

**1 Kings 11**  
**December 15, 2024**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: In what ways can we be led into idolatry in our modern lives? What is leading us astray today? What is taking our eyes off of Kingdom matters? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** Our world is filled with temptations and ungodly influences. And Solomon was not immune to that either. What caused Solomon to go astray? Let's start with him having 700 wives and 300 concubines...what could possibly go wrong?!! As we will see, the influence of foreign wives leads Solomon to worship other idols. As we read this storyline, I want us to be curious as to why Solomon, who followed God so faithfully for many years, began to turn away from God. Consider:

- \*What attracted Solomon to love so many foreign women?
- \*Why would Solomon persist in chasing after them, even though he knew it was against God's commands?
- \*Do you think Solomon *intended* to turn away from God? If not, then how did it happen?

Solomon had it all and started well, but he didn't finish well. Let's read the text and see what we can learn from it.

**BOOK:**

**Solomon's Wives**

**11** King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter— Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. <sup>2</sup>They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. <sup>3</sup>He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. <sup>4</sup>As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. <sup>5</sup>He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup>So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

<sup>7</sup>On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. <sup>8</sup>He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. <sup>10</sup>Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. <sup>11</sup>So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. <sup>12</sup>Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. <sup>13</sup>Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from

him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

### *Solomon's Adversaries*

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom. <sup>15</sup> Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom. <sup>16</sup> Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom. <sup>17</sup> But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father. <sup>18</sup> They set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking men from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food.

<sup>19</sup> Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, in marriage. <sup>20</sup> The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpenes brought up in the royal palace. There Genubath lived with Pharaoh's own children.

<sup>21</sup> While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go, that I may return to my own country.”

<sup>22</sup> “What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?” Pharaoh asked.

“Nothing,” Hadad replied, “but do let me go!”

<sup>23</sup> And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. <sup>24</sup> He gathered men around him and became the leader of a band of rebels when David destroyed the forces of Zobah; the rebels went to Damascus, where they settled and took control. <sup>25</sup> Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

### *Jeroboam Rebels Against Solomon*

<sup>26</sup> Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

<sup>27</sup> Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king: Solomon had built the supporting terraces and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father. <sup>28</sup> Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the house of Joseph.

<sup>29</sup> About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, <sup>30</sup> and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. <sup>31</sup> Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. <sup>32</sup> But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. <sup>33</sup> I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

<sup>34</sup> “ ‘But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon’s hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who observed my commands and statutes. <sup>35</sup> I will take the kingdom from his son’s hands and give you ten tribes. <sup>36</sup> I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name. <sup>37</sup> However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. <sup>38</sup> If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. <sup>39</sup> I will humble David’s descendants because of this, but not forever.’”

<sup>40</sup> Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon’s death.

### *Solomon’s Death*

<sup>41</sup> As for the other events of Solomon’s reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon? <sup>42</sup> Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. <sup>43</sup> Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about God in this passage? What does this chapter teach about God’s faithfulness despite human unfaithfulness? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

Solomon forgot that his blessings came from God. He forgot the high spiritual privileges that had come to him as God appeared personally to him. His power and glory detracted from his vision of the glory of God. His foreign wives led him away from God.

### **Close in Prayer**

## **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

***Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Kings 11). Victor Books.***

### **IV. Deliberate Apostasy (11)**

It is unbelievable that the man who wrote Prov. 5:20–23 and 6:20–24 would multiply wives and concubines from heathen nations. Polygamy itself was bad enough (it had caused his father David no end of trouble), but to take wives from heathen lands was deliberate apostasy. See Deut. 7:1–14. What was the cause of this repeated sin? Solomon's heart was not right with God (11:4). God wanted "integrity of heart" (9:4), which means a united heart single to the glory of God. But Solomon had a divided heart—he loved the world as he tried to serve God. What a tragedy that the man who built the temple to the one true God should begin to worship at heathen altars. God was angry at this, so He sent several disciplines to bring the erring king back to the faith.

#### *A. A warning message (vv. 1–13).*

God threatened to take the kingdom away from Solomon and give it to another. You would think that this warning would shock Solomon back to his senses, but apparently it did not. If a person will not listen to the Word, then the Lord has to take even more drastic measures.

