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A Biographical Study of Solomon

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Solomon

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

I. The tender years of Solomon

A. Chosen by God

1. He was the second son born to David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:24).
2. Their first son (unnamed) had died in infancy as a punishment for their sin of adultery (2 Sam. 12:15-18).
3. Solomon was also called Jedidiah, meaning “beloved of the Lord” (2 Sam. 12:25).
4. Even before David met and married Bathsheba, God had already revealed to the king several prophecies concerning his yet-to-be-born son (2 Sam. 7:12-16).
 - a. He (and not David) would build the temple of God.
 - b. There would be a father and son relationship between God and Solomon.
 - c. God’s mercy would not depart from Solomon as it had from Saul.
 - d. Through Solomon, David’s kingdom would be established forever.

B. Challenged by David

1. The king’s words to his subjects—David ordered the entire nation to help Solomon.
 - a. The sojourners in Israel (1 Chron. 22:2, 5)
 - b. The key princes in Israel (1 Chron. 22:17-19)
 - c. The religious, military, political, and financial leaders in Israel (1 Chron. 28:1-8)
2. The king’s words to his son
 - a. 1 Chronicles 22:11-13—“The Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.”
 - b. 1 Chronicles 28:9—“Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”
 - c. 1 Chronicles 28:20—“Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.”
 - d. 1 Kings 2:2—“I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.”

3. Along with these challenging words to Solomon, David made a presentation and offered up a prayer.
 - a. The presentation—He gave Solomon the blueprints for the temple which God had given him (1 Chron. 28:11-19).
 - b. The prayer—“Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep my commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision” (1 Chron. 29:19).

II. The triumph of Solomon

A. His two anointings

1. The first anointing (1 Chron. 23:1)
2. The second anointing (1 Chron. 29:22; 1 Kings 1:39)—The second anointing, ordered by the dying David, and carried out by Zadok the high priest and Nathan the prophet, was done to counteract the attempted coup by Adonijah (Solomon’s half-brother) to steal the throne.

B. His four adversaries—After Solomon’s reign was firmly established, he found it necessary to punish four enemies who had continued to demonstrate a rebellious spirit.

1. Adonijah—He was executed for his attempt to marry Abishag, David’s final concubine. This was viewed by Solomon as Adonijah’s first attempt to secure the throne (1 Kings 2:13-25).
2. Abiathar—He was banished from the priesthood for joining in with Adonijah’s original revolt (1 Kings 2:26-27).
3. Joab—David’s former military leader was executed for his part in the rebellion and for past crimes (1 Kings 2:28-34).
4. Shimei—This rebel, who had once cursed David, was executed for disobeying the conditions of his parole (1 Kings 2:36-46).

III. The talent of Solomon

A. Requesting this talent from God (1 Kings 3:4-9; 2 Chron. 1:3-10)

1. At the beginning of his reign, Solomon went to the city of Gibeon, where the tabernacle was located, to sacrifice.
2. He offered up 1,000 burnt sacrifices on the brazen altar and spoke to Israel’s assembled leaders.
3. It was at Gibeon that God spoke to Solomon, promising to give the king anything he wanted.
4. Solomon responded by asking God for a wise and understanding heart—“To judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” (1 Kings 3:9).

B. Receiving this talent from God (1 Kings 3:10-15; 2 Chron. 1:11-12)—“The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing” (1 Kings 3:10).

1. God promised Solomon his request for wisdom would be granted. In fact, he would become the wisest man that ever lived.

2. God would also give the king honor and riches.

C. Revealing this talent from God (1 Kings 3:16-28)

1. Solomon soon had the opportunity to reveal his gift of wisdom when two harlots appeared before him.
2. Both harlots lived in the same house and both had recently given birth to infant sons, one of which had just died.
3. Each harlot claimed the living infant was her son.
4. Solomon proposed to divide the living baby by a sword and give half to each woman.
5. One harlot agreed, but the other was so horrified at this suggestion that she was willing to give up her claim as the mother so the baby might be saved.
6. Solomon quickly awarded the baby to this woman, correctly concluding that she was the true mother.
7. The king's fame quickly grew following this court decision.

