

Life of King Solomon

SESSION #8: 1 Kings 4:20-34

TEXT:

v. 20 The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy.

v. 21 And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

v. 22 Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors of fine flour and sixty cors of meal,

v. 23 ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl.

v. 24 For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, and had peace on all sides.

v. 25 During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree.

v. 26 Solomon had four thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.

v. 27 The district officers, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king's table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking.

v. 28 They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

v. 29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

v. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.

v. 31 He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations.

v. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

v. 33 He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish.

v. 34 Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

INTRODUCTION:

(Poetry: Complete Works to 1993 by Skinny Rowland)

LIFE IS IN THE MOUNTAINS BY SKINNY ROWLAND

When you find you're in a rut, and just fighting to survive,
and you find your efforts aren't to live, but just to stay alive.
And when you find yourself a prisoner, to a system filled with strife,
and you find the rut gets deeper, and becomes the master of your life.
And wrong things are important, and life loses meaning fast,
and goals are small and petty, and ambitions never last.
And happiness is just a word, that other people use,
while you sit alone and lonely, and deep down in the blues,
Then I understand your plight, and you have my deepest pity,
for if you're living with those woes, you're living in the city.
So if you'd like to live again, with joy and peace of mind,
just pack a few belongings, and leave it all behind.
You can trade those city streets, with the plazas and the fountains,
for tree lined roads and fresh clear springs, and a cabin in the
 mountains.
A place to get to know yourself, and what life can really be,
and know what living really is, and the joy of living free.
You'll find your needs are fewer, and you enjoy them so much more,
and life takes on new meaning, that it never had before.
I have lived both ways, and what I say is true,
so for what it's worth I pass it on, and the rest is up to you.

p. 37

(Cowboy Curmudgeon and Other Poems by Wallace McRae)

CLINT

He sometimes turns his horse's tail
Wrong-ways to a cow.
He still can't tie a bowline,
Though I have showed him how.

Once he took a brace and bit
And drilled it in the dirt.
He left his boots out in the rain,
And yonder lies his shirt.

He tried to take his saddle off,
Forgetting the back cinch,
And somehow kinked the cable
On my calf-pulling winch.

Once he filled my water jug
Plumb full of gasoline.
Wore a groove into my grindstone.
At school, said words obscene.

He lost a brand-new Crescent wrench.
Nicked a new hoof nipper.
Took my pinchers from their pocket,
And "fixed" my new chap zipper.

Spilled grease upon my welding rod.
Broke eggs in my felt hat.
Then in the lot at weaning time,
Sicked the dog upon a cat.

When we were corralling cattle, once,
He met us on his trike.
Scratched his name upon my saddle
With a marlinespike.

My boy has done 'er all, my friends.
He's constantly in trouble.
Yet, folks who knew me as a kid
Insist that he's my double.

Their recollection's faulty.
 I dispute it with a curse.
 I wasn't like him, growing up.
 I was a whole lot worse.

p. 124

MY REQUIEM

Some leave their mark on a branded hide.
 Some on the furrowed earth.
 Some aspire to reproduce
 Themselves in those they birth.
 Some leave their marks on canvas,
 Bronze or stone that will survive.
 Long after their creator
 No longer is alive.

Some would build an edifice,
 An architectural gem,
 To serve throughout the ages
 As a lasting requiem.
 But grant to me this final wish
 When I say that last amen:
 Let my mark be carried lightly
 In the hearts and minds of men.

p. 115

In SETTING THE STAGE for this particular passage in the continuing saga of the life of King Solomon, I think it would be good to hear from Solomon himself in:

Psalm 72:18, 19

Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel,
 who alone does marvelous deeds.
 Praise be to his glorious name forever;
 may the whole earth be filled with his glory.
 Amen and Amen.

I would like to FOCUS in this particular passage, however, more on understanding some of the CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SOLOMON'S LATER DOWNFALL.

If I were to try to title this chapter I would call it:

THE PERILS OF PROSPERITY.

David, the father of Solomon is the one who:

fought the battles,

won the victories,

secured the kingdom, and

brought to the place of great prosperity.

Now this has been placed in the hands of his son Solomon who has known nothing of sacrifice, adversity, and struggle.

(Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance by Bob Buford)

Peter Drucker suggests that these are the two most important questions in helping you discover the unique role God has prepared beforehand for you to walk in. The questions are:

1. What have you achieved? (Competence)
2. What do you care deeply about? (Passion)

p. 123

(Signs of Warning, Signs of Hope by J. Kerby Anderson)

The optimism of those formative years had a profound impact on boomers' worldview. It, no doubt, was another reason for the oft-discussed "generation gap." Members of the Depression-era generation saw life as hard, where toil and struggle created opportunity. For them (to borrow another phrase from Charles Dickens) it was the best of times and it was the worst of times. They enjoyed the freedom and opportunity the country provided, but they worked long and hard to achieve the American dream.

By contrast, baby boomers grew up in a world ripe for the plucking. They lived in a time of extraordinary national optimism, idealism, and economic expansion. Often they were indulged, both materially and emotionally, by their newly affluent parents and by the society that surrounded them. Their world built new schools for them, invented new products for them, and took its cultural cues from them.

