



MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

SOLOMON *"Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" 1 Kings 3:7-9*

King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived and also one of the most foolish. God gifted him with unsurpassed wisdom, which Solomon squandered by disobeying God's commandments. Solomon was the second son of King David and Bathsheba. His name means "peaceable." His alternative name was Jedidiah, meaning "beloved of the Lord." Even as a baby, Solomon was loved by God. A conspiracy by Adonijah, Solomon's half-brother, tried to rob Solomon of the throne. Solomon killed Adonijah and Joab, David's general, to take the kingship. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and promised him anything he asked. Solomon chose understanding and discernment. God was so pleased with the request that he granted it, along with great riches and power. Solomon's downfall began when he married the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh to seal a political alliance. He could not control his lust. Among Solomon's 700 wives and 300 concubines were many foreigners, which angered God. The inevitable happened: They lured King Solomon away from Yahweh into worship of false gods and idols. Over his 40-year reign, Solomon did many great things, but he succumbed to the temptations of lesser men. The peace a united Israel enjoyed, the massive building projects he headed, and the successful commerce he developed became meaningless when Solomon stopped pursuing God.

KING SOLOMON'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Solomon set up an organized state in Israel, with many officials to assist him.

The country was divided into 12 major districts, with each district providing for the king's court during one month each year. The system was fair and just, distributing the tax burden evenly over the entire country. Solomon built the first temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, a seven-year task that became one of the wonders of the ancient world.

He also built a majestic palace, gardens, roads, and government buildings. He accumulated thousands of horses and chariots. After securing peace with his neighbors, he built up trade and became the wealthiest king of his time. The Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame and visited him to test his wisdom with hard questions. After seeing with her own eyes all that Solomon had built in Jerusalem, and hearing his wisdom, the queen blessed the God of Israel, saying:

***"The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard."* (1 Kings 10:6-7,)**

Solomon is credited with writing much of the book of Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, the book of Ecclesiastes, and two psalms.

LIFE LESSONS

King Solomon's sins speak loudly to us in our materialistic culture. When we worship possessions and fame over God, we are headed for a fall. When Christians marry an unbeliever, they can also expect trouble. God is our first love. We should let nothing come before him.

KING SOLOMON'S STRENGTHS

King Solomon possessed great wisdom, granted to him by God. He was a prolific writer, poet, and scientist. First Kings 4:32 tells us he wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs.

His skills in architecture and management turned Israel into the showplace of the middle East. As a diplomat, he made treaties and alliances that brought peace to his kingdom.

KING SOLOMON'S WEAKNESSES

To satisfy his curious mind, Solomon turned to worldly pleasures instead of the pursuit of God. He collected all sorts of treasures and surrounded himself with luxury. In the case of non-Jewish wives and concubines, he let lust rule his heart instead of obedience to God. Solomon taxed his subjects heavily, conscripted them into his army and into slave-like labor for his building projects.

FAMILY TREE

Father - King David, Mother – Bathsheba,
Brothers - Absalom. Adonijah. Sister – Tamar.

OCCUPATION

King of Israel.

HOMETOWN

Jerusalem.