

The king and the queens

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[0:00] Please turn to 1 Kings chapter 10. We're going to spend the next 30-40 minutes looking at that together. The Bible and Christianity minimizes the role and importance of women.

It is unfairly male-dominated and oppressive. And I know there are people in Brighton who think that because I've read them when they've written it down. Here are two chapters in the Bible that might undermine that.

The Bible certainly does not take the same view as radical feminists. It doesn't say that men and women are equal in the sense that they are identical.

And it doesn't take the view that men and women are independent of one another. So that the Bible would not agree that a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.

Do you remember that rather memorable picture? So the Bible would disagree with those things. But it does affirm the equal human status and the value of male and female.

[1:27] It does differentiate between their roles but that's not where we're going today. And I think these chapters are about the spiritual power and potential of women.

And I would say the unique spiritual power and potential of women. That they can do things that men can't do. And I think that this chapter is about that in a positive way and in a negative way. There's a testimony here from a woman. The Queen of Sheba. And there's also... So that's a great thing. She does a great job.

There's also the leading into error of... The women in chapter 11.

The Queen of Sheba shows great insight. Perhaps she sees things that a man would not have seen so perceptively. But there's also potential for damage which we find in chapter 11.

[2:31] And so I would say listen up sisters. But blokes, it's not as though there's nothing in here for you. Because it's also about the stupidity of men.

So both sexes have got something to learn from these chapters. As you've got the Bible there in front of you. I'm always fascinated by the words.

Let me just set this in a context. We're looking together in the book of Kings. It's a historical book. It goes back many, many, many years to what happened after the reign of King David in Israel.

This is about his son, King Solomon. And we're doing this because we believe that God speaks to us through his word. Through his written word. We are listening to what God is saying to us today. We're doing him the honor of that. And the words that he uses in 1 Kings 10 and 11. Well, the chapter is full of gold. If you care to look at the verses.

[3:34] Verse 2, there is large quantities of gold. Verse 10, there's 120 talents of gold. Verse 11, there's Hiram ships bringing gold from Ophir.

Verse 14, there's the weight of gold. Verse 16, there's hammered gold and beakers of gold. Verse 17, there's hammered gold and meaners of gold.

And in verse 21, there's goblets of gold. And in verse 22, ships come carrying gold. And in verse 25, there's articles of silver and gold.

And it's the golden age. This is the golden age of the kingdom. It's full of gold. It's also got the link of female figures.

There's the queen of Sheba in chapter 10. And there's the many foreign wives in chapter 11. So you could say this is a chapter of gold and girls and glory, if you wanted to use G.

[4:32] Or if you wanted to use W, you'd say wealth and women and wisdom. So these are the things that these chapters are about. And it just

fascinated me.

The very first sentence, think of the sound sh. It's the queen of Sheba. The word for to hear is Shema.

So hear, O Israel. Shema, O Israel. And fame comes from that word too, Shema. And name is the word Shem. And of course, Sheba is in Hebrew, Sheba.

And so the first sentence in chapter 10, when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions.

Just about every word begins with She. The queen of Sheba, Shemad, about the Shem of Solomon and his relation to the Shem of the Lord. So I think it's an artfully constructed text that just appealed to me, that side of it.

[5:39] When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord, she came. And that's the picture of what's happening.

Here is this woman coming from a long way away to the king. Jesus is in the same business, actually.

He's the king of kings. And people come, male and female, from large distances away. They come to him. So let's look at what it says.

When she heard, she came. I'm going to look at the text. When the queen of Sheba heard, she came. And then verse 2, coming to Jerusalem with a very great caravan with camels, etc.

She came to Solomon and talked with him about all she had on her mind. So three times it says, what did she do? She came to the king. A great theme of coming to the king.

[6:45] There's the king. There's the queen. The queen of Sheba. And she brings... I can't do camels very well. So she did camels carrying spices. She's got lots of camels.

