

## SONG OF SOLOMON

David C. F. Wright, PhD

The Song of Solomon has always presented problems. It did so when the Jews were making up the canon of the Old Testament. They had originally decided to include only those writings which spoke of the Messianic hope. The books of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon contained no such hope.

The Song of Songs, as it is also called, revealed even greater difficulties. To this day among some orthodox Jews it is never read publicly unless all the women and children leave first.

The personal and outspoken language of the book has led Christians to ignore such problem passages — at least, in public meetings — and this complicates matters since it produces inaccurate interpretations.

Some Christians consider that this book reflects a picture of Christ and His Bride insisting that there is but one man in the story namely Solomon and that he, in fact, is a type of Christ and that the Shulamite woman is a picture of the church of Christ. Perhaps people who take this view have been brought up on both a traditional and convenient view which ignores passages some consider embarrassing and highly personal. Some may have succumbed to the writings of commentators and footnotes in certain versions of the Bible and may forget that such writings are not inspired Scripture.

The claim that the Shulamite is a picture of the church of Christ is highly doubtful. While the church is foreshadowed prophetically in the Old Testament it is a New Testament concept and reality. That the Shulamite is a picture of the nation of Israel is also doubtful.

The church was born of the Day of Pentecost, but not established until 312 AD, and it could not have existed earlier for Christ had not died, risen again and ascended into Heaven. Some branches of the reformed faith insist that the children of Israel, being the earthly people of God were the church of the Old Testament, and, further, that the Christian church is a “spiritual Israel,” an extension of the Old Testament “church.”

The Greek word for church, ecclesia means “called-out ones” and certainly Israel were called out of Egypt; they had the tabernacle and later the Temple for the public worship of God. But these people were called to Judaism not to Christianity. The anonymous writer to the Hebrews refers to Judaism as the old covenant which has decayed, become old and is about to vanish away (Hebrews 8 verse 13). In Hebrews 10 verse 9 the Lord Jesus says to the Father, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” The passage continues, “He taketh away the first (covenant) in order to establish the second.” In verses 19 and 20 the new covenant is said to be the new way which is by the Blood of Christ. Judaism is done away in Christ.

It is also asserted by some that Solomon is a type of Christ and, further, that his love for the Shulamite is a portrait of Christ’s love for His Body, the Church. It is foolish to compare any man with the incomparable Christ. Who among the sons of men can compare with Him? Any attempts to make such a comparison could possibly rob that Blessed One of His Glory and Reputation. There are untold dangers in typology.

However, there are events in the Old Testament that foreshadow events in the life of Christ to some extent. The story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22 is one example, the faithfulness of Ruth and the kinsman -redeemer context and passages in Isaiah which foretell aspects of the life of Christ and such matters make the Scriptures a unified whole. The difficulty comes when people say that such

and such a person is a type of Christ which, in effect, means that they are of the same character and worth.

Solomon had a bad start. Of course, it was not his fault. He was the child of his father David's adulterous liaison with Bathsheba. To his credit, Solomon initially asked God for an understanding heart and God was pleased. Sadly, he seems to have been wise in everyone's business but his own. He inherited his father's weakness for we read that Solomon loved many strange women (1 Kings 11). Eventually, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines and, let us be clear about it, a concubine was a woman slept with, a mistress. Solomon was a serial adulterer. We read that these women turned Solomon's heart and drew him to their respective gods and to abandon the true God. I have heard brethren refer to Solomon's bed as undefiled.

If Solomon is the author of Ecclesiastes and a contributor to Proverbs, known as the Wisdom books, we can read of his bitter disillusionment with life but can only conclude that he brought it all upon himself. At the time approaching his death, Solomon was plotting the death of a rival. Is that Christlike? His father, David, had also plotted the death of a rival, Uriah, and was even foolish enough to put such instructions in writing to his captain Joab. Solomon did have the Temple built which took seven years but he built a lavish palace for himself which took thirteen years. His power, pride and love for women and the political advantages some such unions provided was his undoing.

