

You Have Abandoned Your First Love

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[0 : 00] Well, we are going to turn now to our Bibles, and we've got the last evening for a little while with Phil Copeland looking at 1 Kings. And we come this evening to 1 Kings chapter 11.

1 Kings 11, and it's a long chapter, but I'm going to read to the end. And last week we read of the visit of the Queen of Sheba, the Queen from the south, come to learn and to see the wisdom of Solomon, which was famous in all the world.

And she was astonished with the wealth, with the wisdom, with all that she saw in the glory of Solomon's kingdom. But chapter 11 tells something of a different story.

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh. Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women.

From the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither they with you. For surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.

[1 : 20] Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines.

And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Amorites. So Solomon did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

And he did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab.

And for Moloch, the abomination of the Ammonites. On the mountain, east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives. He made offerings and sacrifice to their gods.

[2 : 26] And the Lord was angry with Solomon. Because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. And therefore the Lord said to Solomon, Since this has been your practice, and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.

Yet for the sake of David your father, I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant, and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.

And the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal house of Edom. For when David was in Edom, and Job, the commander of the army, went up to bury the slain, he struck down every male in Edom.

For Job and all Israel remained there for six months, until he cut off every male in Edom. But Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain Edomites of his father's servants, Habad still being a little child.

[3 : 52] They set out from Midian, and came to Paran, and took men with them from Paran, and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who gave him a house, and assigned to him an allowance of food, and gave him land. And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage.

The sister of his own wife, the sister of Tافanes, bore him Genubath, his son, whom Tافanes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh.

But when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Job, the commander of the army, was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, let me go to my own country.

But Pharaoh said to him, What have you liked with me, that you're now seeking to go to your own country? And he said to him, Only let me depart. God also raised up as an adversary to him, And Rezon, the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his master, Hadazar, the king of Zobah.

And he gathered men about him, and became leader of a marauding band, after the killing of David. And they went to Damascus, and lived there, and made him king in Damascus.

[5 : 00] And he was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing harm as Hadad did. And he loathed Israel, and reigned over Syria. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, he also lifted up his hand against the king.

And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built the millow, and closed up the breach of the city of David, his father. The man Jeroboam was very able.

And when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, found him on the road.

Now, Ahijah had dressed himself in a new garment. The two of them were alone in the open country. Then, Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and he tore it into twelve pieces.

And he said to Jeroboam, Take for yourself ten pieces. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes.

[6 : 13] But he shall have one tribe for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen, out of all the tribes of Israel. Because they have forsaken me, and worshipped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Chemosh, the god of Moab, and Milcom, the god of the Ammonites.

And they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight, and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did. Nevertheless, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes.

But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it to you, ten tribes. Yet to his son, I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name.

And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes, by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I'll be with you, and will build you a house, as I built for David.

And I will give Israel to you, and I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever. Solomon sought, therefore, to kill Jeroboam.

[7 : 48] But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak, king of Egypt. And he was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and all his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, was 40 years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David, his father.

And Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his place. Amen. May God bless to us. His word.

Please do turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings 11. Well, last Sunday evening, if you were here, we were truly dazzled by the author of 1 Kings, as he took us for one final tour of King Solomon's kingdom during the glory days of ancient Israel.

It was breathtaking. Truly breathtaking. Remember, King Solomon was the wisest man on earth at that time, because the Lord God had graciously given him wisdom.

[9 : 17] And under his reign, as Solomon walked by the obedience of faith, as he exercised his wisdom, the kingdom flourished. And friends, for the briefest of moments in the grand scheme of history, Israel was the shining light to the nations that it was redeemed to be.

Israel really did reflect the beauty, the loveliness, the goodness of the Lord out into the lost world. And as a result, it was like a magnet for God's chosen people.

Many people were drawn to the kingdom to come and inquire of the Lord and his king. And one of them was the Queen of Sheba, as we saw at the start of chapter 10. And when she witnessed Solomon's wisdom, and when she saw all of the fruits of his wisdom, the temple built for the name of the Lord, it took her breath away.

