

# ISRAEL MY GLORY



## SOLOMON

### THE KING

A LOOK AT ISRAEL'S GOLDEN AGE—  
AND WHY IT ENDED

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**WHEN EVERYTHING WENT WRONG**



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## FROM THE EDITOR

**M**y husband, Tom, had a wonderful opportunity recently to visit Israel on a tour led by the Zionist Organization of America. He was among a handful of Christians on a Jewish trip designed to communicate the precariousness of Israel's existence.

In a bulletproof bus, he traveled to the Gaza border where last year Palestinians launched hundreds of incendiary balloons into Israel and set Israeli fields ablaze. He was taken to the town of Sderot, where bomb shelters line the streets and most children suffer from PTSD. He went to Hebron (a Palestinian stronghold) where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are buried and where King David ruled for seven years before ruling from Jerusalem. Today, a small Orthodox Jewish community is trying to survive in Hebron.

The group also went to Judea and Samaria where Israel began building a beautiful little settlement it was forced to abandon because then U.S. President Barack Obama, 6,000 miles away, told the Jewish state it wasn't allowed to build on the land.

"People are hurting," Tom told me. "They were begging and pleading with us to tell American Jews and Christians the tensions they live with every day and what truly is going on."

The Israel of today is a far cry from Israel in the days of King Solomon, when Gentiles traveled far and wide to see the magnificent Jewish kingdom and how God was blessing His Chosen People. Solomon's reign is considered Israel's golden age, when peace and prosperity prevailed and Israel was the head of all nations instead of the tail (Dt. 28:13).

This issue of *Israel My Glory* unveils the glories of Solomon's kingdom and what went wrong to create some of the difficulties Israel faces today. But the good news is that Israel will not suffer forever. Someday, Israel will return to God with all its heart; and God will reestablish the kingdom of David, as He promises in His Word.

In that day, no ruler 6,000 miles away will be able to order Israel not to build on its own land. Scripture teaches that Israel's Messiah will rule from Jerusalem, and all the world will be subservient to Him.

"In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zech. 8:23). Until then, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, the government of Israel, and the wonderful Jewish people who live in the land God gave them as an inheritance forever.

*Waiting for His Appearing,*  
Lorna Simcox  
Editor-in-Chief



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“The Holocaust is not about the murder of 6,000,000 Jewish people, it’s about the murder of one Jewish person times 6,000,000!” This statement grabbed my attention during a recent visit to Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem.

Yad Vashem is Israel’s national Holocaust museum, founded in 1953 to memorialize those who perished in the largest genocide in the history of mankind. The Hebrew name comes from Isaiah 56:5: “To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial [*yad*], and a name [*vashem*] . . . which will not be cut off” (NASB). The museum is a testimony that, despite humanity’s attempts to eradicate them, the Jewish people will not be destroyed.

Yad Vashem not only memorializes those who suffered and died in World War II but also reminds us that each victim had a name and a story. They all were individuals, like you and I, who suddenly found themselves trapped in a world of horror. To say the Holocaust was the murder of one Jewish person times 6 million is to understand the atrocity through the stories of its victims.

Yad Vashem is built on Mount Herzl in western Jerusalem. Below the museum is a 2.5-acre monument called the Valley of the Communities carved out of bedrock at the base of the mountain. Engraved into the labyrinth of the natural stone walls are the names of more than 5,000 European Jewish communities that existed for hundreds of years. By the end of the Holocaust, nothing remained but the names.

Yad Vashem has so many stories to tell—each one a testimony of a human catastrophe. The world is full of injustice and inhumanity, but nothing has matched the Holocaust in scale or in degree of brutal dehumanization.

Yad Vashem is also about those who survived. It has recorded testimonies of Jewish people willing to share the horrific memories of inhumane treatment, forced labor, starvation, loved ones who perished, and more.

Fortunately, God moved some Gentiles to do good in the midst of evil. A tree-lined path across the Yad Vashem campus is called the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations. Each tree represents a Gentile who risked his or her life to rescue Jewish people. Many sacrificed careers, businesses, and personal safety to do what they knew was right. Yad Vashem’s division that researches and certifies the Righteous Among the Nations identified 28,000 individuals as of 2021.

The World Holocaust Remembrance Center is built around three principles: collection, research, and education. It has collected tens of thousands of artifacts and more than 220 million pages of documents related to the Holocaust. It adds 20,000 new pages each year. These documents help to connect people and reconstruct the lives of victims. The International School of Holocaust Studies is the only school of its kind in the world, using innovative methods and creative materials to teach educators about the Holocaust.

We take all of our Israel tours to Yad Vashem. Its website, [yadvashem.org](http://yadvashem.org), is an amazing resource center, where you can access thousands of stories, pictures, and videos.

Yad Vashem keeps alive the moving stories of those who suffered. But perhaps its greatest testimony to the world is for the Lord, who promised that no one—regardless of strength or determination—will destroy His uniquely chosen people, the “apple of His eye” (Zech. 2:8).

God promised that the Jewish people will always exist (Jer. 31:35–36) and that He will curse him who curses Israel (Gen. 12:3). Hitler’s Third Reich is no more. But the nation of Israel is alive and thriving in the land God promised will belong to the Jewish people forever.



by **Jim Showers**,  
executive director of The Friends of  
Israel Gospel Ministry



# SOMETHING IS WRONG

Pro-choice activists are fuming over the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that declared abortion is not a constitutional right, overturning its historic 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Hundreds of people immediately descended on the court to protest. The ruling came exactly one month after the May 24 nightmare in Uvalde, Texas, when 18-year-old Salvador Ramos entered Robb Elementary School and shot to death 19 children and two teachers.

Logically, you would think outrage over the murder of children in Texas would translate into outrage over the murder of children in utero. But people who lobby for “reproductive rights” don’t see things that way—yet another reminder that the soul of our nation is deteriorating.

What compels a teenager to commit an egregious crime? What compels people to fight for the right to kill children who should be safe in their mothers’ wombs? These issues may look dissimilar. But in truth, they are part and parcel of the same problem.

Uvalde is no isolated incident. Mass shootings in the United States have become common in our conversations and culture. Violent crimes and homicides are surging in our major cities, up 30 percent in 2020 and rising, while district attorneys turn a blind eye to criminals.

According to a Pew Research poll taken a month before the recent Supreme Court decision, 61 percent of U.S. adults say abortion should be legal all or most of the time, while 37 percent say it should be illegal. From 1973 through 2020, 42.8 million children were aborted in America—the equivalent of obliterating the entire population of Canada, and three times the number of Jewish people in the world.

What has gone wrong? According to a recent Gallup poll, 50 percent of Americans rate the overall state of moral values in our country as “poor,” while 37 percent say it is “only fair.” The poll also found that 78 percent think moral

values are deteriorating. The situation has grown so bad only 1 percent view our moral values as “excellent,” and 12 percent feel they are “good.”

Gallup released another poll showing belief in God is at its lowest point since the public-opinion polling company first surveyed the subject in 1944. In 2017, 87 percent of Americans surveyed said they believed in God. In a mere five years, the percentage dropped six points, to 81 percent.

As fewer people look to God for their standard of morality, the more they look to themselves. They do what seems right in their own eyes. The writer of Proverbs declared, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts” (21:2).

It’s human hubris to justify our opinions and convince ourselves and those around us that we are right. The sovereign God of the universe weighs our motives and the intentions of our hearts against His moral truth.

When you have no god, your way always seems right to you—even at the expense of others. Yet consideration of others is at the heart of Scripture, from the laws of the Old Testament to Jesus’ Golden Rule: “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Mt. 7:12).

Americans from all backgrounds acknowledge our country is sick, and it’s not the type of sickness the government can fix by throwing money at it. It’s a soul sickness that can only be mended by the healing hand of God—if we turn to Him.

Will we turn? Or will we, as a nation, continue to do what’s right in our own eyes and watch helplessly as more and more violence overtakes us and more and more unborn babies are put to death? Our prayer is that God will stir hearts and draw people to Himself because He alone is our hope.

by Chris Katulka



# ISRAEL, EU SIGN GAS DEAL

The European Union (EU) has signed a memorandum of understanding with Israel that eventually could see significant quantities of Israeli natural gas shipped to Europe via Egypt. The trilateral agreement, signed at the ministerial meeting of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum in Cairo, calls for Israeli gas to be sent through underwater pipelines to two liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities in Egypt. From there, the LNG would be transported across the Mediterranean Sea on LNG vessels to markets in Europe.

The EU is desperately trying to reduce its dependence on Russia, which supplied around 40 percent of the bloc's gas imports in 2021. Shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, the European Commission, the EU's administrative arm, proposed reducing imports of Russian gas by two-thirds before the end of this year.

Most energy analysts agree that LNG imports are merely a temporary solution for Europe's gas needs. Over the long term, undersea pipelines between Israel and Europe would offer a less expensive, more stable source of gas. Two gas pipeline alternatives are under discussion.

One option involves building a \$1.5 billion, 500-kilometer (311-mile) pipeline between Israel's largest offshore natural gas field, Leviathan, and Turkey, from where Israeli gas would be forwarded to southern Europe through existing pipeline infrastructure. This option would leave Israel strategically dependent on Turkey, whose president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is hostile to the Jewish state.

The second option involves the 2,000-kilometer (1,243-mile) Eastern Mediterranean (EastMed) pipeline, a \$6 billion project to ship natural gas from

Israeli and Cypriot waters to Greece and Italy. Shortly before Russia invaded Ukraine, the Biden administration withdrew American support for EastMed because the pipeline was antithetical to its "climate goals."

The war in Ukraine may contribute to the revival of the EastMed project, regardless of White House opposition. Former Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz recently called on the Israeli government to give top priority to building the pipeline. Steinitz said EastMed is economically and technically feasible and "makes sense." Italian energy executive Fabrizio Mattana called EastMed the most secure option compared to other gas export solutions, adding that EastMed would take up to four years to complete after an investment decision is reached.

Even with new infrastructure, Israel will never be able to replace Russian gas supplies to Europe.

The EU has also pledged to encourage European energy companies to explore for new gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean. Elai Rettig, an assistant professor of political studies at Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv, said Europe's demand for energy could become a windfall for Israel. "Europe needs as many alternative sources as possible," he said. "The more

export deals that are made, the more infrastructure will be built, the bigger the chances are that new energy companies will come to look for more gas in the Eastern Mediterranean."

Israeli Energy Minister Karine Elharrar said, "This is a tremendous moment in which little Israel is becoming a significant player in the global energy market. The memorandum of understanding will allow Israel to export Israeli natural gas to Europe for the first time, and it is even more impressive when one looks at the string of significant agreements we have signed in the past year, positioning Israel and the Israeli energy and water economy as a key player in the world."



\* Participants at a meeting of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum



**by Soeren Kern,**  
a senior fellow at the Gatestone Institute, a nonpartisan foreign-policy think tank based in New York City



## WHY DON'T THESE BLACK LIVES MATTER?

BY RAYMOND IBRAHIM

In June, Islamic terrorists again stormed a church in Nigeria, massacring more than 50 Christians who were peacefully worshipping their God. Videos showed church worshipers lying in pools of blood. Over the years, Muslims have assaulted, shot up, or torched countless churches in Nigeria.

Nigerian Christians are being purged in a genocide. One Christian is killed every two hours. According to an August 2021 report, since the Islamic insurgency began in earnest in July 2009—first at the hands of the Islamic terrorist organization Boko Haram and later by Fulani, Muslim herdsmen—more than 60,000 Christians have either been murdered or abducted, never to be seen again. During this same time, approximately 20,000 churches and Christian schools were torched and destroyed by “Allahu Akbar”-screaming Muslims.

