

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.

– OCT. 4. – 1 KINGS 1:28-39. –

THAT Solomon was the Lord's choice among David's sons to succeed him upon the throne of Israel is clear from 1 Chron. 22:8,9. – "The word of the Lord came to me, saying,...Behold, a son shall be born to thee who shall be a man of rest: and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days." (See also 2 Sam. 12:24,25; 1 Chron. 17:11-15; 2 Sam. 7:12-17.) And it was in view of the fact that Solomon was the Lord's choice, that David assured Bath-sheba, Solomon's mother, that her son should surely inherit the Kingdom. – 1 Kings 1:13,30.

Solomon was the second son of David by Bath-sheba. His name signifies "the peaceful," thus commemorating the promise of God concerning him. The additional name Jedediah (*the beloved of Jehovah*) seems to have been given by Nathan the prophet as a sign of David's forgiveness and restoration to the divine favor (2 Sam. 12:25), as the special love thus expressed before the child could know or choose good or evil could not have been for his own merit, and therefore must have been for his father David's sake, whom God had loved and chosen, and of whose posterity was to come the long promised Messiah – King of the antitypical Kingdom of God. Hence the names, Solomon (*the [R2045 : page 236] peaceful*) and Jedediah (*the beloved of the Lord*) indicated that David was still the beloved, that he was fully restored to the divine favor, and that the promises of God made to him and his posterity still held good.

Solomon came to the throne at an early age, probably at about nineteen or twenty. Of his personal qualifications at this time we know but little except from 1 Kings 3:3, – "And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed [unto the

Lord] and burnt incense in high places." This was prohibited by the Mosaic law (Deut. 12:13,14), but was accepted of God until the Temple was built. – See 1 Sam. 9:12; 1 Kings 3:2.

It was not long, however, until the seductive influences of position, power, wealth and general prosperity bore down with telling effect upon the character of this favored young man whose future was all aglow with promise. His character had never been developed in the school of experience, for he was reared in luxury from his youth up; nor were his principles put to the test. His principles were not fixed and firm. Though he loved God because of what he had seen and heard of his goodness to his people and to David his father, and because God loved him and had chosen him to be king, yet his heart was not anchored in God. He had not learned to love God for his inherent goodness – because he is the embodiment and glorious exemplification of righteousness and truth. And it is only those who love righteousness, and who *therefore* love God, because he is righteous, who are truly anchored in God, and who, consequently, have any stability of character. That Solomon was sadly lacking in such love to God and the consequent stability of character, his subsequent course soon began to show.

Yet, though God knew the end and all the intervening steps of his career from the beginning, though he foresaw his moral decline and its baneful influence upon the nation, still in his own wise purpose he chose Solomon to be king over Israel; and the purpose of God in choosing him was admirably accomplished, notwithstanding his own degeneracy [R2046 : page 236] and the sins into which he led the nation. That purpose and its accomplishment will be more clearly understood from our consideration of the succeeding lesson. But let us observe here that God did not propose always to provide for Israel a king whose reign would afford them the largest measure of temporal prosperity. Indeed, when they demanded a king and he granted them their desire, he faithfully forewarned them of the infringements of kingly power upon the rights and liberties of the people. (Read 1 Sam.

8:9-18.) All of this the nation experienced in the subsequent years of their history.

This was not the Lord's idea of government, but it was his foretelling of what he foresaw that the imperfect and selfish heart of man would do when exalted to power; for he knoweth what is in man. So it was in Israel, and so it has been in all the world: selfishness exalted to power has always used that power, largely at least, for self-aggrandizement.

The Lord's instructions to the kings of Israel were, however, to the opposite of all this; *viz.*, that the king should study the law of the Lord, and put its principles in practice – "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left." (Deut. 17:18-20.) But no king, either of Israel or of any other nation, however wise or good, ever did that. All have been more or less inflated with the pride of power, and their hearts have been lifted up above their brethren. Even David, the beloved of the Lord, succumbed to this baneful influence until, being greatly intoxicated with it, he fell into gross sin. The temptations of power to our impaired humanity in any position are always to the gratification of pride, ambition and self-aggrandizement. The only ruler of the world who will fully meet the requirements of the divine law, turning not aside to the right hand nor to the left, will be Jehovah's Anointed Son, our blessed Lord Jesus, who so loved his (future) subjects that he gave his life for them. His heart is never lifted up by pride, though God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven and things in earth. – Phil. 2:9-11.

In him there is no scheming for self-aggrandizement, no ambition except lovingly and willingly to serve and bless his subjects, and that not only in theory, but in a blessed reality fully attested by his great sacrifice on their behalf. Though he was rich, for their sakes he became

poor; though he had everlasting life, yet for their sakes he freely gave his life a ransom for theirs. Of him it is written, "Behold, a king shall reign *in righteousness*;" and he is called "the Prince of peace." Until his righteous reign is established in the earth the whole creation groans and travails in pain, and neither Israel nor the world could enjoy the blessings of that peace and prosperity which God designs to give through Christ. The reign of Solomon only prefigured this; and, as we shall see, the typical peace and prosperity of his reign were very hollow and unsatisfactory, yet the brilliant bubble was a speaking type of the future glorious reality; and when it had accomplished this mission of shadowing forth the glory to be revealed in Christ, the bubble burst and the groaning creation continued to groan under the heel of the oppressor, and will until he whose right it is shall take the kingdom and possess