I didn't know how to draw spices, so I did a spice jar that you might have got from Sainsbury's or something. So she brings lots of spices. I don't know what spices she would have brought.

Curry, garlic, I don't know. Salt, pepper. And she also brings large quantities of gold. Well, the gold is already on the camels. And precious stones.

So I presume these are jewels. There are stones in kings that are precious because they're very big. And they've been shaped very carefully to make the temple.

But I think these are not big building stones. They're probably what we would call jewels. So here's this queen coming to King Solomon.

[7:41] And it says that she came, verse 2, and talked with him about all she had on her mind. Literally it says all that was in her heart.

She spoke to him all that was in her heart. She's come to test him with hard questions. So the things that she has in her heart are hard questions.

The word is riddles really. Conundrums. Things that you think, I've thought about this for a long, long time. I can't get any further forward with it. Solomon, what do you think?

And Solomon has the answer. She talked with him about all that was on her heart. Verse 3, Solomon answered all her questions. Nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her.

More literally, nothing was hidden that he could not tell her. So it's a fascinating picture, isn't it? This woman comes with lots of knots and, you know, knotted up thoughts and questions and hard questions, riddles.

[8:52] And the king sits there. And he sees, sort of seeing lines. He sees what she has in her heart and he can tell her everything.

Literally, he can tell her the answer to everything. It's a brilliant picture, isn't it? I'm reminded of Jesus with the woman at the well. Do you remember the woman at the well who said, he told me everything I ever did?

Is it something like that? But the king here is the heart seer. A fascinating description.

Jesus is exactly this. It says in John's Gospel that he knew what was in men's hearts. He didn't need anybody to tell him what was in men's hearts because he knew what was in men's hearts.

Jesus is better than Solomon in this. But Solomon's pretty good at it. He tells her everything in her heart. The king here is the heart knower and the heart teller.

[10:00] It would be great to come to somebody like that with our knotted up problems and to know there was somebody we could say those things to.

And that person could say, well, I understand this.

I see exactly what you mean. And I have the solution to this. That's Jesus. And what happens as things go on?

Now the queen of Sheba, verse 4, saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the house he had built. So here she's seeing stuff now. The wisdom of Solomon. She sees the wisdom of Solomon and the house that he built and the food on his table and the seating of his officials.

So whether that meant how many of them there were or how grand they all were or how nicely the tables were set out. I'm thinking of a wedding. You know, a wedding when people set out the chairs and things so nice and you think, wow, this is a great occasion.

What a wonderful venue. You know, how nice everybody looks. I think it's that sort of thing that she's seeing. And we do this every day, they say to her. And she sees the servants with their clothing and the cupbearers, literally the waterers, the people who bring their fluid.

[11:17] And she also sees the offerings he offered at the house of the Lord. And she sees all this. And she says, wow.

This is amazing. I've heard about the report of Solomon. But to see it, you know.

And it says that the stuffing was knocked out of her. It says she was overwhelmed. Literally there was no spirit left in her. Spirit, breath, there was.

She just, maybe she fainted. I don't know. It just tells us about the grandeur of Solomon. The glory of Solomon.

And Solomon is, in this sense, a good forerunner of Jesus. You remember, actually for different reasons. But when people heard Jesus do things, they often went away amazed.

[12:21] Said, we've never heard anything like this. We've never seen anything like this. So, wow, was the response to Solomon. Thud as she falls on the floor.

Wow is a right response to Jesus. And having seen those things, she now speaks it out.

Verse 6. She said to the king, the report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. It's an amen testimony.

I'm saying it's a true thing. The word true being something like amen. I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me.

In wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. This is her testimony. I'm going to say yes to the report I heard.

[13:25] I'm going to confirm it. It's true. That's what faith is. It's endorsing what God has said in particular about Jesus.

It's saying it's true. It's true. To begin with, I didn't believe till I saw. And the half was not told me.

