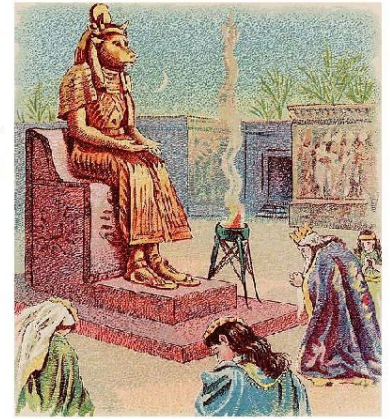


## Words To Treasure

**100 Great Events of the  
Old Testament**  
**Lesson #65 – Solomon Strays  
From God**  
**Family / Teacher Notes**  
**For Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**I Kings 11**

"For it was so,  
when Solomon was  
old, that his wives  
turned his heart af-  
ter other gods; and  
his heart was not  
loyal to the LORD  
his God, as was the  
heart of his father  
David."

(I Kings 11:4)



**Solomon Brings Peace and Prosperity.** Ruling with the wisdom that God had given him, Solomon brought about a great time of blessing in his nation of Israel.

- “Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” (I Kings 4:25) Everybody was safe. It was a great experience. No wars were going on.
- Solomon made it a very prosperous time. It is said in I Kings 10:27 says that Solomon made silver as common as stones. Solomon expanded trade with Egypt, Tyre, Arabia, Africa and other nations. This brought rare and precious products to Israel that had never been available before.
- After the completion of the temple, Solomon began building many other important buildings in Jerusalem. His own palace was so large that it took 13 years to build. Solomon also built other public buildings for holding court. He fortified Jerusalem and made it more safe from invading armies.

**Solomon’s Downfall.** I Kings 10 tells about some of the great wealth and accomplishments of Solomon. Then when we get to I Kings 11 it tells us the bad news: “But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love.

Solomon had actually married Pharaoh’s daughter early on in life soon after he became king. He did this to make a treaty with Pharaoh. Sometimes two countries make a treaty with each other. A treaty is an agreement between them to have good connections with each other and not to fight one another. Sometimes when treaties were made the king of one country might take a wife from the other country. This was done so that they would have family connections and be less likely to go to war with each other.

Even during that time, it was still said of Solomon that he “loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David” (I Kings 3:3). But in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 it had warned that Israel’s kings must not multiply the number of wives that they had.

Solomon, however, had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. This is an almost unbelievable number of marriage partners. How could Solomon have even remembered the names of all these women, and the children he had by them? In those days a king having such a large number of wives was meant to show how rich and important he was. It seems like Solomon's desire for the world to think he was important led him to marry all these women. We have to be very careful when we want the world to think we are important. It can lead us to do sinful things.

God had also said that marrying foreign women would turn their hearts after other gods. Solomon ignored God's warning, and it turned out exactly the way the Lord said it would. By the time we get to I Kings 11:4 we read that Solomon's "heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been" (verses 4). This is important to understand: Solomon still believed in God and worshipped God, but his heart was not "fully devoted" to the Lord. Remember what God had said in the 10 Commandments:

Exodus 20:1-5 "And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God..."

Notice that God and His word had not changed. The change that led to the Solomon's downfall was in his own heart. Age did not make Solomon wiser. The older he got, the more of a problem this became. I Kings 11:5 -8 says, "For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods."

Some have suggested that because Solomon was so attached to these wives, they encouraged him to build them places to serve their gods. Solomon was a very smart man who knew about all kinds of things and cultures. He may have come to feel that they had a right to worship their gods just like he had a right to worship his. He wanted to please these wives so he made special places for them to go honor their own gods. One question worth asking is, why did a great and wise man like Solomon not work to turn the hearts of his wives to worship the true God?

Several hundred years later Nehemiah warned the men of his own time about marrying these godless women: "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even

him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" (Nehemiah 13:25-27)

**God Announces His Judgment.** The LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel. God had even appeared to Solomon two different times to warn him about this and command him to change his conduct and not go after other gods. But Solomon did not obey what the Lord had commanded. You would think that since God gave Solomon such great wisdom, and gave him these warnings, surely he would have given up his sinful ways. But it seems that one of the keys to Solomon's downfall is found in one of his own proverbs. In Proverbs 19:27 we read "Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge." It may be that Solomon got so caught up in his own wisdom, that he didn't think he had to listen to the Lord.

So the Lord told Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

Solomon's story does not end well. He did not follow his own proverb: "A man's own folly ruins his life" (Proverbs 19:13).



Rom. 15:4 "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

**Who You Marry Can Make a Difference.** Solomon didn't seem to think much about who he married and how they affected his dedication to God. But his marriages did turn his heart away from being totally loyal to God. Please marry someone who can help you on your journey to heaven instead of marrying someone who will keep you from getting there.

**Keep Your Heart.** Solomon himself said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence," but he failed to do this. As Solomon gave his devotion to his wives, he probably did not realize that his heart was growing cold toward God little by little. To him the God of Israel became only as one of the other gods. Little things can influence us every day and every hour.