



# The Conditions of a Consecrated Life (1 Kings 9)

Notes: Week Seven

## New American Commentary<sup>1</sup>

### 5. God's Second Appearance to Solomon [9:1-9](#)

This episode provides a conclusion for the book's account of the first twenty years of Solomon's reign (cf. [9:10](#)). God's initial appearance to Solomon occurs after his rise to power yet before he actually begins his work as king. That theophany, or divine self-revelation, indicated God's pleasure with Solomon's request for wisdom. Similarly, this second appearance expresses the Lord's satisfaction with the king's prayers for the people and for the temple. [First Kings 6:11-13](#) states that Solomon had received a "word of the LORD" concerning the temple, but this "word" differs from the second theophany in that this second appearance is more of a vision than a prophetic exhortation. Still, the word and the vision agree. God will honor the eternal side of the Davidic Covenant. The temporal portion of the covenant, the part about Solomon and his descendants, however, is dependent on human obedience.

[9:1-3](#) Some unspecified amount of time after the dedication services, God "appeared to [Solomon] a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon." The Lord both answers the king's prayer and reemphasizes the conditions for continued blessing. God assures Solomon that his prayers have been heard, for the Lord has "consecrated" the temple, or "caused it to be holy," by deciding to place his name there forever and by deciding to watch over and love the place always. This commitment to the central place of worship serves as a clear answer to Solomon's comments in [8:14-21](#) and his petitions in [8:22-53](#).

[9:4-9](#) Exhortations and warnings permeate this text. God reminds Solomon that he must obey God by keeping the divine commands and decrees. Solomon's obedience, however, must be motivated by "integrity of heart," not by a mere external observance of God's word. Such heartfelt commitment to the Lord will result in Solomon's sons ruling Israel after him. This promise coincides with similar comments in [3:14-15](#) and [6:11-13](#).

On the other hand, an embracing of other gods will result in the most devastating consequences listed in [Leviticus 26](#) and [Deuteronomy 27-28](#). If idolatry occurs, God will "cut off Israel from the land," "reject this temple," and make Israel "a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples" (cf. [Lev 26:27-39](#); [Deut 28:36-37](#)). Patterson and Austel note the seriousness of the language of these threats. They state that "cut off" is used in texts "where a person is cut off or excluded from the fellowship of God's people (e.g., [Lev 17:4](#), [9](#); [Num 19:20](#))." God's use of "reject" implies "divorce." Finally, becoming a byword in ancient times was a calamity, since all personal and national self-respect or international respect disappeared. Even strangers in the land would know that these disasters came about because of Israel's unfaithfulness to their covenant with their Lord.

Without question the book's intended audience would have understood this warning as God's grace to Solomon. All the king had to do was remain obedient to the Lord, shun idols, and continue to enjoy God's favor. The first readers also knew that Solomon does not accept this grace. Eventually he will adopt habits that will lead to disaster, a fact the hurting readers knew all too well.

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1. Paul R. House, *New American Commentary – Volume 8: 1, 2 Kings*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 149-153, Under: "6. Solomon's Pursuits".

## Canonical and Theological Implications in [1 Kgs 5:1-9:9](#)

This section's emphasis on the temple serves some vital canonical functions. First, it provides the historical fulfillment of Moses' prediction that God would someday choose a single place to be the focal point of Israel's worship (cf. [Deut 12:5](#), [11](#), [14](#), [18](#), [21](#), [26](#); [14:23-25](#); [15:20](#); [16:2](#), [6-7](#), [11](#)). Moses believed that having a central sanctuary would guard against idolatry (cf. [Deut 12:1-7](#)). Related to the first idea is a second theme. The building of the temple completed the promise of land made to Abraham, taught by Moses, and secured by Joshua and David (cf. [1 Kgs 6:1](#) and [8:50-51](#)). These two themes, then, help readers grasp how the temple's completion helps conclude *the law's* emphasis on covenant worship and the reception of the promised land.

Third, the temple's completion illustrates the twin themes of Israel's faithfulness and God's enduring presence among the people. These ideas are particularly significant in the *prophetic segment* of the canon. Solomon's decision to build the temple stemmed from his gratitude to God and his desire to honor his father's memory. This former motivation emerges again after the exile when Haggai and Zechariah urge the people to rebuild the destroyed temple as a token of their esteem for the Lord. Ezekiel and Malachi stress the temple as a place where God is present among faithful worshippers (cf. [Ezek 40-48](#); [Mal 3-4](#)). Indeed, Ezekiel envisions the temple as the most important place in the new Jerusalem, the city of God, for the temple will be where God's glory resides ([Ezek 43:1-12](#)).

