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Historical Details Related to First Kings 9:10 to 11:43



As Paul House discusses in his commentary on **First and Second Kings**, certain foreign, domestic, economic, and religious factors changed during **Solomon's** last sixteen years. First, **Isra'el's** relationship with **Egypt** deteriorated over time. Though **9:16** states that the Pharaoh, possibly Siamun, conquered Gezer and **gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife,** by **11:14-25** a new pharaoh, possibly Shishak, supported **Solomon's** enemies. Unlike **his** immediate predecessor, Shishak was able to unite **Egypt** and then mount aggressive campaigns against neighboring countries. Eventually Shishak invaded Jerusalem itself during the reign of **Rehoboam**, **Solomon's son** (**to see link click Dc – A House Divided**). Similarly, **Solomon's** influence in Syria was weakened when **Rezon** seized control of **Damascus (First Kings 11:23-25)** and when **Hadad** became king of **Edom (First Kings 11:14-22)**. Probably **Razon's** power threatened **Isra'el** more than **Hadad's**. Still, coupled with **Egypt's** new attitude, **Edom** and **Syrian's** rebellions presented **Solomon** with foes on all sides.

Domestic tensions grew as well. The northern tribes began to feel that they were shouldering more than their fair share of the tax and conscripted labor burden. They perhaps felt that **Judah** received special treatment for being **David's** clan. This fits with the north's complaints after **Solomon's** death **(First Kings 12:1-4)**. Probably not even **Judah** appreciated the taxes that all **Solomon's** building projects required **(First Kings 4:1-28)**. **Jeroboam**, a young and vigorous opponent, arose as an alternative to the house of **Solomon (First Kings 11:26-28).** Because of **Solomon's** spiritual idolatry, **Ha'Shem** supported **Jeroboam's** rise to power, as did Shishak of **Egypt**, though for less religious reasons **(First Kings 11:29-40)**.

Despite such complications, however, **Solomon** was able to maintain order, mostly because of **his** economic prowess. **Isra'el** enjoyed prosperity for most of these years because of **Solomon's** ability to utilize the trade potential that remained at **his** disposal. For instance, **he** sustained **his** shipping partnership with **Hiram** of **Tyre**. **Solomon** built the ships, but **Hiram's** men commanded and sailed them **(1 Kgs 9:26-28)**. This arrangement must have benefited **Hiram**, since **he** continued the relationship even after **he** felt **Solomon's** payment of several Gililean towns was worthless **(1 Kings 9:10-14)**. **Solomon** also strengthened **his** caravan trade by improving relations with **the queen of Sheva**, a nation that had come to dominate the trade in spice and incense for which southwestern Arabia was famous. Since **Solomon** controlled part of the land route and had shipping interests as well, it was in **the queen's** best interest to pay **Isra'el's king** a visit. All these financial ventures bought **Solomon** peace at home, as the presence of luxury items often does **(1 Kings 10:14-29)**.

All of these details contribute to the author's accurate historical portrait of **Solomon's** final years in power. However, as in the whole book, the major problem is **Solomon's** spiritual apostasy to **ADONAI**. In this regard, **he** was a tragic figure. Unlike **his father David**, **Solomon** worshiped **other gods**, in particular those of **his** many **wives** (see **Bx – Solomon's Wives**). This decision violated both the Mosaic and Davidic Covenants and left **Solomon** open to the discipline implicit in them. Earlier **the prophet Nathan** helped **Solomon** become **king** (see **Al – A Royal Conspiracy**). Now **a prophet** named **Ahijah** will prophesy the end of the Davidic dynasty's exclusive rule over **Isra'el** (see **Bz – The Prophecy of Ahijah**). **Solomon's** dynasty could have weathered foreign, domestic, and economic challenges, but idolatry was the last straw, so to speak. For **whoever chooses to be the world's friend makes himself an enemy of God (James 4:4).** How could the dynasty survive?[205]