

The Thread

Discovering The Thread of the Gospel Through The Big-Picture Story of the Bible

Part 2: A People Rise. A People Fall. Lesson 20: The Rise and Fall of Solomon



Session Snapshot

Narrative Passage: 1 Kings 1:28-30; 3:4-15; 9:1-9; 11:1-13

Gospel Focus: John 14:23-24

Student Takeaways:

- Students will see how Solomon's rise was tied to God's blessing, and how his fall was tied to his own sinfulness.
- Students will understand that our motivation for obeying God should be born out of our love for Him.
- Students will examine their own attitudes toward obedience and what their motivations are.



Overview

In today's lesson, the legacy of David continues as his son, Solomon, is crowned king. But we will find that things don't go so well for David's son. David led the people to follow God. And Solomon kept this same thread for many years. But Solomon strayed from God in a very significant way. And because he was king, his wandering led the people away from God as well. And it set in motion a turn of events that would cripple Israel for generations. It's a powerful reminder of what happens when we fail to obey God's guidance.



Teacher Prep Video

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Thread* lesson 20 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 20, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.



Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson we encourage teachers to help students know who wrote a particular book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **Why teach context?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

1 Kings

Author: Ancient Jewish history has Jeremiah as the author of 1 Kings and 2 Kings. However, this view has never been widely supported by scholars. It's best to view the books as a collection of writings with no known author.

Time frame: 1 Kings and 2 Kings are extremely difficult to date because it's a collection of writings that could have been written and edited in stages.

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Purpose: 1 Kings and 2 Kings tell the stories of the kings of Israel. These books speak of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of kings and the impact that a godly leader can have on God's people.

John

Author: The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

Time frame: The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

Purpose: John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.



Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- An introductory activity called Getting Started designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- A section entitled The Story featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- A special emphasis entitled The Thread where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- An application-focused segment called Wrapping Up helping teenagers ask the question, "How am I impacted by what I learned today"?

Getting Started

- **Goal:** For students to experiment with the concept of if/then clauses in order to better understand the conditions of God's covenant with Solomon.
- **Set-Up:** Two notecards or pieces of scrap paper for each student, pens, and two paper bags or bowls.

FIRST, give each student two notecards or scrap pieces of paper, and a pen or pencil. Tell students that you are going to have a little fun with language before you dive into the lesson today.

Say something like:

- **Each of you has two cards that together will make up one statement. You are going to think of one conditional if/then statement and write it as two parts on the cards. For example, "IF I lay down right now (card 1), THEN I will fall asleep (card 2). Do not let anyone else see your statement.**

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THEN, when everyone has written both parts of their statement, collect all the cards, making sure that all of the 'IF' cards go in one bag, and all of the 'THEN' card go in the other. Shake up the bags so the cards are mixed, then have each student randomly draw out one card from each bag. Go around the group and have the students read their mixed up clauses aloud.

NEXT, say something like:

- **While all of these statements may be grammatically correct, some of them make no sense and sound pretty silly. But, the truth is, for each of these 'IF' statements, there is one correct result. Take a minute and see if you can find the correct matches.**

THEN, after the students have taken a few minutes to try and match the cards, say something like:

- **Remember that we're looking at the big-picture story of Scripture. We're coming to some pretty major parts of the story. In today's lesson we are going to see God give some very clear conditions that have a definite result. He does not leave any room for confusion when He enters into a covenant with His people!**

Transition to The Story.

The Story

- **Goal:** For students to see how Solomon's rise was tied to God's blessing, and how his fall was tied to his own sinfulness.
- **Setup:** Dry erase board and Bibles or Bible apps.

BEGIN by giving your students a quick recap of the saga between David and Bathsheba. (Look at 2 Sam. 11-12 if needed.) Remind them that although David's early actions regarding this woman did not honor God, his heart of repentance surely did! Although David and Bathsheba suffered consequences, including the loss of their first child, God set David back on a path of obedience.

Use the information below in the 'Connecting the Dots' section to help set the scene for today's lesson.

Connecting The Dots

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it as a way to review and/or to connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- **King David is now very old and his health is starting to fail. It is no secret to anyone that it is time to anoint his successor.**
- **While one of David's sons, Adonijah pursues the throne, Nathan the prophet prompts Bathsheba to request that David appoint her son, Solomon, as the next king. (Scripture hints that perhaps David had once promised this to Bathsheba in private.)**
- **David anoints Solomon as king, but clearly warns him to uphold their family's covenant with God. He instructs his son to 'show himself a man' by remaining obedient to God and thereby preserving their blessed line of kings. (1 Kings 2)**

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THEN, read or have a student read 1 Kings 1:28-30. Ask something like:

- **Looking closely at David's words here, what do you see about his attitude toward making Solomon king?**
 - o Answer: He reveals this as a promise he made to Bathsheba beforehand, and says he will do this "As the Lord lives." The fact that he swore this by the God of Israel seems to indicate that he thinks this decision is God ordained.