Fourth, the restoration of the fallen temple symbolizes Israel's postexilic restored fortunes in *the writings*. Ezra in particular stresses this point ([Ezra 1-6](#)). In fact, the Hebrew canon concludes with the Chronicler's challenge to rebuild the temple ([2 Chr 36:23](#)). Only through this rebuilding can Israel's humiliation in exile truly cease. Only then can the promises to Abraham and the teachings of Moses reenter the nation's history as key components of Israel's future.

Fifth, the temple's presence stands as a reminder of the importance of worship throughout Israel's history and throughout the Old Testament. Certainly the psalms stress the temple as the most important place where worship occurs, as does 1, 2 Chronicles. Books such as Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi highlight the value of pure, faithful temple worship. Anything less dishonors God, defiles Israel, and leads to judgment (cf. [Jer 7:1-8:3](#); [26:1-24](#)). God will honor Israel with his presence but only if the people take worship seriously.

These canonical details have theological significance. At least three major themes, each with subpoints, emerge in these chapters. The first of these ideas is the presence, nearness, or immanence of God. If God is not close to and accessible to those who desire to worship him, then temple building, prayers, and sacrifices are absurd practices. On the other hand, if God is real, created the earth, and cares about human beings, then honoring the Lord not only makes sense but it also strengthens one's relationship with him. One caution deserves mention. Such worship does not control or manipulate God in any way. As Nelson explains:

God is "really present" in the temple in cloud, glory, and ark (vv. [3:13](#)). Yet lest this be misunderstood as suggesting that God is automatically at Israel's beck and call, Solomon insists that even the whole universe cannot contain God. God is only "symbolically present" in the temple through the divine name.

Israel must freely worship the Lord, who freely chooses to dwell among them.

God's presence is manifested in various ways in [1 Kgs 5:1–9:9](#). As has been mentioned, the Lord's presence is evident in the cloud described in [8:10–11](#). Solomon also believes God will choose to dwell, or be present, in the new temple ([8:12–13](#)). Further, God's presence is demonstrated by his covenants with David ([8:14–21](#), [25–26](#)) and with Israel as mediated through Moses ([8:56–61](#)). Israel's deliverance from Egypt shows how powerful God's presence was in Moses' day ([8:50–51](#)). Finally, the Lord is present in direct, verbal communication in [6:11–13](#) and [9:3–9](#). God not only comes near to the human race but also speaks to people, thus making his will known to them.

Human worship is the second major theological concept in these chapters. Here, as in the whole of Scripture, worship consists of praise ([8:14–21](#)), confession ([8:23–51](#)), petition ([8:46–53](#)), and humility ([8:54](#)). This worship assumes the existence of a personal God who is near, who acts on behalf of faithful worshippers, and who makes binding covenants with those he loves. Solomon's petitions also depict a God who does judge those who sin yet who also forgives the penitent ([8:34](#)). Though powerful, this God is not unapproachable. The covenant God is a loving Lord.

Worship may occur anywhere, but the focus in this story is on the temple. Proper temple worship includes prayer, sacrifice, and the ministry of the Levites. The centralizing of worship in this one place is intended to bring order and uniformity to Israel's religion without suppressing love and devotion for God. By no means does the temple's existence imply that God can be contained in one place ([8:27](#)). Nor does it mean the people can take God for granted, as occurred over time (cf. [Jer 7:1–15](#); [26:1–15](#)). Rather, worship must be consistent as each new generation arises, a truth illustrated by Solomon's constant references to his father, David ([8:14–21](#), [25–26](#)).

Leadership is the third theme this text describes. Throughout the books the author of 1, 2 Kings transforms this seemingly secular concept into a theological issue. God is a model of faithful, consistent, just leadership. Similarly, David led the people to be faithful to the one living God. He thereby helped Israel to enjoy the blessings of God. At this point in his career, Solomon follows in his father's footsteps. He worships God and leads the people to do the same. God rewards this faithfulness primarily through his presence but also through blessing Solomon with wisdom and political gain.

