

KINGS OF ISRAEL II: 1 & 2 KINGS

WEEK 2

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OUTLINE

SOLOMON

- Literary Features
- Building Projects
- Solomon's Failure

WOMEN IN I & II KINGS

- Royal Women
- Less Prominent Women

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Concentric Framing of Solomon's Reign

A	Prophet Intervenes in Royal Succession	1:1-2:12
B	Solomon Resolves Threats	2:13-46
C	Solomon's Humility and Wisdom	3:1-15
D	Solomon Uses Wisdom for People	3:16-4:34
E	Preparations for Building the Temple	5:1-18
F	Solomon Begins Building the Temple	6:1-38
X	Solomon Builds "Rival" Buildings	7:1-12
F'	Solomon Completes Building Temple	7:13-51
E'	Dedication of Temple with Warning	8:1-9:9
D'	Solomon Uses Wisdom for Himself	9:10-10:29
C'	Solomon's Arrogance and Foolishness	11:1-13
B'	Solomon's Unresolved Threats	11:14-25
A'	Prophet Determines Royal Succession	11:26-43

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WHO IS KING?

The placement in the text is not the only clue that something is off. Here is a comparison of Solomon's buildings in I Kings:

	Temple		Palace	
Time to Complete	7 years	6:38	13 years	7:1
Dimensions	60×20×30	6:2	100×50×30	7:2
Throne (Ark*)	Acacia+Gold	8:6	Ivory+Gold	10:18

Solomon's palace is much larger and took nearly twice as long to complete. He also made one for his Egyptian bride. These are not the actions of a king who views himself as a vassal to the suzerain Yahweh.

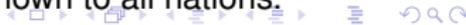
*Cf. I Sam 4:4, II Sam 6:2—"the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim"



DEDICATION PRAYER

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon opens with a history, offers a 7-fold supplication, then concludes with a blessing. After speaking, they have two weeks of sacrifices and feasting. Solomon exhibits a David-like sensitivity to God's word, His nature and ours.

- ▶ In the opening history, he recounts that God predicted the building of the temple and that *He* ensured his word was fulfilled.
- ▶ The central function of the temple is as a sanctioned place for divine reconciliation. In 8:30, he summarizes the seven-fold prayer: "...when they pray toward this place; hear in heaven Your dwelling place; hear and forgive." (Cf. 8:27, Dan 6:10.)
- ▶ Solomon's sensitive to the law (8:40,56) and the book of Joshua (cf. I Ki 8:57, Josh 21:45)
- ▶ Mankind is not only wicked but not transparent to himself: "You alone know the heart...(39) ...there is no man who does not sin...(46)"
- ▶ Solomon sees the evangelistic function of Israel (Ex 19:6) and its temple (I Ki 8:41-43; 60). Yahweh is making Himself known to all nations.





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WARNINGS FOR KINGS

Deut 17:15-20—[NIV] Be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

WARNINGS FOR KINGS

Deuteronomy 17:16—The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them . . .

17:17a—He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.

17:17b—He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

1 Kings 10:26a, 28—Solomon accumulated chariots and horses . . . Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue . . .

11:1a,3— King Solomon...loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter . . . He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

1 Kings 10:14, 27— The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was [25 tons]. . . The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones. . .



LESSONS ON SOLOMON

Looking at Solomon's wisdom, his godly dedication of the temple and his catastrophic fall, what can we learn?

- ▶ Even (especially?) people with extraordinary gifting, come under serious temptation to betray God.
- ▶ No one is beyond serious failure. Many of us comfort ourselves, saying our foolishness is in our past. Our flesh is still with us and is eager to conspire with Satan.
- ▶ Related to the previous, our preferred "poison" changes as we age. Sex, drugs, partying might draw our eyes in our youth; as we grow older, we are attracted to comfort, material wealth, proper shielding/barriers from others and their sin.
- ▶ Certain sins are more destructive than others. Although the author notes the horses and gold, he devotes several paragraphs to the idolatry of the foreign brides and *explicitly* condemns it.

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DAVID'S FOLLY

It would be nice to place all blame on Solomon. Nevertheless, Solomon's father's weakness for women is a central biblical plotline:

- ▶ Although we cannot be sure (the text is not explicit), David's first foolish decision is correlated with his taking on multiple wives. In particular, he flees to Philistine territory not long after marrying both Abigail and Ahinoam.
- ▶ David married Maacah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur, a northern chieftain. Sadly, Solomon is not the first king of Israel to marry for political expedience. Most ironically, Maacah's child, the son who would bring peace, is none other than the treacherous, belligerent Absalom—"my father is peace."
- ▶ Perhaps best known, David's relationship with Solomon's own mother, Bathsheba, was fraught with difficulty.



JEZEBEL AND ATHALIAH

This mother-daughter pair exemplify the quintessence of spiritually dangerous political marriages.