That unique set of circumstances molded in the minds of most boomers an attitude that Daniel Yankelovich has called "the psychology of entitlement." This generation began to believe that it was entitled to the best things life could offer. What other generations viewed as privileges, baby boomers believed were rights.

The predictable result was disillusionment. A generation growing up in that unusual period of affluence, optimism, and opportunity expected more from life than it could possibly deliver.

p. 38

As the scene of our study opens in 1 Kings 4 the THREE "S's" seem to characterize the kingdom at this time. There is:

1. STABILITY,
2. SECURITY, and
3. SATISFACTION.

McNeely titles these verses:

THE STATE OF THE KINGDOM (4:20-34)

Solomon's kingdom was marked by national unity, security, and personal prosperity. The nation's strength resulted from Solomon's dedication to God and provision for national defense.
p. 41

v. 20 The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon's kingdom was unified, secure, strong, and prosperous, with a large population. . . . enjoying the basic comforts of life (cf. 4:25).
p. 497

Patrick & Lowth describe it this way:

In perfect security; and being well-pleased and highly satisfied.
p. 302

J. Vernon McGee says:

This was a time of great prosperity and peace. The wars were over. There was plenty for everyone. And this, my friend, is just a little adumbration, a little preview, of the kingdom that is coming on this earth—the millennial kingdom.
p. 257

For the time being, you have UNITY IN THE NATION for you have Judah in the South and Israel in the North united under the leadership of King Solomon.

“THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL WERE AS NUMEROUS AS THE SAND ON THE SEASHORE.”

This takes us back to:

Genesis 22:17

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,

Genesis 32:12

But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

“THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL WERE AS NUMEROUS AS THE SAND ON THE SEASHORE; THEY ATE, THEY DRANK AND THEY WERE HAPPY.”

This great multitude was characterized in THREE WAYS:

1. “THEY ATE,”
2. “THEY DRANK,” and
3. “THEY WERE HAPPY.”

The citizens of this kingdom are experiencing the good life.

Their PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL needs were being met.

There was EXCITEMENT and ENTHUSIASM in the air. They were rejoicing and being glad over all that they were experiencing.

Solomon comments on this experience in:

Ecclesiastes 3:11-13

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God.

Oh, how dangerous and subtle are the times of prosperity. For it is in times like these that we feel like our destiny is in our own hands and that our prosperity will go on forever.

Deuteronomy 8:17, 18

You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

I am reminded of the words of Jesus in:

Luke 12:15-21

And He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has all abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” And He told them a parable saying, “The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Daniel 5 provides us with a very sober warning in this regard:

Daniel 5:18-28

"O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes. But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription. This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. This is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

How similar is all of this to what is happening in present day America. We have people who have not sacrificed, who have not struggled to help bring America to the level of its present prosperity.

(A Dangerous Grace by Charles Colson with Nancy R. Pearcey)

These people sailed across the dangerous ocean without the benefit of a government grant. They built their own housing in freezing weather without the assistance of a public-works program. And when they fell sick, they didn't look to a government health program to take care of them. Even in the face of death, they nurtured a thankful spirit to God.
p. 297

Inscribed on Plymouth Rock are the words which we all have the privilege of reading:

This spot marks the final resting place of the pilgrims of the Mayflower. In weariness and in hunger and in cold, fighting the wilderness and burying the dead in common graves, that the Indians should not know how many had perished. They laid the foundations of the state in which all men for countless ages should have liberty to worship God in their own way. All who pass dedicate yourself anew to the resolution that you will not rest until this lofty idea shall have been realized throughout the earth.

I am reminded of the words of Abraham Lincoln on April 30, 1863:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us. We have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom in virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace. Too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins and to pray clemency and forgiveness upon us.

Someone has said that Americans were happier a hundred years ago. They had the satisfaction of personal achievement. The founders wanted something far more important than economic security. They wanted the freedom to be men in the way God intended. No cost was too great for that.

With wealth goes a lack of driving force. A man was once watching some eggs being hatched. Being very close he heard the struggle that was going on in the egg until the chicken burst its way through. He decided to help one chicken out by cracking the egg from the outside. Very soon that chicken that had been helped in that way died because it had been robbed of the opportunity of developing its strength through struggle. Human beings are no different.

The PERIL OF PROSPERITY in these circumstances surrounding the life of King Solomon and his kingdom is that there has been no struggle. It has all been handed to them.

Now the CHALLENGE is no longer to face the struggle but the STEWARDSHIP of what has been granted.

(Our God Is Awesome by Tony Evans)

One day, a Puritan was sitting down to a meal of bread and water. Most of us would say, "God, I only have bread and water."

But this Puritan looked down at his plate and said, "Bread and water and Jesus Christ too! What more can a man ask?"
p. 231

The QUESTION that arises at this point is:

HOW CAN WE CAPTURE AND SUSTAIN WHAT IS GOING ON IN
VERSE 20?

I think the KEY is in a couple of passages of Scripture:

Psalms 1:1-3

Blessed is the man
 who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
 or stand in the way of sinners
 or sit in the seat of mockers.
 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.
 He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season
 and whose leaf does not wither.
 Whatever he does prospers.

Jeremiah 17:7, 8

But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

v. 21 And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[It was] from **the** Euphrates **River** on the east and north **to the land of the Philistines** on the west and **Egypt** to the southwest.
p. 497

The EXTENSIVE NATURE OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM is seen in:

the words "RULED OVER" and

the GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES of this great kingdom.

