

# Frequently Asked Questions About the Old Testament

## SESSION 15 – 1 KINGS 1–11

---

### **Why did Zadok the priest anoint Solomon king rather than Nathan the prophet (1:36)?**

Kings chosen by God to rule over his people who were not in a line of dynastic succession were anointed by prophets (Saul, 1 Samuel 9:16; David, 1 Samuel 16:12; Jehu, 2 Kings 9). Kings who assumed office in the line of dynastic succession were anointed by priests (Solomon, here; Joash, 2 Kings 11:12).

*–NIV Bible Study Notes*

### **Why did Adonijah take “hold of the horns of the altar (1:50)?**

The horns of the altar were vertical projections at each corner. The idea of seeking asylum at the altar was rooted in the Pentateuch (see Exodus 21:13–14). The priest smeared the blood of the sacrifice on the horns of the altar (see Exodus 29:12; Leviticus 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34) during the sacrificial ritual. Adonijah thus seeks to place his own destiny under the protection of God.

*–NIV Bible Study Notes*

### **Does God always prosper his people when they obey (1 Kings 2:3)?**

Imagine you have two teenaged children. The older son does what you desire out of love for you; the younger son, whenever he obeys you, comes around asking for money. Which one loves you, and which one loves what you give him? You desire both to obey you, and you desire to bless and give good things to both. But if one of your children ever becomes demanding or insists, “Hey, it’s your job to give to me” good things!” such language would reveal what the relationship and obedience was really all about. God wants his children to obey, and yes, he will

often bless them tangibly. But the Son he loved more than any other—Jesus Christ—*suffered*, and was not spared rejection, humiliation, or physical pain. The “blessings” of obedience Jesus experienced are a clue to what we as his followers can expect: sometimes they will be temporal, but even when they are absent, God is present. He alone—not prosperity—is our greatest reward.

—Don Porter

## **Why did God wait so long to remove the house of Eli from the priesthood? (1 Kings 2:27)?**

Perhaps the Lord allowed another generation of Eli’s descendants to serve as priests to show how contempt for God can be passed from generation to generation. God had told Eli that his house would be cut off from the priesthood because of his sons’ evil behavior. The same disrespect shown by Eli’s sons later became evident in Abiathar’s contempt for Solomon (1 Samuel 2:30–35).

—*The Quest Study Bible*

## **Why did Solomon marry a foreigner (1 Kings 3:1)?**

Sometimes a king would marry another king’s daughter as a way of guaranteeing the peace. Most of Solomon’s 700 marriages were political in nature. However expedient the practice may have been politically, Moses made it clear that the kings of Israel were not to multiply wives for themselves (Deuteronomy 17:17). Solomon’s many wives eventually led to his downfall.

—*The Quest Study Bible*

## **What was wrong with worshiping at the high places (3:3)?**

From earliest times people have tended to choose high places for their worship, whether of the true God or of the false gods that man has invented. The worshipers chose an exposed site where the “god” was likely to see what they were doing and to perform there some act comparable to what they wished their god to do for them. In Canaan the high places had become the scenes of orgies and human sacrifice connected with the idolatrous worship of these imaginary gods; and so when Israel entered the Promised Land they were told to destroy all high places (Numbers 33:52). Israel’s failure to destroy them resulted in idolatry.

—*NIV Bible Dictionary*

## **Why did Solomon spend more time building his own house than God's house (6:38)?**

The contrast between the times taken to build the temple and the king's palace may be a subtle criticism of Solomon's priorities. A similar confusion of priorities is seen in Haggai chapter 1, as God's people were busy "paneling" their own houses while the house of the Lord remained in ruins. We all struggle with maintaining godly priorities when the world and our own fallen nature encourage us to seek first to meet our own needs and desires.

–Don Porter

## **Is God responsible to "turn our hearts to him" (1 Kings 8:58)?**

People need God's help to make the right decisions. In fact, though God gives individuals a free will, none could exercise that free will unless God extended his grace. The fall left humankind trapped by sin, which distorts our thinking and decision-making process. That's why God takes the first step to turn our hearts to himself. But we must respond. Sadly, many ignore God's overtures to them.

–*The Quest Study Bible*

## **It seems that Solomon deceived Hiram and so dishonored God (9:11–14). Is this the case?**

It is not clear from these verses whether Solomon gave these towns to Hiram, or whether they were collateral until he could repay Hiram for the gold he had borrowed. Second Chronicles 8:1,2 implies that the towns were returned to Solomon. In either case, Hiram probably preferred a piece of land on the coast more suitable for trade (the name he gave these cities). In the end, Hiram was repaid many times over through his trade partnerships with Solomon (2 Chronicles 9:10, 21). Because Phoenicia was on friendly terms with Israel and dependent on it for grain and oil, Hiram's relationship with Solomon was more important than a feud over some cities.

–NIV Application Bible

## **Despite 1 Kings 9:22, didn't Solomon impose forced labor on Israelite citizens?**

In light of 1 Kings 9:22 it appears as if God treated them (the Israelite citizens) as free men, as citizens of honorable standing. Yet earlier, in 1 Kings 5:13, it is stated that “King Solomon levied forced laborers (literally, ‘raised a levy of forced labor’) from all Israel; and the forced laborers [*hammas*] numbered 30,000 men” (NASB). It is a fair assumption also that the thirty thousand Israelites who participated in the felling and processing of building materials for the temple were specially selected for their experience and skill along these lines, and that they considered it a privilege to have a part in this work for God. Hence there is no real contradiction between the two statements (5:13 and 9:22).

–*The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*

## **Why did Solomon’s wisdom and insight fail him in the end (1 Kings 11:4–8)?**

The possession of wisdom does not guarantee that it will be used. By the end of his life, Solomon had broken most of the proverbs he had written. If wisdom is the application of knowledge, then obedience is the application of wisdom. Solomon’s wisdom did not fail him; he failed to follow it.

–*The Quest Study Bible*

## **In the light of his dealings with Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah, how could David be regarded by the Lord as a servant whose heart was “perfect” before Him (1 Kings 11:4)?**

Even before David became king of Israel, he had committed several sins and offenses to his discredit. His affair with Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, and the subsequent cover-up were by no means the only shameful blots on his record, even though they are doubtless the best known. From these considerations it is quite apparent that David did not gain God’s favor or approval because of a sinless life. Although his conduct was for the most part exemplary and his courage and ability as a leader beyond comparison, it was not because of these things that he especially pleased God. It was rather because of this tremendous faith in the power and grace of God that his heart was adjudged to be *salem* (“fully devoted”) with Yahweh his God (1 Kings 11:4; 15:3). The adjective *salem* basically means “complete, whole, sound, finished” or even “at peace with [*im*] someone.” That is, David’s heart was all there for God, and God was his very reason for living. Many of his psalms eloquently express his deep attachment to the Lord, his joy in fellowship with God, and his complete trust in His redeeming power.

## **Did Solomon believe in false gods or merely accommodate his wives' beliefs (1 Kings 11:5ff)?**

Solomon's construction of shrines to foreign gods was no mere political gesture. Solomon participated in the worship of his wives' gods, which might have included shrine prostitution and child sacrifice. As his intimacy with his wives grew, so did his compulsion to honor their gods.

*–The Quest Study Bible*