

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

March 12

MONDAY

Benaiah obeys Solomon's orders and kills Joab. Solomon promotes him to take Joab's place over the army, and then promotes Zadok to be the priest instead of Abiathar, whom Solomon had banished from the kingdom

READ: I Kings 2:34-35

Solomon is wise in gathering the right people around him. We should be wise in the same way. A person is known by his companions. Some of what they are and believe will rub off. How careful am I in this way? Have I surrounded myself with those who know and love the Lord? Have I built around me a fortress of those who are strong in the Lord? It's a Solomon-like thing to do.

TUESDAY

Solomon fulfills David's dying instructions (see 2:9) about Shimei. He orders him to stay in Jerusalem, and warns him that if he leaves the city he would die. Shimei assures Solomon that he will abide by his ruling.

READ: I Kings 2:36-38

Solomon's righteousness and wisdom are seen here: righteousness in that he fulfills one of David's last requests, and wisdom in that though not killing Shimei, he does keep him in a place where he can be monitored. This is practical wisdom: see a potential trouble spot in your own life? It is a wise thing to keep a watchful eye out for early signs. Has the thrill of being in God's House with his people lessened? That may be a sign that all is not right in your personal walk with the Lord. Notice the signs.... be alert to the danger... and do whatever you need to do in order to turn things around.

WEDNESDAY

About three years later, two of Shimei's servants escape and head to Gath where the Philistines dwell. Shimei jumps on a donkey, goes to Gath, claims his servants, and returns to Jerusalem with them.

READ: I Kings 2:39-42

Shimei may have thought that he out-smarted Solomon. For in going to Gath, 25 miles to the west, he did not technically cross the stream which Solomon had named in his order not to leave Jerusalem. But it's not the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law that kills. He willfully disobeyed the terms of his agreement with Solomon not to leave Jerusalem. As we share the Lord with family and friends, do not focus on the letter of the law: the problem is not that he cusses or drinks too much; the problem is that, in his heart, mankind willfully goes his own way instead of God's. He chooses to leave God's best,

and instead, to seek his own version of what's best.

THURSDAY

Solomon questions Shimei on why he left Jerusalem even though he had promised not to? Then he told him that God was re-paying him for the evil that he had done, and he ordered Benaiah to kill him. And he did, leaving the kingdom firmly in Solomon's hands with no threats to his reign.

READ: I Kings 2:43-46

By leaving Jerusalem when he (1) had promised not to, and (2) when he had been clearly warned that the punishment for doing so was death, Shimei demonstrated that he failed to appreciate the gracious pardon King David had given to him previously, and that he distained Solomon's authority and was willing to challenge it. We have made promises to God, and we must guard our hearts and minds never to disregard or distain them.

FRIDAY

Solomon married one of Pharaoh's daughters as a way of confirming a peace treaty with Egypt. The Jewish people were worshipping at heathen worship centers because the Temple in Jerusalem had not yet been built.

READ: I Kings 3:1-2

In his early days as king, the one problem the Bible highlights concerning Solomon and his reign was that the people of Israel still worshipped at the "high places" - those worship sites used by the Canaanites. Even godly people worshipped there, but the problem was syncretism (the idea that different religious beliefs can be blended together harmoniously). The idea of harmony sounds good, but not when it means compromised belief. We are called to be holy and pure before the Lord. We are called to be His people. No "high places" for us! No way.

SATURDAY

Solomon loved God and showed it well, except that he too sacrificed to God at these heathen altars. One of these heathen altars now used for sacrificing to the Lord was at Gibeon. On one occasion, Solomon went there and offered 1000 sacrifices to the Lord.

READ: I Kings 3:3-4

I love the first few words of verse 3: *Solomon showed his love for the Lord* and he did so by the way he lived! (or *walked*, in most Bibles) Isn't that terrific! Solomon's everyday life showed that he loved God. The word "showed" implies other people saw it. Pray with me: "Dear Lord, help my life today to show others that I love you; and that I love you first, most, and best." #73