



The Story of Salvation

Chapter 13 - “Solomon:Success and Failure”



**I Kings 3, 5-6, 8, 11, 12;
Proverbs 1; Ecclesiastes 1-3**

Opening Prayer:

O Lord God, who has said, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” bestow on us a full measure of Your wisdom that we may be wise unto salvation. Let us not seek pleasure in the vain things in which worldly-minded people find their delight. For the history of Your people teaches us that what is well begun may end in failure. Sin has the power to ruin the most promising beginning. We ask You, therefore, our Father in Christ, to make us steadfast. Make us humble, honest, and to hate our sin, that we may confess it and turn to Christ. Teach us to look only to You for abiding happiness and peace. Grant this, we pray, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, our Savior. **Amen.**

Hymn: TLH 462 “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”

SOLOMON SUCCEEDS DAVID

When King David was very old, he had Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah take Solomon, his son, to Gihon and anoint him king over Israel. “Then blow the trumpets as you return,” David said, “shout, ‘Long live King Solomon,’ and bring him to sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

Solomon became a strong ruler. He governed justly, and the result was that even the unruly Ammonites and Moabites and other tribes east of the river Jordan were satisfied and quiet.

SOLOMON’S WISDOM

Solomon was a wise king. God told him in a dream that he could ask for anything he wanted and God would give it to him. Solomon asked for wisdom so that he could judge the people righteously. God gave him wisdom, and the reports of his wise judgments spread even to the neighboring nations. When the report came to the queen of Sheba in southern Arabia, she made a journey to Jerusalem in order to learn from this remarkable and wise man.

Once two prostitutes came to the king, asking for his wise judgment. One said, “O my lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house. But her baby died during the night when she rolled over on it. Then she got up in the night and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t my son at all.” Then the other woman interrupted, “It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine.” “No!” the first woman said, “The living child is mine, and the dead one is yours!” And so they argued back and forth before the king. Then the king said, “Let’s get the facts straight. Both of you claim the living child is yours, and each says that the dead one belongs to the other. All right, bring me a sword.” So a sword was brought to the king. Then he said, “Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!” Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, “Oh no, my lord! Give her the child—please do not kill him!” But the other woman said, “All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!” Then the king said, “Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!” When all Israel heard the king’s decision, the people were in awe of the king, for they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice.

The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes record his more than 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs, and give a good picture of Solomon’s wide interest and keen understanding.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

By far the most notable achievement of Solomon's wise and exceptionally prosperous reign was the construction of the Temple at Jerusalem to replace the Tabernacle. While it was built magnificently and beautifully, it was also built in the correct spirit. Rather than glorifying himself or spreading his fame with the building, he sought to glorify God and advance God's kingdom on earth.

David had made all necessary preparations for the building of the temple. Solomon devoted himself to the work so energetically that the temple was finished in seven years. It was modeled after the Tabernacle and constructed from the finest materials, including cedar wood from Lebanon, and the inside of the sanctuary—that is the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies—was overlaid with gold.

As soon as the Temple with its courts and surrounding walls was completed, a great dedication festival was held. Solomon assembled in Jerusalem the elders of Israel, the heads of all the tribes and clans of the children of Israel, and brought the ark of the covenant of Yahweh from the city of David, which is Zion.¹ The priests brought the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in it. While they did this, King Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel sacrificed so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted. The priests placed the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. Only the two tablets of stone that Moses had put there were in the ark. When the priests came out of the Holy of Holies, a cloud filled the sanctuary. The priests could not complete their service because the glory of God had filled the sanctuary.

Then the king kneeled in front of the altar of incense and with up-stretched arms prayed: "O Yahweh, the God of Israel, there is no God like You. Heaven, even the highest heavens, and the earth and everything in it cannot contain You, much less the house that I have built. Nevertheless, may you always hear the prayers of Your people Israel when they pray toward this place. May you watch over this Temple night and day, this place where you have said, 'My name will be there.' Yes, hear us from Your heavenly throne where you live, and when you hear, forgive. If Your people sin against You, for there is no man that does not sin, and You are rightly angry with them and deliver them to be defeated by an enemy, when there is no rain, when there is famine or pestilence, plague or sickness because they have sinned against You and they repent and make supplication (pray) to You, then hear their prayer and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them again to the land that You gave to their fathers. Teach them the good way in which they should live so that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land. And in the future, foreigners who do not belong to your people Israel will hear of you. They will come from distant lands because of your name, for they will hear of your great name and your strong hand and your powerful arm. And when they pray toward this Temple, then hear from heaven where you live, and grant what they ask of you. Then, all the people of the earth will come to know and fear you, just as your own people Israel do."