And she goes on to make it into a blessing. She says, verse 8, how blessed, how happy your men must be.

I presume she means men in the sense of the people who she can see administrating things. How happy your officials who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom.

What a wonderful thought that is. So here are the officials. Here's the chief secretary of something else. Here's the secretary of state to something else. And they're standing there. And they hear Solomon say something. And one says to the other, well, he was really on form today, wasn't he?

[14:26] What a fantastic answer he gave. And he did a similar answer yesterday. It's just brilliant. And she's saying, what a privilege you have to overhear King Solomon.

And to hear the things that he says. They hear your wisdom. And praise be to God. Because this is a king who does God. And it's all part of God's glory.

It's part of his kingdom. Praise be to the Lord your God who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to do justice and righteousness.

That's the king's job. He chose you as king with a forever love. And you are there doing justice and righteousness. And that's her testimony.

And it's a great testimony, isn't it? The things that I've heard are true. And actually, it's twice as much as I'd even dreamed of, at least.

[15:35] It's just so brilliant. And I would invite you to compare that son of David with the son of David, Jesus.

Maybe you've seen something about him. Maybe you've heard some of the things he's said. And maybe you might be saying, he's brilliant.

What a blessed thing it is to be anywhere near him. And what a wonderful thing of God to make him the king and to send him.

I don't know. Maybe you're saying that. I would. I'd say that myself. Anybody else think that they would say Jesus is a brilliant king like this? Maybe one or two.

So let's go on. So what happens next in verse 10? She gives the king 120 talents of gold. So there's the king. And she's giving him gold and the spices that we met before and the precious stones.

[16:40] And it says, never again were so many spices brought in as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. It's an interesting thought because this is meant to be a forever kingdom.

But you can see the writer saying, well, it isn't forever. Those were the golden days. It's not like that now. The king, at the time of writing, he says, we, you know, that was the high watermark.

And, you know, it's not like that nowadays. Never again. And actually it says the same thing in verse 12 where he says about the almug wood, whatever that is.

We've never had so much almug wood as we did in those days. Although it's a forever kingdom, this was just a temporary high watermark. And it says the same thing in verse 20 about the throne. Nothing like it has ever been made for any other kingdom. And I'm stretching that point a little bit to say there's a uniqueness about that. That perhaps this kingdom never equaled.

[17:43] A forever kingdom. But Solomon's kingdom did not last. The people who thought of Solomon would still be looking for a king of whom it could say, you will reign forever and ever.

And of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. Of course, that's what the angel said at the birth of Jesus, isn't it? And let's see.

We've got more things coming into the kingdom. Verse 11. Hiram or Hiram. He brings gold with his ships. He brings gold from Ophir.

And he brings almug wood. I thought if I just drew a trunk, it would just look like two random lines.

So I've drawn some trees. They're almug trees, as I'm sure you realized.

So he brought great cargoes of almug wood and precious stones. Did I put a precious stone? No, I didn't. And these also he brings to King Solomon.

[18:45] And King Solomon uses them to make supports in the house of the Lord and the house of the king. And he makes musical instruments, harps and lyres for the musicians.

So I put a guitar there. So he puts it to a good use. Guitar making is a very, very good occupation. So things are coming in like this.

And in verse 13, King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for. So she said, I don't know what she said.

We're short of filament bulbs in Sheba. Do you have any old ones? Because we're having to use these modern fluorescent ones now. And she said, yeah, we've got plenty in the back. You can have those.

Or whatever. I don't know what she would have asked for. And in addition to this, he's just generous anyway. And besides, he had already given her stuff out of his royal bounty.

[19:45] So Solomon, she brings gifts to him. She lays it all at his feet. All that I have and all that I am, Lord Jesus, I bring it to you.

She lays it all at his feet. And he doesn't send her away impoverished. He enriches her. It's a great picture, isn't it? Our king does that.

