

1st Kings Ch 3-4

Ch 2 left off with the kingdom being established in Solomon's hand. Those things that would otherwise threaten his position in the kingdom had been dealt with &/or put to death. The selfish ambition of Adonijah, the religious façade of Abiathar, the presuming nature of Joab, and the lack of respect for authority in Shimei, and how important it is if you and I are to have the Kingdom established in us that we deal with these same guys that surface in our own life and natural tendencies. Selfish ambitions, putting on the game face of spirituality but not really being right with God in our heart, presuming upon the grace of God to cover blatant and unrepentant patterns of sin in our lives, and not respecting the authority of Jesus Christ in our lives, or those whom He places over us both in the church, and in the work force or at home. The bible calls for the death of those tendencies that we all have to act out in the flesh when we maybe don't agree with the way things have, or *are* going down. Or when we have the unction to want to do what we want to do other than what the Word of God has laid out for us to do. The NT puts it like this, "*And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*" Gal 5:24 and How important it is to crucify the flesh if the Kingdom is to be established in our lives.

and That word "established" in vs 46 of Ch 2 speaks of being *made stable*, which of course is the opposite of instability and vacillation. It speaks of *being fastened* as opposed to drifting free and aimlessly, tossed about with every wind or wave that pushes you a different direction. And it speaks of being *securely determined* which means your not insecurely *undetermined*, but that you've made your calling and election sure, and you've born the fruits worthy of repentance which is the crucifying of the flesh along with it's passions and desires. Now does that mean you'll never make a mistake? No, but it does mean that the patterns of sin previously embedded in your life have been broken by the blood of Jesus Christ and that you're no longer walking after that persuasion in any consistent form or way. You're careful keep your motives open before the Lord, your prudent in pursuing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and you guard against falling into the snare of going through the motions with out having a real heart for God. You're quick to repent of the sin in your life rather than presuming upon God's grace and using His grace to cloak and cover areas of compromise and you're diligent to honor the authority of His Word in your life.

There was one other nuance in Shimei's nature that I didn't draw to your attention last week but it's worth noting and that is this, initial compliance, but eventual compromise. Look at vs 36-38 (read). So when he received the word initially, it seemed good to him and he was careful to comply, look at vs 39-40. Vs 41-42. What's my point, that when the word of the king came into his life, at 1st he was all about obedience, he realized that to violate the word of the king was to invite death upon his life. But *after some time went by* (3yrs in this case) he began to think, "It seemed serious at the time, but I know the King, He's a man of peace, will excuse what I consider to be justifiable, I'm not hurting anyone, and I'm just going to go outside of the parameters of his word to my life a little ways, I'm not going way out there and it's not like I won't be back."

And so often when we submit our lives to Christ initially we're so careful to comply with His Word, but something seems to happen as time goes by, and we begin to lower our standards, and what at one point we may've never done, "Well, it's not that far outside the designated borders, we serve a God of grace." and We can begin to subtly cast off restraint and invite compromise into our lives.

And when you get to vs 46 you find out that Shimei was called to give an account as to his disobedience to the word and it cost him his life. The standard of the word of God for our lives never relaxes just because we've walked with Him, or been obedient *to* Him for a number of years now and so you're entitled to a little freedom. Yeah, more and more freedom *from* sin, not freedom *to* sin, and if anything the standard raises, not relaxes, it's called growth and maturity, walking in wisdom, so let's be careful that we don't violate the parameters of the Word of God for our lives thinking that maybe we were just being zealously legalistic then but we have a better grip on grace now. That's a dangerous position to take, again read 1st 6, Gal ch 5, the bible is clear that if we choose to walk outside the acceptable parameters of the Word of God, we will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Well, Ch 3 begins.)

