

**GOD WITH US**  
**Part 4: The Life and Writings of Solomon**  
*Wisdom and Wander – 1Kings 1-11*

**Message 1 – Solomon becomes King**  
**1Kings 1-4**

The entire Bible is the story of God seeking relationship with people, in every age and stage of history. He is Immanuel – “God with us.” Thus, as we read the stories of other people, we learn the about the character and ways of our God. As we see how He related with *them*, we will better understand how He desires to relate *with us*. As you read these ancient stories, therefore, do not just look at the history. Look deeper for the *ways of God – His story* – as He seeks to relate with what is most precious to Him – human beings made in His image.

**Introduction**

As King David was nearing the end of his life, the issue of his successor came to a head. Who would take the throne as Israel’s next king? In that day, the heir was typically the firstborn son (or the oldest surviving son). In David’s case, his firstborn son Amnon had been murdered by Absalom, the third son. In turn, Absalom had been killed by Joab, David’s general. This would leave the second son, Daniel (also called Chileab), to be named king. However, Daniel never appears in the narrative of David’s life, leading many scholars to conclude that he died before his father, David. This leads us to the fourth son of David, Adonijah, who would (typically) succeed his father on the throne, being the oldest living son of David. But God had other plans, as He had announced to David: “*His name will be Solomon and I will give peace and quiet to Israel during his reign. I will secure the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever*” (1Chronicles 22:9,10).

**Adonijah attempts to claim the throne: 1:1-10**

Adonijah did not wait for his father to die or for him to be appointed as successor. He took matters in to his own hands.

***“Now Adonijah the son of Haggith began boasting, saying, “I will make myself king.” So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him” (1:5).***

His self-willed spirit was fueled by his history with his father. He was the kind of son that always got what he wanted.

***“His father had never disciplined him at any time by asking, ‘Why have you done so?’” (1:6).***

*David failed to discipline (train) his children. The result was self-willed, proud sons who thought they knew better than their father. Both Absalom and Adonijah rebelled against their father and sought to take his throne. A Proverb of Solomon: “He who loves his children will discipline them diligently” (Proverbs 13:24).*

It is instructive to note that both Absalom and Adonijah (the two sons who rebelled and sought the kingdom for themselves) were both noted as being very handsome. Externally, they were very impressive and had ‘the looks’ of a king. When David was chosen from among his brothers to be Israel’s king, however, God specifically noted that it was *not the outward appearance* that He was looking at; rather, *the heart* (1Samuel 16:7,17).

*For thousands of years, humanity has accentuated the externals as the standard for status. Yet, God is always looking beneath the surface into our hearts. The heart is the inner place of character, sincerity, love for God, desire to know Him and love Him, desire to put God on display for others to be drawn to Him, rather than to ourselves. When God looked at young David, He saw a heart that He could relate with and love. Even today, good looks and status do NOT equal a heart that God is drawn to . . . a heart that He can use for His purposes. Take time to ponder how this principle applies in your own life. How’s your heart?*

Adonijah held a grand feast and, with the support of key men from David’s administration, had himself proclaimed the next king of Israel. His self-determined rule would, however, be short-lived.

*Adonijah had a lot going for him: rank, resources, willpower, good looks, friends in high places and family backing. Yet, he lacked the most important thing: God’s approval. When we decide for ourselves what we are going to be or do, we are setting out upon a dangerous course. The wiser course is to walk in step with God, and to ask for His plan. A proverb from Solomon: “Trust in the Lord 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” (Prov.3:5-7).*

### **Bathsheba appeals to David: 1:11-27**

Bathsheba was the wife that David stole from Uriah the Hittite

(see 2Samuel 11, where David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then tried to conceal his sin by having Uriah her husband killed in battle). In spite of this great sin, God showed mercy to David and Bathsheba by giving them a son named Solomon. In accordance with the promise of God concerning Solomon (1Chronicles 22:8-10), David had promised to Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him on the throne of Israel (1Kings 1:13,17,30). When Adonijah proclaimed himself king, Bathsheba immediately went to David to claim her son's right to the throne.