When Solomon was finished praying, he stood up and blessed the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, "Blessed be Yahweh, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. Not one word has failed of all the wonderful promises He gave through His servant Moses. May Yahweh our God be with us as He was with our ancestors; may He never leave us or abandon us. May He give us the desire to do His will in everything and to obey all the commands, decrees, and regulations that He gave our ancestors. Let your heart be perfectly devoted to Yahweh our God, walking in His statutes and keeping His commandments. Then people all over the earth will know that Yahweh alone is God and there is no other."

Then Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Feast of Booths.² In all, the celebration went on for fourteen days—seven days for the dedication of the altar and seven days for the Feast of Booths. After the festival was over, Solomon sent the people home. They blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad because Yahweh had been good to His people Israel.

¹ It was probably brought from a place in Jerusalem where it had been kept since David moved it there (see 2 Samuel 5:7; 6:1-17)

² One of the major festivals for Israel - Learn more at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Feast-of-Tabernacles.html> (Attached)

LUXURY AND TAXES

For much of his life Solomon remained faithful to Yahweh and he gave the best he and his people were able to give to the glory of God. However, later in life he yielded to temptations and became an idolater and a servant of sin, which serves as a warning example for us.

Solomon's greatness had a harmful influence upon him. He liked foreign luxuries and furnished his palace with unheard of splendor. He built many costly buildings, especially in Jerusalem. As a result, taxes became a heavier and heavier burden on the people.

His vanity had yet another, more serious effect. In those days, one of the signs of a great king was that he had many wives. Other kings and rulers would seek the king's favor by giving him their daughters as wives. Solomon accumulated a collection of wives that is said to have numbered over one thousand. All these wives were an expensive luxury and the taxes went still higher.

IDOL-WORSHIP REVIVED

However, this was not the worst. These wives were permitted to carry on idol-worship in their new home and bring their idol priests. Solomon also provided places for the worship of the idols and altars for the service of the priests. As a result, the false gods of the surrounding nations were worshipped in the king's palaces and with his approval. Altars were built on the Mount of Olives and other places within the holy city. Naturally, idol-worship, which David had suppressed, became very popular when the king allowed and accommodated for it in his kingdom and his own house. The old battle against idol worship had to be fought all over again.

REBELLION SPLITS THE KINGDOM

Yahweh was angry with Solomon. He said to him, "Since you have done this and not kept My commandments, I will tear the kingdom from you. But for the sake of David, your father, I will not do it while you are alive. I will tear it from your son. I will give only one tribe to your son, for David's sake and for the sake of My chosen Jerusalem."

A rebellion threatened to split the kingdom while Solomon lived. The attempt failed. However, as soon as Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king, the rebellion flared up again. When the people came to the young king and asked that their lives be made easier. Rehoboam was proud and foolish and answered, "My father laid heavy burdens on you, but I'm going to make them even heavier! My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions!" As a result, ten tribes, led by the tribe of Ephraim, revolted against Rehoboam.

Solomon had made Jeroboam ruler over the tribe of Ephraim. Once when Jeroboam left Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah, who was dressed in a new robe, met Jeroboam along the road. Ahijah tore his new robe in twelve pieces and said to Jeroboam, "Take ten of these, for Yahweh has said that He would tear the kingdom away from Solomon and give you ten tribes because he has forsaken Yahweh. But I will leave him one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel."

So, the ten tribes broke away from the house of David and elected Jeroboam as their king. Their new kingdom was called the Kingdom of Israel, or the Northern Kingdom. Its capital city was Samaria. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to Rehoboam. This kingdom was called the Kingdom of Judah, or the Southern Kingdom. Its capital city was Jerusalem.

WHAT THE NORTHERN KINGDOM LOST

This separation of the two kingdoms had serious implications, so let's be clear about them. *When the Northern Kingdom rejected the king of David's line, it excluded itself from the Messianic promises since the Messiah was to be a son of David. From now on the promises belonged to the people of the Southern Kingdom.*

But that was not all. King Jeroboam realized that he had to provide his people with a religion. Otherwise they would go up to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple and would return to the king of David's line. So, he built a temple to Yahweh in Samaria and appointed priests to officiate. He also set up two golden calves and, worshipping the calves, the people would say they worshiped Yahweh. However, it was the same Egyptian idol worship that Israel tried at Mt. Sinai. Essentially this false worship meant that the Northern Kingdom had really adopted idol worship as its state religion, which broke the 1st Commandment, offended Yahweh, and was deserving of His condemnation.

