

# Mercy Mingled with Judgment

*1<sup>st</sup> Kings*

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Let's take our Bibles and look together in 1 Kings 11. My text is from verse 1 down to verse 13 and I've entitled this "Mercy Mingled with Judgment." How quickly things can turn. We've been going along here and seeing how Solomon is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ and certainly in his office and what he represented, he is, and yet just like any of these others who were types and pictures and images, if you will, of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet none of these were in themselves perfect. In fact, they would have been given the spirit of grace to look forward to the very one that they represented and see in him all of their hope because they were desperately sinners as much as any of those over whom they ruled and reigned.

It's like Job said, it says there in Job 1:1 that he was a righteous man, upright and eschewed evil. That was before men. He would've been the kind that, as we say of different people, his word was his bond. That's how he was and yet before God he was as much a sinner as any, and that's how the Lord taught him through every trial that he brought his way to the point where he begged for an umpire. He knew he had nothing that could commend him to God and that if he opened his mouth, his very words would condemn him. So he said, "Oh, that I had an umpire." That would be somebody that can put their hand on me and at the same time lay their hand on God. Then the Lord by his Spirit gave him that hope. "I know that my Redeemer liveth and on this earth shall stand." He was talking about Christ's first coming, but he himself by God's grace was brought low. There toward the end of the book of Job, he declares, "I thought I knew God." He said, "Now mine eyes have seen thee and I repented in sackcloth and ashes."

The same happened to be said of Solomon. We're riding along here, Solomon a type of Christ, and we're enjoying this and all of a sudden now in chapter 11, verse 11, "But," and I believe that this was put in here lest we should ever exalt a man above measure because when all is said and done, he was there for one reason, as type of the Son the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why God raised him up, this promised seed that should come through him. But it wasn't because he had any perfection or righteousness in himself. In fact as we read here and if we read this being taught ourselves of the Spirit, we'd have to say he represents us in our sin nature.

It says here, "King Solomon loved many strange women." I know there are a lot today that like to boast that somehow they've got the victory over sin and never had an evil thought. They're lying. They're lying. There's not a man alive that cannot look at this and say that same nature is not in any one of us. Here he loved many strange women and this is the dichotomy, this is the paradox of how it is that one can love the Lord and yet still love sin, and I know you'll hear some talking like, "Well, with the Spirit of God, we don't willfully sin." I don't know of a person in the world that doesn't willfully sin. I know men have broken it down into sins of omission and sins of commission, it's sin. That's what it is. That's what we own before the Lord.

But here it says that "Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh," remember that was his first wife that he took, but add to it "women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites." Who are all those but different small fiefdoms in the land of Canaan, that when Israel first went in under Joshua, the Lord purposed that these should remain in the land as a thorn of the flesh lest any should become presumptuous into thinking that somehow they no longer had to deal with sin. There are some that way that are presumptuous. They believe that somehow when God by his Spirit does a work of grace in the heart, that you're given a perfect nature, and so you don't sin as others. There is no more delusion than that for people that think that way.

It says, "Of the nations," verse 2, "concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel," and this goes all the way back to Exodus 34, so this was even before he brought them into the land, "Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you," and what he's talking about there is joining in their practices of false worship. I know there are some that boastfully say, "Well, I can handle anything because I know the truth, and so even if they invite me over here and I know that it's false worship, I know the difference." Beware. In fact, the Scripture says can a person take fire into their bosom and not be burned? And if you were to ask me what is the one sin that God detests? So you'd sit there and think, "Well, he detests all sin," but there is a root of sin that you find throughout Scripture that is clear that God is angered over and detests and that is the sin of idolatry, and what is idolatry except for, as we read here, "for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods."

Think back all the way to the garden of Eden. People talk about keeping the 10 Commandments, Adam couldn't even keep one and what was the one commandment? That he not be turned away from the tree of life to look upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so that's how this whole fall began, in idolatry, thinking that somehow we're here in that knowledge of good and evil and that's how Satan tempted him, "The Lord knows that the day you eat of it, you shall be as God." Well, they found out that it wasn't the kind of knowledge that they wanted. It's like some today in a certain upbringing under the Gospel saying to themselves, "I still need to go out there and find out what's out there in the world." That's where this idolatry begins.

It says here in verse 2, "Solomon clave unto these in love," and boy, did he. Verse 3, "he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." You see, back in the day as a king, this was common practice. If you wanted to have an alliance with

somebody for the sake of politics or whatever, they'd give you wives, and so this just shows even though the Lord had placed Solomon there on the throne as a type and picture of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and caused him to reign in peace, yet here he became distracted by these women. In fact, you remember when Balak hired Balaam to curse the children of Israel, he couldn't curse them. Every time he opened his mouth, blessing was coming out, but because he was a charlatan, he advised Balak, he said, "If you want to bring judgment on the children of Israel, invite them to your feasts." That's where all of the women showed up for these idolatrous times of worship. People would get drunk and they'd pair up with different women and off they'd go. But the base, again, is idolatry because it says there in verse 3, "his wives turned away his heart."

