage observes,

*"Thirty-four years later, and but five years subsequent to the death of Solomon, the decline of the temple began; and this decline was soon to develop into general spoliation, and finally to become an actual desecration." (House of the Lord. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968, [Third Printing, Revised Edition, 1969], 6-7).*

What happened to Solomon's Temple?

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"The temple of Solomon was later destroyed, and the kingdom of Judah scattered. Zerubbabel's temple, which Herod renovated, was later built on the same spot... [It was Herod's Temple that] was the one standing in the Savior's day."*

(Old Testament Institute Student Manual: 1 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 1982], 6).

## 6. Decline and End of Solomon's Reign

In 1015 B.C. Solomon was made king. In 1012 B.C. he began building the temple. In 975 B.C. Solomon died. He reigned as Israel's third king for 40 years (see 1 Kings 11:42); (see also LDS Bible Dictionary, 636).

While Solomon is best known for the building of the temple, it was his building projects that brought discontent to his nation.

Wright G. Ernest states,

*"Though Solomon's remarkable building projects became world famous, they created serious problems in his own kingdom. He taxed the people heavily and used forced labor to complete his massive projects. The people began to complain, and a deep resentment, especially in the northern tribes, began to fester.*

*"The life of the common man had been disrupted. In the past, a man's wealth had been calculated mostly by the land he owned, the number of flocks he had and the size of his family... Now wealth was calculated not by property ownership but by the amount of money a man controlled... For the first time in Israel's history, there began to be a distinct difference between 'rich' and 'poor.' The king and his household were rich; the common people were poor."* (Great People of the Bible and How They Lived. Pleasantville, New York: Reader's Digest Association, 1974, 192-193).

During Solomon's reign, he developed two major flaws. One, which we noted earlier in his reign, involved his marrying of "strange women" (1 Kings 11:1). His marriage to these foreign women, or those not of the covenant, in turn, contributed to the decline of his kingdom.

Nelson Beecher Keyes states,

*"Political necessity forced Solomon to erect shrines to their gods and to give the appearance of taking part in certain ceremonies with them when visiting dignitaries were at his court. For this apostasy and crass disloyalty "the Lord was angry with Solomon," (1 Kings 11:9)... and after his death the bulk of his kingdom was rent from the hands of his family." (Story of the Bible World in Map, Word and Pictures. Pleasantville, New York, 1962, 59).*

These women brought to Israel their idols and heathen worship, a practice which the Lord had strictly forbidden, and corrupted not only Solomon, but the people also.

1 Kings 11:4, 2-3, 6 [verse order altered]

**4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God,...**

**2 ... [For the Lord had said] Ye shall not go in to [women not of the covenant]... neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these [strange women] in love.**

**3 ... and his wives turned away his heart.**

**6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as [JST. "David his father, and went not fully after the Lord"] .**

Solomon's second major flaw was his excessive desire for worldly honor, rather than his previous devotion to the Lord.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"Solomon [also] allowed his love for material things and his great accomplishments as a builder to wean him from his early devotion to the Lord... When the Queen of Sheba and other foreign visitors paid their respects, they said little about Solomon's righteousness or wisdom. Rather they expressed amazement and awe at his tremendous achievements in building. Their compliments had a marked effect upon Solomon. They seem to have created within him a hunger for the plaudits of men. His desire to construct even grander structures [led him] to enforce heavy taxation upon his people—so heavy that he eventually forced his people into poverty... Mismanagement of the nation's wealth left united Israel tottering." (The Old Testament Institute Student Manual: 1 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 1982], 11).*

Solomon's desire for material things and for recognition is manifest in the building of his own palace. We learn it took seven years to build the temple [1 Kings 6:38], and thirteen years to build his palace [1 Kings 7:1].

Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"Solomon's palace 'consisted of several buildings connected together; namely, (1) the house of the forest of Lebanon [see 1 Kings 7:2-5]; (2) the pillar-hall with the porch (ver. 6); (3) the throne-room and judgment hall (ver.7); (4) the*



king's dwelling-house and the hose of Pharaoh's daughter (ver.8)...The description of the several portions of this palace is so very brief, that it is impossible to form a distinct idea of its character. The different divisions are given in vers. 1-8 in their natural order, commencing at the back and terminating with the front (ver.8). Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 3:1:38." (The Old Testament Institute Student Manual: 1 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [Second Edition, 1982], 6).