While Eastern potentates have harems, and it was acceptable in some ancient cultures, Solomon had no excuse. He was a Jew. He knew the law of God and yet he blatantly violated it. No wonder 1 Kings 11 verse 6 records Solomon as evil and God Himself had to punish him.

You may rightly say that the Bible also records that Solomon initially loved the Lord walking in the statutes of David (1 Kings 3 verse 3) but then we read that David was a man after God's own heart. Thereafter, he sinned grievously. Yes, he did repent and we have the touching Psalm 51 which proves this, although it some time for David to come to his senses. We are not to doubt his sincere repentance but, at the end of his life, he numbered Israel which angered the Lord.

Galatians 5. 7 applies.

Although both men have matters to commend them and were indeed national heroes they were sinners — indeed, gross offenders — and, as such, cannot be types of Christ. How can they be compared to the Lord? Even the Lord Jesus when referring to Himself in Matthew 12 verse 42 said, "A greater than Solomon is here" and in Matthew 6 verse 28 said, "Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not neither do they spin and yet I tell you that Solomon in all his glory was not as glorious as one of these." That is hardly a compliment to Solomon whose life was characterised by prolific adultery, widespread idolatry and evil. The Lord is pure, holy, sinless and undefiled. There is no comparison and it may be of passing interest to note that Solomon is not included among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11.

That Solomon is the only man in the book must be wrong. Note chapter 2 verses 4 and 5. We are in the banqueting hall of Solomon's palace and we read the words of the Shulamite, "His banner over me was love." But she also says, "Stay me with flagons." In other words, "I don't want to drink." She is not in a happy or sociable mood. Indeed, she says "I am sick of love." She did not want to get drunk and be defenceless to Solomon's amorous advances. Some have tried to alter the text by asserting that what she said was "I am sick for love." That is wrong for in verse 6 when Solomon tries to embrace her he has obviously not heeded her words that she would rather eat an apple. At Solomon's side she obviously has no pleasure. In verse 3 she likens her true love to a strong apple tree where she used to sit with this true love with great delight. This is clearly not Solomon's company or environment. In verse 8 her beloved is described as being on the mountains; out in the open air and not in a banqueting hall. And note that her beloved is saying in verse 10, "Rise up, my love and

come away.” This is repeated in verse 13. Clearly her true love is pleading with her to come away from Solomon and join him as he feeds his flocks among the lilies. Remember one lily is more glorious than Solomon.

The passage makes it clear that the Shulamite has no love for Solomon but she loves her shepherd out on the hills. Solomon cannot be a picture of Christ. To say so may be blasphemous.

In chapter 3 verse 2 the woman says, “I will seek or him whom my soul loveth.” In verse 4 she asks the city watchmen if they have seen him. The watchmen would know the whereabouts of the king; they looked out from the city to warn of intruders. Her beloved would come from outside the city walls. He was coming from Bether. Bether means separation or “come away.”

Why should she come away? Because the shepherd is betrothed to the Shulamite (4 verses 8 and 9).

Song of Solomon clearly presents us with two men. Firstly, Solomon who loved a thousand women and the shepherd who loved one. Solomon was unfaithful, a libertine as brethren have said.. The shepherd, however, was faithful. If anyone is a sort of type of Christ in this book it is the shepherd, not Solomon.

This interpretation of Solomon being evil and the Shulamite wanting to escape from the King’s harem to be with her true love, the shepherd, is upheld strongly by many Bible and Hebrew scholars including the Anglican J Stafford Wright, the Plymouth brother Arthur Clarke, the Australian Baptist A E Cundall and Jack B Scott of the Hermitage Theological Seminary in Ontario.

Some Christian groups dismiss it as not being inspired and this is known as antigomera.

It is about sexual love as set out in Hebrews 13. 4 ...the marriage bed is undefiled. I have heard brethren say that Solomon's bed was undefiled.

The woman’s true love is feeding (his flocks) among the lilies (2.16, 6.3). Her true love is leaping over the mountains and skipping in the hills (2.8). That would hardly be Solomon.

