

1 Kings 4

Solomon's kingdom.

V.1-6 Solomon reigns over a unified nation. Sadly this will end with him.

Solomon didn't do it alone. He was surrounded by counselors and people that the LORD put around him to assist. He had multiple trusted officials - government administrators who were further categorized according to their expertise.

Scribes - a professional class of men educated in the law, distinct from the priests.

Recorders - "the 'recorder' was the chancellor...of the kingdom. He brought all weighty matters under the notice of the king, 'such as complaints, petitions, and wishes of subjects or foreigners. He also drew up papers for the king's guidance, and prepared drafts of the royal will for the scribes. All treaties came under his oversight; and he had the care of the national archives or records, to which, as royal historiographer, like the same state officer in

Assyria and Egypt, he added the current annals of the kingdom.”
(Easton’s Bible Dictionary).”

Commander of the Army to ensure the readiness of Israel’s fighting force and administration of the military.

The priests - represented God to the people and vice versa.

Somebody to handle the administration and governing over the 12 governors later found in v.7.

This person, Azariah, was also notably the king’s friend.

Solomon had friends. He needed friends and companionship just like we do. The positive part of having a close friend who is also a trusted counselor is the fact that if the bond is true then they can give counsel that may be hard to hear but is so necessary.

[Pro 27:5-6 NKJV] 5 Open rebuke [is] better Than love carefully concealed. 6 Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful.

Further counselors/leaders - somebody to keep care of the household, to ensure that the home is well cared for.

An administrator over the nation's labor force.

Solomon was the beneficiary of a multitude of counselors, and demonstrated wisdom by keeping good counselors close.

This principal is recorded for us many times in the Proverbs as well.

[Pro 11:14 NKJV] 14 Where [there is] no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors [there is] safety.

[Pro 15:22 NKJV] 22 Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

[Pro 24:3-6 NKJV] 3 Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; 4 By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches. 5 A wise man [is] strong, Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength; 6 For by

wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors [there is] safety.

This has a very real application in our lives as well. Whenever we think we “know it all,” or don’t need any advice then we make ourselves a victim of our own pride.

And we know that: [Pro 16:18 NKJV] 18 Pride [goes] before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

Avoiding the trap of intellectual pride doesn’t mean we should accept all of the counsel we receive but we would be wise to seek counsel from God’s Word, God Himself, and trusted counselors who are also leaning on God’s Word.

The more pressing question we must ask is, “How does this fit within a christological, or christ-centered, theology?”

If Christ alone is King, who then are His counselors and His officials? If He has won our salvation and conquered sin and death alone then how do we relate to Christ in His kingdom.

Those are compelling questions indeed! The answer is bound up within the God-head, the union of the Father, Son, and Spirit; AND in how Christ is establishing and ordering His kingdom.

As Christ establishes His kingdom He has appointed certain people to fill certain roles based on His perfect counsel. What is more is that He has appointed every believer as part of His royal court, as an ambassador to unbelievers, and as a servant in His royal priesthood.

[2Co 5:20 NKJV] 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore [you] on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

[1Pe 2:9 NKJV] 9 But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

[Rev 1:6 NKJV] 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him [be] glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen.

We all have a role and a job to fulfill in the Body of Christ for our King.

V.7-18 Governors in Israel providing for the royal estate.

The whole of the kingdom played a role in supporting this massive administration. Notice these are not necessarily divided along tribal lines but geography.

V.20-28 The vastness of Solomon's kingdom and influence.

While Israel is entering into a brief era of unprecedented prosperity and peace we must make note of the cost.

We have an affinity for Solomon but in many ways Solomon's administration shared common traits with what God warned Israel about in 1 Samuel 8:10-19.

[1Sa 8:10-19 NKJV] 10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take

your sons and appoint [them] for his own chariots and [to be] his horsemen, and [some] will run before his chariots. 12 "He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, [will set some] to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and [some] to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 "He will take your daughters [to be] perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 "And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give [them] to his servants. 15 "He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 "And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put [them] to his work. 17 "He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 "And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day." 19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us,

This warning that Samuel issues to the nation is a description of any earthly king. Israel wanted to have all of the trappings of legitimacy and royalty that they saw among the pagan kingdoms around them so they were more than willing to pay the cost.

The nature of all earthly kingdoms has been generally the same. This is the case even for a “good” king like Solomon.

