

# OpenTheo

## September 20th: 1 Kings 11 & Hebrews 10:1-18

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The Lord raises up adversaries for Solomon. Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired.

Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

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## Transcript

1 Kings 11. 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, 2 You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. 3 Solomon clung to these in love.

He had seven hundred wives, who were princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned away his heart. 4 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. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites.

6 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. 7 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. 8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed their gods.

9 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. 10 But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. 11 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.

12 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. 13 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. 14 And the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite.

He was of the royal house in Edom. 15 For when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, he struck down every male in Edom. 16 For Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom.

17 But Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain Edomites of his father's servants, Hadad still being a little child. 18 They set out from Midian and came to Paran, and took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house and assigned him an allowance of food and gave him land. 19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tapanes, the queen.

20 And the sister of Tapanes bore him Ganubath his son, whom Tapanes weaned in Pharaoh's house. 21 And Ganubath was in Pharaoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh. 22 But when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to my own country.

23 But Pharaoh said to him, What have you lacked with me that you are now seeking to go to your own country? And he said to him, Only let me depart. 24 God also raised up as an adversary to him Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his master Hadadizah king of Zobah. 25 And he gathered men about him and became leader of the marauding band after the killing by David.

26 And they went to Damascus and lived there, and made him king in Damascus. 27 He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing harm as Hadad did. And he

loathed Israel and reigned over Syria.

28 Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zerudah, a servant of Solomon whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also lifted up his hand against the king. 29 And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built the millow, and closed up the breach of the city of David his father.

30 The man Jeroboam was very able, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. 31 And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. 32 Now Ahijah had dressed himself in a new garment, and the two of them were alone in the open country.

33 Then Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 34 And he said to Jeroboam, Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 35 Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes. 36 But he shall have one tribe for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.

37 Because they have forsaken me, and worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, 38 Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, 39 doing what is right in my sight, and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did. 40 Nevertheless I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of David my servant whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes. 41 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it to you, ten tribes.

42 Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. 43 And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 44 And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.

45 And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not for ever. 46 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. 47 But Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

48 Now the rest of the Acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the Acts of Solomon? And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

Solomon is at the centre of a great new Eden. He is gathering riches from all around the world. He has built the temple with all of its garden imagery.

He has established himself as the great power within the region. The queen of Sheba, like Eve, has been brought to him, and his kingdom is glorious and well-ordered throughout. However, much as in the garden of Eden, when everything is at its height, a great fall occurs.

He breaks the commandments that were given to the king in Deuteronomy chapter 17. In each respect he accumulates gold. He turns to Egypt for horses and chariots.

And his political entanglement with Pharaoh and the Egyptians is far more extensive than mere horse trading. He seeks to forge multiple alliances with people round about by marrying many foreign women, most notable among them the daughter of Pharaoh. Solomon's love of his foreign wives, the real politic of international relations, and his policy of multiculturalism, turns his heart away from the Lord.

Rather than relying upon the Lord, he relied upon his shrewdness in playing the compromising game of regional politics with the idolatrous nations around him. One can imagine that to keep the nations that he had married into happy, he would be expected to provide shrines for the worship of their favoured gods. If he does not do this, then they will be displeased and will think that the women that they have given to Solomon as wives and concubines have been despised.

Here as elsewhere, political expediency takes priority over faithfulness to the Lord. The Lord had explicitly warned Israel against unfaithful covenants with the surrounding nations and intermarriage with them. In Deuteronomy 7, verses 1-4, When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction.

You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons, or taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn away your sons from following me to serve other gods.

Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. Again in Exodus 23, verses 32-33, You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me.

For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you. Exodus 34, verses 11-16 Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

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. In scripture there is often a close association between marriage and faithfulness to the Lord.

The danger of idolatry is the danger of false intermarriage, or the danger of adultery. There is also the danger of giving your heart and your strength to the wrong person. In marriage a man gives his heart to a woman, gives his heart and his strength and his abilities, and if he gives it to the wrong woman he will be led astray.

Much of the book of Proverbs, ironically, is about the question of to whom do you give your heart. The young man must decide for whom to leave his father and mother. He should give his heart to the wise wife, to the woman who shows the character of lady wisdom herself, not to lady folly or to the adulterous woman.

If he gives his heart to the right woman, he will be built up and glorified, but if he makes the wrong choice he will be destroyed. In the case of Solomon, he made the wrong choice. Peter Lighthouse observes the way that the author of Kings presents this as a compromise of Solomon's own identity.

The word used for wholly devoted puns on Solomon's name, as does the word for the mantle that a hija tears apart. Solomon himself is only truly Solomon when he is wholly devoted to the Lord and his sin leads to him being torn apart in various ways. Solomon was so involved with Egypt that he himself became like Pharaoh.

The startling transformation can be seen in the stories of Hadad the Edomite and Jeroboam the son of Nebat. The story of Hadad the Edomite is told in a manner that is powerfully reminiscent of the story of Moses. As an infant, much of Moses' life was threatened by Pharaoh's slaughter of the Hebrew boys.

