

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

I. The United Kingdom, 1 Kings 1:1-11:43

I. Overcoming Solomon's Devastating Idolatry

(1 Kings 11:1-13)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Colossians 3:5b ESV, NIV claims "covetousness," or "greed," is the sin of "idolatry," and it abounds today:

(1) The Dow dropped the largest point drop ever of 1,175 points last Monday, and the market has ever since been volative, for many investors have sold stocks out of fear, viewing their stock investments as an idol of security. (Fred Imbert, "Dow closes down 1,175 in biggest single-day point loss ever," February 5, 2018; msn.com)

(2) The idol of greed is hurting the ability of many Americans to manage and invest their money well, a fact George F. Will noted in his article, "Feeling Good, Spending Money? Watch Out" (Hartford Courant, February 5, 2018, p. A7). Alluding to a "recent Wall Street Journal front-page headline: 'Americans Save Less As Good Times Roll,'" he reported the story began as follows: "'Soaring stock prices and improving job prospects . . . have set Americans off on a spending splurge that is cutting into how much they sock away for retirement and rainy days.'"

Mr. Will explained how self-destructive such behavior really is, for the "Social Security" trust fund "which provides 33 percent of seniors' annual income, and 90 percent for the bottom third of retirees . . . will be exhausted by 2035 and benefits will have to be reduced by 23 percent," Ibid. In addition, "(a) Federal Reserve study revealed that half of those surveyed said they could not gather \$400 to cope with an emergency" and "one-third said they could not sell assets, tap retirement savings or turn to family and friends to pay three months of expenses," Ibid.

(3) It affects us locally: last Thursday, an area bank manager told me of the lack of proper retirement investing she sees in today's younger adults in view of the financial challenges they will face in the world of their future.

Need: *So, we ask, "If greed is the sin of idolatry, and self-destructive greed is rampant, how are we to handle it?!"*

I. 1 Kings 11:1-8 in its context reports that Solomon who built God's temple came to practice idolatry:

- A. In our past studies, we learned that Solomon disobeyed Deuteronomy 17:18-20, failing to read Scripture daily.
- B. That led to four other violations of God's Deuteronomy 17:14-20 directives to Israel's kings:
 1. Solomon married Pharaoh's pagan daughter (1 Kings 3:1), violating Deuteronomy 17:17; 7:3.
 2. He multiplied wealth to himself (1 Kings 10:14-15), violating Deuteronomy 17:17b.
 3. He lifted his heart up over his people, harshly enslaving them (1 Kings 12:4), violating Deut. 17:20a.
 4. He multiplied horses to himself (1 Kings 4:26; 10:28-29), violating Deuteronomy 17:16a.
- C. Such sins in time led Solomon into the idolatry of greed and vile pagan idolatry, 1 Kings 11:1-8 et al.:
 1. Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter had led him in part to build a much bigger palace structure than the good palace Tyre's king Hiram had already built for David and which Solomon inherited, and all that Solomon might satisfy her demand as a daughter of a very wealthy Pharaoh, 1 Kings 3:1 with 7:1-3, 8.
 2. To finance this and other building projects, Solomon had borrowed \$170 million in gold from Tyre's king Hiram, but with Solomon's failure to satisfy Hiram by reimbursing him with 20 cities of Galilee, Solomon had built ships manned by his slaves and Hiram's sailors to mine gold in Ophir, 1 Kings 9:10-14, 26-28.
 3. That mining venture had expanded to include Solomon's gaining silver, ivory, apes and peacocks in a growing lust for possessions, exposing a materialistic greed, a form of idolatry, 1 Kings 10:22; Col. 3:5.
 4. Not only captivated by his Egyptian princess wife, Solomon fell deeply in love with lots of foreign wives, ending up having 700 of them and acquiring 300 mistresses, 1 Kings 11:1, 3.
 5. He thus **extensively** disobeyed God's prohibition against marrying pagan women lest they turn his heart away to idols, and they led him to worship Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh and Molech (1 Kings 11:4-8), pagan gods by which he participated in immorality and child sacrifice, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 508.

II. God was angered by Solomon's syncretistic worship, so He punished him for it, 1 Kings 11:9-13:

- A. The Lord was angry at Solomon's apostasy because He had twice before appeared to him, warning him not to turn to pagan gods, but Solomon had turned his heart from God to worship such gods, 1 King 11:9-10.
- B. Thus, God told Solomon that He would tear the kingdom from him and give it to his servant, 1 Kings 11:11.
- C. However, the Lord said He would not do this in Solomon's lifetime because he was the son of God's godly servant David, but that He would tear the kingdom out of the control of Solomon's son, 1 Kings 11:12.
- D. God graciously chose to leave 1 tribe for David's heir out of respect for David and Jerusalem, 1 Kings 11:13.