She was speechless. And when she got her voice back, her breath back, she praised the Lord, this Gentile by birth, praised the Lord and paid homage to King Solomon.

And after her visit was over, remember, we left her, she was marching back home back to her homeland. And I'm in no doubt that she was telling everyone about what she'd witnessed.

[10 : 35] Well, friends, as I said last Sunday, this breathtaking kingdom, it was truly prophetic. That is, Solomon's kingdom was a foregleam of the greater and more glorious kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A kingdom which he inaugurated, he brought in through his death and resurrection and his first coming. and a kingdom which one day he will bring in in all its fullness on the earth.

And on that day, people from all nations will flock towards the Lord's place to pay homage to the Lord's King and to praise him. In summary, 1 Kings 10 gave us an immense high.

1 Kings 11 will give us immense heartache. Let's look at this chapter under three headings. Firstly, we see a tragic turning, a tragic turning, verses 1 to 8.

Now, if you've been here throughout the past six weeks now, then as we've made our way through this first section of the book of 1 Kings, we have noted again and again that on the whole, Solomon has been a really faithful king who really did love the Lord and reigned well.

[11 : 55] But on more than one occasion, we've also seen Solomon acting in ambiguous ways. And in fact, there have been moments where Solomon seems to be making dangerous compromises in his walk with the Lord.

For example, remember the way in which he amassed so much military power. Chariots and chariots and horses and horses and horsemen and horsemen. Thousands of them.

And Deuteronomy 17 warned Israelite kings, don't do that. Why? Well, because Israel and the king might be tempted to trust in their own military strength instead of in the Lord alone.

And that was actually a mark of the pagan nations round about Israel at that time. They all worshipped their own strength. Solomon also did the same with amassing miles and, sorry, not miles, what am I trying to say?

Stacks and stacks of gold. Gold, gold, gold, gold, gold. Now some of it he did use for the kingdom and made it glorious. But there are also texts that seem to suggest he was lying in his own account.

[12 : 59] And again, Deuteronomy 17 warned kings from doing that. But Solomon ignores God's law and seems to just go his own way.

And over the past few Sundays as we've seen these little details in the text, it's made us really nervous, really nervous about the future of his kingdom. However, it turns out that none of those things were what brought Solomon's downfall.

His downfall was not weaponry or wealth. His downfall was women. Please look at verse 1. But King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women.

Solomon has made a massive compromise when it came to obeying the law on marriage. As verse 2 says, the Lord had clearly said to his people, do not marry women from these foreign nations.

Don't marry someone, in other words, who is outside of the church, someone who is not a believer, someone who worships other gods. Do not do it. Solomon has completely ignored that and it wasn't just a once-off.

[14 : 22] He didn't do it once. Just have a look at verse 3. He did this hundreds of times. He had 700 foreign wives, 300 concubines.

Now just remember when this all started in his youth, back in chapter 3, in the early days of his reign when he chose to marry Pharaoh's daughter. The decision he made as a young man really set him on this trajectory for the rest of his life.

We haven't been told about it up until now in the narrative, but it is clear that this is what's been going on all the way through behind the scenes. He's been marrying more and more women like Pharaoh's daughter, perhaps even worse than Pharaoh's daughter.

And no doubt marrying all these women from all these nations it would have been a good political and diplomatic move, but in reality this was spiritually dangerous. Why? Well just look at what the Lord says in verse 2.

The Lord says, don't marry women from these nations for surely they will turn your heart away after other gods, after their gods. tragically that is precisely what happens to the king.

[15 : 38] Verse 2, he clung to these women. He loved them. Verse 3, they turned his heart away from the Lord. And friends, remember when the Bible speaks about the heart it's not referring to what we usually mean by the heart in our culture today when we speak about that word.

Today in our culture the heart is usually seen as describing if you like the seat of human emotions within a person. That's not how the Bible uses the word heart.

