

KING SOLOMON – GOD’S CHOICE

Previously we read how King David had eight named wives (Michal [Saul’s daughter, I Sam. 18-19], Ahinoam [the mother of David’s first son, Amnon], Abigail [originally the wife of the wicked Nabal, I Sam. 25], Maachah, Haggith [Adonijah’s mother], Abital, Eglah, and Bathsheba [Solomon’s mother, II Sam. 11]). From them, he had nineteen named sons and one daughter, Tamar, and an unnamed son by Bathsheba who died in infancy. He also married other wives in Jerusalem (II Sam. 5:13) and had more sons, and a host of concubines*. ... Sadly, this was in many ways a dysfunctional family Solomon was born into, with his brothers and half-brothers, sisters and half-sisters ... some he ‘got on’ with, and some he didn’t.

Amnon was the eldest and the natural successor to his father, but he was killed by Absalom because of his lust for his sister Tamar (II Sam. 13). The second son, Daniel, is only mentioned once. Absalom was the third son, who conspired against his father, and died tragically. Next in line for the throne was Adonijah the fourth son of King David (I Kings 1). He was handsome, boastful, and arrogant, with a flair for the theatrical (v.5). He was also badly behaved for unfortunately, his father had neglected his discipline (v.6). Like his brother Absalom previously, he gathered an army and declared himself king (v.9), unbeknownst to David. ... He could not wait until his father had died!

When David learned of Adonijah’s coronation (v.8), he immediately instructed Solomon to go to Gihon and be anointed as the legitimate king (v.38-40). When Adonijah heard the news, his supporters abandoned him, and he ran into the temple and held on to the horns of the altar for protection (v. 49-50). As was the custom, Solomon gave him clemency and allowed him to return home (v.52). However, Adonijah continued scheming for after David’s death he went to Bathsheba and asked to marry Abishag the Shunammite (I Kgs. 2:13-17), who was David’s nurse in his final days (1:3,4). Solomon saw what lay behind his request and was disgusted with him for it was obvious he continued to have designs on the throne, and so he ordered his execution (v.23-25).

Why did God specifically choose Solomon? ... Did He run out of options? No, He chose Solomon simply because He chose to choose him

... and His choice is always His privilege and pleasure, in accordance with His will. Sometimes we understand, sometimes we do not. When Solomon was born, his father gave him his name which comes from a word meaning 'peace'. The Lord also gave him a name for the LORD *loved* him (II Sam. 12:24) ... and that is why the Lord chose him. The Lord called him Jedidiah [*'beloved of the Lord'*], because of the Lord (v.25), that is, 'for the Lord's sake'.

God knew Solomon would fall victim to his many wives and yet He chose him, and He used him to write two of the Psalms, twenty-nine chapters of Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes ... God blessed him abundantly, more than any other (I Kings 4:21-34). ... Why did He do it? ... His thoughts are not always our thoughts, and neither are His ways always our ways (Is. 55:8). Nevertheless, His way is always perfect (Ps. 18:30) and the choices He makes are faultless, such was His choice regarding Solomon. His choice is always determined by the ends which His infinite knowledge and His infinite wisdom present before Him. ... In the same way, He chose Jacob, instead of the older brother Esau ... He chose Joseph, over his brethren ... He chose Israel from out of all the nations. ... And God *loved* Solomon because Solomon was God's choice to love, and through Solomon His will was achieved. Solomon did not choose God, but God chose Solomon, and God kept Solomon. Even in his latter days, when Solomon brought sorrow upon his household, God used him in the demonstration of His glory.

Who of us deserves the blessings and favour of God, His grace? Which of us deserves to be saved? ... Spurgeon said, "Free grace can go into the gutter, and bring up a jewel!"

When I think of how He came so far from glory
 Came to dwell among the lowly such as I
 To suffer shame and such disgrace
 On mount calvary take my place
 Then I ask myself this question
 Who am I?

* Why did God permit polygamy in the Old Testament? At the beginning of Scripture, God's creation ordinance was clear, *Gen. 2:24* Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. However, one of the consequences of the Fall was acrimony within the family ... Cain murdered his brother Abel, he was expelled from his family, and exiled to 'the east of Eden' (*Gen. 4:16*), where he married a woman and eventually had a great-great-grandson called Lamech who was the first polygamist in the Bible, ¹⁹ Lamech took unto him two wives. ... This practice became common, and included Abraham, Jacob, Israel, Gideon, Samson, David, and Solomon.

While the Old Testament does not condemn polygamy, in almost every instance, it brought about troubles which could have been avoided. Polygamy was never God's design for marriage and yet the Law of Moses seems to have made it mandatory in one circumstance for if a married man died without leaving a male heir, his brother was required to marry his widow, even if he already had a wife. This was so his brother's widow would have support during her old age, either from her new husband or from their son, so that the family name and land would be continued (*Dt. 25:5,6*).

Originally, in virtually all circumstances where the Patriarchs took more than one wife, it was for a specific reason. For example, Abraham married Hagar, on Sarah's suggestion because it seemed Sarah and Abraham were unable to have children ... although it subsequently caused bitterness and strife. Another example was when Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah, and he had to work another seven years to marry the real love of his life, Rachel ... And then, on the advice of his first two wives, he took Bilhah and Zilpah.

However, it was the Romans who frowned upon polygamy. They permitted the Jews to practise polygamy in their own land ... but anywhere else, polygamy was forbidden. As a result, the Jews of the *Diaspora* gradually ceased the practice until they outlawed it in the 11th century (Rabbi Gershom).

In the New Testament, Jesus restated the creation ordinance of the union of one man and one woman, *Mt. 19:4* Have ye not read, that he which made them *at the beginning* made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder *1cf. Mk. 10:6-9l.* ... So, God permitted polygamy in the Old Testament but never sanctioned it for the unity of one man and one woman is *His* foundation for the family. This was the teaching of the Church (*I Tim. 3:2,12; Titus 1:6; Eph. 5:22-33*), and any challenge to this teaching stands in opposition to God's plan for His creation.