

1 Kings 4 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[1 Kings Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

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1 Kings 4:1 Now King Solomon was king over all Israel.

- over all Israel: 1Ki 11:13,35,36 12:19,20 2Sa 5:5 1Ch 12:38 2Ch 9:30 Ec 1:12

Related Passages:

1 Samuel 8:10-18+ (**SAMUEL'S WARNING TO ISRAEL FOR DESIRING A KING LIKE ALL THE OTHER NATIONS**) -So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. 11He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. 12"He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. (**COMPARE** 1Ki 4:28+) 15 "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. 16 "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. 17 "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. 18 "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."



Creator: Aaron Booth ([CLICK ANOTHER DEPICTION COMPARING SAUL, DAVID & SOLOMON'S KINGDOMS](#) or [ESV Map](#))

Now King Solomon was king over all Israel - Solomon's kingdom was larger than Saul's and David's kingdoms. He would need a highly organized government to assure it was governed well and 1Ki 4:2-19 give us his organization, into chief administrators (v2-6) and district governors (v11-15).

Warren Wiersbe - David was a gifted administrator (2Sa 8:15–18; 2Sa 20:23–26) and his son inherited some of that ability. Even though Solomon had great wisdom and authority, he couldn't handle the affairs of the kingdom alone. A good leader chooses capable associates and allows them to use their own gifts and thereby serve the Lord and the people. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

John Woodhouse - In 1 Kings 4 we find a description of the wonder of Solomon's kingdom. At first sight you might think that here we have one of the less interesting chapters in the Bible. There are lists with names and numbers, no doubt drawn from the official records of Solomon's government. Not exactly riveting stuff! The story is put on hold while these statistics and details are recorded. It is one of those passages that any Bible reader might be tempted to skip over quickly. That would be a mistake. However we might feel about the details in 1 Kings 4, it is clear that the writer was rather excited! The details are presented in order to give us some idea of the wonder of Solomon's kingdom. The value of this chapter lies in the ways in which we will see foreshadowed here the kingdom of Jesus Christ, greater than the kingdom of Solomon (see Matthew 12:42). ([1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World](#))

1 Kings 4:2 These were his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok was the priest;

- the princes: That is, great, chief, or principal men; for none of them were princes, in the common acceptance of the word. Ex 18:21 2Sa 8:15-18 20:23-26 1Co 12:28
- Azariah: 1Ch 6:8-10 27:17

PRIEST LISTED BEFORE COMMANDER OF ARMY

These were his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok was the priest - Azariah was a very common name in the OT and means "Yahweh has helped" and he was actually the grandson of Zadok and son of Ahimaaz (1Ch 6:8–9).

[Ahimaaz \(ISBE\)](#) The son of Zadok the high priest (1Ch 6:8,9,53). With his father he remained loyal to David in the rebellions both of Absalom and of Adonijah. With Jonathan the son of Abiathar he carried information to David when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam 15:27,36; 17:17,20). At his own urgent request he carried tidings to David after the death of Absalom (2 Sam 18:19 ff). He told the king of the victory, and also, through his reluctance to speak, informed him of Absalom's death. By his reluctance and his sympathy he softened a little the message, which the Cushite presently repeated more harshly.

That Ahimaaz did not succeed his father as high priest has been inferred from the fact that in the Solomon list of heads of departments (1 Ki 4:2) Azariah the son of Zadok is mentioned as priest. It is assumed that this Azariah is the one who appears in the genealogy as the son of Ahimaaz, and that for some reason Ahimaaz was left out of the succession. These inferences are not Justified by the record, though possibly the record does not absolutely disprove them. As the list stands it makes Zadok and Abiathar the high priests. Azariah and Zabud, the son of Nathan (1 Ki 4:2,5), are spoken of as holding priestly offices of a different kind. Ahimaaz may have died early, or may have followed some other career, but the simple fact is that we do not know.

MacArthur on [Azariah the son of Zadok](#) - was the son of Ahimaaz and the grandson of Zadok, as "son of" can mean "descendant of" (cf. 1Ch 6:8, 9). In David's roster of officials, the army commander came first (2Sa 8:16; 20:23). Under Solomon, the priest and other officials preceded the military leader. (See [The MacArthur Bible Commentary - Page 396](#))

Rod Mattoon ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#)) - Verses one through six give a record of Solomon's cabinet. They were the leaders of the nation. The names of these men fit perfectly with the character of the kingdom and foreshadow the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

- Azariah= Jehovah is Help
- Elihoreph= My God is Reward
- Ahiah= Brother of Jehovah
- Jehoshaphat= Jehovah Judges
- Benaiah= Built up by Jehovah
- Zabud= Gift bestowed of God
- Abishar= Brother of Ability
- Adoniram= Lord of Heights

1 Kings 4:3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha were secretaries; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder;

- **Shisha:** 2Sa 20:25, Sheva, 1Ch 18:16, Shavsha
- **recorder:** or, remembrancer. 2Sa 8:16 20:24 1Ch 18:15 Isa 62:6

Solomon's Kingdom ca 971-931 BC
ESV Global Study Bible

[Elihoreph](#) and [Ahijah](#), the sons of [Shisha](#) were secretaries (scribes; Lxx = [grammateus](#)) - These men would probably function like modern secretaries of state. David had only one secretary or scribe ([Shisha](#), AKA Seriah - 2Sa 8:17 or Shavsha - 1Ch 18:16) and these two men were his sons. Two secretaries were necessary as Solomon's kingdom was considerably larger and more complex than David's (see map). Solomon in his wisdom was careful not to try to do everything (even as wise as he was), but parceled positions out to trusted men.

Smith's Dictionary on [Shisha](#) - (*Jehovah contends*), father of Elihoreph and Ahiah, the royal secretaries in the reign of Solomon. (1Ki 4:3) He is apparently the same as [Shavsha](#), who held the same position under David. (B.C. 1000.) (1Ch 18:16)

[Jehoshaphat](#) the son of [Ahilud](#) was the recorder ([zakar](#) = remember; Lxx = [hupomimnesko](#) = remind, call to mind) - Jehoshaphat had been recorder during David's reign (2Sa 8:16; 20:24),

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

- **Benaiah** (KJV): 1Ki 2:35
- **Zadok** (KJV): 1Ki 2:26-27,35

MILITARY AND PREVIOUS PRIESTS

and **Benaiah** the son of **Jehoiada** was over the army - He had proven himself loyal to David and to Solomon and had been appointed head over the army (1Ki 2:35).

And **Zadok** and **Abiathar** were priests (kohen; Lxx - **hiereus**) - David (2Sa 8:17; 20:25). Solomon "appointed Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar." (Ki 2:35) who had conspired with Adonijah (1Ki 2:27). However, it appears that Abiathar was allowed to retain his priestly title until he died. And as noted above the actual functioning priest was **Azariah the son of Zadok was the priest. Zadok and Abiathar** although not functioning as priest were probably honored on this list because they had served King David.

Easton's Bible Dictionary on **priests** - The Heb. kohen, Gr. hierus, Lat. sacerdos, always denote one who offers sacrifices. At first every man was his own priest, and presented his own sacrifices before God. Afterwards that office devolved on the head of the family, as in the cases of Noah (Gen. 8:20), Abraham (12:7; 13:4), Isaac (26:25), Jacob (31:54), and Job (Job 1:5).

The name first occurs as applied to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18). Under the Levitical arrangements the office of the priesthood was limited to the tribe of Levi, and to only one family of that tribe, the family of Aaron. Certain laws respecting the qualifications of priests are given in Lev. 21:16-23. There are ordinances also regarding the priests' dress (Ex. 28:40-43) and the manner of their consecration to the office (29:1-37).

Their duties were manifold (Ex. 27:20, 21; 29:38-44; Lev. 6:12; 10:11; 24:8; Num. 10:1-10; Deut. 17:8-13; 33:10; Mal. 2:7). They represented the people before God, and offered the various sacrifices prescribed in the law.

In the time of David the priests were divided into twenty-four courses or classes (1 Chr. 24:7-18). This number was retained after the Captivity (Ezra 2:36-39; Neh. 7:39-42).

"The priests were not distributed over the country, but lived together in certain cities [forty-eight in number, of which six were cities of refuge, q.v.], which had been assigned to their use. From thence they went up by turns to minister in the temple at Jerusalem. Thus the religious instruction of the people in the country generally was left to the heads of families, until the establishment of synagogues, an event which did not take place till the return from the Captivity, and which was the main source of the freedom from idolatry that became as marked a feature of the Jewish people thenceforward as its practice had been hitherto their great national sin."

The whole priestly system of the Jews was typical. It was a shadow of which the body is Christ. The priests all prefigured the great Priest who offered "one sacrifice for sins" "once for all" (Heb. 10:10, 12). There is now no human priesthood. (See Epistle to the Hebrews throughout.) The term "priest" is indeed applied to believers (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6), but in these cases it implies no sacerdotal functions. All true believers are now "kings and priests unto God." As priests they have free access into the holiest of all, and offer up the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, and the sacrifices of grateful service from day to day.

1 Kings 4:5 and Azariah the son of Nathan was over the deputies; and Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest, was the king's friend;

EXB Azariah son of Nathan was in **charge of the district governors**; Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and -adviser [Lfriend] to the king;

ICB Azariah son of Nathan was in **charge of the district governors**; Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and adviser to the king;

KJV 1 Kings 4:5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:

BGT 1 Kings 4:5 κα Ὀρνία υ ῖος Ναθαν π τ ν καθεστὰμ νων κα Ζαβουθ υ ῖος Ναθαν τὰ ρος το βασιλ ὡς

LXE 1 Kings 4:5 And Ornia the son of Nathan was over the officers; and Zabud son of Nathan was the king's friend.

NET 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah son of Nathan was **supervisor of the district governors**. Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and adviser to the king.

CSB 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah son of Nathan, in charge of the deputies; Zabud son of Nathan, a priest and adviser

to the king;

ESV 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan was priest and king's friend;

NIV 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah son of Nathan--**in charge of the district officers**; Zabud son of Nathan--a priest and personal adviser to the king;

NLT 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah son of Nathan was **in charge of the district governors**. Zabud son of Nathan, a priest, was a trusted adviser to the king.

