

## **Introduction**

David’s son Solomon becomes king after David dies. Solomon is known for building the glorious temple in Jerusalem and for his wisdom, a gift from God. Just as many of the psalms are attributed to David, the biblical books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon are attributed to Solomon.

If you do not have *The Story* book, you can read 1 Kings 1-8, 10-11; 2 Chronicles 5-7; and Proverbs 1-3, 6, 20-21

## **Summary the King Who Had It All**

God used King David’s skills as a mighty warrior to lead Israel successfully against her enemies. For forty years David led the nation and established her firmly in the Promised Land. Upon the death of David, his son Solomon succeeds him as king.

Solomon’s reign began with a series of defining events. He married the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh, and ironically, the nation that had once enslaved Israel now sought the good graces of God’s people. Then God appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered to grant his heart’s desire. Solomon asked for wisdom to lead, and God was pleased to grant this request and gave him wealth and honor as well. Solomon’s keen wisdom became the hallmark of his reign, and people from around the world sought him out. Solomon demonstrated that the cornerstone of all wisdom is a holy fear of God.

During Solomon’s reign, peace prevailed in the Promised Land. The time had come to build a temple for God. The construction project was massive and followed the pattern of the tabernacle that had been used since the days of Moses. The result was as majestic as one could imagine. Solomon humbly realized that even a magnificent temple could not sufficiently contain God; however, the temple would become the enduring focal point of worship and life for God’s people.

King Solomon experienced phenomenal success. His wealth and wisdom were legendary. His reign was marked by peace and prosperity. But Solomon also married hundreds of women, many of them foreigners, and we are told that his foreign wives “turned his heart after other gods.”

Solomon’s story began with great promise, incomparable wisdom and magnificent achievement. However, his closing chapter reveals that the kingdom would be torn in two, and Solomon spent his last days fighting off enemies and rebels. His splendor and his legacy were tarnished by disobedience and idolatry.

## Discussion Questions

As you read, remember there are discussion questions for each chapter beginning on page 473 of the book and questions that can be found on *The Story* bookmark (which is also on our website). Also, feel free to consider some of the questions below:

1. God gave Solomon an incredible opportunity to ask for anything he wished. (See 1 Kings 3:5 where God says, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”) What would you ask for if God gave you such an opportunity? Why?
2. Solomon asked God to give him a wise, discerning, understanding heart. (*The Story*, page 177) What does this mean? What would a heart like this look like in your life? How would it impact you with your family and friends? How about at work? What would it have to do with the way you spend your money or your time?
3. God not only gave Solomon what he *did* ask for, he also gave him what he *did not* ask for. Why do you think this was so? What does this say about the nature of God as a giver? Has God ever given anything to you that you did not ask for? Why do you think this happened?
4. Proverbs often explain the benefits of living God’s way and the hazards of not doing so. Pages 179-183 include excerpts from the biblical book of Proverbs, attributed to Solomon. As you read these wisdom sayings, what sayings stand out or really resonate with you? Why? How can you put these into practice in your life? Are there any you disagree with? Why?
5. Certainly, God is bigger than any building could ever contain. Solomon recognized this, yet the temple Solomon constructed would become a special place where God’s people could meet with Him. Do you have a special place that you meet with God? Why is this special place important to you?
6. Although Scripture is not specific, one must wonder — exactly where did it all go wrong for Solomon? What was that crucial moment when Solomon started down the wrong path? Could Solomon have done anything to avoid it? Have you run into one of those crucial moments in your own life when it appears that a decision could have long-term consequences for your relationship with God? What happened?
7. God had been and still is searching for people whose hearts would be fully His. Solomon was loyal for a long time, near the end of this life he wandered from God. We are all tempted to wander. What is it that causes your heart to wander from God? What has the potential of pulling you away from following God? What can you do to keep that from happening?
8. What questions came up for you while you were reading this chapter?