

1 Kings 04 - Solomon's Political Administration; Solomon's Wealth, Wisdom, & Fame

- I. United kingdom under Solomon (1 Kings 1:1—11:43)
 - (2) Solomon establishes his kingdom (1 Kings 2:13—4:34)
 - (E) Extent of Solomon's empire (4:1-34)
 - (a) Administration (4:1-19)
 - (b) Riches (4:20-28)
 - (c) Understanding (4:29-33)
 - (d) Fame (4:34)

1 Kings 4

- (E) Extent of Solomon's empire (4:1-34)
 - (a) Administration (4:1-19)
 - 1 Now King Solomon was king over all Israel.
 - 1 Now King Solomon was king over all Israel.
 - 1 And so King Solomon ruled over all of Israel.
 - 1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel.
 - 2 These were his officials: **Azariah** the son of Zadok *was* the priest;
 - 2 These were his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok *was* the priest;
 - 2 Here's a list of his officials: Zadok's son Azariah was priest,
 - 2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest,
 - Several high-level officials who had served David now served Solomon. These men helped provide a smooth transition and ensured the new king loyal servants.
 - Delegation of authority is a mark of wisdom. Solomon appointed 11 chief officials over his government:
 - "...Azariah" - Zadok's son or probably grandson (1 Chr 6:8-9); the chief priest
 - 3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha *were* scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* the secretary;
 - 3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha *were* secretaries; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* the recorder;

3 Shisha's sons Elihoreph and Ahijah were his secretaries, Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was recorder,

3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.

- Elihoreph and Ahijah were secretaries or scribes

— This was an important office: they prepared royal edicts affecting trade, commerce, and military alliances and kept official records

- Jehoshaphat was the recorder who maintained the records of all important daily affairs in the kingdom. He had also served in this capacity under David (2 Sam 8:16; 20:24).

4 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

4 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

4 Jehoiada's son Benaiah commanded the army, Zadok and Abiathar served as priests,

4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:

- Benaiah was commander in chief of the whole army; he previously led David's special forces

- Zadok and Abiathar had served as co-high priests under David (2 Sam 15:35)

— Zadok continued as high priest (2:35)

— Abiathar sided with Adonijah in the attempted coup and was dismissed by Solomon (1 Kings 2:20-27); yet, he retained his title and honor

5 and Azariah the son of Nathan was over the deputies; and Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest, was the king's confidant;

5 and Azariah the son of Nathan was over the deputies; and Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest, was the king's friend;

5 Nathan's son Azariah supervised the governors, Nathan's son Zabud the priest was the king's counselor,

5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:

- Two men are listed as sons of Nathan. They may have been the sons of one man or the sons of different Nathans.

- Azariah (not the Azariah in v2) was in charge of the 12 district officers named in v8-19

- Zabud was from the priestly line and served as the king's personal adviser

6 and Ahishar was over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the forced labor.

6 and Ahishar was over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the men subject to forced labor.

6 Ahishar supervised palace matters, and Abda's son Adoniram supervised conscripted labor.

6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

- Ahishar was in charge of the palace, perhaps overseeing the servants and other workers there

- Adoniram (Cf. 5:14) supervised the forced labor. These were non-Israelites living in Israel who were conscripted to work for the king (Cf. 5:13-14; 9:15,21; 2 Chr 2:2; 8:8)

7 Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each *deputy* had to provide food for a month in the year.

7 Solomon had twelve deputies over all Israel, who provided for the king and his household; each man had to provide for a month in the year.

7 Solomon also appointed twelve governors over all of Israel, each of whom were responsible for providing one month's food provisions to the king and to his administration during each year.

7 And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision.

- Solomon made each of his 12 district governors responsible to supply provisions for the royal household (and for his thousands of horses, v28), one governor for each month

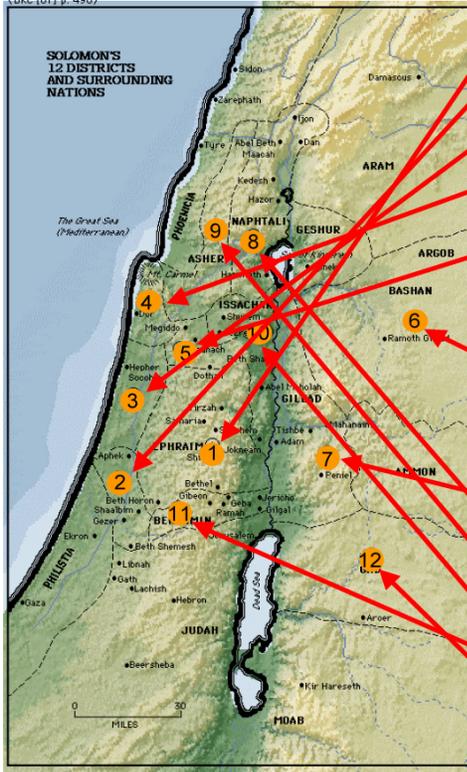
— These provisions were huge (Cf. v22-28). This work doubtless kept these men busy.

