

## Historical Notes

I have tried to be true to the Biblical record.

In matching the histories of other nations with Scripture, I have drawn many dates and parallels from *Pharaohs of the Bible* (2013) by Eve Engelbrite. Traditional dates vary, usually fifteen to forty-five years later.

Following Christian tradition, I refer to Israel's God as "the Lord." Only since the third century BC have Jews avoided using the names of God. David and Solomon use the Lord's Hebrew name, Yahweh, without fear.

Solomon was a son of King David, the fourth of Bathsheba (1 Chronicles 3:5), and appointed by David to succeed him (1 Chronicles 28:5). David's son Absalom killed his oldest brother, Amnon, for raping his sister. David's army commander, Joab, killed Absalom. We hear no more of Daniel (also known as Kileab), son of Abigail, who presumably died young. This left Adonijah, the oldest remaining son of David, with an understandable claim to the throne. It

provoked the conspiracy that Solomon dealt with (1 Kings 1–2).

King Solomon was the wealthiest and wisest king to have lived (1 Kings 4:29–34; 10:23). He collected and wrote the books of Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. He described plant life, and taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish (1 Kings 4:33), making him one of the world's first scientists.

Solomon bought and sold chariots and horses (1 Kings 10:26–29), so becoming an early arms dealer. He raised taxes, established revenue cities, and collected tribute and gifts (see 1 Kings 10:14–26).

Many place Ophir in Sheba, which is modern-day Yemen. I chose to make Sheba a trading city rather than the original source of the gold, which also came from Ethiopia and elsewhere.

Phoenicians sailed much further than previously thought—probably as far as Singapore, certainly to Cornwall and the west coast of Africa. It is even possible they reached the West Indies and the Americas.

Despite Solomon's seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, the Bible records only three children—his son Rehoboam, and daughters Taphath

and Basemath. If Solomon had more children, Scripture would surely have recorded them, for we are told of David's many (1 Chronicles 3:1–9), and Rehoboam's twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters (2 Chronicles 11:21). Why did Solomon only have three?

We have clues. He married Pharaoh's daughter early in his reign before he completed the temple and palace, but she wasn't his first wife. 1 Kings 14:21 records: "Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He was forty-one years old when he became king . . . His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite." King Solomon reigned for forty years (1 Kings 11:42), so Rehoboam was born a year *before* his father became king.

Solomon must have been about sixteen when he married Naamah, and eighteen when crowned. It is likely this marriage was a political alliance to patch up poor relationships with the Ammonites (see 2 Samuel 10).

Solomon's daughters' mother is unrecorded, but Naamah is a reasonable supposition, for if they had been born later in his reign, they would have been too young to marry Ahimaaz and Ben-Abinadab.

Solomon loved his wives (1 Kings 11:2), but they

came with their gods. His heart turned from the Lord, even to building the high places and following them himself (1 Kings 11:1–13). Idolatry removed the blessing. I believe it was the cause of his infertility (see Psalm 127:3–5).

The traditional southern boundary of Israel was the Wadi or River of Egypt, which most scholars place between the Wilderness of Zin and the Desert of Shur. However, both Saul and David defeated the Amalekites as far as the Shur—meaning “wall” in Hebrew (1 Samuel 15:7; 27:8). Built by Pharaoh Amenemhat to protect the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, it lay *west* of both the Wadi and the Sinai Peninsula. However, Solomon's kingdom extended to the border of Egypt (1 Kings 4:21), which only stretched “to Gaza” and “to Beersheba” (1 Kings 4:24–5), both *east* of the Sinai. So I propose Solomon traded away the Sinai for control over the Philistines.

Legends abound over the visit of the queen of Sheba. Many believe she intended to acquire Solomon's wisdom via inheritance (1 Kings 10:13). However, the king's purpose was trade.

It is tempting to ascribe twenty-first-century attitudes to ancient societies. But David and Solomon

lived at a time of religious, social, and technological change quite as dramatic as ours—warfare, cavalry, building, architecture, agriculture, metals, wood, glass, writing, worship styles, the list goes on and on. It was a fascinating period of history.