It says, "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old," that means, then, that all that we read that Solomon wrote that we have here in this inspired word, the book of Proverbs would be Solomon's, that he wrote Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, the preacher, and when you read there here is one whose heart the Lord had taught so that what he write be the truth, and I often say this, it wasn't these men that were inspired, it was their word. As men, they were just as much sinners as anybody. That shows us the mystery of divine inspiration, the fact that we have here the perfect word of God after all these years, yet you look at the men behind this word and you say, "How can that be?" Well, the Lord purposes that, again, lest we should put any confidence in men; that the reason we're reading this today is because God purposed that good come out of evil, otherwise these men are just like any other.

You see, that's where even today men go wrong. You look in your Bible and you might have these titles: St. John the Divine, as a title of the Gospel. There's nothing divine about him, certainly nothing saintly other than anyone else for whom Christ paid the debt and that righteousness imputed. And I dare say that, again, we're seeing Solomon here as a man and everything we're reading here how it glorifies all the more the grace of God. That's why the title of this study is "Mercy Mingled with Judgment." In spite of all of this that we're reading about Solomon, yet he was an object of God's mercy and of his grace, and here's where we need to be careful in thinking that somehow as we live our lives, that we prove that we're saved by a holy life or by walking the walk and talking the talk, like you hear people say today. I will tell you this, that many times the Lord as we read here in the Scriptures, will cause these to fall in their latter years after they have lived out this life as an object of God's grace. It's in their latter years that, like it says here in verse 4, "it came to pass," and whenever you see that in Scripture that means according to God's purpose. It came to pass because God purposed it.

"When Solomon was old." What this means is there's never a time that we can think, "Well, I've arrived," in this life. It was when he was old, "that his wives turned away his heart after other gods," and notice, "his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father." You stop there and think, "Well, wait a minute, David wasn't any better a sinner than Solomon," but here it's talking in the terms of idolatry, of having the heart turned away from God.

It says concerning David that David was a man after God's own heart, in other words, God was the one who set his affection on David and kept it. You could accuse him of being a murderer, you could accuse him of being an adulterer, but we don't read anywhere where David actually turned from the Lord unto idols. But here again is proof that our standing before God is not based upon anything that we are in ourselves. It's not of us, nor of the will, but of God that shows mercy.

And that's what I want us to see here. I believe that these examples are put here in Scripture for our encouragement. As I get up in years and you do, you can never say, "Well, I'm through the worst trial of my life." It may still be ahead because just like with Solomon here, it was in his latter years that now we see his heart being turned away from the Lord. You say, "Well, what's his hope of salvation?" Well, his hope in salvation was that the Lord never turned his heart away from Solomon and this does nothing but exemplify the truth of God's grace, "that this is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief." Paul said that right to the end, "of whom I am chief," not that "I was."

I am very concerned whenever I hear people talking like all their sin is behind them. That's a blindness right there. I believe this is put here lest any of us should presume. It's like the story of the thief on the cross. There's only one example and so a lot of people I know have tried to use that to encourage people, "Well, yes, you can have a deathbed conversion." There's only one example in Scripture where a man at the end of his life, the Lord turned his heart, and I believe as someone said at one time, there's only one example lest any should presume, and I believe that when I read this, this is what I think. It doesn't matter what I profess, Paul said that he held his body in subjection lest ever having preached to others, he himself be a reprobate, he himself be cast off.

And I know for myself as I over the years the Lord has taught me the Gospel and preached but I never presumed that just because I have preached Christ and him crucified that somehow my heart can't be turned away as well. That's every day that I wake up, the Lord impresses my heart with that. It's not a one and done but this is to whom coming. I can't be standing here and pointing you to Christ and telling you to continue to come when thinking to myself that I've arrived. I haven't. I'm as needy a sinner as anybody, and oh, that God would keep this heart.

It says for Solomon, "went after," verse 5, "Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians." Ashtoreth was a goddess of fertility. In fact, over time it became known as Astarte and from Astarte actually we get the word Easter. Everybody running around celebrating Easter and the little bunnies and eggs, that all goes back to Astarte. That's fertility. That's the way it was, it's just that now organized religion took that Astarte day and turned it into a ceremony concerning the resurrection of Christ, being a picture of life. There's nowhere in Scripture that we're commanded to celebrate Easter, in fact, it's an abomination even to call it Easter because you look at the origin of it, it goes back to Astarte. But people have made an idol out of it.