Vs1

Now as you may expect we need to draw attention here to this crack in Solomon's armor right off the bat here. Though Egyptians weren't expressly forbidden for the men of Israel to marry in the letter of the law, the point of the law was that they weren't to intermarry with individuals that didn't serve the same God. Now obviously there's only 1 true God, but they weren't intermarry with people who served pagan gods. The law specifically pointed out the people in the land of Canaan, but the whole point in it was that they were to be careful to abide in marriage relationship of those with whom they were of like mind and of one accord. And God had told them that to marry outside of the parameters established in His word would be to set a snare in their midst (Ex 34). And in Deut 7 we read, "*Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.*" Deut 7:3-4 But here Solomon apparently thought it a wise political move to have peace between Israel and Egypt in this way and so he took for a wife the Pharaoh's daughter. And ultimately it's this type of compromise (that started so small) that would be his undoing. And of course the NT counterpart is something that we're all readily familiar with. "*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*" 2 Cor 6:14-15 And the answer of course is, "No part." There's nothing in common there, they're diametrically opposed to one another, and so often believers think that they'll be able to persuade the non-believer when in reality (generally speaking) it goes the other direction. And that's exactly what happened with Solomon, it seems small enough for now, but it's like that foothold that Satan got on him, like we were mentioning a minute ago. You're not going *that far* outside of the acceptable parameters, but a little leaven leavens the whole lump, and a small compromise opens the door for a little more, and a little more.

So that by the time we get to 1 Kings 11 we read, “*But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites -- from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods;*” 1 Kings 11:1-4 and It seems so obvious in hindsight, but this is where it all begins, so subtly, and great sin always seems to begin with subtle compromise. Notice this took place before Solomon’s prayer for wisdom. You say, “Well, it took place after his prayer as well.” and You would be right, so what does that mean? We’ll talk about that in a moment.

Vs2-3

A few quick things here; 1st of all in vs 3 we see the positive principle, “Solomon loved the Lord.” But then we see its practical application, how was his love for the Lord demonstrated practically? By his, “walking in the statutes of his father David.” That is, (barring of course the basic human failures that we all have and are at times subject to in our lives) he sought to obey the Word of God. And the bible is clear that the way our love for God is demonstrated is by our obedience to His word, now they’ll know we’re Jesus’ *disciples* in that we love one another, but how is that principle made practical? By our interaction with one another in a manner that complies with the word of God, but as for the manifestation of your love for God in your life, it’s demonstrated in your obedience to His word. Jesus said, “*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*” John 14:21 and Of course the manifestation of God to Solomon is about to happen in a very unique way, but God will manifest Himself to him because Solomon loves Him and seeks to walk in His Word. In 1 John we read, “*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.*” 1 John 5:2-3 That we walk with in the acceptable guidelines of His Word, and Solomon did this, “except.” I want you to mark that word “except,” it’s another small crack in the armor. The bible is clear that we’re to love the Lord our God, how? *W/all* our heart, and *all* our soul, and *all* our strength, Deut 6:5, “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*” and When you read that he loved the Lord, “except” then we have cause for concern. And I think we do well to let this probe our hearts for just a moment, if someone were to write a sentence about my life, or your life in regards to our relationship with God what would it say. “They loved the Lord their God with all their heart and all their soul and all their strength.” Or, “They loved the Lord, and sought to walk in His ways, ‘except.’” and There’s just no way to love the Lord with everything we have as long as there’s an “except” in our lives. And the “except” in his life was at this point to sacrifice and burn incense at the high places which is to say the old pagan altars that were around from the people of the land of Canaan which God had forbid them to do. They were to destroy those places and sacrifice at the God ordained place, but at this points there was no house built for God so people just kinda did what they wanted to in this regard going back to the days of the judges.

But just because “everyone is doing it” Christian or not, that doesn’t necessarily indicate that the scriptures are accepting to that particular practice. The point being that we don’t approve and disapprove of the practices of our lives based upon the practice of other brothers and sisters. We’re not to compare ourselves amongst ourselves, but rather we measure our lives up to the word of God and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling being careful to honor Jesus Christ in what we say and do.