There are TWO THINGS that are said about all of these countries that were under Solomon's jurisdiction:

1. "THEY BROUGHT TRIBUTE" and
2. "[THEY] WERE SOLOMON'S SUBJECTS ALL HIS LIFE."

v. 22 Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors of fine flour and sixty cors of meal,

v. 23 ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl.

There are TEN ITEMS listed here on the invoice for Solomon's administration. They are:

1. "THIRTY CORS OF FINE FLOUR,"
2. "SIXTY CORS OF MEAL,"
3. "TEN HEAD OF STALL-FED CATTLE,"
4. "TWENTY OF PASTURE-FED CATTLE,"
5. "A HUNDRED SHEEP,"
6. "GOATS,"
7. "DEER,"
8. "GAZELLES,"
9. "ROEBUCKS," and
10. "CHOICE FOWL."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . **Solomon's daily provisions** (cf. v. 7) testifies to its prosperity (vv. 22-23). . . . **30 cors of fine flour** [would be about 185 bushels] . . . **60 cors of meal** [would be about 375 bushels] . . .
p. 497

Lange says:

According to this, the 30 + 60 measures of meal make 171 bushels, from which 28,000 pounds of bread were baked. "If we allow two pounds of bread to each person, Solomon's court must have contained 14,000 people" (others compute them at only 10,000), a number which does not seem too great for the middle period of this reign.

p. 49

Lange says further:

"If we take the flesh of a slaughtered ox to weigh 600 (according to the calculation of those who understood the matter), that of a cow 400, and that of a sheep 70 pounds," the total consumption of meat would be 21,000 pounds, that is, one and a half pounds for each person; and "this is not reckoning the game and fowl for the king's table."

p. 49

v. 24 For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, and had peace on all sides.

The REASON is now given for the greatness of these “daily provisions” that have been invoiced for us in verses 22 and 23:

“HE RULED OVER ALL THE KINGDOMS WEST OF THE RIVER.”

This takes us back to verse 21:

“And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines” . . . “FROM TIPHSAH TO GAZA, AND HAD PEACE ON ALL SIDES.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

These provisions were made possible by the great geographical extent of the kingdom—from the town of **Tiphseh** in the north (on the bank of the Euphrates) to **Gaza** in the south (cf. v. 21).
p. 497

Lange says:

Tiph'sah, i.e., Thapsæus, was “a large and populous town on the west bank of the Euphrates; it was a place where armies crossed over that river, and a place for landing and shipping wares coming from or going to Babylon on the Euphrates” (Winer, ii. s. 612). While this town was the extreme northeasterly point, *Gaza* in the Philistines' land, about three miles (nine and a half or ten Eng.) from the Mediterranean, formed the extreme southwesterly one.
p. 49

Not only did the citizens of this kingdom enjoy eating, drinking, and being happy they also experienced “PEACE” on all their borders.

v. 25 During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree.

Back in verse 24 we learned they:

"had peace on all sides."

Now in verse 25 they:

"LIVED IN SAFETY, EACH MAN UNDER HIS OWN VINE AND FIG TREE."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[The phrase] **Each man living under his own vine and fig tree** (v. 25) is a figurative expression for peace and prosperity (cf. Micah 4:4; Zech. 3:10). The vine and fig tree were both symbols of the nation Israel and pictured the Promised Land's agricultural abundance.
p. 497

Micah 4:4

Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken.

Zechariah 3:10

"In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the Lord Almighty."

J. Vernon McGee says:

There are several things we need to note here. This was a time of security and safety, something which we do not have in this world today. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:21). But peace is coming on the earth when the Prince of Peace comes. In Solomon’s day every man dwelt under his own vine and fig tree. That tells us that one man was not living in a mansion and another in a hovel. Each man had his vine and fig tree; he was living comfortably on his own property. It was so from Dan to Beer-sheba—that is, from the northern border to the southern border—all the days of Solomon.

p. 257

DeVries says:

Here the image of eating, drinking, and rejoicing is kept rather modest in the familiar locution, “every man beneath his vine and beneath his fig tree,” as if to suggest that privacy, quiet, and the simple needs of life are enough to keep a man happy.

p. 73

Delitzsch says:

This expresses the undisturbed enjoyment of the costly productions of the land (2 Kings xviii. 31), and is therefore used by the prophets as a figure denoting the happiness of the Messianic age.

p. 53

(Shepherding the Church into the 21st Century by Joseph M. Stowell)

Our flock needs to come to believe as Malcolm Muggeridge did that "The only ultimate tragedy in life is to feel at home here."
p. 241

(Walking With Saints: Through the Best and Worst Times of Our Lives by Calvin Miller)

Our peace is forever stalked by two predators. The first is our culture of convenience. We are we-fed, the secure. We are lovers of the large plate and the broad sofa. Material abundance keeps us from seeking any other kind. But could it be that our wonderful, abundant culture is really the jackal that preys on our peace? Yes, because our love of convenience trains us to believe that we can have as much as we want, of whatever we want, whenever we want it. We are deceived into believing that material abundance grants us peace, not that it steals it. But steal it does. For no matter what life gives us, we always want more. Our craving for things never sleeps long enough to allow us peace. We are the walking wanton.