WHY PROPHETS IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

Even so, God is so patient and so unbreakable is His covenant that He could not abandon His people even though they had turned away from Him. He prolonged their time until His judgment, giving them a time of grace, as He sent prophets to them and continued to call them to repentance so they would turn and find salvation by faith in the true God.

However, by making idol worship their official religion, the ten tribes showed that they had become so enmeshed in heathen practices and thinking that they had entirely turned away from God, and He could no longer use them in His work of salvation for mankind. Yet, God could not allow the Northern Kingdom to continue unabated in its pursuit of idol worship. Inevitably, the two kingdoms would influence one another. They belonged to the same people, had the same language and history, and had the same religious traditions. Naturally, the more idol worship could be kept down in the Northern Kingdom, the better it would be for the Southern Kingdom where God intended to work his plan of salvation. *Thus, the God-ordained division of the kingdoms was God's way of enforcing separation between those He could no longer use and those with whom He could still work in the preparation for the coming of Christ.*

Still, there was another reason. True believers still lived in the Northern Kingdom. God thought of them when He said to Elijah that there were still seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal. God could not forsake His believers anywhere. And this small remnant of God's people in the Northern Kingdom needed a lot of help, since the whole national life was dominated by idol worship. So God sent several of His most powerful prophets to the Northern Kingdom.

THE MOST VITAL ISSUE

Although idol worship was more predominant in the Northern Kingdom, it remained a major problem in both kingdoms. The fight against it went on constantly. At times the battle seemed all but lost as the idols were everywhere, even in the temple in Jerusalem. Most of the time, there was only a small remnant of the faithful left, and they were oppressed and persecuted by rulers, priests, and their own community, even family. But the almighty and faithful God of the Covenant was with them. So, the battle was never lost. For power and wisdom belong to our God. (Revelation 7:12)

CATECHETICAL CONNECTION:

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

The Sixth Petition from The Lord's Prayer

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

Luther. (2017). [Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation](#) (p.22). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

PRAYER FOR THE CLOSE OF DAY: *Lutheran Service Book p. 298*

Readings for the Next Chapter - Ch. 14 "Elijah, the Fire Prophet":

- ➔ Scripture: I Kings 16-19, 21; II Kings 2, 9
- ➔ Small Catechism: 2nd Commandment

Question: "What is the Feast of Tabernacles / Booths / Sukkot?"

Answer: The Feast of Tabernacles, also known as the Feast of Booths and *Sukkot*, is the seventh and last feast that the Lord commanded Israel to observe and one of the three feasts that Jews were to observe each year by going to “appear before the Lord your God in the place which He shall choose” (Deuteronomy 16:16). The importance of the Feast of Tabernacles can be seen in how many places it is mentioned in Scripture. In the Bible we see many important events that took place at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. For one thing, it was at this time that Solomon’s Temple was dedicated to the Lord (1 Kings 8:2).

It was also at the Feast of Tabernacles that the Israelites, who had returned to rebuild the temple, gathered together to hear Ezra proclaim the Word of God to them (Nehemiah 8). Ezra’s preaching resulted in a great revival as the Israelites confessed their sins and repented of them. It was also during this Feast that Jesus said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37–39).

The Feast of Tabernacles takes place on the 15th of the Hebrew month Tishri. This was the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar and usually occurs in late September to mid-October. The feast begins five days after the Day of Atonement and at the time the fall harvest had just been completed. It was a time of joyous celebration as the Israelites celebrated God’s continued provision for them in the current harvest and remembered His provision and protection during the 40 years in the wilderness.

As one of the three feasts that all “native born” male Jews were commanded to participate in, the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned multiple times in Scripture, sometimes called the Feast of the Ingathering, the Feast to the Lord, or the Feast of Booths (Exodus 23:16; Deuteronomy 16:13). As one of the pilgrim feasts (when Jewish males were commanded to go to Jerusalem), it was also the time when they brought their tithes and offerings to the Temple (Deuteronomy 16:16). With the influx of people coming to Jerusalem at that time, we can only imagine what the scene must have been like. Thousands upon thousands of people coming together to remember and celebrate God’s deliverance and His provision, all living in temporary shelters or booths as part of the requirements of the feast. During the eight-day period, so many sacrifices were made that it required all twenty-four divisions of priests to be present to assist in the sacrificial duties.

