



What happened before?

David was a great king, but his children caused him much grief. The first born son of David and Bathsheba died. One son, Amnon, treated David's daughter very badly and because of this he was killed by another son of David, Absalom.

Absalom later tried to kill his father, David, and take his throne. David was forced to flee from Jerusalem. The army of David fought the army of Absalom and Absalom was killed. David kept his kingdom, but he lost Absalom, his son.

BIBLE STORY:

King David was growing old. God had promised that Solomon would take David's place as king after David died. However, Adonijah, another son of David had other plans. He planned to take his father's throne away from him.

When Adonijah thought the time was right, he prepared a great feast for his friends. At the feast he was going to declare that he was king. He invited many people to the feast. However, he only invited those who supported him and did not invite those who remained loyal to his father. The people at the feast ate and drank and proclaimed "God save King Adonijah."

Nathan, the prophet, found out what Adonijah was doing. He went to Bathsheba, David's wife, and told her what was happening. Then they went to David and told him. Earlier, God had told David he would have a son named Solomon who would reign after him and who would build the temple. (1 Chronicles 22:9) Adonijah, in trying to make himself king, was going against the plan of God.

When David heard that Adonijah was trying to make himself king, he called for the priest, Zadok and told him to go immediately to Gihon and anoint Solomon as king of Israel. Zadok took Nathan and the captain of Saul's army, Benaiah with him. Zadok, the priest, anointed Solomon. They blew the trumpet and all the people shouted, "God save King Solomon."

The people who were at Adonijah's feast heard the trumpet and the loud uproar and became frightened. When they realized that Solomon had been made king, they knew they were in trouble. Adonijah also was afraid and ran and grabbed hold of the horns on the altar. This was a sign that he was begging for mercy. He knew he had done wrong and

wanted Solomon to be merciful to him and not kill him. Solomon promised not to harm Adonijah as long as he did no evil, but warned him that he would die if he did evil things.

David had reigned over Israel for forty years. He had reigned seven years at Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. As David was about to die, he sent for Solomon and reminded him to always keep the laws of God. Then David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David.

Soon after he became king, Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to the Lord. That night, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him "I will give you anything you ask for." Solomon could have asked for riches, fame or possessions, but he did not.

Solomon knew that as king he would have to judge the people and settle disputes between them. Solomon replied to God, "I am still young and have no experience of how to rule. Therefore, I ask you to give me wisdom so that I might rule my people well."

God was pleased with Solomon's request and he said, "Since you did not ask for wealth or selfish things, I will grant your wish. In addition, I will give you what you did not ask for. I will give you riches and glory, so that no other king will be like you. And if you obey Me as your father did, I will give you long life also."

Soon Solomon was given a chance to put his wisdom to test. Two women came to him and one of them said, "Sir, we live in the same house and each of us had a baby. One night she rolled over her baby and smothered him, then she came and took my baby which was alive and left me her baby who was dead." The other woman interrupted and said, "No, that is not true, my boy is the living one, it is yours that is dead." And the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'"

Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other." Then the boy's real mother cried and said, "O my lord, give her the living child, please don't kill him!" But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him."

When he saw the reactions of the women, Solomon announced, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother." Solomon never intended to kill the baby, but he was wise enough to know that a real mother would rather give up her baby than to have it killed. Solomon had the wisdom of God and news of his wisdom quickly spread abroad.

The children of Israel worshiped God in a tent called the tabernacle

for many years. David had wanted to build a house for God, but God said he could not build it. “You are a man of war,” He said. “Your son will build Me a house.”

Solomon had been king for four years. Things were going well with him and His kingdom was at peace. He decided it was time to build the temple. Although David had drawn up the plans and had gathered huge amounts of material to be used, there was much to do.

Solomon spared no expense in building the temple. He used only the best materials to go into the building of this house and the best craftsmen to do the work. Hiram, the king of Tyre had always loved David and when Solomon asked him to provide the cedar and stone for the temple, he was happy to do so.

Cedar and cypress trees were cut to size and huge stones were cut and taken to the construction site where they were fitted perfectly in place. When the temple was being built, there was no sound of an ax, hammer or chisel heard in the temple. Many thousands of men worked seven years in building the temple. When it was completed, it was the finest and most magnificent and beautiful structure on earth.

The building itself was 90 feet long by 30 feet wide by 45 feet tall. Much of it was covered with gold and it was decorated with valuable stones. The walls of the temple were covered with cedar and the floor with fir so that no stone was seen. The Most Holy Place was overlaid with pure gold at an estimated cost of \$600,000,000.

The temple was arranged like the tabernacle except it was two times as big as the tabernacle. The furnishings in the temple were the same as had been in the tabernacle. The golden lampstand, the altar of incense and the table of showbread were placed in the first room—the Holy Place. In the second part of the temple—the Most Holy Place—Solomon placed two huge cherubim made of olivewood overlaid with gold, 15 feet high. (I Kings 6:23-27). The Ark of the Covenant, containing the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written, rested under the wings of the cherubim.

When the priest who carried in the Ark of the Covenant came out of the Most Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord. The cloud was the glory of the Lord.

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon stood before the altar of burnt offering in the presence of the people. He praised God for keeping His promise He made to David that his son would build the temple. Then he offered a prayer to God. In his prayer, Solomon declared that there was no other God like the true God and that He knows all things. Solomon also declared that man could not make a house that could contain God because even the highest heavens cannot contain Him. But Solomon asked God to look down and listen when the people came to the

temple to pray and to forgive them when they repented. After his prayer, Solomon offered thousands of offerings to the Lord.

God promised Solomon that if he would walk in His ways with an honest heart, that his kingdom would last forever. But God also warned him that if he or his sons worshipped idols, they would be cast out of the land.

After completing the temple, Solomon built a great house for himself—a personal residence. It took him 13 years to build his house. People from all over the world came to see Solomon. At one time the queen of Sheba came to see him in a great caravan. She brought Solomon presents of gold, silver, and spices. She had heard of Solomon's fame and she wanted to see for herself if the things she heard were true. She came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with "hard questions." She was amazed at the wisdom of the king and the magnificent splendor of his kingdom. She confessed that all she had heard was true and things were even more splendid than she had been told. She blessed Jehovah, and the people to whom He had given such a king.

As wise as Solomon was, he was not sinless. Even though God had told him not to, he married wives from foreign lands, including the daughter of Pharaoh. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. His wives worshipped idols and turned Solomon's heart away from God. He built places for his wives to worship idols and eventually worshipped at those places himself. These things angered God and He told Solomon that his kingdom would be taken from him.

God did exactly as He said He would. Solomon had a servant, Jeroboam, who was such "a mighty man of valor" that Solomon made him one of his officers. On one occasion as Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, he met the prophet Ahijah. Ahijah told Jeroboam that after Solomon died, the kingdom of Israel would be divided. Ten tribes would be given to Jeroboam and he would be their king. These tribes would be referred to as the "Northern Kingdom", or "Israel." The other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin would remain and would be referred to as the "Southern Kingdom" or "Judah." When Solomon heard what God was going to do, he wanted to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt until Solomon's death.

Solomon died at Jerusalem in the 40th year of his reign and was buried in the royal sepulchre in the city of David. Only one son of Solomon is named in the scriptures—Rehoboam. Rehoboam became king of Judah after the death of Solomon. Jeroboam would later become king of the ten northern tribes of Israel.