



## Second Chronicles - Chapter Nine

### **II 1 Chronicles 10:1-2 Chronicles 9:31 - The United Kingdom of David and Solomon (continues/concludes)**

#### Summary of Chapter Nine

Solomon's reputation and influence extend beyond the borders of Israel. The wealthy and powerful Queen of Sheba comes to see him because she had heard of Solomon's wealth and wisdom. She found that the stories were not only true but the reality far exceeded all that she had heard.

The chapter provides information as to how Solomon gained all this wealth and lists all the articles that he had made from the gold in particular. Some of it became national treasures and some for his own personal use.

After forty years on the throne of Israel, Solomon died and was buried in the same tomb complex as David. His son Rehoboam succeeded him.

#### **II.j 2 Chronicles 9:1-9:31 - Solomon's International Relations and Renown**

Refer to the chapter summary above.

#### **II.j.i 2 Chronicles 9:1-12 - Visit of the Queen of Sheba**

This subsection closely follows 1 Kings 10:1-13. The Queen of Sheba had heard of Solomon's great wisdom and wealth so she visited him to see if it was actually true. On questioning Solomon she found that it was not only true but that it far surpassed anything she had imagined. She recognised that this was because of the Lord and she praised him.

<sup>1</sup> When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions, having a very great retinue and camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones.

When she came to Solomon, she discussed with him all that was on her mind.

### 2 Chronicles 9:1

The queen of Sheba. Sheba, also known as Sabea, was where modern day Yemen is today. It is known from geography this was a wealthy kingdom, with much gold, spices, and precious woods. History also reveals that they were known to have queens as well as kings. This was a long journey - up to about 1,500 miles or 2,400 km. She probably came as part of a trade delegation, but there is no doubt that she was highly motivated to see Solomon and his kingdom. Her visit may have been prompted by Solomon's naval activities in the south of the Red Sea, but is presented primarily as a quest for wisdom for Solomon is acknowledged as excelling in both wisdom and wealth.

The fame of Solomon. Solomon's fame spread because it was given to him by the Lord and it was always intended that God would be the reason why the name of his people would be made famous throughout the world, as a later prophet would confirm: *<<Your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of my splendour that I had bestowed on you, says the Lord God>>* (Ezekiel 16:14).

In the same manner the Christian church is famous throughout the world only because it bears the name of the Lord Jesus and the church should always reflect the goodness of that name: *<<Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father>>* (Philippians 2:9-11), *<<And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him>>* (Colossians 3:17), and: *<<To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfil by his power every good resolve and work of faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ>>* (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12).

She came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. It is not only gold that arrives from Arabia, which is one possible location for Ophir in 1 Kings 9:28, but also a queen who comes to examine Solomon's knowledge and wisdom, another theme picked up from earlier in the narrative. She came to Solomon and Israel at their material zenith. The great prosperity, splendour, and wisdom of Solomon's kingdom were internationally famous, confirmed by the worldwide fame of Solomon in 1 Kings 4:29-34, which attracted foreigners to his court. The ease with which Solomon deals with her questions, combined with her own observation of his wealth, leaves her breathless; refer also to 1 Kings 10:5.

She came to Jerusalem having a very great retinue. This queen travelled in the manner of queens - with a large royal procession, heavily laden with gifts and goods for trade.

When she came to Solomon, she discussed with him all that was on her mind or her heart. Solomon's kingdom was famous not only for its material prosperity, but also for his great wisdom. The Queen of Sheba had great - and seemingly difficult - questions, and Solomon answered all of them. The hard questions were not just riddles, but presumably included difficult diplomatic and ethical questions. The test was not an academic exercise but to see if he would be a trustworthy business party and a reliable ally capable of giving help.

<sup>2</sup> Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from Solomon that he could not explain to her. <sup>3</sup> When the queen of Sheba had observed the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, <sup>4</sup> the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, and their clothing, his valets and their clothing, and his burnt-offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit left in her.