— Interestingly two of the governors were sons-in-law of Solomon (v11,15)

— All 12 are mentioned only here in the Bible except for Ahimaaz, who possibly was a son of Zadok the priest (Cf. 2 Sam 15:27)

— Judah and Jerusalem were not included in the list of areas that Solomon taxed; this gave Judah a great advantage economically

— Perhaps Solomon favored Judah because that was his tribe; however, this favoritism may have been a factor in the later revolt of the northern tribes (12:4)



- 8 And these *are* their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim:
- 9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan:
- 10 The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him *pertained* Sochoh, and all the land of Hephher:
- 11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife:
- 12 Baana the son of Ahilud; *to him pertained* Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which *is* by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, *even unto the place that is* beyond Jokneam:
- 13 The son of Geber, in Ramothgilead; to him *pertained* the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which *are* in Gilead; to him *also pertained* the region of Argob, which *is* in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars:
- 14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo *had* Mahanaim:
- 15 Ahimaaz *was* in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife:
- 16 Baanah the son of Hushai *was* in Asher and in Aloth:
- 17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar:
- 18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin:
- 19 Geber the son of Uri *was* in the country of Gilead, *in* the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only officer which *was* in the land.

8 And these *were* their names: Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim;

8 These are their names: Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim;

8 Here's a list of their names: Ben-hur from the hill country of Ephraim;

8 And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim:

9 Ben-dekar in Makaz and Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elonbeth-hanan;

9 Ben-dekar in Makaz and Shaalbim and Beth-shemesh and Elonbeth-hanan;

9 Ben-dekar in Makaz, Shaalbim and Beth-shemesh and Elonbeth-hanan;

9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan:

10 Ben-hesed in Arubboth (Socoh *was* his and all the land of Hephher);

10 Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (Socoh *was* his and all the land of Hephher);

10 Ben-hesed served in Arubboth (where he supervised Socoh and all of the territory of Hephher);

10 The son of Hesed, in Arubboth; to him pertained Socoh, and all the land of Hephher:

11 Ben-abinadab *in* all the hills of Dor (Taphath the daughter of Solomon *was* his wife);

11 Ben-abinadab, *in* all the height of Dor (Taphath the daughter of Solomon *was* his wife);

11 Ben-abinadab supervised the Dor heights (Solomon's daughter Taphath *was* his wife);

11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

12 Baana the son of Ahilud *in* Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah as far as the other side of Jokmeam;

12 Baana the son of Ahilud, *in* Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah as far as the other side of Jokmeam;

12 Ahilud's son Baana served Taanach, Megiddo, and all of Beth-shean near Zarethan below Jezreel, including from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah as far as the other side of Jokmeam;

12 Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam:

13 Ben-geber in Ramoth-gilead (the villages of Jair, the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead were his: the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars *were* his);

13 Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (the towns of Jair, the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead were his: the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars *were* his);

13 Ben-geber in Ramoth-gilead, including the towns that belonged to Manasseh's descendant Jair that are in Gilead;

13 The son of Geber, in Ramothgilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars:

14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo *in* Mahanaim;

14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo, *in* Mahanaim;

14 Iddo's son Ahinadab served in Mahanaim;

14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim:

15 Ahimaaz in Naphtali (he also married Basemath the daughter of Solomon);

15 Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (he also married Basemath the daughter of Solomon);

15 Ahimaaz served in Naphtali (he was married to Solomon's daughter Basemath);

15 Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

16 Baana the son of Hushai in Asher and Bealoth;
16 Baana the son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;
16 Hushai's son Baana served in Asher and Bealoth;
16 Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth:

17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah in Issachar;
17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar;
17 Paruah's son Jehoshaphat served in Issachar;
17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar:

18 Shimei the son of Ela in Benjamin;
18 Shimei the son of Ela, in Benjamin;
18 Ela's son Shimei served in Benjamin;
18 Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin:

19 Geber the son of Uri in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only deputy who *was* in the land.
19 Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only deputy who *was* in the land.
19 and Uri's son Geber served in the territory of Gilead, the territory formerly ruled by King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan (he was the only governor over that territory).
19 Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land.

