

When Solomon Was Old (c. 937t–932t BC)

1 Kings 11:1–13

Solomon's Many Wives

- 1 King Solomon fell in love with many foreign women (besides Pharaoh's daughter), including Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites.
- 2 They came from nations about which the LORD had warned the Israelites, "You must not establish friendly relations with them! If you do, they will surely shift your allegiance to their gods." But Solomon was irresistibly attracted to them. [[Deut 7:3–4; 17:17](#)]
- 3 He had 700 royal wives and 300 concubines; his wives had a powerful influence over him.
- 4 When Solomon became old, his wives shifted his allegiance to other gods; he was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his God, as his father David had been.

Solomon Worships Other Gods

- 5 Solomon worshiped the Sidonian goddess Astarte and the detestable Ammonite god Milcom.
- 6 Solomon did evil in the LORD's sight; he did not remain loyal to the LORD, like his father David had.
- 7 Furthermore, on the hill east of Jerusalem Solomon built a high place for the detestable Moabite god Chemosh and for the detestable Ammonite god Milcom.
- 8 He built high places for all his foreign wives so they could burn incense and make sacrifices to their gods.

Solomon Refuses to Repent and Incurs God's Judgment

- 9 The LORD was angry with Solomon because he had shifted his allegiance away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him on two occasions
- 10 and had warned him about this very thing, so that he would not follow other gods. But he did not obey the LORD's command.
- 11 So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you insist on doing these things and have not kept the covenantal rules I gave you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.
- 12 However, for your father David's sake I will not do this while you are alive. I will tear it away from your son's hand instead.
- 13 But I will not tear away the entire kingdom; I will leave your son one tribe for my servant David's sake and for the sake of my chosen city Jerusalem."

Solomon's Enemies (c. 937t–932t BC)

1 Kings 11:14–40

Hadad the Edomite

- 14 The LORD brought against Solomon an enemy, Hadad the Edomite, a descendant of the Edomite king.
- 15 During David's campaign against Edom, Joab, the commander of the army, while on a mission to bury the dead, killed every male in Edom.
- 16 For six months Joab and the entire Israelite army stayed there until they had exterminated every male in Edom.
- 17 Hadad, who was only a small boy at the time, escaped with some of his father's Edomite servants and headed for Egypt.
- 18 They went from Midian to Paran; they took some men from Paran and went to Egypt. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, supplied him with a house and food and even assigned him some land.
- 19 Pharaoh liked Hadad so well he gave him his sister-in-law (Queen Tahpenes' sister) as a wife.
- 20 Tahpenes' sister gave birth to his son, named Genubath. Tahpenes raised him in Pharaoh's palace; Genubath grew up in Pharaoh's palace among Pharaoh's sons.
- 21 While in Egypt Hadad heard that David had passed away and that Joab, the commander of the army, was dead. So Hadad asked Pharaoh, "Give me permission to leave so I can return to my homeland."
- 22 Pharaoh said to him, "What do you lack here that makes you want to go to your homeland?" Hadad replied, "Nothing, but please give me permission to leave."

Rezon the Syrian

- 23 God also brought against Solomon another enemy, Rezon son of Eliada who had run away from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah.
- 24 He gathered some men and organized a raiding band. When David tried to kill them, they went to Damascus, where they settled down and gained control of the city.
- 25 He was Israel's enemy throughout Solomon's reign and, like Hadad, caused trouble. He loathed Israel and ruled over Syria.

Jeroboam the Ephraimite

- 26 Jeroboam son of Nebat, one of Solomon's servants, rebelled against the king. He was an Ephraimite from Zeredah whose mother was a widow named Zeruah.
- 27 This is what prompted him to rebel against the king: Solomon built a terrace and he closed up a gap in the wall of the city of his

father David.

28 Jeroboam was a talented man; when Solomon saw that the young man was an accomplished worker, he made him the leader of the work crew from the tribe of Joseph.

29 At that time, when Jeroboam had left Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the road; the two of them were alone in the open country. Ahijah was wearing a brand new robe,

30 and he grabbed the robe and tore it into twelve pieces.