NRS 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah son of Nathan was over the officials; Zabud son of Nathan was priest and king's friend;

NJB 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah son of Nathan, **chief administrator**; Zabud son of Nathan, Friend of the King;

NAB 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah, son of Nathan, **chief of the commissaries**; Zabud, son of Nathan, companion to the king;

YLT 1 Kings 4:5 and Azariah son of Nathan is over the officers; and Zabud son of Nathan is minister, friend of the king;

GWN 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah, son of Nathan, was **in charge of the district governors**. Zabud, son of Nathan, was the king's adviser.

BBE 1 Kings 4:5 Azariah, the son of Nathan, was over those **in authority in the different divisions of the country**; Zabud, the son of Nathan, was priest and the king's friend;

- **son of Nathan:** 1Ki 1:10-53 2Sa 7:2 12:1-15,25
- **the officers:** 1Ki 4:7,, 2Sa 8:18 20:26
- **the king's:** 2Sa 15:37 16:16 19:37,38 1Ch 27:33 Pr 22:11 Joh 13:23 Joh 15:14,15 Jas 2:23

and **Azariah** the son of **Nathan** was over the deputies; and **Zabud** the son of Nathan, a priest - The NET renders **over the deputies** as "supervisor of the district governors." NIV has "district officers." Both of these renderings are of course somewhat "interpretative." Azariah was probably over the 12 district officers listed in 1Ki 4:8-19. Who was this Nathan? Was this the prophet Nathan? It would be quite reasonable to see Solomon honoring the memory of the great prophet Nathan. **Zabud** was a priest who likely served as special adviser to Solomon.

Was the king's friend (re'eh; Lxx - hetairos = comrade, companion) - **Friend** of king is one who was a personal adviser, not just an acquaintance. He had a personal and official attachment to Solomon and promoted his welfare and cause. Zabud apparently functioned as royal advisor. The same designation is applied to Hushai, the counselor who represented David's interests during Absalom's revolt (2Sa 15:37; 2Sa 16:16).

1 Kings 4:6 and Ahishar was over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the men subject to forced labor.

- **Adoniram** (KJV): 1Ki 12:18 2Sa 20:24, Adoram
- tribute: or, levy, 1Ki 5:13,14 9:15

LEADERS OF HOUSEHOLD AND WORKING FORCE

and **Ahishar** was over the household - He would be over the dwelling or palace of the king and as discerned from the incredible list of daily provisions for the palace (see) this would have been a very complex position.

and **Adoniram** the son of Abda was over the men subject to forced labor- Adoniram means "my Lord is exalted." He was the son of Abda and one of King Solomon's chief officials. His particular responsibility was to oversee the forced labor groups. Thirty thousand men were broken into three separate shifts. Two groups were at home, while one spent a month in Lebanon cutting lumber for the building of the temple (1 Ki. 4:6; 5:14).

Warren Wiersbe explains that "**Adoniram** was in charge of the men who were drafted to labor in the public works of the kingdom (1Ki 9:15-23; 2Ch 2:2, 17-18; 8:7-10). These would not be Israelites but foreigners in the land. However, in the building of the temple, Solomon did conscript Israelites to devote four months a year to public service (1Ki 5:13-18). **Adoniram** was also known as

Adoram and he was stoned to death by the people when Rehoboam became king (1Ki 12:18–20). Samuel had warned the people that their king would do such things (1Sa 8:12–18+). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

1 Kings 4:7 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.

- each man: 1Ch 27:1-15

NAMES OF THE 12 DISTRICT OFFICERS

This list of names of the 12 district officers is found in 1Ki 4:8-19.

[Click here for a very helpful map](#) of the 12 deputies over the 12 districts of Solomon. Click the red icons for names of the officers and the corresponding Scripture. Here a [link to another map in black and white](#).

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 - Beginning in 1Ki 4:8 and through 1Ki 4:17 we find a list of 12 men over 12 districts (geographic but not based on tribal boundaries) who were in charge of collecting taxes from their respective district. These 12 were apparently under the leadership of Azariah in 1Ki 4:5. Since the districts do not necessarily conform to the previous boundaries of the 12 tribes, you will need to look at the [very helpful map](#). In addition apparently each district was to provide provisions for Solomon's court for one month per year. Note that the tribe and territory of Judah was given an exemption from taxation and provisions to the court. And these provisions were not a sack of potatoes and a lambchop as indicated by the quantities in 1Ki 4:22-28! When the nation was divided by God, Judah was the one tribe God gave to Solomon's son [Rehoboam](#) (along with the small tribe of Benjamin) while the other 10 tribes were split off under the rule of Jeroboam (1Ki 11:29-38) and became the Northern Kingdom of Israel. (See also [What is the story of Rehoboam and Jeroboam? | GotQuestions.org](#))

Rod Mattoon - Taxes were heavy upon the land, as each region provided one month of provisions. Judah was not mentioned. Their exemption would create rivalry and resentment later on. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

Warren Wiersbe - By establishing new districts that crossed over old boundaries, Solomon may have hoped to minimize tribal loyalty and eliminate some of the tension between Judah and the northern tribes. Instead, the plan only aggravated the tension, particularly since Judah wasn't included in the redistricting program. Being the royal tribe that contained the royal city, Judah was administered separately....These twelve men had great power in the land and were a part of the corrupt bureaucracy that Solomon wrote about in Ecclesiastes 5:8–12. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

1 Kings 4:8 These are their names: Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim;

- The son of Hur: or, Ben-hur, Jdg 17:1 19:1

Solomon's 12 Districts - click to enlarge
(<https://biblemapper.com/>)

DISTRICT 1 BEN-HUR

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

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:9 Ben-dekar in Makaz and Shaalbim and Beth-shemesh and Elonbeth-hanan;

- The son of Dekar: or, Ben-dekar
- Shaalbim: Jos 19:42, Shaalabbin
- Bethshemesh: 1Sa 6:12,20

DISTRICT 2 BEN-DEKER

Ben-deker in Makaz and Shaalbim and Beth-shemesh and Elonbeth-hanan

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:10 Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (Socoh was his and all the land of Hephher);

- The son of Hesed: or, Ben-hesed
- Socoh: Jos 15:35
- Hephher: Jos 12:17 17:2

DISTRICT 3 BEN-HESED

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

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:11 Ben-abinadab, in all the height of Dor (Taphath the daughter of Solomon was his wife);

- The son of Abinadab: or, Ben-abinadab
- Dor: Jos 12:23 17:11 Judges 1:27

DISTRICT 4 BEN-ADINADAB

Ben-abinadab, in all the height of Dor (Taphath [ornament] the daughter of Solomon was his wife); - Here we may have a little "nepotism." It is interesting that the Bible does not say how many daughters Solomon had, but here is one and there is a second one in 1Ki 4:15.

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:12 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;

- Taanach: Jos 17:11 Judges 5:19
- Megiddo: 2Ki 23:29,30
- Bethshean: 1Sa 31:10,12
- Zartanah: 1Ki 7:46, Zarthan, Jos 3:16, Zaretan
- Jezreel: 1Ki 18:46

- Abelmeholah: 1Ki 19:16

Solomon's 12 Districts - click to enlarge
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DISTRICT 5 BAANA SON OF AHILUD

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**;

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:13 **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);

- The son of Geber: or, Ben-geber
- Ramothgilead: 1Ki 22:3 De 4:43 Jos 20:8 21:38 2Ki 9:1,14
- the towns: Nu 32:41 De 3:14
- Argob: De 3:4,8,13,14 Ps 22:12 68:15
- threescore great cities: These were the fortified cities; their gates and bars being covered with plates of brass.

Solomon's 12 Districts - click to enlarge
(<https://biblemapper.com/>)

DISTRICT 6 BEN-GEBER

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);

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:14 **Ahinadab** the son of **Iddo**, in **Mahanaim**;

- Mahanaim: or, to Mahanaim, Ge 32:2 2Sa 2:8 17:24,27

Solomon's 12 Districts - click to enlarge
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DISTRICT 7 AHINADAB

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

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:15 **Ahimaaz**, in **Naphtali** (he also married **Basemath** the daughter of **Solomon**);

- Naphtali: Jos 19:32-39
- the daughter: 1Ki 4:11 1Sa 18:18

DISTRICT 8 AHINADAB

Ahimaaz, in **Naphtali** (he also married **Basemath** the daughter of Solomon) - Another touch of **nepotism** in this one!

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:16 Baana the son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;

- Asher: Jos 19:24-31

DISTRICT 9 BAANA SON OF HUSHAI

Baana the son of **Hushai**, in **Asher** and **Bealoth**;

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar;

- Issachar: Jos 19:17-23

DISTRICT 10 JEHOSHAPHAT

Jehoshaphat the son of **Paruah**, in **Issachar**;

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:18 Shimei the son of Ela, in Benjamin;

- Shimei: 1Ki 1:8 Zec 12:13
- Benjamin: Jos 18:20-28

DISTRICT 11 SHIMEI

[Shimei](#) the son of [Ela](#), in [Benjamin](#);

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:19 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.

- the country of Sihon: Nu 21:21-35 De 2:26-37 3:1-17 Jos 13:9-12

Solomon's 12 Districts - click to enlarge
(<https://biblemapper.com/>)

DISTRICT 12 GEBER SON OF URI

[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.

- [Another map](#) of the 12 districts of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:20 Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing.

KJV 1 Kings 4:20 Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

- **as the sand:** 1Ki 3:8 Ge 13:16 15:5 22:17 Pr 14:28
- **eating:** 1Sa 30:16 1Ch 12:39 Job 1:18 Ps 72:3-7 Ec 2:24 Isa 22:13 Mic 4:4 Zec 3:10 9:15 Ac 2:46

Related Passages:

Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, people groan.

SOLOMON'S GOLDEN AGE EAT, DRINK AND MAKE MERRY!

Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing - Note Judah is separated from Israel here, possibly alluding to the future split that would occur in 1 Kings 11. This is clearly an allusion to Yahweh fulfilling His covenant promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17+ where He declared

"I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies."

(Ge 32:12) (JACOB SPEAKING WITH GOD) For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.'"

I agree with **John MacArthur's** comment that "The early years of Solomon's reign, characterized by population growth, peace, and prosperity, were a foreshadowing of the blessings that will prevail in Israel when the Abrahamic Covenant is fulfilled." (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#)) I would add that even better the abundance and the joy in Solomon's Kingdom are but a vague (inadequate) foreshadowing or foretaste of Messiah's Kingdom at the Second Coming of the King of kings!

THOUGHT - If you are not yet a believer in Yeshua, the Messiah, let me strongly encourage you to receive His Word implanted (cf Jn 8:24+) which is able to save your soul from destruction and instead bring you into the Kingdom of the One in Whose presence will be fullness of joy and in Whose right hand there will be pleasures forevermore (cf Ps 16:11)!

