

Questions to consider in interpreting the whole Solomon story (1 Kings 3-11)

- 1) **What is the relationship between these chapters and the David story that precedes it and the rest of 1 Kings that follows it?**
- 2) **When was the story written?**
 - a) At the time of the succession
 - b) At the time of King Hezekiah (8th century BCE) to give a sense of antiquity to the “new” reign and justify Hezekiah’s relationship with the Assyrian monarchy?
 - c) At the time of King Josiah (7th century BCE) to justify Josiah’s “reform”?
 - d) During Exile, as a reflection on monarchy as a whole
 - e) Some combination of the above
- 3) **Can we discern one section from another in terms of time of composition?**
- 4) **How are we to see Solomon’s “empire” of Israel/Judah in relation to other powerful nations?**
 - a) Is Egypt (Solomon marries pharaoh’s daughter, 3.1) an “ally” of Solomon? A colonial overseer? A competitor?
 - b) Is Tyre (King Hiram is deeply involved in the building of the “house of YHWH”) an “ally,” a colonial overseer or a competitor?
 - c) What about the indigenous “Canaanites” of various “nations”?
- 5) **Is the story “pro-Solomon,” “anti-Solomon” or some combination? What criteria should we use in answering this? Consider these options:**
 - a) Taking the narrator’s evaluation at face value
 - b) Comparing Solomon’s reign to other kings in 1-2 Kings (such as Josiah)
 - c) Using 1 Samuel 8
 - d) Using Exodus
 - e) Using Deuteronomy 17
 - f) Using Genesis 2-3
 - g) Using “religion of empire vs. religion of creation” to evaluate monarchy
- 6) **In the end, what is Solomon’s “wisdom”?**
- 7) **Consider what’s *not* narrated: why might these elements be omitted completely?**
 - a) War or military battle of any kind
 - b) Where the wealth to pay for Solomon’s enormous expenses came from
 - c) Solomon’s relationship with his family (brothers, wives, children)
 - d) What Solomon looks like or how old he is