

Like Father . . . Like Son

I Kings 11-12; II Chronicles 11-12

Introduction

We continue our study of Kings and Chronicles from the writings of Jeremiah the prophet and Ezra the scribe. Our study today, focuses on the lives of two men – two wealthy, powerful kings who completely lost touch with people and, most importantly, lost touch with God.

In 1928, at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, eight of the most powerful “money magnates” in the world gathered for a meeting. These eight, were their resources and assets combined, controlled more money than the United States Treasury. In the group we find such men as:

- Charles Schwab, president of a steel company,
- Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Exchange,
- Arthur Cutton, millionaire wheat speculator,
- Albert Fall, presidential cabinet member,
- Jesse Livermore, greatest bear on Wall Street in his generation,
- Leon Fraser, president of the International Bank of Settlements, and
- Ivan Krueger, head of the world’s largest monopoly.

This was quite an impressive group of people! Newspapers and magazines heralded their achievements, and held them up for the youth, as an example of life worth living. Twenty five years later:

- Charles Schwab died penniless,

- Richard Whitney spent the rest of his life serving a sentence in Sing-Sing Prison,
- Arthur Cutton died bankrupt,
- Albert Fall was pardoned from a federal prison so that he might die at home,
- Jesse Livermore took his own life,
- Leon Fraser also took his own life, and
- Ivan Krueger took his own life, as well.

All of these men had learned how to make money, but none of them had learned how to live.

Solomon and Rehoboam – Everything *But* Life Worth Living

We are about to look further at the lives of two men. They are Solomon and his son, Rehoboam. These two men had everything, *but* life worth living.

As I studied the lives of these two men, four words came to mind:

- defiance,
- consequence,
- opulence, and
- selfishness.

These are four words that, without the invasion of the Holy Spirit’s control, can easily characterize every one of our lives!

Defiance!

I want to go back, for a moment, to the middle years of Solomon’s biography. There were several events that revealed the spiritual and character erosion

that was taking place in his life; events that sent out warning signals to the people around him, which he would never see nor listen to. You may remember, from our previous studies, that Solomon had become unaccountable. He refused to listen to counsel; he refused to heed his own writings!

Let me expose one of these revealing events. It was something that should have been a simple business transaction, but was not. Turn to I Kings, chapter 9. While you are turning, I want to point out that, while the context of this exchange has changed over the centuries, it is an event that can still happen today.

Let me set the scene for you. Hiram, the king of Tyre, had been a close friend of David. Because of that friendship, Hiram honored and helped Solomon by providing labor and materials for the construction of God's temple and Solomon's own palace. After twenty years of committed construction labor and material provisions, the work on the temple and Solomon's own house was completed. Look at verses 10 through 13 of I Kings, chapter 9.

And it came about at the end of twenty years in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house. (Hiram king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress timber and gold according to all his desire), then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. So Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, and they did not please him. He said, "What are these cities which you have given me, my brother?" So they were called the land of Cabul to this day.

"Cabul" is Hebrew for "worthless". Solomon had given Hiram twenty overgrown Galilean villages. They were of no value to Hiram, and Solomon knew it.

Do you see what happened? Solomon had the opportunity to express gratitude for twenty years of loyal service, but he "brushed Hiram off". In business slang, Solomon "stuck it to him".

Now, that is like the creed of commerce today, isn't it? There is the attitude of, "Get as much as you can, for as little as you can, and if you cut somebody out of the deal or 'rip somebody off;' if you misrepresent your company or exaggerate the product slightly, and you get away with it legally, you are the

smart one; you are the shrewd business man or woman of the year."

Around the king's dinner table the conversation was, "Solomon, I heard you gave Hiram something for twenty years of faithfulness. What did you give old Hiram for everything he has done for you?"

"Who, Hiram? Oh, I passed off some worthless real-estate to him. Who cares about little Hiram anyway? Why should I do anything special for him?!"

Solomon refused personal responsibility toward a loyal business associate. He defied, implicitly, Hiram's right to an honest payback. In fact, it is interesting that, according to verse 14, Hiram gave gold in exchange to Solomon. In other words, Hiram would not allow Solomon to consider the cities as gifts.

Do you know what else was occurring? Someone was watching. Someone was learning how to treat people. That someone was a twenty year old prince, named Rehoboam. And, he will grow up and take his father's example of abusing loyal people to an point that you have never seen an abusive power player reach.

We will discuss Rehoboam in a moment, but let us continue our discussion of Solomon, who was ultimately defiant against God. Look at I Kings, chapter 11, verse 4.

