

LIVING GODS WILL

Vessel of God

SOLOMON



The Judgment of Solomon by Peter Paul Rubens

Born: 990 BC, Jerusalem

Died: 931 BC, Jerusalem (at age 59)

Solomon's parents were **King David and Bathsheba**.

Solomon built **God's Temple**.

Solomon authored **The Song of Solomon & Ecclesiastes**.

Solomon authored most of **Proverbs**.

Solomon was the third and last king of the United Kingdom of Israel, following King Saul and King David. He was the son of **David** and Bathsheba, the former wife of Uriah the Hittite whom David had killed to hide his adultery with Bathsheba while her husband was on the battle front.

Solomon wrote the **Song of Solomon**, the book of **Ecclesiastes**, and much of the book of **Proverbs**. His authorship of Ecclesiastes is contested by some, but **Solomon** is the only "son of David" to be "king over Israel" (not just Judah) "in Jerusalem" (**Ecclesiastes 1:1, 12**), and many of the descriptions of the author fit **Solomon** perfectly. **Solomon** reigned for **40 years** (**1 Kings 11:42**).

What are the highlights of **Solomon's** life? When he ascended to the throne, he sought after **God**, and **God** gave him opportunity to ask for whatever he wanted. **Solomon** humbly acknowledged his inability to rule well and unselfishly asked **God** for the wisdom he would need to rule **God's** people justly. **God** gave him wisdom and wealth besides (**1 Kings 3:4-15; 10:27**).

In fact, "**King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth**" (**1 Kings 10:23**). **God** also gave **Solomon** peace on all sides during most of his reign (**1 Kings 4:20-25**).

One common illustration of **Solomon's** wisdom is his judging a dispute over the identity of the true mother of an infant child (**1 Kings 3:16-28**). **Solomon** proposed splitting the living child in half, knowing that the true mother would prefer to lose her son to another woman than to have him killed.

Solomon was not only wise in his rule but had great general wisdom as well. His wisdom was renowned in his day. The Queen of Sheba traveled 1,200 miles to verify the rumors of his wisdom and grandeur (**1 Kings 10**).

"Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed" (1 Kings 10:3-5).

Solomon proved not only to be knowledgeable but to have put his wisdom into action in the way his kingdom functioned.

Solomon wrote many proverbs and songs (**1 Kings 4:32**) and completed many building projects (**1 Kings 7:1–12; 9:15–23**). **Solomon** also built a fleet of ships and acquired tons of gold from Ophir with Hiram, king of Tyre, as a partner (**1 Kings 9:26–28; 10:11, 22**). Perhaps **Solomon's** most important building project was completing the **Jewish temple** per the instructions and provisions of his father, David (**1 Kings 6; 1 Chronicles 22**).

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of them foreigners who led him into public idolatry in his old age, greatly angering **God** (**1 Kings 11:1–13**). **First Kings 11:9–10** records, "**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. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command.**"

God told **Solomon** that he would remove the kingdom from him, but, for the sake of David, would not do so during **Solomon's** lifetime. He also promised not to tear the whole kingdom away. In the meantime, **God** raised up adversaries against **Solomon** who caused trouble the remainder of **Solomon's** life (**1 Kings 11:14–25**). Jeroboam, who would become the first king of Israel, also began to rebel against **Solomon**, but fled (**1 Kings 11:26–40**). The kingdom was divided under Rehoboam, **Solomon's** son (**1 Kings 12**).

There are many lessons we can learn from the life of **Solomon**. First, when we seek **God** with all of our heart, He will be found (**1 Kings 3:3–7**).

Second, those who honor **God** will be honored by Him (**1 Kings 3:11–13; 1 Samuel 2:30**).

Third, **God** will equip us to accomplish the tasks He calls us to if we will rely on Him (**1 Kings 3; Romans 12:3–8; 2 Peter 1:3**).

Fourth, the spiritual life is a marathon, not a sprint. A good start is not always enough to finish well (**1 Kings 3; 11**).