IV. The total and tranquil reign of Solomon

- A. The source of this reign (1 Kings 2:12; 1 Chron. 29:25; 2 Chron. 1:1)—“The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel” (1 Chron. 29:25).
- B. The extent of this reign—He reigned from the Euphrates River on the east to the Mediterranean on the west, the borders of Egypt on the south to the Lebanon border on the north (1 Kings 4:21, 24).
- C. The nature of this reign—“Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry” (1 Kings 4:20). “He had peace on all sides round about him . . . Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:24-25).
- D. The appointed officials during this reign
 1. Eleven chief cabinet members over political matters (1 Kings 4:1-6)
 2. Twelve key men, one from each tribe, to be responsible for food supplies (1 Kings 4:7-19)
 3. Jeroboam, to govern over the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (1 Kings 11:28)

V. The temple of Solomon

A. The preparation

1. The co-contractor for the temple—Solomon appointed two men to supervise the overall construction of the temple. Both men had the same name, Hiram. One was a king, while the other was a craftsman.
 - a. Hiram the king (1 Kings 5:1-12; 2 Chron. 2:1-10)
 - (1) He was the ruler of Tyre.
 - (2) He provided the cedar and fir trees from Lebanon.
 - (3) In return for his services, Solomon sent him an annual payment of 125,000 bushels of wheat and 96 gallons of pure oil.

- (4) Hiram also helped build a home for Solomon.
- (5) Seven years after the construction of both the temple and the royal palace, Solomon gave 20 cities in the land of Galilee to King Hiram as final payment for all the cedar, cypress lumber, and gold which had been furnished for these two houses (1 King 9:10-11).
- (6) Hiram, however, for some reason was not satisfied with these cities, calling them Cabul, meaning “the wasteland” (1 Kings 9:12-14).
- b. Hiram the craftsman (1 Kings 7:13-14; 2 Chron. 2:14)
 - (1) He was also from Tyre.
 - (2) He was half-Jewish, the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali.
 - (3) This Hiram was “filled with wisdom, and understanding” (1 Kings 7:14).
 - (4) He was highly skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, wood, and linen.
- 2. The location of the temple—It was constructed atop Mt. Moriah, on the threshing floor once purchased by David from a Jebusite named Ornan (2 Chron. 3:1).
- 3. The time involved in building the temple
 - a. It was begun on the second day of the second month of the fourth year of Solomon’s reign (2 Chron. 3:2).
 - b. This was 480 years after Israel’s Exodus from Egypt (1 Kings 6:1).
 - c. It was completed seven and a half years later (1 Kings 6:37-38).
- 4. The workers assigned to the temple
 - a. Solomon indentured many non-Jewish Canaanites living in the land (2 Chron. 2:17-18): 70,000 common laborers, 80,000 loggers, and 3,600 foremen.
 - b. In addition to these, he drafted 30,000 Israelite laborers (1 Kings 5:15-16).
- B. The dedication
 - 1. Solomon brought into the temple all the gold and silver objects his father David had previously given (1 Kings 7:51; 2 Chron. 5:1).
 - 2. He assembled the spiritual leaders of Israel and together they carried the Ark of the Covenant into the temple (1 Kings 8:1-11; 2 Chron. 5:2-14).
- C. The explanation—Solomon reviewed before the people both the persons and purpose connected with the building of the temple (1 Kings 8:12-21; 2 Chron. 6:1-11).
 - 1. The persons involved
 - a. David had desired to build the temple.
 - b. Solomon, however, had been chosen to build it.
 - 2. The purpose involved—It was to serve as a shelter and dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant.
- D. The supplication—Solomon knelt before the altar on a seven-and-a-half-foot elevated bronze platform in full view of the crowd and raised his hands toward heaven. His prayer involved both a review and a request (1 Kings 8:22-53; 2 Chron. 6:12-42).
 - 1. The review—He acknowledge the faithfulness, mercy, and omnipresence of God.

2. The request—
 - a. That the very presence of the temple would cause Israel to seek God’s protection, justice, and forgiveness in the following areas:
 - (1) When an oath was made at the altar
 - (2) In times of defeat
 - (3) In times of drought, famine, and pestilence
 - (4) In showing kindness to the stranger
 - (5) In the hour of battle
 - (6) In time of captivity
 - E. The consecration—At the end of his prayer, the king consecrated to God a twofold offering.
 1. He offered up the people as a living sacrifice to God (1 Kings 8:55-61).
 2. He offered up some animals as burnt sacrifices to God. This consisted of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep and goats (1 Kings 8:62-64).
 - F. The manifestation—At this point God supernaturally intervened, demonstrating his divine approval of Solomon’s temple—“When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’s house” (2 Chron. 7:1-2).
 - G. The celebration—When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. . . . Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt. And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people” (2 Chron. 7:3; 8-10).
- VI. The treasure of Solomon—“So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches” (1 Kings 10:23).
- A. The nature of his wealth—Solomon, it would seem, possessed great quantities of virtually every precious object on earth. This included:
 1. The purest silver and gold
 - a. Gold (1 Kings 10:10-11, 22; 2 Chron. 9:10, 14, 21, 24)
 - b. Silver (1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron. 9:14, 21, 24)
 2. Precious stones of all kinds (1 Kings 10:10-11; 2 Chron. 9:10)
 3. Beautiful and fragrant sandalwood, from which were made harps and psalteries (1 Kings 10:11; 2 Chron. 9:10-11)

