

Survey of the Bible part 14

Last time we left Israel having accepted Solomon as their new king while David was alive, though quite old. In the last part of 1Kings 3 we saw the first act of wisdom on the part of Solomon that God had given to him as he meted out justice between 2 harlots who each had a child.

Does anyone remember the account as Scripture records it?

And so, as we come back to the text of 1Kings we're going to find Solomon accomplishing what David could only dream of and that is the building of the first temple for God in Israel.

What is amazing about this is the detail that Scripture gives us regarding this task, from the individuals involved to the materials used for the building. These were the glory days for all of Israel as God had accomplished two things: 1) the occupation of the land, and 2) peace in the land.

And this is seen at the end of the 4th chapter in these words.

1 Kings 4:24-25 ²⁴ For he had dominion over everything west of the River, from Tiphshah even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides around about him. ²⁵ So Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

By the way, what we're told here is that the rule of Solomon was far more extensive in those days than it is today. And if we back up a few verses we get more specific as to the extent of that rule.

1 Kings 4:21 ²¹ Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River *to* the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; *they* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

This appears to be in fulfillment to what God told Abraham when He made a covenant with him.

^{NAU} Genesis 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

And so, God was faithful in accomplishing this task of calling out a people for Himself and then bringing that people into the promised land as He Himself defines the borders of that land.

So, one can make the argument that God has already fulfilled His promise to Israel. From this point on Israel is responsible to follow and obey God if they are to remain in the land. And this is made quite clear when God judges Israel and Judah by taking them out of the land through the Assyrians and Babylonians because of their disobedience.

And unfortunately, the downward spiral begins to take place during Solomon's reign.

But the amazing thing is how God had supplied Solomon with both the physical and spiritual means to rule over His people and this was no small thing as even the rest of the nations recognized this.

1 Kings 4:29-34 ²⁹ Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. ³⁰ Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was *known* in all the surrounding nations. ³² He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. ³³ He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish. ³⁴ Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

And so, Solomon begins to build the temple for the Lord. This was an amazing structure that was covered in gold and designed precisely the way the Lord had laid it out for him.

1 Kings 6:38 ³⁸ In the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished throughout all its parts and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.

And finally, after the house of the Lord was finished Solomon brought into it the ark of the covenant that was constructed by Moses.

1 Kings 8:1-6 ^{NAU} Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' *households* of the sons of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the city of David, which is Zion. ² All the men of Israel assembled themselves to King Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh

month. ³ Then all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ They brought up the ark of the LORD and the tent of meeting and all the holy utensils, which were in the tent, and the priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵ And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who were assembled to him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen they could not be counted or numbered. ⁶ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the house, to the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim.

It was after this that the Lord appeared to Solomon and repeated what He told his father David and that is that obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings cursing.

1 Kings 9:1-9 ^{NAU} Now it came about when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all that Solomon desired to do, ² that the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ 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, ⁵ then 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, ⁷ then 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.'"

In chapter 10 of 1Kings we have the introduction of the Queen of Sheba, which was in S.W. Arabia, who hears of the wisdom of

Solomon and pays him a visit to witness first hand his unique ability to rule successfully.

She brought all sorts of expensive goods for Solomon to honor him together with 120 talents of gold. One talent is equal to 75 U.S. pounds. So, 120 talents would equal 9,000 pounds of gold.

On today's market that's about the equivalent of \$2,160,000,000. But keep in mind that that was only what the Queen of Sheba brought Solomon. We're told that Solomon was mining gold as well as receiving gold from the surrounding kingdoms to supply the construction of the temple along with his own home.

This is the amount of gold he received in one year according to 1 Kings 10:14-15 ¹⁴ Now the weight of gold which came in to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, ¹⁵ besides *that* from the traders and the wares of the merchants and all the kings of the Arabs and the governors of the country.

This amount in just one year would be almost 50,000 pounds of gold which in today's market would be upwards of \$11,988,000,000. To put this into some perspective a bar of gold that is traded in the world today is about 27.5 pounds. And so, 50,000 pounds of gold could be found in 1,818 bars of gold.

But what I find fascinating about all of this is that we're told that all of the gold that can be mined today is the result of meteors colliding with our planet.