We lay everything at his feet. At your feet I pour all my treasure store. But he doesn't send us away empty. He doesn't just take from us.

He gives to us. And here's a picture of this, the queen of Sheba coming to be a worshiper of the son of David. And she goes away enriched.

So he gives to her all that, whatever it was. And she departs. And I think we have a picture, a rather beautiful picture really, of enrichment and glory and brilliance and wonder.

[20:50] And there, there's the picture. Okay, make the most of that picture. Just think how good that picture is. Because I'm going to, there's a sting in the tail.

So what did the queen of Sheba do? She heard. She came to find out. She saw. And she saw the wisdom and the wealth and the surroundings and the glory of the king. And she, she went away a believer, enriched.

It was the queen of Sheba. And Jesus talks about the queen of Sheba. And I'd like you, if you have a Bible that you can find your place in, to look at Matthew 12, verse 42.

Because in the time of Jesus, people came to see him.

[22:04] And some of them found fault with him. Some of them said, well, we're not impressed with you. We've heard you say things, but we're not impressed. We've seen you do things, but we're not convinced.

And Jesus says there's a very deep problem there. The problem is not with Jesus and what he does. Although we have to say that what was on display with Jesus looked very different to what was on display with Solomon.

I mean, Jesus didn't have gold and a palace. What he had to show is quite different. But Jesus was quite tough. Well, actually, he was very tough on these people who came and were unconvinced. He calls them in Matthew 12, verse 39, a wicked and adulterous generation. You're a wicked lot, he says to Jesus. And your wickedness lies in the fact that you have seen so much, but believed and responded so poorly.

That's the wickedness of it. And if you look at verse 42, he talks about the queen of Sheba. Well, first of all, he says the men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it.

[23:20] Because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And now one greater than Jonah is here. And then he says, and the queen of Sheba, the queen of the south, will rise at the judgment with you lot and condemn you.

Because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom. And she came and she was impressed. And she believed. And she bowed down.

And she gave everything to the king. And he enriched her. And that's what happened to her. But you, and Jesus says, and someone greater than Solomon is here.

Talking about himself, isn't he? He's saying, you have someone standing in front of you here who is actually more impressive than all the gold that Solomon had.

And more impressive than all the palace he had. And more impressive with his little rattle-taggle band of 12 disciples than all the courtiers in their Savile Row suits and everything else.

[24:23] He says, this is more impressive. And it's more impressive, more convincing, has more impact, and you lot don't believe it.

And he says, the queen of the south, the queen of Sheba, one day will come up and say, I believed when I saw Solomon. You saw so much more and you didn't believe.

The queen of the south will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it.

Condemn is the opposite of, say, how well you've done. She won't say, oh, you've done very well. She'll say, you stupid idiots.

You spiritually rebellious and perverse people. You had so much more and you did so little with it.

[25:31] To the generation that heard Jesus teach and saw his miracles close up, the queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it. She believed.

But woe to the hearers of Jesus who saw and heard and were not changed. And the question for us is this.

On the day of judgment, Jesus says, the queen of Sheba will be there with a finger to point, and she will definitely point it at those people in Jesus' time.

You did not repent. You saw, but you did not believe. You heard, but you did not obey. My question is this.

Will she point her finger at us? Will she say, and you? You came along to that church so many times.

[26:42] You heard about Jesus so many times, but you got yourself into the position where it just ran off you like water off a duck's back. You did nothing about it. You didn't take it seriously.

You forgot the moment you left the church, any discomfort that you'd felt. You did not repent. And the queen of Sheba will say, and I likewise condemn you. See, I told you to make the most of the good bit at the beginning.

This bit is very uncomfortable. Actually, it gets more uncomfortable as we go through. But this is the question. Will she point a finger at you and me and say, how come, if it was possible for me to respond when I saw Solomon, how come there is so little from you?

Let's go on. So we now have a description of the splendid stuff that Solomon had.