### **Applicational Implications of [1 Kgs 5:1–9:9](#)**

The canonical and theological conclusions lead to some extremely important life applications. First, understanding that the covenant God is personal and present should affect believers' behavior. Solomon's prayer indicates that God observes all of life's activities. God knows when oppression ([8:31–32](#)), war ([8:33–34](#)), natural disaster ([8:35–40](#)), or exile ([8:46–51](#)) occur. Thus, the people must be careful to keep their covenant with the Lord. They can also know that they may call on their God in whatever type of distress they find themselves.

Second, worship is vital for faithful living. In fact, it is so important that it must be taken very seriously, for people will not enjoy worship until they do take it seriously. Joy will result when prayer, confession, praise, and petition are offered with an earnestness like Solomon's. This recognition of the importance of serious worship will guard against taking God for granted. It will remind worshippers that God blesses them with his presence. The Lord chooses to be present, though he has no obligation to do so. Finally, poor worship leads to improper ethical behavior, then to punishment ([8:31–51](#)). Worship is not an

obligation. Rather, it is a blessing that unites the worshiper with God and guarantees correct relationships in the community.

Third, godly leaders possess certain character traits. They choose projects that reflect the Lord's past and present faithfulness. They lead others *in* worship, which in turn leads others *to* worship. They seek the Lord's will for themselves and their followers. In other words, their leadership style flows from their commitment to the God who leads them.

## **6. Solomon's Pursuits**

### **9:10–28**

Twenty-four years of Solomon's reign, over half of it, have now been discussed. The king has enjoyed success in every area of his life. He has subdued his rivals, organized the nation, built himself a palace and the Lord a temple, made beneficial alliances with Tyre and Egypt, and given his people rest from war. Clearly, he has excelled in both foreign and domestic affairs. Solomon has had an impressive start to his reign. Can he sustain this level of excellence? Will he remain faithful to the Lord? Are these issues related? Only time will tell. This section begins a six-part analysis of the second portion of Solomon's era. The first segment offers an overview of all the king's activities, including his building, domestic policy, and trade agreements ([9:10–28](#)). Next, the famous queen of Sheba story demonstrates Solomon's wisdom ([10:1–13](#)) and is followed by a chronicle of his wealth ([10:14–29](#)). Chapter [11](#) presents Solomon's slide into idolatry ([11:1–13](#)), the opposition God allows to hinder Solomon ([11:14–25](#)), and the man who will eventually divide the nation ([11:26–43](#)). Clearly, the author of 1, 2 Kings does not think the second half of Solomon's reign is as successful as the first, a fact emphasized by the shorter account that appears.

Because of its placement between the successful completion of the temple and the nation's irreversible division, this passage acts as an important bridge between Israel's last happy days as a united country and the contention and weakness that follow. Clues to Solomon's faults have surfaced already. Now they become evident. Even a brilliant, gifted king must follow the Lord. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of the covenant standards outlined in [3:14](#); [6:11–13](#); and [9:3–9](#).

### **Survey of Historical Details Related to [1 Kgs 9:10–11:43](#)**

Certain foreign, domestic, economic, and religious factors changed during Solomon's last sixteen years. First, Israel'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, probably Shishak, supports Solomon's enemies. Unlike his immediate predecessors, 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 (cf. [1 Kgs 14:25](#); [2 Chr 12:2](#)). Similarly, Solomon's influence in Syria was weakened when Rezon seized control of Damascus ([1 Kgs 11:23–25](#)) and when Hadad became king of Edom ([1 Kgs 11:14–22](#)). Probably Rezon's power threatened Israel more than Hadad's. Still, coupled with Egypt's new attitude, Edom and Syria's rebellions presented Solomon with foes on all sides.

Domestic tensions grew as well. J. A. Soggin argues that the northern tribes began to feel that they were shouldering more than their share of the tax and conscripted labor burden. Perhaps they believed Judah received special treatment for being David's clan. Soggin's assertion fits with the north's complaints after

Solomon's death ([1 Kgs 12:1-4](#)). Probably not even Judah appreciated the taxes that all Solomon's projects required (cf. [1 Kgs 4:1-28](#)). Jeroboam, a young and vigorous opponent, arose as an alternative to Solomonic rule ([1 Kgs 11:26-28](#)). Because of Solomon's idolatry, God supported Jeroboam's rise to power, as did Shishak of Egypt, though for less religious reasons ([1 Kgs 11:29-40](#)).

