

The Sovereign Lord is Not Mocked

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[0 : 00] It's a long passage that we read, but one verse that we'll certainly be focusing on is verse 39, page 293.

Page 293 of your church Bible is verse 39 where God says to Jeroboam, and I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, because of Solomon turning his back on God, Solomon falling after other gods.

I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever. You know, the distress when somebody's known the blessings of God in his life, in her life, and he's known privilege after privilege, he's communed with God, he's worshipped God, and then when that person falls back in sin, when he turns his back from following God wholeheartedly, there's real distress in seeing that when we look on in what we might call a spiritual casualty.

And King Solomon was one such spiritual casualty. A king who'd known so much blessing from God. A king who, in his early reign, in the early part of his reign, had sought wisdom from God, and God had granted him wisdom.

When he'd been given the privilege of building the temple in Jerusalem, when his father David hadn't been given that same privilege. And yet, Solomon, as we read there in chapter 11, in his latter years, Solomon fell deep into sin, marrying pagan women, practicing polygamy on the most horrendous of scales.

[1 : 48] And with the influence of these women in Israel such that they're bringing in their false gods, bringing in their false practices, and Solomon is clinging to these wives, he's even now going to these places of false worship.

His single-minded devotion to God has so weakened that we're told that his heart wasn't wholly true to the Lord his God. As we read, God had spoken to Solomon on two occasions to command him to get rid of all these evil practices, but Solomon wouldn't obey the word of the Lord.

And God would not permit such disobedience to go unpunished. God wouldn't and will not be mocked. And that's the consequence when, you know, under God's sovereign reign, under God's sovereign power, as we see in the passage here, God's going to tear the kingdom away from the family line of David and Solomon.

He's going to tear the kingdom away and give it to a servant. God won't do that. When Solomon reigns, God's going to give one tribe to the son of Solomon.

And I'm sure you wondered in your sums, well, there were twelve tribes of Israel. Man Jeroboam's going to get ten. The son of Solomon's only going to get one. Of course, that tribe was Judah.

[3 : 14] There was another tribe, of course, Benjamin. Benjamin is actually included in the tribe of Judah. We see sort of amalgamated into that tribe. So that's your sums in case anyone was wondering. But the whole point is this, that Solomon will be punished for his apostasy, for his polygamy, for his bringing in these false gods.

Because God will not be mocked when there's any persistent rebellion against his word and against his ways. And we might be saying, well, what we've been reading here is the events in Israel 3,000 years ago.

But we can't say these events are disconnected from ourselves. This is God's word. This is God's instruction, even to us today. The same God in Solomon's time is the God of our own time, is the eternal God.

And God will not be mocked now as he was not mocked then. Bring this to our own situation today. I mean, as a nation, as a church, we stand before a God who is holy and just.

And each one of us has to ask in the sincerity of our own hearts. As I have to ask myself, am I truly following and wholeheartedly following the word of God? I mean, we have the full revelation of God

in His word.

[4 : 33] Am I truly following the Lord Jesus? Am I denying myself? Am I taking up my cross? Am I following the Savior? I surrendered my life to Him.

So much so that I can truly and faithfully say I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Am I going to stand with the Lord and His people in a day and an age when God's word and God's law is mocked? Am I going to be like Solomon in his latter days? A heart following after other gods? Am I siding with those who take great pleasure in mocking God and His word?

And if I do that, my witness is going to be empty. Well, if that's the case, if that's the case with each one of us, then we do have to wake up and be shaken and repent and return to God with all our heart because God will not be mocked.

And yes, yes, He is the God who forgives us our sins. He's the God who cleanses us from all our unrighteousness. He's the God who restores the repentant sinner to Himself, the one who comes to Him in faith and repentance.

[5 : 48] But we can never presume upon God's patience in our perpetual sinning. God will not have His name dishonoured by those who might claim His name and yet persist in turning His back on them as we find there with Solomon.

So when we come to this episode in the life of the history of God's people, it is a warning from God's word. It's a warning from history. But it's a reminder too that God is sovereign.

That God rules and God overrules. And that even as we're going to see, even in the midst of sin and evil, God will bring good out of the evil acts of man.

