

Anthology | Learning to Love the Stories of God

Week 7: Solomon's Fall (1 Kings 10:26-11:43)

Read the story:

When?

This occurs towards the end of the Kingdom United era. It's after Saul and David have reigned as kings over one united Israel and right before the kingdom is divided ushering in a new era.

Who?

Solomon (the wisest man who ever lived), Solomon's foreign wives, God, false gods (Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh and Molech)

Where?

Solomon is reigning in Jerusalem.

Summarize the story:

Directly before the kingdom of Israel divides, we see the end of Solomon's life and his reign as king. Despite all his wisdom, and despite God's multiple warnings, (Deuteronomy 7:3-4 and Isaiah 9:1-9), Solomon married many many foreign women who turned his heart away from the Lord exactly as the Lord promised it would do. As a result of Solomon's sinful idolatry, God rips His own people's kingdom apart. Yet God also promises to retain one tribe in the reign of Solomon's line.

Leader Notes: While this overall story is tragic, the most important (and redemptive) piece of the story is the fact that God graciously promises to retain one tribe (the tribe of Judah) to remain in Solomon's lineage and be ruled by his son, Rehoboam. This is important because God is faithfully keeping a pure bloodline from David's descendants that Jesus will eventually come from. This is an incredible blessing and act of grace to bestow upon undeserving and idolatrous Solomon.

Analyze the story:

Attributes of God displayed:

- God is wise. (In 1 Samuel 8, when He told His people they were better off with Him as their King, he was right. Only three kings (Saul, David and Solomon) ruled over a united Israel before the kingdom is ripped apart.)
- God graciously warns His people. (God warns Solomon to walk in His ways and not to depart from Him (Isaiah 9:1-9). He also warns the nation of Israel to not marry foreign wives who might turn their hearts after foreign gods (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). All of this is God graciously warning His kids like a wise father to prevent them from unnecessary pain and suffering.)
- God is faithful to His promises. (He promises to give one tribe to Solomon's son Rehoboam to preserve the line of David that Jesus will come from.)
- God hates idolatry. (Despite the majority of Solomon's rule being marked by wisdom and faithfulness, the idolatry at the end of his angers God so much He rips the kingdom apart.)
- God pursues His people. (Multiple times in Solomon's life, God appears to Solomon to lead Him.)

Who is who in the story? (Who is like us? Who is like Christ?)

- We are like Solomon in that despite God's active pursuit and all the ways He reveals Himself to us, we are actively tempted back to our idols.
- We are like Solomon's wives in that we lead others to worship the same false gods that we do.

- Jesus is like Solomon but better. He is the true wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). Jesus also laid down His power, wealth and comfort to glorify God, instead of letting his wealth harden his heart toward God and turn him toward idols.

Connect the story:

Parallel Statements:

- God gives us wisdom, but wisdom alone is not enough to save us from our sin condition.
- God is ultimately the king that we all need.
- God keeps His covenant/promises.
- God is faithful even when sinful humans make it hard for Him to remain faithful.
- God hates our idols and would be willing to rip His own kingdom/family apart to restore His people. Ultimately this parallels the gospel in how God ripped His own kingdom/family apart when He sent His Son Jesus to leave Heaven and serve us by dying for us so that we could turn from our idols and worship Him forever in His kingdom.

Apply the story:

- God is the king we all need. No human leader, politician or wise man will do. Solomon is the wisest man to ever live and he fails to remain faithful to God throughout his entire reign and life.
- Any kingdom built by human hands will ultimately fail, but God's kingdom will last eternally.
- Fight against idolatry. (Because God hates it, it's bad for our souls and our lives and because it has collateral damage on the people around us.)
- Watch out for the dangers of wealth and power and comfort who can lure us away from the one true God and towards idol worship.

Leader Notes: At the end of the Kingdom United era (a.k.a. Israel's glory days), they've been led by three decent, but yet still sinful kings in Saul, David (a man after God's own heart) and Solomon (wisest man to ever walk the earth). None of these kings could fully save or deliver the Israelites like they hoped they would. All of this points forward to the fact that ultimately we need Jesus to be our King who unites us under His kingdom.

Who needs this story?

- Proud people. (Those who believe their own wisdom or knowledge can save them and those around them.)
- People who put too much hope in politics.
- People who long for a past "glory days" that never really existed.
- People who doubt God's faithfulness. (God remembers His covenant. Even despite Solomon's sinfulness and idolatry, God preserves a way for Jesus to come from David's line.)
- Idolaters (Those whose hearts are being hardened by the deceitfulness of wealth, comfort or power.)