31 Then he told Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces, for this is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'Look, I am about to tear the kingdom from Solomon's hand and I will give ten tribes to you.

32 He will retain one tribe, for my servant David's sake and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.

33 I am taking the kingdom from him because they have abandoned me and worshiped the Sidonian goddess Astarte, the Moabite god Chemosh, and the Ammonite god Milcom. They have not followed my instructions by doing what I approve and obeying my rules and regulations, like Solomon's father David did.

34 I will not take the whole kingdom from his hand. I will allow him to be ruler for the rest of his life for the sake of my chosen servant David who kept my commandments and rules.

35 I will take the kingdom from the hand of his son and give ten tribes to you.

36 I will leave his son one tribe so my servant David's dynasty may continue to serve me in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen as my home.

37 I will select you; you will rule over all you desire to have and you will be king over Israel.

38 You must obey all I command you to do, follow my instructions, do what I approve, and keep my rules and commandments, like my servant David did. Then I will be with you and establish for you a lasting dynasty, as I did for David; I will give you Israel.

39 I will humiliate David's descendants because of this, but not forever."

40 Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam escaped to Egypt and found refuge with King Shishak of Egypt. He stayed in Egypt until Solomon died.

Ecclesiastes: The Teacher's Reflections – Part 1 (c. 937t–932t BC)

Ecclesiastes 1–3

Introduction

1:1 The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem:

2 "Futile! Futile!" laments the Teacher,

"Absolutely futile! Everything is futile!"

3 What benefit do people get from all the effort
which they expend on earth?

4 A generation comes and a generation goes,
but the earth remains the same through the ages.

5 The sun rises and the sun sets;
it hurries away to a place from which it rises again.

6 The wind goes to the south and circles around to the north;
round and round the wind goes and on its rounds it returns.

7 All the streams flow into the sea, but the sea is not full,
and to the place where the streams flow, there they will flow again.

8 All this monotony is tiresome; no one can bear to describe it:
The eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear ever content with hearing.

9 What exists now is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done;
there is nothing truly new on earth.

10 Is there anything about which someone can say, "Look at this! It is new!"?
It was already done long ago, before our time.

11 No one remembers the former events,
nor will anyone remember the events that are yet to happen;
they will not be remembered by the future generations.

On the Activities of Men

12 I, the Teacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 I decided to carefully and thoroughly examine all that has been accomplished on earth. I concluded: God has given people a burdensome task that keeps them occupied.

14 I reflected on everything that is accomplished by man on earth, and I concluded: Everything he has accomplished is futile—like chasing the wind!

15 What is bent cannot be straightened,
and what is missing cannot be supplied.

On the Benefits of Wisdom

16 I thought to myself, “I have become much wiser than any of my predecessors who ruled over Jerusalem; I have acquired much wisdom and knowledge.”

17 So I decided to discern the benefit of wisdom and knowledge over foolish behavior and ideas; however, I concluded that even this endeavor is like trying to chase the wind!

18 For with great wisdom comes great frustration;
whoever increases his knowledge merely increases his heartache.

On Self-Indulgence

2:1 I thought to myself, “Come now, I will try self-indulgent pleasure to see if it is worthwhile.” But I found that it also is futile.

2 I said of partying, “It is folly,” and of self-indulgent pleasure, “It accomplishes nothing!”

3 I thought deeply about the effects of indulging myself with wine (all the while my mind was guiding me with wisdom) and the effects of behaving foolishly, so that I might discover what is profitable for people to do on earth during the few days of their lives.

On Possessions and Personal Accomplishment

4 I increased my possessions: I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself.

5 I designed royal gardens and parks for myself, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.

6 I constructed pools of water for myself, to irrigate my grove of flourishing trees.

7 I purchased male and female slaves, and I owned slaves who were born in my house; I also possessed more livestock—both herds and flocks—than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem.

8 I also amassed silver and gold for myself, as well as valuable treasures taken from kingdoms and provinces. I acquired male singers and female singers for myself, and what gives a man sensual delight—a harem of beautiful concubines!