4. Rare spices (1 Kings 10:10-11, 25; 2 Chron. 9:24)
 5. Ivory (1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron. 9:21)
 6. The finest of clothes and armor (1 Kings 10:25; 2 Chron. 9:24)
 7. Linen (2 Chron. 1:15)
 8. Abundant and exotic foods (1 Kings 4:22-23; 10:5)
 9. Imported animals and birds
 - a. Apes (1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron. 9:21)
 - b. Peacocks (1 Kings 10:22; 2 Chron. 9:21)
 10. Horses
 - a. Solomon owned 40,000 (or 4,000?) stalls of horses (1 Kings 4:26; 2 Chron. 9:25).
 - b. He also commanded 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen.
 - c. Many of these horses were brought out of Egypt (1 Kings 10:28; 2 Chron. 1:16; 9:28).
 11. Mules (1 Kings 10:25; 2 Chron. 9:24)
- B. The source of his wealth—Solomon received his vast riches from at least six sources.
2. From King Hiram’s navy of sailing ships (1 Kings 10:11, 22; 2 Chron. 9:10, 21)
 3. From an annual Israelite income tax revenue (1 Kings 10:14; 2 Chron. 9:13)
 4. From the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:2; 2 Chron. 9:1)
 5. From various traders and merchants (1 Kings 10:15; 2 Chron. 9:14)
 6. From various foreign kings (1 Kings 10:24-25; 2 Chron. 9:23-24)
 7. From his sale of horses and chariots (1 Kings 10:29; 2 Chron. 1:17)
- C. The employment of his wealth—On what and for what did Solomon use his vast wealth?
1. His palace usage
 - a. The meals involved—Solomon’s daily food requirements for his staff alone were staggering (1 Kings 4:22-23).
 - 1) Fine flour: 195 bushels
 - 2) Bushels of meal: 390
 - 3) Ten oxen from the fattening pens; 20 oxen from the pasture; 100 sheep
 - 4) Assorted game food including deer, gazelle, roebuck, and plump fowl
 - b. The majesty involved (1 Kings 10:16-21; 2 Chron. 9:15-19)
 - 1) Solomon made 200 pieces of golden armor and 300 golden shields which he kept in his palace in the hall of the forest of Lebanon.
 - 2) He constructed a huge ivory throne and overlaid it with pure gold. It had six steps, a rounded back with arm rests, and a lion standing on each side. In addition, there were two lions on each individual step. His was thus the most splendid throne in the entire world.
 - 3) All of the king’s cups and vessels were made of solid gold, as were all the furnishings in his forest of Lebanon room.

2. His public usage—During his 40-year reign, Solomon caused silver and gold to be as plentiful in Jerusalem as rocks on the road, and expensive cedar lumber was used like common sycamore (1 Kings 10:27; 2 Chron. 1:15; 9:20, 27).

VII. The testimony of Solomon—the king’s brilliant employment of both his wealth and wisdom was universally known and acknowledged.

A. Publicly attested to—He excelled in the following ways:

1. Jurisprudence (1 Kings 3:16-28)
2. Administration (1 Kings 4:1-19; 11:27-28)
3. Architecture and engineering—This is seen by the temple and his own magnificent palace.
4. Construction
 - a. He built the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer (1 Kings 9:15).
 - b. He also built cities for various reasons (1 Kings 9:19).
 - (1) For grain storage
 - (2) For keeping his chariots
 - (3) For his cavalry and chariot drivers
 - (4) For resort purposes
5. Commercial enterprises
 - a. He had a shipyard in Ezion-geber near Eloth on the Red Sea in the land of Edom, where he built a fleet of ships (1 Kings 9:26-28).
 - b. His merchant fleet was in partnership with King Hiram’s ships (1 Kings 10:22).
6. Forestry (1 Kings 4:33)—“He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.”
7. Zoology (1 Kings 4:33)—“He spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”
8. Music and poetry (1 Kings 4:32)—“His songs were a thousand and five.”
9. Literature (1 Kings 4:32)—“He spake three thousand proverbs.”
10. Drama and playwriting—Song of Solomon
11. Philosophy—Ecclesiastes
12. Counseling and psychology—Proverbs

B. Privately attested to—Solomon was visited by the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chron. 9:1-12).

1. The reason for her visit—She came to find out if Solomon was indeed as great as she had heard. The queen would test him with hard questions.
2. The revelation during her visits
 - a. She listened to the wisdom of Solomon.
 - b. She look upon the wealth of Solomon.
 - c. The results of her visit—The queen concluded that the actual greatness of Solomon far exceeded anything she had previously heard.