1 Kings 4:21 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.

- Solomon: 1Ki 4:24 Ge 15:18 Ex 23:31 De 11:24 Jos 1:4 2Ch 9:26-31 Ezr 4:20 Ps 72:8-11
- brought: 1Sa 10:27 2Ki 17:3 2Ch 17:5 32:23 Ps 68:29 72:10,11 76:11

Related Passages:

Exodus 23:31 "I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.

Deuteronomy 1:7 'Turn and set your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negev and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

Joshua 1:4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.

Genesis 15:18+ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:

Solomon's Kingdom ca 971-931 BC
ESV Global Study Bible

THE EXTENT OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM

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 ([minchah](#)) and served Solomon all the days of his life - The River refers to the Euphrates River in top right corner of map above. This territory includes modern-day Israel, the Palestinian territories, parts of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Under Joshua's leadership, Israel conquered much of Canaan, but they never fully possessed all the land described in Genesis 15:18 (cf Ex 23:31, Joshua 1:4). Many areas remained unconquered (e.g., Judges 1:27–36). Notice these boundaries closely approximate those originally promised by Yahweh to Abraham and his seed. While Solomon exercised influence over regions as far as the Euphrates (1Ki 4:24), this was primarily through vassal states, not direct occupation or settlement (see the greyish area labeled Hamath in the map above). I interpret the Bible literally and believe Yahweh's promise will be fulfilled in a future Messianic kingdom where Israel will possess the entirety of the land literally. God will keep His promise made to Abraham!

Some think that Solomon's rule over all kingdoms was an answer to the prayer in Psalm 72 (some think Solomon wrote this but others think it was David" (because of the words in Ps 72:20) -

Psalms 72:8-11 May he also rule from sea to sea And from the River to the ends of the earth. 9 Let the nomads of the desert bow before him, And his enemies lick the dust. 10 Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. 11 And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him.

Woodhouse - the "tribute" brought to David in the glory days of his reign (see 2 Samuel 8:2, 6) came after his military victories. The nations appear to have served Solomon without the need for armed force. For those prepared to see it, Solomon became "a light for the nations" (Isaiah 49:6). To serve this king, if you did so gladly, would be no burden. To bring him "tribute" would be to honor him.³⁸(See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 98](#))

John MacArthur - The borders of the kingdoms which Solomon influenced echoed the Lord's promise to Abram in Ge 15:18. However, Solomon's reign was not the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant for 3 reasons: (1) Israel still only lived in the land "from Dan even to Beersheba" (1Ki 4:25). Abraham's descendants did not inhabit all the land promised to Abraham. (2) The non-Israelite kingdoms did not lose their identity and independence, but rather recognized Solomon's authority and brought him tribute without surrendering title to their lands. (3) According to Nu 34:6, the Mediterranean Sea ([SEE MAP ABOVE](#)) is to be the western border of the Land of Promise, indicating that Tyre was to be a part of the Promised Land. However, Hiram king of Tyre was a sovereign who entered into a bilateral or parity treaty (between equals) with Solomon (1Ki 5:1-12). (See [The MacArthur Bible Commentary](#))

R D Patterson makes an excellent point that "The countries that David had conquered remained subject to Solomon and brought

him tribute throughout his reign. This was one of the noteworthy signs of God's blessing in keeping with the Davidic covenant. The usual experience of ancient empire builders was that when the old king died, the subject nations would withhold tribute and challenge the new king in rebellion. This necessitated repeated punitive expeditions to reinforce the former king's terms and to prove the ability of the new king to enforce his will. Solomon did not have to do this. God granted him a peaceful reign in which he could focus his energies on the temple and other building projects. He was also able to devote himself to administrative matters, to the building up of extensive and expanding foreign trade, and to his pursuit of wisdom and knowledge." (Borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 52](#))

Tribute (grain offering) ([04503](#)) **minchah** means a gift (given to another without compensation = Ge 32:13, 2Ki 8:8), tribute (payment by one ruler or nation to another in acknowledgment of submission or as the price of protection = Jdg 3:14, 2Sa 8:2; Hos 10:6) or offering (as a gift offered to God). The most common sense by far in the OT is as an offering (usually "**grain offering**" in the NAS but it could refer to animal offerings Ge 4:3-5 or "sacrifices" in general Isa 19:21). In nonreligious contexts, the term spoke of a gift, often to someone who was being honored (Ge 33:10), such as a king (1Sa 10:27; 1Kgs 10:25; 2Chr 17:5), or tribute, an expected or enforced "gift" (Jdg 3:15-18; 2 Sam 8:2). "Gift" seems to have been the basic meaning, becoming more specific if used in a religious or in a sociopolitical context

1 Kings 4:22 Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour and sixty kors of meal,

- **kors:** 1Ki 4:22

Approximation of King Solomon's
Daily Ration of Meal!

A FEW DAILY RATIONS!

Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour and sixty kors of meal - 1 Kor = 10 Ephahs = 220 Liters = 6.2 Bushels. In modern terms, a kor is roughly 220 liters (about 58 gallons - see [ancient kor conversion](#)). This makes it one of the largest biblical units for measuring dry goods. For comparison a single ephah, which is a smaller unit, about 22 liters. In sum, 30 kors would be 6,600 liters (or about 1,745 gallons of flour daily). 60 kors of meal would be 60 × 220 liters equating to 13,200 liters (or about 3,480 gallons of meal daily). This enormous quantity highlights the scale and grandeur of Solomon's kingdom and his royal court and reflects the prosperity and wealth during his reign, as well as the logistical requirements to sustain such a large household and administrative infrastructure (Israel did not have huge metal storage bins as in the depiction above!) The size of these provisions gives us a sense of the splendor, size and majesty of Solomon's court!

Depiction of King Solomon's
Daily Bread Ration!

Patterson - Thenius (cited by Keil, p. 53) calculates that this amount of flour would produce 28,000 pounds of bread, sufficient for fourteen thousand people. (Borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 52](#))

1 Kings 4:23 ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl.

- **Ten fat:** Ne 5:17,18
- **roebucks:** De 15:22.

Ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, a hundred sheep besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl- Remember that these are **Solomon's provision for one day!** These were all Levitically "clean" animals that could be eaten. And remember this not hyperbole, but these numbers represent just ONE DAY's supply! Imagine the logistics of keeping this number of animals ready for the butcher every day! The writer is clearly trying to give us a picture of the majesty and grandeur of Solomon's reign!

Warren Wiersbe comments on these huge provisions and the ultimate impact - The conquered nations may have looked upon these monthly donations as part of their tribute to King Solomon, but the Jewish tribes considered the whole system to be a

humiliating form of extortion. After Solomon's death, it was no wonder that the ten tribes rose up in revolt against "all the king's horses and all the king's men." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

John Woodhouse says that based on these large numbers in vv22-23 "estimates of the number of people in Solomon's royal household range from 14,000 to 32,000. (See Keil, Kings, p. 38) Perhaps we should allow for some hyperbole, although comparable examples have been cited from Persia and Egypt. (Montgomery, Kings, p. 128.) The extent of the nations' submission (glad or otherwise) to King Solomon is reflected in the extraordinary scale of the daily provisions for Solomon's court enabled by their gifts (See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 98](#))

Matthew Henry - Thus Christ fed those whom he taught, five thousand at a time, more than ever Solomon's table would entertain at once: all believers have in Him a continual feast. Herein, he far outdoes Solomon, that he feeds all his subjects, not with bread that perishes, but with that which endures to eternal life.

1 Kings 4:24 For he had dominion over everything west of the River, from Tiphshah even to Gaza, over all the kings west of the River; and he had peace on all sides around about him.

KJV 1 Kings 4:24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

NET 1 Kings 4:24 His royal court was so large because he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River from Tiphshah to Gaza; he was at peace with all his neighbors.

CSB 1 Kings 4:24 for he had dominion over everything west of the Euphrates from Tiphshah to Gaza and over all the kings west of the Euphrates. He had peace on all his surrounding borders.

ESV 1 Kings 4:24 For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphshah to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him.

NIV 1 Kings 4:24 For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the River, from Tiphshah to Gaza, and had peace on all sides.

NLT 1 Kings 4:24 Solomon's dominion extended over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphshah to Gaza. And there was peace on all his borders.

NRS 1 Kings 4:24 For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphshah to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates; and he had peace on all sides.

- **Gaza:** Ge 10:19 Judges 16:1
- **all the kings:** 1Ki 4:21 Ps 72:8,11
- **had peace:** 1Ki 5:4 1Ch 22:9 Ps 72:3,7 Isa 9:7 Lu 2:14 Heb 7:1,2

Related Passages:

Genesis 15:18+ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

Solomon's Kingdom ca 971-931 BC
[ESV Global Study Bible](#)

PEACE REIGNED IN SOLOMON'S KINGDOM

For - Term of explanation. What's it explaining? Why Solomon had (and had need of) such ["hyperbolic"](#) proportions of provisions for his court and retinue. He had a lot of mouths to feed!



He had dominion ([radhah](#)) over everything west of the River (the [Euphrates](#)), from [Tiphshah](#) (see map = northern extremity of Solomon's dominion) even to [Gaza](#) (see on coast of map above), over all the kings west of the River (the [Euphrates](#)); and he had peace ([shalom](#); Lxx = [eirene](#)) on all sides around about him - Recall that Solomon's name in Hebrew means "peaceful" and as is often the case in the Bible, names speak of characteristics or attributes and Solomon's name reflected his peaceful reign for 40 years!

Dominion ([07287](#)) [radhah](#) means to have dominion, rule, dominate, subjugate, exercising domain, whether legitimate or not, over those who are powerless or otherwise under one's control. It referred to priestly rule (Jer 5:31), masters over their slaves (Lev 25:43), chief officers over their workers (1Ki 9:23), Solomon over his kingdom (1Ki 4:24), man in image of God ruling over creatures of God's creation (Ge 1:26, 28), the dominion of Israel over their subjects (Isa. 14:6), the command for Messiah to rule his enemies (Ps. 110:2), the rule of the King-Messiah (Isaiah 41:2).