The district arrangement seems designed to move Israel away from tribal independence to cooperation under the new centralized government. Though the district boundaries approximated the tribal boundaries, they were not the same.

(b) Riches (4:20-28) (Cf. 1 Kings 10:26-29; 2 Chr 1:14-17; 9:25-28)

20 Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; *they were* eating, drinking, and rejoicing.

20 Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; *they were* eating and drinking and rejoicing.

20 Judah and Israel became as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They enjoyed abundance, and ate, drank, and rejoiced regularly.

20 Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

- This verse fulfilled God's promise to David (1 Chr 22:9)

- The reference to Judah and Israel is evidence that Kings was written after the nation had divided

— However, years before the division took place, northern and southern factions had already developed (Cf. 1 Sam 11:8; 15:4; 17:52; 1 Kings 1:35)

21 Now Solomon was ruling over all the kingdoms from the *Euphrates* River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; *they* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

21 Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; *they* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

21 Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the territory of the Philistines and south to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon throughout his lifetime.

21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

- Solomon's domain stretched from the Euphrates River (Cf. v24) on the E and N to the land of the Philistines on the W and Egypt to the SW. All of the smaller kingdoms in between had by this time become vassals to Solomon (Cf. v24).

— It might seem impossible that with two such strong contending powers as Egypt to the south and Assyria to the north it would be possible to build so large an empire, but such was the case at the beginning of Solomon's reign

— At this time, the kingdom of Egypt was ruled by the weak and inglorious 21st Dynasty, and the power of Assyria was in a state of decline

- Usually when a great king died, the nations subject to his leadership would withhold taxes and rebel against his successor. This forced the new king to attack those nations to establish his sovereignty over them. Solomon did not have to do this, as God gave him a peaceful reign where he could focus on his building projects.

Even though Solomon controlled the land area promised to Abraham's descendants in Gen 15:18-20, his control did not fulfill these promises completely (Cf. 2 Chr 9:26). Not all this territory was incorporated into the geographic boundaries of Israel; many of the subjected kingdoms retained their identity and territory, but paid taxes (tribute) to Solomon. Israel's own geographic limits were "from Dan to Beersheba" (v25).

22 Solomon's provision for one day was thirty **kors** of fine flour and sixty kors of meal,

22 Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour and sixty kors of meal,

22 Solomon's daily provisions were 30 kors of fine flour, 60 kors of meal,

22 And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

- "...kors" - a dry measure equal to what a donkey would normally carry; equivalent to about eight bushels; a *kor* was equal to one homer, or 10 ephahs

- The ability of the nation to provide Solomon's daily provisions (Cf. v7) testifies to its prosperity. Those provisions included 185 bushels of fine flour; 375 bushels of meal; 30 head of cattle, 100 sheep and goats, and wild meat (deer, gazelles, roebucks) and fowl (v23).

23 ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, and a hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened geese.

23 ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl.

23 ten fattened oxen, 20 pasture-fed cattle, 100 sheep, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks, and domestic poultry.

23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.

24 For he was ruling over everything west of the *Euphrates* River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides surrounding him.

24 For he had dominion over everything west of the River, from Tiphseh even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides around about him.

24 He ruled over everything west of the Euphrates River from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all of the kings west of the Euphrates River, and he enjoyed peace on all sides around him.

24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

- These provisions were made possible by the great geographical extent of the kingdom— from the town of Tiphseh in the north (Thapsacus, a large and flourishing town on the west bank of the Euphrates) to Gaza on the southwestern extremity, not far from the Mediterranean (Cf. v21)

25 So Judah and Israel lived securely, everyone under his vine and his fig tree, from **Dan even to Beersheba**, all the days of Solomon.

25 So Judah and Israel lived in safety, every man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

25 Judah and Israel lived safely, and everyone enjoyed their own vine and fig tree from Dan to Beer-sheba through all of Solomon's life.

25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

- Each man living under his own vine and fig tree (v25) is a figurative expression for peace and prosperity (Cf. Micah 4:4; Zech 3:10). The vine and fig tree were both symbols of the nation Israel and pictured the Promised Land's agricultural abundance.