If you study the book with care and without prejudice you will notice that all the language which speaks of the facets of the female body are spoken by Solomon. His desire is physical, yes, sexual. God does not refer to His people in sexual terms. The language of the shepherd and the Shulamite is different. For example, “Tell me where is he my soul adores.” This is spiritual love. Our Great Shepherd’s love for us is spiritual.

I have also heard it claimed that Solomon’s glorious reign is a type of Christ’s millennial reign. That is unlikely. Solomon’s reign was wicked and idolatrous. It was one of compromise. He taxed his subjects without mercy to build his lavish palace and caused the schism which divided the kingdom. Christ’s reign will be righteous and pure.

In chapter 3 verses 9 to 16 the woman describes her shepherd to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is a respectable name for the harem. Surely she would not be describing the king to them for they — or, at least, some of them — would know what Solomon looked like.

So what is the story behind this book?

The Shulamite has been abducted, or willingly joined Solomon’s harem. It was thought a great privilege for any girl to be desired by the king. And this girl was probably different in that she had black skin. For her to be chosen was really something! But in the harem she probably realises the awful mistake she has made and her sinful state. Being in the harem is a picture of sin. The owner of

the harem was the king who had violated the laws of God. In chapter 8 verse 11 Solomon is said to have a vineyard at Baalhimon. Baal was one of the heathen fertility gods. In the next verse, the girl says she has not kept her own vineyard which is before her and then refers to Solomon's thousand vineyards. But he also has one at Baalhimon. In Jewish tradition women were often likened to vineyards and children the fruit of them. Solomon had a thousand women.

The Shulamite bewails her own body, her vineyard and how she has betrayed her shepherd. No wonder the book ends with her plea to the shepherd to come and rescue her.

Does this not speak of the need of repentance today? Does not the Good Shepherd bid sinners come away? To leave the banqueting halls of pleasure, sin and lust? In Solomon's presence, the Shulamite was distressed and continued to be so until she was found by her shepherd.

The prodigal son is another obvious comparison.

The lesson of this book is the same as that of Hosea. Hosea married Gomer who bare him a son, Jezreel. Then she had two other children which were not her husbands. She leaves home, worships false gods and falls into ruin. God, in His mercy, instructs Hosea to redeem and rescue Gomer and she is restored. This is what God wants to do for Israel and for Christians who have backslidden.

The Jews were right. The Song of Solomon (or the song about Solomon) may be a picture of God's love for Israel imploring them to leave the "harem of sin" and come away and return to Him.

I wish to repeat that I have heard it said that Solomon's reign is a picture of Christ's millennial reign. Solomon's reign was disastrous with the taxes he imposed on the people to pay for the building of his own palace and this was this and Solomon's greed and mismanagement that cause the schism and the dividing of Israel into two separate kingdoms.

As we have also said, there may be very faint outlines in the life of Solomon that foreshadow events in the life of the Lord Jesus but the Lord referred to Himself when He said, "A greater than Solomon is here!"

No one can compare with the Lord Jesus or God as Isaiah points out and therefore such comparisons are odious. (Isaiah 40. 18; 46.5)

Yet we can say of the Lord, "My beloved is mine and I am His." and, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand." The Shulamite did not say that of Solomon but of her shepherd as we can of Our Good Shepherd.

(2473)

(This is the unedited text of a recorded address given at the Gospel Hall, Shanklin in March 1983)

## **GREATER THAN SOLOMON**

John Griffiths

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I can never understand why some brethren praise and elevate Solomon and even go as far as to say that he is a type of Christ. I have even heard brethren say that his marriage bed was undefiled.

One must be fair and state that there are many who certainly do not regard Solomon as the equivalent of the Lord Jesus but the general use of 'types' or typology does more than imply this.

The accepted definition in Biblical terms is as follows. Someone who is a type of Christ is a person in the Old Testament who behaves in ways that correspond to the character of the Lord Jesus.

Twice the Lord Jesus comments about Solomon. He speaks of his opulence and magnificence and glory.