***“My lord, you swore to your maidservant by the Lord your God, saying, ‘Surely your son Solomon shall be king after me and he shall sit on my throne . . . Now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him’” (1:17,20).***

Bathsheba's appeal was seconded by Nathan the prophet who came in and reported to David what Adonijah had done.

#### **David proclaims Solomon king: 1:28-40**

David immediately gave orders for his key leaders to have a public ceremony anointing Solomon as his successor.

***“. . . have my son Solomon ride on my own mule . . . anoint him as king over Israel, and blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ Then he shall come and sit on my throne and be king in my place; for I have appointed him to be ruler of Israel and Judah” (1:33-35).***

David's men did as he instructed and publicly anointed Solomon as king. The response of the people was heard for miles around:

***“They blew the trumpet, and all the people said, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ And all the people went up after him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth shook at their noise” (1:39,40).***

#### **Adonijah's terror: 1:41-53**

When the report of Solomon's coronation reached the ears of Adonijah and the guests at *his* coronation dinner, they all feared for their lives and ran away. Adonijah, fearing for his life, ran to the place of worship and took hold of the horns of the altar (saying, in effect: 'I have sinned greatly. Have mercy on me.') Solomon's first act as king was to forgive Adonijah.

***“If he will be a worthy man, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he will die” (1:52).***

Solomon was a child of grace. He was born from an immoral union between David and Bathsheba. Yet, God did not hold that against him. It was not his fault. He could not determine the morality of his parents. What may seem like a “mistake” to us is never a mistake with God. The very fact that you are here means that God values you as His unique creation, one made in His image and made for relationship with Him. How you got here is not the issue. The issue is that God longs for you to know Him personally and for you to experience His great love. Immanuel (God with us) wants to be WITH YOU as you journey through this life, and even on into eternity.

### **David’s final words and death: 2:1-12**

As David’s death drew near, he rallied the strength to give a final charge to Solomon and to ask his son to deal with some old relational business. Solomon was rather young (scholars think he was 20 or younger), so his father’s charge was very significant as he prepared to assume such a huge role:

***“Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the Lord may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel’” (2:2-4).***

### **Theological insight: Prosperity promises in the O.T. – Do they apply to the N.T. follower of Christ?**

David’s message to his son was simple: Walk in God’s ways so that you, your sons, and your nation will “succeed in all that you do.” This is one of the many *prosperity promises* made by God to the nation Israel in the Old Testament. Essentially, these promises went like this: *IF you as a people OBEY Me, then I will cause you to PROSPER in every aspect of life.* The foundational prosperity promises are found in Deuteronomy 28:1-14 where God promised many tangible, material blessings (health, wealth, safety, etc.) to Israel IF they walked in obedience to the covenant. Physical judgments and loss were also promised to Israel if they failed to

walk in obedience to God's laws (28:15ff).

David's charge to Solomon carried this same obedience = prosperity theme. Solomon, his sons and his nation would be tangibly blessed IF the king walked in God's ways. If he failed to walk in God's ways, devastating loss would come to Israel.

Many modern Bible teachers err when they take these Old Testament, Israel-specific prosperity promises and attempt to apply them to New Testament Christians (the so called "prosperity gospel"). The New Testament church (the body of Christ) is NOT heir to the promises made to Israel as a nation in the Old Testament. It is an error of Bible interpretation to take promises to Israel and attempt to apply them to the Church and modern-day individuals. Moreover, we do NOT find prosperity promises being made by Jesus to His followers. On the contrary, He promised that His followers would have tribulation in this world (see John 16:23); that their lives would be marked by persecution because of their association with Him (see John 15:20). Thus, the first Christians believed that *suffering was a reward!* ***"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).***

It is a fact that the majority of Christ-followers around the world today do NOT live in circumstances marked by prosperity. Rather, they live with hardship, deprivation, suffering and, in some places, severe persecution. Their only true hopes for "prosperity" are found in the words of James: *"Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be RICH IN FAITH and HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM promised to those who love Him" (James 2:5).* They do not expect to live in mansions here and now; but they certainly expect to enjoy manifold blessings in the next life.