When the Bible speaks about the seat of our emotions by the way it usually refers to our bowels. That's the seat of our emotions or our kidneys according to the Bible. In the Bible actually the heart is what probably we would associate more today as the mind.

It is the control room of your entire being. The willing, loving, thinking center of a person. And it is this heart within Solomon that these foreign wives have turned away from the Lord to love false gods.

And that is repeated again and again and again throughout verses 1-9. That is the dominant thing. And why that repetition? Well, I think what's been shown here is that this heart turning it is actually presented as being more serious than Solomon's decision to marry all these women.

[16 : 59] That was serious. But the greater tragedy, the greater evil in these verses is Solomon turning his heart away from the Lord, forsaking the Lord.

So that, as verse 4 says, his heart was divided. His heart was not wholly true to the Lord God as was the heart of David his father.

Listen to Bob File on that little detail about David. Bob says this, In the depths of Solomon's being there was a fatal weakness. He was capable of great affection and real devotion, but his heart was not fully committed to the Lord.

David his father had sinned in technicolor when he was king. But David's repentance was as equally spectacular as his sin.

See Psalm 51. David wandered never from his first love, never from the Lord, however much his affections for people might have strayed.

[18 : 04] Well, in verses 5 to 8, I think what we've got in verse 5 to 8 are some of the saddest, most pitiful verses that you might read in Scripture. And please, I'm not being funny here.

I've said this a few times. I'm not being funny. Notice that they're structured like a sandwich. Verse 5 is like a bit of bread and then verse 7 and 9 is like another bit of bread and verse 6 in the middle is the central filling.

And in these bits of bread in verse 5 and in verse 7 to 9, there are two horrible, short accounts of Solomon running around, desperately trying to please his wives, trying to accommodate and pursue these wicked, false gods that they've introduced him to.

That's what he's... Verse 5 seems to say that Solomon actually participated in the pagan worship. And in verse 7 to 9, what we see is that the king who once built a temple for the name of the Lord, he is long gone.

What is he doing now? He's running around, setting up high places as worship centers for all of these gods, all of these things that the Lord said, these are abominations.

[19 : 13] Ashtaroath, Milcom, Chemosh, Molech, you worship these false gods by carrying out grotesque evil.

Grotesque evil. Some of these gods, you worship them by taking your own little child and burning it alive. And look at verse 6, the filling in the sandwich.

We are given the author's clear verdict in Solomon's behavior. Verse 6, Solomon did what was evil. In the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord as David his father had done.

Friends, this is truly frightening. It should be truly frightening for all professing believers today. If this could happen to the Lord's wisest king of the ancient world, then it could easily happen to any one of us.

this is the man who, under the power of the Holy Spirit, wrote Proverbs, a book that's full of warnings to the people of God to keep away from forbidden relationships precisely because it will lead to folly and spiritual ruin.

[20 : 26] In fact, just listen to this. This is from Proverbs 4. This is where King Solomon is writing to his son. Listen to what he says. And when you read it alongside 1 Kings 11, it is tragic.

Solomon said to his son, keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life. There came a point in Solomon's life where he absolutely turned his back on the things he taught his son.

And if this can happen to Solomon, this can happen to any one of us today. Don't turn to it, but way back in chapter 3, verse 3, the text wonderfully says that the young Solomon loved the Lord.

3, verse 3, he loved the Lord. But by the time we get to 11, chapter 11, verses 1 and 2, we're told Solomon lost his first love. In other words, gradually, slowly but surely, little by little, King Solomon, as he lived out his days, made more and more compromises in his obedience to the Lord's Word.

It began in his youth, it went on unchecked and unrepented of in the middle of his life. so that by the time that he was old, that was the day that he turned.

[21 : 50] Notice that, please. Look at verse 4. For when Solomon was young, mid-lit, no, when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away.

Let me just try and drive this home to different age ranges in the church. If you're young, and what I mean by young is anyone in their teens up to their maybe mid-twenties, if you are young, please be warned by King Solomon.