And I think the glory we're going to look at is actually dangerous glory. So it says, where are we? We've got people.

[28:02] That's right. We have verse 14. Verse 16. The weight of gold that Solomon received was 666 talents, not including the revenues from the merchants and traders from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.

It talks about the gold from the different lands. It talks about the shields of gold. Verse 16. These shields are fantastic.

In fact, as the kingdom diminished, as the years went on, the shields were one of the things which went. We had to take away the shields. It tells us about his throne.

I would love to have tried to draw this, but I think it would have taken far too long. You'll have to imagine it. He made a great throne inlaid with ivory, so it would be a white throne, and it has fine gold inlaid into it as well.

It would have been magnificent. It had six steps, and it had lions. It was a rounded top, and the armrests, as I understand it, were lions, and on each of the six steps, there was a lion on each side.

[29:16] Nothing like it had ever been seen anywhere else. It was unrivaled. The king on his great white and gold throne in his majesty.

Amazing. It says that there was so much gold all over the place. Nothing was made of silver. Silver was rubbish in those days because the gold was so much gold.

And there was the navy, and there was trading, and I would have liked to have drawn gold, silver, ivory, apes, and baboons, but you just have to imagine that bit as well.

And it says, in summary, Solomon was the greatest of all the kings. He was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.

The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift, articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

[30:18] And Solomon was the king of kings. All the other kings bowed down before him. The chariots and horses.

And remember, Jesus insists that he is greater than Solomon. And the things that Solomon was good at, Jesus is better at. And that's why I chose that to sing at the beginning about the glory of Jesus.

Kings shall bow down before him, and golden in spring. All nations shall adore him, and something else. All nations come to Jesus.

Now, I don't think anybody here, I could be wrong. Let's put it this way. Very few people here are probably members of any royal family. But we do have people from many different nations, do we not?

So if you look around, you will certainly get two people from Switzerland. And if you're new here, you probably can't spot who's from which nation.

[31:21] But let me assure you, people here from different nations. And what was started when the Queen of Sheba came and bowed down before Solomon is carrying on as men and women who are not necessarily royal, but they're still from different nations, come and bow down before Jesus.

He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He's greater. But, let me put in a necessary but. Would you like to have one finger in 1 Kings 10, where it described the grandeur of Solomon?

And then look in Deuteronomy 17, verse 14 it is. I put four, I meant 14. Deuteronomy is right back at the beginning when there wasn't even a king, but they're looking forward to when there would be a king.

And it had just begun to be a nation. And right back in the original constitutional documents of Israel, it says this. In Deuteronomy 17, verse 14, it says, When you enter the land the Lord your God has given you, and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, let us set a king over us like all the nations around us, be sure to appoint the king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. Okay. The king, however, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself, or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them.

[33:10] Hold on, didn't it say that he went to Egypt to get horses? I think it did. And it says, For the Lord has told you you are not to go back that way again.

Verse 17, He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

But that's exactly what Solomon did. When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll, the copies of the law.

Well, so it goes on. It says, He's not to consider himself better than his brothers, and turn from the law to the right or to the left. He's to be a humble king. Now, I'm a little bit worried by this text, because Kings has been telling us about the glory of King Solomon, and gold has been very much part of that.

And the writer in Kings seems to forgive him that. But in Deuteronomy, it is quite clear, the king mustn't do that.

[34:21] The king must not do horses and chariots. He must not go down to Egypt. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

And he must not have many, take many wives. And I'm reading, in 1 Kings 10, Solomon accumulated chariots and horses.

He did have a lot of silver and gold. And, chapter 11, verse 1, and Solomon loved many foreign women. So, I'm worried about that.

I'm worried about that. Are you not worried about that? Because it takes the shine off this glory. And I want to say that the worrying thing is that Solomon's wisdom was also his folly.

Folly is the opposite of wisdom. That his glory was also his undoing. So, the glory was all this gold, but he wasn't supposed to have all that gold.