Thus, while the New Testament believer must avoid the error of living by the O.T. obedience = prosperity formula, we can (and should) live by the timeless *principle* underlying the formula: Walking with God is the only way to find the unique life that He has designed for you. ***"For we are His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which He has prepared in advance for us to walk in" (Ephesians 2:10).*** Those "good works" may involve health and wealth, or they may involve suffering and loss. We are to seek HIM, and allow HIM to write the script for our lives. This IS the charge we must make to our sons and daughters. Walk with God . . . and let Him write the story of your life.

After charging Solomon to walk with God, his words take an unexpected tone. He asked Solomon to exact revenge upon two men who had brought trouble to him during his lifetime: **Joab** was David's loyal general; yet he had overstepped his bounds by killing some of David's enemies without his consent. **Shimei** had cursed David during the rebellion of Absalom. David asked Solomon to apply the death penalty to both men.

*A proverb from Solomon: "Do not say, 'I will repay evil'; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you" (Proverbs 20:22). "Do not say, 'I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay him back according to his work'" (Proverbs 24:29). "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink . . . ." (Proverbs 25:21). Paul wrote: "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19).*

### **Adonijah's foolish request: 2:13-25**

Proud spirits never cease to strive to have their way (Matthew Henry). Adonijah held fast to his proud dream of being Israel's next king. Thus, he asked Bathsheba to implore Solomon to grant him the right to marry Abishag the Shunammite, the young woman that cared for David in his dying days (1:1-4). She may have been *perceived* by the people to be one of David's concubines (half-wives), though she was not. Thus, by claiming one of David's "wives" as his own, Adonijah would be claiming his throne. When you secured the ruler's bed, you thereby secured his throne (Henry). Solomon saw right through his brother's shrewd attempt to unseat him, and had him executed for this act of treason.

### **Solomon dispenses with other opponents: 2:26-46**

Solomon dismissed Abiathar from his priesthood since he had supported Adonijah (2:26-27). Abiathar was the last priest in the lineage of Eli, who, a century earlier, had disobeyed God and forfeited the right to an enduring line of priests (1 Samuel 2:30-32). Solomon also had Joab and Shimei put to death, as David had requested. The final line summarizes the main point of the first 2 chapters:

***"Thus the kingdom was established in the hands of Solomon" (2:46).***

The timing of God and His ways of bringing about justice is often a great mystery. Though judgment was pronounced upon the household of Eli the priest, it was a century later when the judgment went into effect. So often, when we suffer an injustice, we cry out, "Not fair!" We want God to move immediately to remedy the situation and impose justice. Additionally, we often resort to "getting even" through our own schemes. Is there a situation in your life where you are yearning for God's justice to be revealed? Are you willing to let God deal with this situation, in His way and on His timetable? God is trustworthy.

### **Solomon's two compromises: 3:1-4**

In the opening lines concerning Solomon's reign we find two little details that will have huge long-term implications. First . . .

***"Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David . . ." (3:1).***

The Law of Moses forbade the taking of foreign wives, even by the king of Israel (see Deuteronomy 7:3,4 and 17:16-20). Further, the forming of alliances with foreign powers was a sign of *lack of dependence* upon God for protection. It would, ultimately, be Solomon's love for foreign women that would lead to his demise. Secondly . . .

***"Now Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places" (3:3).***

The "high places" in the O.T. were those places where unauthorized offerings were made to pagan gods and goddesses. Even if Solomon was *not* worshipping foreign gods (which at this point in his life seems unlikely), there is here a hint of his willingness to compromise on spiritual practices. It would, later, be his love for foreign women *and* his willingness to allow them to erect altars for *their foreign gods* in Jerusalem that would lead to God's judgment on Solomon and the people of Israel.

Airplanes have been known to take flight with very minor errors in the electronic compass. Yet, after hours in the air, they have strayed hundreds of miles off course into prohibited airspace. Similarly, small compromises in our lives can, over time, turn into bigger compromises, leading to major consequences. Be attentive to the little 'drifts' in your life today. They may be far greater issues than you realize. Ask God to reveal any 'drifts.'

## Solomon's request for wisdom from God: 3:5-15

At the very beginning of his reign, Solomon worshipped the Lord and offered 1,000 burnt offerings. That same night, the Lord appeared to him and said: ***“Ask what you wish Me to give you” (3:5)***. Solomon responded by 1) acknowledging that he was young and unprepared to serve as Israel's king, and 2) asking for wisdom from God in order to rule the people well.