For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

It gets worse. Continue to verses 5 and 6.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not follow the Lord fully, as David his father had done.

Five Attitudes of Solomon's Defiance

I like the way one author put it. He explained the defiance of Solomon in the form of five attitudes that built one upon the other.

I want my own way

1. The first attitude says simply, “I want my own way.”

This person is not interested in your way or even God’s way, it has to be their way!

I won’t quit until I get my way

2. The second attitude says, “And I won’t quit until I get my way.”

This person says, “I want my way, and I want it when I want it, and I won’t quit until I get my way.”

I don’t care who it hurts

3. The third attitude, that builds upon the first two, is, “I don’t care who it hurts.”

In other words, “I don’t care if having my way hurts my husband, wife, peers, parents, kids, the team, the committee, the church, the company . . . I don’t care, I’m gonna get my way.”

These are the people who will claw their way to the top and behind them, lie the bruised and bleeding bodies of people who got in their way.

By the way, this is reaching the danger point, at this step or level of defiance. When a person who is selfish, and we all are, reaches the point where he no longer cares who he hurts, he has become unaccountable. Solomon must have said in his heart, “I don’t care if I destroy years of friendship with Hiram. Who is he anyway?”

There is another step that follows quite naturally.

I refuse to listen to counsel

4. The fourth attitude says, “I refuse to listen to counsel.”

Solomon himself, had written, in Proverbs, chapter 11, verse 14, “There is safety in a multitude of counselors!”

Since that is true, the opposite is true, “There is danger in a lack of counselors!”

You are in danger when you say, “Yea, I know what God says; I know what His Word counsels; I know what my Christian friends are saying, so what? I’m not listening to them!”

That leads to the final step.

I am not concerned about the consequences

5. The final attitude is, “I am not concerned about the consequences.”

In other words, “I don’t care what happens, I’m going to do what I want to do anyway!”

Do you know what the result will be? *Defiance always leads to personal misery.* Show me a defiant man or woman, college student or teenager and I will show you an unhappy person, whether they will admit it or not. Solomon also wrote, in Proverbs, chapter 13, verse 15, “The way of the transgressor is hard.”

Consequence!

I will take this one step further and say, personal defiance also leads to divine discipline! The principle is this, *Defiance in the life of a believer will not be ignored by God!*

Proof

Now, let me give you the proof of that principle by showing how God dealt with Solomon.

God became angry

Look at I Kings, chapter 11, verse 9a. Note, in your mind and heart, this ignored, overlooked, downplayed aspect of God’s dealing with his own.

Now the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel . . .

1. To put it simply, God became angry!

And, He let his anger be known! Look at God’s choice of words in the verses that follow. God tells Solomon that He will tear the kingdom from his hands. The word “tear” appears three times in the next few verses, as God tells Solomon that his son Rehoboam will never rule a united kingdom. In verses 11, 12, and 13, God basically says, “Solomon, I’m going to tear (literally, ‘rip’) the kingdom away from you.”

What strong, angry words! God does not stop with anger, however.

God appointed adversaries

2. God appointed adversaries!

The punishment and discipline of Solomon’s defiance came in the form of two men, named Hadad and Rezon. Notice verse 14a.

Then the Lord raised up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite . . .

Skip to verse 23a.

God also raised up another adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada . . .

Continue to verse 24a.

He gathered men to himself and became leader of a marauding band . . .

This “marauding band” is literally, “men who killed”.

Now just how long did they rob Solomon of his peace of mind and sense of safety? Notice verse 25a.

So he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, along with the evil that Hadad did . . .

When a child of God sins against God, God still loves that child and will still forgive that grievance and restore fellowship with that child; but, in the meantime, a holy, jealous God is downright angry!

Read verse 9a again,

Now the Lord was angry with Solomon[!] . . .

Then, imagine, God called these two pagans from the dark shadows to pester and plague Solomon until he repented. The problem is, Solomon never did!

Listen to the words of Chuck Swindoll, who wrote on this passage in his book, *Stress Fractures*. In the chapter on defiance, he tells that God calls the dogs out on Solomon! He writes, powerfully,

God unleashed both of these men onto Solomon, “‘Sic ’im,’ Hadad! ‘Sic ’im,’ Rezon!”

When we have the audacity to defy the living God; when we walk against His holiness and resist His authority over our lives, He has ways of calling all kinds of dogs from any number of alleys. Sometimes they come in the form of a memory; sometimes it is restlessness. It is like a monkey on your back. It stays, plagues, works, harasses, and beats you black and blue emotionally.

