

King Solomon (ca. 970 B.C.E)

A. Traditional view

-temple builder; wrote wisdom books; attained great wealth and glory

B. Close Look: a cause of division of the united monarchy

1. Cunning character: (sort of) usurper-- 1 Kings 1-2

2. Tyrant

-imposed forced labor (1 Kgs 9:15-22)

9:22 But of the Israelites Solomon made no slaves (עֶבֶד).

5:27-32 (Eng 5:13ff) reports forced labor (עָמַל) from all Israel

-his mistreatment of the northern tribes with building projects (4:7-19)

11 officials from the northern tribes of Israel, and only one from Judah

-excessive consumption (1 Kgs 4:22)

-tight control over the temple revenue-- the ark of covenant imprisoned

*Jesus' teaching and rejection (cleansing?) of the temple shows dissatisfaction.

On anxieties (Mt 6:25-34; Lk 12:22-31; cf. Gos. Th 36)

On rejection of the temple (Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-17; Lk 19:45-46)

--Jeremiah's temple sermon (Jer 7)-- "a den of robbers" (Jer 7:11)

3. Credit card bill overdue and mistreatment of the northern Israelites

* Jerobam's Ephraimite background served him to be in charge over forced labor of the "house of Joseph" (1 Kings 11:28) and the people's demand to lighten the work (12:4) indicates that the northern tribes of Israel were not treated with fairness.

* 1 Kgs 9:10-14 report that Solomon gave up 20 Galilean cities to Hiram.----- Solomon was praised for his wealth and power, but he was unable to pay the credit-card bills for the building materials.

4. Marriage alliance and worshipping foreign gods (1 Kgs 3:1; 7:8; 9:15, 24; 11:1)

-Scholars would compare only the twin phrases "Solomon loved the Lord" (3:3) and "Solomon loved many foreign wives" (11:1), not taking 1 Kings 3:1 into consideration.

-Many wives not a symbol of Viagra, but a seat of apostasy

*Prophetic stories in fact bear witness to widespread Baalism

1 Kgs 18:21-- "How long will you go limping with two different opinions?"

*Sin of Jeroboam I-- not so much of moral character (not as bad as David/Solomon)

Deuteronomic law concerning kingship (17:14-20) and Kings' account of Solomon

a. people (**you**) may choose the king; but Solomon is never recorded to be acclaimed a king by the people ---- David under Batsheba and Nathan designated him privately. (compare, Saul and David: 2 Sam 2:5 and 5:1-5). David's personal character in the succession narrative (2 Sam 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2) is weak and easily manipulated.

b. forbids many chariots and horsemen (Deut 17:16a; 1 Kgs 10:26, 28-29)

c. forbids returning the people to Egypt for this purpose (Deut 17:16b; 1 Kgs 10:28-29)

d. problem of the multiplication of wives who turn his heart away from YHWH (Deut 17: 17a; 1 Kings 11:1-8)

e. note of excessive wealth (Deut 17:17b; 1 Kgs 10:14, 21, 27)

f. possession of a copy of the law. No historical note that Solomon ever acquired the book of the law, in fact he banished the levitical priest, Abiathar. (Deut 17:18-20; 1 Kgs 2:26-27)