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The Fall of the House of David

First Kings 11: 9-25

The fall of the house of David DIG: Why is the story of Solomon such a tragedy? What choices did Solomon have in his own downfall? Why is the story of Hadad told in such detail? Likewise, why is the story of Rezon in the Bible? What was the only reason Solomon remained king?

REFLECT: Why do you think Solomon ended his reign so horribly? What was the root cause? Who are your adversaries? Are they attacking you because of your holy standards in this life? How did Yeshua turn our tragedy into a happy ending? Likewise, who can you help this week?

Yeshua turns our tragedy into a comedy - a story with a happy ending.

A genuine tragedy always results in pain and suffering. We see this in all the tragedies of Shakespeare, as well as the tragedies in the Bible. The tragic hero has made a tragic choice. Because of some particular flaw in his character, he had made a foolish and often **sinful** decision that can end only in disaster. As the tragedy unfolds, therefore, he suffers deeply for his decision. This is true even more so in the tragedy of **Solomon the Wise**. **He** had made his fateful choice. **He** had chosen to **marry foreign women** and to **worship their many gods**. The result was painful suffering for **himself, his family, and his kingdom**. The Bible tells us this story of **Solomon's** tragedy so that we can avoid making the same mistakes that he made. The choices of **sin** are always tragic, and we are tempted to make them every day. If we are wise, therefore, we will let **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** use **Solomon's** example to teach us our own need for **ADONAI's** saving grace.

The righteous anger of ADONAI: The first thing that we learn from **Solomon's** tragic suffering is that **Ha'Shem** is angry because of our **sin**, and rightly so. The TaNaKh says very plainly: **So, ADONAI grew angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from ADONAI the God of Isra'el (First Kings 11:9a)**. It was not simply that **sin** made **God** angry, as if somehow the **sin** could be separated from **the sinner**; it was the man who committed the **sin**, and who

became the personal object of divine wrath. **ADONAI** was angry with **Solomon**. Most people don't like to think about, talk about, or believe in the wrath of **YHVH**. Nevertheless, **ADONAI** is a holy and righteous **God** who cannot tolerate **sin**.

The truth is that **Ha'Shem** had every right to be **angry** with **Solomon**. The TaNaKh tells us exactly why **the king** fell under divine judgment. It was **because his heart had turned away from ADONAI the God of Isra'el, who had appeared to him twice and given him orders concerning this matter that he should not follow other gods. But he didn't obey ADONAI's command (First Kings 11:9b-10)**. There is only one true living **God**. Yet **Solomon** had decided to worship **false gods** who could not save. **He** broke the first commandment by having **other gods before God**; **he** broke the second commandment by making idolatrous images; and this dishonored **his father David**, and therefore broke the fifth commandment. **He** also committed **adultery** which broke the seventh commandment. This is what happens when people turn away from **God**; by the time they are finished, they break every commandment in the Book. It is not enough to *know* the commandments, although that's a good place to start. **ADONAI** demands that we *do* the commandments, and if we do not, **He** is right to be angry.²²¹

The consequences of Solomon's sin: The **anger** of **God** has real consequences, both in this life and the life to come. If **He** is **angry** with people for their **sin**, then **He** will certainly punish them for it. This is part of **sin's** tragedy: it leads to punishment. Because of **Ha'Shem's** perfect justice, **sinner**s are liable to suffer the consequences of their **sin**.

We see this clearly in the tragedy of **King Solomon**. In earlier days, **God** spoke to **Solomon** using the word **"if"** (**First Kings 9:4**). **If Solomon** walked with **the LORD** in holy obedience, **then God** would establish **his** throne. Otherwise, **his kingdom** would be lost. The blessings of **his** dynasty were conditional on keeping the commandments. But when **ADONAI** spoke to **Solomon** this time, **He** started with the word **"since."** **Since this is what has been in your practice, and you haven't kept My covenant and my regulations which I ordered you to obey, I will tear the kingdom from you - the tragic downfall of the house of David - and give it to your servant (First Kings 11:11)**. This reminds us of **First Samuel 13:13-14**, where **Sha'ul's sin** led the prophet **Samuel** to tell **the king** that **his kingdom** would not endure, for **ADONAI has sought for Himself a man after His own heart . . . because you did not observe what ADONAI commanded you to do**.

The only thing that would keep **Solomon** on the throne at all was the promise **the LORD** had made to **his father David**. **However, for David your father's sake I won't do it while you are alive, but I will tear it away from your son.**

Further, for **David's** sake **his** descendants will continue to rule a portion of the covenant nation. **Even then, I won't tear away all the kingdom; I will give one tribe (Benjamin, which was too small in numbers, was merged with Judah) to your son for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Yerushalayim, which I have chosen" (First Kings 11:12-13).** Despite the concessions to **David's** memory, however, the punishment is clear, irrevocable, and stunning. **Solomon's sin** would soon cause the nation to crash from the heights it had achieved. **His** idolatry had led to the idolatry of the people. **Isra'el** had begun **her** long road to exile, though **she** didn't know yet that **her** actions would result in such dire consequences.²²²

Just because **ADONAI** left **Solomon** on the throne did not mean that **he** would suffer no consequences. **First Kings 11** tells the story of two adversaries. One came from **Edom**, in the south: **Then the LORD raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom.** Ever since the days of **Jacob** and **Esau**, there had been bad blood between **the Israelites** and **the Edomites**. In **Solomon's** day, there had been recent conflict between the two tribes. **Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom. Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom (First Kings 11:14-16).** Needless to say, that didn't help relations any. Elsewhere, we read that **David's** men killed almost twenty-thousand **Edomites** before subjecting **them** to slavery (**Second Samuel 8:13-14; First Chronicles 8:12-13**). The few **Edomites** that somehow managed to survive had vengeance on **their** minds.