Hadad's life was placed in peril when Joab killed every male in Edom and some of Hadad's family servants fled with Hadad to Egypt. Pharaoh treated Hadad well, giving him food and land and his own sister-in-law as a wife. Like Moses, Hadad turned his back on the privileges of the Egyptian court and sought to return to his own people, asking Pharaoh, again in a manner reminiscent of Moses, to let him depart.

Rezon's story should also be familiar to us. Like David, he flees from his lord. He gathers a band of men around him like David did in the cave of Bedolom and then he becomes

king in Damascus, like David became king in Hebron over Judah.

Like Pharaoh, Solomon was committed to the non-stop construction of vast building projects, establishing a standing labour force in order to do so. Amos Frisch observed some of the parallels. He writes, In the description of Solomon's works, it is possible to discern echoes of the first stage of the Israelite enslavement at the hands of Pharaoh.

They set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens, and they built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Ramses. Exodus 1, verse 11. In a similar fashion, we find vis-à-vis Solomon, Solomon rebuilt, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots and the cities for his horsemen.

In 1 Kings, chapter 9, verses 17 to 19. He notes that the term for burden appears within the narrative of Solomon, when he gave Jeroboam the son of Nebat charge over all the forced labour of the house of Joseph. Indeed, later in the narrative, the people talk about the heavy yoke and the hard service that Solomon had placed upon them.

In chapter 12, verse 4. All of this is languished with troubling echoes of Pharaoh's treatment of the Hebrews, in Exodus chapter 1, verses 11 to 14. And by this point then, the rich cluster of Eden themes in the opening chapters of the book has thoroughly curdled. In chapter 11, verses 9 to 13.

God confronted Solomon concerning his sin, much as he had confronted Adam in Genesis. The kingdom would be torn away from him, much as Adam was thrust out of the garden. It is against this background that the figure of Jeroboam first comes into the frame.

Jeroboam was an officer over Solomon's labour force. The prophet Ahijah told Jeroboam that the Lord was going to tear the kingdom from Solomon's hands, leaving only two tribes to him. Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon, who sought to kill him.

Jeroboam, like Hadad before him, flees to Egypt for refuge, where he remains until the death of Solomon. Once again, we see themes reminiscent of Moses and the Exodus here. But they have been twisted, distorted, and inverted.

Jeroboam should also be a character who reminds us of David. In such characters, the Lord is establishing mirrors in which Solomon and Israel can reflect upon their sins, and how they are compromised by them. The character of Jeroboam is a sort of parody of Israel.

Like David, he is a valiant warrior who rises in the service of the royal administration. He meets a prophet who tells him that he will be king, much as Samuel told David that he would be king. The tearing of the cloak representing the tearing of the kingdom should remind us of Samuel's symbolic action to Saul.

Like Saul with David, Solomon tries to kill Jeroboam when he finds that he has been set apart as his successor. Indeed, even the promises that are given to Jeroboam might remind us of the promises that are given to David. However, the Lord has purposes still for David's house.

He will not entirely extinguish it. He will leave to David one tribe, and when the time comes, he will restore the kingdom. A question to consider.

The theme of the self is a prominent one throughout this chapter, whether in the way that sin fractures and undermines identities, leading us to transform into our opposites, or the way that giving our hearts to the wrong thing or to the wrong persons can tear us apart. How might the lessons of this chapter be related to other teachings of scripture regarding the effects of sin and of grace upon the self? Hebrews chapter 10 verses 1 to 18. For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come, instead of the true form of these realities, it can never by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year, for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "...sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me. In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure." Then I said, "...behold I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book." When he said above, "...you have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings, these are offered according to the law." Then he added, "...behold I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us, for after saying, "...this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days," declares the Lord, "...I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds." Then he adds, "...I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin." Chapter 9 ended with Christ once for all dealing with sins in the heavenly places themselves, opening the way to God that was once closed off in a manner symbolized by the lack of access to the most holy place in the earthly

tabernacle.

In the opening verses of chapter 10, he drives the point home. The law of Moses and its ceremonies had only an anticipatory shadow of the realities that had been brought in by Christ. The most holy place of the tabernacle was not the heavenly reality of God's throne, but an earthly symbolic representation.

All of the sacrifices performed in the old sanctuary could not ultimately perfect the worshippers, bringing them to the clearly intended goal of the system. The old covenant was Sisyphean. It had to repeat the same cycle again and again and again, year by year, while never actually attaining to its goal of decisively dealing with sin and bringing the worshipper into the presence of God.

Had it done so, the sacrifices wouldn't have continually been offered. The worshippers would no longer have needed repeated reminders of their sin. The sacrificial system constantly brought sin and the division that it caused to the forefront of the worshippers' consciousness.

However, with the offering of Christ, the burden of sins upon the worshippers' consciousness can be removed. The obstacle of our sins needs no longer be a constant preoccupation when the true way into God's presence has been secured. This contrasts markedly with the old covenant, in which year after year there were repeated reminders of that obstacle of sin, a constant nagging recollection of the barrier between God and humanity that had not been lifted.