This past spring, the Islamic State in Nigeria released a video of members slaughtering 20 Christians. Although reminiscent of the 2015 video of another pack of Muslim terrorists slaughtering 21 Coptic Christians in Libya, it received significantly less media coverage. And the 2015 video received six times less coverage than the killing of a gorilla that occurred at the same time.

The silence is deafening. When Australian Brenton Tarrant attacked two mosques and killed 51 Muslims in 2019 in New Zealand, the world stood up in condemnation; and the UN responded to that lone, aberrant attack by inaugurating a “combat Islamophobia” initiative. Where are the UN initiatives to combat antisemitism and Christian genocide?

All the UN seems interested in doing is ignoring violations of its own laws by its own members, such as Iran’s genocidal threats that violate the UN Charter and are grounds for expelling Iran. It ignores crimes against humanity. Instead, the UN wrongfully, mercilessly persecutes Israel, a democracy that actually protects and upholds human rights for all its citizens—whether Muslim, Jewish, or Christian.

So what will the UN do now in response to the shooting up of a church and the murder of more than 50 Christians? Absolutely nothing—except try to silence those who expose the driving ideology of the murderers.

Indeed, when members of the European Parliament recently



proposed discussing the rising tide of Christian persecution around the world—including the stoning and burning to death of a Christian student—the majority of the parliament refused.

Ignoring the murder of Christians is merely one piece of the puzzle; covering up the murderers’ religious identities is the other. In describing the recent massacre in Nigeria, the words *Muslim*, *Islam*, or even *Islamist* never appeared in the Associated Press report.

One need only consider the words of former U.S. President Barack Obama’s assistant secretary of state for African affairs, speaking after Muslim terrorists in Nigeria slaughtered another batch of 50 Christian worshipers on Easter Sunday 2012: “I want to take this opportunity to stress one key point and that is that religion is not driving extremist violence [in Nigeria].” Instead, “inequality” and “poverty,” he said, are “what’s fueling all this stuff” (“this stuff” being the massacre of Christians at the hands of Muslims). A decade—and countless Christian corpses—later, the United States has not changed its position.

Worse, the Biden administration removed Nigeria from the State Department’s list of Countries of Particular Concern, that is, nations that engage in, or tolerate violations of, religious freedom.

Where is the outcry? Where is the outrage? Where are the hashtags in support of Christian Nigerians? Why don’t these black lives matter?

*Raymond Ibrahim is a Shillman Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a Judith Friedman Rosen Fellow at the Middle East Forum, and a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute. To read this article in its entirety, along with others by Raymond Ibrahim, log on to his website, [raymondibrahim.com](http://raymondibrahim.com).*

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## Growing in Australia

The Australian ministry of The Friends of Israel (FOI) has grown remarkably in recent years. Many of you know Deane Woods, our representative in Sydney. God has blessed his 18 years with FOI



\* Margaret and Deane Woods (above)  
Elizabeth and Les Crawford (right)

by giving him amazing fruit. As a result, we've seen our team grow from one person to six across the country, all recruited and mentored by Deane.

In June, Deane officially retired. However, his influence continues through the outreaches God used him to establish and the personnel God used him to locate and train. We now have experienced Bible teachers, former college professors, professional musicians, and pastors on our team. And they all seek inroads for teaching the truth about the Messiah and Israel throughout the continent.

Some teach and preach, while others create programs that provide for the needs of Australian Jewish communities. All of our workers share the truth about Jesus and teach that God loves His people Israel and will never cast them aside.

The gospel is forging ahead in Australia, touching a new generation as our teams seek strategic means of engaging the culture. With our new field director, Les Crawford; an increased digital presence through our social media platforms; and new websites ([foiaustralia.org](http://foiaustralia.org) and [foinz.org](http://foinz.org)), FOI-Australia is expanding beyond our dreams. Our great God is exceeding our expectations.

As one Australian FOI conference attendee commented, "[FOI's] love of Israel and her people is evident, while grounding everything in Scripture. Jesus could come back sooner than we imagine, and we need to share the gospel message."

Will you pray with us as FOI-Australia seeks new opportunities to minister? It has taken

decades for us to see God position our workers for the current expansion there. And we couldn't be more excited to see what doors He will open in the future. Our goal is to be among those who bless Israel and are blessed (Gen. 12:3). Pray we

continue to experience God's blessing of growth as we teach, preach, and serve the people of Australia with the Good News of the Messiah.



If you would like to support our Australian team and other FOI ministries around the world, visit [foi.org/INToutreach](http://foi.org/INToutreach). You can also call our toll-free ministry-support line at 800-257-7843. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.



## ORIGINS, Abigail, and Archaeology

Israel, as we all know, is a haven for archaeologists. That's why Abigail Leavitt goes there. Abigail was part of Dr. Scott Stripling's archaeological team from Katy, Texas, that made international news recently when it was revealed that a team member spotted a small lead square while wet sifting piles of soil from the excavation at Mount Ebal in Israel. It turns out the object, which measures only 2 x 2 centimeters, is extremely important.

It reads, "Cursed, cursed, cursed—cursed by the God YHWH. You will die cursed. Cursed you will surely die. Cursed by YHWH—cursed, cursed, cursed." Today it is called the Ebal Curse Tablet, and it predates the Dead Sea Scrolls.

We're proud of Abigail at The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI) because we're part of the reason she became an archaeologist. She participated in our first ORIGINS tour to Israel, and it changed her life.

FOI launched ORIGINS in 2007. The name is an acronym for "Our Resolve Is Giving Israel Never-Ending Support." Since then, hundreds of people ages 18 to 28 have traveled to Israel with us to serve the Jewish people and experience the Holy Land through this young-adult volunteer ministry.

Abigail, originally from Idaho, and 17 others spent two weeks volunteering with us at Kibbutz Schiller, not far from Tel Aviv. Others served in nearby Kaplan Medical Center in Rehovot. There's no doubt the original ORIGINS team left a lasting legacy of Christ's love that opened doors for the next 15 years of ministry.

During that first trip, team members participated in the Temple Mount Salvage Operation (today the Temple Mount Sifting Project) under the auspices of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). The IAA used volunteers to sift through soil that had been removed from the Temple Mount in 2004 and dumped in the adjacent Kidron Valley to make way for a new exit from the al-Aqsa Mosque.

The soil was rich with artifacts from the first Temple period (959 to 586 BC), proving a Jewish presence on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

On that hot day with ORIGINS in 2007, while sifting



\*  
**Abigail Leavitt**

through dirt, mud, debris, and countless pottery shards, Abigail discovered her passion for archaeology. Later, she returned to work on archaeological digs at Khirbet el-Maqatir (the biblical city of Ai), Mount Zion, and Tel Shiloh. Today Abigail is pursuing a PhD in archaeology from Ariel University in Israel.

We are thrilled with Abigail Leavitt and the important work she is doing as a Christian and as an archaeologist. And we thank the Lord He used ORIGINS to stir a passion in her to link Israel's archaeological past with the truth of Scripture.

If you would like to support ORIGINS and other ministries in North American outreach with The Friends of Israel, visit [foi.org/NAMoutreach](http://foi.org/NAMoutreach). You can also call our toll-free ministry-support line at 800-257-7843. Thank you for your prayers and financial support.



# 70 MY THREEScore AND TEN

AS I APPROACH MY 70TH BIRTHDAY,  
I REMEMBER MOSES' INSTRUCTION:  
"TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS."

BY STEVE HERZIG



# SCORE

Birthdays, like mile markers, disclose the distance traveled but not the distance remaining on our lives' journeys. I recently passed mile marker 69 on my way (hopefully) to 70. That fact caused me to pause and think about my life and my God.

I realize this upcoming mile marker is my "threescore years and ten," the King James Bible's way of saying 70. Moses wrote, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Ps. 90:10, KJV).

Though we don't know for sure when Moses wrote Psalm 90, the book of Numbers provides some backstory. Chapter 14 records the Israelites' refusal to go into the land God promised them after 10 of the 12 spies Moses sent to check out the territory brought back a bad report. Chapter 20 tells of the deaths of Moses' sister, Miriam, and brother, Aaron; and it reports Moses' sin when he struck a rock to get water instead of speaking to it, as God had commanded.

Sin, frustration, and death—quite a backdrop to the psalm titled "A Prayer of Moses the man of God." As I approach my threescore and ten, I decided I could learn something more from Moses. Here are my thoughts:

## 1.

### **No matter how many years I have, I realize God is my dwelling place.**

*LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations (Ps. 90:1).*

Moses knew God was Israel's Refuge, Provider, Protector, and Home—even when things didn't go as planned. Living outside God's dwelling place meant trouble.

Jesus built on Moses' statement when He said we must abide in Him:

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15:5).

God was Moses’ dwelling place, and He should be ours as well.



**SO WE MUST MAKE THE MOST OF THE YEARS GOD GIVES US.**

## 2.

### **My years are limited. God is eternal.**

*From everlasting to everlasting, You are God (Ps. 90:2).*

God created time. He is self-existent and not bound by time or space. So, while our mile markers are limited, God has no mile markers. He knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), as well as all the trials we will endure in this life. That is why He can promise, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5).

Jesus spoke of this eternality when He told the Jewish leadership, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn. 8:58). God sees all, knows all, is everywhere, never changes, and loves us. So we can trust Him completely.

## 3.

### **Life spans vary, but all human life is fragile and brief.**

*For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night. You carry them away like a flood (Ps. 90:4–5).*

Under divine inspiration, Moses wrote Genesis 3:19, speaking of God’s word to Adam: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you

return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” Moses alluded to this truth in Psalm 90: “You turn man to destruction [dust], and say, ‘Return, O children of men’” (v. 3).

Moses saw many people come and go through birth and death and observed, “They are like grass which grows up: In the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers” (vv. 5–6).

No matter how long we live, our lives are still “a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (Jas. 4:14). So we must make the most of the years God gives us.

## 4.

### **Our years are marked with sin, and God judges all sin.**

*You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance (Ps. 90:8).*

Even Moses had a secret sin that may have been on his mind when he wrote Psalm 90:

*Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand (Ex. 2:11–12).*

All sin, secret or otherwise, is under condemnation: “For we have been consumed by



Your anger, and by Your wrath we are terrified” (Ps. 90:7).

God’s wrath is mentioned three times in verses 7 through 11. God is holy. We are not. We are all sinners. And without Christ and the forgiveness God gives through faith in Him, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). Scripture says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (Jn. 3:36).

## 5.

### Every mile of the way, God is merciful.

*Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days! Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, the years in which we have seen evil (Ps. 90:14–15).*



### EVEN THE GREAT LEADER MOSES ASKED GOD TO TEACH HIM. WE NEVER FINISH LEARNING.

Moses acknowledged our brevity, frailty, and sin and asked God for mercy. We all need mercy. I am reminded of the apostle Paul’s words: “For this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all long-suffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life” (1 Tim. 1:16).

God graciously showers our days with mercy.

In fact, the prophet Jeremiah said, “Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning” (Lam. 3:22–23). Great is His faithfulness.

## 6.

### Mile markers are measured in years but should be lived in days.

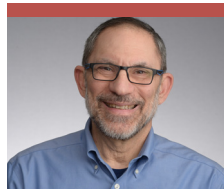
*So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Ps. 90:12).*

Even the great leader Moses asked God to teach him. We never finish learning.

Life is precious, and each day is a valuable gift from God. Jonathan Edwards, the great 18th-century theologian, desired to make the most of his time and asked God daily, “Stamp eternity on my eyeballs.” Quite a lofty goal, but one worth pursuing every day that God gives us.