NEXT, have students turn to chapter 3 and read or have a student read 1 Kings 3:4-5. Ask something like:

- **If you were Solomon and had just become king and could have any request granted, what would you ask for?**
 - o Answers will vary. Share with them your answer and try and get them talking about what they think would be the most important request.

THEN, finish this passage by reading or having a student read 1 Kings 3:6-15. Ask something like:

- **What does Solomon's request reveal about his relationship with God at this point in his life?**
 - o Answer: Solomon acknowledges in verse 7 that he is on the throne because God put him there. He understands that he is king of God's people, and that he will have to depend solely upon God rather than his own skill.
- **Where did Solomon's wisdom come from?**
 - o Answer: It came from the Lord. Solomon wasn't born that wise. He became incredibly wise because the Lord chose to bestow it on him.
- **Where did his great riches come from?**
 - o Answer: They also came from the Lord. The Lord willingly chose to bless Solomon with these things.

THEN, explain to your students that you're going to skip ahead to chapter 9. While they're turning there, give them a quick summary of what takes place leading up to chapter 9 by saying something like:

- **In the next couple of chapters, we learn that David had never been able to build a proper temple for the Lord during his reign due to all the wars that occupied his resources. Now Solomon, basking in the riches and years of peace that God has given him, declares that he will build a temple fit for the Lord God. He even recalls the prophesy spoken by Nathan to David in 2 Samuel 7:13, that David's son would build this temple. All of this begins to take shape some 480 years after the Israelites are freed from slavery in Egypt. In 1 Kings 6-8 we see extravagant detail of the design and construction of the temple, as well as Solomon's palace. The description of the materials and elaborate furnishing help us to imagine the significance of this building. Upon its completion, we see in 1 Kings 6:11-13 that the word of the Lord comes to Solomon and reiterates the promise that He will dwell with the Israelite nation so long as they remain faithfully obedient to Him. After this, the inner sanctuary, or "Holy of Holies," is prepared to receive The Ark of the Covenant.**

THEN, read or have a student read 1 Kings 9:1-9. Ask something like:

- **What two tiny words did you notice in this passage?**
 - o Answer: "If" and "then" were both used in two if/then statements.

NEXT, make two columns on a dry erase board. At the top of the first column, write "If" and at the top of the second column, write "Then." Explain to your students that you're going to read verses 1-5 again and fill in these columns. Read 1 Kings 9:1-5 and when you're done, ask the students to list what goes in each column. After they're done, ask something like:

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- **What do you think about this if/then statement? How does it sound to you? Does it seem fair?**
 - o Answers will vary.

THEN, do the same thing with verses 6-9. Read 1 Kings 9:6-9 and when you're done, ask the student to list what goes in each column. Ask the same question:

- **What do you think about this if/then statement? How does it sound to you? Does it seem fair?**
 - o Answers will vary.

NEXT, say something like:

- **Looking at these charts, you can see that God was very clear in what He expected. The importance of obedience to God is seen in the potential for either elaborate blessings or devastating destruction. For most of his life, Solomon kept the commands of the Lord and his kingdom prospered like no other. His wisdom, wealth and success became so renowned that he even received a visit from the infamous Queen of Sheba. Despite great wealth of her own, the sight of Solomon's wealth actually took her breath away.**

Ask something like:

- **So, where do you think things went from there? Which one of this if/then statements do you think eventually came to fruition?**
 - o Answers will vary.

THEN, read or have a student read 1 Kings 11:1. Ask something like:

- **What 'red flag' do you see here in verse one?**
 - o Answer: We see a new object of Solomon's love. He is no longer solely clinging to God and His commands, but his heart has turned toward women of pagan beliefs.

NEXT, read or have a student read 1 Kings 11:2-13. Ask something like:

- **Think about those 10 commandments that the Israelites carried around for over 400 years and placed in the center of their temple. Does anyone know the first commandment? How would following this one rule have impacted Solomon's choices?**
 - o Answer: The first commandment is "You shall have no other gods before me." This is why God told them not to marry those who worshipped pagan gods. If Solomon had still loved God with all his heart, he would have seen for himself the problem with loving these women who did not love God.