This was especially true for the only member of **Edom's** royal family who escaped with **his** life: **But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father.** The Bible then tells how **Hadad and his men set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking people from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt.** While living in **Egypt, Hadad** not only survived, but also thrived. **He** was welcomed as a prominent member of **Pharaoh's** royal court, **who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food. Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpanhes, in marriage. The**

sister of Tahpanhes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpanhes brought up in the royal palace. There Genubath lived with Pharaoh's own children (First Kings 11:17-20).

Yet for all the blessings **he** experienced in **Egypt**, **Hada** never forgot what **Isra'el** had done to **the Edomites**. **He** named **his son Genubath**, which means *to steal* (from the Hebrew verb *ganab*), possibly to serve as a constant reminder of the kingdom that had been taken away from **him**. **He** bided **his** time **in Egypt** - a bitter victim nursing a hateful grudge while **he** gathered **his** power and waited for the day of **his** revenge. And when the chance finally came, **he** seized it. **While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his ancestors and that Joab, the commander of the army, was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go, that I may return to my own country." "What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?" Pharaoh, seemingly offended, asked. "Nothing," Hadad replied, "but do let me go" (First Kings 11:21-22)! So Hadad persuaded Pharaoh to let him go, and from that time on, the Edomites began to harass Solomon on his southern border, chipping away at his empire.**

But why does the Bible tell us this story in so much detail? To answer that question, it is important to notice how similar **Hadad's** story sounds to the story of **Isra'el in Egypt**. A nation sojourns to **Egypt**, where it is given bread to eat and a place to live, and where some of its sons' become princes. At the end of his sojourn, the leader of that nation asks **Pharaoh** to let his people go - a request he initially refuses, before eventually granting. Does any of this sound familiar?

The story of **Hadad** follows the main plot lines of the exodus, in which **Moshe** and **the children of Isra'el** escaped from **Egypt** and returned to the Promised Land. Except that everything in **Hadad's** story is backward. The nation coming out of **Egypt** is not **Isra'el**, but **Edom**. This turnabout is **God's** doing - not for **Isra'el's** benefit but this time for her detriment. The Bible clearly states that **the LORD raised up Hadad as an adversary against Solomon (First Kings 11:14)**. The broader point is that this is what happens when our hearts turn away from **God**: **His** hand goes against us, and we suffer the consequences of our **sin**.

The story of **Rezon** makes a similar point. While **Hadad** was harassing **Solomon** from the south, **Rezon** was raiding **him** from **the north**. **And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah (Second Samuel Chapters 3 to**

8). When David destroyed Zobah's army, Rezon gathered a band of men around him and became their leader; they went to Damascus, where they settled and took control. Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So, Rezon ruled in Aram, or Syria, and was hostile toward Isra'el (First Kings 11:23-25).

This story has political relevance as up-to-date as the evening news. **Isra'el** and **Syria** are still fighting over the same territory today - such as the Golan Heights. We will see this conflict throughout **First** and **Second Kings**, in which **the Syrians** attack **the Israelites** again and again. Therefore, this episode has literary significance: it sets the stage for some of the stories that will follow.

But this story has spiritual significance in its own right. **Rezon** and **his** band of rebels were waging guerrilla warfare. In former times, this had been the role that **David** occupied. In the days before **his** royal dynasty, when Sha'ul was still the king of **Isra'el**, **David** had been the leader of a marauding band (**First Samuel 27:8**). But now everything is turned up-side-down. **The house of David** is not *on* the attack, but *under* attack. The roles were reversed, which was a clear sign that **Solomon's** dynasty had fallen under the judgment of **Ha'Shem**.²²³

The consequences of our own sin: This is what happens when our hearts turn away from **God**: because of **His** justice, we are liable to suffer the tragic consequences of our **sin**. At one level, the stories of **Hadad** and **Rezon** are about the politics of war. But on a more fundamental level, they are about **sin** and judgment. Political and military conflict is never outside the sovereignty of **God**. In this particular case, the Bible tells us that **Ha'Shem** was raising up adversaries against **Solomon** because **the king** had committed the great **sin** of worshiping **other gods**. **His** sufferings were deserved; they were the tragic consequences of **his** own tragic choices.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that though **You** are very loving, **You** are also holy. As the Seraphim call out from **God's** Temple in heaven: **Holy, holy, holy, is ADONAI-Tzva'ot! The whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:3)**. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is such a wonderful picture of both a humble heart and **God's** magnificent forgiveness. **"And he got up and went to his own father. But while he was still far away, his father saw him and felt compassion. He ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your presence. I am no longer worthy to be called your son' (Luke 15:20-21)**.*