Will I reach my threescore and ten? Only God knows. No matter, my desire is to be like Moses, “the man of God.” British missionary C. T. Studd (1860–1931) captured the essence of Psalm 90 when he wrote, “Only one life, ’twill soon be past. Only what’s

done for Christ will last.” To that statement, I am confident Moses would say, “Amen.” ★



#### Steve Herzig

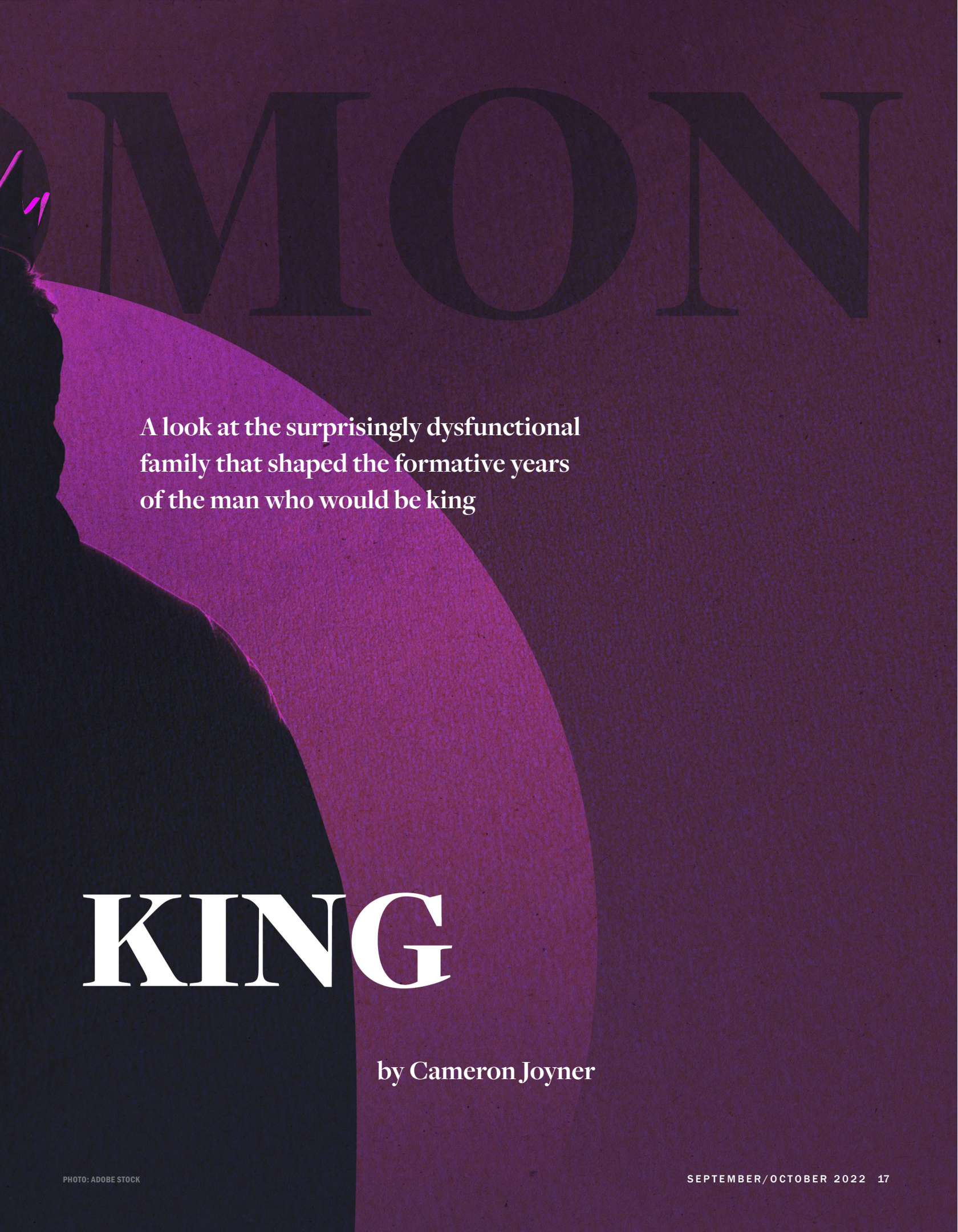
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SOLO

THE  
*UN*LIKELY





A look at the surprisingly dysfunctional family that shaped the formative years of the man who would be king

# KING

by Cameron Joyner



**I**t was a scandal many find hard to stomach even today. The king God chose to govern His people committed adultery with another man's wife, got her pregnant, secretly ordered her husband murdered, and married her.

It's a storyline we expect to find in Hollywood (and we have), but not in God's covenant nation Israel. Yet the scandal of King David and Bathsheba is legendary, and its consequences form the backdrop of their son Solomon's birth and early life.

Although the Lord took the infant the couple conceived in adultery, He later gave them Solomon, whom He chose and loved (2 Sam. 12:24; 1 Chr. 28:5). Ultimately, Solomon's wisdom and the privilege given him to continue ruling over the house of David can be summarized in one word: *grace*.

### **'A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES'**

Solomon's name derives from the Hebrew word *shalom*, which means "peace." It is often translated "man of peace." God Himself named Solomon before his birth, telling David the boy's name would characterize his reign (22:9). To grasp the significance of this prophesied peace, we need to look at the beginning of Israel's monarchy.

God rejected the house of Saul because of King Saul's repeated disobedience and rebellion. Yet He upheld David's dynasty through turmoil, sexual immorality, and murder.

We might be tempted to shout with Shakespearean contempt, "A plague on both your houses!" What made the house of David any better than the house of Saul? Wouldn't Saul's son Jonathan, a righteous young man if ever there was one, have made a better successor than any of David's sons? Why was God so tough on Saul, given David's repugnant sins? The answer lies in the difference between Saul's heart and David's.

David was better than Saul (1 Sam. 15:28) because he was a man after God's own heart (13:13–14). Saul did not possess David's desire for God. David loved God so much he longed to build Him a house, a permanent place for the Ark of the Covenant: "See now," he told Nathan the prophet, "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains" (2 Sam. 7:2).

God told Nathan to tell David He would build David a house instead: "Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever" (v. 16).

Furthermore, God said David's son (Solomon) would build the Temple (v. 13); and God's mercy would not depart from him, as it departed from Saul (v. 15).

This promise, given to David many years before his sin

with Bathsheba, formed what is known as the Davidic Covenant, which is still in effect today. Saul did not enjoy the covenant benefits of grace, mercy, and everlasting love given to the house of David. However, God did not excuse David's sin, and the consequences of it followed him the rest of his life.

Interestingly, Scripture refers to the child Bathsheba conceived in adultery as "the child that Uriah's wife bore to David" (12:15), even though David and Bathsheba were married by then (11:27). The Lord, however, decreed the infant would not live because the affair had "given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" (12:14).

As a man after God's heart, David mourned greatly and repented, acknowledging that his sin was ultimately against God (Ps. 51:4). When he comforted Bathsheba and she conceived Solomon, Scripture no longer refers to her as "Uriah's wife." This time, the Word says, "David comforted Bathsheba his wife" (2 Sam. 12:24).

### **THE PROVERBIAL UNLIKELY CANDIDATE**

The beauty of God's grace and forgiveness is seen in how God set His love on Solomon and chose him to succeed David: "Of all my sons . . . He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel" (1 Chr. 28:5).

From a human perspective, Solomon was the proverbial unlikely candidate, not being David's firstborn son. Bathsheba was David's eighth wife. Following Saul's daughter Michal (1 Sam. 18:17–30) were six more wives who each bore David a son while David ruled from Hebron (2 Sam. 3:2–5). In other words, David had six sons before he ever laid eyes on Solomon's mother.

The prophet Nathan revealed how much the Lord loved Solomon by calling him Jedidiah (Hebrew, *Yedidiah*, meaning "beloved of the Lord").

Bathsheba was obviously the favored wife and gave David three more sons after Solomon, though they are sometimes listed out of birth order (2 Sam. 5:14; 1 Chr. 3:5).

### **SOLOMON'S TUMULTUOUS CHILDHOOD**

Though Solomon was God's choice, the consequences of his father's affair made for a tumultuous childhood. He likely witnessed much of the turmoil that resulted from David's punishment. God told David, "The sword shall never depart from your house. . . . I will raise up adversity against you from your own house" (2 Sam. 12:10–11).

Into this troubled environment, Solomon was born. After his birth announcement (vv. 24–25), however, his name isn't mentioned again throughout all the drama that occurs in the rest of 2 Samuel.

Clearly, Solomon grew up in a dysfunctional household.





**Though Solomon was God's choice, the consequences of his father's affair made for a tumultuous childhood.**

When Solomon was a boy, Amnon (his older half-brother) raped his half-sister Tamar (13:1–22). Solomon was likely old enough to remember when, two years later, Absalom (Tamar's full brother) murdered Amnon to avenge his sister. In fact, Solomon may have witnessed the event, which took place at Absalom's sheep-shearing feast, to which he had invited all of David's sons (v. 23).

David received a false report that Absalom had killed "all the king's sons, and not one of them is left" (v. 30). The verse strongly suggests Solomon, too, was there and witnessed the murder. Otherwise, David would not have been deceived into thinking he no longer had any sons (v. 31).

Approximately seven years later, Absalom incited a rebellion to take over the kingdom, forcing David to flee for his life from Jerusalem (15:10–14). Bathsheba and Solomon also would have fled. When David's men finally quashed the rebellion, killed Absalom, and secured Jerusalem, Solomon no doubt heard of his father's plaintive lament: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!" (18:33).

Murder. Rape. War. Rebellion. All these events would have made a lasting impression on young Solomon. This was the family drama he lived with, and it was anything but peaceful.

When David officially crowned Solomon as his successor, it probably came as no surprise to the young king that his older half-brother Adonijah (Absalom's brother) already

had declared himself king (1 Ki. 1:18), despite knowing full well the throne was Solomon's "from the LORD" (2:15).

## **'PEACE' ANOINTED IN ISRAEL**

All the upheaval and tragedy the Davidic kingdom experienced as a consequence of David's sin underscores the significance of what God told David: "His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days" (1 Chr. 22:9).

It would be Solomon who would execute the justice necessary to secure peace. On his deathbed, David told Solomon to punish Joab, David's military leader, for murdering two other leaders, Abner and Amassa (1 Ki. 2:5–6), and to punish Shimei ben Gera for cursing

David during Absalom's rebellion (vv. 8–9). Solomon did so and more, also executing Adonijah (vv. 13–25) and exiling Abiathar the priest for conspiring with Adonijah (vv. 26–27).

Solomon was probably 19 or 20 years old when he began to solidify his kingdom as the newly anointed king. He humbly acknowledged his youth and considered himself lacking in wisdom (1 Ki. 3:7). So when God came to him in a vision, he famously asked the Lord to give him "an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (v. 9).

Interestingly, David noticed Solomon's inherent wisdom before God had supernaturally gifted him: "You are a wise man and know what you ought to do" (2:9). Once God gifted him, however, the whole world took note.

Unfortunately, despite his wisdom, Solomon forsook the Lord. Consequently, God told him, "I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son" (1 Ki. 11:11–12).

And tear it out He did. Solomon was the last monarch to rule the undivided kingdom. After his reign, the nation split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern, Davidic kingdom of Judah. Yet God upheld His promise not to remove His mercy from Solomon, as He removed it from Saul; and He gave him grace for David's sake.

Sin always has consequences. David's sin with Bathsheba cost the kingdom peace and created a dysfunctional atmosphere for rearing the next heir to the throne. But Solomon's sin of worshiping other gods eventually cost the kingdom itself. ★



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# THE RICHEST MAN ON EARTH

**WHAT WAS THE SECRET TO SOLOMON'S  
SUCCESS? IT WASN'T THE SELF-ABSORBED  
CLAPTRAP SO OFTEN TOUTED TODAY.**

**BY BRUCE SCOTT**

**S**uccess is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." These words of wisdom, falsely attributed to Winston Churchill,<sup>1</sup> have likely encouraged scores of people over the years never to give up their pursuit of success in life. Many people have looked to Churchill and others to inspire them.

