

# *Smoky Mountain Bible Institute*

## *History 120 Solomon (fixing a date)*

Break out your maps and histories as we travel again in our time machine to examine history & geography through a biblical worldview. Let's finish our discussion of Solomon, who as I mentioned last month, served his first two years as king as a coregent until David's death in 969 BC. Solomon begins his reign in 971 BC and dies in 932 BC, serving as Israel's king for just over 40 years.

Solomon, in a dream, made his famous request of God for wisdom. I have, however, always been somewhat puzzled about Solomon, the wisest man of all history (according to 1<sup>st</sup> Kings). He was promised and received wisdom, riches, and fame, but the Lord made this contingent on Solomon following Him as his father David had. The confusing thing for me is how such a wise man can think that it is a good idea to violate the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment and take multiple wives. And not just a few wives, but according to 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11:1-3, *700 wives*, and 300 hundred concubines (formally recognized mistresses). I can understand the politics of that time and how marrying women from many lands makes for good political relationships, but God instructed the Israelites not to marry foreign women, because intermarrying would lead to the worship of false gods. So why did Solomon, the wisest of all, do such a dumb and disobedient thing?

History reveals that Solomon was very aggressive in his foreign policy. In sealing treaties in ancient days, it was customary for the lesser king to give his daughter in marriage to the greater king (in this case, Solomon). Every time a new treaty was sealed, Solomon ended up with yet another wife. These wives were considered tokens of friendship and "sealed" the relationship between the two kings. In the process of doing all this, Solomon was utterly disobedient to the Lord. He was apparently so obsessed with power and wealth that it overshadowed his spiritual life and he ended up falling into apostasy, worshiping some of the false gods of the women who became married to him.

More importantly, in marrying more than one woman, Solomon was violating God's revealed will regarding monogamy. From the very beginning God created one woman for one man (see Genesis 1:27; 2:21-25). Deuteronomy 17:17 explicitly instructed the king not to "multiply wives." Sadly, in his old age, his many wives led the wisest man of all time to commit the greatest of his offenses against God; worship and support of false gods. So Solomon was, like his father, a man after God's own heart who was also guilty of adultery and murder. Like all of us at the same time being both saint and sinner, while it puzzles me, I can still understand and relate to Solomon's unwise decisions.

Solomon built the largest, richest kingdom in his time, and some would argue, of all time. He builds the temple in just over 6 years from 967 BC to 961 BC, and his palace in 12 years, from 960 BC to 948 BC. This means he spent almost half of his 40 year reign on two massive building projects while conquering and establishing relationships with the surrounding countries. The most prominent of his visitors was of course, the Queen of Sheba, whose visit was around 940 BC, probably at the peak of his life and reign, with all of his wealth and strength on display through architecture, chariots, horses, and a family larger than most American small towns. There are even people in Ethiopia today who claim to be descendants of Sheba and Solomon, and they also claim to have the Ark of the Covenant which was brought there for safe keeping when the first temple was destroyed. At any rate, this powerful and wise man descended into wholesale idolatry in his old age, building temples, altars and giving sacrifices to the pagan gods of all his wives. He came to the end of his days in 932 BC, and soon after came the death of the Israelite united monarchy.

Note: much of this article is based on an article at Christian Answers.net; if you would like to read it, it can be found at: [christiananswers.net/q-eden/rfsm-solomon.html](http://christiananswers.net/q-eden/rfsm-solomon.html)

Have a blessed Advent & Christmas!

In Christ,