



#### Biblical works mentioning Solomon at the outset - Book of Proverbs

- 1. Did Solomon write the book of Proverbs?
   Some of the language and the ideas are much later than the period when Solomon lived (10th Century BCE).
- Other parts, paradoxically, state verbatim the words of older sayings from Egypt (Amenemope).
- 2. Does the superscription of Proverbs say that Solomon wrote it?
   Proverbs מְשִלִּי שִׁלְמָה (Proverbs of Solomon' (Proverbs 1.1).
   Very little within the book about Solomon.
   But it has a regal patitacrical feel to it.
   So the answer is probably yes.



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# Biblical works mentioning Solomon at the outset – the Book of Ecclesiastes

- > 1. Did Solomon write the book of Ecclesiastes?
- The language throughout the book is late Biblical Hebrew.
- Answer clearly no.
- > 2. Does the superscription of Ecclesiastes say that Solomon wrote it?
- Ecclesiastes דָּבְרִי מֶּלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: 'The words of Kohelet, son of David, king in Jerusalem' (Ecclesiastes 1.1).
- Offen written in first person at one point describing scenes in Solomon's life.
- Answer probably yes.

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# Biblical works mentioning Solomon at the outset – the Song of Songs

- Did Solomon write the Song of Songs?
   As with the other books, the language is much later than the reign of Solomon indicating that he could not have written it.

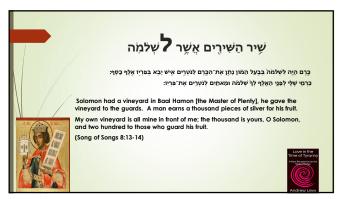
  Answer clearly no.
- 2. Does the superscription of the Song of Songs say that Solomon wrote it?
  The Song of Songs has a different form of superscription.
  מוֹל איני מאינים איני מאינים איני האינים אינים אינים



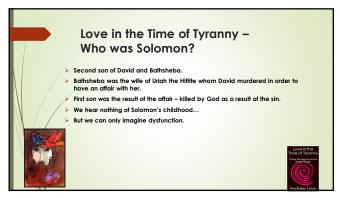














## Love in the Time of Tyranny – Who was Solomon?

- Both Solomon and Bathsheba disappear from the David narrative until close to David's death.
- Solomon is not the eldest son of David; Adonijah is older than he is.
- > Adonijah seeks to claim the throne publicly.
- Bathsheba (Solomon's mother but not Adonijah's) in league with Nathan the prophet contrives to get David to proclaim Solomon king with him so that he can rule by himself after David's death.
- Solomon is proclaimed king while David is alive.
- Once David dies, Solomon loses little time in getting rid of David's enemies and his own (Adonijah).



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## Love in the Time of Tyranny – Who was Solomon?

- So we know from being a silent youth, Solomon has developed into the ruthlessness needed to survive.
- Yet is this really the same Solomon who is known for his wisdom?
- Yes it is the context for the wisdom which Solomon shows.
- > Wisdom as judge (the two women claiming to be the mother of the child)
- Wisdom as knowledge 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs.
- But there was one other thing for which Solomon is just as well known positively...
- He is lauded for having built the temple.



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# Love in the Time of Tyranny – Solomon's Temple

- > The temple is seen as the crowning glory of Solomon's reign.
- > But the temple was only part of a greater building project.
- Solomon built a palace as well as building a temple.
- > Yet the way they were built indicates exploitation and aggrandisement.





## Love in the Time of Tyranny Solomon's Temple - Exploitation

- Solomon imposed a מָס ('Mas') on Israel.
- > What is a pa?
- Modern Hebrew 'tax', 'levy'.
- Here it is forced labour. It is the same word which is used to describe the oppression of the Israelites before Pharaoh.
- יַּשְׁימוּ עָלִיוֹ שְׁרְ (מִפִּים ֻּלְּמְעוֹ עַנְּתוֹ בְּסבֹּתְם וְיִּכֵּן עָרִי מִסְכֵּנוֹת לְפֵּרְעָה אַת־פִּתם וְאַת־רְעמִסִּכּ: So they set masters of forced labour over them to oppress them with their burdens, and they built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses. (Exodus 1:11)
- "It all reminds one of the days of slavery in Egypt. Except that this time the people do not need to return to Egypt; Egypt comes to them" (Micha Goodman).



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# Love in the Time of Tyranny – Solomon's Temple - Aggrandisement

- > Temple took seven years to build it is described in great detail.
- Yet Solomon's palace took thirteen years to build and was more than four times the size.
- The forced labour brought the cedar wood and cypresses which were used to build both the temple and the palace.
- The forced labour workers went to Lebanon to cut down the wood which was brought by sea and then taken up to Jerusalem.



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#### Love in the Time of Tyranny – Solomon and women

- > The Queen of Sheba arrives astounded by his wisdom and brings spices.
- > Solomon had 'a thousand wives'.
- The Bible only says he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.
- > This is seen as his major fault.
- Yet we can also see the aggrandisement in building the temple and palace.
- To sum up...





## Love in the Time of Tyranny -Summary of who Solomon is

- Second son (first dies as a result of murder/adultery of David).
- Dysfunctional upbringing.
- His mother, Bathsheba, is the power behind his becoming king.
- The Solomon portrayed has great wisdom and great wealth.
- He demonstrates the wisdom by judging between the two mothers.
- He demonstrates wealth by acting tyrannically in building the smaller temple and larger palace tyrannically because he exploits his people in the way Pharaoh had done in Egypt.
- The Queen of Sheba, on hearing of his wisdom, brings him gifts including spices.
- He had 'a thousand wives'.



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# Love in the Time of Tyranny -Solomon – link to the Song of Songs

So how does this link to the Song of Songs?

קֹרְוֹת בָּתַּינוֹ אֶרְזִים רחיטנו [רְהִיטֵנוּ] בְּרוֹתִים:

The beams of our houses are cedars, our rafters are cypresses.

#### The lovers are outside describing their 'houses' in nature.

- They have chosen trees which are not native and cannot grow in the Jerusalem area where they have their idyll.
- Cedar trees can only grow above 1,000 metres above sea level (i.e. only in Lebanon in the Middle East).
- These are the trees which were used to build Solomon's temple and palace.



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# Love in the Time of Tyranny -Solomon – link to the Song of Songs

- The poem could have been written originally in Lebanon.
- But it was used in this poem in a way which linked it to the temple.
- So it was appropriated by the author of the Song of Songs to describe the two lovers.
- Their 'houses' are natural. Solomon's are constructed.
- > A subtle, yet clear, jibe at Solomon.