Today, motivational speakers and so-called social media influencers make millions of dollars by telling people how to succeed. Tony Robbins, one of the most widely known motivational speakers, defines success this way: "Success is doing what you want, when you want, where you want, with whom you want as much as you want."<sup>2</sup>

And there's the crux of the matter. However they define it, most people think success is all about self-fulfillment, self-enrichment, and self-empowerment. It's all about self.

But the most successful man who ever lived saw things differently: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5–6). That man, of course, was Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel.

## **SOLOMON'S SUPERSTARDOM**

Solomon reigned over a united Israel for 40 years (2 Chr. 9:30; ca. 971–931 BC). No kingdom before or after his matched Solomon's for productivity, prosperity, and peace. His reign was the pinnacle, the golden years, for national Israel. Solomon's glory was so grand that Jesus Himself used it as a point of comparison in one of His teachings (Lk. 12:27).

What was the secret to Solomon's success? It certainly wasn't the self-absorbed claptrap so often touted today. It was, in fact, the opposite. Shortly after ascending the throne, Solomon confessed his inadequacy in a prayer to God: "I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in" (1 Ki. 3:7).

The secret to Solomon's success was God. Solomon asked God for "understanding to discern justice" (v. 11), and God responded by giving grace and exaltation to the humble (Jas. 4:6, 10). So the Lord "exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel" (1 Chr. 29:25).

God not only granted Solomon's request for wisdom, but He also gave what Solomon didn't request: riches and honor

(distinction) “such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like” (2 Chr. 1:12).

## SOLOMON’S WISDOM

Apart from Jesus Christ, there has never been anyone with more wisdom, knowledge, or understanding than King Solomon (Mt. 12:42; 1 Cor. 1:30).

A famous example of his wisdom in action was when he discerned the true mother of a baby claimed by two women (1 Ki. 3:16–27). This impressive judgment inspired all Israel to recognize that “the wisdom of God was in [Solomon]” (v. 28).

Solomon’s wisdom was so great it “excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East [east of the Jordan River] and all the wisdom of Egypt” (4:30) and surpassed that of certain sages in Israel (v. 31). Not since Adam in the Garden of Eden was someone so knowledgeable and skilled about so many topics. Solomon was a sage; prolific songwriter; and an expert botanist, zoologist, ornithologist, entomologist, and ichthyologist (vv. 32–33).

Because of his wisdom, Solomon’s fame spread to all of the surrounding nations and beyond, reaching even the queen of Sheba, who came to him to learn in what we might call the “University of Solomon” (vv. 31, 34). Scripture says, “Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart” (10:24).

Not all of Solomon’s wisdom has been preserved, but what God wanted us to have for eternity He retained in the Bible. God used Solomon to write Psalms 72 (a Messianic psalm) and 127. Solomon also penned most of the book of Proverbs. And, though sometimes debated, he is most likely the author of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs (Song of Solomon).

Others might argue over who was the greatest thinker of all time. But God’s choice would be Solomon, who wrote, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 9:10).

## SOLOMON’S RICHES

God not only gave Solomon wisdom, He also showered him with riches. All the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to Philistia brought tribute to the Israelite king all the days of his life (1 Ki. 4:21).

Traders and merchants also brought their wealth (10:15), and wisdom seekers around the region annually brought monetary gifts and valuables to Israel (v. 25).

In an economic alliance with the king of Tyre (today a city in Lebanon), Solomon launched ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea. They went to Arabia and possibly as far as modern-day Malaysia<sup>3</sup> in search of gold (9:27–28; 10:22). In one particular year, Israel imported more than 25 tons of gold (10:14),<sup>4</sup> which Solomon used to make 500 gold shields (vv. 16–17). He overlaid his ivory throne with gold, and every cup that touched his lips was gold (vv. 18, 21).

Aside from gold, so much silver flowed into Jerusalem it

became as common as stones and completely lost its value (vv. 21, 27).

Solomon placed 12 governors over Israel who ensured an abundance of food each month for him, his family, and his entourage. In fact, “Solomon’s provision for *one day* was thirty kors [187 bushels] of fine flour, sixty kors [374 bushels] of meal, ten fatted oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures, and one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl” (4:22–23, 27, emphasis added). That’s a lot of food!

“So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom” (2 Chr. 9:22). Even in today’s economy, Solomon’s financial empire would outmatch any Fortune 500 company’s revenues and eclipse the richest person’s net worth.

In human terms, Solomon was the richest, most successful person who ever lived. And there is nothing wrong with success, if you’re careful. But if you’re not, it can be corrosive. Jesus said, “One’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” Disaster awaits him “who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Lk. 12:15, 21).

Solomon was rich toward God at first. He “loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David” (1 Ki. 3:3). But despite all of God’s blessings, Solomon strayed (chap. 11). He lost sight of what truly mattered and forsook the great God who loved Him; and after his death, God dismantled his kingdom.

The world has a shallow definition of success. Perhaps that is why Solomon eventually declared in Ecclesiastes, “Vanity [futility] of vanities, all is vanity” (1:2). Fortunately, God has a better definition:

*Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth” (Jer. 9:23–24).*

Knowing and understanding God makes us rich indeed. ★

### ENDNOTES

- 1 “Media Matters: Finest Hour 136, Autumn 2007,” International Churchill Society, [winstonchurchill.org](http://winstonchurchill.org), July 4, 2013 <[tinyurl.com/msm25vf9](http://tinyurl.com/msm25vf9)>.
- 2 Tony Robbins, “How to be Successful in Life” <[tonyrobbins.com/how-to-be-successful](http://tonyrobbins.com/how-to-be-successful)>.
- 3 Josephus, *Antiquities* 8.6.4. See also Wikipedia, s. v. “Chersonesus.”
- 4 One talent weighed at least 75 pounds or 34 kilograms.



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# SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

BY BRUCE SCOTT



**K**ing Solomon's reign has been called Israel's Golden Age. Under him, the Israelites possessed almost all of the land God promised them (1 Ki. 4:21, 24).<sup>1</sup> They lived in complete security, peace, and rest; and Solomon built the magnificent Temple of the Lord on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, "where the LORD had appeared to his father David" (2 Chr. 3:1).

Solomon knew the serenity of his kingdom was God's doing: "Now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence" (1 Ki. 5:4). Nevertheless, he put formidable safeguards in place. He erected massive fortifications and walls and acquired thousands of chariots and horses (the equivalent of today's armored fighting vehicles), which he stationed in strategic locations throughout Israel, along with supplies (9:15–19; 2 Chr. 8:3–6; 9:25).

But the greatest honor God gave Solomon was the privilege of building Him a house in Jerusalem (1 Chr. 22:10). David had wanted desperately to build the Temple. But David was a man of war who had shed much blood (28:3). Although God gave David the blueprint and David provided most of the building materials (28:11–19; 29:19), God chose Solomon to build the structure because Solomon's reign would see peace.

Over seven years, Solomon built a magnificent stone house for God (1 Ki. 6:7, 38). The Temple had three parts: the porch; nave, or Holy Place; and holy of holies. Together, they measured approximately 120 feet long and 34 feet wide. The porch was 207 feet high, while the rest of the building was 52 feet high.<sup>2</sup>

Two enormous, beautifully decorated bronze pillars stood guard at the entryway (7:15–22). The building's interior had cedarwood walls, cypress wood floors and doors, and olive wood doors (6:15, 31, 34). All the wood was overlaid with pure gold and engraved with images of cherubim, palm

trees, and open flowers (vv. 21–22, 29, 32, 35).

Amazingly, the Temple "was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built" (v. 7). It's difficult to imagine such an accomplishment even today.

In the innermost sanctuary (holy of holies), two 17-foot-high olive wood cherubim, overlaid with gold and with wings outstretched, overshadowed the gilded Ark that contained the two stone tablets of the Mosaic Covenant (vv. 23–28; 8:6–7, 9).

But the Temple's stunning splendor was not what distinguished or brought honor to Solomon and his kingdom. What distinguished Israel—what no other nation to this day can claim—was the presence of the living God in its midst.

After Solomon dedicated the Temple to the Lord, offering prayers and sacrifices, "fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple" (2 Chr. 7:1). God was dwelling among His beloved people Israel. In response, the Israelites "bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: 'For He is good, for His mercy endures forever'" (v. 3).

Unfortunately, the Israelites did not remain loyal to God; and in 586 BC, approximately 380 years after its completion, Solomon's Temple was burned to the ground by the Babylonians; and the Jewish people were exiled to Babylon. ★

## ENDNOTES

- 1 See Numbers 34:1–15. Solomon ruled from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt (probably Wadi al-Arish). He did not possess or rule Phoenicia (Lebanon), which was part of the promised territory; but he did have an alliance with the Phoenicians (1 Ki. 5:1–12).
- 2 See 1 Kings 6:2–3 and 2 Chronicles 3:3–4. Measurement is based on the royal cubit of 52.5 centimeters. See Randall Price with H. Wayne House, *Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 130.



# WHEN EVERYTHING

A golden crown is shown in a state of complete disintegration. The crown's structure is crumbling, with numerous sharp, jagged fragments floating in the air. The background is a dramatic sky with a gradient from deep blue at the top to a rich purple at the bottom, with wispy clouds. The overall mood is one of loss, powerlessness, or the end of an era.

by David M. Levy





# WENT WRONG

**FOUR WORDS CAN SUM UP  
KING SOLOMON'S LIFE.  
TWO OF THEM IN PARTICULAR  
LED TO HIS DOWNFALL.**

**W**hen people think of King Solomon, they usually recall his great wisdom and the magnificent Jewish Temple he built on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Under Solomon's leadership, ancient Israel became the greatest kingdom on Earth (1 Ki. 10:23–24).

In fact, what the queen of Sheba saw and heard of Solomon left her breathless: "I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard," she told him (2 Chr. 9:6; cf. 1 Ki. 10:7).

However, as easy as it is to apply the word *wisdom* to Solomon's life, three other words also apply: *wealth*, *women*, and *wickedness*. The last two in particular led to Solomon's downfall.

## **WISDOM AND WEALTH**

Early in Solomon's reign, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and asked the young king, "What shall I give you?" (1 Ki. 3:5).

Instead of requesting great wealth, as many men would have done, Solomon asked for an understanding heart to judge God's people and wisdom to discern between good and evil (v. 9). Solomon's desire pleased God so much He not only granted him wisdom but also showered him with riches, telling him, "There has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you" (v. 12).

Solomon was so rich that "all [his] drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon" (10:21).

But Solomon was not to rely on his wealth. One of God's instructions to Israel's kings was not to amass horses, wives, silver, or gold (Dt. 17:16–17). In other words, they were not to depend on wealth or political alliances with surrounding heathen nations and military powers. Instead, they were to look solely to the Lord for protection, guidance, and direction.

The Law also stated the king was to "write for himself a copy of this law in a book. . . . He shall read it all the days of his life, that he





## GOD HAD EQUIPPED SOLOMON TO LEAD ISRAEL WITH WISDOM, BUT THE KING FAILED TO USE THE GIFT WISELY.

may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes” (vv. 18–19).

Apparently, Solomon did not keep this command because he did many things the Law warned against; and his disobedience led to his undoing.

### WOMEN AND WICKEDNESS

Early in his reign, Solomon sowed the seeds of disobedience by marrying a foreign wife, something forbidden to the kings of Israel: “Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh’s daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the LORD” (1 Ki. 3:1).

