
BIG WORD: 1 Kings

Homework for Chapters 9—11
Discussion Dates: 27 February 2013 (in house)
and 28 February 2013 (online)

DAY ONE: Overview

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 1 Kings 9—11.

If possible, read all three chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

DAY TWO: The Lord Appears to Solomon

READ 1 Kings 9:1—9.

Scripture distinguishes between types of communication with God. Sometimes God "appears" to people. This does not mean a true and visible encounter, since no one can see the face of God (Exodus 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16), but rather an appearance through visions or dreams. Other times "the Word of God comes" to people. This usually happens by way of prophets, angels or other messengers.

In 1 Kings 9 God appeared to Solomon. Verse 2 states that this is the "second time" and that the appearing is similar to the first time in Gibeon, which we read about in 1 Kings 3.

Describe the message God gives to Solomon.

While this is the second "appearing" of God to Solomon, Solomon has heard the same message far more often. Just here in 1 Kings, we know that Solomon received very similar messages at least four times. I imagine his father, David, reiterated God's instructions even more than that. Compare these instances.

- 1 Kings 2:1—5

- 1 Kings 3:14
- 1 Kings 6:11—13
- 1 Kings 9:4—9

What differences, if any, do you see among the messages?

DAY THREE: Solomon's Dominion

READ 1 Kings 9:10—28 and 2 Chronicles 8.

In previous chapters we learned the details of Solomon's building projects. Here we get another summary of the impact on the nation and their alliance with Tyre.

How many years did they build?

What did Hiram, king of Tyre, provide to Solomon?

What did Solomon give to Hiram in exchange?

What dowry did Pharaoh provide for his daughter to marry Solomon?

From where did the workers come?

Were any of the workers slaves? Which ones?

How many chief officers were there?

What else – besides cities, the Temple and his palace – did Solomon build in this time period?

What other observations do you take from these passages?

DAY FOUR: Solomon's Reputation

READ 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9:1—28.

Here we find another famous story of Solomon: his encounter with the Queen of Sheba.

Why did the Queen visit Jerusalem? What did she want?

What did she discover?

Verses 14—29 describe in detail Solomon's wealth and opulent lifestyle. What surprises you the most among his possessions?

Before leaving, the Queen of Sheba declared (verse 7) that Solomon's wives and servants must be very happy to "*continually stand before you and hear your wisdom.*" Do you agree with her? How do you think his wives, servants and subjects felt?

She then blessed the LORD and declared that Solomon being king was proof of God's love of Israel (verse 8). What might Solomon have thought about this?

DAY FIVE: Solomon's Divided Heart

READ 1 Kings 11:1—10.

Solomon's choices, as described in these verses, conflict with key parts of the Law. Consider the following passages:

- Exodus 20:2—6
- Deuteronomy 5:8—10

- Deuteronomy 7:3—4
- Deuteronomy 17:16—17

How did Solomon break these laws?

These four passages all point to one supreme message: **No other gods before the LORD**. The chapter makes clear that Solomon followed his wives in worshipping not one other god, but several. His heart was divided. He worshipped the LORD and – .

“An idol is not simply a statue of wood, stone, or metal; it is anything we love and pursue in place of God ... In biblical terms, an idol is something other than God that we set our hearts on, that motivates us, that masters or rules us, or that we serve.” – Ken Sande

*“Idolatry is attached to everything. All of our bitterness, all of our impurity, all of our malice, all of our problems, everything that troubles us is a result of idolatry. And **what is idolatry? It’s taking a good thing and making it an ultimate thing.**” – Tim Keller*

Have you ever caught yourself serving God and – ? What have you added (or attempted to add) to your faith in and worship of Him?

What idols might you have hidden in the recesses of your heart today? Is there anything that you have made an ultimate thing in place of God?

READ these passages:

- Mark 3:24-25
- Matthew 6:24
- James 3:11-12

While these passages deal address different contexts – false gods, money, pride and speech – all may be applied to modern idolatry. What truths do you see there that are relevant to us today?

What happens to divided hearts ... homes ... kingdoms?

DAY SIX: Foreign Gods

According to Deuteronomy 23:3, neither Moabites nor Ammonites were permitted to enter the assembly of God to the tenth generation. This ruling goes back to the Israelites' exit from Egypt and the poor treatment provided by these tribes, but it was more than that. Ruth, who was a Moabitess, not only entered the assembly long before the tenth generation, but even became an ancestress of King David and eventually the Messiah. Therefore, this law could not be simply about bloodlines. I believe it referred more to divided hearts and detestable "worship."

In chapter 11 Solomon's heart was led astray by his 1000 (or more) women and their gods, the gods of the Moabites and Ammonites (among others). Let's take a closer look at the gods specifically mentioned.

- **Ashtoreth:** This was the moon goddess of the Phoenicians, of Tyre and Sidon. A female deity that represented fertility and the passive principle in nature, Ashtoreth was called the "queen of heaven." She was frequently associated with Baal, the sun-god, their chief male deity. The plural form is Ashtaroth. You can find references to this god in Judges, 1 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and Jeremiah. Solomon established worship of Ashtoreth here in 1 Kings 11. It is likely that Jezebel's 400 priests were employed in service to this god, as well as Baal (1 Kings 18:19). The high places and priests remained until King Josiah removed them, as told in 2 Kings 23:4—8.
- **Chemosh:** The "fish-god" or subduer, Chemosh was the god of the Moabites. This would have been the deity to which Ruth worshipped before converting to the LORD when she followed her mother-in-law Naomi. Chemosh is mentioned in Numbers 21:23, here in 1 Kings 11, in 2 Kings 3:5 and 23:13, and several times in Jeremiah 48.
- **Molech** (also spelled Moloch): The main deity of the Ammonites, Molech represented a consuming, destroying and purifying fire. Worshipers sacrificed their children to the fire, most often by literal sacrifice, other times by "passing through" or by labor to the fire and altar. Molech is mentioned as early as Leviticus 18:21 and again in Leviticus 20:2—5. Solomon built a high place of worship for Molech (1 Kings 11:7). According to 2 Kings 23:10, this "high place" was called Topheth and was built in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. This was just outside Jerusalem. The name "Topheth" comes from *toph*, which means *drum*, and refers to the ceremonial drums beat to drown out the cries during sacrifices. Read more in Jeremiah 7:29—34 and Ezekiel 16:20—22.
- **Milcom:** A god of the Ammonites (*descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew, Gen. 19*), Milcom was called "the abomination of the children of Ammon" (2 Kings 23:13). It is possible that Milcom was another name for Molech. Scripture references Milcom only in context of Molech; they're temples were both near the Mount of Olives.

Aside from the issue of idolatry, which we explored yesterday, why would these gods and the worship of them been particularly detestable to our God?

Solomon established worship of these gods by building “high places” and erecting temples for them. Those stood until the time of Josiah’s reign, more than 300 years later. Why do you think it took so long for the people to remove them and return to God?

Is it always that difficult to remove idolatry from our lives?

DAY SEVEN: Solomon’s Kingdom Divides

READ 1 Kings 11:11—43.

What is God’s charge against Solomon? What did He tell Solomon?

Whom does God raise up as adversaries to Solomon?

How did Solomon respond to God’s sentencing and discipline?

Do you think Solomon ever returned to God? Explain your answer.