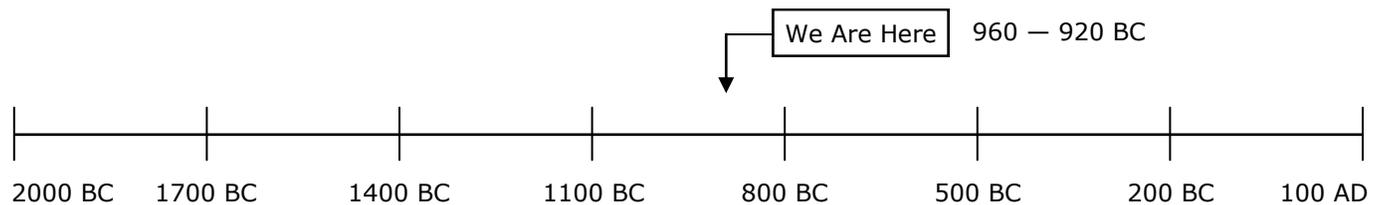


The Secrets of Success

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Week 21: May 21-27 — *1 Kings 2-10; 2 Chronicles 1-9*

40% Complete — 218 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Solomon's Temple (p.87) and Temple Interior (p.89), Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

The great King David has passed and all of Israel watched as its third and last king of the United Kingdom came to the throne. Though the majesty of David's kingdom was remarkable, the riches and rule of Solomon quickly surpass him. No king on earth has ever experienced the abundance of God's blessing like Solomon, who astounded all with his wisdom and wealth. People from surrounding nations came to visit him, to see if they could pinpoint the reason for his great success. Let's see if we can do the same in this week's review.

Here are four steps that he took to secure success, all of which we would be wise to emulate:

Step 1 — Solomon Rid Himself of His Enemies (*1 Kings 2:13-46*)

In order to establish his rule, Solomon eliminated his opposition, among which were his unhappy brother Adonijah (who was planning to overthrow him), Abiathar the priest and Joab the leader of the army (who had both sworn allegiance to Adonijah), and, finally, Shimei (who had shown an unfavorable disposition towards David and could not be trusted). This act should not surprise us, for kings had removed their enemies for centuries before Solomon. However, it is not recommended that we execute our enemies, but when viewed in regards to our spiritual lives, Solomon's actions against his opposition shed new light. **Before we can move forward, we must first remove that which holds us back.** In order to experience God's best in our lives, we must eliminate His and our opposition (*Heb. 12:1, 2*). Many times we fail to enjoy our new life in Christ, because we remain loyal to our old life of sin. We must exercise in the flesh what Christ has done in our hearts — freedom from all encumbrances.

Step 2 — Solomon Sought Wisdom Over Wealth (*1 Kings 3:1-15*)

It is the desire of most (if not all) people to possess material wealth in this world, and kings are no exception. Thus, we see the cold contrast of Solomon's heart, for **he desired not the materials of earth but the mind of heaven.** He asked for eternal wisdom when all others fell foolishly for temporal things. In that, Solomon pleased the Lord and received beyond measure that which he did not seek. In that, he already proved to be wise and God rewarded him greatly. **Let us thirst for the resources of heaven and hunger not for the riches of earth.** As Christians, our priority should be the mind of God and not material wealth; we should not concern ourselves with temporal things but rather seek first the eternal treasures of God (*Matt 6:33*). Later, Solomon tells us that to find the wisdom of God, one must fancy the words of God. To demonstrate the Lord's uncommon sense, we must know how He thinks.

Step 3 – Solomon’s Primary Task Was the Temple (1 Kings 5-8)

For the first eleven years of his reign (four in preparation and seven in construction), all of Solomon’s efforts were aimed at the completion of the beautiful Temple. Every resource he had, every person he could find, every ounce of energy he could muster went towards that great work. Why? Because **Solomon knew how important the worship of God was to the success and survival of the nation**. It was his desire to make a home for the Lord, to honor Him above all else, and to demonstrate His glory to the world with a sanctuary unlike any other. The Temple was Solomon’s first priority and one of the great markers of his reign and life. To honor the Lord should be our highest aim and greatest goal in life. He should take first place in all that we do; all of our efforts, all of our resources, all of our attention should be used to the glory of God (*Col. 3:17*). Although we do not have a Temple as Solomon did, the Bible says that our bodies are the temples of God, and that His Spirit dwells within us, in our hearts (*1 Cor. 3:16*). Therefore, **great care should be given to how we treat that temple; we should be careful to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness** (*1 Tim. 4:7, 8*). Our spiritual growth should be a physical goal, for it is key to our survival and success when it comes to healthy Christian living.

Step 4 – Solomon Was Obedient to God, Careful to Do What Was Right by Him

In the first half of Solomon’s reign, he obeyed the Lord; and, as we have already mentioned, he sought to honor God with his wisdom and worship. It was evident to all, including the Queen of Sheba (*1 Kings 10:1-9*) that God was blessing Solomon and the people for his right choices, to set God first in the kingdom. In *Psalms 72*, Solomon wrote, “May the mountains yield prosperity for all, and may the hills be fruitful, because the king does what is right. May his reign be as refreshing as the spring rains — like the showers that water the earth...” (*v.2, 6*). Later, Solomon tells us that people rejoice when the righteous rule, but they groan under the hand of the wicked. **God honors those who honor Him, and He honors others because we honor Him. Do what’s right and you will not only be blessed but you will be a blessing to those around you**. We honor God least when we are most disobedient. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments; and He promises to bless us or “disclose Himself to us if we obey His Word” (*John 14:21*). The second half of Solomon’s life will be a testimony to the contrary; his foolishness and rebellion towards God’s statutes will set the stage for his own downfall.

- Prophetic Passages
 1. **Solomon’s Prayer** (*1 Kings 8:22-53*): He mentioned several scenarios in his prayer to God concerning the nation and the Temple, all of which come true, particularly the one concerning “the exile” to a foreign land (*v.46-53*).
 2. **God’s Warning to Solomon** (*1 Kings 9:6-9*): God warned Solomon and the people that if they abandoned Him and His commands, He would in turn abandon His Temple and lift His protection from the city, the people, and the nation of Israel. Sadly, all of this is true, with the rebellious kings to come.

The Bottom Line

True *success* is not found in obtaining wealth, power, or fame, but in *glorifying* God in all we do.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the most burdensome weight that is holding you back from God’s best?
2. If wisdom is our aim, how do we hit our target? List ideas for gaining wisdom.