

# Monday - Week Twenty-two

## Lesson Sixty-three: The Last Days of Solomon

Read: 1 Kings 11; Ecclesiastes 1 and 12

**Summary:** Solomon threw away the promising start that God had given him by committing adultery and idolatry.

### Background and Comments

- King Solomon had 700 wives! How could someone have so many wives? Two things need to be kept in mind:
  1. Large harems were symbols of stature among eastern kings. Perhaps Solomon fell into this sinful race for prestige.
  2. These 700 women were from royal families. There were “political marriages” for Solomon. By marrying another king’s daughter Solomon secured peace with that country.
- Of course this does not excuse Solomon at all. God had clearly told the Israelites not to intermarry with foreign countries. God’s plan for marriage was for one man and one woman to be united in a lifelong union.
- Solomon’s other sin was idolatry. He provided for his wives’ idolatry and became ensnared himself. “Wise” Solomon build pagan temples instead of teaching his family about the Messiah.
- 1 Kings 11:14 tells us that God raised up adversaries against Solomon. God had clearly told Solomon the consequences of disobedience.

### Lessons for Today

- Solomon’s idolatry and adultery were connected. Often one sin that we commit leads directly to another sin. Can you think of some examples of that in your life?
- Did Solomon repent at the end of his life? When we read Ecclesiastes 12:1 and 14 it seems that he did. How could wise King Solomon have fallen so far? What are the lessons for your life?
- So many things in this world are “meaningless”. What is our attitude toward the world supposed to be as Christians?

**Read:** Psalm 106, Colossians 2.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, King Solomon began trusting in his wisdom instead of You. Don’t ever let me trust in one of my abilities instead of in You. I ask this in Jesus’ name; Amen.

## Tuesday - Week Twenty-two

### Lesson Sixty-four: Job

Read: Job 1 - 2 and 38 - 41

**Summary:** We often use the phrase “the patience of Job”. Certainly Job had a lot of patience - but God also had to rebuke Job to correct Job’s false ideas.

#### Background and Comments

- The first two chapters of Job make us shudder. Job’s suffering was the result of a heavenly “wager” between God and the devil. These two chapters pull back the veil between the physical world and the spiritual world of angels, demons and God. One lesson that we can learn from the glimpse into heaven is that God had power over the devil. The devil had to ask God for “permission” to strike Job.
- Job never got an answer to the question of why all this had happened to him. God simply told Job that He was powerful and wise. There are times when God never reveals the reasons or purposes of our suffering.

#### Lessons for Today

- Job 1:21 is often quoted at funerals. Death has been called the great equalizer. No matter how rich or poor, successful or prone to failure a person has been in this world death comes and cannot be stopped. Ironically we cannot truly appreciate life until we seriously think about death. In the middle of all our cars and computers, our houses and vacations we need to remember that one day all these things will be gone - period. If we become attached to any of these things we are building on shaky ground. Job knew the secret of life: we are here to give God glory.
- Job’s three friends didn’t say anything at first (too bad they said anything at all!). When we comfort people we don’t always have to come up with brilliant things to say. Most of the time just being there means a lot to the person. Also remember that it’s dangerous to try to figure out why things have happened (we won’t know those sorts of things until heaven). Stick to basic truths: God’s strong love, the forgiveness of sins and God’s power are all good things to talk about.

**Read:** Psalm 107; Colossians 3.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, we don’t understand so many things in this world. Yet one thing we do understand perfectly: You love us. Please keep my focus on that wonderful truth. Never let suffering shake that trust. Amen.

# Wednesday - Week twenty-two

## Catechism Review

### Read Questions 161-171

1. Question 147 tells us that God does one of two things when we have troubles; He either takes the trouble away or uses it for our good. Why is this simple truth so difficult to remember sometimes?

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2. Angels are God's special creatures He uses to take care of us. God's angels always do His will. Today angels have become "popular" in TV shows, magazines and movies. How do you evaluate this "craze"?

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3. God protects and takes care of us because He loves us. If God's protection depended on us we would be in big trouble. Yet sometimes we act as if it did. Give an example of that from your life and explain why that's so dangerous.