Researchers tell us that during the formation of Earth, molten iron sank to its centre to make the core. This took with it the vast majority of the planet's precious metals -- such as gold and platinum. In fact, there are enough precious metals in the core to cover the entire surface of Earth with an (11 foot) thick layer. (The research is published in *Nature*.)

This of course assumes that God did not create the earth in the first 3 days out of water and the elements in water. But what they're saying is that over millions of years the gravitational pull of the earth pulled all of the heavy elements toward the core and so we should find no appreciable samples of things like gold or silver and such near the surface of the earth.

The problem with this theory is that it doesn't take into account that God did actually create this earth in three days and placed in

the top layer of the earth an abundance of precious metals that man was able to mine from day one, or more accurately day 6.

Genesis 2:7-14 ⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. ⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

So, right there in the land of Eden, which included Havilah, were all the things that God placed there for not only man's immediate needs, but also for his aesthetic desires, including gold, which presumably he had easy access to.

We're told that much of the gold that Solomon received came from a particular place in the Mid-east called Ophir. In the LXX this word is rendered "Sopfir," and "Sofir" and is the Coptic name for India. And so, it is possible that this is where Solomon got his gold though some believe it to be parts of Arabia.

The point is that there was an abundance of gold in the top layer of the earth prior to man being created and after. As of 2011 researchers estimate that 171,300 tons of gold have been mined by man since man discovered gold.

As to how much is still left in the top layer of the earth we don't know, but we do know that there is vast amounts near the core of the earth and every day much of that is being pushed up to the surface through volcanism.

I know that this has nothing to do with our text except for the fact that Solomon had lots of the stuff, but I do find it amusing that man thinks that he has all the answers to things like where does gold come from, when in fact they haven't got a clue. God created it and God gave it to man to manage as far back as the Garden of Eden.

And one day this precious metal will be walked upon by you and me in a city we'll know as the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:21-23 ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. ²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

So, getting back to Solomon, we have a man who has been especially endowed by His creator with a wisdom that surpassed that of any other ruler then and since. And yet being wise in his rulings with God's people, that evidently did not translate over to having wisdom ruling his own life.

1 Kings 11:1-6 ^{NAU} Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, *for* they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*. ⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father *had done*.

And so, even though Solomon enjoyed relative peace throughout his reign it was not all peaceful. He had his enemies and he had his rebellions.

One such rebel, at least in the eyes of Solomon, was Jeroboam. But Jeroboam was no rebel. He was an agent of God chosen by God and acknowledged by the prophet, Ahijah. Here's what we're told in verses 28-36.

1 Kings 11:28-36 ²⁸ Now the man Jeroboam was a valiant warrior, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he appointed him over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. ²⁹ It came about at that time, when Jeroboam went out

of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had clothed himself with a new cloak; and both of them were alone in the field. ³⁰ Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak which was on him and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹ He said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces; for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes' ³² (but he will have one tribe, for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel), ³³ because they have forsaken Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon; and they have not walked in My ways, doing what is right in My sight and *observing* My statutes and My ordinances, as his father David *did*. ³⁴ 'Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of My servant David whom I chose, who observed My commandments and My statutes; ³⁵ but I will take the kingdom from his son's hand and give it to you, *even* ten tribes. ³⁶ 'But to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen for Myself to put My name.

And of course the son of Solomon being referred to here is Rehoboam. Essentially what had transpired between the sons of Judah and the rest of Israel is that Solomon had put a hard yoke on the people. After Solomon's death Rehoboam was counseled by the elders to ease that yoke at the request of Jeroboam.

But Rehoboam took the counsel of those he grew up with in his youth and they counseled to make the yoke even harsher. And so, all of Israel followed Jeroboam, while Judah followed Rehoboam.

But neither Jeroboam, who ruled over Israel, and Rehoboam, who ruled over Judah, followed the Lord and both came under the judgment of God.

And as chapter 14 of 1Kings comes to a close we read this.

1 Kings 14:30-31 ³⁰ There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. ³¹ And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. And Abijam his son became king in his place.

And so, for many years after there were a variety of rulers over both Judah and Israel and they all did evil in the sight of the Lord. One man in particular is noted as being evil whose name was Ahab.

1 Kings 16:29-34 ²⁹ Now Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. ³⁰ Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. ³¹ It came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him. ³² So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria. ³³ Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. ³⁴ In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundations with the *loss of* Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the *loss of* his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

Next time we'll see how God is going to deal with Ahab.