Now we're commanded to celebrate Christ in his death, burial and resurrection but we do that every time we meet. Our whole worship is centered around who he is and why he came and what he accomplished and where he is now. We're not caught up with pagan holidays and even these that are called Christian holidays are just as pagan as anything. They're making an idol out of even the resurrection. You know, everybody gets up early on resurrection morning, goes out for sunrise ceremony, all this stuff. But the point is it's in the heart. Anything in this Scripture that we can take and turn into a ceremony or a tradition other than just simply resting in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's our nature.

So "Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom," notice it says, "the abomination of the Ammonites." If you look up Milcom, that would be Molech. That was the god where even to the point of offering up the first born in order to find God's blessing. You read that in verse 5 and you say to yourself, "Well, how could he have been the Lord's and go on this way?" I believe this was a period of time where the Lord purposely when it says up there, "it came to pass, when Solomon was old," withdrew his hand for a time that Solomon might even know the evil of his own heart. And I believe that at some point here through all of this, this is where Solomon would have written his book of Ecclesiastes, the preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Except the Lord had preserved himself a remnant, Isaiah said in Isaiah 1:9, we had all been as Sodom and Gomorrah.

So I believe this is here lest we should presume and yet at the same time, this is here lest we should despair. That's the second thing about the thief on the cross. It was there that we not presume but at the same time there is that one example lest we should despair because I know even now as I preach for you, I know the idolatry of my own heart. I know some might say, "What? You're an idolater?" I've been since my birth. In fact, if you look over in Galatians 5:20, you see, this is what it is to be made aware. There is none of us that the Lord has taught that should wonder at how Solomon could be turned in this direction. I'll tell you, it's in every one of our hearts but for the Lord keeping us, and it doesn't mean necessarily bowing down in front of physical objects that somehow that's idolatry.

Look here in Galatians 5 when it's talking about the works of the flesh in verse 19. In other words, like Christ said, it's not what enters into a man that defiles him. Everybody today is worried about smoking or drinking, none of that defiles a man. What is it that defiles us? It's "the works of the flesh are manifest," and look at here, "which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," there it is in verse 20, "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." What it's saying is as I was reading that, if any way as I was reading you start thinking of, "Oh, that one there, that's...." No, that's me and left to myself, when it says here, "they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," what it's talking about is left to ourselves, apart from that work of righteousness that the Lord Jesus Christ earned and established, such are we. There's not one of those things in this list that you

can say doesn't pertain to you because it says these are the works of the flesh. Are we not in the flesh? Are we not sinners? Are we not fallen creatures?

So this never goes away and when I said that this was a time when the Lord took his hand off of Solomon, it was to expose what was still there lest he should be lifted up and cry. But there's the "but" of God's grace in verse 22, "But the fruit," notice it doesn't say fruits, "the fruit of the Spirit," another way of looking at it is the work of the Spirit within the sinner, "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness," there it is, "faith," the persuasion, and where does the Spirit draw the heart? Always to Christ. "Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." But why is there no law? Because we know ourselves to be just as guilty as anybody.

There it is in verse 24, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Now the important thing here is "have crucified the flesh." Where was that flesh crucified? Why is that we don't stand condemned before God like the rest of the world? Well, because whatever pertains to this flesh here beginning with verse 19 has been crucified. Where did that crucifixion take place? At the cross. When Christ took on him the sin of his people, he took on him all of their sin, past, present and future, and therefore we're not condemned by these works of the flesh but we are bound to this flesh just like anybody.

So it's not God looking the other way but when you see that word "crucified," that means there's an execution that has already taken place when Christ died, and that's why it says in verse 25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." How do you walk in the Spirit? Never putting confidence in this flesh but always looking to the Lord Jesus Christ and that work that he's finished and accomplished and therefore in verse 26, "Let us not be desirous of vain glory," that means kind of proudly saying, "Well, I've overcome that sin. I don't know why the other hasn't." You know, but "provoking one another, envying one another." In other words, our desire should be even as I'm doing now, pointing each of us to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But you can see that this idolatry is every bit a part of our flesh and it may be that the Lord will have to expose myself or some others. We tend to write them off. If somebody that has followed along and preached the Gospel and they say, "Amen, brother. It's by grace," and then someone falls like Solomon, everybody uses that just to pounce on them and say, "Well, there we go." No, all of this should be what encourages us to pray for one another and exhort one another while it's day, that the Lord be gracious and merciful to us.

