



King Solomon | History, Temple, Wives & Facts

History of King Solomon

Solomon appears in the King James Bible almost 300 times. One of the 48 Jewish prophets, Solomon, also known as Jedidiah, is an important figure in the Jewish tradition. He is also a prophet in the Islamic tradition and is referred to as Sulaiman.

The Old Testament depicts him as a wise, wealthy, and powerful leader. As the king of Israel, he was the successor to David, his father. David was also a great king, having consolidated various Israelite tribes under a single banner.

His son's path to the throne was a tad complicated, but when he ascended the throne, the kingdom of Israel witnessed an age of prosperity. Let us start with the final days of David's reign.

King Solomon Facts



King Solomon in His Elder Years, by Gustave Doré, 1866



Born	c. 990 BCE, Jerusalem, United Kingdom of Israel
Died	c. 931 BCE (aged 58–59) Jerusalem, United Kingdom of Israel
Burial	Jerusalem
Solomon Wives	Naamah, Pharaoh's daughter, 700 wives of royal birth, and 300 concubines
Father	David
Mother	Bathsheba
House	House of David
King Solomon Children	Rehoboam, Taphath, Basemath

The First Book of Kings

According to the First Book of Kings in the Old Testament, David was cold in his bed, and his servants and family did all they could to help him. In [ancient](#) Israel, the lack of potency was closely linked with the lack of any other power a king may have, and it



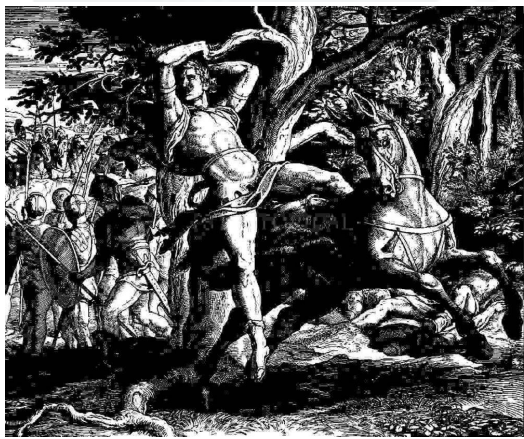
suggested the end was near. And so happened the inevitable – the king’s sons began to fret about his succession.

Solomon would not just make his father’s greatest idea come true by building the “house” for God; he would also become Israel’s most successful ruler and make his people one of the world’s most affluent and influential nations. But first, he had to become the king, and it was not an easy task.

Solomon was not the eldest living son of David. Adonijah, who was older than Solomon, was ready to take the helm. After Adonijah crowned himself outside the walls of Jerusalem, David abdicated and handed the throne to Solomon.

The word spread, and people started deserting Adonijah’s forces. The throne’s pretender fled to God’s altar and remained there until Solomon promised he wouldn’t kill him – unless he tried to usurp the throne again. When David was about to die, he called for Solomon to give him some final advice. He told him to love and obey God so that his kingdom would thrive and his sons would rule Israel forever. He also advised Solomon to get rid of two particular men whose activities might be dangerous in the near future.

General Joab



(General Joab) Source – Wikipedia



The first man was General Joab, who had served David for ages and was very brave and successful. However, he had killed people under David's explicit protection more than once, and he had supported Adonijah against the rightful king of Israel.

Shimei



Shimei (Wikipedia)



The second man was named Shimei. He supported David but had cursed and betrayed him in the past and thus could not be trusted. Later, Adonijah tried to usurp the throne, so Solomon ended up killing him as well. Historical and archaeological records dictate that the dates of Solomon's reign are 970 to 931 BCE.

Solomon had perhaps been born with a stellar mind, but the Bible says he was awarded it when he became the king of Israel. Nobody knows whether this is historically accurate or not. According to the Bible, Solomon followed the advice of his father. He lived and ruled rightfully, so God approached him one night and directed him, "Ask what I should give you."

Solomon had the opportunity to choose between overwhelming power, longevity, wisdom, wealth, and other amazing rewards, but he chose wisdom. He felt that he needed a wise mind to understand good and evil and rule his people justly. Happy with Solomon's choice, God granted him health, wealth, and power in addition to wisdom.

1 Kings 3:12-13

The Book of Kings, chapter 3, verses 12-13 reads, "I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for – both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings."

The next day, Solomon had the chance to demonstrate the wisdom he had just been given. In the ancient world, the king held the role of the supreme judge in all legal cases, and there stood a tricky case before him. Two prostitutes approached him with a newborn baby.

The two women lived under one roof, and each of them had had a baby recently; however, one baby died, while the other survived. Now both women claimed that the surviving baby belonged to her. It was up to the king to decide who the real mother was – and there was no evidence to back either woman's story. No problem at all.

Solomon knew precisely how to identify the birth mother. He asked his servants for a sword and said he would give each mother half of the baby. One of them did not object



to the decision, but the other started crying and begging the king to give the baby to the other woman – to keep the child unharmed.

Solomon recognized the true mother's love and gave the child to her. Another token of Solomon's wisdom was the attribution of several biblical books to him. Solomon's story is recalled in Kings 1-11 and Chronicles 1-11, but he is considered the author of the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Wisdom of Solomon | biblical literature

Most [historians](#) today believe that Solomon did not write these books but that they were written later, probably in the post-Exilic period. It is generally thought that the Book of Proverbs dates to 700 BCE at the earliest, and the Book of Ecclesiastes dates to around 250 BCE.

