

Heart Turned Away

written by Tricia Berg

Now 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 shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods."** Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, who were 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 Ammonites. So **Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and 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 Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods. 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. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "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. 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."** 1 Kings 11:1-13

King Solomon didn't remain faithful to the God of the Bible, the God of his father, King David. Perhaps he wrongly assumed that because he was so blessed in every imaginable good thing in life that God was pleased with him no matter what he did. Perhaps he felt he was invincible and had need of nothing else. Whatever the reason, he listened to ungodly advisors, his wives, who led him astray. He forgot the wise words of advice his father gave him. Jesus demands our WHOLE heart today as well. (Matt. 10:37-39, Matt. 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-38, Luke 14:33-35)

*"And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and **serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind**, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. **If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.**" 1 Chronicles 28:9*

Notice in the top passage that no mention was made of David having transgressed against God with Bathsheba, having Uriah killed and so forth. David repented of that sin and was severely disciplined for it. (2 Sam. 12:14) He is remembered forever as a faithful, true servant of God. But sadly, Solomon is not remembered as such, at least not in his latter days. He was the smartest man who ever lived before his time or since, but sadly He seemed to forget that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—words that he and his own father wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (Psa. 111:10, Prov. 1:7, 9:10, 15:33, 2Tim. 3:16-17)

*Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may **discern between good and evil**, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, **I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.** And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." 1 Kings 3:9-14*

*And God gave Solomon **wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men**, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom. 1 Kings 4:29-34*

Solomon started out SO well, asking God for wisdom. Who would have thought he could have ended up that way after beginning like this:

*Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven. And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, "Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may **incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules,** which he commanded our fathers. Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. **Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.**" 1 Kings 8:54-61*

*Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place. "And now arise, O LORD God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in your goodness. O LORD God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one! Remember your steadfast love for David your servant." **As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house.** When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." 2 Chronicles 6:40-7:3*

But at some point, he chose to disregard God's direct warnings to him (as well as those of his father) not to mix with foreign women who would lead him astray. This probably happened the way it usually does—gradually, over time. He apparently found himself wanting to please them more than God. He even built them "high places" where they offered sacrifices to their false gods. That does not sound like someone who loves God with all of his heart or even remembers where everything he has come from. Did he forget that God saw what he was doing? (Psalm 94:8-11) He may have trusted in himself and his own wisdom, not leaning on God like he did at first.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a **double-minded** man, **unstable** in all his ways. James 1:5-8

Every **good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father** of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17

There's another lesson we can learn from Solomon for today. People (at least in this country) may not be building shrines to fake gods these days, but their hearts are still turned (lured) away from God, often by things and also by the "wisdom" of this world. One thing we hear frequently is "who are we to tell someone who they can love?" Well, Solomon was told by his father David and by the Scriptures recorded under the inspiration of God NOT to LOVE foreign women. (This had nothing to do with the color of their skin. It was their false gods that were dangerous.) Did God make that restriction because He didn't care if Solomon was HAPPY? NO! It was for his own good, IF he wanted to remain in God's good favor and continue to receive His blessings. This world is temporary. We are not meant to invest heavily or take too much delight in the physical things or pleasures of this world. (Matt. 6:19-24, 33, Matt. 19:21, 1Pet. 2:11-12)

If we forsake God, we have no idea what the result may be once he lets us go our own "natural" way. (Rom. 1:26-31, Jude 1:4-7) God decides what is right and wrong, not us. It was true back then and it is still true today. The fruit of the Spirit is self control. (Gal. 5:22-25, 2Pet. 1:5-12, 1Thess. 4:2-8, 2Tim. 3:1-5) Solomon had a choice as to whether or not to heed God's wisdom or listen to himself and those around him, and we have the same choice. There's a true saying: "Don't play with fire and you won't get burnt."