William White - This verbal root is found in later Semitic dialects (but not Ugaritic). It occurs in two senses. One is cognate to Akkadian *radû* although the Hebrew root developed the specialized meaning "to tread" and is used in the Qal stem in this sense only once (Joel 3:13), "Come! Tread! for the winepress is full, the vats are overflowing." The second meaning is "to rule" and is used some twenty-two times in the OT, occurring in every section and type of context. The initial usage appears in Genesis 1:28, "And let them rule over the fish of the sea." (The allusion to this verse in Psalm 8:6 [H 7] uses *māshal*.) There is no definite structure to its use in parallel poetry, as the root may be placed in either the first (Psalm 68:28) or the second hemistich (Psalm 49:15). *rādâ* does not occur as a synonym in proximity to the more frequent verb, *māshal* (q.v.). Generally *rādâ* is limited to human rather than divine dominion (Psalm 110:2, et al.) The root is used of the rule of Israel over its enemies (Isaiah 14:2) and of the Gentile nations' rule over subject peoples (Isaiah 14:6). A most difficult and unusual usage occurs in Lament. 1:13, RSV mistakenly reads, "From on high he sent fire; into my bones he made it descend," while KJV and JPS more precisely translate, "From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevailed against them." But to be preferred is the reading, "He sent fire from above into my very bones and it overruled them." There is one instance of the Hiphil stem in Isaiah 41:2, speaking of the reign of the king-messiah, "And causes him to rule over kings." (See online [TWOT page 832](#))

RADHAH - 23X/23V- dominated(1), had dominion(1), have dominion(1), prevailed(1), rule(12), ruled(4), ruling(1), subdued(1), subdues(1). Gen. 1:26; Gen. 1:28; Lev. 25:43; Lev. 25:46; Lev. 25:53; Lev. 26:17; Num. 24:19; 1 Ki. 4:24; 1 Ki. 5:16; 1 Ki. 9:23; 2 Chr. 8:10; Neh. 9:28; Ps. 49:14; Ps. 68:27; Ps. 72:8; Ps. 110:2; Isa. 14:2; Isa. 14:6; Isa. 41:2; Jer. 5:31; Lam. 1:13; Ezek. 29:15; Ezek. 34:4

Peace ([07965](#)) [shalom](#) from [salam/salem/shalam](#) = to be safe, sound, healthy, perfect, complete [1Ki 7:51, Neh 6:18]) signifies a sense of well-being and harmony both within and without - Completeness, wholeness, peace, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, fullness, rest, harmony; the absence of agitation or discord, a state of calm without anxiety or stress. See [Jehovah Shalom - The LORD our Peace](#) The root meaning of **shalom** is to be whole or sound and this leads to translations that speak of completeness, wholeness, well-being, welfare and peace. **Shalom** also includes the idea of vigour and vitality in all dimensions of life. In short, **shalom** speaks of holistic ("holy") health for our souls and spirits.

Boice - Shalom is a large, embracing word for the good that comes to the one God favors. (See [Living by the Book: The Joy of Loving and Trusting God's Word](#))

Guzik - The Hebrew word is **shalom**, which is more than the cessation of hostility - it is God's word for wholeness and goodness and **total satisfaction in life. This is the abundant life Jesus promised!** (John 10:10)... shalom... is the gift of precious well-being... it is the establishment of a lasting, righteous, good. (Commentary on Nu 6:24-26) ([Commentary](#))

Kenneth Hemphill notes that **shalom** "means much more than the cessation of violence and hostility. There is a considerable difference between peace and a truce. It is glorious good news that Jehovah is peace... The idea behind the word shalom is wholeness and harmony in relationship with God. Peace is the deepest desire and need of the human heart. When you find yourself wondering where is the blessing of God's presence in your life, you need to remember that He is Jehovah Shalom. He desires to bring peace if you will simply return to Him. (Borrow this excellent little book and read it devotionally and it will speak to your heart beloved - BORROW [The Names of God- Ken Hemphill](#) - highly recommended)

1 Kings 4:25 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.

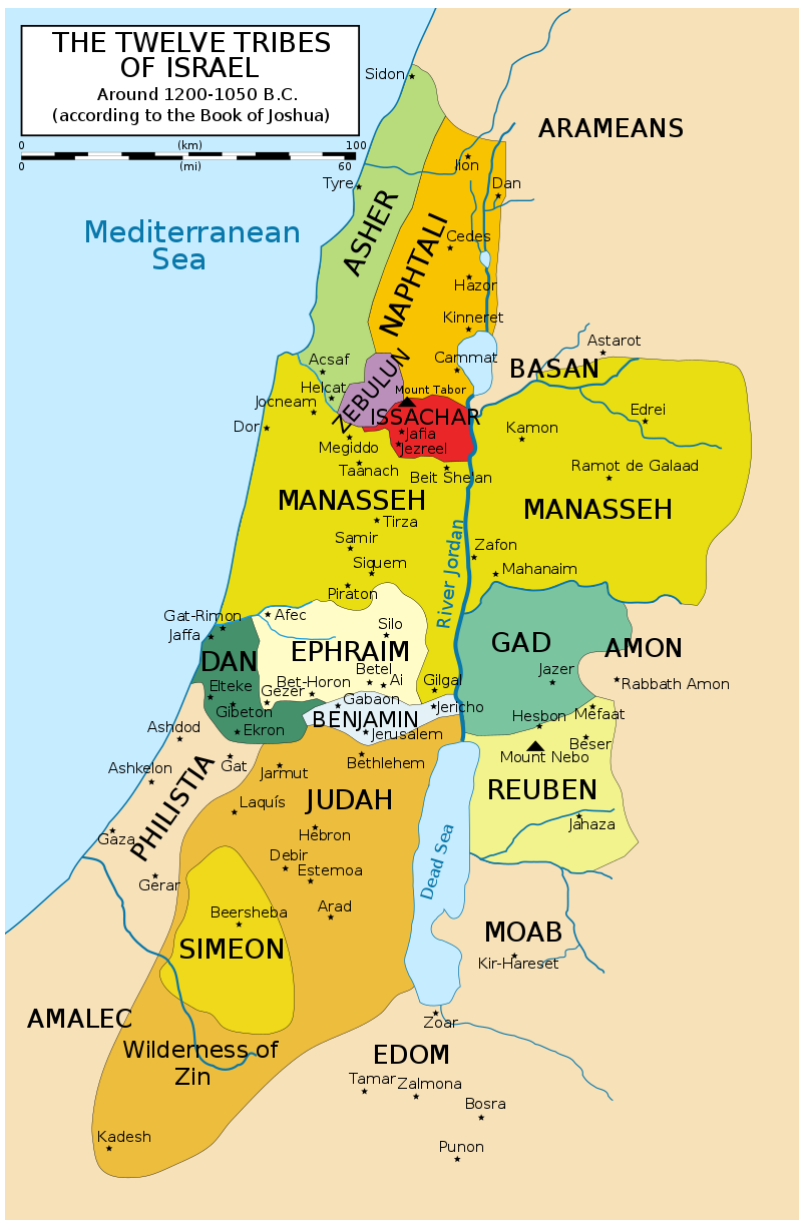
- **safely** Isa 60:18 Jer 23:5,6 33:15,16 Eze 38:11
- **every man:** 2Ki 18:31 Mic 4:4 Zec 3:10
- **from** Dan: Jud 20:1 2Sa 17:11 24:15

Related Passages:

Micah 4:4+ (IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM) Each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

Zechariah 3:10 (IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM) 'In that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'"

Ezekiel 28:26 (IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM) "They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.""



Map of Israel After Entering the Promised Land - DAN in far north, BEERSHEBA far south

**SECURITY REIGNED
IN SOLOMON'S KINGDOM**

So - Term of conclusion. Based on the fact that Solomon was in total control of his kingdom and had the respect of all surrounding nations.

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 - Under his vine depicts the security Israelites experienced under Solomon's rule (cf Mic 4:4, Zech 3:10). One is reminded of Micah's description of the coming kingdom of Christ described in Micah 4:1-5+. It was the "best of times" but it would also soon prove to be the "most dangerous of times" for King Solomon and the nation of Israel!

THOUGHT - Peaceful conditions can produce a drift of loyalty to God, when it seems like everything is going so well we do not need God! Enjoy the peace, but remain vigilant and daily watch over your heart diligently, never forgetting that from it flow the springs of true life (Pr 4:23+).

Circumstances of ease, when demands upon life are not severe, are always calculated to produce evil results, spiritually and morally.

G Campbell Morgan - These were the golden days of the monarchy. For awhile the people had rest from war, and the king gave himself up to the careful organization of his kingdom. He ruled with the understanding heart which he had received from Jehovah, and the system of government as set forth in this chapter is remarkable. The king was supreme, but he gathered around him a company of officers of state, each having his own department, for which he was responsible. The words which we emphasize pictorially set forth the peace and prosperity which characterized the period. Such a time is always one of peril to a nation. It is under circumstances of adversity, when a strain is put upon life, that man is most likely to realize and practise his dependence upon God. Circumstances of ease, when demands upon life are not severe, are always calculated to produce evil results, spiritually and morally. In saying that, have we not almost inadvertently revealed the secret of the peril? Life is not intended for ease, if by ease is meant anything approaching indolence. Days of prosperity should never be days when service ceases. Life is so rich potentially, that there is always room for fuller realization, and all enrichment should but create opportunities for more complete development. That was the meaning of the garden of Eden with its work, before man sinned. That will be the meaning of the Kingdom of God when fully established on earth, not laziness, but strenuous activity in the fulness of strength. Luxury, producing languor, destroys. Abundance, inspiring endeavour, makes for permanence.

1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.

KJV 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. (MASSORETIC TEXT HAS "40,000")

NET 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had **4,000** stalls for his chariot horses and 12,000 horses.

CSB 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had **40,000** stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.

ESV 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon also had **40,000** stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.

NIV 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had **four thousand** stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.

NLT 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had **4,000** stalls for his chariot horses, and he had 12,000 horses.

NRS 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon also had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

NJB 1 Kings 5:6 And Solomon had **four thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots and twelve thousand cavalymen.

NAB 1 Kings 5:6 Solomon had **four thousand** stalls for his twelve thousand chariot horses.

YLT 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon hath **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

GWN 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had stalls for **40,000** chariot horses. He also had 12,000 chariot soldiers.

BBE 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had **four thousand** boxed-off spaces for horses for his carriages, and twelve thousand horsemen.

RSV 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon also had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

NKJ 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

ASV 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

DBY 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

NIRV 1 Kings 4:26 Solomon had **4,000 spaces** where he kept his chariot horses. He had a total of 12,000 horses.