- "...Dan even to Beersheba" - must of the land described in v21 was outside the geographic borders of Israel; Israel's geographic extent in those days was only about 150 miles long, from Dan to Beersheba

26 Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

26 Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.

26 Solomon owned 40,000 stalls for the horses that drove his chariots, and he employed 12,000 men to drive them.

26 And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

- 4,000 stalls is preferable to 40,000 (Cf. 2 Chr 9:25), especially considering he had 1,400 chariots (10:26; 2 Chr 1:14)

— However, Josephus wrote 40,000 [*Antiquities of the Jews*, 8:2:4]

- Solomon's numerous horses (12,000; Cf. 2 Chr 1:14) and many chariots (1,400 according to 2 Chr 1:14) were kept in several locations (called "chariot cities" in 2 Chr 9:25; Cf. 1 Kings 9:19)

— Archeologists have excavated stalls at Megiddo, Hazor and Beth-Shemesh

Solomon, exceptionally wise, failed to allow God's Word to guide his decisions fully. Each king was "to write for himself...a copy of this law" (Deut 17:14-20). He was "to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

Did Solomon follow God's commands to read His law daily? God specifically warned kings not to accumulate wives, wealth or horses. Solomon loved God, yet the early days of His reign sowed the seeds of his eventual downfall. God's gifts do not ensure we use them wisely, nor can God's gifts satisfy fully unless we depend on Him.

27 And those deputies provided food for King Solomon and all who came to King Solomon's table, each in his month; they allowed nothing to be lacking.

27 Those deputies provided for King Solomon and all who came to King Solomon's table, each in his month; they left nothing lacking.

27 His officers supplied provisions for King Solomon and for everyone who visited King Solomon's palace, each in their respective month of service responsibility. Nothing ever ran out.

27 And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

28 They also brought barley and straw for the *war* horses and baggage horses to the place where it was *required*, each *deputy* according to his duty.

28 They also brought barley and straw for the horses and swift steeds to the place where it should be, each according to his charge.

28 They also provided barley and straw for the horses and camels to their respective locations, each consistent with their responsibilities.

28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.

- The horses and chariots, used for national defense, served as a strong deterrent to potential foreign aggressors. Barley and straw for all Solomon's horses was supplied daily by the district governors.

1 Kings 10:27a: And the king made silver *as common* as stones in Jerusalem

2 Chr 1:15a: The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones

(c) Understanding (4:29-33)

29 Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.

29 Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.

29 God gave Solomon wisdom and great discernment. His insights were as numerous as sand on the seashore.

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

- This additional information about Solomon's wisdom demonstrates God's faithfulness in blessing the king as He had promised (Cf. 3:12; 5:12). "Largeness of heart" is from a Hebrew term meaning breadth of mind. His understanding was vast; today he might be described as a man of encyclopedic knowledge. Wisdom is the ability to live life successfully.

- While Solomon possessed this ability, he did not always apply it to his own life. Thus the wisest man who ever lived (i.e., with the greatest wisdom) did not live as wisely as many others who preceded and followed him.

— Having insight into life does not guarantee that one will choose to do what is right

— Solomon's great insight was his ability to see the core of issues (Cf. 3:16-27)

30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

30 Solomon was wiser than any of the eastern leaders and wiser than anyone in Egypt.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31 For he was wiser than all *other* people, **morethan Ethan** the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol, and Darda, **the sons of Mahol**; and his fame was *known* in all the surrounding nations.

31 For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was *known* in all the surrounding nations.

31 He was wiser than anyone of his day—wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, and wiser than Mahol's sons Calcol and Darda.

His reputation was known throughout the surrounding nations.

31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

- "...than Ethan" - or Jeduthun, of the family of Merari (1 Chr 6:44)

— Heman (1 Chr 15:17-19) the chief of the temple musicians and the king's seers (1 Chr 25:5); (the other two are not known.)

- "...the sons of Mahol" - either another name for Zerah (1 Chr 2:6), or taking it as a common noun, signifying a dance, a chorus, "the sons of Mahol" signify persons eminently skilled in poetry and music

32 He also told three thousand proverbs, and his songs *numbered* 1,005.

32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

32 Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs.

32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

- By common consent the Wisdom literature contained in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes is traditionally ascribed as written by Solomon (Ps 72; 127; 132 are also his)

— The literary production of the reigning son of David was little short of prodigious

33 He told of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he told also of animals, birds, crawling things, and fish.

33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish.

33 He described trees—everything from cedars that grow in Lebanon to hyssop that grows on a garden wall. He described animals, birds, reptiles, and fish.