This would only be the beginning. Solomon married Hittite women and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Sidon (Phoenicia). Scripture records that Solomon clung to them in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. In time, they turned Solomon’s heart away from God (11:1–4).

Many of these marriages were politically motivated to establish diplomatic agreements with city-states, tribal chieftains, and kingdoms throughout the Middle East. Solomon no doubt considered these marriages beneficial to his economy and Israel’s security. But in reality, they were the opposite. They drew him into idolatry, provoking God’s anger and therefore undermining Israel’s security.

Solomon forsook the Lord and built altars to Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians; Milcom, the god of the Ammonites; and Chemosh, the deity of the Moabites (vv. 5–8).

Ashtoreth, the goddess of love or fertility, was connected to centers of prostitution. Milcom (also spelled Molech or Malcam, v. 5) and Chemosh (believed to mean “destroyer,” v. 7) were the gods of King Mesha of Moab. King Mesha offered his eldest son as a human sacrifice to appease Chemosh’s anger (2 Ki. 3:27).

Solomon’s women brought down his kingdom. Because he allowed them to bring their family gods, idols, priests, and practices into Israel, he polluted the land and led the nation into a spiritual decline that incurred God’s judgment.

### GOD’S WARNING

God had equipped Solomon to lead Israel with wisdom, but the king failed to use the gift wisely. He did not practice the God-given principles he advocated for others in the book of Proverbs.

Though Solomon’s father, King David, also sinned, David never forsook the Lord. His heart remained devoted to God to the day he died. Yet Solomon broke the very first of the Ten Commandments:

*You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image; . . . you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments (Ex. 20:3–6).*

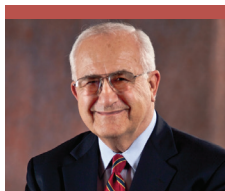
After years of bestowing His favor and blessing on Solomon and his reign, God’s patience came to an end: “Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, ‘Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant’” (1 Ki. 11:11).

God did not divide the kingdom during Solomon’s lifetime for the sake of David and Jerusalem. “Nevertheless,” He said, “. . . I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen” (vv. 12–13; cf. 2 Sam. 7:15–17).

After Solomon’s death, the united kingdom vanished. God severed the 10 northern tribes early in the reign of Solomon’s son Rehoboam. But He let the tribe of Judah and the smallest tribe, Benjamin, remain under Davidic rule as the southern kingdom, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Wisdom, wealth, women, and wickedness sum up Solomon’s life. His story should be a wakeup call to every nation in the world today, especially the United States of America. America has a unique history, having been blessed with immense prosperity, religious freedom, and opportunities the likes of which few nations have enjoyed.

But like other countries around the world, America is forsaking the Lord. We need to pray for a return to God before the nation faces the same fate as Solomon and Israel. ★



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# THE BEGINNING OF THE END

BY DAVID M. LEVY

**GOD** is not to be trifled with. He warned Israel's kings not to worship other gods, and He meant it. Because He knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), He knew King Solomon would forsake Him; and He raised up three adversaries during Solomon's reign who would lead to division in the Israelite kingdom.

The first was Hadad, son of an Edomite king (1 Ki. 11:14–22). When Hadad was a child, King David's army under his commander Joab conquered Edom. Hadad escaped death by fleeing to Egypt. After hearing David and Joab had died, he returned to Edom. There he plotted against Solomon and caused him much trouble.

The second was Rezon, a Syrian (vv. 23–25). Rezon fled when David attacked Hadadezer of Zobah in the north (2 Sam. 8:3). Rezon “gathered men to him and became captain over a band of raiders” (1 Ki. 11:24). Eventually, he ruled over Damascus and Syria and became Solomon's adversary, along with Hadad, all the days of Solomon's reign.

The third and most notable was Jeroboam the Ephraimite (vv. 26–40). A talented, energetic young man, he was hand-picked by Solomon to oversee construction of the Millo (a fortress built into Jerusalem's wall) and other building projects around the city. Ultimately, Jeroboam became an adversary too.

One day, Ahijah the prophet, clothed in a new garment, met Jeroboam outside Jerusalem. Clutching his garment, Ahijah tore it into 12 pieces as a sign to Jeroboam that Solomon's kingdom would be divided and Jeroboam would rule over the 10 northern tribes of Israel (vv. 29–32).

The reason given was the idolatry Solomon promoted in his kingdom. Hearing that Solomon sought to kill him, Jeroboam fled to Egypt and remained there until Solomon's death (vv. 33–40).

Throughout his reign, and more so near the end of his life, Solomon sowed seeds that would blossom into rebellion. He imposed burdensome taxes and fostered militaristic control, bureaucracy, racial discrimination, slavery, worldliness, sensuality, and idolatry.

After his death, Israel fell into decay, decline, and division. Solomon's successor, his son Rehoboam, whose mother was

an Ammonite, proved to be an arrogant, frivolous, stupid man who was nonreligious and untrained in God's Law. Solomon's seeds of wickedness produced a bumper crop of rebellion against Rehoboam's reign.

When Jeroboam, along with the congregation of Israel, asked King Rehoboam to ease the grievous burden of compulsory service and oppressive taxation, Rehoboam sought counsel from his ignorant peers and replied, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges” (12:14).

Hearing that the king intended to make their burdens even worse than they were under Solomon, the 10 northernmost tribes decided they would have none of it and seceded from the Davidic kingdom (vv. 15–16). Jeroboam, as Ahijah prophesied, became the ruler of the northern kingdom, with Samaria as its capital. Rehoboam was left with Judah and Benjamin, the two southern tribes, with Jerusalem as the capital. After the division, the northern kingdom was called Israel; and the southern kingdom was called Judah.

The division occurred around 930 BC. The northern kingdom lasted until 722 BC, when it was conquered by Assyria. The kingdom of Judah lasted until 586 BC, when it was invaded by the Babylonians. Jerusalem was destroyed; and the people were taken into captivity for 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11–14).

The question is often asked, “In his later years, did Solomon turn back to God in repentance?” Solomon did write, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all [the duty of man]. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Eccl. 12:13–14).

Knowing Solomon wrote these two verses later in life indicates he might have returned to God before his death. But we'll never know for sure on this side of heaven.

Solomon's obituary consists of two brief verses (1 Ki. 11:41–42). It does not emphasize the grandeur of his life, his legacy, or the sin that ruined his reign. It does mention a book “of the acts of Solomon” (v. 41) that contains more of his writings. But the book is unknown to us today. Solomon reigned over Israel 40 years (ca. 971–931 BC) and was buried in the City of David. ★



# A TASTE OF TOMORROW



## HOW SOLOMON'S KINGDOM FORESHADOWED THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

by Timothy Rabinek

**O**n October 25, 2021, shares of Tesla spiked almost 13 percent, surpassing the \$1 trillion market cap and making the electric car company's CEO, Elon Musk, the richest person in the world.<sup>1</sup>

But Musk's enormous wealth of almost \$275 billion is merely a fraction of the fortune the richest man in the Bible possessed. That man was King Solomon. Some estimate that today, Solomon's wealth would amount to trillions of dollars. He was so rich he could finance the United States' infrastructure bill of \$1.2 trillion all by himself.

But Solomon's riches tell only part of his story. His wealth was a byproduct of the great blessing he received from God—so great, in fact, that it makes the magnificent period of his reign a picture of the future Messianic Kingdom.

### THE CORONATION

Israel's history is part of the cosmic struggle between the forces of darkness and light—between Satan, who hates the Jews, and God, who loves them. Unprovoked hatred for the Jewish people goes as far back as their origin—to the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And it has endured in various guises for the past 4,000 years.

The victorious culmination of Israel's history will begin at a moment foretold by the prophet Zechariah, when the feet of the Lord—the Messiah Jesus, Son of David—touch the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4) as He returns to Earth. Then the satanically driven evil forces gathered around Jerusalem to annihilate the Jewish people will suffer destruction from the Lord, and the Messiah will take His rightful place on the throne (Mt. 19:28).

As a chosen descendant of King David, Solomon engaged in his own battle to inherit



the throne. It was not an easy beginning for him, as there were several contenders. The most notable was Adonijah, his older half-brother, who gathered a coalition and proclaimed himself king of Israel (1 Ki. 1:5). The prophet Nathan and Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, prompted David to give quick orders to crown Solomon as David's rightful successor.

Imagine the surprise and dismay of Adonijah and his followers when they heard the trumpet sound, announcing Solomon's coronation. The rich feast and deceitful plan that led many away from the truth fell apart in a moment. When it looked like the forces of evil were strong and unstoppable, Zadok, the priest, took the horn of oil from the Tabernacle and anointed Solomon king by the spring of Gihon (v. 38).

The trumpet blast was a terrifying reminder to the forces of evil that God was in control. The God of Israel does not slumber or sleep. When the Israelites shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" (v. 39), Adonijah and his coalition fled, knowing there was no hope for victory.

Solomon's coronation is a beautiful picture of what will happen in the last days. Jesus warned His disciples that false prophets will proclaim themselves Messiah and will perform many signs and wonders to enhance their credibility, misleading multitudes (Mt. 24:5, 11, 24). But as it was in the days of Solomon, the true heir to the kingdom will reveal Himself dramatically, vanquish His enemies, and take His seat on the throne.

At the sound of the great trumpet, the Son of Man will appear in the sky in power and great glory. Satan's plan to prevent God from restoring humanity to Edenic conditions under the Messiah's rule will shatter in this glorious moment of Jesus' triumphant return to Jerusalem (25:31–46).

## THE KINGDOM

The Messianic (Millennial) Kingdom will embrace four elements: judgment, wisdom, peace, and a Temple, much as Solomon's did.

**JUDGMENT.** One of Solomon's first acts as king was to punish the men who had lived through David's reign and gotten away with hideous crimes. Adonijah and those who followed him faced severe judgment for betraying David. Adonijah was killed (1 Ki. 2:24–25), as were other defectors; and Abiathar the priest, who had supported Adonijah, was exiled (v. 26).

Some may think Solomon cruel in this situation. But the big picture reveals powerful symbolism: God judges evil. One of the first things Jesus will do when He returns is punish the unrighteous: "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Mt. 25:41).

**WISDOM.** When the Lord appeared to young Solomon at Gibeon, He asked him, "What shall I give you?" (1 Ki. 3:5). The heroes of fairy tales usually ask for riches, power, or love. But Solomon's choice reveals an aspect of his character that makes

him a type of the future Messiah. Solomon chose wisdom.

His decision pleased God and shaped the new king of Israel into a legendary ruler. His name became so famous that "men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon" (4:34).

But Solomon's wisdom still cannot compare to that of Jesus Christ. Even as a child, His wisdom astonished the most educated elite in Israel. As an adult, His words silenced everyone who tried to argue with Him.

In the Messianic Kingdom, His wisdom will be supreme, leading Him to rule "upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever" (Isa. 9:7).

**PEACE.** Solomon also was a man of peace and rest. God gave him rest from all his enemies "on every side" (1 Ki. 5:4), making his reign extremely different from that of his father. David had to fight to attain dominance over his enemies, but Solomon's diplomacy brought peace.

When the King of kings, the Prince of Peace, returns, not only will Israel enjoy lasting peace, but the whole world will as well. Peace will flow like a river, and "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Isa. 65:25).

In Israel, where the Jewish people experience opposition and terrorism every day, "'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,' says the LORD" (v. 25).