III. If we wonder HOW a son of the godly king DAVID could drift so FAR as to practice VILE PAGAN IDOLATRY, we gain insight from viewing the wide Scripture context of 1 Kings 11:1-8 (as follows):

- A. Solomon's drift into idolatry **began** by *SIMPLY NEGLECTING* his *daily reading of Scripture*: had he consistently read God's Word, Deuteronomy 17:18-20 claims he would not have turned aside from it to sin.
- B. That *neglect* of daily Scripture reading left Solomon vulnerable to adopting the values and views of the unholy world around him so that he gratified his **lusts** of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of life, practicing the sin of **worldliness** (1 John 2:15-16). This is seen in Solomon's actions of acquiring many pagan wives and mistresses, his many enterprises to acquire ever more wealth of all kinds and his long slavery abuse of fellow countrymen to work his building projects and to man his mining venture.
- C. Since the gratification of lust for material goods is greed, or idolatry, Solomon was **already** into **idolatry!**
- D. Thus, captivated by the world through lust, and already practicing the idolatry of greed, Solomon's heart easily swung from devotion to God to a devotion to his pagan wives, and they influenced him to worship their pagan gods in a syncretism of immoral, murderous paganism mixed with the worship of God, 1 Kings 11:6; Ibid.

Lesson: *Solomon's move to vile pagan syncretism was NOT a SUDDEN event, but a GRADUAL SHIFT that began by (1) his mere neglect of daily reading God's written Word (2) that led to his love of the unholy world around him and of gratifying his lusts by it (3) to where he worshiped the idol of materialism. (4) This in turn led Solomon to be influenced by his pagan wives to mix his worship of God with vile pagan idolatrous worship!*

Application: *(1) May we heed God's call to trust in Christ for salvation, Acts 17:30; John 3:16. (2) May we then (a) rely on the Holy Spirit for the behavior control (b) to focus on (c) exposing our minds and hearts to Scripture (d) that we not love the world and worship its idols, especially materialism, but (e) do God's will (1 John 2:15-17).*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Since "greed" is one of the biggest idols in our era, we illustrate how to overcome it in practical terms:

(1) In our introduction, we cited a recent article by George F. Will that reported how "'(s)oothing stock prices and improving job prospects . . . have set Americans off on a spending splurge that is cutting into how much they sock away for retirement and rainy days,'" Ibid., Will. He told how self-destructive such actions are before summing: "Americans consider deferral of gratification unnatural, which it is. Time was, however, thrift was considered a virtue. People sat at kitchen tables, calculating how to bring their outlays, for living and retiring, into alignment with their incomes. But eventually many people decided: This is no fun. Instead, let's disconnect enjoyable spending decisions from tiresome facts about resources, thereby living the way the federal government does." (Ibid.)

The **solution -- restoring a mentality of thrift -- is ACQUIRED by trusting in Christ as Savior, thus becoming indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:16; Romans 8:9), and then relying on that Spirit in a life of faith for the behavior control (Galatians 5:16-23) needed to manage one's income how Scripture directs him to do that he might meet his livelihood needs with the income God provides (2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Hebrews 13:5-6).**

Hebrews 13:5 NIV in particular commands believers: "Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, because God as said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'" A believer relying on the Holy Spirit to avoid the love of money and to be content with what he already has is well-equipped by God to budget and to invest his income effectively for stability throughout his life!

(2) On investing for the future in light the stock market's recent volatility, a volatility fueled by greed, we have often noted that Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 directs us to invest (a) aggressively, (b) long-term, (c) properly diversified, and (d) periodically to add to those investments (e) without greedily trying to buy low and sell high in timing the market.

This directive has a proven track record, too: if an 18-year-old had invested \$10,000 in the S & P 500 Index back in 1970 and **left** it, its earnings and capital gains there to grow, paying its taxes out of other income, at the close of Thursday's market after **45 years** of **many big** market swings, at age 65, his investment would be worth \$1,367,088. Had he invested in the Sequoia Fund, he would have \$4,268,692. (sequoiafund.com; yahoo.finance.com) Regardless which investment route he would have taken, just staying invested in it long-term would have equipped him to retire!

(3) For encouraging investment guidance in view of the recent market volatility, on January 22, 2018, days before the big Dow drop, the Sequoia Fund's managers sent a letter to their investors, stating: "It won't last . . . the hot market . . . while we all asked Santa for a few more 2017s over the next few years, simple math suggests that he won't deliver." They knew the market **had** to correct, so they recommend long-term investing, as does Ecclesiastes 11:1-6!

May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then may we daily expose our minds and hearts to Scripture to discern how to avoid idolatry, and rely on the Holy Spirit for the self-control to heed God's Word for blessing!