Do not compromise when it comes to walking obediently to the Word of the Lord. Don't pick and mix which bits of God's Word you're going to obey and which bits you're going to disregard.

For the decisions you make in your youth, they really can, will and do, have massive ramifications for later in life, for the years ahead.

And if you're young, just think about, for a second, about someone much older than you in the church. Someone who is a godly, older Christian. Someone who's been walking in the way of faith for years.

[22 : 59] Just picture them in your mind for a minute, silently. The reason that person is that way, the reason that they are like that in their senior years, is because when they were your age, they decided to guard their hearts with the Word of God and by the power of the Spirit.

And they didn't compromise when it came to obeying Jesus. So my young friends, if there is anything in your life happening now that you know should not be, anything that might cause you to drift away from the Lord in the years ahead, 1 Kings 11 pleads with you to repent.

Let me just think specifically, those of you who are students, those of you who are maybe in your 20s, maybe even those of you in midlife, let me say this to you. It may be that you're here this evening and you are utterly desperate not to be single.

Maybe that you're here in your life and you're so determined to settle down with someone that you've gone to such desperate measures as dating someone who is not a believer, someone who does not love Jesus and know Him, the one true God.

If that is you, 1 Kings pleads with you to repent, to call it off immediately. The same thing goes for you, by the way, if you're in midlife and that's what you've done.

[24 : 19] Repent of any compromises you may have made in your walk with the Lord for it will haunt you in the years ahead. Or maybe you're here and you are in your senior years.

Maybe you've been a professing Christian for decades and let's just define senior years as probably 60 upwards. I hope that doesn't offend you, but it's a fact.

The average life, isn't it, is about 70 years old. So I don't think that's unreasonable. If you're 60 upwards, you are in your senior years. If you're in your 50s, you're not far off it.

Friends, you are especially in need of remembering verse 4. For you are at the stage of life when Solomon turned away.

Do you know, if you were to ask anyone in the Western church today, the Western Evangelical Church, at what stage of life is the Christian life its hardest? I reckon most of you would reply, or most people would reply, well, the youth, teens to 20s.

[25 : 29] Well, 1 Kings says, that is wrong. That is wrong. Actually, the life of faith is a battle and a struggle in all ages, but it's especially hard when you are nearing the end.

In the Christian life, it is hard to finish well, says 1 Kings 11. So, Sean Church family, whatever age and stage we are at in the Christian life, let's let 1 Kings 11 sober us.

It's sobering. Let's be asking these questions and these are really questions that Dale Ralph Davis wrote in his excellent commentary on 1 Kings. He says this, we must ask ourselves, where are my affections?

And if I've been a Christian for a while, has there been a drift in my affections over the years? Am I headed for tragedy because in my heart I have left my first love, the Lord Jesus.

That's the first point this evening. We see a tragic turning. Well, secondly, we see just judgment, just judgment. And that is really what verse 9 to 41 is all about.

[26 : 40] That's the main tune, if you like, of those verses. I warn you, it does make for grim reading, but, friends, there is marvelous hope here, even in this dark passage, which we'll look at in our third and final point.

But before then, let's look at the just judgment. Please look at verse 9. And the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods.

But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. Friends, scripture is clear. The Lord, the Lord, our God, he is a jealous God. He wants the hearts of his people to love him undividedly.

He doesn't want to share us with any other. That's what verse 9 tells us. There is absolutely nothing wrong with God's jealousy. This is a type of good and righteous jealousy, the type we might find in any decent husband, should he find out that his spouse has been cheating on him.

Because he doesn't want to share his wife with anyone else. And so it is with the Lord, he desires the fidelity of our hearts. In other words, the Lord is not a pluralist.

[28 : 00] That is why he's angry with Solomon. Despite all of the grace he's shown Solomon, despite all of the privileges Solomon has received, the fact that the Lord actually appeared to him in person twice and commanded Solomon not to do this, Solomon decided to stretch his liturgical wings and go off to worship some other gods alongside the Lord.

