

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

18 July 2010

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Lesson ##26: King Solomon: Man of Wisdom, Man of Foolishness (1 Kings 3; 5-11)

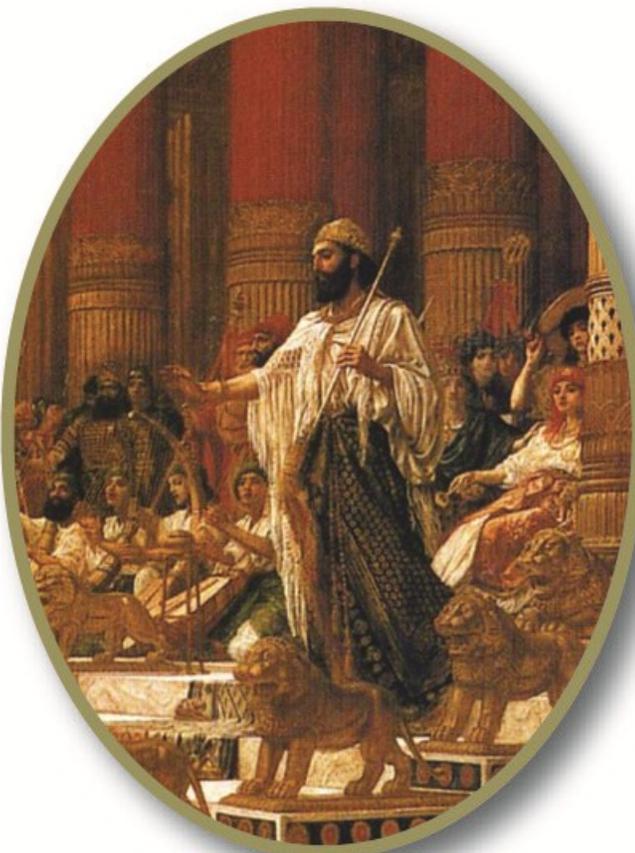
Introduction

“We generally think of Satan attacking us at our weakest spot. ... But weakness is not our only vulnerability. Satan can also attack us where we think we are strong—in the very areas where we are proud of our strengths. He will approach us through the greatest talents and spiritual gifts we possess. If we are not wary, Satan can cause our spiritual downfall by corrupting us through our strengths as well as by exploiting our weaknesses”

(Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall,” Ensign, Oct. 1994, 12).

Think about some strengths that could become our downfall.

This lesson is about King Solomon, a man who received great gifts from God but eventually used those gifts unrighteously. In this lesson look for incidents that show the gradual decline of Solomon. We should look for his flaws not to judge him, but to learn from his mistakes.



King Solomon, Edward Poynter, 1890

The Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor. (1 Kings 3:5-28)

Background: Just before David died, Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon as the new king. Solomon, who was a son of David and Bathsheba, received the following counsel from his father: “Be thou strong ... , and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and

his judgments, and his testimonies, ... that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest” (1 Kings 2:2-3).

When Solomon succeeded his father, David, as king, he followed the Lord.

1 Kings 3:5, 9 - Soon after Solomon became king, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I shall give thee”. Solomon

asked for an “understanding heart”

1 Kings 3:28; 4:29 - Having an “understanding heart” meant that the wisdom of God was in him.

1 Kings 3:7-8 - Solomon felt a special need for that blessing because he was young and needed help.

Think about how “the wisdom of God” would help you with

Lesson Highlights

- The Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor.
- King Solomon directs the construction of a great temple and has a palace built for himself.
- Solomon dedicates the temple.
- Solomon becomes excessively wealthy and marries many non-Israelite women who persuade him to worship idols.

A study of this lesson will help encourage us to use our blessings wisely and to enter the temple worthily.

Next Week

#27 The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders (1 Kings 12-14; 2 Chronicles 17; 20)

your responsibilities at home, work, or Church.

1 Kings 3:11-12 - The Lord was pleased by Solomon's request for an understanding heart because Solomon had asked for a gift that would help him serve others rather than a gift with selfish purposes.

D&C 46:13-26 - Some of the spiritual gifts we may seek

are enumerated in these verses. As you consider them, you might think about how you could use them in service to others.

1 Kings 3:14 - The Lord gives spiritual gifts on conditions of righteousness and obedience.

1 Kings 3:13-14 - Additional blessings the Lord granted Solomon were riches, wisdom, and honor.

1 Kings 3:16-22 - The first situation requiring King Solomon's judgment was a dispute over an infant.

1 Kings 3:23-28 - Solomon wisely determined which woman was the actual mother. Solomon's solution dramatically demonstrated that the Lord had blessed him with wisdom.



King Solomon directs the construction of a great temple and has a palace built for himself. (1 Kings 5-6; 7:1-12)

As commanded by the Lord, Solomon directed that a temple be constructed.

1 Kings 5:1-6, 17-18; 6:15-36 - These verses emphasize the elaborate nature of the temple.

Solomon used fine materials to build the temple because it was the house of the Lord.

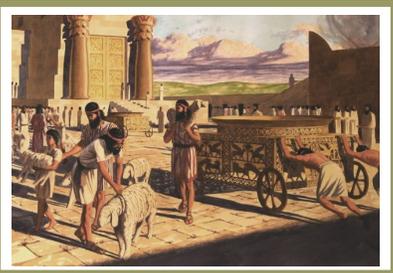
1 Kings 6:7 - The builders showed reverence for the temple during its construction by not making noise with tools of iron while the temple was being built.

1 Kings 5:1-12 - Solomon used his wisdom, riches, and honor to ensure proper construction of the temple. Because of those blessings, he was able to obtain building materials and enlist the help of skillful laborers in the construction of the temple.