[35:31] So, that he, in all his wisdom, made foolish decisions. That in a glorious way, he went down shameful paths.

Do you see what I'm getting at? There's a deep flaw which ends up being a split. Where does the flaw start?

Where does it all begin to go wrong? It's very difficult to tell, but we know that at the end, it says that the Lord became angry with Solomon. Chapter 11, verse 9.

The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord. As he's accumulating this gold, everybody's saying, you're very wise, fantastic Solomon.

Well done. Good decisions. Good economics. And as he's acquiring these horses, people are saying, that's brilliant. Couldn't have struck a better bargain myself. But it's all, he's using his wisdom, but it's not quite right, is it?

[36:39] It's not quite right. And I think this is a very challenging thing, that this man who was so wise in heart could end up having taken one logical step after another with his heart going the wrong way, which we'll look at in a moment.

And I think it's a tremendous challenge to us. We're not as clever as Solomon. Most of us aren't. If he could make such terrible mistakes, you know, what about us? It's a challenge to human pride and strength and wisdom. Paul says to the people in the church in Rome, he says, you do well to actually have fear.

Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. Now, I know there's a wrong sort of fear in the Christian life, but there's also a right sort of fear. And I think if we are blithely going through our Christian lives, thinking, well, I can't do a thing wrong.

I can't do a thing wrong. I'm such a good Christian. I can't do a thing wrong. He says, you just better watch out. Because if Solomon could make such a mess of things, I'm sure you can.

[38:04] You be careful. Let him who stands take heed lest he fall. The wisdom of God is not always like our wisdom.

The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. Says Paul in 1 Corinthians. He says, if you look at the cross of Jesus Christ, that's wisdom.

Doesn't look like wisdom to most people, but that's wisdom. That's power. That's glory. And the best and safest thing is for us, when we're glorying, to glory in that.

That's the best thing. That's the cleverest thing. That's the wisest thing about us, that Jesus died on the cross for us. That's the safest place to be. Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might.

Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but that him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who does loving kindness, judgment, righteousness in the earth.

[39:28] For in these things I delight, says the Lord. It's a place to be wise. It's a place to be strong in the Lord. Let's look now at these foreign wives in chapter 11.

So here's Solomon. Chapter 11. It doesn't say however in Hebrew. It just says and. So it's adding to the list of things.

And King Solomon loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from the nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, you must not intermarry with them because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.

Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. Now the heart is mentioned several times. It's in verse 2. Will turn your hearts after their gods.

Verse 4. His wives turned his heart after other gods. Verse 9. His heart had turned away from the Lord. And is it mentioned again?

[40:38] Maybe not. But those, at least those one, two, three, four times. He says that the problem was actually quite deep. Not really to do with the accountancy figures of gold.

But actually deep the heart. So what went wrong? Well he married many foreign wives. So there they are.

And the thing was that he, they brought with them their foreign gods. Now let's just say, before we go any further, the New Testament is different to this. The New Testament take on different ethnicity is different to the Old Testament.

And the New Testament says, we welcome in all nations. So the kingdom belongs to all nations. And Christians can marry people of a different ethnic group.

And that's not a forbidden thing. That's a good thing. Because it shows the unity of God's people across ethnic boundaries. However, the New Testament does warn about marrying in the Lord.

[41:53] Does say, you know, you can't just marry anybody. If you're, if you want to be pleasing to God, please don't marry somebody who is not a believer.

So the New Testament does say that. However, it does say if, for example, you have, you found yourself, perhaps you've been converted since you've been married, or perhaps some complicated situation, you find yourself married to an unbeliever.

It doesn't say your first duty is to break that relationship. It says your first duty is to witness to your spouse. So, if your spouse won't agree with that, okay, then that's different.

But if, until that point, your, the general call is if you find yourself in a marriage where you're married to somebody who's not a believer, then witness to that person to try and win them.