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and**

redemption, so that, as it is written, "**Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**" 1 Corinthians 1:25-31

Who is **wise and understanding** among you? By his good conduct let him show his works **in the meekness of wisdom.** James 3:13

Solomon believed in God and served Him, but not with his whole heart toward the end of his life. After Solomon died, all but one territory of the kingdom was taken away. That's sad to not finish well. There were and still are dire consequences for faithlessness. (Matt. 13:47-50, 1Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-20, Rev. 2:5-6, Rev. 2:14-16, Rev. 2:20-23, Rev. 3:1-3, Rev. 3:15-19, Rev. 22:10-15)

A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "**All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.** The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. **The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.**" Isaiah 40:6-8

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are **without excuse.** For **although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.** Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because **they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.** Romans 1:18-25

The one **who conquers will have this heritage,** and I will be his God and he will be my son. **But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.**" Revelation 21:7-8

"For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises **every son whom he receives.**" 8 **If you are left without discipline,** in which all have participated, **then you are illegitimate children and not sons.** Hebrews 12:6, 8

True wisdom comes from God. He doesn't expect us or even want us to rely on our own intelligence or that of the world. (Jam. 4:4) Ironically, this next passage was written by Solomon:

*Trust in the LORD **with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.** It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.* Proverbs 3:5-8

*And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read." And the Lord said: "**Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men,** therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and **the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.**" Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" You turn things upside down! **Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?** Isaiah 29:11-16*

The wise men shall be put to shame; they shall be dismayed and taken; behold, **they have rejected the word of the LORD, so what wisdom is in them?** Jeremiah 8:9

Let no one deceive himself. **If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.** For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "**The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.**" 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

Perhaps Solomon succumbed to flattery? (Rom. 16:18) See what the Queen of Sheba (mentioned by Jesus - Matt. 12:42, Luke 11:31) when she brought an

abundance of gifts said to Solomon below. I am not saying this was definitely her intention, but in the future, there will be flattery by the antichrist leading people away from God. (Dan. 11:32-39)

And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness." 1 Kings 10:6-9

God despises idols. The earth and everything in it is His. (Psalm 24:1) Anything that does not glorify Him is no better than pollution defiling His land. (Isa. 24:5) In fact, He will be tearing down all of the monuments to false religions in the future. (1Chron. 16:26, Psa. 96:5, 97:7, Isa. 2:17-22, 30:25-33, 31:7-9) They are not something that we should be proud of and make efforts to preserve (contrary to what UNESCO thinks). A better use of those funds would be to feed and clothe the poor, wouldn't it? In the name of "justice" (even in much of the church these days), we spend more time, money and effort defending the "rights" of people to SIN than we do seeking justice for oppressed widows and orphans.

*Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; **remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.** Isaiah 1:16-17*

*Religion that is **pure and undefiled** before God, the Father, is this: to **visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.** James 1:27*

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore **go out from their midst, and be separate from them,** says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; **then I**

will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Notice there is no mention of “I held a parade to demand my civil (or reproductive) rights and you didn’t march with me” in the list below. (1Pet. 4:19, Rom. 13:1-7) Please understand the ones referred to as being in prison are there for Jesus’ sake, NOT because they did anything wrong in God’s sight. (1Pet. 4:12-15, Heb. 10:32-36, Heb. 13:3) Persecution is not the same as discrimination, which is related to discernment. We need to be able to distinguish between good and evil so that we can have the sense not to partake in it. (Rom. 1:32, 16:19, Luke 17:1-3).

*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.**’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘**Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.**’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matthew 25:41-46*

*But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to **distinguish good from evil.** Hebrews 5:14*

Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. 1 Corinthians 14:20

However, we are to love even our enemies, including those who persecute us. (Matt. 5:44, Titus 2:7-8, 1Pet. 2:11-12, 1Pet. 4:3-5) There is NO PLACE for violence, name calling and hatred. The entire point of speaking the truth in love is to save souls. (Col. 4:5-6, Eph. 5:3-21, 1Tim. 4:12, 2Tim. 2:21-26, Gal. 6:1, Eph. 4:11-24, Jude 1:22-23) However speaking the TRUTH is NOT hate and neither is disagreeing with someone, but the motive and manner of sharing the truth does matter.

“For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.” Jeremiah 4:22

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Isaiah 5:20-21

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? **If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?** So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. James 2:14-17

There is ONE God, and He warned His people right from the start to destroy idols and not to worship false gods, including man-made idols as well as nature. They could have saved themselves so much grief if they had just listened and obeyed. We believers who have been grafted into Israel should be no more proud of physical idols (or careless about other forms of idolatry) than those who were warned in the Old Testament. (Rom. 11:17-25)

Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a **snare** in your midst. **You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim** (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and **you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.** Exodus 34:12-16

"Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, **beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them,** things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. Deuteronomy 4:15-19

You shall surely **destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.** You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way. Deuteronomy 12:2-4