1 Kings 6:11-13 - The Lord promised Solomon that, if Solomon would remain righteous and follow the Lord, then He would dwell in the temple.

D&C 97:15-17 - A similar promise has been given by the Lord in our day regarding our temples.

1 Kings 6:2-3; 7:2, 6-7 - Solomon also had a house built for himself. His house was larger than the house of the Lord. This use of riches showed Solomon's gradual decline was starting.



Solomon's Temple
Balage Balogh, 2010

Solomon dedicates the temple. (1 Kings 8:22-66; 9:1-9)

1 Kings 8:22-53 - After seven years of construction, the temple was dedicated. Some of the things Solomon prayed for in the dedicatory prayer included answers to prayers (1 Kings 8:28-30, 49-52), forgiveness (1 Kings 8:33-39), rain (1 Kings 8:35-36), help during famine and sickness (1 Kings 8:37), and help in battle (1 Kings 8:44-45). In that dedicatory prayer, Solomon prayed for the Lord to help his people through many difficult problems.

We recognize that temple attendance can help us when we are weighed down with problems and need inspiration, guidance, answers or comfort.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"In the peace of these lovely temples, sometimes we find solutions to the serious problems of life. Under the influence of the Spirit, sometimes pure knowledge flows to us there. Temples are places of personal revelation. When I have been weighed down by a problem or a difficulty, I have gone to the House of the Lord with a prayer in my heart for answers. These answers have come in clear and unmistakable ways"* (Ensign, Aug. 1985, 8).

1 Kings 8:41-43 - Solomon prayed that the temple would help lead unbelievers to the Lord.

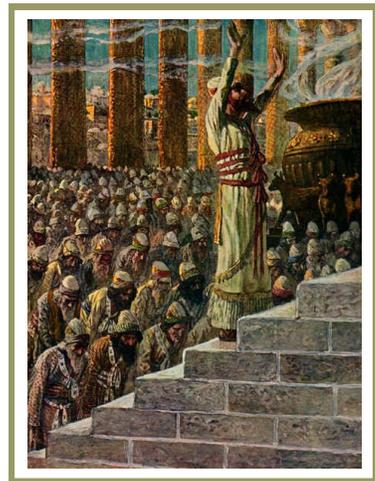
A temple might accomplish that as people see it, are

curious, and seek to learn about it.

1 Kings 8:61 - After Solomon offered the dedicatory prayer, he counseled his people, "Let your heart ... be perfect with the Lord our God".

Actions we can take to have a heart that is "perfect with the Lord" and to keep the influence of the temple strong in our lives include: attending the temple frequently where possible, keeping a current temple recommend by living worthily, and displaying pictures of temples in our homes.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, *"When we dedicate a house to the Lord, what we really do is dedicate*



Solomon Dedicates the Temple
J James Tissot

ourselves to the Lord's service, with a covenant that we shall use the house in the way He intends that it shall be used" (Church News, 22 Jan. 1972, 3).

1 Kings 8:66 - The attitude of the people as they returned to their homes after the temple dedication and the 14 days of worship was one of gladness of heart.

Solomon becomes excessively wealthy and marries many non-Israelite women who persuade him to worship idols. (1 Kings 10–11)

1 Kings 10:1-15, 24-25 - Solomon's riches and honor increased after the temple was built.

1 Kings 10:16-23, 26-29 - Solomon misused these blessings to build up his own kingdom rather than God's kingdom.

Jacob 2:18-19 tells us how wisdom, riches, and honor should be used—to do good.

1 Kings 11:1-2 - Solomon's choice of wives showed that he had turned away from God because he married out of the covenant.

1 Kings 11:3-8 - Solomon's non-Israelite wives influenced him to construct heathen idols and worship them, turning away from the Lord. (Note that in the Joseph Smith Translation, verse 4 says that Solomon's heart "became as the heart of David his father" and verse 6 says that "Solomon did evil in the sight

1 Kings 9:3-9; 6:11-13 - The Lord's message when he visited Solomon after the dedication of the temple was similar to his message during the construction of the temple. If Israel did not follow the Lord and obey his commandments, or, if they ever accepted idol worship, then they would be forsaken. Solomon obviously needed to be reminded of his covenants.

of the Lord, as David his father.")

Sadly, the blessings of wisdom, riches, and honor contributed to Solomon's downfall through his misuse of them.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: "*How ... do we prevent our strengths from becoming our downfall? The quality we must cultivate is humility. Humility is the great protector. Humility is the antidote against pride. Humility is the catalyst for all learning, especially spiritual things. Through the prophet Moroni, the Lord gave us this great insight into the role of humility: 'I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them' (Ether 12:27).*

"We might also say that if men and women humble themselves before God, he will help them prevent their strengths from becoming weaknesses that the adversary can exploit to destroy them. ... If we are humble and teachable, hearkening to the commandments of God, the counsel of his leaders, and the promptings of his Spirit, we can be guided in how to use our spiritual gifts, our accomplishments, and all of our other strengths for righteousness. And we can be guided in how to avoid Satan's efforts to use our strengths to cause our downfall. "In all of this, we should remember and rely on the Lord's direction and promise: 'Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers' (D&C 112:10)" (Ensign, Oct. 1994, 19).

I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

—Ether 12:27

Conclusion

We should be very grateful for the spiritual and material blessings the Lord has given us and for the temple. Each of us should humble ourselves before the Lord so that we can use our blessings wisely and enter the temple worthily.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- On what conditions does the Lord give gifts of the Spirit? How can we use these gifts to serve others?
- What do you think it means to have a heart that is "perfect with the Lord"? How can temple attendance help us perfect our hearts?
- How can we ensure that our strengths do not become a downfall for us?