“Solomon’s leadership was not oppressive. It doesn’t seem too much to do one-twelfth of the work, so each of these governors didn’t feel overwhelmed by the burden of raising so much in taxes.” Guzik, D. (2005). [1 Kings](#) (1 Ki 4:7–19). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

This serves as a sign post pointing to the kingdom that Christ is establishing. His kingdom isn’t marked by massive displays of wealth but by “breaking the heavy yoke; breaking the staff of the oppressor.” Christ’s kingdom is marked by peace, and justice. (Isaiah 9:1-7)

[Jer 23:5-6 NKJV] 5 "Behold, [the] days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this [is] His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The one true king, Jesus, is very clear that He is the King who serves and so we as His servants are similarly marked.

[Mar 10:45 NKJV] 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

And yet! We are all implored to count the cost of entering into His kingdom. (Luke 14:28)

While it is noted that Solomon reigned over the whole of the nation later on the nation will split and be referred to as Israel and Judah. Israel represented the tribes in the North of the kingdom; and Judah represented the last holdouts of the once great nation in the South around Jerusalem.

Because of this great prosperity, great wisdom of Solomon, great peace there is much rejoicing in the kingdom. There is much to be joyful about!

It is here that I find it prudent to recall Deuteronomy 6:15 - written generations before this unique time of prosperity in Israel.

[Deu 6:10-15 NKJV] 10 "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, 11 "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant--when you have eaten and are full-- 12 "[then] beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 13 "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. 14 "You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who [are] all around you 15 "(for the LORD your God [is] a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

This really encapsulates the situation in Israel. They still haven't completely driven out the pagans from the land but rather exert influence over them.

Unfortunately, influence isn't one sided and the Israelites adopt some of the customs and religious practices of those people that they were supposed to drive out of the land.

The unified nation is still young too. Jerusalem has just been added to their kingdom during David's reign. They are truly inheriting a lot of goodness from the land and rejoicing in it, as God intended.

We must remember that this is all a gift from God, not because of their own merit.

But there is a warning against complacency, and the evil of following after other gods in the midst of tremendous blessing. This is the sin that destroys Israel - forsaking the LORD and going after other gods from among their neighbors.

At this time Solomon's kingdom expanded Israel's reach farther than ever. It stretched from the Euphrates River in the Northeast all the way to Egypt in the South.

Solomon's very brief reign of peace and unity represents a partial fulfillment of promise pointing to a future complete fulfillment that is found in the kingdom that Jesus Christ establishes.

[Mic 4:1-5 NKJV] 1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days [That] the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make [them] afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. 5 For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.

As the Israelites basked in their temporary prosperity and peace, “each man under his vine and his fig tree,” we look forward to that eternal kingdom where we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

V.29-33 The vastness of God’s grace.

God gave these attributes to Solomon: wisdom, understanding and a big heart! Oh that we as Christians would be known for our big-hearts!

How God relates to Solomon is pure grace. Regardless of Solomon’s nature and future failure, which was certainly known to God, He still poured out His grace abundantly.

None of these things belong to Solomon - not the wisdom, the understanding, or the big heart. Not the land, the people, the throne, the horses, the buildings, none of it! It all belongs to God and exists for His glory! Knowing how stiff-necked Israel was, God gifted them with abundant grace anyway.

The same holds true for the saints. We have been gifted an eternal kingdom, and immense spiritual treasure because of the grace of God, even when, especially when, we are stiff-necked and hard-hearted people.

[Eph 2:4-7 NKJV] 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in [His] kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

More than wisdom, understanding, and a big heart, Solomon possessed a superlative knowledge regarding what we would call science: animals, birds, insects, fish, and plants.

Even this is a gift from God. God revealed himself to Solomon in the natural world. That's amazing. I'm a lover of science. Nothing I've encountered in science has shaken my belief in God, or the gospel.

Rather, those things that I have found to be truly remarkable regarding science and the natural world only invigorate my faith in our creator, God.

[Rom 1:20-23 NKJV] 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible [attributes] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify [Him] as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

The danger is becoming so enamored with the natural world that we forget who God is - which is what happened with the pagan nations. They worshipped the creature rather than the creator.

In our day this still happens, and to some degree rather than worshipping the creature (which also still happens) we mistake our

own selves for God. We make ourselves the arbiters of truth, the engineers of life. We worship ourselves and the human form.

This is the pinnacle of pride and spiritual blindness.

V.34 Solomon was so exceptional that people from all over the world came to hear from him. But, Solomon is still a man, faulty, prone to failure. And yet, he is undeniably covered, immersed in God's grace.

Ultimately the one true perfect king, who alone is wise, is yet to come. He is coming and people of all nations will worship him.

My favorite example of this is found in Revelation:

[Rev 7:9-10 NKJV] 9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation [belongs] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Let us finish these thoughts with Paul's words on the one true King:

[1Ti 1:17 NKJV] 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, [be] honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen.