

THE DANGER OF FINISHING WRONG

1 KINGS 10:23-11:13

Text: 1 Kings 11:11

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Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Introduction:

If you have ever seen a news story about a marathon race they usually show two sets of pictures: the beginning of the race with the huge mass of runners “taking off” and the end of the race with the winner breaking the tape at the finish.

What we fail to see is the important part of the race: the middle.

Many of those who started so well struggle and even some fail to finish.

Let’s look at an example from the Bible of someone who started well but finished badly. That person was one of Israel’s greatest kings: Solomon.

1. DIVINE FAVOR

1 Kings 3:5-13

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. ⁶And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in. ⁸And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. ⁹Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? ¹⁰And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. ¹¹And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; ¹²Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. ¹³And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

2. Divided Loyalties

1 Kings 11:1-13

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites; ²Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: *for* surely they

will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father. ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father. ⁷Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. ⁸And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

3. DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES

1 Kings 11:9-13

And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, ¹⁰And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. ¹¹Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. ¹²Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: *but* I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. ¹³Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; *but* will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.