RWB 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

WEB 1 Kings 4:26 And Solomon had **forty thousand** stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

- stalls: 1Ki 10:25,26 De 17:16 2Sa 8:4 2Ch 1:14 2Ch 9:25 Ps 20:7

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 17:16-17+ “Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, **nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses**, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never again return that way.’ “He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20+ (DID THIS CONTRIBUTE TO THE PATHOGENESIS OF SOLOMON'S DECLINE AND EVENTUAL DOWNFALL? SOLOMON HAD "HEART DISEASE"!) 18 "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. 19 "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 **that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen** and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.

1 Kings 10:28 Also Solomon's **import of horses was from Egypt** and Kue, and the king's merchants procured them from Kue for a price.

2 Chronicles 9:25 Now Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

1 Kings 10:26-29 Now Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; and he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. 27 The king made silver as common as stones in Jerusalem, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamore trees that are in the lowland. 28 Also Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's merchants procured them from Kue for a price. 29 A chariot was imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse for 150; and by the same means they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of the Arameans.

2 Chronicles 1:14-17 Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 15 The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the lowland. 16 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue; the king's traders procured them from Kue for a price. 17 They imported chariots from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver apiece and horses for 150 apiece, and by the same means they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

Psalms 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.

1 Kings 10:26-29 Now Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; and he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. 27 The king made silver as common as stones in Jerusalem, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamore trees that are in the lowland. 28 Also Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's merchants procured them from Kue for a price. 29 A chariot was imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse for 150; and by the same means they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of the Arameans.

Solomon had 40,000 stalls ([marbeq](#)) of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen - 2 Chronicles 9:25 has **4000 stalls** so many suggest this was a copyist's error in 1Ki 4:26. Either way this is a whole lot of horses to feed and keep groomed (spoken by a dad who had one horse riding daughter which was a very expensive hobby!) Of course, regardless of the exact number, 4000 or 40000 is some major equine multiplication and surely represents disobedience to God's warning in Deuteronomy 17:16+ which says of a king of Israel "Moreover, **he shall not multiply horses for himself**, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' Solomon was storing up for himself trouble in the future, as he would experience God's immutable sowing and reaping principle! Hosea 8:7 says "they sow the wind And they reap the whirlwind." The whirlwind was coming for Solomon!

THOUGHT - One has to ask if this horse stall scenario is another clue suggesting Solomon is drifting from his early devotion to Jehovah? Spiritual drifting is usually not abrupt, but is subtle and often difficult to recognize! How many "stalls" (metaphorically speaking) do you have beloved? See [Backsliding](#) and [Backsliding-Quotes, Devotionals, Illustrations](#).

Warren Wiersbe - Contrary to God's law, Solomon multiplied horses in the land (Dt 17:16) and built special cities for housing them (1Ki 4:26; 1Ki 10:26-29; 2Ch 1:14-17; 1Ch 9:25, 28). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*Anything that breeds independence
leads on to outright disobedience.*

Rod Mattoon - Verse number 26 has a copyist error. Forty thousand stalls reads as four thousand stalls in—2 Chronicles 9:25— The reason for copyist errors in any translation of the Bible is Hebrew numbers are written with Hebrew letters, not numbers. Hebrew letters have a numerical value. Some letters look alike with minute differences. One little dot can change the value of a number too. If the scribe does not catch it or if the manuscript is worn or damaged, he can copy a number incorrectly. There are a small number of places this occurs in our translation. They do not affect any Bible doctrines. Here in this passage, we see an area of disobedience in Solomon's life. It may seem small, but it was important to God. As Solomon disobeyed the Lord in having many wives, he disobeyed the Lord in having horses too....

*You may not see the consequences for many years,
but they eventually come*

Solomon was not perfect. His mistakes and disobedience caught up with him later on in his life. Even though he loved the Lord, his disobedience affected his life and eventually ruined him. Disobedience breeds more disobedience, which brings problems and repercussions. You may love the Lord, but when you violate Bible principles, you will pay a price in problems later on. You may not see the consequences for many years, but they eventually come. We do reap what we sow (Gal 6:7-8+). ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

ILLUSTRATION OF THE COST OF SIN - (CAVEAT - THIS IS AN INTERESTING STORY BUT MAY NOT BE TRUE) When Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece The Last Supper, he sought long and hard for a model for his Christ. At last, he located a chorister in one of the churches in Rome who was lovely in life and features. He was a young man named Pietro Bandinelli. Years passed, and the painting was still unfinished. All the disciples had been portrayed except one, Judas Iscariot. Leonardo started to find a man whose face was hardened and distorted by sin. At last he found a beggar on the streets of Rome with a face so villainous that he shuddered when he looked at him. He hired the man to sit for him as he painted the face of Judas on his canvas. When he was about to dismiss the man, he said, "I have not yet found out your name." The man replied, "I am Pietro Bandinelli. I am the one who sat for you as a model of Christ." Sin takes its toll on our life. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

Norman Geisler - 1 KINGS 4:26—How can this verse say Solomon had 40,000 stalls when 2 Chronicles 9:25 says he had only 4,000 stalls?

PROBLEM: In recording the prosperity of Solomon, this passage states that he had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots. However, 1 Chronicles 9:25 affirms that Solomon had only 4,000 stalls for horses. Which one is right?

SOLUTION: This is undoubtedly a copyist error. The ratio of 4,000 horses to 1,400 chariots, as found in the 2 Chronicles passage, is much more reasonable than a ratio of 40,000 to 1,400 found in the 1 Kings text. In the Hebrew language, the visual difference between the two numbers is very slight. The consonants for the number 40 are **rbym,í** while the consonants for the number 4 are **rbh** (the vowels were not written in the text). (The "y" in the word rbym is normally represented by the long "i" vowel. However, since the consonant yod was written to represent long vowels before the vowel points were added, it is inserted here as a transliteration of the letter which would have appeared in the unpointed text.) The manuscripts from which the scribe worked may have been smudged or damaged and have given the appearance of being forty thousand rather than four thousand. (See [When Critics Ask](#))

NIDOTTE - According to 1 Kgs 4:26 [1Ki 5:6 in Hebrew Bible] Solomon had 40,000 “stalls” for his chariot horses and 12,000 horses (or horsemen). The parallel v. in 2 Chron 9:25 says, “Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses ... and 12,000 horses.” NIV reads 4,000 in 1 Kgs 4:26, which is the reading of some Septuagint manuscripts, but not the reading of the Heb. text. Admittedly, the 40,000 of 1 Kgs 4:26 [5:6] seems excessive, even for 12,000 horses. Were there three אָרְיֹת / אָרִיֹת for every horse? On the other hand, the number 4,000 in 2 Chron 9:25 raises the problem: were there three horses in each אָרְיֹת? The larger number of 40,000 (versus 4,000) in 1 Kgs 4:26 [5:6] may be an example of a type of textual corruption in which “extra noughts can be added to a number” (Wenham, 21). Cf. the reference to “700” chariots in 2 Sam 10:18, and the reference to “7,000” chariots in the parallel v., 1 Chron 19:18; similarly, the mention of “4” years for the period of conspiracy planned against David by Absalom (2 Sam 15:7) is rendered by some manuscripts as “40” (see NIV footnote to 2 Sam 15:27). To be sure the Heb. text does not use zeroes, but this is Wenham’s way of describing one type of a variant that may be evidence of the use of a different type of pre-Massoretic notation. Davis (89), citing such a copyist’s error, says, “When contradictory numbers occur in parallel passages, the interpreter must take into view the intent of the passage and the nature of the events, in order to arrive at a conclusion as to which of the two numbers represents the true reading of the text.” But this thinking leads to the conclusion that our “biblical text is conveying to us an infallibly correct copy of a set of errors” (Barr, 310).

QUESTION - [Does the Bible contain errors, contradictions, or discrepancies?](#)

ANSWER - If we read the Bible at face value, without a preconceived bias for finding errors, we will find it to be a coherent, consistent, and relatively easy-to-understand book. Yes, there are difficult passages. Yes, there are verses that appear to contradict each other. We must remember that the Bible was written by approximately 40 different authors over a period of around 1,500 years. Each writer wrote with a different style, from a different perspective, to a different audience, for a different purpose. We should expect some minor differences. However, a difference is not a contradiction. It is only an error if there is absolutely no conceivable way the verses or passages can be reconciled. Even if an answer is not available right now, that does not mean an answer does not exist. Many have found a supposed error in the Bible in relation to history or geography only to find out that the Bible is correct once further archaeological evidence is discovered.

We often receive questions along the lines of “Explain how these verses do not contradict!” or “Look, here is an error in the Bible!” Admittedly, some of the things people bring up are difficult to answer. However, it is our contention that there are viable and intellectually plausible answers to every supposed Bible contradiction and error. There are books and websites available that list “all the errors in the Bible.” Most people simply get their ammunition from these places; they do not find supposed errors on their own. There are also books and websites available that refute every one of these supposed errors. The saddest thing is that most people who attack the Bible are not truly interested in an answer. Many “Bible attackers” are even aware of these answers, but they continue to use the same old shallow attacks again and again.

So, what are we to do when someone approaches us with an alleged Bible error? 1) Prayerfully study the Scriptures and see if there is a simple solution. 2) Do some research using some of the fine Bible commentaries, “Bible defense” books, and biblical research websites. 3) Ask our pastors/church leaders to see if they can find a solution. 4) If there is still no clear answer after steps 1), 2), and 3) are followed, we trust God that His Word is truth and that there is a solution that just simply has not been realized yet (2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17).

Related Resources:

- [Is the Bible reliable?](#)
- [Is the Bible truly God’s Word?](#)
- [Why is it important to believe in Biblical inerrancy?](#)
- [What does it mean that the Bible is infallible? What is biblical infallibility?](#)

1 Kings 4:27 Those deputies provided for King Solomon and all who came to King Solomon's table, each in his month; they left nothing lacking.

NET 1 Kings 4:28 Each one also brought to the assigned location his quota of barley and straw for the various horses.

CSB 1 Kings 4:28 Each man brought the barley and the straw for the chariot teams and the other horses to the required place according to his assignment.

ESV 1 Kings 4:28 Barley also and straw for the horses and swift steeds they brought to the place where it was

required, each according to his duty.

NIV 1 Kings 4:28 They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

NLT 1 Kings 4:28 They also brought the necessary barley and straw for the royal horses in the stables.

NRS 1 Kings 4:28 They also brought to the required place barley and straw for the horses and swift steeds, each according to his charge.

NJB 1 Kings 5:8 They also provided the barley and straw for the horses and draught animals, where required, each according to the quota demanded of him.