In Colossians 3:5 it says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," then notice, "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection," this is talking to believers, this is talking to, he's writing to ones that the Lord has taught by his grace but he's telling them that these affections remain in us, "evil concupiscence," and notice this, "and covetousness, which is idolatry." Don't tell me you don't covet. We covet wealth. We covet glory. That's our nature. Unless the Lord is pleased to keep his hand on us, we

would go the way just like anybody else. That's why he says, "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

So what we're reading about Solomon here is a warning lest we should presume and yet as we're gonna see here, the Lord never took his hand off of Solomon. When it says there in verse 6 of our text in 1 Kings 11, "And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD." Well, what is it to do evil in the sight of the Lord? You realize just being ungrateful is evil? That's what covetousness is, "I don't like this food. I'm not gonna eat it." We complain about everything. Just something as simple as not being thankful is to have the heart turned from the Lord. So don't let any of us say we're not idolaters and that we don't love ourselves more than our neighbor or even the Lord. This is why the Lord Jesus was necessary that he come and he work out the salvation because we could never satisfy God's holiness and righteousness.

He "went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father." Again in the sense of idolatry, it wasn't that David was any better. And you talk about to what degree this manifests itself because in verse 7, "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab," and look at here, where did he put it? "In the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." He put that right in front of the temple face-to-face. What is that but compromise? And that's really what brought this abomination was that Solomon somehow thought that, "We can worship God in the temple but here's for those that want to worship God through Chemosh or through Molech." And notice the Scriptures call it all an abomination. Any thought that is contrary to God is an abomination. We bring it into our places of worship. We bring that idolatry in. We're sitting here right now listening to this glorious message of Christ and him crucified and yet in our hearts we've brought in this abomination.

"And likewise," verse 8, "did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods." In other words, he never intervened. He said each one worship however they're directed, and that's why verse 9 says, "the LORD was angry with Solomon." Here's the difference between anger and wrath because Solomon being an object of God's grace, that wrath was not upon him. God purposed that that be put upon his son but his displeasure with Solomon, "because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice." You remember how the Lord had appeared unto Solomon from the beginning and told Solomon, "Ask what you will and I'll give it to you." What did he pray for? Wisdom. I often say you can't live on yesterday's grace. It doesn't matter what you experienced in your experience with the Lord back here, it's now. Today I need this grace as much today as I ever did. Here's an example with Solomon.

It says in verse 10, "And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded." There it is again. What is it that God detests? Why is it that God has brought down nations? It's because of idolatry. It's because of coming unto God in a different way, and I'll tell you, I'm amazed that the Lord has preserved this nation, the United States. It's got to be his longsuffering with the vessels of wrath because we live in a nation that is as idolatrous as anywhere in

the world where free will religion is being preached, man's will exalted above God's will; man's will being the determining factor supposedly in salvation. That's going after other gods.

So it says in verse 11, "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." Remember that when Solomon passed away, Jeroboam, who was Solomon's servant, took 10 of the tribes of Israel and created a new separate kingdom up in Samaria and he established again the worship of the golden calf. We're gonna run into that here as we go along. But he not only had one golden calf, he had two this time, one for the north and one for the south, to ensure that that would be now the new religion of the day. That wasn't a surprise to God, he prophesied, he said, "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee," those 10 kingdoms, "and I will give it to thy servant," Jeroboam.

But here's the mercy mingled with judgment because verse 12 says, "Notwithstanding," but God who is rich in mercy, "Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake." You could say, "I will not do it for Christ's sake." In other words, Solomon would die and then all of this would take place after him. "But I will rend it out of the hand of thy son." There he's speaking of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was left with the two tribes in the south, Benjamin and Judah, and Jeroboam, his servant, took the 10 tribes.

He says in verse 13, "Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom," and look at here, "but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake." Do you know what that one tribe was? It was Judah. Why is Judah important? Not because it merited any importance above the others but the line of Judah, God had purposed for Christ's sake to preserve that one tribe all the way down through the years until Christ would come. And he says, "and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

So there again we see God's mercy toward Solomon even though he was as wretched as any other person, yet for Christ's sake, God was merciful unto Solomon. When you sit down and look at the difference between Saul and Solomon, what was the difference? The mercy of God, the grace of God, what God had purposed for Solomon in Christ, otherwise both were idolaters. What was the difference between Judas and Peter? The only thing you can say is the grace of God in Christ because they both denied the Lord and yet for Christ's sake, God was merciful to Solomon and for Christ's sake he was merciful to Peter, and here's where I bow in humble adoration, for Christ's sake he's been merciful to me, the sinner. Not that I'm any better than any one of these but for Christ's sake.

Alright, let's leave it there for now, pray that the Lord will cause us to reflect upon his mercies and grace in Christ.