The second predator that stalks our peace is narcissism. Narcissists worship themselves. This self-love produces only those inner values that we ourselves can create. In the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *Starlight Express*, one of the characters sings what was meant to be inspirational, "Only You Have the Power Within You." Alas, this is not the hymn of the settled soul. We do not have such power within us. When our self-contrived image begins to crumble, we always crave a more solid foundation; for "the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His'" (2 Tim. 2:19). Our peace is born in God's knowledge of us—who we are and where we are going.

pp. xvii-xviii

(Time To Get Serious: Daily Devotions to Keep You Close to God by Tony Evans)

One Sunday a man came to church looking very sad and despondent. The pastor noticed him and asked, "Why are you so sad?"

"Well, two weeks ago my uncle died and left me \$75,000. Then a week ago my aunt died and left me \$50,000."

The pastor said, "Wait a minute. Two weeks ago your uncle died and left you \$75,000. Last week your aunt died and left you \$50,000. Why are you so sad?"

The man answered, "Because nobody died this week."
p. 110

(Beyond Culture Wars by Michael S. Horton)

It reminds me of the story of Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Computers. He realized that the meteoric growth of his corporation necessitated the hiring of an experienced executive who could provide overall leadership. So he went after a top executive, John Sculley, who was with Pepsi-Cola.

After wining and dining him a bit, he started to get the sinking feeling that Sculley was going to turn down his offer. So he took him to the top of an apartment building overlooking Central Park in New York City, and made his final, last ditch effort to try to get him to join Apple.

But even then it wasn't looking good. Finally, in total exasperation, Steve Jobs looked John Sculley in the eye and said to him, "Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water, or do you want a chance to change the world?"

In his book, Sculley writes that this challenge knocked the wind out of him. And eventually it prompted him to leave PepsiCo and join Apple Computers.

Like John Sculley, all of us has a God-given yearning to change the world. But personal computers will never impact the world as much as leading someone into a personal relationship with Christ.

p. 216

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

A major offshoot of such thinking is secularism, which is one of the most widely embraced views of life in our day. Secularism means that God and His will have no part in life. The only things that really matter are human and materialistic concerns. So the secular person, being indifferent to God or actually rejecting Him, lives only for this present world and its rewards.

p. 139

v. 26 Solomon had four thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The **horses** and chariots, used for national defense, served as a strong deterrent to potential foreign aggressors.

p. 497

This type of DEFENSE PROGRAM is the result of EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE.

Solomon's father, David, said in:

Psalms 20:7

Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

(Finishing Strong: Finding The Power To Go The Distance by Steve Farrar)

In the book of Deuteronomy, God laid down a direct order to His people:

"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman. Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself." (Deuteronomy 17:14-17)

pp. 80-81

Baxter says:

His very greatness betrayed him. His treasures, wives, and chariots were all contrary to the spirit and precepts of the Law (Deut. xvii. 16, 17).
p. 106

Lockyear says:

No Bible king so belied the promise of his early days as Solomon, on whom prosperity produced so fatal an apostasy. Farrar speaks of Solomon as "the brilliant soldier and trafficker who grew into an uxorious, a ruined and an apostate autocrat. The story of Solomon is the story of one whose heart was pervert and his will enervated by luxury and pride."
p. 113

(No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be by Tony Evans)

Solomon personally had more money than most other entire nations.
He would have made Ross Perot look like a ghetto child.
p. 74

Jesus points out in:

Matthew 6:19-24

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

It may be true that most people can't stand prosperity, but it is also true that most people don't have to.
p. 62

Riches are the least worthy gifts which God can give man, yet men toil for them day and night, and take no rest. Therefore, God frequently gives riches to foolish people to whom He gives nothing else.

—Martin Luther

p. 128

I may, I suppose, regard myself or pass for being a relatively successfully man. People occasionally stare at me in the streets—that's fame. I can fairly easily earn enough to qualify for admission to the higher slopes of the Internal Revenue—that's success. . . . It might happen once in a while that something I said or wrote was sufficiently heeded for me to persuade myself that it represented a serious impact on our time—that's fulfillment. Yet I say to you—and I beg you to believe me—multiply these tiny triumphs by a million, add them all together, and they are nothing—less than nothing . . . measured against one draught of the living water Christ offers to the spiritually thirsty, irrespective of who or what they are.

—Malcolm Muggeridge

Riches make people decadent and and they behave accordingly. When, as in our affluent society, there are many rich, there is much decadence.

—Malcolm Muggeridge

pp. 128-9

When I have money, I get rid of it quickly, lest it find a way into my heart.

—John Wesley

Money is an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and a universal provider of everything except happiness.

Money is like manure. Stack it up and it stinks; spread it around and it makes things grow.

p. 135

v. 27 The district officers, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king's table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking.

There are several KEY PHRASES in this passage that describe the circumstances at this stage of Solomon's kingdom. The citizens:

"ate,"

"drank,"

"were happy (verse 20),"

"had peace" (verse 24),

"lived in safety" (verse 25), and

now we note another phrase,

"NOTHING WAS LACKING (verse 27)."