And as we'll see, the consequences of Solomon's apostasy actually, yes, resulted in his kingdom being divided, his son being given only the kingdom of Judah with Benjamin included.

Remember, that tribe, the tribe of Judah, was the same tribe from which Jesus and his human nature came from.

[6 : 52] And we'll speak more on that later. But yes, as we know, it's a long chapter. But three things really that we can highlight here. I must highlight the Lord's anger, the Lord's answer, and the Lord's control.

And let's look first of all at the Lord's anger as we see here in this chapter. Because we really need to look at this whole notion of the anger of God. Isn't that the case that, you know, we're so often content just to, you know, omit any reference to God's anger, whether it be in a sermon or whether it's in a conversation.

You know, it's as if we live as if the anger of God is absent from the character of God. And, of course, that's utterly, utterly wrong. God's anger is real and just unrighteous.

It's not the kind of, you know, human kind of anger that can happen when it's sort of unrestrained. No, God's anger is that just attitude of a holy response, of a holy God, when God's name is dishonoured, when his words ignored, when his law is disobeyed.

And in King Solomon's case here, what Solomon was doing, obviously required God to respond in anger. You see that as we look again at the passage, verse 9, and the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel.

[8 : 20] And you can see the connection. You go right back almost to the start of the book there. You go to chapter 3, verse 3. We're told there that Solomon loved the Lord. Now you go towards the end of his reign, chapter 11, verse 1.

Solomon loved many foreign women. You see the contrast. And so God has to act in His righteous anger. He's got to give righteous judgment. Now, I think the passage shows us, certainly in verse 4, God is still Solomon's Lord.

But as we can see in verse 6, Solomon isn't fully following the Lord as God. And God's not going to be mocked. And that truth made all the clearer when we realised that Solomon's guilt justified the consequences of God's anger.

And this is where we're going to get this bigger picture here. If we were to go back to chapter 9, you read there that God made an agreement with Solomon, a covenant with Solomon.

Just after Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. God appears to Solomon in a vision. And God announces this binding relationship with conditions.

[9 : 37] Listen to the words. Very clear.

If Solomon obeys God and His word, then God said, I'll establish your royal throne over Israel forever. But if you turn aside from following me, you are your children.

And do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I've set before you. But go and serve other gods and worship them. Then I will cut off Israel from the land that I've given them. And the house that I've consecrated for my name will cast out of my sight. And Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all the people. So Solomon, bound by this covenant, he knows the conditions that God's laid on him.

He's to obey God's word. He's to obey God's law. But following other gods is going to spell God's judgment in Israel. And as we've seen in the passage, Solomon breaks his side of that covenant. [10:53] And God is angry. But you might still be asking, well, why anger? Why is God angry? The reason is this. Because God is a jealous God. God's jealous for His name.

God's jealous for that supreme place and His people's worship and their affection and your wholehearted devotion to Him. And when God's people don't give Him first place in worship and affection, when we water down, we might say, our devotion to God and we're turning to idols of our own choosing, well, then God's every right to be angry with us.

You know, we live in a day and age when all religions are considered equally valid. You hear it all the time. You know, the exclusive claim that we find in Scripture of God, God seeking that exclusive worship of Him and Him alone.

Well, people say, well, that's just discriminatory. Discriminating against other forms of worship. Discriminating against other forms of religion. And then when we hear the claim of Jesus, I am the way, the truth and the life.

That's objected to us being elitist. And when that's the mindset of a land or even a church, then God is angry when He isn't given that wholehearted devotion.

[12:19] When modern society will claim to be superior in knowledge, God is angry. God is angry.

The God of Scripture, the God of creation, the God of redemption, the one true God. He must be worshipped and worshipped alone.

And He's given us instructions how we're to come before Him. And when we follow, as it were, by the wayside, when we, as Jim was saying, the children, when we go astray, then He's given us instructions how we must come before Him and return to Him.

And we refuse to do so. He's angry. He's angry towards a nation which worships other gods except the one true God. And God's anger will be expressed in many ways.

The famine of His Word, we see that all around. The troubling of our people. Political unrest. All that was happening at the end of Solomon's reign that we see in our own day.

[13:23] And you see all this summarized, I know it's a long section from verse 14 right to the end of the chapter, but that's why we were trying to be a little more selective in pinpointing these key events that were happening three times.