Despite such complications, however, Solomon was able to maintain order, mostly because of his economic prowess. Israel 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 Galilean towns was "Cabul," or "worthless" ([1 Kgs 9:10-14](#)). Solomon also strengthened his caravan trade by improving relations with the queen of Sheba, 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 Israel's king a visit. All these financial ventures bought Solomon peace at home, as the presence of luxury items often does (cf. [1 Kgs 10:14-29](#)).

All of these details contribute to the author's accurate historical portrait of Solomon's final years in power. As in the whole book, however, the major issue is Solomon's faithfulness to the Lord. Unfortunately, he is quite lacking in this area. Unlike David, Solomon worships other gods, in particular those his many wives favor ([1 Kgs 11:1-13](#)). This decision breaches the Mosaic and Davidic Covenants and leaves Solomon open to the punishments implicit in each of God's conversations with him. Earlier a prophet (Nathan) helped Solomon become king. Now a prophet named Ahijah will predict the end of the Davidic dynasty's exclusive rule over Israel ([1 Kgs 11:29-39](#)). Solomon's dynasty could have weathered foreign, domestic, and economic challenges, but idolatry makes the Lord an enemy. How can the dynasty survive?

### **(1) Foreign Relations [9:10-14](#)**

[9:10-14](#) Solomon and Hiram's friendship lasts as long as both men live. Only Solomon's death and Shishak's expansionist policies interrupt their trade agreement. These verses demonstrate the strength of the alliance's bonds, for Solomon is not presented in a favorable way here. Apparently he has offered Hiram cities instead of the food that was given in previous years (cf. [1 Kgs 5:10-12](#)). These cities were "Cabul," meaning "worthless," constituting a poor payment to a "brother" ([9:13](#)). Hiram had sent gold to Solomon and received "Cabul" in return. This episode shows a conniving side of Solomon. Readers may wonder whether he is completely trustworthy. Still, Hiram continues to work with Solomon (cf. [9:26-28](#)).

### **(2) Forced Labor [9:15-23](#)**

[9:15-23](#) Several thousand workers were needed for Solomon's many building projects. Besides the temple and the palace, Solomon commissioned work on "the supporting terraces," which Burney concludes was "a massive fortress or tower built into that part of the city wall where such a protection was specially needed." He also had defensive walls strengthened in Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. Indeed, Gezer needed serious reconstruction because it had been destroyed by Pharaoh, then presented to Solomon as a wedding gift. Further, he decided to construct "store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses." Obviously, there was some building project under construction

throughout Solomon's reign. Conscripted labor was the cheapest means for the king to complete his building goals.

Who comprised this nonvoluntary labor force? As the comments on [1 Kgs 4:1–6](#) and [5:13–18](#) state, scholars disagree about the identity of this group. Those texts state that Adoniram was in charge of the corvée workforce, a notion [1 Kgs 12:18–19](#) supports, and that thirty thousand Israelites spent up to four months per year working on the king's projects. The confusion arises from [9:22](#), which says, "But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites." Rather, it was the remaining Canaanite peoples that were "his slave labor force" ([9:20–21](#)). Again, [9:21](#) and [9:22](#) use different words for the services rendered. The distinction is a technical one. The Canaanites were *permanent* corvée workers, while the Israelites were *temporary* draftees. Regardless of the technical differences, the northern tribes came to resent the practice bitterly, as later texts reveal.

### (3) Further Building [9:24](#)

[9:24](#) This verse draws together statements made in [1 Kgs 3:1](#); [7:8](#); and [9:15](#). The first text indicates that Pharaoh's daughter lived in Jerusalem until the temple, palace, and defensive walls were completed. The second text simply states that Solomon built a separate palace for his Egyptian-born queen after his major works were done. In [2 Chr 8:11](#) Solomon says she could not live in David's palace "because the places the ark of the Lord has entered are holy." Such concern for purity becomes ironic later when the king worships his wives' gods. Finally, the third text notes that "the supporting terraces" were built to help fortify Jerusalem. Patterson and Austel theorize that besides the explanation noted in [2 Chr 8:11](#) probably "the construction activities would have been at or near the site of her temporary home. It also appears likely that existing structures may have been razed to allow the construction over a large area of this buttressing work."