How easy it is to become COMPLACENT and INDIFFERENT when all of your needs are met.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

(The Seven Laws of the Harvest: Understanding the Realities of Sowing and Reaping by John W. Lawrence)

Perhaps you heard about the man who was in the hospital suffering from a bad heart attack when his family received word that he had fallen heir to a million dollars. Fearing that the news might be too much of a shock to the man, they asked his pastor to give him the information very gently. The pastor decided to approach him like this: "What would you do if you inherited the sum of a million dollars?" "Why," he replied, "I'd give half of it to the church." The pastor dropped dead!

p. 73

(The Things that Matter Most by Cal Thomas)

They chanted, "What Do We Want? Everything. When Do We Want It? Now!"

p. 11

(Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.)

God is what we need; things are what we use. In the words of one Christian journalist, "Contentment lies not in what is yours, but in whose you are."¹⁹

19. Doug Trouton, "Discontent Is the New Spirit of the Age," *Twin Cities Christian*, 13 September 1984, page 6.

p. 198

"Within the human heart 'things' have taken over," asserts A. W. Tozer. "God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution."¹⁸

18. A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1948), page 22.

p. 197

v. 28 They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

“THEY” refers to the “district officers” who supply all the provisions for King Solomon and his guests in verse 27.

“THEY” also provide all of the “BARLEY AND STRAW FOR THE CHARIOT HORSES AND THE OTHER HORSES.”

I am reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus to the church at Laedecia in:

Revelation 3:15-20

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

v. 29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

In the previous verses of this passage we have been looking at the HORIZONTAL PROVISIONS that have been made for Solomon's kingdom and for himself as well.

We now turn to the VERTICAL PROVISION, this is what God has provided for Solomon as he is in the process of exercising leadership over this great kingdom.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles these remaining verses:

Solomon's skill (4:29-34)
p. 497

Let us FOCUS for a few brief moments on the FIRST TWO WORDS of verse 29:

"GOD GAVE."

GOD IS IN THE BUSINESS OF GIVING GIFTS.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son . . .

2 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

“GOD GAVE SOLOMON” a gift.

WHEN GOD IS INVOLVED IN MAKING THE PROVISION IT IS ALWAYS THE GREATEST!

1 Kings 3:12

I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

In verse 29 the gift is divided into THREE PARTS.

“GOD GAVE SOLOMON:”

1. “WISDOM,”
2. “VERY GREAT INSIGHT,” and
3. “A BREADTH OF UNDERSTANDING AS MEASURELESS AS THE SAND ON THE SEASHORE.”

This FINAL PHRASE in verse 29 takes us back to the first verse in our passage, verse 20:

“The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This additional information about Solomon’s wisdom demonstrates God’s faithfulness in blessing the king as He had promised (cf. 3:12; 5:12). **Wisdom** is the ability to live life successfully. While Solomon possessed this ability he did not always apply it to his own life. Thus the wisest man who ever lived (i.e., with the greatest wisdom) did not live as wisely as many others who preceded and followed him. Having insight into life does not guarantee that one will choose to do what is right. Solomon’s **great insight** was his ability to see the core of issues (e.g., 3:16-27). His **understanding** was vast; today he would be described as a man of encyclopedic knowledge.
p. 497

Baxter says:

To the people at large, the first evidence of the young king’s penetrating insight came with his decision in the case of the two young mothers who came as rival claimants to the same babe (iii. 16-28). Solomon’s handling of this case is indeed striking. Any misgivings hitherto entertained on account of his immaturity were thereby removed. The people recognised a wisdom in him which was far beyond his tender years. This was indeed the wisdom of God in him. Thenceforth, Solomon held the confidence and veneration of all his people.
p. 100

Delitzsch says:

God gave Solomon wisdom and very much insight and, “breadth of heart,” *i.e.* a comprehensive understanding, as sand by the sea-shore,—a proverbial expression for an innumerable multitude, or great abundance.
p. 54

Patrick & Lowth Commentary says:

God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding] Knowledge of all manner of things; and prudence in the administration of the government.
Largeness of heart,] A mind very comprehensive of all sort of knowledge; and a heart to do a vast deal of good.
 p. 304

Gaebelein says:

And how marvelously the Lord answered the King's petition! The greatness of Solomon's wisdom, the manysidedness of its character, as well as the world-wide impression this wisdom made is recorded in verses 29-34. "Happy is the man who findeth wisdom, and the man who causeth understanding to go forth; for merchandise with it is better than merchandise of silver, and the gain from it than the most fine gold." (Prov. iii:13-14.)
 p. 256

Parker raises the question:

And how did Solomon bear himself under all this grandeur? Was the purple too heavy for him? Was the gold too much? Was he dazzled by the sheen which blazed upon him on every side? Or was he greater than his house, and was he intellectually superior to his circumstances?
 p. 286

(Measuring the Days: Daily Meditations with Walter Wangerin, Jr. by
Walter Wangerin, Jr.)

True Gift-Giving

And then there were two memories, side by side:

I am standing at the kitchen door, holding the publisher's letter that promises to print my book. You've just stopped me to ask an earnest question. Your face is upturned, your eyes dead on mine. "Wally," you say, touching the letter, meaning the book, "this isn't going to come between us, is it?" I am surprised by the intensity of the question and deny that anything should come between us. "Well," you say, not fully convinced, not wholly persuaded by this occupation of mine, "you're an author now." Did you have second thoughts about my desire to write?

