

“From the best to the worst and back - If!”

Lord Jesus, grant me your Spirit that I would proclaim your word in Truth and Power and that all who listen would hear what you have to say to them. To the glory of the heavenly Father. Amen.

“Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” Solomon - “I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor--so that there hath not been any among the kings like unto thee--all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in My ways. . .”

Grace Mercy and Peace - Blessed are you in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

No one was ever as great a King as Solomon, during his lifetime. He was the best. He became the worst. The little word “IF”, did him in. He did not keep on acting with wisdom, obedient to the will of God, doing what was best for the Nation of God’s chosen people, doing what was best for himself. It was all lost. There is debate about whether Solomon will be in

heaven or hell. The words written about him are not very promising.

Jesus never wavered on the course He had to run, The perfect sinless Son of God, Son of Mary. His human life was not easy, nothing like the life Solomon lived.

Solomon, son of David, the great king, lived in palaces, praised by everyone. We can be sure he was good looking, eloquent, with the best education of that time. It was not all good. He had a number of step-brothers. They were in competition to be the next king. Palace intrigues, mothers vying for influence. Surrounded by treachery, false friends, Solomon was never really safe secure. One brother seduced a stepsister and was murdered by her brother who then tried to overthrow their father David causing civil war. Solomon became King by the intrigues of his mother and the Prophet Nathan.

Both Solomon and Jesus were sons of women with serious accusation. Bathsheba had been unfaithful to her husband Uriah. Jesus’ mother Mary could have been stoned to death, becoming pregnant while engaged to Joseph. Joseph would have been judged

less than a man, for taking her in. Another man could have used her as a concubine. Joseph not only gave her a home, he married her, scandalous violations of proper behavior.

“Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.” The words always puzzle. How could the perfect one increase? Whatever, as Jesus became older, the people who knew him as a child, as a young man, were increasingly impressed. I have no idea what a human sinless life would look like. Jesus was a very nice young man. Do not think people were nice to him. Small town every body knew everything. Son of Mary was an insult!, real father unknown, immoral mother. You can be sure he was called names to his face. You can't play with that Jesus Son of Mary. It would have followed him, if they went to another town.

Jesus grew in favor with God and man. I am sure in time the people who knew him quieted their nasty words because they were impressed by how he acted. The way His mother Mary and Joseph acted when they heard nasty words set him an example and in time also earned them respect.

The world we live in is very different. It was not that many years ago that it was normal for someone to carry the stigma of illegitimate and worse. Personally I see a connection between the radical increase in abortion and the right to discover the identity of the birth mother. It used to be that a child could be given up for adoption and the identity was closed. There are many reports of happy reunions. The shattered lives which can be understood do not get the press. I can believe many women might think it better to be safe and abort than run the risk of being sorry later.

The text is from the beginning of Solomon's reign. God offered him anything he wanted. Solomon asked “Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I

give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

Solomon went from top to bottom. “IF IF” He failed and was brought low. God promised his father David: I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. My love will never be taken away from him Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’

Solomon built the house, the Temple of the Lord. But his throne wasn’t established forever. That promise was kept in the son of David, Jesus. Jesus walked in God’s ways, keeping His statutes and His commandments, perfectly. The throne of Jesus is established forever. Remember Jesus came proclaiming the Good News, the Gospel, saying the Kingdom of God is at hand, is here now. The people knew what He was saying. In Him was the Kingdom of God. What they saw and what they heard did not compute, connect.

Jesus was proclaiming the Spiritual Kingdom of God, spiritually established in His presence among them. Spiritual reality seems disconnected from the world we live in. What we call physical reality.

If, If. If you only see the reality of this world, you will not see the whole world of God. maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. He created the universe, the galaxies, wrote the laws of physics. If you only see what is here and now, what you touch, see and have, you will have no reason to keep God’s commandments, worship, serve, obey.

The Epistle Lesson said it this way:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Another way of talking about Spiritual Reality is heard in a letter I received from an inmate in prison.

“Christmas Eve! Thought I would spend it writing my new family members in the household of God! It’s truly a privilege to be alive, as well as aware spiritually. Since receiving Jesus into my heart “1973” my journey

has brought me through many dark valley's, and atop many mountains. The Beauty of this amazing journey has been the constant changes! My view: as well as perspectives have been transformed daily. The Lord has brought me out of the enemies dungeons, where I had been bound by chains that held me fast, and has gently released me inside His Kingdom! It's taken a considerable amount of time for my eyes to adjust to this light, and even more to actually be able to comprehend the truth that I'd been set free! Spending half my life confined inside prison! here in Maryland! I can't explain how blessed my soul is, or why God has been so good to me? My rap sheet is full! I am able to fully comprehend the definition of sinner! - smile. What truly amazes me is God's grace, that so freely given? Christmas God's present to mankind, Oh yes I am so grateful this evening sitting here in this chair, while being able to share my meaning of Christmas with the both of you!

God has given you peace that passes all understanding, your life, all you have are held in His hands, your hearts and minds are kept in Christ Jesus Amen.

Christmas 2

1 Kings 3:4–15

Eph. 1:3–14

Jan 4, 2015

Hymns

Psalm 119:97–104

Luke 2:40–52

Living Water Rosedale