So in verse 11, the Lord announces just judgment in the form of covenant curse. He brings covenant curse upon his king.

Please look at verse 11. Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.

So friends, here the Lord has actually been absolutely true and faithful to his covenant promises that he made back with David in 2 Samuel 7. When the Lord promised, you remember that there's a great promise of salvation that one of David's descendants will sit on the throne over the kingdom forever.

But in that covenant the Lord also said that should any of David's sons commit iniquity then, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.

[29 : 23] Excuse me. And that is what the Lord announces in verse 11. He says to Solomon, I'm going to take the kingdom from you and I'm going to rip it away from the house of David.

But, verse 12, notice, for the sake of David, this tearing of the kingdom won't happen in your day, Solomon. And verse 13, neither will the entire kingdom be torn away from the house of David.

But at some point in the future, this will happen. This will come upon David's line. In other words, Solomon's divided heart will lead to a divided kingdom.

Solomon will be actually the last Old Testament king to rule over a united Israel. people. And friends, this really prepares us for what's going to happen in the next major section of the book, which God willing, maybe perhaps next year, I'm hoping that we might return to and preach through it.

But from chapters 12 onwards, we're going to see that God's people are torn apart. They're divided into ten tribes in the north who will go by the name of Israel, and the others in the south will be called Judah.

[30 : 36] And it's over this southern kingdom that the house of David will continue to reign. And friends, this division, it will only ever bring spiritual disaster and misery.

And ancient Israel will never again be the light to the nations that it should have been. But that is not the only covenant curse that the Lord brings on Solomon.

And we don't have time to look at absolutely every single detail here, but I'm hoping to just skim through it really quickly. In verse 14 to 40, the Lord, what he does is, he takes away rest from Solomon.

Remember earlier in the book, we saw that the Lord gave Solomon rest on every side. That is, there were no military threats or enemies on the scene to cause Solomon's kingdom any trouble.

There was a few back in chapter 2, but Solomon dealt with them speedily, and the kingdom was established. And from that point on, it was just peace on every side. It was a great covenant blessing.

[31 : 36] Solomon's reign was a time of rest by God's grace. Well, in chapter 11, the Lord withdraws that, and he does that by raising up these adversaries against Solomon.

Please look at verse 14. The Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. Then look at verse 23.

God also raised up as an adversary to Solomon, Rezon, son of Eliada. And although the same detail isn't repeated when it comes to Jeroboam, whom we meet in verse 26, the rest of the chapter is abundantly clear that the Lord has also raised up this man Jeroboam as another adversary against Solomon.

Let's just look at the first two adversaries, and then we'll look at Jeroboam. The first two adversaries that we read out there, they're both enemies from outside of the covenant people.

In verse 14 to 22, we meet Hadad the Edomite, and he had a long-standing grudge against Israel and the house of David, because when Hadad was a little boy, David defeated his home nation of Edom.

[32 : 53] And if you can read about it in 2 Samuel 8, one of David's commanders, Joab, he goes somewhat rogue, and he carries out an unsanctioned massacre of Edomites.

That is what verse 16 is referring to. And in verse 17, we're told that Hadad, when he was a little boy, when all that massacre was happening, he managed to escape, and he fled down to seek refuge in Egypt, where he grew and grew and grew and developed until the time when the Lord raised him up to go and face Solomon.

And just think about that. That actually would have been deeply humiliating for Solomon. Why? Well, I take it one of the reasons why he married Pharaoh's daughter was so he would nullify any threat from Egypt upon Israel.

Well, here the Lord has sovereignly been working behind the scenes to prepare a punisher, an adversary for Solomon at the right time. Be humbling to this king that he is not in control.

Then in verse 23 and 25, we meet Rezon. He's also got history with Israel, and again you can read about this in 2 Samuel 8. David waged war on Rezon's homeland of Syria.

[34 : 11] Specifically, David sacked the key city of Damascus. And the text tells us that the Lord gave David victory over it. And in response to this invasion, Rezon, at the time, he set up his own band of thugs, violent thugs, who then took over ruling Syria.