33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

(d) Fame (4:34)

34 *People* came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

34 Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

34 People came from everywhere to hear Solomon's advice. Every king on the earth heard of his wisdom.

34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

The Era of Solomon

The years of Solomon's long reign seem to be years of growing glory for Israel. The traditional powers of the ancient world—the Egyptians and the Hittites—and the empires yet to appear—Assyria and Babylon—were not aggressive during either David's or Solomon's rule. David had expanded Israel's sphere of influence by war. Solomon was a diplomat, who held what his father had gained. During Solomon's reign, Israel's wealth and power were unmatched.

Strength for Peace

One of Solomon's strategies for maintaining peace was to constantly strengthen Israel's military capacity. Like strategists in our day, Solomon wanted to deal with world problems through diplomacy, but he wanted to negotiate from a position of strength rather than weakness. For a country to gain her ends by force she must be strong. For a country to gain her ends by diplomacy she must be twice as strong.

Solomon fortified key cities on the perimeter of Israel's territory and set up outer command posts to give early warning of possible enemy military buildups. In addition, Solomon developed a strong and mobile strike force, assembling some 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and building stables for 4,000 horses. Solomon's chariot cities have been

excavated and indicate the extent of the large standing army the king maintained. This military readiness placed a heavy strain on the kingdom's financial resources. But throughout the years of Solomon's reign, Israel was at peace.

Diplomacy

David had won the respect of the great powers surrounding Israel. Solomon now moved to make alliances with them. His many marriages to foreign women were part of this diplomatic strategy; in that day such marriages were a normal way to seal an international alliance. Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings 3:1) shows the place Israel had won in the ancient world, as Egypt was a major world power. Solomon also developed close ties with Hiram I, the Phoenician king of Tyre (ca. 978-944 BC). Again, marriage sealed the alliance. But trade between the two powers, with Tyre contributing her "cedars of Lebanon" and Israel providing wheat plus other foodstuffs, also bound them together. In addition, Solomon and Hiram jointly sponsored trade ventures that took ships representing Israel as far as India. This system of alliance and trade treaties was the key to Solomon's successful foreign relations program.

Economic Conditions

Solomon was as aggressive economically as his father had been militarily. He invested in land and sea trade. He developed Israel's natural resources, setting up smelteries which excavation has shown brilliantly used prevailing winds to intensify the heat of the furnaces in which metals were refined. Solomon maintained a large court as well as a large army and built many public buildings. He also built the temple of the Lord, which his father had dreamed of and planned for. And that temple cost billions! While Solomon's sources of income were constantly being developed, his expenses still outgrew them. We are told that at one time he borrowed heavily from Hiram.

Solomon drew income from four major sources:

- (1) Taxation - The country was divided into 12 districts (not along the old tribal lines), and the chief officer over each was primarily a tax collector. The bureaucratic demands grew so heavy that at Solomon's death the people cried out desperately for tax relief (12:3-4).
- (2) Trade - Solomon's ships and caravans traveled to Africa, Arabia, and India, trading copper from his mines for many goods. He also became a middleman in selling military hardware, buying and selling chariots and horses for peoples to the north and south of Israel.
- (3) Labor conscriptions - Solomon drafted laborers for his public works projects. At first the laborers were drawn from the foreign populations over which Israel ruled.

Later, when more men were needed, he pressed Israelites into service as well. As such conscripts were expected to work for the government without pay, this was deeply resented.

(4) Foreign tribute - Income was also received from foreign countries. Some of this was annual tribute from subject states, while some was in the form of gifts from states desiring to remain on good terms with powerful Israel.

During Solomon's days Jerusalem became increasingly affluent. The wealth of the world flowed to Solomon's court and was reflected in the glory of the capital city. But bureaucracy grew as well. The nation's wealth was no longer based on the land and what it produced. Increasingly the government controlled the wealth of the land, and taxes drained wealth from the people and funneled expenditure through the central government. The glory was a superficial thing; prosperity was not for the people as much as it was at the expense of the people.

The Temple

Solomon's most massive project was the building of the temple at Jerusalem. The gold used in its construction was worth over \$2.5 billion—if gold were valued at only the old \$35 per ounce. And 10 times as much silver as gold had been gathered by David before construction began. The temple was similar to the tabernacle in structure, but was approximately twice as large. Built of stone, and paneled over with cedar, with the whole inlaid with gold, the temple was a strikingly beautiful building.