

Study No.14 Life of Solomon



Timeframe of events:

c.980 B.C. to c.920 B.C.

Summary: Solomon co-reigned over Israel during the last few years of his father David's life, and in his own right after David's death for several decades. He was "protected" to a degree because of the promises God made to David. Some of the defining features of Solomon's life include: the prosperity of his kingdom, peace in the land for most of his reign, the construction of the temple (sometimes called the First Temple, or Solomon's Temple), his wisdom, his many wives, and his worship of pagan gods later in life. Solomon's life is worthy of scrutiny, not only because there are lessons to be learned from the study of these features, but also because the events of his life shed light on at least three other books of the Old Testament - namely Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon - which we will consider in subsequent studies.

Main Reading / Listening



Read and/or listen to the following passages at least once. Twice is better for taking it all in!

As a minimum, please read or listen to:

1 Kings 2:10-12; 11:42,43.

To read or listen to the entire Bible systematically, this week's passages are:

1 Kings 1 to 11

(re-read 2 Samuel 5:13-16; 12:15-25)

2 Chronicles 1 to 9

(re-read 1 Chronicles 22:1-23:1; chs. 28 & 29)

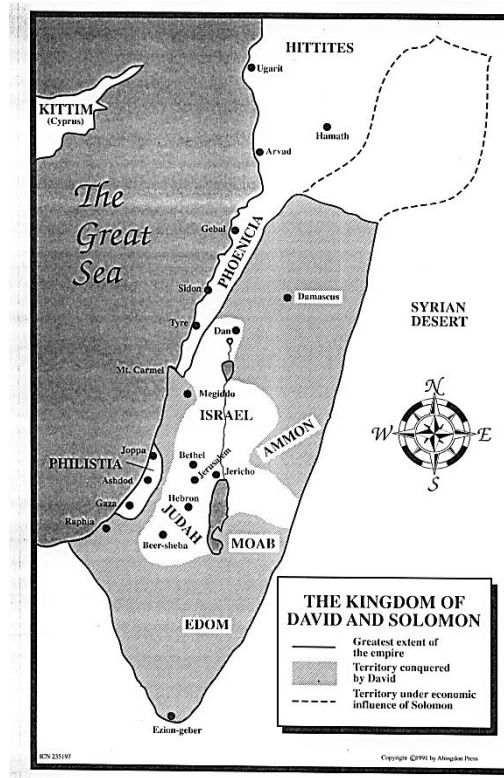


Timeline of Solomon's Life



- **Years and ages are approximate and may be 5 to 10 years out.**
- **The exact sequence of some of these events is difficult to establish beyond doubt.**

| Age | Year (B.C.) | Event | Events (approximate time period) |
|------------|------------------|--|--|
| 0 | c.980 | Solomon born (2 Samuel 12:24). | |
| 15 | c.965 | Co-reign with David commenced (1 Kings 1:32-52; 1 Chronicles 23:1). | <u>Youth:</u> Mentoring by instructors (Proverbs 1:8-9:18; 1 Chronicles 22:5,17; chs. 28,29). |
| 20 | c.960 | David died, and sole reign began (1 Kings 2:12; 1 Chronicles 29:26-28). God appeared to Solomon, and he requested wisdom to judge/rule. Granted great wisdom and riches from this point onwards (1 Kings 3:6-13; 10:1-13,24; 2 Chronicles 1:9,10; 9:1-12). | <u>Age 15 to 25:</u> Married Pharaoh's daughter, his first wife (1 Kings 3:1; 7:8; 11:1; 2 Chronicles 8:11). <u>Lifelong:</u> Personal and kingdom wealth increased (1 Kings 3:13; 4:20-28; 10:14-29; 2 Chronicles 9:22). |
| 24 | c.956 | Temple construction commenced (1 Kings 6:1,2,12; 2 Chronicles 3:2). | <u>Lifelong:</u> Composition of many Proverbs and songs (1 Kings 4:32; Proverbs 10:1-22:16; chs. 25-29). |
| 31 | c.949 | Temple completed and dedicated (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chronicles 6:10; 7:5). | <u>During and after temple construction:</u> Many other building projects (1 Kings 7:1-8; 9:15-19; 2 Chronicles 8:1-6). |
| 40? 44? | c.940? c.936? | Palace completed. God appeared to Solomon a second time (1 Kings 9:1,2,10; 2 Chronicles 7:12; 8:1,2). | <u>After completion of many projects:</u> Visited by the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12). Also wrote Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 1:1,12; 2:4-6). |
| 60 | c.920 | Death of Solomon (1 Kings 11:43; 2 Chronicles 9:31). | <u>Later years:</u> Married many pagan-worshipping women, increased the size of his harem, and began to worship pagan gods (1 Kings 11:1-8). Song of Solomon is set in this time period (1:4; 6:8,9; 7:5). |



Enhancing your reading:

Attempt one or more of the following tasks for a better appreciation of the subjects covered by the main readings for this study.



- Jot down any questions arising from this study's readings. Ask someone else for help, or conduct your own research to try and answer these questions.