9 So I was far wealthier than all my predecessors in Jerusalem, yet I maintained my objectivity:

10 I did not restrain myself from getting whatever I wanted; I did not deny myself anything that would bring me pleasure. So all my accomplishments gave me joy; this was my reward for all my effort.

11 Yet when I reflected on everything I had accomplished and on all the effort that I had expended to accomplish it, I concluded: “All these achievements and possessions are ultimately profitless—like chasing the wind! There is nothing gained from them on earth.”

On the Difference Between Wisdom and Folly

12 Next, I decided to consider wisdom, as well as foolish behavior and ideas. For what more can the king’s successor do than what the king has already done?

13 I realized that wisdom is preferable to folly, just as light is preferable to darkness:

14 The wise man can see where he is going, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I also realized that the same fate happens to them both.

On the Transitory Nature of Life

15 So I thought to myself, “The fate of the fool will happen even to me! Then what did I gain by becoming so excessively wise?” So I lamented to myself, “The benefits of wisdom are ultimately meaningless!”

16 For the wise man, like the fool, will not be remembered for very long, because in the days to come, both will already have been forgotten. Alas, the wise man dies—just like the fool!

17 So I loathed life because what happens on earth seems awful to me; for all the benefits of wisdom are futile—like chasing the wind.

18 So I loathed all the fruit of my effort, for which I worked so hard on earth, because I must leave it behind in the hands of my successor.

19 Who knows if he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will be master over all the fruit of my labor for which I worked so wisely on earth! This also is futile!

20 So I began to despair about all the fruit of my labor for which I worked so hard on earth.

21 For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; however, he must hand over the fruit of his labor as an inheritance to someone else who did not work for it. This also is futile, and an awful injustice!

22 What does a man acquire from all his labor and from the anxiety that accompanies his toil on earth?

23 For all day long his work produces pain and frustration, and even at night his mind cannot relax! This also is futile!

On Finding Contentment in Pleasing God

24 There is nothing better for people than to eat and drink, and to find enjoyment in their work. I also perceived that this ability to find enjoyment comes from God.

25 For no one can eat and drink or experience joy apart from him.

26 For to the one who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner, he gives the task of amassing wealth—only to give it to the one who pleases God. This task of the wicked is futile—like chasing the wind!

On the Ebb and Flow of Human Activities

3:1 For everything there is an appointed time, and an appropriate time for every activity on earth:

- 2 A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to uproot what was planted;
- 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
- 5 A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 A time to search, and a time to give something up as lost;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
- 7 A time to rip, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silent, and a time to speak.
- 8 A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

9 What benefit can a worker gain from his toil?

On the Occupation of Men

10 I have observed the burden that God has given to people to keep them occupied.

11 God has made everything fit beautifully in its appropriate time, but he has also placed ignorance in the human heart so that people cannot discover what God has ordained, from the beginning to the end of their lives.

12 I have concluded that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to enjoy themselves as long as they live,

13 and also that everyone should eat and drink, and find enjoyment in all his toil, for these things are a gift from God.

14 I also know that whatever God does will endure forever;
nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken away from it.
God has made it this way, so that men will fear him.

15 Whatever exists now has already been,
and whatever will be has already been;
for God will seek to do again what has occurred in the past.

On Injustice and God's Final Judgment

16 I saw something else on earth: In the place of justice, there was wickedness, and in the place of fairness, there was wickedness.

17 I thought to myself, "God will judge both the righteous and the wicked; for there is an appropriate time for every activity, and there is a time of judgment for every deed.

On the Fate of Men and Animals

18 I also thought to myself, "It is for the sake of people, so God can clearly show them that they are like animals.

19 For the fate of humans and the fate of animals are the same: As one dies, so dies the other; both have the same breath. There is no advantage for humans over animals, for both are fleeting.

20 Both go to the same place, both come from the dust, and to dust both return.

21 Who really knows if the human spirit ascends upward, and the animal's spirit descends into the earth?

22 So I perceived there is nothing better than for people to enjoy their work, because that is their reward; for who can show them what the future holds?