We read of God raising up individuals to punish Solomon and to punish Israel for falling after other gods. That's what we read in verse 14. God raising up an adversary, an enemy against Solomon, this man, Hadad, the Edomite.

Then we read verse 23. Another adversary reads on the son of Eliadah. And then verse 26, Jeroboam also lifted up his hand against the king.

You see, God wasn't going to permit Solomon's rebellion against God to go unpunished. God in his sovereign power was raising up individuals to be these means of punishing Solomon.

And you know, we have to say this, that in times past, and yes, even times present, God will intervene to show his anger when he is dishonored, when his way, the one true way, is abandoned.

[14:36] And I'm sure many of you know my own particular interest in the First World War and in our own church in relation to that war. The Reverend Kenneth McRae, he declared without hesitation during that war that the Lord has a controversy with his people.

In other words, that God was acting, we might say, through war, you know, to bring the nation to its senses. You know, this was at a time when the church in Britain, certainly even in Scotland, when religious liberalism was being championed that so denied so much of Scripture.

But what about today? We're on a land that has seen so much turmoil. Laws are being passed that are so counter to God's Word. There are lawbreakers making the rules.

And we shudder at the secularization of society. We grieve when we read this. We've read just a few days ago Christians excluded from their work, from positions of employment because they've stood by the Word of God against the secular mind of man.

I said, we can't be surprised. And God has a controversy with us as a nation. So what's your response? What's my response? We have to call upon Him to have mercy upon us.
[15 : 56] And we cry, is there hope? Is there hope? Well, there is hope. Of course there's hope. There's hope for all who repent and return to God. The hope that the psalm writer in Psalm 30 expressed when he wrote, his anger is but for a moment and his favor for a lifetime.

But for Solomon here, at the end of his reign, there's no evidence of repentance. Even the nation of Israel itself, there's no evidence of their turning back to God. and for their stubborn rebellion, God raises up adversaries against Solomon and ultimately the raising up of this individual Jeroboam. So we're going to think, as we say, a lot more of in the next few weeks. So what is the Lord's answer to all that Solomon had done to bring about dishonour to the name of God?

Well, God was raising up somebody who'd rule, certainly rule, the greater part of this new divided kingdom. Someone who wasn't from a royal background, but from a tribe, the tribe of Ephraim. Joshua's tribe. Joshua who'd led the Israelites into the promised land. Well, this man, Jeroboam, is from that same tribe. And as we read there in chapter 11, this man, obviously, he's got potential for leadership.

[17 : 21] He's been in charge of a team of labourers. There's this great fortress being constructed in Jerusalem. Solomon is told about this individual.

He takes note of this individual and Solomon appoints him to a very high-ranking position. But in the providence of God, this servant, if you like, this servant, this underling under Solomon, in God's timing, in God's providence, would rule, be the first ruler of the separated kingdom, this kingdom separate from the south, from Judah.

And you see the story, the graphic kind of story, the symbolic teaching that you find there of this prophet Ahijah. Ahijah, the prophet, he meets Jeroboam in the Jerusalem road.

The prophet takes off his new coat, his new jacket, and he tears it into ten pieces. There was something new that's going to happen. And symbolically, the ten pieces representing the ten tribes that are going to be separated off and given to this man, Jeroboam, to rule over.

Solomon's family is going to have one tribe, Judah, plus, obviously, Benjamin included. And all this is going to happen after Solomon's death. Why is this going to happen?

[18 : 46] Because, verse 33, because Solomon and his people have followed after false gods. They've not followed after the one true God. They've not walked that one true way.

So does this mean the end of hope for Israel? Does this mean the God who promised King David many years before that his house and his kingdom is going to be made sure forever before him? The God who promised that his throne is going to be established forever. Does that mean that God's going to break his word? That it's not going to happen? David's line is going to somehow be stopped?

Not at all. That's why we read verse 39, I will afflict the offspring of David because of this but not forever. Because the Lord is in control.

The Lord is sovereign. God's not going to break his promise to King David. David's throne will last forever. There's going to be successions of generations from King David through Solomon to this man Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

[19 : 50] You read that in Matthew chapter 1 verse 7. The one tribe which God permitted the family line of David to keep as sovereigns through Judah the tribe of Judah.

