

“I will take your kingdom away.” My dad King David was weak and close to death and everyone knew it. My half-brother, Adonijah, who was the son of David’s wife Haggith, wanted the throne. The people **loved** Adonijah and were ready to crown him as their king. But my mother, Bathsheba, was not going to stand by and let that happen. She had **suffered** too much. She had lost her husband Uriah and then her first son with David had died. She wanted those losses to mean something. So my mother Bathsheba grabbed me and the prophet Nathan and we went to David’s bedside. My mother begged and pleaded for my dad David to proclaim me, Solomon, as the next king. David listened to us and that day I was **anointed** as king by both the prophet and the priest of the land. When Adonijah heard this, he was **terrified** and went to cling to the horns of the altar, showing that he was seeking the **mercy** and **protection** of the Creator. Adonijah begged me to swear an oath that I would not kill him. I told him that as long as he was worthy to live that I would not kill him.

After my dad David died, my half-brother Adonijah approached my mom Bathsheba in peace. Adonijah said he no longer wanted the throne of David, but only wanted one of David’s servant girls, Abishag, to be his wife. My mother agreed to this and thought this was a small thing to give him in order to make peace in my new kingdom. But when my mom told me what Adonijah wanted, I was furious. I was not going to show any **weakness** as the king—everything that belonged to my dad would be mine, including Abishag. So I sent word to my commander Benaiah and he killed my half-brother Adonijah. Then, when Joab, my dad’s former commander, learned what I had done he was **terrified** and went to cling to the horns of the altar, seeking the Creator’s **protection**. But I did not have mercy on Joab just as my dad David had urged me on his deathbed. I had Benaiah kill Joab, as Joab clung helplessly to the Lord’s **altar**. Then to cap it all off, I completed my dad’s final wishes by having Benaiah kill Shimei who had cursed my dad David for being a violent man. It was a ruthless beginning to my kingdom, but I wanted everyone to see that I would kill **anyone** who did not listen to my every word and give complete loyalty to **me**.

After becoming king, the first wife I took for myself was the daughter of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. I made an alliance with Egypt through this marriage and became **Pharaoh’s son** and made Israel a servant nation of **Egypt** in the process. I also began to worship at the shrines and altars of the gods of the nations around us. I went to the most important site for worshipping these idols and offered 1,000 burnt offerings on the altar. The night after worshipping these false gods, I had a dream and the Creator spoke to me, **“Ask for whatever you want and I will give it to you.”** Why was the Creator offering me whatever I wanted after I had just worshiped **false gods**? I said to the Creator, **“Give me a heart to know good and evil.”** I knew that if I did not have intelligence and wisdom, then nothing else I could ask for would matter. But if I was clever and smart enough, then I could get whatever I **wanted** in life. The Creator said to me, **“I will do exactly what you said. And I will also give you wealth and fame.”**

So I grabbed this **“knowledge of good and evil”** and took life by the horns. I grabbed all the things that I thought were **good** in life and dove headlong into life’s pleasures. I **“ate, drank, and partied”** every single day and spread this life of partying all throughout my kingdom. While I was partying I had two great building projects. One was to build the temple my dad David had wanted. The other was to build myself a magnificent palace, unlike any other that had ever existed. I spent **7 years** building the temple for the Creator, but spent **13 years** building my far grander palace. I deforested the great and towering cedars of Lebanon to build these massive structures. I cut down those forests and then used their giant timbers to make a **pretend forest** in these buildings of mine. I used hundreds of thousands of people, including my own, as slave labor to build these structures. Then as I brought the Ark of the Covenant into the temple, I slaughtered countless animals. After having been stolen by the Philistines under my dad, there was nothing left in the Ark of the Covenant except the Ten Commandments—the staff of protection and the manna of provision were gone. Then as we consecrated the temple of the Creator I slaughtered 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. It was then that the Creator appeared to me with a strong word of warning, **“If you serve other gods I will cut off Israel and reject this temple.”**

But I had been serving other gods all along and I had still gotten **everything** I wanted in life. Why should I stop now? So I kept pursuing every **desire** of my own heart. I built up a giant army of 40,000 horses and chariots that I got from Egypt. I accumulated an insane amount of gold and silver, having an annual income of 666 talents of gold which is \$1.3 billion dollars a year. I also took all the women I wanted. I ended up with 700 wives and 300 concubines, marrying the most beautiful women from all the nations of the world. And just as I had from the beginning, I worshiped idols and other gods. And all this **“turned my heart from the Lord”** and I was **“not fully devoted to the Lord.”** And then the Creator spoke to me one final time and said, **“Since you have not kept my commands, I will take your kingdom away.”** Moses had commanded us in his law, saying, **“Your king must not acquire many horses, he must not return the people to Egypt, he must not take many wives, and he must not accumulate silver and gold.”** I had done everything that I was not supposed to do in the Creator’s eyes. I had built an army, I had returned the people to being under Egypt’s power, I had taken many wives, and I had accumulated great wealth. All of it was **idolatry** and **unfaithfulness** to the Creator. The Creator had been **patient** with my idolatry for years, but now his **judgment** was coming upon me.

“I will take your kingdom away.” It was only at the very end of my life that I started to question everything I had pursued in life, all of my ambitions and goals. I had walked headlong down the same fateful path as my ancestors. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden had rebelled against the Creator by eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of the **“knowledge of good and evil.”** I chose to partake of that same fruit when I was given the chance to have anything I wanted. I wanted to be intelligent, wise, clever, and discerning. I too wanted to **“know good and evil.”** I too wanted to be **“like god.”** The Creator did not stop me from pursuing this path. In fact, he enabled me to walk further down it. I thought I was being **blessed** by the Creator when he gave me exactly what I **wanted**. It was only at the end of my life that I realized that the Creator was **cursing** me. Yet even his cursing of me was a blessing, because it helped me see the emptiness and vanity of all wealth, power, fame, and human wisdom and intelligence. At the end of my life I declared, **“Everything is empty and pointless.”** It was only in the end that I saw that only one thing matters: **“Fear the Creator and obey his commands, this is the whole purpose of man.”** The Creator let me have my own kingdom in order to take it away from me. It was only by experiencing all the pleasures of having my own kingdom that I was able to truly learn the emptiness of my own kingdom and the value of the Creator’s Kingdom that I had been ignoring.

“I will take your kingdom away.” The Creator also allows us to eat the fruit of the **“knowledge of good and evil,”** just like Solomon did. The Creator also allows us to arrogantly use all our smarts and intelligence to make a kingdom for ourselves. The Creator allows us to **“eat, drink, and party”** and chase a life of selfish indulgence. The Creator allows this to happen so that we might learn that nothing in life can satisfy us other than the Creator himself. The Creator has **cursed** you to a life of selfishness so that he might **bless** you by teaching you that selfishness is completely empty and never satisfies. The Creator allows you to pursue selfishness until you realize, **“Everything is empty and pointless.”** Then the Creator says to you, **“I will take your kingdom away,”** as he invites you this day into the Kingdom of his Son Jesus. **Amen.**