Now, they hadn't been a problem to Israel for years, but now things will be different. God gave David victory over Syria.

It's not the case anymore. In fact, Syria, the king of Syria, we're told, he does great harm to Solomon and his kingdom in his latter years.

And friends, also if you know your Bible, if you know the rest of the Old Testament, you'll know that Edom and Syria together in the years ahead, they will continue to be major thorns in Israel's side for years to come.

And it's all part of God's sovereign, just judgment. Because Solomon turned his heart away. The third enemy mentioned there is Jeroboam.

[35 : 18] He's raised up by the Lord, but this time from within the covenant people. And in verse 26 to 28, we're told that he was a very hard working chap, very capable man, a great leader.

He oversaw one of the forced labor teams who carried out lots of the building work for Solomon. And in verse 29, just out of the blue, out of nowhere, we are told about the Lord coming with his word to Jeroboam via the prophet Ahijah.

And when they meet in verse 29, it's just the two of them standing in the road. There's nobody there. They're all gone. Everyone's gone. It's just them. And Ahijah, he takes off his jacket that he's wearing and he rips it.

He rips it to pieces. Twelve pieces precisely. Twelve pieces that symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. And he takes ten of them and he gives them to Jeroboam.

And really what Ahijah's doing here is he is enacting prophecy here. What the sovereign Lord is going to do in the future. This is where we find out about that terrible tearing that will happen in the next major bit of the book.

[36 : 33] As Ahijah says in verse 31 to 32, the Lord is going to rip these ten tribes away from Solomon's son and you, Jeroboam, will rule over them instead.

And the house of David will be left to rule a small part of the kingdom. And again, just run your eye over verse 33. Look at verse 33.

The Lord states plainly and clearly that this is just judgment. It is a serious business to turn your heart away from the Lord.

It has all happened because of Solomon forsaking his first love. And just look what the Lord says to Jeroboam in verse 37 to 38. Let me read verse 37 to 38.

The Lord says, and I will take you, Jeroboam, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires and you shall be king over Israel. And if you will listen to all that I command you and will walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house as I built for David.

[37 : 46] And I will give Israel to you and I will afflict the offspring of David because of this. The Lord promises to raise up Jeroboam, you see, to be a rival king to the house of David in order to afflict and discipline the offspring of the line of David.

And the Lord says, it's astounding. The Lord says, Jeroboam, if you walk by the obedience of faith, if you behave like David, then you will have an established reign. But friends, and again, God willing, we will discover this if we carry on preaching through this book of Kings.

We are going to discover Jeroboam will be a dreadful king. In fact, he will be the archetypal apostate king who will lead the northern kingdom deeper and deeper into sin.

And many future bad kings in the future of the nation of Israel, they will be compared to Jeroboam. This little phrase will come up again and again. This king walked in the evil ways of Jeroboam.

Well, in summary of all that we've seen there from verse 14 to 40, we see just judgment, covenant curses, the tainting of the kingdom, raising up of enemies to plague Solomon's line and Israel for the years ahead.

[39 : 10] And it's all because of the tragic turning. Well, friends, so what? How do we apply these verses to our lives today? Well, as the true Israel of God in Christ, again, I do think these verses should be a sobering warning to us.

Friends, the Lord still deals with us covenantally today, his people. Please do not think for one second that because we live this side of the cross, the Lord will put up with people flagrantly turning away from him and his church.

As our God remains a jealous God, he will not share us with any other. And the rest of the Bible is clear about this. Because he loves us, because he loves his flock and his people, often the Lord can and does raise up enemies of the church in order to draw us back to himself in repentance and faith.

Just listen to David Jackman on this point. This is what David Jackman says. Suppose for a moment we are part of a church that is under judgment because of its rebellion.

Would it then be inconceivable that God would use the greatest enemies of the gospel, false religion, pagan immorality, powerful commercial or media forces to overrun his people in order to humble us and to bring us truly to our knees?