THEN, have students look back at the if/then columns. Ask something like:

- **Can you point out what you see on the chart that resurfaced in this passage?**
 - o Answer: Solomon chose to turn aside from following God and served other gods and worshipped them. Therefore, God declared that He will destroy Solomon's kingdom.
- **Who was to blame for the ensuing destruction?**
 - o Answer: Solomon.
- **Would the destruction had come if Solomon had kept the first set of "ifs" we read about in chapter 9? Why or why not?**

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- o Answer: No, destruction would not have come because it would have gone against the Lord's promise, and the Lord can't and won't go against a promise He made.

Transition to The Thread by saying something like:

- **Even after being blessed beyond his wildest imagination, Solomon let his guard down and turned away from God. God's requirement of absolute obedience is rooted in His desire for our hearts to be wholly His. By following His commands, we show that we place His desires above all others, even our own!**

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FIRST, Begin The Thread by having students turn to John 14. Read or have a student read John 14:23-24. Ask something like:

- **What does Jesus say the motivation for true obedience is?**
 - o Answer: Love.
- **What's the problem with trying to obey with a motivation other than love?**
 - o Answer: The motivation eventually fades away. We can only obey to try and earn God's love or to keep our parents happy or some other reason for so long. We'll eventually get tired of it and burn out.
- **Why is love different from other motivations?**
 - o Answer: A love for God comes from a heart that's been changed. It doesn't mean we don't make mistakes or disobey, but if our heart is bent towards loving God, we'll want to obey Him and that won't become a never-ending drudgery.

If your students don't have any more questions, transition into the "Wrapping Up" section.

Wrapping Up

- **Goal:** For students to examine their own attitudes toward obedience and what their motivations are.
- **Set-Up:** A dry erase board.

FIRST, tell your students that we are going to make a chart similar to those we made for God's covenant with Solomon, only this time it will be more personal. Erase everything on the board except the "If" and "Then" at the top.

THEN, have the students look back to John 14. Read or have a student read verse 23. Ask something like:

- **Let's fill in our chart again. What goes in the "If" column? What goes in the "Then" column? Put the answers in the first person.**
 - o Answer: In the "If" column write "I love God" and in the "Then" column write "I will keep his word," "the Father will love me," and "God will make His home with me."

NEXT, read or have a student read John 14:24. Ask something like:

- **What goes in the "If" column? What goes in the "Then" column? Put the answers in the first person.**

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- o Answer: In the "If" column write "I don't love God" and in the "Then" column write "I won't obey God."

THEN, when you're done writing on the board, ask something like:

- **What are your initial thoughts when you look at it like this?**
 - o Answers will vary. Make sure students understand that this isn't a salvation issue. The Bible makes it clear that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Christ. We're saved by Christ's work on the cross, not by our godly actions. But we can't dismiss the fact that God WANTS us to obey Him.
- **What is your motivation for obeying God? Don't give the answer you think you should give. Give the one that's the real motivation for you.**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **Depending on your motivation for obedience, your attitude towards it will vary a bit. When you think about obeying God, what's your attitude toward it? Is it something you want to do? Or does it sound miserable, boring, hopeless, pointless, etc?**
 - o Answers will vary. Try and keep the conversation going a little bit.
- **So, if you're struggling to obey God or it seems miserable or hopeless to you, what's the solution?**
 - o Answer: The answer is to come to a place where you truly love God.
- **How can we learn to love God more?**
 - o Answer: The best way we can learn to love God more is to spend more time thinking and reflecting on the truth of who He is, and how much He loves us. When we let those truths sink in and wash over us, it moves us to place of loving Him more and more.

WRAP UP by saying something like:

- **The passages we've looked at today show us that God wants our hearts. He wants us to follow and obey Him out of our love for Him. We can try and obey Him for a number of other reasons, but it won't be pleasing to Him and it won't last. We'll burn out eventually. The only answer to this issue is to regularly remind ourselves how glorious God is and how deeply He loves us. Let those truths move in your heart each and every day and if you do that, then you'll come to a place where obeying Him won't be miserable, it will be your heart's desire.**

Close your Bible study in prayer, perhaps including thanksgiving for what God has promised followers of Jesus about eternity.

- **If you've purchased the *Tracing The Thread* devotional journal, remind students that they'll be working through Week 20 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions, and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.**
- **If you'll be utilizing the digital devotions included in the *Thread* curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.**
- **Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.**

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We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at **feedback@youthministry360.com**.