*Having a contrite heart (Isaiah 57:15, 66:2) filled with remorse over one's **sin** is the only way to come to **God** when asking forgiveness. How gracious **the father** was in the Prodigal Son parable to have **the fatted calf killed** for rejoicing with a party for **the repentance** of his son. **But the father said to his slaves, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it! Let's celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead and has come back to life- he was lost and is found!" Then they began to celebrate (Luke 15:22-24).***

*How wonderful the **joy in heaven** over a **repentant** heart! **I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over the ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance (Luke 15:7).** Thank **You** for forgiving my **sin** when I come to You in humbleness with a **repentant** heart. I love to follow You. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

ADONAI still operates the same way today. As a righteous **Judge**, **He** often brings **sinners** to judgment. Admittedly, we do not always know the purposes of **God**. Why does **He** allow this nation to triumph or those people to suffer? Yet by the sovereign justice of **Ha'Shem** people often suffer the consequences of their **sins**. Self-destructive choices lead to destruction, not simply because this is the way the universe operates, but because the universe is governed by a just and righteous **God**.

For anyone who belongs to **ADONAI** through faith in **Yeshua Messiah**, these judgments are never punitive, only corrective. In **His** fatherly love, **ADONAI** will use whatever consequences we suffer for our **sins** to do **His** good work in our lives (see the commentary on **Hebrews**, **to see link click Cz - God Disciplines His Children**). Still, the judgments of **God** are a serious matter for self-examination. The moral choices we have make real consequences. What we do with our money, the way we handle sex, the exercise of power - we are responsible before **God** for each and every decision we make. Could it be that some of our present sufferings are the tragic result of our own **sin**? If so, then **YHVH** is correcting us with **His** justice.²²⁴



How tragedy becomes comedy: Is there any **hope** for us to receive **mercy**? There is always **hope** in **Yeshua**, even in the darkest hour. And we find such openness here in this passage as we do everywhere in the Bible. It is true that **Ha'Shem** is **angry** with us because of our **sin** and that we deserve to fall under **His** righteous judgment. But this is also true: **ADONAI** has saved us from judgment by sending **His Son** to be our **Savior**. We are objects of wrath who nonetheless have received **mercy (Ephesians 2:1-7)**, because **Messiah** has taken all of **God's** anger against our **sin** on the cross.

But at the same time that we see **ADONAI** acting injustice against **Solomon** for **his sin**, we also see **God** acting in mercy to save **His** people. Even as we witness the downfall of **the house of David**, we know that this cannot be the end of **His** royal line. For according to the promises of **YHVH**, **Solomon** was a beloved son who would not be lost forever. **When he commits iniquity, God** said: **I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him (Second Samuel 7:14-15)**. Whatever judgment **Solomon** suffered would be corrective, not destructive, for the love of **the LORD** would never leave **him** or abandon **him**. **Ha'Shem** also promised **David's house, David's kingdom, and David's throne** would last forever **(Second Samuel 7:16)**. Therefore, **God** still preserved a remnant of **his** dynasty - enough to keep **His** promises. For the sake of those promises **He** would protect the royal line of **Judah**. And in the fullness of time, **a Savior-King** from **the house of David** would rise to **God's** eternal throne.

Here is a promise for us to possess - a promise that finds its fulfillment in **the house** and line of **David**. If **God** had not preserved the tribe of **Judah**, then none of the promises for salvation would have ever come true. But **ADONAI** protected a remnant of the kingdom, preparing the way for our salvation. This is part of the

story of **Yeshua Messiah**, as we know from the royal genealogies in the Gospels (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ai - The Genealogies of Joseph and Mary](#)).

Yeshua is the royal **Savior** who alone can rescue us from the wrath that we deserve. He does this specifically through the cross where he was crucified. Some people say that the painful death of **Yeshua** was a tragic mistake, but strictly speaking, “tragic” is exactly the wrong word to use in describing the **Messiah’s** death. The hero in a tragedy is the victim of his own tragic mistakes, **His** own **sinful** flaws. Yet our **Lord** is perfectly flawless. **He** never committed even the smallest, most insignificant **sin**. Whatever suffering **He** endured was not deserved, therefore, but undeserved, and thus it could not be tragic in the proper sense of the word.

What then was the cause of the painful death that **Yeshua** died? It was not caused by **His sin**, but our own. This makes **Messiah** a new kind of hero, one who steps into our tragic story to take our place. We are the people with the tragic and **sinful** flaw. We are the ones who deserve to suffer the consequences of our **sin**. Yet, **Yeshua** has stepped in to suffer the wrath of **God** in our place. This is why the Gospels feel almost like tragedies; they lead to the cross. By dying in our place, **Yeshua** turns our tragedy into a comedy - a story with a happy ending. Therefore, we are saved from the wrath of **God** to live happily ever after.²²⁵