J B Watson writes of ' the gleam of his much wrought gold, the smooth whiteness of his ivory palaces, the rich apparel of his servants, his towers that shimmer in the sun, the gifts from afar brought by those who did him honour, his chambers associated with the spices of India, his multitude of chariots and horses and all the pomp and splendour of his court.'

Yet all his glory could not compare with the glory of a wild, wayside Palestinian lily which was a weed. The Lord said that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Matthew 6.29. Luke 12.27)

The Lord speaks of Solomon's glory and, in particular, of his wisdom for ' all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put into his heart.' The Queen of Sheba concluded, 'the half was not told me ; thy wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard.'

Yet the Lord said of Himself, ' a greater than Solomon is here!' (Matthew 12.42. Luke 11.31)

The Lord is greater than Solomon in every way.

As we have seen, typology is understood to be the comparison of Old Testament characters with the Lord Jesus and such characters are said to be of the same excellent character and goodness as the Lord. Abraham is said to be a type of Christ as is Joseph and Moses etc. Abraham may be the most obvious example since he was prepared to offer his son as a sacrifice just as God was prepared to give up His Son, but these are foreshadowing of similar events to happen later but we cannot say that Abraham, although was described as a friend of God, was not of the same faultless character as the Lord Jesus. Who could be?

Both Solomon and the Lord Jesus were named by God before their birth.

David was told, 'Behold a son shall be born to thee who shall be a man of rest... for his name shall be Solomon and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days ' (1 Chronicles 22. 9).

Of Christ we read, 'And shall His name Immanuel.' Isaiah 7.14 Matthew 1.23. And His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And thou shall call His name, Jesus Matthew 1.21

Solomon's name means peaceable and the Lord Jesus is the prince of peace.

Nehemiah refers to Solomon as 'beloved of God and God has made him king over all Israel.' Nehemiah. 13.26. The name of his father David means beloved.

The Lord Jesus is God's beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. Colossians refers to Him as the Son of God's love.

What is obvious is that these names fit Messiah infinitely better than they did Solomon.

One of his first fatal mistake was the marry the daughter of a heathen king (1 Kings 3.1).

Solomon chastened his people with whips (1 Kings 12. 11), loved many foreign women and built temples or places of worship to their pagan gods(1 Kings 11 1-8). He did evil in the sight of the Lord and was, therefore, apostate (1 Kings 11 verses 9-13). He built a temple to the pagan god Chemosh opposite the Temple to the true God. These appalling sins cannot be said of the sinless and perfect Son of God. He and the Christ are not of the same excellence. They did not, nor do they, behave in the same way. Solomon is a rogue and a serial idolator.

The prophet Nathan refers to Solomon as David's son. Matthew refers to the Lord Jesus as the Son of David. This is David's greater son and it is not Solomon. But the Lord who is the Eternal Word of God became flesh, became a person and was God the Father's beloved Son.

To Solomon was granted the privilege of overseeing the building of the Temple.

It was not granted to David because his hands were stained with the blood of warfare. It has been calculated in today's money that the cost of building the Temple would have been £112 billion. Solomon's temple took seven years to build but His own palace took 13 years! Herod's temple took 46 years to build.

The church in this dispensation in Ephesians 2.21 is called a temple. The stones of Solomon's temple were prepared off-site but Christ is building a spiritual temple of living stones, men and women taken out of the quarry of this world, converted to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. A spiritual organism is not a material edifice.

Solomon may have basked in the glory of his temple for 36 years but Christ's glory in His temple is for eternity and His living stones were purchased with His precious blood and His love for mankind. You cannot put a price on that!

In the millennium there will be a physical Temple in Jerusalem. Some brethren have said that the model of this new Temple will based on Solomon's design but that is speculation. But He, whose name is the Branch, shall build the Temple of the Lord (Zechariah 6.12)

Solomon also put Gentiles to work on his Temple and numbered all the strangers in Israel who were labourers. They were flogged and treated abominably and Solomon raised taxes to pay for all his building work making the people poor and their struggling to survive. And people say he is comparable with Christ and a type of Christ whose behaviour tallies with the same behaviour as the Lord! I have heard people say this and preach it in ministry!

