

KING SOLOMON – SAVED OR LOST?

If a young newly crowned king Solomon began to come to our church and asked for membership, how would we receive his request? We would probably be overjoyed! His wealth, power, and family background would have a major influence on our decision to accept him. The increasing number of his children would be a great boost to the Sunday School! However, if each time he came he was accompanied by a different woman, how would we accept the fact he had hundreds more at home? Also, how would we deal with him accompanying his wives to their religious events honouring and worshipping their pagan and foreign idols ... in fact, he built some of their temples. Increasingly, our church leaders would be concerned, and they would need to speak to him! When he would refuse to acquiesce to their courteous conversations, would he change his mind, or would they rescind his membership ... *what would they do?!*

Almost every church fellowship has their fair share of membership problems. These problems usually include behavioural activities unbecoming of God's people. It is particularly hurtful and potentially harmful when the person concerned is all too aware of the spiritually destructive consequences but proceed nonetheless. When the individual persists in pursuing a path contrary to God's Word and God's will, legitimate apprehensions must invariably be expressed. ... Were they saved in the first place? Are they backslidden? Have they 'fallen from grace' and 'lost their salvation'?

Was Solomon saved, or was he not? Is he in Heaven, or is he not? ... To be 'saved' and 'born again' is a New Testament term, however, in the Old Testament it is described by how Abraham *believed* God, and it was *accounted* to him for *righteousness* (Gal. 3:6). When King David held his final audience with all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem (I Chron. 28:1), he told them, of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) *he [the Lord] hath chosen Solomon* my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. ⁶ And he *[God]* said unto me, Solomon thy son, ... I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. ... I Chron. 29:1 Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone *God hath chosen*. ... Solomon was not only God's choice to become king of Israel, but Solomon was also God's choice to be His son. Solomon, therefore, *belonged* to God.

However, even though Solomon was counted as God's son, he sinned and stubbornly *continued* to sin, *knowing* he was pursuing a path contrary to and in

defiance of the Lord's will. He was blatantly disobedient and God-*dis*-honouring! ... How could he still be 'saved'?

Scripture is clear how the relationship began with God, - the Lord loved him. Scripture is also clear Solomon loved the Lord. The relationship between Solomon and God was founded upon Divine love and Divine choice. God had invested in Solomon the Father-son relationship which can never be destroyed or annulled. ... Solomon was, - in New Testament terms, - once in Christ, in Christ forever. He was saved, and such was his guarantee of eternal salvation. Like Abraham, he had a personal trust and faith in God, and therefore, he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gal. 3:6). He was saved at the beginning of his reign, and the only way he could have died lost was to have sinned enough to cancel out his salvation somewhere along the way ... and that is impossible. That would be in complete contradiction to how the Bible teaches the eternal security of the believer. Indeed, from the beginning, because of God's sovereign choice, Solomon was God's possession, ¹ Kings 3:3 Solomon loved the LORD. ... and *no unbeliever* ever loved the Lord!

Furthermore, would God include in His Word the writings of an unbeliever? ... Absolutely not! Solomon's unsurpassed knowledge, evident in his writings, were based on the wisdom God gave him, wisdom beyond that which anyone else possessed (1 Kgs. 4:29-34). Such wisdom is a gift God bestows upon His people for it is the spiritual ability to apply the principles of God's Word to the believer. Solomon's wisdom, though, went beyond that and included an understanding of God's creation, and to produce proverbs and compose songs of worship. His Proverbs tell of Christ, as does the Song of Solomon, which points forward to the relationship between the Lord Jesus and His Church.

Did Solomon finally repent though? ... If he did not, he was not saved, however, there is evidence he *did* repent. From the commencement of the Book of Ecclesiastes, he had come to realise his power, prestige, wealth beyond measure, a mighty kingdom, a host of wives and concubines, beautiful palaces and gardens all measured up to sheer emptiness, vanity of vanities; all is vanity (Eccles. 1:2) ... "Pointless! Pointless!" (CJB), "Meaningless! Meaningless!" (NIV), "Sheer futility" (NKB), "Utter futility" (TNK).

Approaching the end of his days on earth, he confessed the realisation that everything the world offers is an illusion, as far as God and the things of God are concerned. Solomon 'had it all' but he accepted nothing this world can offer brought the satisfaction of knowing God and being in a personal relationship

with Him. As a backslider, with all the pleasures of this earth, he could find no joy, no peace, no genuine purpose, nothing worthwhile for time or eternity.

It took him a long time to realise it, but in the end, he returned to the Lord,
 Wasted years, wasted years, oh how foolish,
 As you walk on in darkness and in fears;
 Turn around, turn around, God is calling,
 He's calling you from a life of wasted years.

God's people *can* live a life of 'wasted years' away from God ... and that was what Solomon did. But he again listened to the voice of God, calling him to return, - such is God's mercy towards His own for Solomon loved the Lord (I Kings 3:3). He *did* come back for among his concluding words in Scripture are, ^{Eccles.} ^{12:13} Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Solomon did not lose his salvation, even though he certainly did experience God's chastisement because of his womanizing and idolatry. He *did* lose for a time the joy of daily fellowship with Him, but he did not lose his eternal relationship with God. As a well-known hymn describes, he had "wandered far away from God ... the paths of sin too long [*he'd*] trod". He had "wasted many precious years" but he returned to the place where he cried out, "I now repent with bitter tears, Lord, I'm coming home". ... And he did enter Heaven for why else would Jesus commend him, Solomon in all his glory (Mt. 6:29; Lk. 12:27). ... The Saviour Who spoke those words has the vantage point from Heaven, and from His perspective the Bible tells us, man looketh on the outward appearance, but *the LORD looketh on the heart* (I Sam. 16:7) ... That is how the Lord Jesus judged Solomon, and that is how he could speak of Solomon in all his glory.

In conclusion, the evidence is in favour of Solomon returning to God. Despite his flagrant disobedience, he was beloved of his Lord from the beginning of his life to the conclusion for God does not 'switch' His love 'on and off', as the world does. Even though Solomon had his failures and shortcomings, as a repentant sinner, he was sovereignly saved by God's marvellous and wonderful grace through believing faith, in the same manner we are saved and kept today.

My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus' name.