Well, but the second memory is of the interior of our house when I happen to be home, once, and you are not. You've rearranged the furniture, and I stand gazing at the change you've made. I'm shaking my head. I'm shaking my head over you, astonished by your kindness. This house has two bedrooms; one is the children's, one is ours, and these are the only two rooms with doors and privacy. But here, in what used to be the sitting room, is all our bedroom furniture—and what used to be our bedroom has become a study, in which I am invited to write. Thanne! You've given up your bedroom. How can I answer that kind of love? I can't. I can only bow my head and stand in its light. And write.
pp. 333-4

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

Faithfulness:

Psalm 56

God, you did everything you promised,
and I'm thanking you with all my heart.
You pulled me from the brink of death,
my feet from the cliff-edge of doom.
Now I stroll at leisure with God
in the sunlit fields of life.

p. 81

v. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.

The COMPARISON of SOLOMON'S WISDOM TO THE TWO CITADELS OF WISDOM in that era:

1. "ALL THE MEN OF THE EAST," and
2. "ALL THE WISDOM OF EGYPT."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[The East and Egypt were] known for their wisdom.
p. 498

Job 1:3

and he [that is Job] owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

Parker says:

Other men were clever, sharp, facile of mind, easy to flippancy in expression, and not without a species of merriment; but when Solomon spoke they all listened; they said, This is music; when he gave judgment, they held their peace.
p. 287

v. 31 He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations.

“ETHAN THE EZRAHITE” is mentioned as the author of Psalm 89.

“HEMAN” is listed among the musicians in 1 Chronicles 15:19.

So evidently “ETHAN” and “HEMAN” were not only wise men, they were also both musicians.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Apparently Mahol was the father of the four (Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda) . . .
p. 498

There are TWO THINGS that are said about Solomon here in verse 31:

1. “HE WAS WISER THAN ANY OTHER MAN” and
2. “HIS FAME SPREAD TO ALL THE SURROUNDING NATIONS.”

(The Book of Virtues by William J. Bennett)

The Things That Haven't Been Done Before

Edgar Guest

The ones who dared to do what we now take for granted are the ones we remember.

The things that haven't been done before,
 Those are the things to try;
 Columbus dreamed of an unknown shore
 At the rim of the far-flung sky,
 And his heart was bold and his faith was strong
 As he ventured in dangers new,
 And he paid no heed to the jeering throng
 Or the fears of the doubting crew.

The many will follow the beaten track
 With guideposts on the way.
 They live and have lived for ages back
 With the chart for every day.
 Someone has told them it's safe to go
 On the road he has traveled o'er,
 And all that they ever strive to know
 Are the things that were known before.

A few strike out, without map or chart,
 Where never a man has been,
 From the beaten paths they draw apart
 To see what no man has seen.
 There are deeds they hunger alone to do;
 Though battered and bruised and sore,
 They blaze the path for the many, who
 Do nothing not done before.

The things that haven't been done before
 Are the tasks worthwhile today;
 Are you one of the flock that follows, or
 Are you one that shall lead the way?
 Are you one of the timid souls that quail
 At the jeers of a doubting crew,
 Or dare you, whether you win or fail,
 Strike out for a goal that's new?

pp. 488-9

Psalm 119:97-100

Oh, how I love your law!
 I meditate on it all day long.
 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
 for they are ever with me.
 I have more insight than all my teachers,
 for I meditate on your statutes.
 I have more understanding than the elders,
 for I obey your precepts.

Solomon truly is “WISER THAN ANY OTHER MAN.” These names that are listed are the “BRAIN-TRUSTS” of the day.

There are a COUPLE OF THINGS that we need to remember at this point, however:

1. It is one thing to know what to do and another thing to do it.
2. It is between the knowing and the doing that Satan works.

v. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Solomon's literary output was extremely prolific.
p. 498

Baxter says:

The wisdom of Solomon is celebrated both in Scripture and in Eastern story. Three thousand proverbs gave proof of his virtues and sagacity. A thousand and five songs placed him among the first of Hebrew poets; while his knowledge of natural history was shown by writings which were long admired.
p. 106

Delitzsch says:

Of these proverbs we possess a comparatively small portion in the book of Proverbs, probably a selection of the best of his proverbs; but of the songs, besides the Song of Songs, we have only two psalms, viz. Ps. lxxii. and cxxvii., which have his name, and justly bear it.
p. 56

Alexander Whyte says:

If ever ship set sail on a sunny morning, but all that was left of her was a board or two on the shore that night, that ship was Solomon. A board or two of rare and precious wood, indeed; and some of them richly worked and overlaid with silver and gold—it was Solomon with his sermons, and his prayers, and his proverbs, and his songs, and his temple. If ever a blazing lighthouse was set up in the sea of life to warn every man and to teach every man, it was Solomon.
pp. 278-9

McNeely says:

Solomon was a multigifted regent. Beside his administrative abilities, he demonstrated that he was a man of the arts; being a poet, lyricist, and student of life sciences made him more than a mere well-rounded individual.
p. 41

v. 33 He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[Solomon was also] an authority in botany and zoology . . .
p. 498

J. Vernon McGee says:

Solomon was a dendrologist—"He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." The hyssop is a humble little plant that grows on rocks. Solomon was also a zoologist—"he spake also of beasts"—and an ornithologist since he spoke of birds. He was an entomologist: he spoke of creeping things, or insects. He was an ichthyologist: he spoke of fishes. He spoke of these things because he had studied them and was an authority in these particular realms. This, apparently, is the beginning of the sciences. Solomon was interested in these things.
p. 257

RHINOCEROS

Adam and Eve were naming the animals of the earth when along came a rhinoceros.