#### 2 Chronicles 9:2-4

Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from Solomon that he could not explain to her. Solomon's wisdom, given by God, was unprecedented in the entire world, and it amazes this foreign queen.

When the queen of Sheba had observed the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, there was no more spirit left in her. This queen was obviously familiar with the world of royal splendour and luxury. Yet she was completely overwhelmed by the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of his kingdom. What happened to the Queen of Sheba is a natural and not uncommon effect which will be produced in a delicate sensible mind at the sight of rare and extraordinary productions of art.

<sup>5</sup> So she said to the king, 'The report was true that I heard in my own land of your accomplishments and of your wisdom, <sup>6</sup> but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes saw it. Not even half of the greatness of your wisdom had been told to me; you far surpass the report that I had heard. <sup>7</sup> Happy are your people! Happy are these your servants, who continually attend you and hear your wisdom! <sup>8</sup> Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the Lord your God. Because your God loved Israel and wished to establish them for ever, he has made you king

over them, so that you may execute justice and righteousness.’<sup>9</sup> Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones: there were no spices such as those that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

### 2 Chronicles 9:5-9

The report was true that I heard in my own land of your accomplishments and of your wisdom. The Queen of Sheba had heard wonderful things about Solomon and his kingdom, but upon seeing it with her own eyes she realised it was far greater than she had heard or even imagined, for not even half of the greatness of your wisdom had been told to me; you far surpass the report that I had heard.

Happy are your people! Happy are these your servants. When the authors of the Book of Kings described the joyful kingdom in 1 Kings Chapter 4, they stressed the benefits of Solomon’s wisdom for all his subjects: <<*Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy*>> (1 Kings 4:20), and: <<*During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all of them under their vines and fig trees*>> (1 Kings 4:25). The Queen of Sheba, however, refers much more specifically to the blessing that Solomon must be to his wives (1 Kings 10:8), the nation in general and his court officials in particular. While Solomon’s wisdom and wealth are still remarkable, and are still evidence of God’s abundant blessing, it seems that his great wisdom, wealth, and power have begun to distort his moral judgement in the proper use of these blessings. Chapter 9 as a whole in fact focuses on this benefit that wisdom brings to the royal court, and particularly to Solomon himself, rather than on any benefit that might flow out to the people. The influx of food described in 1 Kings Chapters 4-5 has been replaced by an influx of luxury goods that were only beneficial to a minority.

**It is a joyful thing to serve a great, wise, and rich king. If it was a joyful thing to serve Solomon, it is a much more joyful thing to serve Jesus.**

Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the Lord your God. The queen immediately recognised that what Solomon had could never have been achieved by human effort alone. She knew that Israel’s God was the source of all this magnificence and she praised him. This is an example of what God wanted to do for Israel under the promises of the Old Covenant. God promised Israel that if they obeyed him under the Old Covenant, he would bless them so tremendously that the world would notice and give glory to the Lord God of Israel: <<*If you will only obey the Lord your God, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the*

*earth*>> (Deuteronomy 28:1), and: <<*All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you*>> (Deuteronomy 28:10). God wanted to reach the nations through an obedient and blessed Israel. If Israel did not obey, then God would speak to the nations through a thoroughly disciplined Israel.

For the Chronicler, the Davidic kingdom is the earthly expression of God's eternal kingdom. Recognition, especially from a Gentile monarch, that God was the actual King of Israel could only encourage the postexilic community, when no descendant of David was on the throne. The impression made on the queen would have been beneficial to a postexilic community for she recognised that Solomon had been made king by God and that therefore God was the true king of Israel. On their return from Babylonian exile it seems that the people realised that they would never again require a human king on the throne of David. All they need to realise now is that the Messiah has inherited the throne and reigns over all things.