NAB 1 Kings 5:8 For the chariot horses and draft animals also, each brought his quota of barley and straw to the required place.

MONTHLY QUOTAS FULFILLED BY EACH OF THE 12 REGIONS

Those deputies (1Ki 4:7-19) **provided for King Solomon and all who came to King Solomon's table, each in his month; they left nothing lacking** - The deputies were diligent to make sure nothing was lacking but made sure every provision was filled to the brim so to speak. This is exactly what Samuel had warned about in 1Sa 8:14 "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants."

John Woodhouse points out that "Again we see in Solomon's kingdom an anticipation of the kingdom of David's greater son. Jesus said, "And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29+). What a kingdom!" (See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 101](#))

1 Kings 4:28 They also brought barley and straw for the horses and swift steeds to the place where it should be, each according to his charge.

- Es 8:10,14 Mic 1:13

PROVISIONS FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE HORSES

They also brought barley and straw for the horses and swift steeds to the place where it should be, each according to his charge - The writer goes on in this passage to explain the last note in v27 that there was **nothing lacking!** Even the horses were well fed!

Spurgeon opines that "From the whole passage you will see that the kingdom of Israel under the sway of Solomon was a fair type of the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps it most exactly describes his future dominion, in the long-expected glory of the latter days."

Paul House - As 4:7–19 has already explained, the twelve district governors collected taxes. Over time this burden became too great for the people to bear, so they asked Solomon's successor for relief (1 Kgs 12:1–4). For now, though, Israel seems content that they have finally reached the goal they set almost a century before when they asked Samuel for a king: they are like other prominent nations (cf. 1 Sam 8:5). It is interesting to realize that at this point in the story the author expresses neither approval nor disapproval of Solomon's activities. Certainly the writer presents Solomon as a man made wise by the Lord. Of course, the people seem happy now. Yet Moses' warnings, especially the one against collecting "great numbers of horses" (cf. Deut 17:14–20), and Samuel's cautions against royal excesses (1 Sam 8:10–18) linger in the minds of seasoned readers. What long-term good can come of such traditionally non-Israelite practices? (Borrow [1.2 Kings](#))

C H Spurgeon - The dromedaries (See full sermon [The Dromedaries](#))

'Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.' 1 Kings 4:28

You cannot better your circumstances as a servant of Christ by diminishing your charge. If you say, 'I shall not attempt quite so much,' you will not improve your circumstances by that course, for if you diminish work, the Lord will diminish the strength. Our great

Solomon will stop some of the supplies if you have fewer dromedaries to feed, and so you will be no better off. If you have to keep six he will give you provision for six; if you take to keeping three he will only give you supplies for three, and you will be poorer rather than richer. Neither can you improve your circumstances by entirely and only increasing the supply, for, if you receive more straw and barley, certainly our Solomon will send you more dromedaries. When you have more strength you will have more trials. When God's children do not discharge their service with the means which he entrusts to them, he frequently lets them take shares in a 'limited liability company,' which is the same thing as throwing your money into the river, or he leaves them to become shareholders in a breaking bank, with unlimited catastrophe as its capital, and this is more terrible still. It often happens to a man who has scraped and saved, and stunted the cause of Christ, that in his later years he is in straits, and he cries to himself, 'It is all gone, and I wish I had used it better before it went. It would have been far better to give it to the Lord than to see the lawyers devour it.' Ah, your sin has found you out. Your Master could not trust you, and so he has taken away his goods from you, and now you wish that you had behaved yourself. Let us take warning from such bad managers, and let us see that, as our charge is, so we cry for supplies, and that as the supplies come we use them wisely.

1 Kings 4:29 Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.

KJV 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

BGT 1 Kings 5:9 κα ὄωκεν κ ριος φρ νησιν τ Σαλωμων κα σοφ αν πολλ ν σφ ὄρα κα χ μα καρῶ ας ς μμος παρ τ ν θ λασσαν

LXE 1 Kings 4:29 And the Lord gave understanding to Solomon, and very much wisdom, and enlargement of heart, as the sand on the seashore.

NET 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment; the breadth of his understanding was as infinite as the sand on the seashore.

CSB 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom, very great insight, and understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore.

ESV 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore,

NIV 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

NLT 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon very great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore.

NRS 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon very great wisdom, discernment, and breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore,

YLT 1 Kings 4:29 And God giveth wisdom to Solomon, and understanding, very much, and breadth of heart, as the sand that is on the edge of the sea;

GWN 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom-keen insight and a mind as limitless as the sand on the seashore.

BBE 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon a great store of wisdom and good sense, and a mind of wide range, as wide as the sand by the seaside.

RSV 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and largeness of mind like the sand on the seashore,

NKJ 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore.

ASV 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.

DBY 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and very great understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.

NIRV 1 Kings 4:29 God made Solomon very wise. His understanding couldn't even be measured. It was like the sand on the seashore

- **Now God gave Solomon wisdom:** 1Ki 3:12,28 10:23,24 2Ch 1:10-12 Ps 119:34 Pr 2:6 Ec 1:16 2:26 Jas 1:5,17 3:17
- **breadth of mind:** Isa 60:5
- **the sand:** 1Ki 4:20 Ge 41:49 Judges 7:12 Jer 33:22 Hab 1:9

Related Passages:

Job 28:28 "And to man He said, **Behold, the fear of the Lord** (see [Fear of the Lord](#)), **that is wisdom**; And to depart from evil is understanding."

A MENSA MAN ON "STEROIDS!"

[Mensa people](#) score at the 98th percentile or higher on a standardised, supervised IQ or other approved intelligence test, but the writer implies that Solomon was in a class alone, a "super mensa" mind if you will. In this verse we see the writer return to the theme in 1 Kings 3:28, Solomon's great wisdom was from God -- "When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the **wisdom of God** was in him to administer justice."

Now God gave (1Ki 3:5, 9, 12+) **Solomon wisdom** ([chokmah](#)) **and very great discernment** ([tebunah](#)) **and breadth of mind** ([leb](#)) (literally - enlargement of the heart, cf "listening heart" in 1Ki 3:9+, cf Ps 119:32+) - Note that Solomon's mental acumen was a gift from the most high God as he says in Pr 2:6. And in fairness to Solomon, he did utilize this gift for the glory of God, becoming one of the main Biblical writers of what we today know as the "[Wisdom Literature](#)," Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. The books of Job and Psalms are also included in the [Wisdom Literature](#). Solomon's contribution to the [Wisdom Literature](#) is interesting in view of the fact that his father David wrote at least 73 of the 150 Psalms (and probably more that do not have an ascription).

Solomon himself testified of the source of his wisdom which He makes available to His children writing

For **the LORD gives wisdom**; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. **7 He stores up sound wisdom** for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, **8** Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. (Proverbs 2:6-8+)

Jesus alluded to the greatness of Solomon's wisdom

"The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Matthew 12:42+)

R D Patterson - Interest in wisdom ḥokmāh was widespread in the ancient world. In the Gentile world wisdom was primarily associated with the ability to be successful. It was not a speculative discipline but intensely practical.....Wise men were those who had unusual insight into human nature and in the problems of life in general. Thus they were sought as advisers to kings and rulers. At the very heart, however, of the concept of wisdom in the OT lies the recognition that God is the Author and End of life and that a meaningful or successful life is one that has its focus in God. This finds typical expression in the statement "The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom" (Job 28:28). He who fears the Lord receives wisdom from him, the ability to see things from God's perspective. Thus true wisdom gives discernment in spiritual and moral matters. It also enables man to discriminate between that which is helpful and that which is harmful. Every aspect of human endeavor is included: the spiritual, intellectual, secular, and practical. It covers man's relationship to God as well as his relationship to other men. (Borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 54](#))

Like the sand that is on the seashore- This is quite a term of comparison indicating Solomon's mental facilities were as we might say today "off the charts!" There is no human being described in the Bible in terms similar to this man Solomon. Of course the description of the God-Man Christ Jesus far surpasses Solomon for Paul writes in Him "are hidden **ALL** the treasures of **wisdom** and **knowledge**." (Col 2:3+)

Wisdom (02451) [chokmah](#) from the verb **chakam** - to be wise) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Wisdom** is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life." The essential idea of **chakam** represents a manner of thinking and attitude concerning life's experiences; including matters of general interest and basic morality. These concerns relate to prudence in secular affairs, skills in the arts, moral sensitivity, and experience in the ways of the Lord.

The source of all wisdom is a personal God who is holy, righteous, and just. His wisdom is expressed against the background of his omnipotence and omniscience. By his wisdom God numbered the clouds (Job 38:37), founded the earth (Proverbs 3:19), and made the world (Jeremiah 10:12). Wisdom, being found in God, is regarded as a divine attribute (Job 12:13). He alone knows wisdom in its truest sense (Job 28:20, 23). The wisdom of God is not found in man's speculation. He alone must provide this wisdom for man's guidance so that man can live the best possible moral and ethical life (Proverbs 2:6; Job 11:6).

In proverbial fashion, the Bible personifies divine wisdom so that it seems to be a hypostasis of God, but stops just short of giving it separate existence. This wisdom was brought forth before all things (Proverbs 8:22-31). She has built a house and prepared a banquet for those who will listen to her (Proverbs 9:1f.). She even teaches in public places (Proverbs 1:20; Proverbs 8:1, 6, 11-12). By her instruction her students receive a divine spirit (Proverbs 1:2), the naive become wise, politicians become wise, and those who receive from her wealth are crowned with honor and riches (Proverbs 8:1-21).

This personification of wisdom is unique. While there were gods and goddesses in the ancient near east who were thought to possess the gifts of wisdom it is unlikely that any existed by the name of wisdom. The figure of wisdom in the OT never came to be regarded as a deity independent of the Lord although some such expressions occur in Proverbs 8. These have often been taken as an adumbration of Christ. Wisdom did attain a degree of personification, with features which were by no means abstract. Wisdom should not be regarded as God but it does belong to God; it is one of his attributes. Wisdom has a personal existence in the living word of the NT, but wisdom is not the Logos herself (Delitzsch, Proverbs, p. 183). That Wisdom is personified as a woman in Proverbs 1-9 is partly explained by the fact that the noun is feminine. There the Lady Wisdom is contrasted with the woman Folly who is personified sin. Note the studied contrast of Proverbs 9:4-6 and Proverbs 9:16-18. This personification of wisdom is not found outside these chapters.