The millennium Temple referred to in Ezekiel 40-44 will be built with Gentile help. And they that are afar off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord

(Zechariah 6.15). Whatever glory Solomon had in his forty year reign will be nothing like the tremendous glory in the 1,000 year reign of Christ. And He shall bear the glory and sit and rule upon His throne (Zechariah 6.13). What glory! What a reign! What a duration!

Solomon was a king and his dealings with his people lead to the splitting of the kingdom of Israel into two separate kingdoms namely Israel with its capital of Samaria and Judah with its capital of Jerusalem. But Christ alone has the designation of king and priest. He is the King-Priest.

The millennium Temple will know the literal and physical presence of the Son of God. Not then the Shekinah glory, but the glory of the Son of God.

When one reads the evidence of Solomon's true and deplorable character in the Scriptures, one cannot possibly read the Song of Solomon and say that he typifies Christ and His love for His bride, or that Solomon typifies God and His love for Israel.

It must also be noted that Solomon is excluded from the so-called hall of fame which is Hebrews 11 and it is quite clear that the Lord did not have a high opinion of him.

Do you think that the Lord would wish to be compared with Solomon?

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### **FURTHER EVIDENCE**

David C F Wright PhD

Since writing this essay on the Song of Solomon, I have studied Solomon in more detail.

The Song of Solomon has received more confusion than any other book in the Bible.

An Old Testament authority, R K Harrison, has written, 'It has almost unlimited ground for speculation. The Bible's usual piety, preachments and prayers are totally absent, as is God, except for in chapter 8 verse 6 in some translations.' Yet 'acceptable' readings from the Song are chosen for Judaism's Passover liturgy and some excerpts are used by Catholics in the Feast of Mary Magdalene.

Other Old Testament authorities such as J Stafford Wright, A E Cundall and John Bright believe that the woman wanted to escape the lecherous Solomon and be reunited with her Beloved Shepherd out in the fields and in the countryside. Chapter 3 verse 1 speaks of her as she is laid upon her bed wondering where her beloved was. She looked for him but did not find him. Everybody in Jerusalem would know the whereabouts of Solomon.

It is the most controversial book in the Bible yet it is a book obviously of erotic poetry which to the honourable believer may be somewhat distasteful. However, it deals with the sacredness of marriage and the intimacy that goes with it. The anonymous writer to the Hebrews states that the marriage bed is undefiled (Hebrews 13.4)

The New Bible Commentary writes, It must be taken for what it is, namely the righteousness and value of married life.

Was it written by Solomon? Some say it was written by a woman or parts of it were for a woman says, 'My breasts...' (chapter 8.10)

If written by Solomon, we must again recall what the Bible says of him.

And Solomon loved the Lord except that he sacrificed and burnt incense at the high places 1 Kings 3.3.

Deuteronomy 17 commanded that no king is to multiply women for himself. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, that is to say mistresses, and his wives turned away his heart. What does any man want with a thousand sexual partners? It obviously was not genuine love, but lust. God's love for Israel or Christ's love for the church is not lust.

Solomon loved many foreign women. The Lord had said, You shall not have intimacy with them for they will turn away your heart to seek other gods. 1 Kings 11. 1 and 2.

While Nehemiah speaks of Solomon's good start he also says, Did not Solomon sin by these things? Nehemiah 11.26.

Solomon was in blatant opposition to the commandment, Ye shall have no other gods before me Exodus 29 3-5.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. He did evil in the sight of the Lord. He built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab and for Moloch the abomination of Ammon and he did likewise for all his foreign wives and sacrificed to their gods 1 Kings 11 5-6. Because of all his despicable sins the kingdom would be divided 1 Kings 11.33.

Ashtoreth was the Philistines goddess of love and war. The worship of her had immoral rites and, in the time of Saul, the Philistines had a temple to her. Milcom is thought to be another name for Moloch and Solomon sacrificed to him and the worship of Moloch was to make children walk through fire and perish. How could Solomon support this?

One has to say that Solomon was a really hateful man. God had to raise up an adversary to punish him.

Chemosh is thought to be another name for Ashtoreth or someone similar.

