

**1 Kings 11.1-13****Solomon: Downgrade, Downslide, Downfall****Read 1 Kings 11.1-13****MAKING THE CONNECTION**

1. Solomon succeeded his father, David, and reigned over the united kingdom of Israel for 40 years / **ch 11.42**
2. His story is told in **the first 11 chapters of 1 Kings**.
3. The first 20 years of his reign were blessed by Yahweh and were glorious / **ch 9.20**.
4. During those years, God had appeared to him twice
  - a. **ch 3.3-15** / In the first appearance, Solomon asked Yahweh for the needed wisdom to lead His so great a people, and the LORD graciously granted that request.
  - b. **& ch 9.1-9** / In the second appearance at the dedication of the Temple Solomon had built for the LORD, Yahweh again promised Solomon that if he would love the LORD as he had been commanded, He would continue to establish him as king as Yahweh had promised David. However, if he did not do so, then YHWH would depose him and cast them and the Temple out of His Holy sight and bring disaster upon them.
5. Today's lesson is the sad and sordid tale of how that eventual destruction came to pass.
6. These events had transpired sometime over the second 20-year period of his reign. **Ch 9.10** tells of the first 20-year period – and now **ch 11.4** says **“For when Solomon was old...”**
7. We will tell this chapter of Solomon's latter years of declension and departure from Yahweh in three movements: [1] **Downgrade** / vv 1-2; [2] **Downslide** / vv 3-8; [3] **Downfall** / vv 9-13

**I / DOWNGRADE / vv 1-2**

1. What do we mean by **‘downgrade’**? A downgrade is when you lessen, diminish, or ratchet down your standards or values. When you ‘downgrade,’ you compromise and give up the high standards of convictions you should live by and once did.
2. In Solomon's case, his downgrade was giving up his supreme love for Yahweh had commanded in **Deuteronomy 6.4: to love Yahweh with all your heart**. Solomon loved the LORD as **ch 3.3** states ... although even then, the downgrade had already begun. He had, at that time, intermarried with an Egyptian wife and was sacrificing in the high places – both of which YHWH had commanded they should not do.
3. Now, we come to **ch 11.1**, and Solomon had loved and intermarried with **many foreign women**. And included among them were **Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, 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.** / see **Deuteronomy 7.1-5**
4. **We need to learn some lessons here for ourselves:**
  - (1) All of our sins against God begin with loving something that is either lesser/other than God or something that He has commanded us NOT to love / **see 1 John 2.15-17**
  - (2) We **MUST** learn to check the rising of our illicit loves in our hearts before they begin to take root and grow in our desires.
  - (3) Either we kill and ‘put to death’ our sins [**Romans 8.13 & Colossians 3.5**] or they will kill us – follow the story here to see where it leads Solomon...

**II / DOWNSLIDE / vv 3-8**

1. What do we mean by **‘downslide’**? Downslide is the ‘slippery slope’ of sin. Like making a snowball at the top of a hill and push it roll down – it increases both in size and momentum as it makes its downslide. So it will be with our sin if we don’t deal with it when it first begins to sprout in our hearts.
2. You can’t ‘manage’ your sin. You can’t do a ‘control burn’ of your sin. Once you begin to condone or coddle your sin, it will take you over. As the old adage truthfully goes and grows:

*“Watch your thoughts, they become your words;  
watch your words, they become your actions;  
watch your actions, they become your habits;  
watch your habits, they become your character;  
watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”*

**IF ONLY** Solomon had been watchful and careful over his own heart and desires as he had written in **Proverbs 4.23: Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.** All of the acts, actions, deeds, and conduct of our lives inevitably flow from the desires, loves, and thoughts of our hearts! / OR how about all his warnings against the influences of ungodly and immoral women in **Proverbs, chapters 5, 6, & 7** particularly!

3. Solomon was not content with loving ‘only’ the daughter of Pharaoh – **He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. All his wives turned away his heart. 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.**
4. One sin leads to another. Our sins not only multiply, but they cluster together with other more egregious sins.
  - a. Solomon first **‘loved many foreign women’** and gave his heart to them.
  - b. Then he **‘clung to these in love.’**
  - c. Then, in his downslide, **‘Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.’**
  - d. **‘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.’**
  - e. **‘And so he did for ALL his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.’**
5. Open, overt, and outward sin is encouraged, energized, and emboldened when we willingly and secretly rehearse it over and over in our desires, minds, and fantasies. When we willingly preview it in our minds and thoughts, it is an easy step then to practice it in our outward conduct when the opportunity presents itself – and it will!
6. Sin occurs at the intersection of desire and opportunity. That’s why Jesus commands us repeatedly: **“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” [Matthew 6.13]...** and **“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” [Mark 14.38 & Luke 22.40, 46].**
  - a. Temptation to sin is a desire just waiting for an opportunity to indulge itself. Thank God that when you are enticed with an illicit desire, He mercifully withholds you from an opportunity to act it out ... or when the tempting opportunity does present itself, He graciously withholds the desire to take advantage of it.

