



Our Gospel text today relates to the coming out of Christ and His being made known to the Gentiles. This was accomplished through the visit of the Wise Men from Persia (Iran) as well as Jewish shepherds. Christ came for all, but He must be received by all who will accept His invitation to Life.

A further revelation of Christ comes at the age of twelve when His mother and Joseph took Him to the Temple at Jerusalem at Passover.

We see the importance of parental oversight and participation in the development of every child.

The knowledge and wisdom of Christ dumbfounded the biblical scholars of the Temple.

In wisdom, He exceeded every living human being, now or ever – even exceeding the wisdom of Solomon. Being God incarnate, He knew all things.

Having mistakenly left the boy Jesus in Jerusalem on their return home to Nazareth, they returned and found Him in the Temple discoursing with the biblical doctors of the Temple. When Mary inquired as to why He was so careless in not following them home, Christ asked if they did not know that He must be about His Father's business? We must follow God even before we follow parents.

This morning, I want to tell you about two kings of Israel – both descended from Godly ancestry – One, Solomon, wise, and the other Jehoiachin, wicked beyond all measure.

Solomon was born of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah whom David had murdered for the purpose of stealing his wife. We read this in Matt 1:6:

*And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah.*

God hides no secrets from His people.

Solomon prayed to God – not for wealth, honor, power, or defeat of enemies – but for wisdom. We read from 2 Chron 1:7-12:

*<sup>7</sup> In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. <sup>8</sup> And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. <sup>9</sup> Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. <sup>10</sup> Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great? <sup>11</sup> And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: <sup>12</sup> Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.*

Solomon was wise, but riches and power corrupted him so that he turned, for a time, his face from God.

He had sexual relations with women who knew not God. He married women as well who turned his face from God. 1 Kings 11:1-4

*But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; <sup>2</sup> Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. <sup>3</sup> And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. <sup>4</sup> For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*

Young people, the kinds of people you associate with has great bearing on your salvation in God.

When Solomon was old, he turned his face back to God – the God of his Father’s and the God of his father, David. He wrote two epic biblical books – the Song of Solomon (describes the Church and her relationship with Christ) and the Book of Proverbs. There is another book of the Bible which Solomon or his brother Nathan likely composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – Ecclesiastes. In this book we are told that all our works, done under the sun (worldly) are vanity. Only those Godly works of man are lasting.

We have a summary of man’s life given in Chapter 12 of that book:

*<sup>1</sup> Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; <sup>2</sup> While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: <sup>3</sup> In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, <sup>4</sup> And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; <sup>5</sup> Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: <sup>6</sup> Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. <sup>7</sup> Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

He concludes with: <sup>8</sup> *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.*

And:

<sup>13</sup> *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.* <sup>14</sup> *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

This summarizes the life of the wisest man who ever lived – a man whose earthly wisdom was humanely great but fell far short of that of the twelve year old Christ.

Another king is Jehoiachin. His grandfather, Josiah, was a king who did right in the sight of the Lord and who restored the reading of God's Word in the Temple.

God blessed Josiah and he died in peace and was gathered to his fathers. But Josiah's son, Jehoiakim did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.

King Jehoiakim committed a sin which the Lord would not forgive:

<sup>4</sup> *And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.*

Please take note of this national sin of Israel – they shed innocent blood. What about America today?

Jehoiakim died when God brought the gentile armies under Nebuchadnezzar against him and Jerusalem fell captive.

The invader made Jehoiachin King over Judah in the stead of his father. He was eighteen years old. He also did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, so after only three months, God brought the invader back to take this last king captive to Babylon. Josiah was in prison for 37 years!

He received meager food in filthy dishes. He was imprisoned in the darkest dungeon where the sun never shone.

His royal robes became filthy, tattered rags. Imagine wearing the same clothes for 37 years. Imagine being in a dungeon prison from the age of 18 for 37 years!

A new king came to the throne of Babylon named Evilmerodach. This was a king whom Jehoiachin had never known.

This king owed no favors to Jehoiachin. But he was as a savior to him.

We are told that this king had compassion on Jehoiachin. Why? Jehoiachin had done no good to deserve mercy. He had been an enemy of the king's empire.

Let's read what King Evilmerodach did for Jehoiachin:

<sup>27</sup> *And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;* <sup>28</sup> *And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;* <sup>29</sup> *And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.* <sup>30</sup> *And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.* (2 Kings 25)

Observe what this king, who was a stranger to Jehoiachin, did for him:

1) He lifted his downcast head out of the dark dungeon and into the brilliant light of the sun!

- 2) He spake kindly to him just as did Christ to the woman taken in adultery.
- 3) He exalted him above his fellows
- 4) He removed his filthy rags and covered him with royal robes..just as the father of the prodigal son, and Christ for each one who comes to Him.
- 5) He invited Jehoiachin to eat at the kings table just as Christ has invited you to do in remembrance of Him in Holy Communion and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
- 6) He provided him a living allowance for all his days – just as Christ has given to all who come to Him eternal life with Him.

What Christlike actions this king foreshadows of Christ toward us!

*<sup>18</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: <sup>19</sup> By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; <sup>20</sup> Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3)*

All we need do is answer His calling and petition the King of Kings for clemency, and He will release us from prison, change our filthy rags of sin for white resplendent robes of righteousness, bring us into the Light of the Son, exalt us above our fellows, and provide an eternal living to us at His own Table. What a King! What a Savior!