Besides these basic historical details, [1 Kgs 9:24](#) reminds readers that this foreign-born wife requires special considerations. For whatever reason, the nation must bear the expenses for a new, separate palace. Pharaoh's daughter worships different gods from the Israelites ([2 Chr 8:11](#)). So far she is the only non-Israelite royal wife mentioned. The problems she causes will multiply by chap. [11](#), where the author finally reveals the extent of the king's harem. Then the full implications of Solomon's marriage to women who share neither his national nor religious heritage become clearer.

### (4) Worship [9:25](#)

[9:25](#) At least for now Solomon honors the Lord by offering sacrifices at the new temple. Three occasions for sacrifices are mentioned. These times were most likely the Feasts of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Booths (cf. [Exod 23:14–19](#)). By offering the required sacrifices at these specified times, Solomon demonstrates his faithfulness to the covenant. All his subjects could then follow his lead.

The last sentence in [9:25](#), which the NIV renders "and so fulfilled the temple obligations," is somewhat difficult to translate. Literally the text reads "and he finished the house." Burney thinks the phrase is a copyist's error. Montgomery and Gehman suggest, however, that this phrase parallels [Ps 76:11](#), where a similar construction refers to the paying of vows. Keil adds that "and so fulfilled" may be a continuation of "burning incense." Furthermore, the preceding description of Solomon's ritual activities favors the NIV translation. Solomon met all religious obligations set by the Mosaic law and implied by the building of a central sanctuary.

**(5) Shipping [9:26–28](#)**

[9:26–28](#) Solomon's partnership with Hiram emerges again. Israel built the ships, Tyre sailed them, and both nations took home gold. Perhaps only [1 Kgs 10:11–12](#) approximates this passage's ability to illustrate how both kings benefited from their alliance. Ezion Geber no longer exists as a port, due to changes in the coastal line. Ophir was an ancient city virtually synonymous with the production of gold. Solomon's success in shipping also led to prosperous land trade, as the next passage indicates.

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### 15. Glory under a Cloud ([1 Kgs. 9:10-10:29](#))

It was Solomon's rule over the surrounding kingdoms, combined with his status in the world in general ([4:21-34](#)), that put him in a position to be able to plan, build, and dedicate the temple ([5:1-8:66](#)). [First Kings 9:10-10:29](#) brings us back to consider the glory of this empire. It is glory that must now be seen with respect to [8:22-53](#) and [9:1-9](#). It is therefore glory under a cloud, destined to fade away.

This of itself would affect our view of what we read in [9:10-10:29](#), even if we were to find here only repetition of the material of [chapters 4-5](#). It is not, however, merely the new *context* in which Solomon's glory is described that lends the account in [9:10-10:29](#) its air of impending doom. It is also the way the account itself is written. Themes from [chapters 4-5](#) are picked up now in a way that hints, not of wisdom, but of foolishness (Solomon's dealings with Hiram, [9:10-14](#) etc.; his use of forced labor, [9:15-23](#); foreigners coming to listen to his wisdom, [10:1-13](#)). Other material (e.g., [9:24](#); [10:26](#)) reminds us of foolishness already revealed in [1 Kings 1-8](#). All in all we are forced to be aware, even as we hear of accumulating gold and proverbial splendor (cf. [Matt. 6:29](#)), that we are reading the last chapter of the story of Solomon's "golden age"—that he is heading very shortly for a fall.

[9:10-14](#) / We first came across **Hiram, king of Tyre** in [5:1-18](#). It was he who had supplied Solomon with **cedar and pine** for the temple ([5:10](#)). In one sense [9:10-14](#) simply confirms the impression gained from that passage that Hiram is very much the "junior partner" in his relationship with Solomon. The **gold** that is now introduced into the narrative is not the subject of any agreement so far as we can tell; there was, of course, no mention of any gold in the agreement struck between the two kings in [5:1-18](#). Hiram simply supplies Solomon with as much gold as **he wanted** (cf. [5:8](#), [10](#)). Solomon in turn "rewards" him with **twenty towns in Galilee** of dubious worth. He is clearly the only real beneficiary in this relationship; yet Hiram's displeasure ([v. 13](#)) does not affect his "willingness" to send men to sea to bring back more gold ([vv. 9:26-28](#); [10:11-12](#), [22](#))—for Solomon! Truly Solomon does rule over Lebanon ([9:19](#)), and here, as in [5:1-18](#), Hiram cannot ultimately resist his will.

