

Who was Jedidiah in the Bible?

The only mention of the name Jedidiah in the Bible is found in 2 Samuel 12:25. King Solomon, second son of David and Bathsheba, was given the name Jedidiah by God. After Solomon was born, God sent a message through the prophet Nathan that his name was to be Jedidiah (Hebrew for “Beloved of the Lord”). Scripture says that God named him Jedidiah “because the Lord loved him” (2 Samuel 12:25). The names Jedidiah and David are related in that the name David means “beloved.”

Although Israel’s third king is generally referenced in the Bible as Solomon, it is unknown which name was used during his reign. Some scholars believe that the name Solomon (“Peaceable”) was given by his father David to be a throne name in anticipation of his future reign of peace over Jerusalem; others believe that Jedidiah was the throne name. It is possible that the Lord first gave the name Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:8-10) but then gave him the additional name Jedidiah as a sign of His love.

Solomon (Jedidiah) reigned over Israel after his father David and was on the throne c. 970-930 BC. This was despite the efforts of Solomon’s half-brother Adonijah to take the throne during David’s final days. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon/Jedidiah was asked by the Lord what he desired, and Solomon’s response reveals a soft heart. The king asks not for great honor or wealth but for wisdom to govern God’s people well and for discernment between right and wrong. Because of this response, the Lord not only granted Solomon wisdom far beyond that of other kings, but He also blessed him with wealth, honor, and other pleasures (1 Kings 3:4-15; 4:29-31). Even the Queen of Sheba traveled well over 1,000 miles to see the glory and wisdom of Jedidiah, the Beloved of the Lord (1 Kings 10:1).

Many things in the life of King Jedidiah/Solomon point to the fact that he was indeed beloved of the Lord. Under the rule of Jedidiah/Solomon, Israel enjoyed a time of great peace and prosperity (1 Kings 4:25). Solomon built the temple of the Lord, a task that God had reserved specifically for him (2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Chronicles 17:12; 22:6-11). Under his reign the kingdom was extended to its largest geographical capacity with victories over the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. Jedidiah/Solomon was by no means a perfect king; in fact, he strayed into idolatry (1 Kings 11:4), which makes God's blessing and steadfast love even more remarkable.

Students of Scripture have noticed parallels between Jedidiah/Solomon and Jesus Christ. The Father's words about Jesus, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), correspond to the name Jedidiah. The Lord's title Prince of Peace evokes thoughts of the name Solomon, the "peaceable" king. The blessing of Psalm 72, written of Solomon, could also be applied to Jesus: "May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. Then all nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed" (verse 17). One day, Jesus Christ will sit on David's throne (Isaiah 9:7), and the world will see justice, peace, riches, love, and blessing like never before. King Jedidiah in all his glory was but a murky foreshadowing of the reign of the Messiah, the "greater than Solomon" (Matthew 12:42).