#### *B. An invasion by Edom (vv. 14–22).*

Solomon's "kingdom of rest" is now upset by war. Read James 4 for the spiritual explanation of this. Apparently, Solomon's alliances with Pharaoh were not accomplishing much, because Egypt turned out to be an ally with the Edomites.

#### *C. Trouble from Rezon (vv. 23–25).*

This band of warriors harassed Solomon's borders for many years. The apostate king was losing ground rapidly.

#### *D. Competition from Jeroboam (vv. 26–43).*

Solomon himself had promoted Jeroboam into a good position because of his bravery and industry. But God chose this obscure young man to be the king over ten tribes. The one tribe remaining would be Judah, but this southern kingdom would include "little Benjamin" (12:21). When Solomon heard that he had a rival, he tried to kill him. The king must have known that the people were groaning under the heavy taxes and forced labor programs (see 12:6–11). In fact, Adoram, who was in charge of the "public works" was stoned by the people (12:18).

Solomon's death left his son Rehoboam to reign in his place. Had Solomon remained true to the Lord, his later years would have been filled with blessing and victory instead of chastening and defeat. He left to his son the problem of winning back the love of the people and lifting the heavy tax burdens that helped to make Solomon so wealthy. Yes, Israel seemed to be basking in great glory and splendor, but all was not well. It was a hollow glory that could not last. The description in Rev. 3:17–18 fits the situation well.

**Constable, C.L. (1985). 1 Kings. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 508-510) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

#### 4. SOLOMON'S APOSTASY (CHAP. 11)

The internal weaknesses of Solomon's reign which have been only hinted at so far come into full view in this chapter.

##### *a. His foreign wives (11:1–8)*

11:1–8. Besides a **king** being forbidden by God to increase the number of his horses (Deut. 17:16; cf. comments on 1 Kings 10:26–29), a king was also forbidden by God to marry **many** wives “or his heart will be led astray” (Deut. 17:17). This is precisely what happened to **Solomon**. His palace apparently included a harem; **He had 700 wives and 300 concubines**. Solomon's pagan **wives** led him into idolatry just as God had warned (Ex. 23:31–33; 34:15–16; Deut. 7:1–4). **Solomon** did not abandon Yahweh, but he worshiped other gods as well. **His heart was not fully devoted to the LORD**; he compromised his affections. Apparently, he concluded that since he was a great king he should live like the other great kings of the world even though it meant disobeying God's Word.

**As Solomon grew older**, he got farther away from God (cf. 1 Kings 11:33). **Ashtoreth** was a **goddess of sex and fertility** whose worship involved licentious rites and worship of the stars. She was a vile goddess (cf. 2 Kings 23:13). **Molech** worship involved human sacrifices, especially children, which was strictly prohibited by the Law (Lev. 18:21; 20:1–5). **Chemosh** worship was equally cruel and licentious. The **hill east of Jerusalem** on which **Solomon built ... high places** may have been the Mount of Olives (cf. 2 Kings 23:13).

##### *b. His sentence from God (11:9–13)*

11:9–13. The reason for God's judgment of Solomon is clear: **his heart had turned away from the LORD** (cf. v. 4). Solomon's great sin was a change in his **attitude toward God** (v. 11). This happened despite the two times God had revealed Himself to Solomon, making promises to him (3:5; 9:2). His decision to pursue **other gods** led to his disobeying (11:10) God's specific command against idolatry (9:6–7).

**One of Solomon's subordinates** (11:11) was Jeroboam, who tore **the kingdom ... from Solomon's son**. The **one tribe** (v. 13) that God left in Rehoboam's hand was Judah. Actually two tribes were left (Judah and Benjamin) but Benjamin was small and the two became known as the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The tribe of Simeon had been given territory south of Judah but later at least part of Simeon moved north (see comments on Josh. 19:1–9). It was **for David's sake** that God tempered His judgment with mercy and did not allow the split in Solomon's day. Whereas David had sinned against God deliberately, his heart remained devoted to the Lord. That is why his sin was not so serious as Solomon's. The greatest commandment is to love God with all one's heart (Deut. 6:5).