CHOKMAH - 141 TIMES (NOTE CONCENTRATION IN PROVERBS AND ECCLESIASTES) - Exod. 28:3; Exod. 31:3; Exod. 31:6; Exod. 35:26; Exod. 35:31; Exod. 35:35; Exod. 36:1; Exod. 36:2; Deut. 4:6; Deut. 34:9; 2 Sam. 14:20; 2 Sam. 20:22; 1 Ki. 2:6; 1 Ki. 3:28; 1 Ki. 4:29; 1 Ki. 4:30; 1 Ki. 4:34; 1 Ki. 5:12; 1 Ki. 7:14; 1 Ki. 10:4; 1 Ki. 10:6; 1 Ki. 10:7; 1 Ki. 10:8; 1 Ki. 10:23; 1 Ki. 10:24; 1 Ki. 11:41; 1 Chr. 28:21; 2 Chr. 1:10; 2 Chr. 1:11; 2 Chr. 1:12; 2 Chr. 9:3; 2 Chr. 9:5; 2 Chr. 9:6; 2 Chr. 9:7; 2 Chr. 9:22; 2 Chr. 9:23; Job 4:21; Job 11:6; Job 12:2; Job 12:12; Job 12:13; Job 13:5; Job 15:8; Job 26:3; Job 28:12; Job 28:18; Job 28:20; Job 28:28; Job 32:7; Job 32:13; Job 33:33; Job 38:36; Job 38:37; Job 39:17; Ps. 37:30; Ps. 51:6; Ps. 90:12; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 107:27; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:2; Prov. 1:7; Prov. 2:2; Prov. 2:6; Prov. 2:10; Prov. 3:13; Prov. 3:19; Prov. 4:5; Prov. 4:7; Prov. 4:11; Prov. 5:1; Prov. 7:4; Prov. 8:1; Prov. 8:11; Prov. 8:12; Prov. 9:10; Prov. 10:13; Prov. 10:23; Prov. 10:31; Prov. 11:2; Prov. 13:10; Prov. 14:6; Prov. 14:8; Prov. 14:33; Prov. 15:33; Prov. 16:16; Prov. 17:16; Prov. 17:24; Prov. 18:4; Prov. 21:30; Prov. 23:23; Prov. 24:3; Prov. 24:14; Prov. 28:26; Prov. 29:3; Prov. 29:15; Prov. 30:3; Prov. 31:26; Eccl. 1:13; Eccl. 1:16; Eccl. 1:17; Eccl. 1:18; Eccl. 2:3; Eccl. 2:9; Eccl. 2:12; Eccl. 2:13; Eccl. 2:21; Eccl. 2:26; Eccl. 7:10; Eccl. 7:11; Eccl. 7:12; Eccl. 7:19; Eccl. 7:23; Eccl. 7:25; Eccl. 8:1; Eccl. 8:16; Eccl. 9:10; Eccl. 9:13; Eccl. 9:15; Eccl. 9:16; Eccl. 9:18; Eccl. 10:1; Eccl. 10:10; Isa. 10:13; Isa. 11:2; Isa. 29:14; Isa. 33:6; Isa. 47:10; Jer. 8:9; Jer. 9:23; Jer. 10:12; Jer. 49:7; Jer. 51:15; Ezek. 28:4; Ezek. 28:5; Ezek. 28:7; Ezek. 28:12; Ezek. 28:17; Dan. 1:4; Dan. 1:17; Dan. 1:20

Discernment (08394) *tebunah* (derived from *bin/biyn*) means understanding, insight and represents the act (Job 26:12), faculty (Ex 31:3), object (Pr 2:3), and personification of wisdom (Pr 8:1). Synonymous with *bînâ*, and it is used in the same variety of ways, although in different passages. By the act of understanding God shattered Rahab (Job 26:12). The faculty is such that a man of understanding walks in a path of uprightness (Proverbs 15:21). Then again, understanding can refer to the object of knowledge as when one gains understanding (Proverbs 3:13). *tebûnâ* is also personified as a woman lifting up her voice (Proverbs 8:1). Here understanding is parallel with wisdom and thus is seen as the teacher. In only one passage do *bînâ* and *tebûnâ* appear in synonymous parallelism: as one cries for discernment one must lift up his voice for understanding (Proverbs 2:3); the nouns refer to the object of knowledge. **Tebunah** is used both for God (Pr 2:6; cf. Pr 3:19; Isa. 40:14) and humans (Pr 21:30; cf. Dt. 32:28; Pro 11:12; 28:16).

TEBUNAH - 42X - **discernment(1), reasonings(1), skill(1), skillful(1), skillfully(1), understanding(37)**. Exod. 31:3; Exod. 35:31; Exod. 36:1; Deut. 32:28; 1 Ki. 4:29; 1 Ki. 7:14; Job 12:12; Job 12:13; Job 26:12; Job 32:11; Ps. 49:3; Ps. 78:72; Ps. 136:5; Ps. 147:5; Prov. 2:2; Prov. 2:3; Prov. 2:6; Prov. 2:11; Prov. 3:13; Prov. 3:19; Prov. 5:1; Prov. 8:1; Prov. 10:23; Prov. 11:12; Prov. 14:29; Prov. 15:21; Prov. 17:27; Prov. 18:2; Prov. 19:8; Prov. 20:5; Prov. 21:30; Prov. 24:3; Prov. 28:16; Isa. 40:14; Isa. 40:28; Isa. 44:19; Jer. 10:12; Jer. 51:15; Ezek. 28:4; Hos. 13:2; Obad. 1:7; Obad. 1:8

QUESTION - [What is wisdom literature?](#)

ANSWER - Wisdom literature was a category of literature in many cultures in the time of the Old Testament. Wisdom literature deals with the way the world “works.” It can deal with the big philosophical problems and the smaller things that may be addressed with common sense. Modern philosophical writings might be considered to be in the same vein as ancient wisdom literature. Modern philosophers write about such lofty issues as the problem of evil, while others address more mundane matters from a practical standpoint. A modern example of the more practical wisdom might be Benjamin Franklin’s “Poor Richard’s Almanac,” source of the wise saying “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.” This is not lofty, academic philosophy, but it is philosophy of sorts.

The wisdom literature of ancient Israel was unique in that God was recognized as the fountainhead of all wisdom. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” ([Proverbs 9:10](#)). Through common grace, people can gain a certain amount of wisdom about how to live in the world. There are unbelievers who know how to manage their money well, respond positively to difficult situations, and even respond to tragedy with strength and dignity. However, it is the Lord who created the world, and only He can give true insight into the way the world works, because His wisdom is seen in the light of eternity.

In the Old Testament, there are five books that are classified as wisdom literature:

Job

The [book of Job](#) deals with the problem of evil and the justice of God. Job is a faithful man who loses everything. He has friends who tell him that he must be guilty of some great sin and that he should confess it and perhaps God will restore him (Job 11:13–15). In their worldview, this kind of thing only happens to the wicked. Job, however, maintains his innocence but does come quite close to questioning God’s justice because in Job’s world, too, things like this should only happen to the wicked. In the end, God appears to Job and emphasizes the fact that what He is doing is bigger than any simple formula that people may concoct (chapters 38–41). In the end, the book does not answer the question of why the righteous suffer, but it does turn the focus to God who is in control.

Psalms

There are 150 psalms, all examples of wisdom literature and generally prayers and/or songs of worship. Many of them deal with the difficult problems of life such as “why do the wicked prosper?” and “if God loves me, why is this happening to me?” Psalm 73 is an example of a “philosophical” psalm. The writer looks around at how the wicked are prospering and is tempted to envy them because they seem to have it so good. “My feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Psalm 73:2–3). But then he remembers that their prosperity is only for a limited period of time. He considers what will happen to them in the end: “Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds” (verses 27–28). Indeed, the whole [book of Psalms](#) may be seen as addressing the issue of why God has allowed Israel to suffer when it is the “chosen nation.” The answer is that, even as Israel suffers God’s chastisement, He will never abandon them.

Proverbs

Most of the [book of Proverbs](#) is made up of short, pithy sayings about how the world works. Some of these bits of wisdom literature address simple, common sense solutions to life’s problems. Proverbs 27:14 is almost comical but true: “If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.” In other words, let your neighbor sleep if he wants to! This proverb is also very practical: “Don’t visit your neighbors too often, or you will wear out your welcome” (Proverbs 25:17). Another is sad but true: “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife” (Proverbs 17:1).

The truth of many of the proverbs can be readily apprehended without any special spiritual insight, but others will make more sense when viewed from God’s perspective: “For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as [gall](#), sharp as a double-edged sword” (Proverbs 5:3–4). And some will only make sense when viewed from the perspective of eternity: “The Lord works out everything to its proper end—even the wicked for a day of disaster” (Proverbs 16:4).

Ecclesiastes

[Ecclesiastes](#) may be one of the most misunderstood books of the Bible. Some things in the book seem to be

flatly at odds with everything else in the Bible. For example, Ecclesiastes 3:19–21 says, “Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?” However, when one understands that the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes is “Life without God,” the book begins to make sense. Ecclesiastes reveals the inner thinking of a person who has lost hope in the God of the Bible. If God is not a good, loving, faithful God, then the above passage is completely logical. The point of Ecclesiastes is that life “under the sun” (a phrase the author uses to describe life on a completely horizontal level) is meaningless. The only sensible conclusion is to stop looking for meaning “under the sun” and to “remember your Creator” (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs)

[Song of Solomon](#) is also an example of wisdom literature. The book is a poetic picture of marriage written by or about Solomon and a woman he loves. Scholars disagree on exactly how it should be understood and exactly who is saying what. But the bottom line seems to be that Solomon loves the woman and this book gives some practical ways that he can express his love.

Wisdom literature deals with how to live well. Those who want to maintain harmonious relationships with friends, family, and God; who wish to avoid foolish mistakes in everyday life; or who desire to raise their children in the fear of the Lord will turn to the wisdom literature of the Bible for advice.

F B Meyer - Largeness of heart.

We must all admit that our soul is too narrow. It holds too little, knows too little, is deficient in will-power, and, above all, in capacity of love; and when we are called to run in the way of God’s commandments, we break down in despair, and cry, “If I am to be a runner, Thou must first enlarge my heart.”

How little we know of the experience which Madame Guyon describes when she says: “This vastness or enlargedness, which is not bounded by anything, increases every day; so that my soul in partaking of the qualities of her Spouse seems also to partake of his immensity.”