And while the blood of bulls and goats offered a symbolic cleansing of the body, they could never truly take away sins and deal with the deeper reality of sin that obstructed people's access to God's heavenly presence. Christianity talks a lot about the blood of Christ and other such things. Some people can think of this as if the physical blood of Jesus has quasi-magical properties.

However, blood was always a symbolic manifestation or representation of something more fundamental. One's blood is one's life, especially one's life laid down or offered or transmitted in some manner. The use of the physical substance of blood helps us to communicate or to understand the more fundamental reality of the transmission of the qualities of someone's life and death to others.

Likewise, the concept of animal sacrifice always related to the communication and offering of oneself and one's works to God. The author of Hebrews makes this point by quoting Psalm 40 verses 6 to 8 as if it were the statement of Christ just before taking human flesh. Animal sacrifices were unable to deal with sins and to establish righteousness.

They constantly recall the presence of an obstacle and the need for something to deal



with it. And while they might symbolize the solution, they were unable to affect that solution themselves. They were not ultimately pleasing to God.

God wanted something more, the true obedience and self-offering of human life. David's words to the Lord in the Psalm are most fully realized in his greater Son, who accomplishes the true will of God by coming to render the true service and human offering that the sacrifices were unable to achieve. The author of Hebrews tweaks the verse to strengthen his sermonic point.

The original text reads, Verse 6 more literally reads, ears you have prepared for me, which Hebrews expresses as a body you have prepared for me. Perhaps the author of Hebrews is wanting his hearers to hear that divergence from the original text and to recognize that he is unpacking the point of the original. The open ear or the prepared ears are bodily instruments given and prepared by God for obedience.

Christ in his incarnation realizes and more gloriously fulfills what the psalmist is speaking of. And the author of Hebrews tweaking of the verse makes this more apparent. It reinforces his argument.

The body of Christ's incarnation is a God-given means of his full obedience to the will of God. It's a means by which what God always most deeply desired from humanity can be realized. God the Son became man in order that the will of God might be fulfilled in true human obedience.

The law of God is within his heart. This was written of in the scroll of the book, which now refers not merely to the law of kingship or even to the Pentateuch more generally, but to the entire Old Testament, which anticipates or speaks of its expected fulfillment in the obedience of one who is to come. When such human obedience is offered and we are by the Spirit caught up in the slipstream of Christ, animal sacrifices and offerings are no longer needed and indeed they can be done away with.

The once for all decisive and final offering has now occurred. Animal sacrifices are nullified now that the true human obedience that the law always anticipated and awaited and desired has been established. And now the author of Hebrews is at a point to return triumphantly to the point at which he began.

But now we have the eyes to see its true wonder and glory. The Levitical priests are engaged in that Sisyphean task of repeatedly offering the same sacrifices, sacrifices that are ultimately futile in the task of taking away sins. However, Christ offered a single efficacious sacrifice for sins, achieving once for all what the old repeated sacrifices were unable to do, no matter how much they strive towards it.

Having offered this once for all sacrifice, he can now sit down at the right hand of God in the position of intimacy. He enjoys all the prerogatives of sonship and rule. He waits for

all things to be subjected to him, to be placed beneath his feet.

The great contrast here is one of posture between the Levitical priests who stand daily at their service and Christ who is seated. Their work is never completely done. However, Christ's work is truly complete.

And as a result, he has entered into his rest at God's right hand in fulfillment of Psalm 110 verse 1, the verse concerning the ascension of the one who is eternally the priest according to the order of Melchizedek. He now awaits the final judgment as all enemies and opponents are subdued under his feet. He constantly intercedes for us from his position of rule, through and in us his enemies are overcome.

Recognizing the efficacy of Christ's once for all sacrifice is imperative for our understanding of the Christian faith. The old sacrifices could never take away sins, but the offering of Christ has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. The pollution and the guilt of sin have been decisively dealt with and we now have access to God.

We have been made holy. However, Christ's work is also continuous and progressive as we are being conformed over time to the reality of who he is and what he has achieved for us. We have been perfected, but we are also being sanctified.

We must continue to participate in Christ, growing into full possession of him and of his life. All of the things the author of Hebrews has written of are witnessed to by the promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah chapter 31. There are two parts of this promise, speaking both of the dealing with the principle of sin within the people of God and dealing with the guilt and condemnation of sin.

Christ in his self-offering deals with both of these things. His self-offering deals with the condemnation of death that lies upon humanity as he takes up the destiny of humanity within himself and bears its sin. Christ is also the word or the law made flesh, the complete incarnation of the will of God.

By the communication of his life by the spirit to us, this writing of the law upon the heart, the enfleshing of the will of God, becomes a reality for us too. The attentive reader of scripture will have noticed earlier that when the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 40, he cuts off at the end of verse 7. But verse 8, which a biblically literate hero would have been familiar with, is the real powerful verse. I delight to do your will, O my God.

Your law is within my heart. The true obedience of David's greater son is the means by which the new covenant will be fulfilled. A question to consider.

What might we learn from the way that the author of Hebrews uses the Old Testament within this passage?