[40 : 40] Might it not be that the disappointments and the difficulties that we face, which we call our enemies, are in God's hands his agents to deepen and ultimately to renew our faith?

Painfully though it might be at the time. Could it be so? Is God's hand really in all these things, all the time, even when things seem worse than better?

Now friends, of course, myself and David Jackman, we are not saying that every time a church suffers it's because it's under discipline or that it's suffering as a direct result of unfaithfulness.

No, no, no, no, no. The Bible gives lots of carefully nuanced reasons as to why the church suffers. Sometimes the church suffers because it is faithful. It is being a great witness in the world.

But as we listen to 1 Kings 11, we must see that clearly this is one way that the Lord operates. Don't be surprised if he raises up enemies against us to keep us from turning away to turn us back.

[41 : 49] We must take it seriously. Well friends, very, very briefly, let's notice a third thing from 1 Kings 11. We've seen a tragic turning.

We've seen just judgment. Lastly, we see great grace. Even in this dreadful chapter, and amongst all of the just judgment, all of the covenant curses that are announced, we still see the grace of God, that is his undeserved kindness, shining out and giving hope.

Let's just look back again at verse 12 to 13. Remember that the Lord has just told Solomon that he will tear the kingdom away from the house of David. But then the Lord says, verse 12, Yet for the sake of your father David, I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.

And then please forgive me for jumping about, but please look on to verse 39. This is what the Lord said to Jeroboam again. And if you were listening carefully, you would have seen that I missed this out earlier.

[43 : 07] Verse 39, the Lord says, I will afflict the offspring of David because of this. That is what Solomon has done. But not forever. You see those lovely three words there?

But not forever. You see what the Lord is saying? And there's loads of other instances of this running through the chapter. You can read it later. The Lord is saying, yes, I will discipline the house of David.

And yes, I will tear the majority of the kingdom away for the house of David, but not all of it. And it will not last forever. For the sake of my servant David, the time spent under these covenant curses will be temporary.

So yes, the coming days, they will be a time of affliction, but not abandonment. Yes, they will be a time of discipline, but not of divorce.

Friends, the Lord is being so gracious here. And really, the Lord is declaring that his great covenant promise of salvation and rescue, his promise to establish his perfect kingdom forever on earth through his greater son of David, it hasn't been cancelled due to Solomon's failure.

[44 : 19] It is still on by God's grace alone. And as those today who have a full and finished Bible, we have the great privilege of seeing and knowing how the Lord's gracious words to Solomon here played out throughout all the centuries, all the years ahead.

The Lord never utterly abandoned David's line, even through the horror of the exile that we read about at the end of 2 Kings. Even through those days when things seem to be at the very bleakest and David's line seemed to be disappear.

Lord never abandoned his covenant promises until the day when one greater than Solomon appeared. And where Solomon failed, where all the other sons of David failed, this son didn't fail.

And through his perfect obedience and undivided heart to his father, he established the kingdom and secured our blessings of salvation for all eternity, completely by God's grace.

Friends, as we listen to the gracious words of God in 1 Kings 11, there are really yet another, another reminder to us from Scripture that no mere human king could ever save us.

[45 : 40] Solomon could never save us. Our hope is found only in the one born, the God-man. Our hope is found in Christ alone.

Amen. Let's be quiet for a moment. Maybe take some time to respond to the word of God in your own heart. And then I'll pray for us. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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Amen. Amen. Amen. Our gracious heavenly father, we know that in our hearts, we are prone to wander, prone to leave you, the God that we love.

So father, please take our hearts, take and seal them for thy courts above. We thank you for the one greater than Solomon.

[46 : 48] And we pray that by the power of his Spirit who lives in us, we would all be seeking to reject the things which call out to us, all of the voices that we hear in the world, tempting us to turn our hearts away from you.

Father, with great fear and with great trembling, we pray that you would sovereignly guard us and that you would use all things, even our enemies, as means of grace in order to keep us trusting you, to keep us from drifting away from you.

We pray all this in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen.