

Bible Overview 11: The Golden Age: Rise and Fall

Solomon, David's son comes to the throne after David dies, and at the beginning of his reign, Israel enjoys a 'golden age'. In the early years of Solomon's reign, Israel comes the closest it ever gets to the fulfilment of God's promises.
See 1 Kings 8:56

1 Kings:

- The people of Israel are in the Promised Land and enjoying its blessings (4v20-21,8v66)
- The Son of David is on the throne (3v6)
- The people of Israel are too numerous to count (3v8,4v20)
- The King is a wise and godly king (3v10-13, 4v29-33)
- Under Solomon, Israel was a blessing to the nations (4v34, visit of queen of Sheba 1 Kings 10v1, 6-9,23-24)
- The greatest blessing of all – God was in their midst (6v13)
- The temple was built – the dwelling place of God (1 Kings 8:10-11)

In Solomon, we see a beautiful picture of what life will be like for the people of God, living in the world God has created and renewed for them, under a godly king – too numerous to count, enjoying 'every blessing' with God in their midst.

However....!

1 Kings 11

Firstly note, the ominous warnings ie 1 Kings 9:6-9

1 Kings 11:1 'however' – a weighty word – implying despite all the glory of 1 Kings 10 – things were about to take a turn for the worse

- Solomon 'loved many foreign women' v1
- He broke the express command of God v2
- The terrible 'action' was the doorway to the 'turning of his heart'. V4,6

“Affections are in the soul as the helm in the ship; if it be laid hold on by a skilful hand he turneth the whole vessel which way he pleaseth. If God hath the powerful hand of his grace upon our affections, he turns our souls unto a compliance with his institutions, instructions, in mercy, afflictions, trials, all sorts of providences, and hold them firm against all winds and storms of temptation... when the world hath the hand on our affections, it turns the mind, with the whole industry of the soul, unto its interest and concerns. And it is vain to contend with any thing that hath the power of our affections in its disposal; it will prevail at last” John Owen

King Solomon is the example 'par excellence' of this reality (Compare also the way in which Eve fell into sin – Genesis 2+3 – contrast between the 'Word' that was given and the 'sight' that dazzled)

- His love of foreign wives led him to worship idols, including the 'detestable' god Molech (v5,7) (this included child sacrifice)
- Note the 'deceitfulness of sin' (It moves us from A-Z, by tempting us to move from A-B)
- Solomon provoked the wrath of God (v9)
- God's judgment decreed that the 'Kingdom' would be 'torn away from him (v11)
- Judgment tempered with mercy because of David (v12-13)
- Note the importance of 'self-knowledge' 1 Kings 8:57-58, 61 (see Matt 26:30-35)

Following the death of Solomon, the kingdom is divided into 2, never to be reunited:

- Israel – the Northern Kingdom, under Jeroboam
- Judah – the Southern Kingdom under Rehoboam (1 Kings 11:13)

See Diagram on following page:

Northern Kingdom defeated by Assyria in 721 BC

Southern Kingdom (Judah) defeated and Exiled by Babylon 597-586 BC

(EMMA – could the diagram on page 19 of book be enlarged and photocopied to go on this page? Thanks Mark)

1 King 8 The Temple

Not literally the 'dwelling place of God' (v27) but symbolised his presence.

The temple = the place where God and man meet, where sacrifices are offered for sin so that God and man can have fellowship together.

"Transcendent and Immanent"

Holy of Holies = God is very near, but sinful man cannot come into his presence.

Sacrificial system and priesthood = to enable God and man to fellowship together, the Temple is vital for the relationship between a holy God and sinful man. To 'draw near' to God – you would go up to the Temple

- At the temple sacrifices for sin were offered
- The sacrifices were performed by priests

Group Discussion: Solomon's prayer of dedication 1 Kings 8

- What phrase is often repeated?
- Why is that? What is its significance? What does it tell us about the way we must relate to God?
- Read John 14:13-14 – in the light of 1 Kings 8 what is the significance of Jesus' words

Group Discussion: READ John 4:19-26

- Why did the Jews insist that God must be worshipped in Jerusalem v20
- What do you make of the following comment? "In John 4:21-24 Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that it doesn't matter where you worship God".
- What is the significant phrase in v21,23 and what does it mean?
- What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth? (take note of the context)

1 Kings 8:29,30,33,35,41,44,48

JESUS AND THE TEMPLE:

Who is Jesus – John 1:1, 1:14

John 2:19-21 – why does he say this of himself?

Jesus death is the one sacrifice for sin – no other needed

“He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself” Hebrews 7:27

Jesus is our great high priest who only makes his offering for sin once – so there is no need for any more priests because there are no more sacrifices;

“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties, again and again he offers the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down (ie it was finished) at the right hand of God” Hebrews 10:11-12

Therefore there is no longer any need for a temple. We draw near to God not by going to a building but by trusting in a person = Jesus

“Therefore brothers since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near to God ” Hebrews 10:19-21

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE TEMPLE:

1 Cor 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16

The Holy Spirit – who is God, now comes to live in us.

“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you, but if I go I will send him to you” John 16:7

Why was it good that Jesus went away?

Note the incredible truth of what a Christian is!

For Next Time

Please try and learn off by heart all the Kings of Israel and Judah and also their dates

(Only kidding – have a look at 1 Kings 18-19:18)