Terrence L. Szink adds,

*"To build fortresses, cities, the temple, and other royal buildings, including an elaborate, costly palace, Solomon used forced labor allotted periodically to different districts. But he also used teams of non-Israelite slaves (1 Kings 9:20-21). Thus Solomon's glory was at least partially based on the oppression of conquered peoples and native Israelites, and it was deeply resented. When Rehoboam succeeded his father, Solomon, Israel told him that they would not tolerate the "grievous service" of Solomon any more. When he vowed to increase their burdens, he was rejected by the ten northern tribes.*

*"Although the temple was built in response to the Lord's will, had a valid religious motivation, and was of great spiritual value to Israel, Solomon's palace and luxurious court seem to have resulted from other motivations. One thinks of [wicked] King Noah's elaborate building projects recorded in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 11)." ("The Reign of Solomon," in Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4. Edited by Kent P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 17).*

It appears there is sufficient evidence to infer the subsequent building of Solomon's elaborate palace was a major contributor to his loss of support from the people which led to the division of the nation following his death. It also further evidence of how far Solomon had turned from the Lord toward seeking the honor and glory of the world.

The Lord, ever patient, continued to speak to Solomon. Solomon, however, no longer listened to the Lord's direction.

1 Kings 11:9-10

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,  
10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

## 7. Solomon's Kingdom Given to Jerobom

Due to Solomon's unwillingness to listen to the Lord's directives, Solomon's kingdom will be, for the most part, taken from his family upon his death.

1 Kings 11:11-13

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.  
12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.  
13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

We learn that the servant whom the Lord has selected to replace Solomon as King is named Jeroboam.

1 Kings 11:29-32

29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Abijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:  
30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:  
31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take these 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 [Rehoboam] 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:)

Map of divided Israel:



(Reference: Bible History online, [www.bible-history.com](http://www.bible-history.com), <http://www.bible-history.com/studybible/1+Kings/2/11/>)

How did Solomon react to the renting of his kingdom by the Lord?

1 Kings 11:40

**40 Solmon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.**

The final verses of chapter eleven of 1 Kings, provides the conclusion to Solomon's reign.

1 Kings 11:42-43

**42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.**

**43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.**

## **8. Two Solomons?**

We may ask ourselves which Solomon was the real Solomon? It is hard to reconcile the earlier humble Solomon with his later haughtiness. His early obedience to the Lord with his later disregard for the Lord's will. His gift of wisdom with his disregard for his people. Who was the man Solomon?

Terrance L. Szink observes,

*"It almost seems as if there are two Solomons. The first was a king of great power and glory who gave Israel legendary prestige and a sense of self-worth. He was a ruler of supernatural wisdom who had semi-prophetic status, for he had visions and was selected by the Lord to build his temple. He also had a kind of priestly status, for he prayed to dedicate the temple and perform frequent sacrifice...."*

*"The second Solomon (absent in Chronicles) carried out purges to eliminate his rivals. With an extensive court, he lived on a lavish scale and required his people to shoulder the burden. His building projects were vast and impressive but came into being through oppression of the people—foreign slaves and Israelites who were forced to endure temporary slave status. He married foreign women, perhaps because he desired political security or priestly status, to worship pagan gods. And he sought to kill the man whom the Lord had selected to lead most of Israel after his death—much as Saul had sought to kill Solomon's father, David, whom the Lord had similarly chosen to rule (1 Sam.19-24; 26)."* ("The Reign of Solomon," in *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 4. Edited by Kent P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993, 19).

## **9. Conclusions**

The third king to rule Israel, Solomon, has now died. All of the concerns the Prophet Samuel expressed to Israel when they desired a king have been exemplified during the reign her first three kings. As an ancient prophet-king warned, "an unrighteous king doth pervert the ways of all righteousness" (B/M, Mosiah 29:23). Many of us do not live under the reign of a king or a dictator, and therefore we alone are responsible for our actions, either for good or evil.

Old Testament student manual states,

*"All men and women enjoy certain blessings from the Lord. The individual is wise who accepts the blessings with a grateful heart and walks in righteousness before the Lord..."*

*"[At times affluence can be a problem for us]. We, as modern Israel, need to avoid the sins of pride, misuse of wealth, esteem of the world, [and marriage outside the Church]... sins which beset Solomon and caused his downfall.*

*"Are we any different? Even if we make some good decisions, could we also make some foolish ones that might destroy us?"*

*"[The blessing of a] patriarchal blessing can be an important guide to us. Because Solomon forgot his blessing from the Lord, he lost it" (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: 1 Kings-Malachi. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [ Second Edition, 1982], 11).*

We learn from Solomon, among other important lessons, it is important that we endure in our decision to live a life of righteousness and obedience to the Lord. Solomon had a great beginning, however, the Lord not only needs great "beginners" but also faithful and obedient "finishers." We must be true to the faith throughout our lives, not just in the beginning, or in the middle or as we approach the end. As we give to the Lord throughout our lives 100% obedience to His covenants, life will be sweet and abiding to us. Someday the Lord will say to us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:... enter thou into the joy of the Lord" (Matthew 25:21).