Adam: “What shall we call this one?”

Eve: “Let’s call it a rhinoceros.”

Adam: “Why?”

Eve: “Well, it looks more like a rhinoceros than anything we’ve named yet.”

CHICKEN VS ELEPHANT

Q: What do you get if you cross a chicken with an elephant?

A: I don’t know, but Colonel Sanders would have a lot of trouble trying to dip it into the batter.

BEAT THAT

Q: What’s worse than a giraffe with a sore throat?

A: A hippopotamus with chapped lips.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

v. 34 Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

Back in verse 31 we noted:

“his fame spread to all the surrounding nations” BECAUSE “he was wiser than any other man.”

Now here in verse 34 the response of the “MEN OF ALL NATIONS” was to come:

“TO LISTEN TO SOLOMON'S WISDOM [and they were] SENT BY ALL THE KINGS OF WORLD, WHO HAD HEARD OF HIS WISDOM.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The point is that many important visitors from faraway places visited Solomon who received them openly at his court. He was recognized as the wisest man of his day as God had promised he would be.
p. 498

COMPUTER KNOW IT ALL

Q: What do you get when you cross an elephant with a computer?
 A: A 5,000 pound know-it-all!

A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, and then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.

Fred Allen

Ability will enable a man to get to the top, but it takes character to keep him there.

<Unknown>

If I keep my good character, I shall be rich enough.

Platonicus

It is not a question of how much a man knows, but of the use he makes of what he knows; not a question of what he has acquired, and how he has been trained, but of what he is and what he can do.

Josiah G. Holland

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Delitzsch says:

The wide-spread fame of his wisdom brought many strangers to Jerusalem, and all the more because of its rarity at that time, especially among princes. The coming of the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem (ch. x.) furnishes a historical proof of this.

p. 57

Baxter says:

We have said that Solomon's reign typifies the coming reign of Christ on earth. What then were the outstanding characteristics of Solomon's reign? First, throughout his reign there was *peace* and *rest*. Not one war or internal disturbance broke the serenity of that forty years. Second, there was surpassing *wisdom* and *knowledge*, as we see in I Kings iv. and x. Third, there was *wealth* and *glory*—such as excelled all that had gone before. Fourth, there was *fame* and *honour*, Solomon's name being the greatest in all the countries around Israel, and Israel being honoured by all peoples. Fifth, there was *joy* and *safety*. In I Kings iv. 25 we read: "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." See also verse 20.

Now these are certainly the predicted marks of that kingdom which Christ will yet set up among the nations. There will be *peace* and *rest*: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." There will also be unprecedented *wisdom* and *knowledge*; for "the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

So, also, will there be *wealth* and *glory* such as have never been known before, for "the mountain (i.e. the kingdom) of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains (i.e. kingdoms), and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." And there will also be such *fame* and *honour*, and such empire, as no king has ever known before; for "He (Christ) shall have dominion, also, from sea to sea, and from river unto the ends of the earth; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." And there will also be *joy* and *safety* for all the privileged subjects in that eventual kingdom; for in Micah iv. 4 we read of it that "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." There is no more engrossing study in all the Scriptures than the study of those glowing passages in the prophets, which describe the glories of this Davidic and Solomic kingdom of Christ which is yet to be on earth. Well may our daily prayer be, "Thy kingdom come!"

—J.S.B.

pp. 104-5

Acts 1:6, 7

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

Revelation 19:6, 7

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

Revelation 19:11-16

And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The potential for pride and arrogance become very real in ones experience because this great wisdom is very real.

(Sportin' a 'Tude by Patsy Clairmont)

Ask little Anne Wallis. She went to her first day of kindergarten certain of what to expect. Things went her way until the end of the day. Then her teacher announced it was time to pick up all the toys. A frown fell over Anne's face as she headed for the teacher. "Miss Ruth," Anne said with her southern drawl and an air of five-year-old authority, "I'm Anne Wallis, and I don't do pick-up."

Well, Miss Ruth and little Miss Anne Wallis had a heart-to-heart discussion regarding Anne's 'tude, wherein she was assured by her teacher that her kindergarten future *would* include "pick-up."

p. 100

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

The grey mist of secularism stupefies the sense of holiness, stifles moral outrage, intimidates ethical indignation and questions the worth of purity.

—Carl F. H. Henry

He who marries the spirit of his time will soon be a widower.

—Dean Inge

p. 176

(Finishing Strong: Finding The Power To Go The Distance by Steve Farrar)

Oscar Wilde, an Irish poet and dramatist of the late nineteenth century, was known for his keen wit and gifted prose. Yet he spent several of the last years of his life in jail on a sodomy charge. Looking back on his life, he wrote these words:

The gods have given me almost everything, but I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease. Tired of being on the heights, I deliberately went to the depths in search of a new sensation. What paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion. I drew careless of the lives of other people. I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. And I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character. And that therefore, what one has done in the secret chamber, one has someday to cry aloud from the housetop. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and I did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me, and I ended in horrible disgrace.

pp. 150-51

James 1:13-16

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The people of Judah and Israel ate, drank, and were happy in the early stages of Solomon's kingdom.