**TEMPLE.** Israel has had no Temple for almost 2,000 years. But in the Millennium, as in the days of Solomon, God's Temple again will stand atop Mount Moriah in Jerusalem:

*The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. . . . For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (2:2–4).*

This is the wonderful future that awaits the Jewish people, and Solomon's kingdom is a beautiful picture of what is yet to come. ★

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### ENDNOTE

- 1 Eliza Haverstock, "Elon Musk, Nearing \$300 Billion Fortune, Is The Richest Person In History," *Forbes.com*, October 26, 2021 <[tinyurl.com/EMuskk](https://tinyurl.com/EMuskk)>.



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# THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING GOD

BY PAUL PIERCE

**Apart from Jesus Christ, King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived** (1 Ki. 3:12). When he dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, he told the Israelites, “Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments” (8:61).

Scripture records some of his decisions, which demonstrate his great wisdom and discernment; and his proverbs guide us to this day. In fact, Solomon wrote most of the book of Proverbs, sharing his wisdom on a variety of topics.

Though our circumstances and times differ vastly from Solomon’s, his insights are timeless and shed light on how we are to live. The essential element of his writings can be summed up in Proverbs 9:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”

Unfortunately, Solomon apparently failed to heed his own advice.

## SOLOMON’S CONFLICT

Wisdom is not merely knowledge. It involves the application of knowledge and godly life skills. Wrote Bible expositor Warren Wiersbe in his book *Be Mature*, “Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but wisdom enables us to put things together and relate God’s truth to daily life.”

Scripture reveals a conflict in Solomon, who expressed his frustration in the book of Ecclesiastes:

*I communed with my heart, saying, “Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge.” And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that*

*this also is grasping for the wind. For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow* (1:16–18).

How could the wisest human being who ever lived come to such a conclusion? What was going on in his life that led to such a statement?

There is a profoundly sad chapter in the life of this man whose reign began with such humility. His life took a tragic detour along the way: “Solomon loved many foreign women” (1 Ki. 11:1), in direct violation of God’s command not to intermarry with non-Israelites. Why was this command so important? Because love is a powerful motivator, and it motivated Solomon to forsake the Lord: “Solomon clung to these in love. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God as was the heart of his father David” (vv. 2, 4).

It is no wonder this man, endowed with such knowledge and wisdom, also experienced such grief and frustration. All the wisdom in the world holds no guarantee of happiness and contentment apart from knowing and fearing God. Indeed, in the closing years of his life, Solomon confessed, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all [duty]” (Eccl. 12:13).

## THE FIRST STEP

The fear of the Lord involves more than merely knowing about God or having sound theology. Such knowledge—absent from truly knowing and loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind—leads to what is called a cold orthodoxy.

Certainly, we should desire wisdom. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (Jas. 3:17). How do we obtain such wisdom? By fearing the Lord. And the first step to fearing the Lord begins with actually knowing Him.

God is indeed knowable. He told the Israelites, “Let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth” (Jer. 9:24).

The apostle Paul’s desire for the believers in Colossae and Laodicea was “that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:2–3, emphasis added).

Wisdom for living involves knowing and loving God. Such a life begins with acknowledging our sin and our





need for a Savior. Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son—Israel's Messiah—gave His life as our substitute. Scripture says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus bore our sins and took the punishment of death we deserve. When we place our faith in Him alone for salvation, we are delivered from "the power of darkness" and transferred "into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). In other words, He saves us from suffering eternally to pay for our sins. He paid for them and set us free. Our responsibility is to believe.

## WALKING WITH GOD

At salvation, we begin our walk of faith with the Lord Jesus Christ. From that point forward, God expects us to mature: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (2:6–7).

In my own walk with Christ, I have found it easy to listen to the counsel of others or read books about the Christian life. But knowing how to seek God's wisdom with my heart is another thing entirely.

Recently, intent on understanding God's will for my life, I set out to know what God desired; and I prayed very specifically. I was in the process of memorizing Paul's letter to the Colossians when two verses hit me hard:

*For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (1:9–10, emphasis added).*

I had focused so intently on the "what" of God's will that I neglected the "why" of knowing His will for me: that I might walk worthy of the Lord. Doing so involves my heart, desiring God's wisdom so that my life would reflect my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

All the wisdom in the world won't bring us to God unless we come with our hearts. Somewhere along the way, Solomon gave his heart to the women he loved instead of giving it to God. May Psalm 90:12 be our prayer: "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." That way we won't end up like Solomon—empty and filled with regret. ★



## WHAT WILL OUR RESURRECTED BODIES BE LIKE?

Every human being will receive a resurrected body prepared for eternity. The redeemed will go to heaven, and the unredeemed will be tormented in the Lake of Fire forever (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:24, 29; Rev. 20:11–15).

The believer's resurrected body will be like Christ's. The apostle John said, "When He [Christ] is revealed, we shall be like Him" (1 Jn. 3:2). The apostle Paul said Christ "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21).

How will our bodies be like Christ's? In His post-resurrection body on Earth, Jesus was recognizable. He could appear and disappear (Lk. 24:31). He could walk, talk, and eat. He possessed scars, maintained His appearance, and rose into heaven. He was not bound by gravity, time, or space; and He could travel at will. He could pass through closed doors and walls (Jn. 20:19–30; 21:25; Acts 1:3, 11). We will be able to do likewise.

In 1 Corinthians 15:42–49, Paul described four ways the resurrected bodies of true believers in Jesus Christ will differ from mortal bodies:

(1) Mortal bodies deteriorate, die, and turn to dust. Our resurrected bodies will never tire, deteriorate, or die (1 Pet. 1:3–4). Mortal bodies are corruptible (perishable); resurrected bodies will be incorruptible (imperishable, 1 Cor. 15:42).

dishonor" and "raised in glory" (v. 43). They are imperfect, possessing a sin nature. But the resurrected bodies will be raised perfect, without a sin nature.

(3) Mortal bodies are weak. Our resurrected bodies will be "raised in power" (v. 43) and will be physically, mentally, and spiritually powerful and perfect. They will not need rest, food, sleep, oxygen, or medical care. A mortal body cannot be eternal or enter heaven.

(4) Our human bodies are "sown" as natural bodies and "raised" as spiritual ones (v. 44). The natural body bears the image of sinful Adam; the spiritual body bears the image of Christ, the "heavenly Man" (vv. 48–49).

Our natural bodies are subject to natural laws and will one day die. Our spiritual bodies will not have flesh or blood or be bound by the laws of nature and death. They will be suited for eternity and animated by God's divine Spirit and power.

All true believers in Jesus Christ will receive their resurrected bodies at the Rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51–52; 1 Th. 4:13–18). Old Testament believers will be resurrected immediately before Christ's Second Coming (Dan. 12:1–3).

Scripture is silent on certain details, such as what age, appearance, height, and weight individuals will possess in their resurrected, glorified bodies.

(2) Mortal bodies are "sown in

by David M. Levy



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# THE CURSE

BY TOM SIMCOX

God made many promises that are now fulfilled and others yet to be fulfilled. But He always gets around to fulfilling them, no matter how long it takes. One in particular involves a curse and explains why Jesus is a direct blood-descendant of King David but not of Solomon.

After Solomon dedicated the Temple, God reminded him, “If you walk before Me . . . in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father” (1 Ki. 9:4–5).

In what we now call the Davidic Covenant, God promised David, “Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). If Solomon expected to enjoy the same blessing, he had to obey God.

Yet, despite all his wisdom and prosperity, Solomon allowed his heart to be swayed by his love for “many foreign women” (1 Ki. 11:1). So, God “became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice” (v. 9).

As punishment, God promised to rip the kingdom from his hand, which occurred under Solomon’s son Rehoboam and resulted in the divided kingdom. Yet David’s throne remains established forever, just as God promised—David’s throne, not Solomon’s. This is an important distinction because it affects the future rule of Jesus Christ on Earth and demonstrates how precisely God fulfills His promises.

Approximately 334 years after Solomon died (ca. 931 BC), 18-year-old Jehoiachin ascended the throne (ca. 597 BC). He is also called Coniah and Jeconiah. Jehoiachin was an evil man and a wicked king. He reigned merely three months before he was exiled to Babylon, never to return.

But in those three months, he so angered God that the Lord cursed Jehoiachin and all his descendants: “Write this man down as childless, . . . for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah” (Jer. 22:30).

Not only was Jehoiachin’s throne not established, but none of his heirs would ever rule over Judah or Israel. His bloodline bore the legal rights to David’s throne, but it also bore the curse.

So how could Jesus—David’s greater Son and long-expected Messiah—prosper on David’s throne if the bloodline through the kings of Judah was cursed?

Here is the answer. Two lineages of Jesus are recorded in the New Testament. The first is Matthew 1:1–17. The second is Luke 3:23–38. The first shows Jesus is the legal heir to David’s throne, as it traces the line of kings from David through Joseph, Jesus’ earthly father. This line involves both Solomon and Jehoiachin. But Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit. So He had no earthly, paternal bloodline.

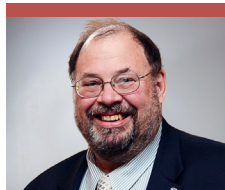
Luke’s account has similarities but also several key omissions: Solomon and Jehoiachin are absent. Instead, Nathan is mentioned (v. 31). Nathan was Solomon’s younger brother, whom David also had with Bathsheba. Luke traces Jesus’ bloodline through Mary, Jesus’ mother. She, too, was of the house and lineage of King David. But she did not descend from Solomon or Jehoiachin. Wrote Bible scholar Charles Ryrie,

*Luke traces Jesus’ physical descent back through Mary and Nathan to David, bypassing Jeconiah’s line and showing accurately the fulfillment of this prophecy of Jeremiah. If Jesus had been born only in the line of Joseph (and thus of Jeconiah), He would not have been qualified to reign on the throne of David in the Millennium.<sup>1</sup>*

So, God was able to keep His promise to David while also keeping His promise never to establish Solomon’s throne. Jesus, David’s direct heir, will sit on David’s throne and prosper; and His Kingdom will be established forever. ★

## ENDNOTE

- 1 Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible* (ESV) (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011), n. Jer. 22:30, 903.



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# SOLOMON'S TIMELINE

**DAVID BORN**

1040 BC

**SOLOMON BORN**

991 BC

**SOLOMON CROWNED KING**

971 BC

**TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS**

966 BC

**TEMPLE COMPLETED**

959 BC

**REHOBOAM BECOMES KING**

931 BC





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# ARCHAEOLOGY AND JERICO

## (PART 1)

\*  
Tel Jericho

➔ Bible critics love to attack the conquest of Jericho. Disproving or questioning its historicity undermines Israel and Israel's claim to possessing the land.

Critics focus on three main issues: (1) the assertion of a massive invasion and conquest of the entire country of Canaan; (2) the theological problem of Canaanite genocide; and (3) the archaeological contention that Jericho was destroyed long before the time of Joshua, thus making the biblical account a myth. We will examine each of these issues over the next several columns of "Unearthing Truth."

**The Conquest.** The Bible states, "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes" (Josh. 11:23).

The archaeological record does not support such a massive conquest. However, a primary rule of biblical interpretation, particularly when a passage appears to contradict external evidence, is to confirm that the text actually says what it appears to say. In this case, the Bible does not present the conquest in the manner these critics assume.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt the conquest was extensive ("the whole land"). But this fact does not imply it was total or complete. Joshua's army gained sufficient territory to enable the Israelite tribes to settle into their promised inheritances without further war. Joshua 11:13–17 indicates that only key Canaanite cities, such as Hazor, were conquered and destroyed, fulfilling God's command (v. 15).

The context reveals that, of the Canaanite cities conquered, only three were burned down: Jericho (Josh. 6:2, 24), Ai (8:8,

19–20), and Hazor (11:13). At the end of the military campaign, there still remained "very much land yet to be possessed" (13:1), including Jebusite Jerusalem (15:63).