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The LORD is with you while you are with him. **If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.** For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, **but when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them.** In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress. But you, take courage! **Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.**" As soon as Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, **he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim,** and he repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the LORD. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing with them, for great numbers had deserted to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. They were gathered at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. They sacrificed to the LORD on that day from the spoil that they had brought 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep. **And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul, but that whoever would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman.** They swore an oath to the LORD with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets and with horns. **And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.** Even Maacah, his mother, **King Asa removed from being queen mother because she had made a detestable image for Asherah.** Asa cut down her image, crushed it, and burned it at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not taken out of Israel. Nevertheless, the **heart of Asa was wholly true all his days.** 2 Chronicles 15:1-17

Your evil will chastise you, and your apostasy will reprove you. Know and see that **it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the LORD your God; the fear of me is not in you,** declares the Lord GOD of hosts. "For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, 'I will not serve.' Yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore. Yet **I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?** Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, **the stain of your guilt is still before me,** declares the Lord GOD. **How can you say, 'I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals'? Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done**—a restless young camel running here and there, a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her. Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst. **But you said, 'It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.'** "As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed: they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets, who **say to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.'** For they have **turned their back to me,** and not their face. But in the time of their trouble they say, 'Arise and save us!' But **where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble; for as many as your cities are your gods,** O Judah. "Why do you contend with me? You have all transgressed against me, declares the LORD. **In vain have I struck your children; they took no correction; your own sword devoured your prophets like a ravening lion.** And you, O generation, behold the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of thick darkness? Why then do my people say, 'We are free, we will come no more to you'? Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? **Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.** Jeremiah 2:19-32

Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?" **"Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?"** Jeremiah 8:19

But first I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have **polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations.**" Jeremiah 16:18

Some prophecies have yet to be fulfilled (and some are historical but also serve as foreshadows of what is to come). (Rev. 17-18)

"Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will **punish her idols**, And the mortally wounded will groan throughout her land. "Though Babylon should ascend to the heavens, And though she should fortify her lofty stronghold, From Me destroyers will come to her," declares the LORD. Jeremiah 51:52-53

"Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.' "They will return to it and **remove all its vile images and detestable idols**. I will give them an **undivided heart** and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. **But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD.**" Ezekiel 11:17-21

"And on that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will **cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more**. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness." Zechariah 13:2

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: 'I am about to bring a sword against you, and **I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed**; and I will slay your people **in front of your idols**. I will lay the dead bodies of the Israelites **in front of their idols**, and I will scatter your bones **around your altars**. Wherever you live, the towns will be laid waste and **the high places demolished, so that your altars will be laid waste and devastated, your idols smashed and ruined, your incense altars broken down, and what you have made wiped out**. Your people will fall slain among you, and you will know that I am the Lord. 'But I will spare some, for some of you will escape the sword when you are scattered among the lands and nations. Then in the nations where they have been carried captive, **those who escape will remember Me - how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from Me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices**. And they will know that I am the Lord; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them." Ezekiel 6:3b-10

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they **defiled it** by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before Me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity. So I poured out My wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, **for the idols with which they had defiled it**. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they **profaned** My holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.' But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had **profaned** among the nations to which they came. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name, which you have **profaned** among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have **profaned** among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate My holiness before their eyes. Ezekiel 36:16-23

This message is still for today, in whatever form it rears its ugly head. (1Thess. 1:9-10)

Therefore be **imitators of God**, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. **But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them;** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to **discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."** **Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but**

understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:1-21

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these **the wrath of God is coming.** In these you **once walked**, when you lived in them. But now **put them all away:** anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Colossians 3:5-10

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For **the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.** With respect to this **they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.** 1 Peter 4:1-5

Let's end with John's words:

Little children, **keep yourselves from idols.** 1 John 5:21

Written by Tricia Berg, May 2017, updated July 2017 and May 2024 (somewhat), 14pp. + digital layout. If this article has blessed you, please feel free to share it without modifications (and of course, don't claim it as your own or sell it).

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
AMMONITES. SO SOLOMON DID WHAT WAS EVIL
IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD AND DID NOT
WHOLLY FOLLOW THE LORD, AS DAVID HIS
FATHER HAD DONE. ... THEREFORE THE LORD
SAID TO SOLOMON, "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. 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.



1 Kings 11:4-6, 9-12

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