1. Jezebel was a Sidonian princess and Baal worshipper. Her marriage to Ahab brought Baal worship into Israel and Samaria (eventually Judah). She exhibited a cynical and violent temper: threatening death on Elijah and conspiring to kill the innocent Naboth. Athaliah was worse.
2. The seemingly “ecumenical” decision of Jehoshaphat to ally himself and intermarry with the royal family of Israel was a catastrophe for Judah—causing endless violence and spiritual degradation.
 - ▶ Jehoram, who married Athaliah, killed all his brothers after acceding to the throne (II Chron 21:4).
 - ▶ After Jehoram’s son Ahaziah was killed by Jehu, Athaliah moved to kill all of her own grandchildren, securing an “uncontaminated” Omrid dynasty (after Jehu’s northern coup) and her own control.
 - ▶ Somewhere along the way, Athaliah helped establish Baal worship in Jerusalem (Cf. II Kings 11:18; II Chron 24:7)



JUDAH'S MOTHERS

Nearly all of the kings of Judah's mothers and their origins are given. Green kings are good; yellow kings are okay; white are bad. Note their mother's origins.

#	King	Mother	Her Father	Her City
1	Rehoboam	Naamah	[Ammonite]	—
2	Abijam	Maakah	Abishalom	—
3	Asa	[G'ma Maakah:↑]	—	—
4	Jehoshaphat	Azubah	Shilhi	—
5	J(eh)oram	[Wife Athaliah:↓]	—	—
6	Ahaziah	Athaliah	Ahab	—
7	Athaliah (♀)	—	—	—
8	J(eh)oash	Zibiah	—	Beersheeba
9	Amaziah	Jehoaddan	—	Jerusalem
10	Azariah	Jekoliah	—	Jerusalem

JUDAH'S MOTHERS

#	King	Mother	Her Father	Her City
11	Jotham	Jerusha	Zadok	–
12	Ahaz	–	–	–
13	Hezekiah	Abijah	Zechariah	–
14	Manasseh	Hephzibah	–	–
15	Amon	Meshullemeth	Haruz	Jotbah
16	Josiah	Jedidah	Adaiah	Bozkath
17	Jehoahaz	Hamutal	Jeremiah	Libnah
18	Jehoiakim	Zebidah	Pedaiah	Rumah
19	Jehoiachin	Nehushtah	Elnathan	Jerusalem
20	Zedekiah	Hamutal	Jeremiah	Libnah

This analysis shows the author's awareness of the impact of mothers. Crucially, idolatrous mothers bear problematic families.

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PROPHETS' FRIENDS

- ▶ Widow of Zarephath—This first episode is the most striking. She's no mere gentile, she's in Sidon, the very place from which Jezebel has come. Moreover, God specifically tells Elijah go to her (I Kings 17:8-9).
- ▶ Prophet's Widow—There is not much “heroic” about this woman. However, she exhibits the kind of childlike faith that Jesus commends. She humbly shares her vulnerable situation with the man of God.
- ▶ Shunammite Woman—Unlike the previous two, her husband is alive. But the wife is the one who takes the spiritual initiative. (There's no indication that he's bad. Only that he's not really the focus.)



SPIRITUAL WOMEN

These women are not extensively discussed but considered worthy of mention by the author:

- ▶ Jehosheba—This is the sister of Ahaziah who had the savvy to save Jehoash when his own grandmother Athaliah attempts to eliminate all competition for the throne.
- ▶ Naaman's Slave Girl—A young Israelite girl captured by raiders boldly shares the news of Israel's prophet with her mistress, the wife of the Aramean commander Naaman
- ▶ Prophetess Huldah—A wife of a wardrobe-keeper (probably for the temple priests) had a reputation for receiving word from God. This is particularly striking since we witness the high priest—Jeremiah's father—Hilkiah pursuing her for a special message.

SUMMARY

Why would the author focus so much attention on women?

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Why would the author focus so much attention on women?

- ▶ As a matter of biography, Jeremiah was forbidden to marry (Jer 16:2), giving him uncommon sensitivity to the issue of marriage.
- ▶ Deuteronomy is explicit in its warnings concerning political marriages and the spiritual risks posed thereby.
- ▶ While mothers always play a special role in the lives of their children, ancient kings were particularly disengaged in child-rearing. Between matters of state, and the scale of children from the vast number of wives and concubines, a king would be necessarily limited.
- ▶ Given the dangers drawn out concerning wives, a tempting error would be that women are bad. Ensuring the presence of numerous godly (even foreign) women eliminates such a clumsy conclusion. The central concern of God is heart-fidelity and obedience. (Cf. Rahab vs. Achan.)
- ▶ Such specifics aside, women play a central role in history, named or unnamed, recognized or not.

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