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4. Agree/disagree and why: "The first sin (the devil's sin) was pride."

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5. Should Christians think about the devil? Why or why not.

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**Read:** Psalm 108; Colossians 4.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your protecting hand. Never let me take You for granted; instead motivate me to treat others in the graceful way that You have treated me. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

# Thursday - Week Twenty-two

## Lesson Sixty-five: The division

Read: 1 Kings 12:1-24

**Summary:** God had promised that David's sons would rule Israel as long as they were faithful to Him. Solomon's disobedience paved the way for a split in Israel that created two kingdoms.

### Background and Comments

- After Solomon died Rehoboam went to Shechem in northern Israel to meet with representative of the northern tribes. We would have expected the northern tribes to travel to Jerusalem (the capital of the country) to meet their new king. The northern tribes were telling Rehoboam that they would accept him as their king ... but only under certain conditions.
- Did God take the throne away from Rehoboam or did Rehoboam take the throne away from himself by his stupid actions? The answer is yes.
- Rehoboam and the army that rallied around him deserve credit for listening to God's prophet who told them to go home instead of fighting against their fellow Israelites.

### Lessons for Today

- Rehoboam was young and impetuous. Instead of listening to the wise advice of his father's advisers he listened to the advice of the "younger advisers" (his friends he had grown up with). Can you just imagine these power-hungry, prideful young men planning to "do things their way"? Youth does have its advantages: idealism, energy, and motivation. Yet youth also has the glaring weaknesses of inexperience and a predisposition toward rash decisions. Young people who are humble enough to ask for advice, listen to those who are older and to be patient every once in a while are sometimes rare ...and are always valuable people to have around!
- Whom do you ask for advice? Just asking other people for advice is not enough - you need to ask the right people for advice. Try to gather a spiritually strong group of advisers around yourself.

**Read:** Psalm 109, Luke 1.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, when I have questions and challenges remind me to go to my Christian friends for advice. You never intended me to be an isolated rock against the world. Cause me to make myself available to my Christian friends when they need advice. Amen.

# Friday - Week Twenty-two

## Life Questions

Topic/Question: I have heard some Christians talk about “spiritual warfare”.  
What is it and should I be doing it?

### Bible References and Considerations

- Ephesians 6:10-20 talk about the battle that we fight against the devil. In fact, Paul even talks about spiritual armor that we need to put on! This armor all centers around the Word of God and our trust in Jesus as our Savior. Our faith is called a shield that extinguishes the flaming arrows of the devil. When we are tempted, our faith points us to the fact that we are children of God. The Word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. The Word of God allows us to fight offensively against the devil! The devil has to flee when confronted with the Word of the Almighty God.
- Verse 13 says that we will be standing after our lifetime battle with the devil. Notice that Paul didn't say we would be jumping up and down with extra energy; living a Christian life is sometimes very difficult and takes all the determination God can give us.

### Practically Speaking

- The first step to winning any fight is to realize that we are in a fight. Too often we start to lazily drift along in our spiritual life. When that happens the devil has us right where he wants us! Pray that God will help you recognize the devil's temptations and the challenges that we face as we live in a sinful world.
- It is possible to overemphasize the spiritual warfare idea. If we begin to think that winning the battle depends on how well we fight then our attention has begun a fatal shift. Our life of faith depends on just one thing: God's grace in Jesus Christ. He is the “Warrior” who has won the battle for us. Praise God (and keep watch)!
- Verses 19 and 20 should cause us to pause. St. Paul practically pleaded with the Ephesians to pray for him. In fact, it almost seemed like Paul thought that the success of his ministry depended on the Ephesians' prayers. WOW! Who is praying for you today? For whom are you praying? Talk with these “prayer partners” about all this!

**Read:** Psalm 110; Luke 2.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, give me strength to fight against the devil. First, remind me that I'm involved in a spiritual war at all times. The devil is always trying to lead me away from You. Second, cause me to rely on You and Your Word for strength for the battle. I pray in the name of Jesus; Amen.