Vs4

Why was this called the great high place? Because it’s where whatever was left of the tabernacle from the days of Moses were currently at, and so it was the altar that Moses had built that Solomon is sacrificing to the Lord upon. And so after probably a week or better of sacrificing *to* the Lord, and celebrating *before* the Lord, we read in vs 5.

Vs5

Notice that the vs is careful to point out that is was there at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, where God met up with him. It wasn’t at any random place, it was when he was at the meeting place that God had appointed. The bible says that we’re not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as believers. Can God meet you anywhere? You bet, but how He desires that we be in the prescribed place of worship corporately that He might minister to us personally, direct, and bless us individually, and reveal Himself to us uniquely.

But look at this question, the Lord appears to Him by a dream at night and says, “Ask! What shall I give you?” “Solomon, you’re only limited by your ability to fathom.” Can you imagine that! Many of us have heard this story several times and so it loses a bit of it’s impact to us, but think about this, anything you want, name it! and Your choice reveals something about you, be it you’re on the carnal side of your nature, or the spiritual, if you want endless wealth, or power and influence, things of that nature, you’re still under the delusion that things in this life are going to somehow satisfy you if you can just get enough of it, but therein lies the snare, there’s never enough of it. But if you would ask for a closer walk with Jesus Christ a life that would in no way encumber the Lord from using you to the full as it relates to His plan for your life. To reveal to you how you can be near Him, walk with Him, and be used by Him all the days of your life. To expand His kingdom *through* your life, and that people might come to know Him through His work *in* your life, then you’re focusing on the spiritual side of things, walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Vs6-8

I have to admit, I love this conversation that Solomon is having with God, there’s a lot of honest humility here. And you can sense that he knows that he has some real weaknesses, in vs 6 he brings up 3 qualities of his dad that caused the Lord to look favorably upon David. He says, You showed great mercy to him because *he* walked before you in #1 truth, #2 in righteousness, and #3 in uprightness of heart. But the implication in there is, “But I’m not sure I can do that. This is an awesome responsibility that’s been entrusted to me, my dad told me to walk in your ways, and he was a great man, had lots of experience, and lived the life that he exhorted me to live.

But I'm just a kid, I don't know how to go out or come in, to lead your people in a manner that's worthy of who You are." and I think that we all do well to take this position before the Lord of open and honest humility, and no matter how old you are physically, before Him it's like this, "God, I am a little child, and I really don't know how to go out, or how to come in. I don't know what you want from me, I don't know how you want to lead my life, or what direction you want me to take at this time." and There's just something about being transparent before the Lord, that God really honors, you don't have to know it all, matter of fact God would prefer you and me to be quite clueless, then we can give Him the reigns of our lives.

Vs9

"God give me Your heart, for Your people, that I might reflect You rightly." and Of course for you and me, the place we glean God's heart that we might reflect Him right is in His word. And I'd refer you to Ps 119:34,73,144.

Vs10

Prov 15:8 "*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.*" Solomon's request pleased the Lord, why? Well, even though he asked for personal improvement, that he might be a better man for the job, at the root of it was the desire to right by *others*, it was an *others* oriented request. He wasn't looking out solely for #1 here, and anytime our concern is for others I believe it pleases the Lord, why? Because we serve an *others* oriented kind of God, He's not concerned with Himself, but with others, that's why Jesus Christ came to this earth, that's why He died on the cross, it wasn't for His sake, it was for ours, for those other than Himself, and so a request like this is near to the heart of God. It wasn't to benefit him in personal matters, but rather it was to benefit *kingdom matters*. And so

11-13

What's the principal here? Matt 6:33 "*...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*"

Because Solomon didn't seek personal exaltation, or selfish gain, God will exalt him and give him great gain, and this principle is in effect today. If you seek to sow selfishly, you'll reap sparingly, but if your focus is outwardly, on being a blessing rather than being blessed, God will bless abundantly. If you're seeking to build your own kingdom, you're on your own, but if you're looking to increase God's Kingdom, He'll grant you increase freely and lavishly. You see Solomon asked for one thing, and got so much more, it's that, "*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,*" Eph 3:20 type thing that we're seeing here. You just can't out give God, Solomon was serving the Lord, sacrificing *to* the Lord, worshipping *before* the Lord, not for selfish gain, but because he *loved* the Lord, and God opened up the windows of Heaven and poured out more than he could ever contain "*...good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over,*" Luke 6:38 was given into his bosom.