Blessed be the Lord your God. It is fair to ask if this was a true confession of faith, expressing allegiance to the God of Israel. Taken in context, it may not be more than the queen's response to the astonishing blessing evident in Solomon's Jerusalem. Even though the queen recognised the almighty power of God it does not mean that she forsook her own gods and turned to him. There have been many in history who acknowledge God but who do not accept his sovereignty over their lives: <<*Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel; please accept a present from your servant'*>> (2 Kings 5:15), <<*When that period was over, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me. I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured the one who lives for ever. For his sovereignty is an everlasting sovereignty, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does what he wills with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can stay his hand or say to him, 'What are you doing?'*>> (Daniel 4:34-35), and: <<*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder*>> (James 3:19).

If the Queen of Sheba is taken as an example of a seeker, it can be seen that Solomon impressed her with his wealth and splendour, and also impressed her personally. However, she returned home without an evident expression of faith in the God of Israel. This shows that impressing seekers with facilities, programmes, organisation and professionalism is not enough. Regardless of the result of her search, her seeking can be admired:

- She came from a great distance.
- She came with gifts to offer.

- She came to question and to learn.
- She came and saw the riches of the king.
- She came for an extended period.
- She came telling all that was on her heart.

Jesus used the Queen of Sheba as an example of a seeker: <<*The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!*>> (Matthew 12:42). If the Queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendour of his kingdom so diligently, how much more should people today seek Jesus and the glory of his kingdom? She will certainly also rise up in judgement against each subsequent generation that rejects Jesus.

Because your God loved Israel and wished to establish them for ever, he has made you king over them. This statement is especially meaningful because Solomon was not necessarily the most logical successor of his father David. There were several sons of David born before Solomon. It was God's special act to make him king rather than his elder brother.

Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones. The queen's gift of one hundred and twenty talents of gold, equivalent to 9,000 lbs or 4,080 kg, is a remarkably large amount, yet in context it does not compare with Solomon's great wealth. Solomon was already receiving much more gold than this (notice that her gift is exactly the same size as Hiram's first instalment in 1 Kings 9:14, which was superseded by his second in 1 Kings 9:28), as well as unparalleled amounts of valuable algum wood (vv.10-11). Solomon was a vastly wealthier person than the queen, something that is underlined in v.12. What she gives to him pales in relation to what he subsequently gives to her as a gift.

There were no spices such as those that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. She came from a region rich in spices and skilled in the processing of spices. There were none that were comparable to these in the known world at the time and so this was as rare a gift as the precious metal and stones.

<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon who brought gold from Ophir brought algum wood and precious stones.

<sup>11</sup> From the algum wood, the king made steps for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, lyres also and harps for the singers; there never was seen the like of them before in the land of Judah.

## 2 Chronicles 9:10-11

The servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon. The former were the master mariners and sailors and the latter would be traders and merchants who sailed with them.

Algum wood is also known as almuq wood in 1 Kings 10:11-12. In the Hebrew it appears only in its plural form indicating that it was imported already cut, either as logs or planks.

The botanical identity of algum is not known for certain, although some references suggest it may be juniper. Several species of juniper occur in the Middle East region, including *Juniperus excelsa* (Greek juniper), *Juniperus foetidissima* (stinking juniper), *Juniperus phoenicea* (Phoenician juniper), and *Juniperus drupacæa* (Syrian juniper). It is likely that the woods of these species, which are all very similar in woodworking properties, would have not been distinguished from each other in the wood trade. The difficulty in identifying this wood is due in part to uncertainty over the location of the city of Ophir. If Ophir is located in India, as some think, the wood likely would be red sandalwood.

<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, King Solomon granted the queen of Sheba every desire that she expressed, well beyond what she had brought to the king. Then she returned to her own land, with her servants.

## 2 Chronicles 9:12

Meanwhile, King Solomon granted the queen of Sheba every desire that she expressed, well beyond what she had brought to the king. To give according to the royal generosity means to give a lot. This description of Solomon's measure of generosity to the Queen of Sheba also describes the measure of God's generosity towards his creation.