##### *c. His external adversaries (11:14–25)*

11:14–22. **Hadad** was a prince of **Edom**, Israel’s ancient enemy to the southeast. **When David was at war with Edom**, Hadad, then **a boy**, escaped **to Egypt**. On the way he went **from Midian**, a kingdom south of Edom and east of the modern-day Gulf of Aqaba, **to Paran**, an area in the Sinai Peninsula between Midian and **Egypt**. **Pharaoh** took him in and even **gave him a sister-in-law in marriage**.

The ancient hostility of the Edomites toward the Israelites must have been aggravated in Hadad’s mind by David’s slaughter of the Edomites, and **Hadad** lived for the day he could take revenge. Hearing **that David** had died (in 971 B.C.) and that **Joab** was also dead **Hadad** asked **Pharaoh** for permission to go back to Edom. Apparently he caused trouble for Solomon militarily (cf. v. 25).

11:23–25. Another enemy of **Solomon** was the rebel **Rezon** (see the chart “Kings of Aram in 1 and 2 Kings”). He was from **Zobah**, a kingdom just south of Damascus (cf. 2 Sam. 8:3–6). Rezon went with some other **rebels** to **Damascus**, the capital of Aram, and **took control** there.

*d. His internal adversary (11:26–40)*

11:26–28. **Jeroboam** was from Ephraim, the leading tribe of Israel’s Northern Kingdom. Apparently, he had worked for **Solomon** when the king **built the supporting terraces and ... filled in the gap in the wall of the City of David**. As a result of his good work **Solomon** promoted him over **the whole** forced **labor force** of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (the house of Joseph).

11:29–33. **Ahijah the prophet** (who was sought out later by Jeroboam, 14:1–18) graphically demonstrated to **Jeroboam** the division of **the kingdom** by tearing his own **new cloak** in **12 pieces** and giving **10** to **Jeroboam**. This must have impressed Jeroboam greatly. The **one tribe** (11:32) to be left with Solomon was Judah (cf. comments on v. 13). Actually, two were left—Judah and Benjamin—which were often regarded as one tribe and referred to as Judah. This portrayal by **Ahijah** demonstrated what God had said earlier to Solomon (vv. 11–13). Not only Solomon but also the people of Israel (**they**, v. 33) had **forsaken** Yahweh by worshiping idols (cf. comments on **Ashtoreth ... Chemosh**, and **Molech** in vv. 5–7).

11:34–39. Solomon’s **son** (v. 35) was Rehoboam to whom would be given **one tribe** (cf. vv. 13, 32). Like a **lamp** kept burning perpetually in a tent or home, Judah would be a perpetual testimony to God’s choice of **David**, who was of the tribe of Judah (cf. 15:4; 2 Sam. 21:17; 2 Kings 8:19).

Jeroboam was told that he would **rule over all that his heart** desired (1 Kings 11:37) in **Israel**, that is, he would have freedom to rule as he saw fit. It is remarkable that God’s conditional promise to establish Jeroboam’s line (v. 38) was similar to His unconditional promise to establish David’s line (v. 38). Unfortunately, Jeroboam did not value this promise but forfeited it. God prophesied that He would **humble David’s descendants ... but not forever**. This ending of the humbling was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, David’s greatest Son (i.e., Descendant). All that Ahijah prophesied came to pass.

11:40. The reason **Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam** is not stated. Perhaps **Jeroboam** tried to take matters into his own hands and seize the kingdom. Or he may have done something else that made it necessary for him to flee **to Shishak the king** (Pharaoh) of **Egypt** (cf. Hadad’s escape to Egypt, vv. 14–22). Shishak (945–924), also known as Sheshonk I, later invaded Judah (2 Chron. 12:2–4) and Jerusalem (1 Kings 14:25–26) in Rehoboam’s reign.

e. *His death (11:41–43)*

11:41–43. The writer of 1 and 2 Kings was led by the Spirit of God to record no more **events of Solomon’s reign** though others were preserved in **the book of the annals of Solomon**, which is not extant today (cf. comments on 14:19). This is the first of several such sources mentioned in 1 Kings (cf. 14:19, 29) and 2 Chronicles (cf. 2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 26:22; 32:32). **Solomon reigned for 40 years (971–931 B.C.)**. After he died, he was given an honorable burial **in the City of David** (cf. comments on 1 Kings 2:10).