Solomon turned away from the Lord. He stopped trusting in Him (Proverbs 3.5) and entered the path of the wicked and walked in the ways of evil (Proverbs 4.14).

A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead (Proverbs 21.16). Think about this and how it affects Solomon. What is his eternal state?

Consider Ezekiel 18. 24, ' But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and commits iniquity and doeth according to the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; to his trespass that he hath trespassed and in the sin that he sinned, in them shall he die.' The following verses emphasise this.

Many scholars point out that there is no record of any repentance with Solomon and, because of this and his appalling sin of idolatry and his intimacy with foreign women he is condemned as evil.

But the Song is clearly erotica and I cannot see how it is a picture of God, or Christ, or of love for Israel or Christ's love His bride, the church. It is sexually explicit. There are references to women's breasts three times in chapter 8 and in 7. 1 a reference to her thighs and, later, to her belly.

Many evangelicals in the last 200 years or so have taken this book to be a picture of Divine love for Israel and/or the church. How does one therefore translate breasts, thighs and bellies in relation to

Israël and/or the church? I do not know who invented these interpretations, but it seems to have been so invented to make a spiritual message out of married love and intimacy.

What about the verse in the final chapter, We have a little sister who has no breasts?

Some evangelicals are adamant that their interpretation is right in that it is about Divine love for Israel and/or the church and argue quite vehemently and will not let the matter rest.

John Nelson Darby and William Kelly, two highly respected brethren writers take the view that Solomon typifies Divine love for Israel or the church but they offer no explanation as to why they believe this.

If you study the history of what the Jews thought about the Song of Solomon you will discover that from the earliest times they accepted that it was about sexual love and not spiritual love. They found its language to be most embarrassing and the sexual descriptions too lucid.

People in the West cannot judge the book from their non-Jewish point of view but that being so, it still is regarded by Jews as not being an allegorization. There is no allegorization in the earliest periods of history. It is only in the last two centuries that a predominant method of interpretation is that it is a picture of God's love for Israel or Christ's love for the church.

The Jews were worried that this Canticle was in the Bible, but a very small few have suggested that the Septuagint hints at God's love for His own in this book but that does not explain the embarrassing language or change the fact that it is about married love and intimacy. In all Jewish writings there are rare occasions when it suggests God's love for His own but without any credence.

It is clear that Solomon, whom the Bible calls evil, is a picture of sin and the woman's beloved is the shepherd calling her to come away. It is the same as Hosea who is told to rescue his unfaithful wife now in the throes of sin to be come away from other gods, drinking and playing the harlot and live with her husband who loves her (Hosea 3).

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## **SOLOMON**

John Bright

Professor John Bright's book, A History of Israel, is arguably the finest and most detailed account of the subject of the history of Israel and we set out below extracts from his exposition of Solomon.

He makes the point that few people are more difficult to evaluate than Solomon. His father, David, had promised Bethsheba that their son would be king. Solomon was a man of some astuteness to promote himself and he certainly wanted the empire which his father had established. But in other cases, Solomon was blind and utterly stupid and hastened the empire to complete disintegration. It is all very well saying that God chose Solomon to build the Temple but that says nothing for Solomon. The Lord Jesus called Judas Iscariot.

Solomon was no warrior and simply sought to make a name for himself. He was a proud man and God resists the proud.

As soon as David died, Solomon moved swiftly and committed the murders of Adonijah, Joab and Shimei. The sanctuary of fleeing to the altar was violated.

And so Solomon was proud and haughty as well as being a murderer and how anyone could say that he is a type of Christ is blasphemous and offensive and drags the Lord Jesus through the dirt.

Solomon's foreign policy was not of any moral or spiritual purpose but to maintain amicable relationships externally, especially with his own vassals which he considered to be judicious alliances. Many of these alliances were sealed by marriage to numerous foreign noblewomen who he brought into his harem; the crown prince was his child and the offspring of one such woman. One of his wives was the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt which nation has always been Israel's enemy.