**III / DOWNFALL / vv 9-13**

1. Solomon illustrates the steady and fatal progression of sin that James describes in **James 1.13-15:**

**Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he Himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup> But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.**

2. Track Solomon’s downfall according to the course laid out in **James 1.13-15**:
  - a. **He consented, conceded, and complied with all his desires as they arose in his heart – he did not check them or deal with them as they began to arise and entice him.**
    - i. And we must observe here that this went on for years. We can be sure that Yahweh must have come to him repeatedly, reminding him and convicting him of his moral and spiritual sins and downslide. But his continuous disobedience and rebellion had so hardened and calloused his heart, he deliberately and wantonly continued in the pursuits of his own desires and sins.
  - b. **His giving in to his desires then led him to commit the sins they enticed him to want.**
    - i. This goes back to his loves and desires: instead of loving Yahweh with all his heart as YHWH had commanded, he pursued the loves of self, wealth, lusts, and all pleasures he enumerates in the **Book of Ecclesiastes, especially ch 2.**
  - c. The commission of those sins he was desiring grew to full maturity and brought the judgment of God on him and the nation.
3. **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 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded.**
4. Solomon is a sad, sordid story of:
  - a. **privilege squandered:** Yahweh had given Solomon ALL of these graces. God had **appeared to him twice** – not just once [as in ch 3.3-14] when Solomon was young and asked God for the needed wisdom to lead His so great a people – but twice [as in ch 9.1-9] when Yahweh again promised Solomon that He would establish his throne and kingdom, that His eyes and heart would be on them and with them to bless them, and that He would dwell with them and fill the Temple with His Glory.
  - b. **promises violated:** Solomon had promised Yahweh that he would serve Him according to all His commandments and for His pleasure. Solomon’s request for wisdom and his commitment to use that wisdom to follow Yahweh and fulfill His will **pleased the Lord... / ch 3.10.** But now, for years, Solomon had broken those solemn promises and reneged on his commitments to follow, serve, and please the Lord.
  - c. **power abused:** Yahweh had appointed Solomon to the throne he was occupying and had given him the power he was exercising. But now he was abusing that God-given power to satisfy his own lustful desires.
5. The **DOWNFALL** that Yahweh pronounced upon Solomon was: **I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant** [as it came to pass in **vv 26-40**]
6. And we must remember and reiterate that Yahweh had given Solomon numerous forewarnings of these impending destructive consequences of his unfaithfulness and covenant-breaking:
  - a. Going all the way back to **Deuteronomy 28** ... Yahweh warned them of the consequences of departing from loving and serving Him only.
  - b. In **2 Samuel 7**, when Yahweh promised David a perpetual throne and kingdom, it was conditioned upon the faithfulness of his sons who would succeed him / **2 Samuel 7.14**
  - c. In **1 Kings 9**, when Yahweh appeared to Solomon the second time at the dedication of the Temple, He solemnly and personally warned Solomon of the consequential downfall he would suffer: **“...But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, <sup>7</sup> then I will cut off Israel from the land**

**that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my Name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. <sup>8</sup> And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?’ <sup>9</sup> Then they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore the LORD has brought all this disaster on them.’”**

7. So ... what we are witnessing here in Solomon’s downgrade, downslide, and downfall is the beginning of the end of the earthly kingdom of Israel.
  - a. Immediately after Solomon’s death, the kingdom will be split. The 10 northern tribes [to be called Israel] will secede under the rule of Jeroboam / **see ch 11.26-40 & 12.16-33.** The remaining two tribes of Judah and Benjamin [to be called Judah] would continue under the rule of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam / **see ch 12.21-24.**
  - b. Both of these kingdoms would eventually be overtaken by the Assyrians and Babylonians and carried off into their respective captivities.
  - c. The city of Jerusalem and their beloved Temple would be destroyed.

## PROLOGUE

1. Let’s remind ourselves again of the primary and overarching theme of these Books of 1 & 2 Kings... Here is an excellent Purpose Statement for these books from Yahweh’s holy perspective: *“The books of Kings continue the story of kingship begun in Samuel, and their primary purpose is to record the ‘covenant failure’ of the Hebrew united and divided monarchies. The Biblical narrative implicitly balances the notion of God’s sovereignty and the reality of human freedom and declares that God was justified in exiling His people for the failure of the kings of Israel and Judah to uphold the ideals of the Davidic covenant.”* [A Survey of the Old Testament / Andrew E. Hill & Jonathan H. Walton].
2. **This theme also serves to show us the ultimate failure of all human kings and our need for King Jesus to come with His Gospel and salvation!**
3. **No King but Jesus Christ ... no ‘Son of David’ but Jesus Christ ... is worthy and qualified to be God’s appointed King of His Kingdom as He promised in 2 Samuel 7.12-13 & 16:**

**“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your Offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish the Throne of His Kingdom forever ... and your House and your Kingdom shall be made sure before Me. Your Throne shall be established forever!”**

**TRUST IN YAHWEH WITH ALL YOUR HEART  
AND DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.  
IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM,  
AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.  
DO NOT BE WISE IN YOUR OWN EYES;  
FEAR YAHWEH AND TURN AWAY FROM EVIL.  
IT WILL BE HEALING TO YOUR BODY AND REFRESHMENT TO YOUR BONES.  
~Proverbs 3.5-8 LSB**