That's the New Testament in a nutshell. But here, what's happening in the Old Testament? Well, the Old Testament, these women, they're not believers in the Lord. They have their own gods.

[43:08] So, I've put some tree sort of shrines and each one has their own shrine and their own god and the effect of it is to turn his heart away.

And it's a real conundrum, isn't it? How somebody so wise and so exemplary in some ways could fail.

Did he not notice? Did he not think he was doing wrong? Did it just creep up on him? What happened? Great mystery, isn't it?

So, we are now a nation in which we are polytheists. So, we worship the Lord for sure but we also worship Chemosh and whatever these other gods are, Ashtaroth, Molech.

And the writer says the Lord was angry. The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel who had appeared to him twice.

[44:19] Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. Despite his great privileges, his heart was turned away.

Now, let me just point out here, it is compared with David. Verse 4, his wives turned his heart away, his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God as the heart of David his father had been.

David made some very serious mistakes and committed at least one major sin. You know, in a moment of stupidity, in a season of madness, no, I should have put that around the other way, shouldn't I?

A moment of madness and a season of stupidity. But, God says, his heart, even though he made, you know, he went off beams so badly, in his heart, he stayed devoted to the Lord.

He was a penitent believer. He was a repentant believer. But, what is said here is different about Solomon.

[45:32] His heart went wrong. His heart turned away. And, there were bitter consequences. And, I think that's a troubling, a troubling thing in the Bible.

because we who are Calvinists, if you're familiar with all that, you might say, perseverance of the saints, if you're a believer, then you're always a believer.

I'm sure that's true. But, we have a very disturbing thing put to us here, I think, to make us worry, really, to make us tremble.

Here's somebody who started off so well, and seems, their heart seems to have gone away. Now, I'm not going to try and read the deep spiritual realities of that for Solomon personally, but here's a definite warning, which says, we should look out for our hearts.

We should make sure that our hearts are not turning away from the living God. And, the Bible's got warnings in it. And, the mark of a real believer is that they believe the promises and they tremble at the warnings and heed the warnings.

[46:54] And, this is a warning. It's a warning to older people because this didn't really come to its fruition until Solomon was older.

You say, well, the problem of a Christian life is for young people because of drugs and alcohol and sex. I'm sure those are troubling things. But, Solomon, I got all through that. He was an older man. He was an older man. And, his heart went astray. And, it's a warning to older men, isn't it? To be careful.

Conclusion. The spiritual power of women. I've shifted it back to the theme of women. The Queen of Sheba had the insight to see and believe and testify.

And, she did well. She's a great example. And, she is ready to ask us on the last day, did you do the same thing?

[48:00] Pretty stupid if you didn't. Have you followed her example regarding Jesus? Have you seen? Have you been impressed? Have you been, would you like to see?

Would you like to know more? Would you like to be impressed? There's a way to do that. A woman's power to influence the hearts of men.

Seems to be what's in chapter 11. For good or evil? In chapter 11, for evil. But, here's something that ladies perhaps might like to take notice of.

The Bible here is saying, you have a power that you might not realize. Use it well. Use it well.

Don't know what your view of men are. You might think they're rather silly creatures. You have a power to benefit them or to damage them which you might not realize.

[49:03] The chapter tells us about that. Power to turn people to the Lord. Maybe you are married to an unbeliever and you think, well I've got no leverage at all.

Actually, no. You have the potential to win your spouse. Take note of that. You have the power to turn someone from the Lord.

It's interesting that in chapter 11, the wives actually are not blamed at all. The blame lies on Solomon. But, you know, we're to use our influence well and all of us to guard our hearts. Even the wisest can be totally stupid in the matter of his own heart. Solomon could read the heart of the Queen of Sheba, but he couldn't read his own.

Be serious. Seriousness is an undervalued Christian virtue. To take these matters seriously.

[50:08] To take heed and make sure it doesn't creep up on you. Let's sing together. Let's sing together.