

Wives, adversaries and rebels

Notes for 11 Oct

Jim Cunningham

Read: [1 Kings 11](#)

I don't want to get into a dispute over the number of Solomon's wives and concubines. Even although Ancient Israel's number system was based on base 10, the one observation I would like to note, is the sheer coincidence that he appeared to stop with wives and concubines when he reached nice round numbers. Last week we noted how Solomon's wealth and perhaps military strength reflected his prestige both nationally and internationally. Undoubtedly the 300 concubines and 700 wives quoted may again reflect prestige and wealth rather than reality.

There are a significant number of other important issues from this chapter which I am keen to explore with you.

They are the following:

- **1 Kings 11:1-3**

"King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter."

"Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines."

Conceptually, this is beyond me. Is this hyperbole? Was his libido so sky high that he could accommodate all of these women? This is where I lean on Virtual Vestry members to help me out of my conceptual hole!

- **1 Kings 11:4**

"As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods"

So, it was the women to blame for the demise of Solomon's loyalty to Yahweh! Sounds a bit like the Adam and Eve story.

The broader question, without taking away personal responsibility, should we be cognisant of influences in our life that affect our relationship with Christ?

- **1 Kings 11:5-10**

"As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods"

Was the cause dementia setting in, or the loss of his gift of wisdom, or a lack of application of the gift, or was he so love struck that his love haze caused an inability to think straight? The last part of this question some of you may recognise from your youth when you first fell in love.

- **1 Kings 11:12-25**

A number of issues from this passage:

1. Does God literally arouse a pagan nation to violently overthrow those who are generally classed as His own people, when they are disloyal to Him?
2. If so, is it not likely to establish the pagan god as being more powerful than Yahweh, therefore, reinforcing idolatry?
3. Does Israel under Solomon, replicate the example of many powerful nations throughout history that become decadent and complacent, resulting in a loss of power, prestige, and in some cases, much, if not all of their resident land?

- **1 Kings 11:26-40**

Ultimately, this passage prefigures the future for the nation of the twelve tribes.

Was this deserved and was it because of one man's inability to choose the right partner?