Fifth, we can sincerely ask **God** to incline our hearts toward Him (**1 Kings 8:57–58**), but we will wander off the path of righteousness if we choose to violate His revealed Word.

Sixth, those closest to us will affect our spiritual lives (**Exodus 34:16; 1 Kings 11:1–8; Daniel 1; 3; 1 Corinthians 15:33**), and we must therefore be very careful of the company we keep.

Seventh, life lived apart from **God** will be meaningless, regardless of education, fulfilled goals, the greatest of pleasures, and the greatest abundance of wealth (**Ecclesiastes 1:2**).

Of course, **Solomon** lived in the Old Testament dispensation and thus did not experience being “**born again**” or the indwelling of the **Holy Spirit**, for that was not possible before the Christ’s ascension and the birth of the church (see **John 16:7**). The terms born again and saved (in the sense of eternal salvation) are New Testament terms. That kind of language is not used of Old Testament saints. So, when we speak of **Solomon’s** being “**saved**,” we are simply referring to his justification before **God** and his presence in heaven today.

King **Solomon** was greatly used by **God** in many ways. He received wisdom and riches from **God**. He built a beautiful temple because **God** chose him for that, and **God’s** presence later dwelt there. **Solomon’s** dedication of the temple in **1 Kings 8** is a humble, awe-filled occasion marked by thousands of sacrifices and a prayer overflowing with faith and praise.

God used **Solomon** to write three books of the Bible: Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. **God** said concerning **Solomon**, “**I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father**” (**1 Chronicles 28:6**). Surely, these facts allow us to surmise that **Solomon** was saved and is in heaven today.

On the other hand, King **Solomon** also sinned greatly against the **Lord (1 Kings 11:3–13)**. Sadly, he married pagan wives, built pagan altars for them, and even participated in pagan worship himself.

The only reason **God** did not immediately take the kingdom from **Solomon** was that **God** wanted to keep His covenant with David (**1 Kings 11:12**). The record of **Solomon’s** sins, plus the dismal tone in Ecclesiastes, has led some to suggest that **Solomon** was not saved and is not in heaven today.

Some point to the fact that **Solomon** is not mentioned in the great hall of faith of **Hebrews 11** as another clue that he was not saved. However, many other Old Testament characters are not mentioned there, either, and **Hebrews 11** was never intended to be a comprehensive list of the redeemed.

Just as in the life of David, there were periods of disobedience in **Solomon’s** life that required confession and repentance. Do believers today ever sin? Of course, they do. The actions of **God’s** people don’t always match up with what they profess.

When believers stumble, they should confess their sins and receive God’s promised cleansing (1 John 1:9). We know that David did exactly that (**Psalms 51**). Did **Solomon**? Yes, we believe he did.

The book of Ecclesiastes is a dark study on a life lived apart from **God**. **Solomon** looks back over his wasted years and finds no joy in them, only futility, vanity, and “**a chasing after the wind**” (**Ecclesiastes 1:14**). But he had learned his lesson—albeit the hard way—and he wraps up the book with this advice: “**Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil**” (**Ecclesiastes 12:13–14**).

This surely sounds like a man who has returned to the **Lord** and is trusting in Him.

Of course, the ultimate answer to whether or not **Solomon** was saved rests with **God**, not with us. Salvation is in the hands of **God** and **God** alone because, as Scripture says, **God looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7)**. But we believe that **Solomon** did trust in **God** and, in spite of his disobedience, was a son of **God**.

His writings clearly speak of a man who had a personal relationship with **God** and knew firsthand the folly of living without **God**. We assume that, upon his death, **Solomon** went to heaven to be with the **God** he loved and served. Despite his failures and shortcomings, **Solomon** was saved, by grace through faith, just as we are today.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

1st Kings 11:42 And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

1st Kings 10:23 So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

1st Kings 11:1 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. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.

1st Kings 11:11 Therefore the Lord said to 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.

1st Kings 11:14 Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was a descendant of the king in Edom.



The Dream of King Solomon by Luca Giordano