Solomon’s life ended in tragedy. Solomon was greatly blessed by God, but he allowed God’s gifts to dominate his affections. The fault lay not with God for giving Solomon so much, but with Solomon who, though he had the wisdom to deal with such temptations, chose to set his affections on the gifts and not on the Giver. The man best qualified to live life successfully chose not to do so. Success in life in the eyes of God does not come automatically with the possession of wisdom but with the application of wisdom to one’s life. Spiritual success depends not only on insight but also on choices.

***Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (pp. 138-139). Broadman & Holman Publishers.***

***Solomon’s Apostasy (11:1–43)***. Deuteronomy warned of forgetting God in prosperity (Deut. 6:10–12; 8:7–20). The troubles of Solomon’s reign can be traced to the misuse of God’s blessing. His success in international trade encouraged him to marry foreign wives for diplomatic reasons. He loved the Lord, but he also “loved many foreign women.”

This love for foreign women grew greater than his love for the Lord’s commandments. The wives caused him to pursue idolatrous worship. The hills of Jerusalem were dotted with high places sacred to the Phoenician fertility goddess Ashtoreth (see Deut. 16:21; Judg. 3:7; 1 Sam. 7:3–4), the god Molech of the Ammonites (Lev. 18:21), and Chemosh of Moab (Judg. 11:24).

The author concluded that “Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD” and did not obey “as David his father had done.” Although David sinned against the Lord, his reign was not evil because he never fell into the contemptuous practice of idolatry. This practice brought God’s judgment, which entailed Israel’s division into two kingdoms. Solomon’s wisdom and possessions were not subjected to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord raised up three antagonists: Hadad the Edomite, Rezon of Aram/Syria, and Jeroboam of the tribe Ephraim. Ahijah, the Lord’s prophet, incited Jeroboam to lead the ten northern tribes to secede from Jerusalem.

Solomon died after forty years of rule (971–931 B.C.). Rehoboam succeeded his father and reaped the whirlwind of God’s judgment.

***Tatum, S. L. (1972). 1 Kings. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher’s Bible Commentary (pp. 198-199). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.***

### **The Idolatry, Decline, and Death of Solomon (1 Kings 11:1–43)**

*The passage*—Solomon forgot that his blessings came from God. He forgot the high spiritual privileges that had come to him as God appeared personally to him. His power and glory detracted from his vision of the glory of God. His foreign wives led him away from God. He compromised by participating in worship with them and in providing for the building of altars to strange gods.

Solomon did what was evil in the sight of God. He did not follow in the ways of David's worship. God was angry because of his sins. God promised to take the kingdom away from him, with the exception of one of the tribes. For the sake of David God delayed the execution of the sentence until after Solomon's death.

Adversaries began to rise up against Solomon. First Hadad the Edomite organized resistance to Solomon. He had been an exile in Egypt, but returned after Solomon became king of Israel. Rezon of Syria became a troublemaker about the same time. It was said of both of these that God raised them up as adversaries.

The greatest threat came in the person of Jeroboam. He was a very able man. Solomon had made him one of the leaders in his forced labor system. The prophet Ahijah predicted that Jeroboam would take the Northern tribes away from Solomon's hand. His dramatic illustration was the tearing of his robe into twelve parts. He gave Jeroboam ten pieces along with his prophecy.

Ahijah's prophecy was much like the judgment that God had pronounced to Solomon. In it God gave the reasons for Solomon's loss of the kingdom. He promised to bless Jeroboam if he would serve God. Solomon learned of Jeroboam's opposition and sought to kill him. Jeroboam fled to Egypt.

Solomon died. The statement, "He slept with his fathers," came to be a common way of announcing the death of a king. Solomon was buried in the city of David—Jerusalem. Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead.

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Kings 11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**

© 2024 Lee Ann Penick