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## **Why Am I Here?**

### **A Commentary on *Ecclesiastes***

#### **Chapter 1**

#### **Why the Wisest Man That Ever Lived Died as a Fool**

In order to get the maximum benefit of a writer, it is important to not just read their writings but look at how they lived their lives. King Solomon was, without a doubt, the wisest man that ever lived. The only One that walked on this earth that exceeded his wisdom was the Lord Jesus Christ! To properly understand what he wrote, and its place in the Bible, it is important to look at how he obtained the wisdom he had.

Although Solomon, meaning “peaceful”, is the name King David gave to him, God loved him and chose to call him Jedidiah:

**2 Samuel 12:24 “And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.**

**And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.”**

Solomon starts out great. He loves God. **1 Kings 3:3**

**“And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.”**

A good start is an advantage in life. Unfortunately, he ends up worshipping false gods and doing evil in the eyes of the Lord. He loses his son and his kingdom. His end was tragic, God, in His wisdom, uses imperfect vessels to teach us to learn about Him and lean on Him! Even though King Solomon was a great king, he left a bad testimony in a ruined family, and his son lost most of the kingdom that he built.

The following verses give how he ended his life. It is not pretty!

**1 Kings 10:1-9** “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites;

Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, 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 clave unto these in love.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and 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 perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

**And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father.**

**Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.**

**And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.**

**And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,”**

This is tragic because it affected many people. Only in one kingdom was it recorded that they walked in his way and only for three years.

**2 Chronicles 11:17 “So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.”**

God recommended his writings but not his life! He wrote many valuable lessons, and you can learn a lot by reading and meditating on them.

**2 Chronicles 35:4 “And prepare *yourselves* by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son.”**

Under no circumstances should you try to imitate or pattern your life after his! Many of the kings of Israel justified their sins by making the same mistakes that King Solomon made. I am sure they thought, “*King Solomon did it, so I can too.*” Never pattern your life after the sins of others. You are an individual that God wants to use. Seek to please Him, and not justify your sins!

How does this happen? How did the wisest man that ever live, turn away from God and die as a fool?

A glimpse of the reason he failed when he was older is given here in *1 Kings 3:3*. Only one deficiency. “...**only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.**”

His practice of continuing in doing something he started as a young man ends up bearing fruit in his old age. It is so important to quit doing wrong things, *even though you are getting away with them temporarily!*

There are seven glimpses into his character that made his life a failure, even though he had great success! If you can learn anything from his life, *learn what not to do!*

## **He had a weak prayer life.**

Now you probably didn't think his prayer life was weak. He is known for praying two of the most powerful prayers in the Bible and getting answers to both of them!

Take a moment and read his prayers. They are in *1 Kings 3:3-15* (Personal prayer for leadership abilities.) and in *1 Kings 9:3* (Public prayer for the dedication of the Temple).

Even though it looks like he had a good prayer life, the Bible gives insight into his daily prayer life. Notice God's comment on his prayer in *1 Kings 3:10*

**“And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.”**

Notice that his prayer is called a “speech.” This is a subtle hint. It is sad to report, that most people's prayers are just speeches that they had prepared in advance. Prayer is opening your heart to God and telling Him your desires! God didn't call it a request, or a supplication, or a prayer. He called it a speech! It is also instructive to notice that none of his writings are prayers. Compare that with King David's writings. They are mostly prayers!

# He spent more time on his house than on God's house.

**1 Kings 6:37,38** “In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif:

And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which *is* the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.”

**1 Kings 7:1** “But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.”

Thirteen years on his house but only seven years on God's! Again, this is a subtle hint of Solomon's priorities. He didn't abandon God at first, he just made his wants more important than God's wants. Many fathers and mothers make this mistake. They emphasize the importance of the

family over the importance of the church. Don't misunderstand, the family is extremely important. One way to strengthen the family is by being active in a good local church. A good balance is needed.

## **He exalted himself, not the Book.**

Notice the difference: *2 Chronicles 6:13* and *Nehemiah 8:1-5*

*2 Chronicles 6:13* **“For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,”**

He set the scaffold up so people would see him and hear him praying.

*Nehemiah 8:1-5* **“And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake**

unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam.

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

In this passage a pulpit is made not to elevate the priest Ezra, but to elevate the Book! Their eyes are upon the Book not the man! He even has other people up there to take the attention away from himself. The whole thing is to exalt the Book and allow people to hear and understand it.

Jesus comments on this in *Luke 14:11*

**“For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”**

## **He rejected God’s written will for his life.**

There are specific commandments for the king listed in *Deuteronomy 17*. Three things they were not supposed to do and one thing they needed to do.

*Deuteronomy 17:14-20* **“When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell**

therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother.

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites:

**And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:**

**That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left: to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.”**

He was not supposed to multiply horses from Egypt.