***“Give Your servant an understanding (wise) heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil” (3:9)***.

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had not made a selfish request for a long life, or riches.

***“Behold, I have done according to your words. I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you” (3:12)***.

This is how Solomon became the wisest man on earth in his day, and why he wrote such a significant part of the “wisdom literature” of the Bible. His wisdom was a supernatural gift from God.

*What would YOU ask for, if God told you that He would grant you just ONE request? Take a moment to ponder this question. Be honest. (Don't just mimic Solomon for the sake of doing the 'right' thing.) Your biggest ASK of God will tell you something very important about your heart. What is your #1 request?*

## The first test of Solomon's discernment: 3:16-28

Two women came to Solomon, both claiming to be the legitimate mother of one baby. Solomon wisely used *the protective instinct of a mother for her newborn* to reveal the truth in the dispute. Only one woman (the real mother) was willing to do *anything* to spare the child's life. As a result of Solomon's actions . . .

***“When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice” (3:28)***.

## Solomon's officers: 4:1-19

Every great leader begins by surrounding himself/herself with other great leaders. Solomon's officials in the central government are listed by name (4:2-6). Further, each of the 12 tribes was responsible to support the government (“the king and his household”) 1 month per year. A deputy from each tribe was



appointed to ensure that this system of ‘taxation’ was effectively carried out.

*An effective leader once said: If my voice is the only one being heard in a room, then I am in the wrong room! Or, maybe you have failed to invite the right people into the room with you. Have you surrounded yourself with competent and confident voices that can speak into the issues and decisions you are responsible for? A great leader is surrounded not only by great followers, but also by other great leaders.*

### **The scope of Solomon’s kingdom: 4:20-28**

The kingdom of Israel enjoyed a time of prosperity and joy under Solomon. The geographical boundaries of Israel were wider than at any other time in Israel’s history. There was prosperity, peace and safety. The proverbial phrase used to describe such times of blessing in Israel was this: *“Every man lived under his vine and his fig tree . . . all the days of Solomon”* (4:25). Now *that’s* the life!

### **The breadth of Solomon’s wisdom: 4:29-34**

The greatest thing about Solomon’s kingdom was its impact on the surrounding nations, an impact that came about as a result of the unusual *wisdom* that God gave to him. His wisdom . . .

***“ . . . surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt . . . they came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom”*** (4:30,34).

At this juncture in the narrative of Israel’s history, it is important to recall the original purpose God had in mind when he brought them out of Egypt and called them to be His own unique people:

***“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”*** (Exodus 19:5,6).

Israel was to be a “kingdom of priests” displaying the character of God to *all* the nations of the earth. It had been more than 400 years since those words were spoken through Moses to the people of Israel, as they were gathered at Mt. Sinai, awaiting God’s laws and commandments for their nation. Now, in the time of Solomon, *the nations of the world were flocking to hear the wisdom of*

*Solomon, beholding the glory of God's kingdom under his rule.* If there was any period during Israel's history when they came close to fulfilling their purpose as the O.T. "light of the world," pointing all nations to God and His character, it was during the early years of Solomon's reign.

### **A Summary thought:**

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament, many lives and many nations are showcased. Whether we are reading of an individual or a nation, God consistently demonstrated HIS AMAZING GRACE. Take the life of Solomon as an example. God knew the grave sins that Solomon would later commit, leading to disaster for the house of David and the nation of Israel. Yet, God allowed Solomon to: 1) become a great king and lead Israel in their greatest years as a nation, 2) become the wisest man on earth with a reputation that spread worldwide, and 3) author 3 books of Scripture – Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

Perhaps you have made choices that went against God's will for you and His revealed Word. Maybe you have resigned yourself to the fact that God could never make much of your life, or use you for His purposes. Because of His amazing grace (as demonstrated in Solomon, David, and so many others), you can be assured that *God desires to walk with you and bless you again . . .* even using you and your former choices for His greater purposes in this world. God's GRACE turns our messes into masterpieces, for His joy and glory, and our amazement. It's never too late to turn back to God and trust Him to make something beautiful of your life. "*May the kindness of God lead you to repentance*" (Romans 2:4).