Let us be honest about this harem. A harem was made up of wives and concubines, that is to say mistresses. Solomon was keeping women for sex and the Shulamite woman in the Song of Solomon was one such mistress or intended mistress.

His most famous alliance was with Tyre in matters of trade and industry. Solomon was very good at commercial ventures simply because it made him money.

The visit of the Queen of Sheba established Solomon's caravan trade with Arabia and Solomon controlled the routes. It brought in much revenue. He also developed the copper industry. These commercial ventures were money-making schemes.

And it should be remembered that Arabs have always been enemies of the Jews!

Solomon's reign has been described as Israel's Golden Age and it is further said that his reign predicts the glorious millennial reign of Christ on earth.

The temple took about seven years to build and Solomon's palace took twice as long and so you can draw your own conclusions from this.

But while we may promote the Golden Age, the Bible makes it clear that it was not all gold. It may have brought wealth to many but to many others it was slavery. The costs of the lavish buildings outran income. 1 Kings 9 indicates that there were 550 supervisors over the labour force. And so, Solomon put heavy taxation on his people and in his chronic financial difficulties he resorted to the hated corvee which means days without or little pay.

Solomon maintained security for Israel and built up a military establishment to discourage aggression, developing chariots and he had stalls for 4,000 horses. There were 12,000 men to man the chariots. There were facilities for 450 horses found at Megiddo. He had trouble with Edom (1 Kings 11. 14ff) after God had denounced Solomon as evil. He had trouble with Syria, over which he ruled and controlled the trade routes. Then Rezon made himself king in Damascus (1 Kings 11.23ff) although Rezon seems have been brought to terms. But, again, these troubles came after Solomon was charged by God for being evil. In common parlance he was a nasty man!

The unfair and heavy taxes Solomon put on his people resulting in his organizing the land into twelve districts each with a governor to report to the Crown (1 Kings 4.7ff) and this was to produce more revenue for Solomon's expensive projects which put an unacceptable strain on the people. He also amalgamated Canaanite districts into his schemes. The corvee resulted in resentment and a thorough dislike for Solomon. There was also conscription for military service which was manual labour not

soldiering. People in the military service can be court martialled. Some preached the divine right of kings while most found this intolerable under evil Solomon. There was no theological basis for what Solomon did. The divine right of kings was considered a cult and a royal cult with Solomon at the head. It was an open rebellion against God.

It has been said that a cult can be the acceptance that aspects of Solomon's life as pictures of Christ and/or God

How then can we say that Solomon is a picture of Christ or a picture of God Himself? The Lord Jesus loves His own, the church — Solomon did not love his people since he treated them badly. God loves His people with an everlasting love. Solomon did not!

Solomon also built temples to pagan gods and worshipped them! The Bible is right when it calls him evil! He was a murderer, an arrogant despot, a womaniser, cruel and an idolator and destroyed the kingdom of Israel! Do you think that God approved of him?

When Solomon died the kingdom was divided and that was down to Solomon! As we have said, Solomon was often utterly stupid!

The question is asked, Why is the Song of Solomon in the Bible?

It is clearly understood if it is accepted that there are three main characters in the book namely Solomon, the Shulamite woman and the Shepherd out on the hills calling her to come away. Solomon, the serial womaniser, has a thousand women and the Shulamite has been acquired for his harem. She refuses the wine he offers her and later she asks the watchman on the city walls, Why is he my soul adores? This cannot refer to Solomon for his whereabouts would be known. She speaks of her beloved out on the hills tending his sheep. That could not be Solomon. And he was no shepherd.

It is a book of redemption. The woman has fallen into sin, or been enticed into it, and wants to get away to be with her beloved. The book distinguishes between love and sex. If anyone in this canticle is a portrait of Christ, it is the Shepherd.

There are some evangelical churches and colleges in the USA who write that Solomon is in hell. I cannot acquiesce to that but the Lord referred to the lilies of the field, which were weeds, and said that Solomon in all his glory was not as beautiful as one of these weeds. The Lord did not extol Solomon who is not in the 'hall of fame' of Hebrews 11.

How can Solomon be likened in any way to the Lord Jesus or to God?

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