That's going to continue as we said from the tribe of Judah from that line that family line from David Solomon and onwards the Lord Jesus and his human descent will come.

God is faithful. He's going to remain faithful. He's going to be faithful to his promise to King David. There is going to be an eternal aspect to the throne of David. The Lord Jesus is that eternal King. He's the Son of God in all his eternity in his divinity. and he's the Son of David in his human descent. God's not going to deny his holiness.

God said to King David that should his offspring commit iniquity God would punish. That punishment is going to be carried out in the dividing of the kingdom after Solomon's death.

[20 : 54] God is not going to be mocked. God's not mocked when his holiness is denied. But God will remain faithful to his promises because God is a God of grace.

He's a God of faithfulness. He's a God of love for his own. You and I we're accountable to the same God.

The same God of holiness. The same God of faithfulness. God's promise never to leave you in his grace. You who know him as Lord and Savior you know that once saved you can never be lost. You're in Christ. You're always in Christ. But you know this. You know it. You know it. In your own life there are times many times even when God will discipline his children for their good for your good.

What does the writer to the Hebrews say? The Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. So when the Lord God does discipline you it's his wisdom for your good to sanctify you to help you to grow in grace to help you to be more like Christ to enable you the more to abhor that sin that you want so readily embraced.

[22 : 15] Now Israel would suffer in the discipline of God. Israel's going to be divided. There's going to be centuries of conflict with neighbours. There's going to be evil kings in the northern kingdom of Israel the southern kingdom of Judah.

But God would not abandon his people utterly. Yes God raised up these adversaries against Solomon. But of course God raised up one one among his people in his human nature. The Lord Jesus the divine Son of God the Saviour the Saviour of his people. And so from what we see here in this chapter what are we seeing?

Let's bring all this together. We're seeing the sovereign Lord God Almighty God working out his plan of redemption even in the midst of rebellion against him.

In other words there's that ray of hope there's that shimmer of hope for the salvation of God's people that even the darkness of all that's happening there and at the end of Solomon's reign there's that ray that shining ray of hope because God is sovereign God's in control there's hope given for God's people even in the midst of rebelling against him and our God is sovereign still yes amidst all the evil around even even within even amidst the controversy that yes God does have with his people even with us as a nation there's still hope and we cling to that hope he will not cast us off forever you read in Lamentations 3 the Lord will not cast off forever but though he cause grief he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love so we we rest in it that in his promises what we've read here this morning is for our good your good we're reminded yes that God is angry when God is dishonoured when he's rebelled against yes when even his own people turn their back against him when we fall away from him in our truly giving of ourselves in service and worship to him but we're reminded yes we're reminded that God's not going to sit idly by when his name's tarnished he will act in his perfect justice but we're reminded too that God gives real hope he's the God of hope he gives real hope to to all whom he's called to himself yes even even despite our wandering and going astray we're reminded above all we're reminded that God is the God who keeps who makes promises and keeps his promise even the promise of a saviour to come who'll reign in that throne of righteousness forever so Jesus is seen here as that ray of hope in this in this chapter

[25 : 22] Lord Jesus the fulfilment of the promise that God gave even here that God would not just die he's forever and so what's the response what's your response well surely this to bow in worship before the God of all grace to bow before God who's a forgiving and pardoning God who loves his own and will pardon the iniquity of his people for his sake and for his glory Amen let us pray Lord our God may we truly cast our eyes upon you may we see you in all your glory may we know that truly yes Lord you are a God who is angry because you are the God who is jealous for your name you're angry against sin even the sin committed in our own hearts may we know Lord to you you're the God who calls your people to repentance may there truly be that repentance of heart as we come before you pleading your forgiveness for our sins hear us Lord as we continue in worship before you now and forgive even our sins and holy things we ask these things in

Jesus name Amen well let's close in Psalm 105 on page 138 we're going to sing verses numbered 1 to 9 and then verse 43 to 45 so just four verses we're singing verses give thanks to the Lord God and call on his name his wonderful deeds to the nations proclaim sing praises to him and his exploits record let all those who seek him rejoice in the Lord 1 to 9 and then 43 to 45