
King Solomon: Man of Wisdom Man of Foolishness

Lesson
26
Summary

1 Kings 3; Solomon loves the Lord and keeps his commandments—The Lord appears to Solomon and promises him a wise and an understanding heart—He judges between two barlots, and determines maternity of a child.

1 Kings 5; Solomon solicits and gains Hiram's help in getting timber to build the temple—Israelites hew stones and cut timber for the temple.

1 Kings 6; Solomon builds the temple—The Lord promises to dwell among Israel if they are obedient—Ornaments of the temple are described.

1 Kings 7; Solomon built himself a house also—For the temple, Hiram of Tyre made the two pillars, the molten sea, the ten bases, the ten lavers, and all the vessels—The molten sea (baptismal font) rests on the backs of twelve oxen.

1 Kings 8; The ark, containing the two tablets of stone, is placed in the holy of holies—The glory of the Lord fills the temple—Solomon offers dedicatory prayer—He asks for temporal and spiritual blessings upon repentant and prayerful Israel—The people sacrifice and worship for fourteen days.

1 Kings 9; The Lord again appears to Solomon—The Lord promises great blessings if Israel is obedient, and great cursings if they forsake him—Solomon reigns in splendor, levies tribute upon the non-Israelites, and builds a navy of ships.

1 Kings 10; The queen of Sheba visits Solomon—His wealth and wisdom exceed those of all the kings of the earth.

1 Kings 11; Solomon marries outside Israel, and his wives turn his heart to the worship of false gods—The Lord stirs up adversaries against him, including Jeroboam the son of Nebat—Abijah promises Jeroboam that he shall be king of ten tribes—Solomon dies and Rehoboam reigns in his stead.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Black Ethiopian Jews:** “They feel they are descendants of King Solomon through one of his wives, the Queen of Sheba. “In Ethiopia, members of this group refer to themselves as Beta Israel . . . They practice an early form of Judaism; the chief rabbis of Israel have recognized them as Jews. According to their tradition, their ancestors were Jerusalem notables who came with Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, when he returned home.” “They said that he brought Judaic customs and civil law to Ethiopia.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Variety of Poetry and Wisdom Works Attributed to Solomon: “The Song of Songs, a joyous tribute to life and love, was written in his youth; Proverbs, a more serious and scholarly work, was produced in his middle age, and Ecclesiastes, on the surface a very cynical book, was written by Solomon in his final years.” “Ecclesiastes . . . has won enduring popularity because of its wise maxims and its counsel on life. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Judaic Symbols Date to David's and Solomon's Times: One of the most popular is known by non-Jews as The Star of David. Jews call it the Magen David. “. . . tradition tells us that King David wore a *magen David* on his shield, and that King Solomon had the symbol inscribed on his ring in place of the name of God to give him dominion over demons. In spite of its long history, it is however only recently that the *magen David* has become an exclusively Jewish symbol.” “During the early Middle Ages, Christians decorated their churches and cathedrals with the *magen David*. For Muslims it was a magical sign; in Arabic sources the *magen David* was also known as the "seal of Solomon" and this alternative name was taken over by Jewish groups as well.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Urim and Thummim: The Magen David is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. One possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the Urim and Thummim. According to statements attributed to Joseph Smith, the Urim and Thummim were two triangular stones connected by a silver bow. One pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed they make a fascinating Magen David! Since the Urim and Thummin were revelatory tools, it is possible that they represent or operate on a simple principle of revelation. The answer is yes or no. “. . . study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right . . .” (*Doctrine & Covenants 9:8*)

Sukkoth: After Solomon built the Temple, the holiday of Sukkoth was used to keep the remembrance of the building and dedication of the Temple. “This holiday was also the occasion for the consecration of the Temple built by Solomon and every seventh year on Sukkoth, the Torah was read by the king before the assembled people.

In his vision of the end of days, the prophet Zechariah foretells that all the nations of the world will assemble for the festival of Sukkoth in Jerusalem to worship God.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) It was at this particular holiday season, in 1982, that the LDS Branch Meeting facility, “Mormon House,” in Jerusalem was dedicated.

Temple Destructions: “On Tish'ah be-Av in the year 586 B.C.E., the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar stormed the great Temple built by Solomon, turned its marbled columns and gilded rooms into a useless pile of rubble . . . After . . . Jews managed to rebuild the Temple, which stood for more than 600 years . . . in the year 70 C.E., the walls of the Temple were once again broken through --- this time by the Romans . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Temple Curtains: Since Later-day Saints have such an intense interest in temple culture and its ritual symbolism, a few comments about the temple may be interesting. There were curtains in the temple that the Sanhedrin sat behind when speaking with participants in the temple. “. . . the Great Sanhedrin was the name of the unique court consisting of . . . judges which sat in a special part of the Temple in Jerusalem. These judges had to know a great many languages in order to understand the witnesses and the litigants without an interpreter (who might change — ever so slightly the original statement). They never saw the litigants or the accused, in case their judgment might be influenced by their appearance. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Marriage Customs: Nowadays, a curtain or cloth is used to create a canopy (Huppah) under which marriages are performed. This cloth is usually a “Tallith,” a garment that represents the clothing used in temple times with marks (four sets of strings with knots) that represent binding ourselves to keep the commandments. “. . . it was customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his *tallit* as a symbol of sheltering her; and in modern-day Israel, for weddings of soldiers on active duty, it is not unusual to see a *huppah* constructed of a *tallit* supported by four . . . friends of the bride and groom . . . among Orthodox Jews, the preferred custom is to erect the *huppah* outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars,” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Homes Becomes Temples: “With the destruction of the Second Temple . . . it was then said: "Now that there is no altar, a man's table . . . and prayer takes the place of the sacrifices.” “The Talmud describes in detail . . . persons should engage in a discussion of Torah during the meal so that they will be "as though they had eaten at the table of God." . . . the table is regarded as a substitute for the altar in the Temple . . . (a) benediction (after meals), called *Boneh Yerushalayim* . . . asks God to have mercy on Israel and to restore the Temple and the Kingdom of David. It includes a plea that He may always sustain and support Israel.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Essene's Latter-day Temple: The Dead Sea “Temple Scroll” describes a temple to be built in “latter-days.” The Essenes believed that they were in the latter-days and referred to themselves as “Saints.” The dimensions of the Temple they planned were similar to the dimensions described by Ezekiel. However, the outer dimension seems to include the entire walled city of Jerusalem.

Latter-day City-Temples Foretold: “Malachi predicted the coming of the Lord suddenly to his temple . . . in the latter times, as a refiner and purifier. Ezekiel predicted the building of a temple in Jerusalem which will be used for ordinance work after the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion and when they are cleansed from their transgressions. John the Revelator saw the day when, after the earth is sanctified and celestialized, the presence of the Father and the Son in the New Jerusalem would take the place of the temple, for the whole city, due to their presence, would become a temple.” (*Doctrines of Salvation - Joseph Fielding Smith - Vol.2, Pg.244*)

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