Perhaps your sense of defiance gets stronger and you stiffen your neck and stand your ground. Guess what? God just calls more of those dogs out of the alley, “Go get him! Work him over!”

God is persistent when dealing with defiance. He will not give relief to his children who deliberately walk away from His will.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a subject that is all but forgotten in our tolerant age. It is an age in which we have recreated God into a tolerant, doting, old grandfather who sighs when his children sin, and wishes they would just behave!

“Solomon, has God changed; has He lost a little sovereignty over the years?”

No! But, according to Solomon’s actions, God had changed. Do you remember, at the beginning of Solomon’s reign, he offers a thousand bulls as a sacrifice to the one true God? Now, at the end of his reign, he builds alters to other gods! *How?!* Because, according to Solomon’s decaying theology, the only true God had grown small enough for Solomon to believe there could be room in the universe for a few more gods.

Is this happening to Christians today? Has our great and awesome God become small and insignificant?

Donal McCollough thinks so, and writes as much in his book entitled, *The Trivialization of God*. Let me read his opening comments from the first chapter of that book,

Visit a church on Sunday morning, almost any one will do, and you will likely find a congregation comfortably relating to a deity who fits nicely with its positions; who conforms to individual spiritual experiences. But you will not likely find much awe or sense of mystery. The only sweaty palms will be those of the preacher, unsure whether the sermon will go over. The only shaking knees will be those of the soloist about to sing. Yet, the New Testament warns us, “. . . offer to God [Christian] an acceptable [worship] with reverence and awe; for [indeed] our God is a consuming fire.”

Today, reverence and awe have been replaced by a yawn of familiarity. The consuming fire has been turned into a candle flame – no heat, no blinding light, no power for purification. It may well be revealed that the worst sin of the church, at the end of the twentieth century, has been the trivialization of God. Why? Because we prefer the illusion

of a safer deity. So, over time, we have whittled God down to a more manageable size.

It happened to Solomon and it may be happening to you even today. Perhaps you have sin that you have not confessed and have shoved under the carpet of your conscience. Do you really want to follow Solomon? Shall God raise up another adversary against you in order to break your will and bend your knee?

No! Stop now and, in your heart, say, “O Lord, as your child, I’ve stubbornly clung to my way; my will. Forgive me, Father. I surrender all!”

Opulence!

Now, while the drama between rebellious Solomon and God has been played out to its final stages and Solomon dies a bitter old man, something else has been happening, or I should say, someone else has been watching! A young boy, born to Solomon and one of his foreign wives, was taking mental notes and his character was being etched by a defiant father and an ungodly mother. The ingredients for a disaster were already well mixed. For years, this boy, named Rehoboam, had grown up and lived in the palace of the world’s richest king. Turn to chapter 14, of I Kings, for a brief biographical sketch. Look at verse 21.

Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. And his mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonitess.

Solomon reigned for forty years, and Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he took his father’s throne. That means that Rehoboam’s entire life was spent in the luxury of Israel’s finest palace, with a father who was the world’s richest man.

Now, it is hard to fault Solomon for what must have come naturally. He had grown up under harder circumstances. As a young man, his father David, was spending most of his career on the warpath. There was little in the way of luxury. There was no palace at that time. Later, however, Solomon was wealthy and able to give to his son what he had never received. So, Rehoboam never lifted a finger. He had learned, as I will show in a moment, that other people

were on planet earth to make his life easier and his path smoother.

By the way, *there are few children who can survive affluence with balance and humility.* That is why, for some of us, the reminder is appropriate that there is nothing wrong with our children having to work. If your teenager is seen flipping hamburgers in the evenings, it is not a sign that you are not providing for them as a parent; in fact, you may be providing just what they need. If your child cannot get work outside the home, make sure they work inside the home. Teach them how to load the dishwasher; teach them how to do laundry. They should be the ones to take out the trash. All the fathers are saying, “Amen.” They should cut the grass. “Amen.” They should wash the car. “Amen.” It says it right here, in III Kings!

If adults struggle with opulence; with stuff, and we are living in the middle of it; if we struggle for balance, why do we think giving kids all the stuff they want will make them better people? It will not!

Solomon himself, wrote an interesting Psalm, numbered Psalm 127. I will paraphrase what Solomon sang, in verse 4, “Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children in the lives of parents.”

