

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

Solomon's Apostasy

By
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1 Kings 11:1-13*

We have talked about the success and fame of Solomon, how he exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom, how all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

There never was a more God-blessed man than King Solomon. As we say in American slang, he had it made. All he had to do was keep on with the program he had going for him. His careful obedience that had gained him the kingdom to start with, his pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, his God-centered approach to all problems, his devotion to Jehovah God. These were the qualities that characterized his life in those early years, and even into middle age he kept a good grip on his faith and the helm of his life. He had his eyes fixed on God and he determined to serve Him and glorify Him. And God was pleased in Solomon in his early years of faith.

God is always pleased when a man, woman or young person follows the path of obedience and faith. How unfortunate, how sad, how tragic that Solomon had to end his life a spiritual failure. He could have left a name for history to marvel at. He might have excelled even his father David in greatness. I wish I could tell you that Solomon ended his life as he had begun it -- a bright and shining star, a man of absolute fidelity to God, a man who kept the faith in such a way that all generations would have in him a Christ-like example to imitate in the blessing of wisdom and wealth God gave him. But it isn't that way. The world crowns success; God crowns faithfulness. It is better to be faithful than famous.

Solomon with all his wisdom did something very foolish, something that he knew was wrong but did anyway. Perhaps he thought, like many do today, that he could handle the wrong; that with him it would be different. With him there was a special monitor within that would keep him from going over the line in his indulgence or sin, some special strength of character that would enable him to handle his life in such a way that he would never stumble and fall. If you feel that way, friend, remember the warning of God, **Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall** (Pro.6:18).

Do you know who penned those words? That's right! Solomon! But isn't it amazing how we can always discern the pride in someone else and fail to detect in ourselves. Solomon knew this truth and yet he behaved proudly to disregard the Word of the Lord concerning a most important matter. He had taken to himself many strange women. It says he loved many strange women. And this in the face of God's warning to Israel, the nation he headed, ***Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.***

Solomon was wise in everything but his love life. His problem was women. Do you know that's the problem of many men today? They can handle everything but their sex drive. Now it is true that Solomon had a bad example of polygamy from his father David. I am sure that he justified the taking of many wives and concubines from the life of his godly father.

Polygamy -- that is the marrying of more than one wife at a time -- is no longer practiced. And even in Solomon's time it was not the custom with any but the very wealthy, and all who practiced it had their marital difficulties because of it. But at least David never married a pagan wife or took a non-Israelite wife or concubine. He married women who had joined themselves to the religion of the God of Israel. But

there again, perhaps Solomon thought he could convert the women he loved. He no doubt believed that he could win them over to his own religion -- such is the vanity and pride of man. But he didn't do it. God had warned that it would turn out the other way around -- the women would turn him to their gods. This was Solomon's pride. He thought he could be different. He thought he could resist any such temptation. This in the face of that solemn warning from the Lord -- **Surely They Will Turn Away Your Heart After Their Gods.**

We see, then, that the Law of Moses explicitly warned and forbade intermarrying with heathen women. This was the perpetual warning in the Word of God. Why did Solomon, a man who was obedient in other ways to his parents and to God, deviate in this one vital particular? Can it be that this is the weakest point for many others today? Surely it is. And this warning goes to both men and women. A woman can be guilty of dating, in her dating days, the wrong kinds of boys or men. When she does that she is playing Solomon's game. Some young men date Christian girls part of the time and worldly girls most of the time. Why is that? What is the attraction of a woman of the world?

Is it not true that the answer to that question puts the finger on Solomon's weakness? Is it not sensuality and lust that tempts a man or a woman to look beyond God's holy saints for companionship to the dens and parlors of the world?

Not only did Solomon have this written warning in the Word of God, he had a personal warning from God himself. It took place on the second occasion that the Lord appeared to Solomon as he had appeared unto him the first time at Gibeon, And the Lord said to him **"I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. ⁴"As for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, ⁵then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'**

⁶"But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸"And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' ⁹"And they will say, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the LORD has brought all this adversity on them.'"

Solomon had practiced obedience in his early years but slipped away as he got older. Old age is not necessarily a hedge against the temptations of the world. They tell us that the most dangerous time for many is middle age -- that it is then that many men get a wandering eye and many women entertain sensuous thoughts that they would never have dreamed of in their youth. Perhaps it is the reluctance of people to grow old. The saying holds true -- ***there is no fool like an old fool.***

Again, it is pride that causes those who had lived close to the Lord to think that they are beyond the range of temptation. Never adopt such a madcap notion.

Note that special experiences or revelations from God are no guarantee that you will be immune from Satan's charms and allurements.

Solomon's pride led to the sin of compromise and a resulting lukewarmness or half-heartedness toward God. The Scripture says, his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, When Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: **and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.** ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. ⁶Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. ⁸Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. 1 Kin. 11:4-8

Solomon paved the way for his old age apostasy by going the way of the world in his love life when he was young, The Word of God says, ¹⁵**Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** ¹⁶**For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.** ¹⁷**The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.** 1 Jn. 2:15-17.

The fall of king Solomon from a true and right worship to a profane and idolatrous worship stands as a warning to us all today. The Reformed and Biblical principle of separation from error is valid in all generations. Had Solomon simply not departed from the Word of God he would have been a great man. As it is he is simply a man who might have been great, who was almost great. Because he identified himself with the world he became like the world in the end. Oh, how this ought to warn us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

To think that Solomon was a man far wiser than you and I will ever be, a man as close to God as most men ever get, a man who might have been the greatest king of all time, a model and type of the Christ who was to come. But alas, alas, he ended his life a failure, a disappointment to God. It says in the Word that God was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded.

¹¹**So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.** ¹²**"Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.** ¹³**"However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but 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."** 1 Kin. 11:11-13

Great wisdom is precious. It is like a watchdog against sin and evil, but a watchdog is no protection when the owner invites strangers into his home, especially strangers that have been warned against.

Wealth is a tremendous responsibility. It can be used for good but it can also bring the world and its ways into a man's home like an overwhelming flood.

In Solomon's life there is much that we can imitate with great profit: **his early obedience, his passion for knowledge and wisdom, his faith and devotion to God.** But let us beware that we do not

imitate him in taking to ourselves the love for the people of the world, especially in matters of the heart which lead to forbidden alliances, for in doing this we can expect the same falling away from Christ to take place in our own lives as did in the life of Solomon.

The warning is sharp and clear -- **do not presume to think that you can love God aright and love the world too. Do not compromise with the sin and evil of this world because if you do, it will demote you with God and wreck your testimony for Christ. Let us separate from all error quickly; let us keep ourselves unspotted from the world.**

Are you in the faith of Christ today? He is the one and only atoning sacrifice for sin. All other gods have no salvation to offer. Only Christ can save. The sacrifices of Solomon's wives were all in vain. They only displeased God. They were an abomination in his sight. We find salvation in Jesus Christ. Come to him today. Confess him as your Savior and Lord and remain true to him all the days of your life.

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