According to tradition - fanciful stories, perhaps - the Queen of Sheba wanted a son by Solomon, and he obliged her. Her child was named Menilek, and he became the ancestor of all subsequent Ethiopian monarchs.

## II.j.ii 2 Chronicles 9:13-28 - Solomon's Great Wealth

This subsection closely follows 1 Kings 10:14-28. The Chronicler's presentation of Solomon concludes with a description of the king at the zenith of his wealth and international renown, a far cry from the difficult conditions of the postexilic days: <<*From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as is now the case*>> (Ezra 9:7), and: <<*Here we are, slaves to this day*

– slaves in the land that you gave to our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts. Its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our livestock at their pleasure, and we are in great distress>> (Nehemiah 9:36-37).



**Solomon's International Ventures circa 950 BC**

The trading ships of Hiram brought great quantities of gold to Solomon and he made great shields of gold to be placed in the Forest of Lebanon. He also built an elaborate throne of ivory, the likes of which has never been seen in any kingdom since. Everything Solomon used was made of gold for silver was not even considered due to the amount of gold that Solomon possessed.

Solomon's fame spread throughout the world and all the other kings came to him. They all brought him gifts thus increasing his immense wealth. With this he bought chariots and horses from Egypt, selling them on to the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

Solomon's firm control of important trade routes linking Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia, i.e. Asia Minor, provided him with incalculable wealth. Partnering with King Hiram of Tyre, Solomon also launched his own trading expeditions to Ophir to acquire valuable and exotic goods. The Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon attests to his great fame throughout the ancient world. Solomon further augmented his wealth by buying horses from Kue and chariots from Egypt, and selling them to the kings of Syria and the Hittites.

Although Ophir is shown in this map as possibly being in East Africa, it could have been in Arabia or India. No one knows for sure.

<sup>13</sup> The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, <sup>14</sup> besides that which the traders and merchants brought; and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon.

### 2 Chronicles 9:13-14

The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold. This was a vast amount of gold, which came to Solomon annually. The accumulation of gold continues; it is mentioned no fewer than eleven times in vv.13-24. According to the value of gold in October 2016, it would be around £750 million or just under \$1 billion US dollars. Solomon's annual revenues in gold would have been derived from both tribute and trade. This speaks not only to the great wealth of Solomon, but it also makes him the only other person in the Bible associated with the number 666.

The other Biblical connection to 666 is the end-times world dictator and opponent of God and his people often known as the Antichrist: <<*This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred and sixty-six*>> (Revelation 13:18). In fact, the Revelation passage specifically says that the number 666 is the number of a man, and the man may be Solomon. This is not to say that Solomon was the Antichrist, clearly he was not, or that the coming Antichrist will be some strange reincarnation of Solomon. However, some commentators believe that it may indicate that the Antichrist may not be someone purely evil from the very beginning. Instead, he may be like Solomon - a good man corrupted. The apostle John seemed to understand that the term does not just refer to one individual but to several who oppose God and his purposes: <<*Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is*

coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour>> (1 John 2:18), <<By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world>> (1 John 4:2-3), and: <<Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist!>> (2 John 7).

Besides that which the traders and merchants brought; and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon. Solomon received more than 666 talents of gold a year. The 666 talents was just his initial payment. The Chronicler provides a warning signal here. He assumes that the reader know of the instructions for future kings of Israel in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. He assumes they especially know the command which states: <<**And he must not acquire many wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; also silver and gold he must not acquire in great quantity for himself**>> (Deuteronomy 17:17). God blessed Solomon with great riches, but Solomon allowed that blessing to turn into a danger because he disobeyed multiplied silver and gold for himself.

<sup>15</sup> King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of beaten gold went into each large shield. <sup>16</sup> He made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold went into each shield; and the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

### 2 Chronicles 9:15-16

King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold; he made three hundred shields of beaten gold. These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, part of the palace complex that contained vast quantities of cedar, but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This shows Solomon had the *image* of a warrior king, but without the *substance*.