Vs14

Now this is a conditional clause, and this is that which we were talking about earlier, how could he be given so much wisdom and still allow all that compromise. The key word in this vs is “if.” You see, having the capacity to choose right, doesn’t guarantee or insure that you will, how many of us have known the right thing in a given circumstance and still chosen to do wrong? I would venture to say we all have, yet you had the wisdom to do well, but you chose to do wrong, the flesh is a powerful foe, one that we do well not to underestimate. Solomon would later say that with much wisdom comes much sorrow, not only because you see the vanity in things, but you know the consequences of your ways, and you choose them anyway. And it can be a gut wrenching thing, yet you choose to submit to the flesh, so wisdom doesn’t insure you’ll make the wise choice.

Vs15

Can God speak in dreams today? I believe He can, but it’s important to be careful and not put a lot of stock in your dreams generally speaking. 99 plus % of the time God will speak to you from His word, and that’s always the safe bet.

Vs16-24

What’s the sword a picture of in scripture? The word of God, (Heb 4:12, Rev 19:15), and anytime you’re seeking to bring resolve to a matter you and I do well to bring in the sword. It has a way of cutting to the quick and dividing that which is flesh and that which is spirit so that we can discern a situation. So always bring the sword into the equation.

Vs25-28

Notice that the true “mother” will do anything to keep there from being a “division in the body.” Those who don’t really have a “mother’s heart” or a “shepherd’s heart” will say, “Yeah, go ahead, cut it in ½, split it right down the middle as long as my agenda is served.” But God hates division in the body of His Son, and those who are walking in a manner that accords with His heart will will anything they can to keep that from happening, even at great personal sacrifice. And notice once the hearts were discerned the king honored the one who’s heart was true towards the son, and had the son’s best interest in mind.

Ch 4

Vs1

And now we have a list and a picture of the way Solomon’s government broke down, you can read these names on your own. Look at vs 7

Vs7

So each region with a governing official over that region would be responsible for 1 month out of the year to provide the sustenance for Solomon’s household.

Vs20-25

Which is synonymous with saying that each man was blessed and abounded with plenty.

26-29

Now back in vs 12 of ch 3 God promised this, and we seen it surface once already, and here we have the record again with an added addition. God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. How important it is that love and humility balance the increase of knowledge and wisdom, knowledge alone is a dangerous thing, it creates pride in our hearts, and God hates pride, but love edifies. And the point here is that even as sand on the seashores is able to encompass the vastness of the ocean, even so Solomon's heart was able to encompass and enclose the vastness of wisdom and understanding that God gave him in a rightly balanced fashion.

Vs30-32

Of course only a couple of them made it into the charts, the most popular being the Song of Solomon. But as for his proverbs obviously we have several hundred of them, but don't down play what this is saying, have you ever tried to come up with a single proverb that was actually worth repeating and beneficial to people? It's no small thing, yet Solomon spoke 3,000 of them plus writing over 1,000 songs, that's amazing.

Vs33-34

So besides the arts, he was a man of science as well, or more than one specialty. He was a dendrologist (studied trees), a botanist (studied plants), a zoologist, (studied animals), an ornithologist (studied birds), he was an entomologist (insects and creeping things), and an ichthyologist (he studied fish.) So this guy had it going on, and people came from everywhere to hear what he had to say, and when people realize that you've got it going on, that is that you have perhaps insight into the word of God, you study His Word and understand His word, then they'll seek you out as well. Oh Perhaps not by the multitudes like is intimated here, but they'll want to know what you know, and what we know is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Just be purposed in your heart to point people to Jesus Christ and what His word has to say and God will use your life, and cause you to speak influence into the lives of others as well.