These hypotheses make it impossible for Solomon to have written them. Some schools of thought believe that Solomon didn't have a hand in writing ANY of these books. According to some sources, Solomon would hold large dinner gatherings and invite wise people. He would talk to them and record their sayings.



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The Remarkable
WISDOM *of*
SOLOMON



*Ancient
insights from
the Song of Solomon,
Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes*



Wisdom of Solomon | biblical literature

The people who believe in this traditional understanding of the Jewish tradition think that these stories were compiled much later. Now that we have talked about Solomon's wisdom, let's look at his wealth and glory. Having secured his position on the throne, King Solomon worked on strengthening his kingdom.

The walls and gates of all major cities were rebuilt, and administration was established in several regional centers, which functioned well. The king also took care of many horses and chariots he owned by building impressive stables – stables that clearly testified about the wealth of Israel.

In addition to that, Solomon constructed a remarkable fleet and increased maritime trade on the Red Sea. But nothing was as impressive as his construction projects. His palace was built over thirteen years. Next to the palace, the temple hosted all the relics that used to reside in the Tabernacle.

King Solomon Temple



In the middle of ancient Jerusalem stands the famous temple of Solomon.



The building of Solomon's Temple, the first temple in Jerusalem, was particularly interesting. Construction lasted for seven years, and Solomon had built it in a partnership with King Hiram of Tyre, who provided the much-needed cedar lumber. But in the end, it was the people of Israel who paid for it and did all the work through forced labor.

While the glamor of Solomon's reign was visible to all, his household was just as magnificent. He had a harem of one thousand women, including hundreds of foreign princesses. Following the Biblical tradition, it is believed that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. He is thought to have married the daughter of the Pharaoh to build an alliance with Egypt.

Solomon was at the peak of his power, enjoying enormous admiration from his subjects – especially the rulers of other nations. He maintained excellent relationships with most of them.

The queen of Sheba visited him and testified about his breathtaking fortune. She had heard a lot about the splendor Solomon enjoyed (and she did not believe it, but once she saw it, she realized everything was even more magnificent than what her people had described!) A later legend says King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had a son together, but the Bible says nothing about it.

However, this state did not last forever, as even Solomon succumbed to temptations. From the Biblical point of view, Solomon's greatest mistake is that he tolerated the gods that his foreign wives respected.

Things that started happening after his death – such as the split of the empire and the subsequent falls of both new empires – are traditionally interpreted as the punishment for Solomon's tolerance of pagan deities (some argue that he might have even become polytheistic himself, although the Old Testament does not specifically say this).

Solomon made another very palpable mistake related to how he governed the kingdom in his later years. Among the twelve tribes of Israel, he gave special treatment to the tribe he belonged to – Judah. Solomon had divided the kingdom into twelve administrative districts.



These did not correspond to the older tribal borders but some geographical features. Only the territory of Judah appeared to be intact, and that was not all. Each district needed to provide laborers to work on new building projects and pay taxes. Again, Judah was spared.

The people of Judah did not have to pay taxes. Most of the money gathered elsewhere ended up in this district, used for their fortifications. On top of that, Solomon sold almost 20 cities that belonged to the northern tribes to King Hiram.

In perfect harmony with the Biblical tradition, all these things were signs of things to come. Solomon had taken note of the son of one of his servants, a talented and hardworking young man

named Jeroboam, and gave him a promotion. Jeroboam was in charge of some construction works in the capital. One day, a prophet approached him and told him he had been chosen to rule ten of the twelve tribes of Israel.

These ten tribes were eager to leave Solomon behind and follow the new leader. But the future king knew Solomon would want to kill him, so he fled to Egypt, where he stayed until the king's death. Solomon eventually died.



The Kingdom Divided (1 Kings 12; 2 Chronicles 10)



The kingdom's split up may have been a consequence of the late Solomon's tolerance of foreign gods. Still, his unjust behavior toward the northern tribes contributed to the divide, and his successor had just added salt to the wound. Solomon's son, Rehoboam,



succeeded him on the throne. Rehoboam, the unwise son of the wise king, was advised by two groups of advisors.

The elders told him to treat the matter with the utmost delicacy, but the young advisors asked him to demonstrate his strength to the crowds. He listened to the latter, prompting a backlash from the people in the form of a declaration of independence.

With Solomon's death, the golden age of prosperity that Israel enjoyed under the reign of David and Solomon had ended, along with any notion of the nation's stability.

The tribes were at odds already, and now they were just a step away from parting ways forever. Where there was once one great kingdom of Israel, two minor kingdoms appeared: Israel, which consisted of the ten tribes in the northern part of the previous kingdom – and Judah.

The ages that followed were full of conflicts, both political and religious. About two centuries later, Israel would fall to the mighty Assyrian Empire. Another century and a half later, Judah would collapse to another colossal force – the Babylonians, who would seize David's capital and ruin Solomon's Temple.

Tomb of King Solomon

The massive King Solomon's Tomb can be located in the Atlas Mountains of northwest Africa. From 970 to 928 BCE, it was built. In addition to housing King Solomon's remains, it also has a huge chamber packed with treasures. A pair of identical brass frogs were the most significant object found inside the tomb. Each frog has extraordinary abilities. One frog could distort space, while another could travel back in time. The frogs could change reality if they worked together.



Mount Zion in Jerusalem. King Solomon's tomb

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