

foreign princesses so that their fathers would not fight him. Sadly his wives built shrines to their own false gods and Solomon soon started to worship idols too. This made God very angry and He warned Solomon to stop this but Solomon did not obey God.

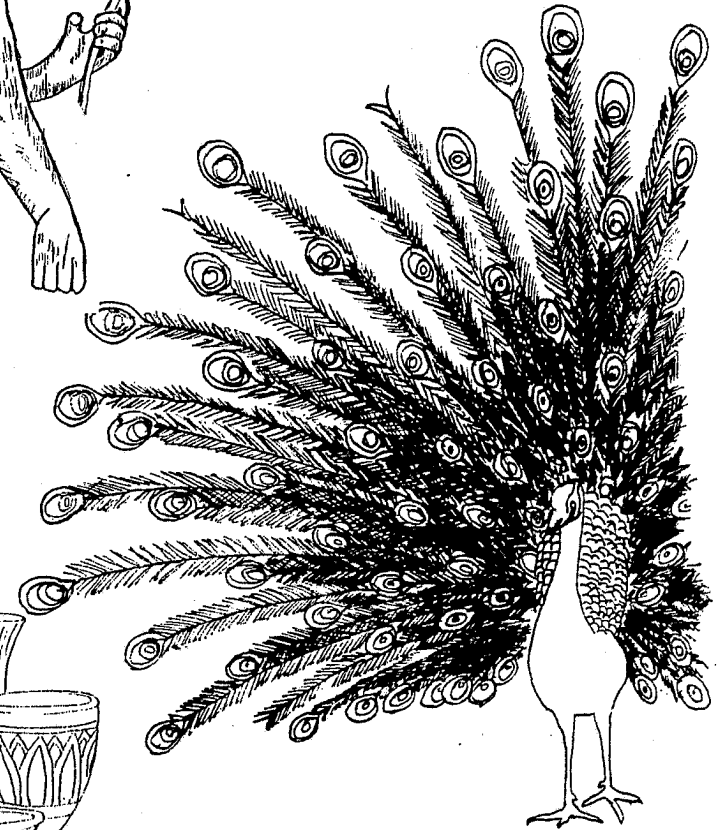
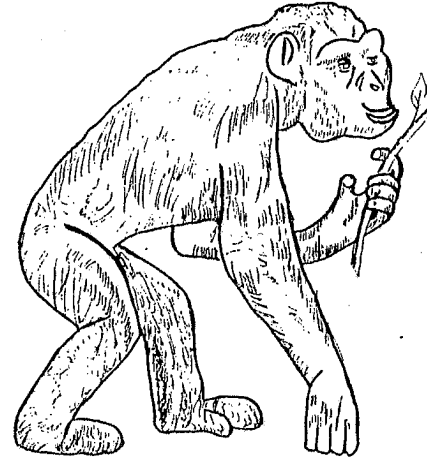
Then God told Solomon that because of his disobedience his kingdom would be taken away in the reign of his son. However because God remembered how Solomon's father was true to Him and because of Jerusalem, the tribe of Judah would be left. The other tribes would be split off from the kingdom of Solomon's son and ruled by a servant.

It all happened as God said and Jeroboam, Solomon's servant became ruler of all the kingdom apart from Judah which was ruled by his son.

All of this tells us that we should take notice of God's promises and of His warnings. We should also note that disobedience to God will never go unpunished. You can read more about Solomon in the First Book of Kings chapters 2 to 11.

BIBLE HEROES : 12

THE LIFE OF



SOLOMON

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King David had a son called Solomon and when David died Solomon became king in his place. One night God spoke to him in a dream and asked what gift Solomon would like. Solomon asked for wisdom so he could judge between right and wrong and rule wisely. It pleased God that Solomon didn't ask for money and power for himself. He told Solomon that he would be wiser than any other king and have wealth and glory as well. God warned him that he must obey God's laws. Then Solomon woke up.

Soon he became famous for his wisdom. People brought their problems. One day two women came to the palace. One of them carried a baby and they were both very upset. Recently they had both had babies but one had died and they were both saying the living baby belonged to them. Soon they started to argue in front of the king. Solomon called for a sword and suggested that the baby should be cut in half so they could have half each. One of them agreed but the other cried out that the baby must be saved even if the other woman had it. Then Solomon knew that she must be the real mother because she showed her care for the baby. He gave the baby to her.

Solomon had only been king for four years when he started to work on a beautiful new building. It was to be the temple where everyone could come and worship God. Solomon built it in Jerusalem. It was to have the best for God, white stone, carved wood and precious metal. Solomon wrote to King Hiram in Tyre who provided him with all the wood that he needed from the forests of Lebanon. When trees had been cut they were floated down the coast to Israel. Thousands of men worked in quarries cutting blocks of limestone. Right in the middle of the temple was a room lined with gold. Inside was to be put the holy box called the Ark of the Covenant, with the carved slabs of stone on which were written God's laws and His promises to Israel. In the courtyard outside the Temple all the people could meet to worship God. Here they built two great pillars of solid bronze decorated like

lilies. There was also a huge round bowl placed on the shining backs of twelve bronze bulls.

It took seven years before the work was finished but it was worth it. Every leader in Israel had to go to a special ceremony to bring the holy box to its new home inside the Temple. Thousands of sacrifices were offered to thank God and the box was taken into the golden room. Suddenly light more dazzling than the sunshine outside filled the temple just as though God had come into the little room.

News of Solomon's wisdom and wealth spread afar. In her sunny land the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon and decided to visit him. So she travelled to Jerusalem on a camel bringing more camels all laden with gold, precious jewels and spices for which her land was famous. She gave them to Solomon and then asked him some questions all of which he was able to answer. (Remember Solomon was very wise). Possibly he told her some of his famous proverbs. However when Solomon had shown the Queen of Sheba the Temple and all his possessions her breath was taken away. She saw the peacocks in his garden, the grapes and goblets of gold on his table and jewels and beautiful clothes which he wore. She saw that his men and servants were happy to be in his presence and to hear his wisdom. When the Queen of Sheba went home she took more back than she had come with.

Solomon grew even more powerful. Fleets of ships sailed the seas bringing cargoes of gold and ivory. There were also monkeys!

After Solomon had finished building the temple and his palace, God visited him again and said that he had heard Solomon's prayers and had seen all the work that he had done. If, from now on, he would act to please God and obey Him then God would establish his kingdom over Israel for ever. As you will see he didn't obey.

Even Israelites who weren't Solomon's servants were forced to work for him and the people started to complain. Solomon also married foreign wives which God had told him not to do. He had also married