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We now resume The Legend of King Solomon.

He was a Philosopher and a Poet

Much philosophy and poetry is attributed to Solomon by rabbinical tradition comprising more than 3,000 proverbs and 1,000 songs. According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote three Biblical books, corresponding to the three states of a man's life:

The Shir ha-Shirim or Song of Songs, which expresses the lustful vigor of youth and chronicles erotic love. In this passage from Chapter 1, the Song of Songs expresses the love and passion of the young king and queen for one another. But the Shir ha-Shirim contains in all eight chapters timeless writings of sexual love in its full abundance and the fertility of the living world springs forth anew, the plants bursting into flower and fruit, the wilderness into wild splendor and the herding flocks pregnant with offspring.

The Mishlei or Book of Proverbs is a collection of moral and philosophical maxims which express the wisdom of maturity. These reflect the first five proverbs in Chapter 1 of 31 total chapters.

The Kohelet or Ecclesiastes, which expresses the cynicism of old age and contemplates the sense of absurdity of man's feeble accomplishments as written, in the first of twelve chapters.

Unlike these Books, the Psalms of Solomon are not part of any scriptural canon and are traditionally attributed to David rather than Solomon. Much of the confusion may be associated with the 17th of the 18 Psalms, which has a similarity to Psalm 72 from the Book of Psalms, entitled "A Psalm for Solomon".

Despite traditions approaching 3,000 years, archaeological excavations and studies of texts made during the 10th century BCE indicate Solomon did not author any book of the Old Testament. The oldest of these, the Book of Proverbs, is dated more than five hundred years after King Solomon's death and is mainly derived from Egyptian papyrus manuscripts, recently discovered in the 19th and 20th centuries. Another book of wisdom and poetry accredited to Solomon is the "Wisdom of Solomon" which portrays him as an astronomer but was likely written much later near the second century BCE, while the "Odes of Solomon" and the "Psalms of Solomon", are possibly Gnostic Christian in authorship.

None of these discoveries detract from the richness of the lessons, which span the ages of time. The philosophy of Solomon was also exemplified in the form of riddles exchanged by

King Solomon with King Hiram of Tyre and the 'tests' of the Queen of Sheba.

One of his greatest demonstrations is reflected in 1 Kings 3:5-14, which narrates an encounter between the newly crowned Solomon and the God of the Kingdom of Israel in which he offers Solomon anything he pleases. Solomon asks for "an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" Pleased with his non-materialistic wish God tells him that not only will he receive a foundation in epistemology greater than any other man, but also great wealth, power, and prosperity.

Thus, it happened that much of the secret of Solomon's success was faithfully portrayed in his request "for an understanding heart". But it was also shown unto him through the wonders of nature, both of animal and plant life, the mysteries of their existence that God was made manifest in the heavens above and in the earth below, and that God was all and in all.

Solomon as King

Solomon was about 14 years old when he was anointed the third king of the united, ancient Kingdom of Israel. "Then Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. They blew the horn and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" Then all the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing so much as to split open the earth with their shouting." (1 Kgs 1:39-40) When he turned twenty-one, his father King David passed into the annals of history, setting King Solomon fully on the path of destiny.

Having been carefully nurtured by his mother, Queen Bathsheba, he had grown into a young man of great mental vigor. He was schooled by the greatest masters of the times, reared in one of the richest and most brilliant courts of the then known world; and was preeminently gifted for the stupendous task before him, which he undertook with great enthusiasm to accomplish. He was renowned for his great wisdom, vast wealth, and supreme power; but also blamed for his later pacifism toward his wives and their worship of other gods. King Solomon was definitely the "right stuff" for legends.

But his ascension to the throne was not without its difficulties. Having been chosen by King David as his successor, he was elevated over the claims of Adonijah, the eldest living son of David by his first wife. Though Solomon's elevation to the throne took place seven years earlier, hastened on by the prophet Nathan and Queen Bathsheba when Adonijah first tried to seize the throne; intrigue, rebellion, and the struggle for power in the court of Solomon was far from over. Before David's death, 1 Kings 1:5-53 narrates that Adonijah received pardon for his conduct from Solomon on the condition that he show himself "a worthy man". However, after David's death, Adonijah made a second attempt to gain the throne for which he was banished. Solomon also ordered executions of two of his father's closest advisors - Joab, Captain of the Army, and the high priest Abiathar, who had allied themselves with Adonijah. With these final strokes of the sword, King Solomon overcame the last serious threats to his sovereignty. Here ends Part Two of Three.

This is part of a series of lectures written by MEC Marcus Trelain, PGHP DC. you are free to quote and/or use any part(s) or the entirety as long as this message remains a part of any publication.