VIII. The transgressions of Solomon

- A. The caution against his sins—God himself had previously appeared to the king with a promise and a warning (1 Kings 9:2-9).
 - 1. The promise
 - a. God would honor the temple.
 - b. He would establish the kingdom.
 - c. He would forgive confessed sin.
 - 2. The warning
 - a. For unconfessed sins, he would destroy the temple of Israel.
 - b. For unconfessed sins, he would deport the people of Israel.
- B. The cause of his sins—“When Solomon was old . . . his wives turned away his heart after other gods” (1 Kings 11:4).
 - 1. The polygamy involved
 - a. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3).
 - b. These women were taken from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from the land of the Hittites (1 Kings 11:1-2).
 - 2. The paganism involved
 - a. His first marriage was to the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 3:1).
 - b. It was apparently a politically arranged marriage.
 - c. The girl was not a believer, for Solomon later built a separate house for her, away from the temple area, lest she defile it (1 Kings 9:24; 2 Chron. 8:11).
 - d. He also built various temples for his pagan wives to use for burning incense and sacrificing to their gods (1 Kings 11:8).
 - e. Finally, Solomon committed the ultimate transgression when he himself sought out those horrible idols. The king worshiped the following (1 Kings 11:5, 7):
 - (1) Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians
 - (2) Milcom, the vicious and vile gods of the Amorites
 - (3) Chemosh, the depraved god of Moab (Solomon even built a temple on the Mount of Olives for this idol)
 - (4) Molech, the god of the children of Ammon
- C. The consequences following his sins
 - 1. God predicted a coming civil war (1 Kings 11:9-13).
 - a. Much of Solomon’s kingdom would be torn away from his successor and given to another.
 - b. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin would be left for his family to rule over.
 - c. For David’s sake, however, this would not occur until after the death of Solomon.
 - 2. God permitted a current civil unrest (1 Kings 11:14-40), allowing three adversaries to trouble Solomon.

- a. Hadad the Edomite—He was a member of the royal family of Edom who had previously fled to Egypt to escape death at the hands of David during a war between the two nations.
- b. Rezon—He was the leader of a gang of bandits and made his headquarters in Damascus.
- c. Jeroboam
 - (1) He had been Solomon’s former governor over Ephraim and Manasseh and had also fled to Egypt.
 - (2) The king had attempted to kill Jeroboam upon learning that this was the man to whom God would later give over much of Solomon’s kingdom.
 - (3) Jeroboam continued to exert influence over 10 of Israel’s 12 tribes even from Egypt.

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Josiah referred to Solomon during his great Passover celebration (2 Chron. 35:3-4).
- II. Nehemiah rebuked some Jewish men of his day who had married pagan wives, reminding them of how Solomon had once allowed this terrible sin to wreck his testimony for God (Neh. 13:25-27).
- III. Matthew included Solomon’s name in his royal genealogy leading to Christ (Matt. 1:6-7).
- IV. Jesus referred to Solomon on two important occasions.
 - A. To emphasize the faithfulness of God—“Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Matt. 6:28-30).
 - B. To emphasize the faithfulness of Israel—“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here” (Matt. 12:42).
- V. Stephen referred to Solomon during his defense before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:47).

STATISTICS

Father: David (2 Sam. 12:24)

Mother: Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:24)

Spouse: Naamah (among the many) (1 Kings 11:3; 14:21)

Son: Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:21)

Brothers: Full brothers: Shammua, Shobab, and Nathan (1 Chron. 3:5)

Half-brothers: Amnon, Daniel (also called Chileab) Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream, Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet (2 Sam. 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 1 Chron. 3:1-8; 14:3-5).

Sister: Half-sister Tamar (2 Sam 13:1)

First mention: 2 Samuel 5:14

Final mention: Acts 7:47

Meaning of his name: "Peace"

Frequency of his name: Referred to 297 times

Biblical books mentioning him: 14 books (2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Nehemiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Jeremiah, Matthew, Luke, John, Acts)

Occupation: King of Israel

Place of birth: Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:14)

Place of death: Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:43)

Important fact about his life: He was the world's wisest man (1 Kings 3:11-12)