



[1 Kings 3:5-10](#)

(5) At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." (6) Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. (7) "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. (8) Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. (9) So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (10) The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.

New International Version

Did anyone ever have such a good start as Solomon? Perhaps the outstanding thing was his attitude when he asked this of [God](#). Commentators feel that he was somewhere around twenty years old when this occurred. His youthfulness shows in what he felt about himself in relation to what had become his responsibility. He says, "I am a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in." In other words, "I don't know how to conduct the affairs of office. I feel that I am not adequate to do the job that has been given to me."

He began with such promise, and maybe most of all was that wonderful attitude. It was childlike. He was humble, willing to listen, willing to be admonished and commanded by God. This is why God responded as He did.

[Jesus Christ](#) said, "To whom much is given, from him much will be required." Very few have ever been given as much as Solomon had. So, he is an excellent study case of one who neglected his gifts in favor of something of lesser value. The cause of his fall is here summarized in [1 Kings 11:1-10](#).

Solomon had very special evidence of God's love. There are four examples of this:

1. He was chosen king contrary to the normal custom. He was hand-picked to do the job. Had the normal custom been followed, Adonijah would have been made king, but it fell to Solomon instead. Of course, God is the one who sets kings up and puts them down, and He chose Solomon to succeed David.
2. He was given a change of name. Just like Abram's name was changed to Abraham, Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and Saul's name was changed to Paul, people who went through unusual experiences sometimes receive a name change to reflect the change that had occurred in their lives. Solomon's name was "Jedidiah," which means "beloved of the LOORD." His name was a special assignment to him—someone that God really smiled upon.
3. He received every benefit imaginable: understanding, wisdom, wealth, and power. Of course, the Bible indicates that these things flowed from God—for his benefit and the nation's.
4. Twice he was visited by God—for encouragement and admonishment.

In addition, he had clear evidence of God's power working directly for him. Solomon was put on the throne in the face of the entrenched political power of the day, represented by Adonijah and particularly Joab. When David died, the most influential person in the nation was not a member of David's immediate family. It was Joab. In the face of Joab's support of Adonijah, however, Solomon still became king. Obviously, God manipulated things to put him on the throne.

He was also granted unparalleled, unchallenged power and prestige as a king. People came from all the nations to admire Solomon, his wisdom, his building projects, and his wealth. All these visitors gave all the credit to Solomon. In reality, the Bible shows that God's power was working on Solomon's behalf to produce these things.

He was given success in all of his endeavors beyond what anyone could normally expect. Whether it was in botany, biology, building projects, wine, women, and song, Solomon hit the top of the charts in everything he did.

But Solomon also had a problem. He was distracted by his interest in women. He was a great man, but he had feet of clay and succumbed to idolatry. Now, this did not happen overnight but by degrees. He never openly renounced God, but neither was he ever very devoted either.

It is reminiscent of II Thessalonians 2 and the man of [sin](#). Apostasy is taking place, and God says that He was going to allow delusion to come upon people, a "blindness" to

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occur. A similar thing happened to Solomon. When we add what is taught in II Thessalonians, we find that the blindness is, in reality, self-imposed.

God did not make Solomon blind, and He will not make the people spoken of in II Thessalonians 2 blind either. But, because of their behavior, neither will He stop their progression towards it. It is not that the people utterly refuse to accept truth—just as Solomon never renounced God. The problem is that they do not love it!

The problem is one of dedication. What was Solomon dedicated to? He was not dedicated to God for very long after his good beginning. He was dedicated to his projects—to building Jerusalem, the Temple, his home, botanical gardens—things that only expanded his overwhelming vanity.

He ignored the laws God gave for kings ([Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)), and that was sin. Unfortunately, unlike David, Solomon did not have the spiritual resources to recover from what he did. David recovered when he sinned because he had a relationship with God. Even though he sinned, he would bounce back from it in repentance.

[I Kings 11:4](#) says that Solomon "clung to" his wives. Normally, that would be good. A man should cling or cleave to his wife. Solomon, though, cleaved to the wrong women, and his attachment to them led him astray. As he tolerated their worship of other gods right in his home, his resistance wore down, and he became increasingly vulnerable. Before long, he was participating in the worship of their gods. Once he was accustomed to it, it wore away his loyalty as each compromise made the next step easier. His vanity deceived him into feeling that his strength and resolve were so great that he would not fall. But he did, and he paid a bitter price.

One of the deceptive aspects to what Solomon did is something that any of us could fall prey to. It does not have to be foreign women or something like an all-consuming hobby. Religion, however, especially entrapped him through his wives.

Virtually every religion uses similar terminology. Every Christian sect uses the terms "born again," "salvation," "saved," and "redemption." We could add "justification," "mercy," "[kindness](#)," "forgiveness," and "grace." All Western religions (and maybe now even some of these New Age religions) share some of the same terminology, but the theology behind the terms is radically different.

In Solomon's day, the religions of Ashtoreth, Molech, Baal, Chemosh, and the other false gods used terminology very similar to what was being used in Israel, but the theology was vastly different. This is what trapped Solomon. Once a comfortable

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syncretism is accepted, God is gradually neglected and idolatry is adopted. Thomas Jefferson is credited with saying, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." This is just as true in regard to religion as it is to civil liberty under a government.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Fourth Commandment \(Part 5\)](#)



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