In addition, seven tribes remained without their inheritances because they had failed to conquer their land (18:2–3). The tribe of Dan was still unable to possess its land during the time of the judges (Jud. 18:1). Furthermore, the Israelites disobeyed God by making an alliance with the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:3–26), resulting in the divine discipline of continued Canaanite conflict and spiritual contamination (Jud. 2:2–4).

Clearly, Joshua failed to drive out the Canaanites completely; and, over time, the Israelites occupied the area gradually, settling among the Canaanite population (Josh. 9:21–27; 13:13; Jud. 1:29–33).

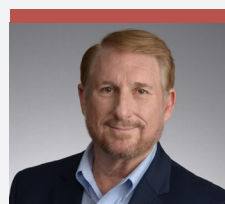
This more accurate understanding of the biblical text confirms the archaeological record. Typical Israelite structures, such as the four-room house, collared-rim jars, and lime-plastered cisterns, had Canaanite predecessors. While there are subtle differences in Israelite design, the basic structures reflect the Canaan-

ites' influence on the Israelites as they lived among these people.<sup>2</sup>

The criticism that archaeological evidence contradicts the Bible fails here because the critics misread the biblical account. Rather, the archaeological evidence that the Israelites settled in Canaan gradually agrees with the picture of daily life found in the historical narratives. Given a proper interpretation of the facts of the conquest, the biblical text and the archaeological data agree.

### ENDNOTES

- 1 For a thorough treatment of this issue, see David S. Merling, *The Book of Joshua: Its Theme and Role in Archaeological Discussions*, Andrews University Dissertation Series (Berrian Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997).
- 2 Paul J. Ray, Jr., "Classical Models for the Appearance of Israel in Palestine" in *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History*, *Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement* 3, ed. Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Paul J. Ray, Jr. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 79–93.



#### Randall Price

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# PAUL'S FINAL WORDS

## 2 TIMOTHY 4:16–22

Place yourself in the apostle Paul's sandals: You are in a dungeon awaiting execution, knowing your fellow workers face great persecution from Roman officials and opposition from Jewish leaders. Timothy, your beloved son in the faith, might not arrive before your execution. You want your final words to encourage him and others who will read your epistle to him. How would you conclude your letter? Here is how Paul concluded his.

### PAUL FORSAKEN

Concerning his trial, Paul said, "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them" (2 Tim. 4:16). Some scholars believe Paul was referring to his first trial before Emperor Nero several years prior to his upcoming trial. The phrase *at my first defense* is a technical term used in Greek courts concerning defense proceedings. Paul was saying he had to be his own defense lawyer because no one testified on his behalf.

Fellow believers in Rome could have testified, but it was dangerous to do so because Christianity was outlawed. His witnesses could have been arrested and cast into prison, where they would face the same fate as Paul. In his first trial, Paul answered the false charges, was set free, and continued to preach the gospel. The Lord had given him the words to defend himself.

Other scholars believe Paul was referring to his upcoming trial in Rome following his second arrest. This trial would begin with a preliminary hearing, where the charge against him would be read. He could then provide a defense through

witnesses on his behalf. Because his friends and fellow believers feared to testify, he had to defend himself. Yet, the apostle said, "May it not be charged against them" (v. 16).

We do not have enough evidence to be certain if Paul was referring to his first or second trial. Most scholars believe he meant his second trial because he was certain he would be found guilty and executed. Like Stephen before him and in the spirit of Christ, Paul asked the Lord to forgive those who failed to testify of his innocence (cf. Acts 7:59–60).

### PAUL'S FAITH

Though no one came to Paul's defense, the Lord was with him: "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4:17). Paul received strength and power through the Holy Spirit to effectively and boldly present his own defense before Nero and the court.

In fact, the Lord had already prepared Paul for his trial, even mentioning Caesar to him by name when the ship transporting Paul to Rome as a prisoner encountered a treacherous storm and ran aground on the island of Malta. An angel assured Paul all 276 aboard would survive: "Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar" (Acts 27:24).

Much earlier, at Paul's conversion, the Lord called Paul "a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake" (9:15–16). Notice, the Lord forewarned Paul he would face persecution.

Paul reminded Timothy, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4:17). The apostle did not mean he was delivered from death, a second trial, or literal lions. He simply meant that at the preliminary hearing, he was rescued from death because no verdict was handed down. But he knew his death was imminent (2 Tim. 4:6).

Paul wrote, "And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom" (v. 18). The word *evil* refers to the spiritual battles he had fought in this satanic world system.

This was not the first time Paul had experienced God's strengthening. While writing to the Philippians from prison, the apostle said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). He knew what he was saying. For example, in Corinth, when the Jews rejected his message and he turned to evangelize the Gentiles, the Lord told him in a night vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you" (Acts 18:9–10).

Reflecting on dying and being with Jesus, Paul declared, "To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" (2 Tim. 4:18). He had



## PAUL RECEIVED STRENGTH AND POWER THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EFFECTIVELY AND BOLDLY PRESENT HIS OWN DEFENSE BEFORE NERO AND THE COURT.

lost sight of Earth, with its evils and conflicts, and fixed his heart and mind on the joy and unspeakable glory awaiting him after death (1 Pet. 1:8).

### PAUL'S FRIENDS

Before concluding his farewell epistle, the apostle greeted several close friends in the ministry; and some mutual friends in Rome sent their greetings to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:19–21).

**Prisca [Priscilla] and Aquila** (v. 19). Mentioning them six times in his epistles, Paul honored this remarkable couple that was so faithful with him in the work (Acts 18:18, 26). They were Jewish believers in Jesus who settled in Corinth after Emperor Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome. They were tentmakers like Paul and helped him evangelize Corinth during his second missionary journey. They also accompanied him to Syria, then Ephesus, and stayed there while Paul went to Jerusalem (vv. 1–3, 18–21). Priscilla and Aquila often risked their lives in Paul's ministry. A church also met in their home (Rom. 16:3–5).

**Onesiphorus** (2 Tim. 4:19). He and his household helped Paul minister in Ephesus. Onesiphorus also traveled to Rome to visit Paul in prison (1:16–18).

**Erastus** (4:20). Not much is known about him, only that he was the treasurer of Corinth and was led to Christ by Paul (Rom. 16:23), who sent him with Timothy to minister in Macedonia while Paul stayed in Asia (Acts 19:22).

**Trophimus** (2 Tim. 4:20). He ministered faithfully with Paul and accompanied him to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4–5). Jewish leaders falsely accused Trophimus, a Gentile, of being brought into the Temple's inner court (21:29), which was for Jewish people only. Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus, 36 miles south of Ephesus.

Notice, Paul, who had the gift of healing, did not heal Trophimus. Nor did Paul heal Timothy from frequent stomach infirmities but told him to drink a little wine instead of water for his stomach (1 Tim. 5:23). It is not always God's will to heal believers even though people pray fervently for their healing.

Paul sent greetings to Timothy from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, and Claudia, who were committed believers in Rome. Nothing else is said about them. He added, "all the brethren" (2 Tim.

4:21). History reveals that the Christians in Rome, although under extreme persecution by Nero, did survive.

Jesus promised the church will survive: "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18).

Again, Paul urged Timothy to hurry to Rome: "Do your utmost to come before winter" (2 Tim. 4:21). To see Paul alive, Timothy had to leave immediately. With winter approaching, Paul knew the journey would be difficult; and when Timothy arrived in Rome, he could face Nero's persecution. Thus, Timothy needed the Lord's protection. Scripture never reveals if he made it in time.

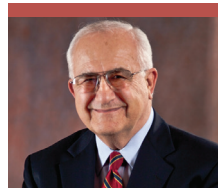
### PAUL'S FAREWELL

Paul concluded this letter—his final epistle—simply and appropriately: "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen" (v. 22). Not only Timothy but all Christians needed God's grace during the early days of the church, just as we need it today.

Paul knew well the grace of God through his life and ministry. Grace washed away his sins, called him to serve Jesus, and protected him through many perils. Grace allowed him to bring hundreds to saving faith in Christ, helped him face a martyr's death, and guided him to pen this wonderful epistle to fortify and encourage everyone who reads it to serve the Lord.

The curtain is now closed on the apostle Paul's life. Friend, take to heart Paul's final words, and apply them to your life as you serve the Lord in these difficult times. God's grace be with you!

**Editor's Note:** This concludes David Levy's series on 2 Timothy. In the next issue, he will begin a series on the book of Philippians, an epistle of joy and rejoicing.



by **David M. Levy**,  
media resource specialist and a Bible teacher  
for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry



# JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE

## PART 5: THE DISCIPLINE OF COMMUNITY

BY DAN PRICE

**People are lonely. Research studies show that today, Americans in particular have decreasing family sizes; fewer friends with whom to discuss important problems; and a high number of people taking antidepressants and anxiety medications. Furthermore, America has the third highest divorce rate in the world.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, Americans are among the loneliest people anywhere.**

COVID-19 only deepened the problem. A recent study by Harvard University found that since the pandemic began, almost half of young adults reported feeling lonelier than before.<sup>2</sup>

Believers desperately need deep, meaningful relationships centered around pursuing Jesus together: Christian community. Finding that type of community isn't getting any easier. That's why we need to consider what the Bible teaches about pursuing Christian community as a spiritual discipline.

### THE DRIVE FOR COMMUNITY

God created us to thrive in deep, spiritually oriented relationships. This fact has been true from the beginning of creation.

When God spoke the universe into existence, He delighted in its perfection, calling each element "good." Light, oceans, land, vegetation, the cosmos, and every living creature all received God's ultimate pronouncement of inherent perfection. Everything was good—except one thing. After God made man, He said, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18).

The only thing "not good" in all of God's creation was a lonely

human without a "help meet for him" (KJV). That phrase, also translated "helper fit for him" or "helper comparable to him," uses the fascinating Hebrew words *etzer kunegdo*. *Etzer* is more than a helper: It's an ally, a rescuer, an advocate.

In fact, in the Bible, it most often refers to something God does for His people: He rescues, helps, and intervenes on their behalf. Jesus

even called the Holy Spirit our Helper (Jn. 15:26). *Kunegdo* is Hebrew for "suitable for him," or "corresponding to him." God's cure for Adam's "not good" loneliness was the creation of a deep, spiritually invested, reciprocal relationship.

In other words, we were made for intentional community relationships with others. To be sure, marriage is the pinnacle of human relationships. However, the need for meaningful connection was obviously designed into Adam before Eve was created.

When we live solitary lives, disconnected from other Christians, we are living according to what God calls "not good"; all is not as it should be. We were made for community. That's why we all want it—and need it.

### THE ENEMY OF COMMUNITY

Unfortunately, many times our attempts to find relationships just don't seem to scratch the itch. Sometimes we feel lonely in a crowd of churchgoers. Or perhaps we feel frustrated with our small-group experience for lack of heartfelt conversation.

Most of us have wrestled with feeling that our connection



to other Christians is forced or shallow. Unfortunately, our drive for meaningful relationships can feel unfulfilled because of more than merely awkward social situations. We have an enemy that often ruins our attempts to make and keep the life-giving relationships we need: sin.

Sin makes us hide from community. Again, the story of Adam and Eve demonstrates the fundamental nature of our relationships (Gen. 3). When Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan's lie that God was holding out on them, and they ate the forbidden fruit, they immediately hid, both physically and spiritually. They hid their bodies from each other and from God. And when God questioned them about their actions, they hid by shifting blame. The trust and openness of their relationship with God and each other was broken. Sin made them hide the truth about themselves. And it still does today.

After all, isn't it easier to withdraw than to trust someone? Isn't it safer to remain lonely than to invest in a relationship that might hurt us? So we hide from meaningful community. Knowing the darkness in ourselves and being unwilling to trust Christians around us, we wilt in our solitude, choosing to miss out on the health and beauty of the spiritual connections for which we are made.

But the beauty of the gospel is that God took our sin and iniquity and cast it into "the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:19) because of Jesus' work. Honest, accountable Christian relationships bring freedom and growth. As James 5:16–20 says, a Christian who gently helps a sinning brother return to the truth rescues his brother's soul and covers a multitude of sins. It's only in community that we find grace in action and vulnerability reciprocated because of the gospel.

Christian community isn't merely hanging out at a potluck dinner talking sports. It involves making ourselves vulnerable to one another through the grace of God. The courage to live that way is a discipline we often avoid.

## THE CALL TO COMMUNITY

There's an apocryphal tale about a church split. As the story goes, a deacon at a small country church noticed that each day when the pastor arrived, he left his hat on a back pew. So the deacon decided to install a small peg near the door so the pastor had a place to hang his hat.

Another deacon, noticing the new peg, got upset because he hadn't been consulted on such an important building improvement. The ensuing fight divided the congregation, leading to a church split. The two branches of the former church began to call themselves Peg Baptist Church and Anti-Peg Baptist Church.

We chuckle at stories like these, but how far from reality are they really? It's no wonder that almost the last thing Jesus prayed was for God to give His disciples unity: "That they all may be one" (Jn. 17:21). He wasn't asking for agreement on building décor. Jesus prayed His people would be "one" in the

same way the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father. He prayed we would be intrinsically, inherently part of one another's very existence, like the Father and Son. He asked that we replicate the community of the Trinity—which is no mean feat.

The Bible presents Christian community and relationships as a habitual lifestyle that stimulates spiritual health. We are repeatedly told to love, teach, encourage, and motivate one another to good deeds for Jesus' sake and for our growth. Isolating ourselves from other Christians is a recipe for spiritual shipwreck.

## THE SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY

The only question left is, "How do we find these relationships?" Beyond simply attending church, how do we get close to people to find this spiritually driven community? The best advice is simply this: Jump in.

Make it a priority to commit your family to a small group at your church. Invite a Christian you don't know well to meet for coffee, and trust the Lord to help you face the social awkwardness with grace. Volunteer for a church ministry that needs help, even if it isn't an area in which you feel skilled. Invite another Christian family over for dinner, even if you don't feel you connect. With the Holy Spirit's help, get involved and open yourself to the opportunity of relationships with other believers.

Make no mistake: If we are to find the spiritual health of the meaningful connections for which God made us, we must do the work. So, jump in, Christian! Discipline yourself to flex your spiritual muscle of vulnerable, life-giving Christian community.

**Christian community isn't merely hanging out at a potluck dinner talking sports. It involves making ourselves vulnerable to one another through the grace of God.**

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Susan Mettes, "Guest Column: Who Is Most Likely to Experience Loneliness and How Can Churches Help?" Barna, December 8, 2021 <barna.com/mettes-loneliness-blog>.
- 2 "Loneliness in America: How the Pandemic Has Deepened an Epidemic of Loneliness and What We Can Do About It," Making Caring Common Project, February 2021 <mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/loneliness-in-america>.



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# WHAT DOES BDS REALLY STAND FOR? UNADULTERATED HATE

BY JONATHAN S. TOBIN

**(JNS)**—A Boston BDS group is promoting a “Mapping Project” that places a target on American Jews. It declares everything associated with Jewish life in this country fair game for demonization; public humiliation; false accusations of crimes against minorities; and, ultimately, violence.

The project supposedly illustrates “how local support for the colonization of Palestine is structurally tied to policing, evictions and privatization locally, and to U.S. imperialist projects worldwide.” What makes the project truly sinister is that it creates interactive maps of synagogues and other Jewish institutions, including schools in Massachusetts, and brands them as bastions of “harms,” such as “racism,” “policing,” “U.S. imperialism,” and “ethnic cleansing.”

BDS stands for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions; and BDS rhetoric—which talks of “colonization of Palestine” when referring to Tel Aviv, not remote settlements in the territories—reflects exactly the toxic stuff routinely spouted by both the Hamas terrorists who rule the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority that governs the West Bank Arab population.

While much of the organized Jewish world will ignore or downplay this story, it is important. The “Mapping Project” tells you exactly what BDS means. It is pure, unadulterated hatred for Jews; and it engages in the eliminationist rhetoric about Israel and Zionism that matches even the most extreme screeds heard on the far right.

It also reflects the positions of anti-Zionist groups like IfNotNow and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) that demand a place at the communal Jewish table.

JVP’s “Deadly Exchange” campaign was a classic, antisemitic blood libel cloaked in the language of human rights and “anti-racism.” Its conceit was that Jewish and non-Jewish groups that funded trips to Israel for American first responders were racist and led to the slaughter of African Americans on the streets of America by police trained to kill by the Jewish state.

That this claim was pure fiction was beside the point. Those sent to Israel benefited from the country’s unfortunately vast store of knowledge about dealing with public emergencies, including terrorist attacks that produce mass casualties. They were not taught how to deliberately kill innocent civilians, something the Jewish state forbids—unlike Hamas.



But, as with past blood libels, the point was to demonize Israel and its supporters and to falsely accuse them of murder. The irony is that an organization with the word *Jewish* in its title was using a classic trope of Jew-haters. JVP was banking on the fact that no limits on rhetorical excess or fabulism need be observed by those who work for Israel’s destruction.

The pro-BDS JVP has been stealing the thunder of liberal Jewish groups like J Street on college campuses and other woke precincts, where it is allied with Students for Justice in Palestine. Its ardent support of Black Lives Matter (BLM) and its “Deadly Exchange” libel illustrate intersectional ideology: People who believe all struggles of oppressed people of color are linked and that all “white privilege” oppressors are similarly united also believe the Palestinian war on Israel’s existence is morally equivalent to the struggle for civil rights in the United States. BLM and its associated ideologies are predicated on the absurd yet somehow fashionable notion that the cure for racism is more racism.

By the same token, the BDS movement believes that the only people on the planet who must be deprived of sovereignty in their ancient homeland and left defenseless against genocidal Islamist and nationalist Arab movements are the Jews. Far from promoting peace, its platform is a path to Jewish genocide in Israel.

All of this amounts to a wake-up call for American Jews. BDS seeks the destruction of the one Jewish state in the world and is, by definition, antisemitic. Its intersectional ideas lead this movement to treat Jews as hateful oppressors—something that always leads to violence. BDS isn’t about human rights, helping the Palestinians, peace, or justice. It is a hate group, and all who support it should be treated accordingly.



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**“It often takes  
a long time  
until they  
understand that  
I am speaking  
about Jesus.**

*by Zvi Kalisher*

**W**e recently enjoyed a most important holiday—the feast of Simchat Torah, Hebrew for “rejoicing over the Law.” Many of the Orthodox dance in the synagogues and streets. I go to some of their synagogues not to dance, but to tell them their vain dancing does not bring glory to the Lord.

When I talk with them, I feel like I am in the lions’ den. But I am encouraged by Luke 12:11–12, which says, “Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

I asked one of these fanatical dancers, “Are you sure this is what the Lord wants us to do?”

“Of course!” he answered.

“Are you worshiping the Lord according to the Law or according to those many rabbinical commentaries you read all the time?” I asked.

The man brought some of his friends to me and said, “This man asked me crazy questions right here in our

synagogue.” They were happy to show me how smart they were.

“What do you want to know?” one of them asked.

“I am so surprised,” I said, “that all year long you study your books of rabbinical traditions, which are so far from the Law. Yet now you celebrate Simchat Torah, the rejoicing over the Law. How do you explain this?”

“In Leviticus 26 it is written, ‘If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain.’ What greater blessing is there than this? A blessing from the Lord Himself. What is the reason for your great joy and dancing? According to the teachings that you worship, you must take the rabbis to the middle of the room and dance around them. They



are the Law you have chosen.”

“Your words are very interesting,” one said. “What are you trying to do here?”

“I am one of many of the Chosen People of God,” I said. “Our duty is not to dance but to go to people and warn them against the ways of the Devil.”

This was not the first time I had been in such a dangerous position. Since it was Simchat Torah, I thought they would be nice to me. But they had only hatred for me.

“We are against you and those like you who want to bring this Messianic teaching to our people in Israel,” one said. “You are a missionary!”

“Do you know who the first missionary was?” I asked.

“Of course! This Man, Jesus Christ,” one responded.

“You are mistaken,” I said. “The first missionary was Abraham, the father of our faith. Do you hate him also?”

“But he was not a Christian!” another said.

I had to start from the beginning with them. I taught them who Jesus was and where His name, *Yeshua*, is written in the Bible—not only in the New Testament but in the Old Testament too. For example, Psalm 14 says, “Oh, that the salvation [*Yeshua*] of Israel would come out of Zion!” (v. 7). It often takes a long time until they understand that I am speaking about Jesus.

Second Timothy 2:24 says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient.” Patience is my armor, and it is effective. Those who were unkind to me earlier became friendly as we continued to speak.

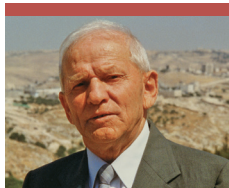
I continued to teach them all they wanted to know about Jesus directly from the Bible. They listened intently, seeking a clear explanation of how I came to believe in Him.

“Why do we study so long in the Yeshiva if none of our teachers speak about this?” one asked.

“What did the prophet Jeremiah say?” I asked. “‘Beware of false teachers.’ You can see what is written here about the Lord and what He has done for us all. I will not speak any more about Him because it is better that you read His Word with your own eyes and meditate on it in your own heart.”

Pray they will spend time in the Holy Bible instead of in rabbinical commentaries.

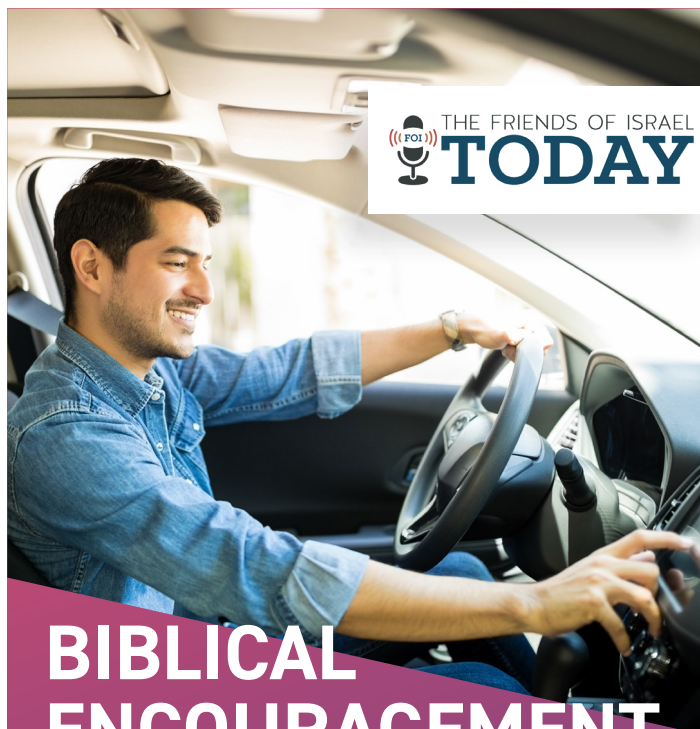
*From The Friends of Israel archives*



**Zvi Kalisher** (1928–2014) was a Holocaust survivor who was known for his unwavering faithfulness to the Lord and his bold witness in Jerusalem. He was with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry for more than 55 years.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **ISRAEL MY GLORY**

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR JESUS?



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