Each of the larger shields would have been worth about £92,000 or \$120,000 at late 2016 prices. Therefore, the total value would have been in the region of £18.4 million or \$24 million US. Likewise, the smaller shields, worth around £23,000 or \$30,000 each would have a net worth of £6.9 million or \$9 million to be used just for ceremonial purposes!

The gold shields were lost as booty to Pharaoh Shishak by Solomon's son Rehoboam: <<**So King Shishak of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's**

*house; he took everything. He also took away the shields of gold that Solomon had made>> (2 Chronicles 12:9).*

<sup>17</sup> The king also made a great ivory throne, and overlaid it with pure gold. <sup>18</sup> The throne had six steps and a footstool of gold, which were attached to the throne, and on each side of the seat were arm rests and two lions standing beside the arm rests, <sup>19</sup> while twelve lions were standing, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom. <sup>20</sup> All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. <sup>21</sup> For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram; once every three years the ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

### 2 Chronicles 9:17-21

Solomon decorates his palace with gold; overlays the finest throne ever seen with it; and makes household items with it. It arrives in Israel by various means, including the ships of Tarshish, ships capable of a journey to such far-flung ports as Tarshish, usually identified with Tartessus in Spain, and to Arabia and possibly also India and the Far East. These ships are said to have sailed to lands so distant that it took three years to return with their extraordinary cargo. These trade missions should also have served as an opportunity to spread the name of God to the other nations: *<<For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. From them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud – which draw the bow – to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations>> (Isaiah 66:18-19);* instead it seems to only have been for trade and the increase of Solomon's wealth and fame: *<<Tarshish did business with you out of the abundance of your great wealth; silver, iron, tin, and lead they exchanged for your wares. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded with you; they exchanged human beings and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. Beth-togarmah exchanged for your wares horses, war-horses, and mules. The Rhodians traded with you; many coastlands were your own special markets; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony>> (Ezekiel 27:12-15).*

Silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. This was a statement of wealth. If taken seriously, it shows the tremendous abundance of Solomon's kingdom. Truly, King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom, and the promises of Deuteronomy 28:1-14 were fulfilled in his

reign, especially: <<*The Lord will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings. You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow*>> (Deuteronomy 28:12).

<sup>22</sup> Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. <sup>23</sup> All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. <sup>24</sup> Every one of them brought a present, objects of silver and gold, garments, weaponry, spices, horses, and mules, so much year after year. <sup>25</sup> Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup> He ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. <sup>27</sup> The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah. <sup>28</sup> Horses were imported for Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

### 2 Chronicles 9:22-28

Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. Solomon is presented as supreme over all the kings of the earth, in keeping with the promises made at the beginning of his reign: <<*God answered Solomon, 'Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for possessions, wealth, honour, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may rule my people over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. I will also give you riches, possessions, and honour, such as none of the kings had who were before you, and none after you shall have the like'*>> (2 Chronicles 1:11-12). Verses 25-28 are a partial repetition of 2 Chronicles 1:14-17, and thus form an inclusio, i.e. literary bookends, around the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon.

All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom. This was another fulfilment of the promises of Deuteronomy Chapter 28: <<*The Lord will make you the head, and not the tail; you shall be only at the top, and not at the bottom – if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God*>> (Deuteronomy 28:13a).

So much year after year. The wealth continued to pour into the royal treasury from every corner of the known world.

Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

At the end of this great description of Solomon's wealth and splendour, the author provides this dark note. The accumulation of silver and horses, as well as gold, is forbidden by Deuteronomy 17:16-17; refer to the comment made on 1 Kings 4:28.

In comparison to the reign of David, there were few military conflicts during the reign of Solomon, yet he still saw the importance of a strong defence. Perhaps there were few military conflicts because Solomon had a strong defence. The remains of Solomon's fortress and stables at Megiddo can be seen today.