- Note any passages, verses, themes or lessons that have stood out to you from this study's readings. Write down or verbalise your reasons.

- Read or listen to these other Bible passages that relate to the content of this week's readings:

Psalms 72 & 127

**Consider and discuss
the following questions:**



- (1) When did Solomon begin to reign? 1 Kings 1:1,28-40; 2:1,10-12; 1 Chronicles 29:20-26.
- (2) Adonijah plays a prominent role in the story of Solomon ascending to the throne of Israel. Who was Adonijah in relation to (a) David, and (b) Solomon? 2 Samuel 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 1 Kings 1:5,10.
- (3) What role does Bathsheba play in these events? 1 Kings 1 & 2
- (4) What were the first recorded acts of Solomon after he became king in his own right? 1 Kings 2:13-46.
- (5) How do these acts relate to David's instructions to him in 1 Kings 2:1-9?
- (6) Why do you think that Adonijah's attempt to usurp the throne is described in 1 Kings, but not mentioned at all in the Chronicles account?
- (7) It is possible that Psalm 45 was composed for such an occasion as 1 Kings 3:1. In light of Psalm 45:10-17, was it acceptable for Solomon to marry an Egyptian woman? Cp. Exodus 34:11-16.
- (8) What were the "high places" mentioned in 1 Kings 3:2,3? What was wrong with worshipping there? (cp. Deuteronomy 12:5-14)
- (9) Was it wrong for Solomon to sacrifice at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4,5. Cp 2 Chronicles 1:3)? Give reasons for your answer.
- (10) What was the significance of the bronze altar made by Bezalel (2 Chronicles 1:5,6 cp Exodus 38:1,2,22)?
- (11) How many animals were sacrificed there? 2 Chronicles 1:6
- (12) (a) What exactly did Solomon ask of God in 1 Kings 3:9, cp. 2 Chronicles 1:10? (b) Why did he make this request? (c) What did God give Solomon in response to his request? 1 Kings 3:11-13.

(13) Did the promise of 1 Kings 3:14 come to pass? How old was Solomon when he eventually died? Why do you think this promise is not included in the 2 Chronicles account?

(14) For what purpose(s) did Solomon offer sacrifices in Jerusalem (1 Kings 3:15)?

(15) How is the incident with the two women and the baby, described in 1 Kings 3:16-28, linked to the narrative before it in 3:4-14?

(16) How did Solomon acquire so many riches? (e.g. 2 Chronicles 1:14-17. Cp 1 Kings 4:21)

(17) If Solomon reigned over what is often called a “united monarchy”, why are Judah and Israel distinguished from each other in 1 Kings 4:20?

(18) What does "tribute" mean in 1 Kings 4:21?

(19) Is 1 Kings 4:24,25 a fulfilment of the promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:18-21? Give reasons for your answer.

(20) The number of some of Solomon's written works are listed in 1 Kings 4:32. (a) How many of each kind of composition is listed? (b) Apart from these, what portions of the Bible also came via Solomon's pen?

(21) In 1 Kings chapters 5, 9 & 10, we read of Hiram King of Tyre and his role in providing supplies and workers for the temple. How did Hiram feature earlier in the Biblical narrative? 2 Chronicles 2:3; 2 Samuel 5:11.

(22) Approximately how many labourers worked on building the temple (and possibly other projects)? 1 Kings 5:13-16; 2 Chronicles 2:1,2,17,18.

(23) What was the exact location of the temple site (2 Chronicles 3:1; 1 Chronicles 21:18-26)? How is this different to “Zion” (2 Chronicles 5:2)?

(24) When in Solomon's reign did work on the temple commence? 1 Kings 6:1

(25) How long did the temple take to construct? 1 Kings 6:37,38.

(26) Comparing the figures given in 1 Kings 6:1, 38 and Exodus 40:17, estimate approximately how many years the tabernacle was in use before the temple superseded it?

(27) How long did Solomon's own house take to construct? 1 Kings 7:1

(28) In length, if 2 cubits equals about 1 metre, what were the approximate dimensions of the main temple building (excluding extra rooms, the courtyard, etc.) 1 Kings 6:2,3; 2 Chronicles 3:3

(29) Approximately how much bigger than the tabernacle was the main temple building? In what ways were the tabernacle and the temple similar? What were some of the fundamental differences between the tabernacle and the temple?

(30) Why do you think that so many details about the temple materials and measurements have been included in the Biblical text?

(31) What were the House of the Forest of Lebanon, the Hall of Pillars and the Hall of Judgement (or Justice)? 1 Kings 7:2,6,7

(32) What purpose was served by the two bronze pillars (1 Kings 7:15-22; 2 Chronicles 3:17)? What was the significance of their names?

(33) What did the "Sea" (1 Kings 7:23-26) equate to in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:18-21)? What was the purpose of the carts? 1 Kings 7:27-39

(34) Why were there ten lampstands in Solomon's Temple, compared to just one in the tabernacle? 1 Kings 7:49 cp Exodus 25:31

(35) What size was the temple's altar (2 Chronicles 4:1)? How does this compare with the altar of the tabernacle (Exodus 27:1)?