*(Compare Deuteronomy 17:16 with 1 Kings 10:28)*

**1 Kings 10:28 “And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.”**

He was not supposed to multiply wives to himself. Compare

**Deuteronomy 17:17 with 1 Kings 11:1-3**

**1 Kings 11:1-3** “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites;

Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, 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 clave unto these in love.

And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.”

He was not supposed to greatly multiply gold. Compare

**Deuteronomy 17:17** with **1 Kings 10:14-22**

**1 Kings 10:14-22** “Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

Beside *that he had* of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

And king Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target.

And *he made* three hundred shields *of* beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round behind: and *there were* stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold; none *were of* silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

**For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.”**

King Solomon did all three of these things. The thing that he was supposed to do he did not! He was supposed to copy the law into a book and read it every day. Compare *Deuteronomy 17:18-20* with ???). There is no record that he did that.

God’s commandments are more than suggestions. They are a recipe for success.

## **He rejected God’s directive will for his life.**

King Solomon not only rejected what the Bible told him to do, he didn’t respond to God dealing directly with him. God appeared unto him twice and gave him specific instructions.

**1 Kings 11:9-11 “And the LORD 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.**

**Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.”**

Solomon showed no repentance. The key to a successful life is to respond when God reveals something to you, you repent. The Christian life is a life of repentance. When you make a mistake, own up to it. That was the major difference between King David and King Solomon. David would realize his sin and get right with God. Solomon is never used as an example of how to lead the nation. His writings were recommended but not his life. David was recommended often.

## He experimented with sin.

One of the ways King Solomon got wisdom is by the scientific method. He would try something to see if it was good. Later in this book we will look at the way to get wisdom. Here we need to compare the first three kings of Israel.

The similarities stand out. All were approved by God and anointed. All reigned 40 years. All had unlimited power. All made mistakes and sinned against God. The striking differences are the way they handled sin.

## King Saul

King Saul's main strength was his physical size. He looked like a king. His main weakness was that he was a coward. I differ with many on this point. When they were looking for Saul to make him king he was hiding. Many commentators think he was humble at first. They get this from Samuel's comment on him in *1 Samuel 15:17*

**“And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?”**

I don't think this is a comment on his humility but on his cowardice. Saul always cared how a thing looked rather than if it was right or wrong. All the mistakes he made were because he was afraid of what people thought about him.

Saul typifies the flesh. His cowardice and reliance on the flesh causes him to commit spiritual sins at the beginning of his reign. He never repents, is tormented by evil spirits, dies a failure to his country and ruins his family!

## ***King David***

His main Strength was his heart. He loved God. He cared more about what God thought about it, than how it looked. When Saul made

a mess of things, God picked another leader. He chose David to be king.

This is the main meaning of **Acts 13:22**

**“And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.”**

The meaning of “...a man after mine own heart...” is that David was the one that God wanted. Saul was the one that the people wanted. Many times, God gives us what we want first to teach us to ask for what we need when the wants don't solve the problems!

King David's main weakness was that he gave into the lust of the flesh. It was the result of not going to battle. When you stop fighting God's battles, you lose your personal battles. If you fight God's battles, God helps you fight your personal battles!

King David typifies the spirit. He commits fleshly sins in the middle of his reign, repents, restores, and regains fellowship with God and re-

reigns. He pays dearly for his sins. Don't ever use King David's sins as an excuse to sin. His sins ruined him and his family. There is a different tone in the *Psalms* that comes through after his sin with Bathsheba!

## ***King Solomon***

King Solomon's main strength was his wisdom. His wisdom was also his main weakness. He had the ability to analyze a situation and find out the right thing to do. Unfortunately, he trusted his own wisdom instead of relying on God's wisdom.

King Solomon typifies the soul. He commits horrible spiritual sins at the end of his reign, raises a fool for a son, never repents, and leaves the kingdom and his family in a mess!

His experimenting with sin (loving many strange women) caused him to leave his first love (love of God). He ends up worshipping false gods. The book of *Ecclesiastes* is his record of experimenting with sin. Although we can learn a lot from what he wrote at the end of his life, you

wouldn't want to pattern your life after his. His experimenting with sin hardened him and ruined his character. The result of this was his view that life was vain and not worth living!

He is missing these two key elements from his character: Thankfulness to God and Love for God. There is no mention of these anywhere in his writings!

**Romans 1:21** “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

**Colossians 3:15** “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

**Psalms 100:4** Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

**Jude 21** “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

**Revelation 2:4** “Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”

## **How do you avoid the mistakes of King Solomon?**

The reason King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived (outside of Jesus Christ) died as a fool is that he did what a lot of parents do today: They say, “Do as I says, not as I do!”

### ***Keep your heart***

**Proverbs 4:23** “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

### ***Confess and forsake your sins***

**Proverbs 28:13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

### ***Read the Bible***

**Proverbs 13:13** “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.”

## ***Fear God***

**Ecclesiastes 12:13** “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Add one from the New Testament.

**Acts 16:32** “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”



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