

GOD'S BLESSING UPON SOLOMON.

– *NOVEMBER 15. – 1 KINGS 9:1-9. –*

**"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." – Prov. 10:22.**

GOD'S second revealing of himself to Solomon, recorded in this lesson, occurred twenty-four years after he had become king, when he had reached the forty-fourth year of his age. He began the building of the temple in the fourth year of his reign. Its construction occupied seven years, and after finishing it he built his own palace, which took thirteen years. (1 Kings 7:1.) During this long period of twenty-four years Solomon was occupied not only with these great works, but in general in cultivating trade with neighboring countries, repairing his cities, etc., etc. He had just reached the period, we may suppose, where he was "in all his glory." His fame had spread throughout the world. He had become wealthy and had cultivated luxurious tastes, which in turn had increased the expenses of his government and, if prosecuted further, would lead to the oppression of his people with burdensome taxes. In the language of the first verse of the lesson, Solomon had reached the place where he was able to gratify his every desire. He had reached the critical point of danger; for, without question, great prosperity is much more dangerous than moderate competency.

Up to this point of time, we may reasonably infer, Solomon's course at least in a general way had the divine approval. He had accepted the prayer of his dream as the sentiment of his heart. He had been seeking for wisdom and to a considerable extent had been walking in her way and had received the promised blessings of affluence and fame. But now he had reached the danger point: He had come to a parting of the ways. One way would lead onward in humble reverence for God and a continuous seeking for Divine wisdom and guidance for the management of the kingdom and a seeking more and more for the elevation of the people, their prosperity, happiness and cultivation in

mental, moral and religious directions. The other way opening before Solomon would lead onward to pride, folly, self-gratification, the oppression of his people and by setting before them a bad example of royal profligacy, licentiousness, extravagance, carelessness of religious obligations and charity for false religions.

At this juncture the Lord appeared to Solomon as before at Gibeon; that is, in a dream (1 Kings 3:5); and an account of the Lord's words spoken in that dream is given in this lesson. The Lord's words imply his approval of Solomon's course up to this time, indicating that he had accepted the prayer of Solomon's first dream as Solomon's prayer, that he had accepted the temple built to his name, not only outwardly but in reality, as implied by the words: "Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." The Lord then proceeds to set before Solomon a view of the right and the wrong paths which lay before him, counselling him to **[R2059 : page 262]** choose the path of wisdom and righteousness as his father David had done. This reference to David shows us that the Lord was not expecting absolute perfection of David or Solomon, or any of the fallen race, but that he was seeking and would appreciate the heart intentions of those who sought to serve him and who, even though falteringly, sought to walk in his way.

The outcome of both paths is particularly stated: the path of obedience would not only establish the kingdom in his own hands, but insure it in the line of his posterity, even as it was promised to David. In this promise God shows that he has reference not merely to the immediate descendants of Solomon and David, but that his particular reference is to Christ, the great King, the antitype of Solomon, whose Kingdom shall be an everlasting Kingdom, and all people shall serve and obey him. As God promised to David that Christ should come of his seed, so here he proposes the same to Solomon, that if Solomon would hearken to his words and walk in his way, the Messiah should come through his posterity. But on the other hand, the choosing of the wrong course now would mean disaster not only to **[R2060 : page 262]** Solomon and his greatness but to Israel and its national prosperity,

and to the temple which was a delight to Solomon and a wonder to the world.

We all know the sequel: We know that Solomon chose the wrong path, that he chose self-gratification; and thus, although noted as the wise man, he is also noted as having determined his course unwisely and the "high" house which he had built to the Lord, that is, the notable house in the eyes of the world, did become a by-word. It was robbed of its treasures and profaned; and the world knows to-day that the Lord's displeasure against Israel and his rejection of them for a time was the result of their rejection of him, and that this in part at least was induced by Solomon's choice of the wrong course; and that the high places which he established for the worship of false religions to please his wives and their heathen relatives, became snares to the people of Israel and continued to have an idolatrous and ungodly, sinful tendency for centuries; until God cast them out of their land, overthrew their typical kingdom and temporarily gave a lease of earthly dominion to the Gentile nations, to last until the time for his establishment of the antitypical Kingdom in the hands of the greater than Solomon and through the instrumentality of the true Israel of God; – until the time for the building of the true, spiritual, antitypical temple of which Christ and his Church are the "living stones" as well as the "royal priesthood." – Eph. 2:21; 2 Cor. 6:16.

As a matter of fact, our Lord Jesus did not come through Solomon's line, but through that of his brother Nathan, in whose lineal descent was Mary, the mother of Jesus. (See Luke 3:31.) Only the legal heirship came through Solomon, through his descendant Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. (See Matt. 1:7,16.) That the line of genealogy given in Matt. 1 is not that of Mary, our Lord's mother, according to the flesh, is conclusively shown by a comparison of Matt. 1:11,12, with Jer. 22:30.

The practical suggestions of this lesson are applicable to all of the Lord's people, for although none of us of the Gospel age are called to

be typical kings with typical grandeur and wealth and wisdom, as was Solomon, but on the contrary are called to occupy humble positions, not many great or wise or learned being chosen and called, nevertheless, before each of us continually appear two ways, the one the way of divine favor, spiritual blessing and light, the other the way of self-gratification, divine displeasure and condemnation. The choice which we are called upon to make is even more important than that which was placed before Solomon. The question with him was whether or not Messiah, according to the flesh, should come in the line of his posterity. The question with us is whether or not we shall make our calling and election sure as joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the Kingdom and glory of which Solomon's was but a type. The resolution of each one should be that with humility he will accept the divine favor, seek to walk in the divine way – in the footsteps of Jesus – and by obedience, humility and love seek to make his calling and election sure, as one of the kings and priests of the antitypical Kingdom. – Rev. 5:10.

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