LESSON #2: "I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live" (Ecclesiastes 3:12).

LESSON #3: "That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastes 3:13).

LESSON #4: Solomon's kingdom was characterized by adequate daily provisions and peace.

LESSON #5: The citizens of Judah and Israel lived in safety during Solomon's lifetime.

LESSON #6: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7).

LESSON #7: The peril of prosperity is to begin to love the provisions rather than the person who is making them.

LESSON #8: When God is involved in making the provision it is always the greatest.

LESSON #9: God is in the business of giving gifts.

LESSON #10: God has been faithful to fulfill His promise of wisdom for Solomon.

LESSON #11: It is one thing to know what to do and another thing to do it.

LESSON #12: It is between the knowing and the doing that Satan works.

Parker says:

When you awaken the world's attention see that the world comes to hear your wisdom, and not to look at your horses.

p. 288

Alexander Whyte says:

The wise men of the east, wiser than Solomon, have a proverb upon the secret worm that was gnawing all the time in the royal staff upon which Solomon leaned. What, to end with, is the secret worm that is gnawing in your staff on which you lean?

p. 284

Whyte says further:

And Bishop Butler, as I think, the very wisest of all our English writers, though he does not, like Sir Henry Taylor, name Solomon, he surely had him in his eye when he penned that memorable and alarming passage about those men who go over the theory of wisdom and virtue in their thoughts, talk well, and paint fine pictures of it, till their minds are hardened in a contrary course, and till they become more and more insensible to all moral considerations.

p. 290

(No More Excuses: Be the Man God Made You to Be by Tony Evans)

The story is told of an eagle flying over a river in the wintertime and noticing a large chunk of ice floating down the river. The eagle landed on the ice to relax for a minute, even though there was a steep waterfall ahead. He knew he had plenty of time to fly away before the ice chunk plunged over the fall.

But as the eagle stood on the ice, his feet froze to it. Then, as the chunk of ice got near the waterfall and the eagle tried to fly away, he discovered that he was stuck. So over the waterfall went the ice and the eagle, because he waited a little too long to do something about his situation.

That's a pretty accurate picture of American fatherhood today. Most dads are content to ride the ice chunk as long as things seem to be going along all right.

p. 167

Psalm 107:43

Whoever is wise, let him heed these things
and consider the great love of the Lord.

(Prayer, Praise & Promises: A Daily Walk Through the Psalms by Warren W. Wiersbe)

You can picture people saying, “My, we are blessed. We have these wonderful rivers and springs. We have all of this fruitful land. Let’s just eat, drink and be merry.” But God says, “Wait a minute. Are you enjoying the gifts and forgetting the Giver? Are you looking at My hand and forgetting My heart? Are you enjoying my wealth but neglecting My will?”

That’s what often happens—we turn to idolatry. We start living on substitutes. The rivers and springs and fruitful land become our god. So God stops the rivers. He shuts off the water springs. He makes the fruitful land barren. Then we cry out and say, “Oh, God, what shall we do?” His answer is, “Start worshipping Me instead of your blessings. Start looking to the Blessor instead of the blessing. Don’t be idolaters, who live on substitutes. Give thanks to Me for all the good things I have given you.” In other words, get smart. “Whoever is wise will observe these things, and they will understand the lovingkindness of the Lord” (v. 43).



Satan will do his best to get you to depend on the world’s substitutes. When he succeeds, you forget God and trust in your resources and wealth—you become an idolater. Perhaps you enjoy comfortable circumstances. Thank God for them, but continue to draw your strength from the spiritual resources He has provided. If God has shut off His watersprings of blessings to you, start worshipping Him.

Day 276

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall)

A persecutor once taunted a martyr by asking him if he did not love his wife and children too much to die. “Yes,” answered the Christian, “I love them so dearly that I would not part with any of them for all that is the Duke of Brunswick—whose subject he was—is worth; but for Christ’s sake and His truth, farewell to them all!”

June 3

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

Do you know anything of spiritual thirst? Have you ever felt anything of genuine deep concern about your soul? I fear that many know nothing about it. I have learned, by the painful experience of the third of a century, that people may go on for years attending God's house, and yet never feel their sins, or desire to be saved. The cares of this world, the love of pleasure, the 'lust of other things' choke the good seed every Sunday, and make it unfruitful. They come to church with hearts as cold as the stone pavement on which they walk. They go away as thoughtless and unmoved as the old marble busts which look down on them from the monuments on the walls.
p. 266

(Life of the Beloved by Henri J. M. Nouwen)

It is sad to see that, in our highly competitive and greedy world, we have lost touch with the joy of giving. We often live as if our happiness depended on having. But I don't know anyone who is really happy because of what he or she has. True joy, happiness and inner peace come from the giving of ourselves to others. A happy life is a life for others. That truth, however, is usually discovered when we are confronted with our brokenness.
p. 87

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

Psalm 16

Day and night I'll stick with Yahweh;
I've got a good thing going and I'm not letting go.

I'm happy from the inside out,
and from the outside in, I'm firmly formed.
You canceled my ticket to hell—
that's not my destination!

Now you've got my feet on the life path,
all radiant from the shining of your face.
Ever since you took my hand,
I'm on the right way.

p. 22