(36) How many tables of shewbread were there in the temple? 2 Chronicles 4:8,19 cp. 1 Kings 7:48

(37) What were the things Solomon's father David had dedicated (1 Kings 7:51; 2 Chronicles 5:1)? See 1 Chronicles 8:8-11; 22:1-5,14-16; 28:14-18; 29:2-5.

(38) From what plan or design was the temple prepared and constructed? 1 Chronicles 28:11-19

(39) Compare 1 Kings 8:1,2,65,66; 2 Chronicles 5:3; 7:8-10 and Leviticus 23:26,44. The temple dedication ceremony overlapped which annual festivals?

(40) Where was the ark housed before it was transported to the new temple? 1 Kings 8:1 cp 2 Samuel 6:17

- (41) Why were sacrifices offered on this occasion (1 Kings 8:5,62-64; 2 Chronicles 5:6; 7:4,5,7)? Why so many?
- (42) How long were the poles of the ark? 1 Kings 8:8; 2 Chronicles 5:9. Are the poles still there today? 1 Kings 8:8; 2 Chronicles 5:9
- (43) What was in the ark at that time? (1 Kings 8:9; 2 Chronicles 5:10) What do you think may have happened to the other items mentioned in Hebrews 9:4?
- (44) What was the role of the musicians at the completion ceremony? 2 Chronicles 5:11-14
- (45) What musical roles did Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun have? 2 Chronicles 5:12 cp 1 Chronicles ch.25; 2 Chronicles 29:30; 35:15.
- (46) Why does Asaph's name appear in the titles of Psalms 50, 73-83? Likewise, Heman in Psalm 88, and Jeduthun in Psalms 39, 62, 77?
- (47) Once the temple building was complete and furnished, what took place (1 Kings 8:10,11; 2 Chronicles 5:14)? How is this similar to what took place in Exodus 40:33-35?
- (48) David is mentioned nine times in Solomon's prayer and dedication in 1 Kings 8 (also in 2 Chronicles 6). Why were there so many references to him?
- (49) Solomon acknowledged that the temple is not big enough to contain God (1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 6:18) and prayed several times for God to hear prayers in heaven (1 Kings 8:30-49; 2 Chronicles 6:21-39). Yet the Lord said, "My name shall be there" i.e. the temple (1 Kings 8:29). How can these statements be reconciled?
- (50) What was one role of the temple to be, according to 1 Kings 8:27-52?
- (51) How did the Gentile nations feature in Solomon's prayer? 1 Kings 8:41-43,59,60; 2 Chronicles 6:32,33
- (52) What was the significance of the fire from heaven? 2 Chronicles 7:1-3
- (53) How did God's promise to Solomon in 1 Kings 9:3-9 come to pass? 2 Chronicles 36:15-21
- (54) From which peoples did Solomon raise a labour force for his many other construction projects. 1 Kings 9:15-22

(55) Which particular "three times a year" did Solomon offer sacrifices? 1 Kings 9:25 cp 2 Chronicles 8:12,13; Deuteronomy 16:16

(56) The Queen of Sheba visited Solomon (1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chronicles 9:1).
(a) Why? (b) Was she an Israelite or a Gentile? (c) Where was Sheba located?
(d) What was her reaction? 1 Kings 10:6-9; 2 Chronicles 9:4-6

(57) What was the source of Solomon's gold that came to him annually? 1 Kings 10:14; 2 Chronicles 9:13 cp 1 Kings 4:21; 10:25.

(58) Why do you think that 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9 give us so many specifics about the wealth of Solomon's kingdom?

(59) How many wives and concubines did he have? (1 Kings 11:3) What was the difference between a wife and a concubine?

(60) According to the Bible, what was the difference between Solomon marrying an Egyptian and him marrying his other wives? 1 Kings 11:1,2 cp Exodus 34:11-16; Deuteronomy 7:1-4; Joshua 23:11-13.

(61) Immediately after the narrative telling of Solomon's foreign wives, we read of two adversaries being raised up (1 Kings 11:14,23). (a) How is this in contrast with 1 Kings 4:24? (b) How is this a partial fulfillment of 1 Kings 9:6,7a?

(62) Despite Solomon's sin, why did God not remove the kingdom from Solomon? 1 Kings 11:11-13

(63) Nehemiah's prayer in 13:23-27 refers to Solomon's pagan wives leading him astray. What were the circumstances of Nehemiah's time that prompted this reference?

(64) What bearing do laws found in Deuteronomy 17:14-17 have on the reign on the Solomon?

(65) Why do you think that the accounts of Solomon's wives are not mentioned in the Chronicles account, but only in 1 Kings?

(66) Who was Jeroboam in relation to Solomon? 1 Kings 11:26,28

(67) Why did Jeroboam rebel against Solomon? 1 Kings 11:27-40

(68) Where are the book of the acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41) and the other writings listed in 2 Chronicles 9:29?