We find God’s instructions for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus 23, given at a point in history right after God had delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt. The feast was to be celebrated each year on “the fifteenth day of this seventh month” and was to run for seven days (Leviticus 23:34). Like all feasts, it begins with a “holy convocation” or Sabbath day when the Israelites were to stop working to set aside the day for worshiping God. On each day of the feast they were to offer an “offering made by fire to the Lord” and then after seven days of feasting, again the eighth day was to be “a holy convocation” when they were to cease from work and offer another sacrifice to God (Leviticus 23). Lasting eight days, the Feast of Tabernacles begins and ends with a Sabbath day of rest. During the eight days of the feast, the Israelites would dwell in booths or tabernacles that were made from the branches of trees (Leviticus 23:40–42).

The Feast of Tabernacles, like all the feasts, was instituted by God as a way of reminding Israelites in every generation of their deliverance by God from Egypt. Of course, the feasts are also significant in that they foreshadow the work and actions of the coming Messiah. Much of Jesus' public ministry took place in conjunction with the Holy Feasts set forth by God.

The three pilgrim feasts where all Jewish males were commanded to "appear before the Lord in the place he chooses" are each very important in regards to the life of Christ and His work of redemption. We know with certainty that the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are symbolic of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross. Likewise, we know that Pentecost, which marked the beginning of the Feast of Weeks, was the time of Jesus' bodily ascension. And most scholars would agree that the Feast of Tabernacles is symbolic of Christ's Second Coming when He will establish His earthly kingdom.

There are also some who believe that it was likely during the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus was born. While we celebrate Christ's birth on December 25, most scholars acknowledge that this tradition was begun in the fourth century AD by the Roman Catholic Church and that the exact day of Jesus' birth is unknown. Some of the evidence that Jesus might have been born earlier in the year during the Feast of the Tabernacles includes the fact that it would be unlikely for shepherds to still be in the field with their sheep in December, which is in the middle of the winter, but it would have been likely they were in the fields tending sheep at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The strong possibility that Jesus was born at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles is also seen in the words John wrote in John 1:14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The word John chose to speak of Jesus "dwelling" among us is the word *tabernacle*, which simply means to "dwell in a tent."

Some believe it is very likely that John intentionally used this word to associate the first coming of Christ with the Feast of Tabernacles. Christ came in the flesh to dwell among us for a temporary time when He was born in the manger, and He is coming again to dwell among us as Lord of Lords. While it cannot be established with certainty that Jesus was born during the Feast of Tabernacles, some believe there is a strong possibility the Feast of Tabernacles not only looks forward to His second coming but also reflects back on His first coming.

The Feast of Tabernacles begins and ends with a special Sabbath day of rest. During the days of the feast all native Israelites were "to dwell in booths" to remind them that God delivered them out of the "land of Egypt" and to look forward to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would deliver His people from the bondage of sin. This feast, like all of the feasts of Israel, consistently reminded the Jews and should remind Christians as well that God has promised to deliver His people from the bondage of sin and deliver them from their enemies. Part of God's deliverance for the Israelites was His provision and protection of them for the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness, cut off from the Promised Land. The same holds true for Christians today. God protects us and provides for us as we go through life in the wilderness of this world. While our hearts long for the Promised Land (heaven) and to be in the presence of God, He preserves us in this world as we await the world to come and the redemption that will come when Jesus Christ returns again to "tabernacle" or dwell among us in bodily form.

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I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

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Ps. 137

Timothy Dwight, 1800, ab., alt.

S. M.

St. Thomas

Aaron Williams, 1770



1 I love Thy king - dom, Lord, The house of Thine a - bode,
2 I love Thy Church, O God. Her walls be - fore Thee stand,
3 Should I with scoff - ers join Her al - tars to a - buse?



The Church our blest Re-deem-er saved With His own pre-cious blood.
Dear as the ap - ple of Thine eye And grav - en on Thy hand.
No! Bet - ter far my tongue were dumb, My hand its skill should lose. A-men.



4 For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given
Till toils and cares shall end.

5 Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

6 Jesus, Thou Friend Divine,
Our Savior and our King,
Thy hand from every snare and foe
Shall great deliverance bring.

7 Sure as Thy truth shall last,
To Zion shall be given
The brightest glories earth can yield
And brighter bliss of heaven.
Amen

✠ **Prayer for the Close of Day** ✠

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and peace at the last.
Amen.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praise to Your name, O Most High;

To herald Your love in the morning,
Your truth at the close of the day.

Apostles' Creed

**☐ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

**Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace;
Your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which You have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal You to the nations
and the glory of Your people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Continued on the back →

Visit our dwellings, O Lord, and in Your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of Your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Lord's Prayer

**☩ Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.

Acknowledgments

Close of the Day from Lutheran Service Book

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