A model of Solomon's Gate at Megiddo

The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone. When Solomon's great wealth is considered, it can be seen that he originally did not set his heart upon riches. He deliberately asked for wisdom to lead the people of God instead of riches or fame. God promised to also give Solomon riches and fame, and God fulfilled his promise. It can also be considered that Solomon gave an eloquent testimony to the vanity of riches as the preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He powerfully showed that there was no ultimate satisfaction through materialism. Christians do not have to be as rich as Solomon to learn the same lesson.

Horses were imported for Solomon from Egypt and from all lands. All but one of the instructions about kingship in Deuteronomy 17:16-17 have thus far been violated by Solomon. That remaining one: <<**he must not acquire many wives for himself**>>, is omitted by the Chronicler but can be found in 1 Kings Chapter 11.

The author of Kings also states: <<**so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram**>> (1 Kings 10:29b). This may explain why Solomon broke such an obvious commandment. Perhaps the importation of horses from Egypt began as trading as an agent on behalf of other kings. From this, perhaps Solomon could say, "I'm importing horses

from Egypt but I am not doing it for myself. I'm not breaking God's command." Many examples of gross disobedience begin as clever rationalisations.

### II.j.iii 2 Chronicles 9:29-31 - Death of Solomon

Solomon's life comes to an end after forty years on the throne. It is a sad end to what had promised to be such a magnificent enduring kingdom, ruined by his failure to stay true to the God who had given him so much. Solomon was buried in Jerusalem and his son Rehoboam became the last king over the entire nation.

<sup>29</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not written in the history of the prophet Nathan, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of the seer Iddo concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat? <sup>30</sup> Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. <sup>31</sup> Solomon slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father David; and his son Rehoboam succeeded him.

### 2 Chronicles 9:29-31

The acts of Solomon were recorded in various chronicles kept by Nathan, Ahijah and the seer Iddo. There is also a reference to: <<*the Book of the Acts of Solomon*>> (1 Kings 11:1b). Scribes and prophets kept detailed records of all the activities of the various kings which sadly are not extant and therefore lost to history.

The visions of the seer Iddo concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat. Jeroboam had been told that he would rule over ten tribes and that God would favour his house if Jeroboam followed the Lord's statutes. When the kingdom divided Jeroboam became king of Israel in the northern kingdom but he built idols of golden calves and thus he lost the promise that the Lord had made to him. Refer to 1 Kings 11:28-40 and 1 Kings 12:20-33. Iddo the seer is traditionally identified with the unknown prophet in 1 Kings Chapter 13.

Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. Many commentators believe that Solomon began his reign when he was about 20 years old. This means that Solomon did not live a particularly long life. It also means that the promise made at the start of his reign was not fulfilled to Solomon, because of his disobedience: <<*If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life*>> (1 Kings 3:14).

Solomon slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father David. This does not necessarily mean that Solomon died a saved man. It is a familiar phrase used in 1 and 2 Kings, used a total of 25 times, and was appears for one of

the most wicked kings, Ahab, in 1 Kings 22:40. It simply means that Solomon passed to the world beyond. No one can say with certainty that he is in heaven.

The often repeated phrase 'slept with his ancestors' reflected the reality that almost all Israelite burials were in multi-chambered, rock-hewn tombs carved into hillsides. They were probably used as family tombs, so that even in death family ties were underscored.

His son Rehoboam succeeded him. Solomon did not end well and the rot for the nation had set in. It will accelerate rapidly from the outset of Rehoboam's reign.

Although, as with David, the Chronicler overlooks aspects of Solomon's life, the last look at the life of Solomon in First Kings leads the reader to believe that he died in apostasy. There is no hopeful or cheerful end to the story in this account. However, it may be that Solomon was shown special mercy for the sake of David his father, as in 2 Samuel 7:14-15, if that promise also applies to Solomon as well as the Messiah. Some also believe that Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes at the very end of his life as a renunciation of his fall into vanity. It makes for fascinating reading following such a privileged mortal life.