“There is,” remarks one of the old Puritans, “a straitness, slavery, and narrowness, in all sin; sin crumples up our souls; which, if they were freely spread abroad, would be as large and wide as the whole universe. No man is truly free; but he that hath his will enlarged to the extent of God’s will, by loving whatsoever God loves, and nothing else, he enjoys boundless liberty, and a boundless sweetness.” God’s love embraces the universe. He “so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.” We who have partaken of the Divine nature must also love as He does.

Thomas à Kempis says, finally: “He who desires glory in things outside of God, or to take pleasure in some private good, shall many ways be encumbered and straitened; but if heavenly grace enter in, and true charity, there will be no envy, neither narrowness of heart, neither will self-love busy itself, for Divine charity overcometh all things, and enlargeth all the powers of the soul.” Give unto us, O God, this largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore!

1 Kings 4:30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

- **the sons of the east** : Ge 25:6 Job 1:3 Da 1:20 4:7 5:11,12 Mt 2:1,16
- **the wisdom of Egypt**: Isa 19:11,12 Ac 7:22

Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 1:19-31+ For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.” 20 Where is the **wise** man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the **wisdom of the world**? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for **wisdom**; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is **wiser** than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of

the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in **Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God**, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.” 1And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

1 Corinthians 3:19+ For the **wisdom of this world is foolishness before God**. For it is written, “He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS”;

SOLOMON'S SURPASSING WISDOM

Solomon's wisdom ([chokmah](#)) surpassed the wisdom ([chokmah](#)) of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom ([chokmah](#)) of Egypt - See passages above explaining what Solomon's wisdom from God surpassed all earthly wisdom of men. Egypt was well known as a source of ancient wisdom, but of course it was not wisdom from on high. **Solomon's wisdom surpassed** that of all other men not just in quantity but in quality, because his wisdom was from God, not from fallen men!

1 Kings 4:31 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.

- **wiser:** 1Ki 3:12 Mt 12:42 Lu 11:31 Col 2:3
- **Ethan:** 1Ch 15:19 Ps 89:1
- **Heman:** 1Ch 2:6 6:33 15:17 Ps 88:1
- **his fame:** 1Ki 5:7 10:1,6 2Ch 9:23 Mt 4:24

Related Passages:

Psalm 89:1 **A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.** I will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever; To all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth.

Psalm 88:1 A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. For the choir director; according to Mahalath Leannoth. **A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.** O LORD, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You.

1 Chronicles 15:19 So the singers, [Heman](#), Asaph and [Ethan](#) were appointed to sound aloud cymbals of bronze;

1 Chronicles 2:6 The sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara; five of them in all.

SOLOMON'S FAME SPREAD INTERNATIONALLY

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 - Solomon's wisdom was compared here with other men who had wisdom from on high. Solomon's was still greater. [Ethan](#) and Heman are mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:19 as members of David's musical staff assigned to direct sanctuary worship. [Ethan](#) is also probably the man also known as [Jeduthun](#) who wrote Psalms 39 and 89 (1Chr 16:41–42; 1Ch 25:1, 6).

John Woodhouse - The fame of Solomon “in all the surrounding nations” has today spread even to Australia (where I am writing this) where people who know little of the Bible still speak of a difficult decision needing “the wisdom of Solomon.” (I suspect that most Australians who use this phrase have no idea who Solomon was!) (See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 101](#))

1 Kings 4:32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

- Spoke: Pr 1:1-31:30 Ec 12:9 Mt 13:35
- songs: Song 1:1-17

PROLIFIC PROVERB PRODUCER AND SONG WRITER

He also spoke 3,000 proverbs ([mashal](#); Lxx = [parabole](#)) and his songs were 1,005 - There are 600 proverbs with about 915 verses that have been preserved in Proverbs representing about 20% of all of Solomon's proverbs. And of course these writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter writing that "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2Pe 1:21+) The Song of Solomon is one of his songs and along with Ecclesiastes are Solomon's other two Spirit inspired writings. It is also worth noting that we have no record of the "the book of the acts of Solomon" mentioned in 1Ki 11:41. There were other lost writings about Solomon mentioned in 2Ch 9:29 "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat?" These lost writings remind me of John's words concerning Jesus "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book." (John 20:30+).

John Woodhouse - It is more than interesting to note that the Hebrew word for "proverbs" in verse 32 is translated into Greek with the word used in the Gospels of the New Testament for Jesus' "parables." (Heb = [mashal](#); Lxx = [parabole](#)) Just as King Solomon spoke many proverbs, the still greater Son of David spoke many parables (see Matthew 13:3, 34; 22:1; Mark 4:33). Those who heard him were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom?" (Matthew 13:54). He had been filled with wisdom from childhood (Luke 2:40, 52). For those who had eyes to see, in Jesus "something greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42). (See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 101](#))

Proverbs (04912) [mashal 12](#)([mashal](#) [Singular = mashal, Plural = misle] from the verb **mashal** - to rule [e.g., Ge 1:18] or more generally indicates idea of comparison, likeness or equality and thus to speak a proverb or popular saying comparing 2 objects, attitudes or activities -Ps 49:12-note, Ezek 16:44, 18:2, 24:3) usually conveys the meaning of a wise saying (or a pithy maxim which suggest special insight and authority), but in two occurrences of the connotation of **parable** or **allegory** (as defined above) is clearly evident (viz. Ezek 17:2ff = a parable centering on two eagles, Ezek 17:12 representing Babylon and Ezek 17:15 representing Egypt, as well as centering on a vine Ezek 17:6), both in indictments against Israel for her sin. In Nu 23: 7, 18, 24:3ff. **mashal** refers not to a popular or common saying but to Balaam's prophetic oracles (the first 7 uses in Scripture). In Isa 14:4 the context is after Israel's return to the land and the song is one of contempt or taunting (**mashal**) directed at the king of Babylon.

A proverb is a truth expressed in brief and striking words, like "Pride cometh before a fall."

John Phillips noting that the root verb means **to rule** says "**Mashal** therefore are words and sayings that are supposed to rule and govern life. The book of Proverbs then is not simply a collection of bits of human wisdom. It contains God's rules." (Proverbs Commentary)

NET Note on **mashal** - In Pr 1:1 it "means an object lesson setting out courses of action. It helps one choose the course of action to follow or avoid."

William Arnot - It is safer and better to assume that all men know what a proverb is, than to attempt a logical definition of it. As a general rule, the things that are substantially best known are hardest to define.

MASHAL - 40V - **byword(3), discourse(9), parable(3), parables(1), proverb(15), proverbs(6), taunt(2), taunt-song(1)**. Num. 23:7; Num. 23:18; Num. 24:3; Num. 24:15; Num. 24:20; Num. 24:21; Num. 24:23; Deut. 28:37; 1 Sam. 10:12; 1 Sam. 24:13; 1 Ki. 4:32; 1 Ki. 9:7; 2 Chr. 7:20; Job 13:12; Job 27:1; Job 29:1; Ps. 44:14; Ps. 49:4; Ps. 69:11; Ps. 78:2; Prov. 1:1; Prov. 1:6; Prov. 10:1; Prov. 25:1; Prov. 26:7; Prov. 26:9; Eccl. 12:9; Isa. 14:4; Jer. 24:9; Ezek. 12:22; Ezek. 12:23; Ezek. 14:8; Ezek. 17:2; Ezek. 18:2; Ezek. 18:3; Ezek. 20:49; Ezek. 24:3; Joel 2:17; Mic. 2:4; Hab. 2:6

1 Kings 4:33 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.

- **the cedar:** Nu 24:6 2Ki 19:23 Ps 92:12
- **the hyssop:** Ex 12:22 Nu 19:18 Ps 51:7 Heb 9:19
- **of animals:** Ge 1:20-25

SOLOMON WAS A "RENAISSANCE MAN"

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 - The cedar of Lebanon was the greatest of trees, and the hyssop was the smallest, especially when stunted by growing from a wall. David wrote psalms that mentioned plants and creation, whereas Solomon studied it objectively. Ecclesiastes 2:5 says a "I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees;

John Woodhouse -Solomon's wisdom had a great deal to do with understanding God's creation. The range of plants and animals in verse 33 should remind us of Genesis 1. (Of the vocabulary in verse 33, "trees," "beasts," "birds," "reptiles" [or "creeping things"], and "fish" occur repeatedly and prominently in Genesis 1 (see Genesis 1:11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30).) Adam exercised dominion over "every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens" by giving them their names (Genesis 2:19). Solomon mastered the created world with words of wisdom. This is the extraordinary significance of true "wisdom." God's work of creation is a work of his wisdom. God's wisdom is behind all things he has created (see the remarkable personification of God's wisdom in Proverbs 8:22-31; cf. Psalm 104:24). That is why wisdom is needed to rightly understand and live in the world God has made. Such wisdom begins with rightly acknowledging God ("the fear of the Lord," Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). The wisdom God gave Solomon was the power to put things right ("do justice," 3:28) in God's world. (See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 101](#))

1 Kings 4:34 Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

- 1Ki 10:1 2Ch 9:1,23 Isa 2:2 Zec 8:23

Related Passages:

1 Kings 10:1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions.

2 Chronicles 9:1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with difficult questions. She had a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and a large amount of gold and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was on her heart....23 And all the kings of the earth were seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.

Deuteronomy 4:6+ "So keep and do them, for that is **your wisdom and your understanding** in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, '**Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.**'

SOLOMON'S WISDOM WAS WORLDWIDE

Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom- Solomon's great wisdom was ultimately to be a testimony to the great wisdom of God. This testimony leaves one thinking Solomon's kingdom and rule were like a utopia, but as we have seen in chapters 3-4 now all was well in Solomon's heart. Recall the marriage to an Egyptian woman, mention of the persistence of the notorious high places, the mention of his work on his palace before mention of work on God's Temple and his multiplication of horses in direct disobedience to Dt 17:16+. Biblical biographer [Alexander Whyte](#) expressed it vividly when he wrote that "the secret worm ... was gnawing all the time in the royal staff upon which Solomon leaned."

Brueggemann - "This exuberant affirmation of the king would suggest that he is represented and celebrated as the true, judicious, all-knowing manager of all creation. That is, the king is understood as 'the true Adam,' the real human being. And he is treated so in later Israelite development which attributes to him the wisdom materials of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon." (Borrow [Kings, p. 68](#) but be a Berean Acts 17:11+)

John Woodhouse - When we see the wisdom of God in David's greater Son, Jesus, we understand Paul's exclamation: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

(Romans 11:33). The manifold wisdom of God is now being “made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he [foreshadowed in King Solomon and] has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:10, 11). (See [1 Kings: Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World - Page 101](#))