The ways of bows and arrows

I want to take a brief, but closer look at that poetic thought of parents as warriors with bows, and children as arrows. When you think of arrows today, as I did, there are a number of different kinds.

The imitation or artificial arrow

- There is the imitation or artificial arrow.

This sort of looks like an arrow, but in battle, this arrow will not accomplish anything. It is plastic, not wood or steel; it will not hold up under pressure and, when held up against the bow, its weaknesses are immediately apparent.

The ill-formed or unformed arrow

- There is the ill-formed or unformed arrow.

I grabbed something resembling an arrow out of my backyard this morning. I was in a hurry – like a parent who does not have much time for his children. I tried to shape it, but if I went hunting for my supper with this in the woods, it would not accomplish

anything. Unless I got close enough to the animal to hit it over the head, I would starve first. Unformed arrows do not do well in battle.

The skillfully prepared arrow

- Then, there is the skillfully prepared arrow.

Someone has taken time to prepare this arrow. The shaft is strong and straight, the head is sharp and balanced, the vein (or feathers) are perfectly balanced and appropriate to the need of this particular arrow. So, when this arrow is released, it will fly straight and true.

When you consider that Solomon referred to children as arrows, and then, look at the life of Rehoboam, his own son, Rehoboam would be the plastic arrow. At best, he was an imitation. There was no strong wood or steel in him; he would be ineffective in battle.

Selfishness!

Notice how Solomon is described. Turn to I Chronicles, chapter 29, verse 1a, where David is speaking of his son Solomon.

Then King David said to the entire assembly, "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is still young and inexperienced and the work is great . . ."

Note the words, "young and inexperienced"! Solomon, by the way, was around nineteen or twenty years of age at this time.

Now turn to II Chronicles, chapter 13, verse 6, to see how Rehoboam is described.

Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master, and worthless men gathered about him, scoundrels, who proved too strong for Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when he was young and timid and could not hold his own against them.

The Hebrew words used to describe the immaturity and inexperience of a teenage Solomon are the same words used of a forty-one year old Rehoboam! Rehoboam was a forty-one year old boy. The spoiled, pampered, selfish son of Solomon, had grown old, but had never grown up.

Now, go back to I Kings, chapter 12, and I will point out where this is made clear. Solomon has just

died and Rehoboam had assumed the throne. Look at verse 1.

Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king.

Skip to verse 4, where Jeroboam serves as the people's spokesman.

Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.

Skip to verses 6 through 8.

King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer this people?" Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their petition, . . ."

(that is, lower the unbearable taxes and lessen the forced labor demands),

“. . . then they will be your servants forever." BUT he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him . . .

"Ha! That's it!"

If you look in enough places for advice, you will eventually find someone who agrees with you. Now Solomon has hardly been in his grave for a day, and notice the way his son allows these young, spoiled counselors to direct him. Look at the last part of verse 10.

. . . But you shall speak to them, "My little finger is thicker than my father's loins!"

In other words, "If you think Solomon, my father, was great; if you think he was wise, I've got more in my little finger than my father had in his entire body."

Can you imagine such audacity?! Notice verses 13 and 14.

The king answered the people harshly, for he forsook the advice of the elders which they had given him, and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; . . ."

(that is, "I'll increase your taxes and labor."),

**“. . . my father disciplined you with whips,
but I will discipline you with scorpions.”**

(that is, a cat of nine tails).

Talk about a ruler who is completely out of step! He is selfish and immature; plastic. I can just see the elders shaking their heads in dismay. Now notice the tragic words of verse 16.

When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, “What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; . . .”

(that is similar to saying, “Listen, with the way we’re being treated, who cares if we are related to David; what good does it do us?”),

. . . to your tents, O Israel! Now look after your own house, David!” So Israel departed to their tents.

In other words, “Rehoboam, you’re on your own.”

Now, at this point, the unified kingdom experiences something it has not experienced for nearly one hundred fifty years; that is, civil war; brother against brother. There is a principle in this, *Defiance against God develops into personal division and painful differences between people.*

II Chronicles, chapter 10, informs us that Rehoboam will send a man to gather the labor crews, as if nothing has happened, and the northern tribesmen will stone that man to death. Rehoboam does not have a clue how to lead the people. He is an imitation arrow sent into battle!

With that act of bloodshed, the nations rift is settled in concrete and the nation will live in a state of civil unrest and separation for the next four hundred years!

Defiance against God creates an incredible waste – a waste of years; a waste of hopes; a waste of potential; defiance always destroys.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 8/6/1995 by Stephen Davey.

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