The significance of the introduction of gold as part of the "Hiram theme" is, however, much greater than this; for this is only the first mention of this metal in a section of Kings littered with such references ([9:28](#); [10:2](#), [10-11](#), [14](#), [16-18](#), [21-22](#), [25](#)). In [1 Kings 9:10-10:29](#) Solomon is a king who accumulates gold in extraordinarily large amounts—amounts that increase as we read (120 talents in [9:14](#); 420 in [9:28](#); 666 in [10:14](#)—for the significant exception in [10:10](#) see the additional note on [10:11](#)) and that are collected from more and more exotic places ([9:28](#); [10:22](#)). Commentators have generally regarded this as a positive thing, reminding the reader that God had promised Solomon riches ([1 Kgs. 3:13](#); cf. [10:23](#)). Yet it is not so simple as all that. Why, we must ask ourselves, have we not been told about Hiram's gold before, especially when it was presumably the very gold that Solomon used in the temple ([1 Kgs. 6:20-22](#), [28](#), [30](#), [32](#), [35](#); [7:48-51](#))? Why, indeed, is there no mention of gold at all in the description of Solomon's glory in [chapters 4-5](#), where prosperity is described rather in terms of *food*? And why does gold appear in such abundance here, after the solemn warning of [9:6-9](#) about "turning away from God," and in company with other material that leads us to expect just this "turning away" of Solomon (cf. the commentary on [9:15-25](#); [10:26-29](#))? These are interesting questions, particularly in view of texts like [Proverbs 30:8](#) and [Deuteronomy 17:17](#). Excessive wealth brings with it the danger of apostasy.

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2. Iain W. Provan, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series – 1 & 2 Kings*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "15. Glory under a Cloud (1 Kgs. 9:10-10:29)".



We have grounds for suspecting, then, that all this gold is not necessarily meant to attract our unqualified approval. What is particularly striking about 1 Kings [9:10-10:29](#) when compared with [1 Kings 4-5](#) is the manner in which the authors go out of their way in [4-5](#) to emphasize that the prosperity of the king was shared with his subjects (cf. [4:20](#), [25](#)). This is a theme that is notable for its absence in [9:10-10:29](#), where all the emphasis lies upon the luxury of the royal court (cf. the commentary on [10:14-29](#) in particular). God may well have given Solomon riches, but has he used them wisely (cf. [Luke 12:13-34](#))?

[9:15-25](#) / [First Kings 9:15-23](#) is another section that refers us back to [5:1-18](#), where we were told of the **forced labor** (Hb. *mas*) that Solomon **conscripted** to build his temple. Again, it is the additions that are significant. At one level, the purpose of these additions seems to be that of clarification. First, Solomon did not use this 30,000—strong taskforce only for the temple but also for his other building operations ([vv. 15-19](#)), especially his new fortifications in strategically important cities. Secondly, it did not include his Israelite subjects (who had other jobs to do, [vv. 22-23](#)) but only the descendants of those Canaanite peoples **whom the Israelites could not exterminate** ([v. 21](#)) when they settled in the land. But why delay this clarification until now? If we need to be clear that Israelites were not involved in the *mas*, why were we not told at precisely the point ([5:13](#)) where confusion might (and often has) arisen?

The significance of the delay becomes clearer when we notice the way the authors have associated the Canaanite laborers with **Pharaoh's daughter** ([v. 24](#)). She was first introduced (waiting for her **palace**) in [3:1](#), in language that reminded us of the deuteronomic warnings about intermarriage with foreigners ([Deut. 7:1-6](#))—precisely those **Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites** mentioned in [1 Kings 9:20](#). These people were to be exterminated (Hb. *hrm*, [Deut. 7:2](#); [20:17](#); as in [1 Kgs. 9:21](#)) precisely so that they could not lead Israel into apostasy. Their appearance (very much alive) along with Pharaoh's daughter in [1 Kings 9](#) again serves to prepare us for Solomon's downfall. Like later kings (cf. [2 Kgs. 17:7-8](#)), he will indeed be seduced by the other gods ([11:4](#)). It is of little comfort to read, in the sure knowledge of this future reality, that Solomon is for the time being an orthodox worshiper in the temple ([v. 25](#); cf. [Exod. 23:14-17](#)).

## Additional Notes

[9:3](#) / **Cabul**: The **NIV** footnote, in common with many modern commentators, apparently wishes us to explain this name in terms of the Hb. root *blh*, “to waste away.” It is much more likely, however, that the root is *kbl*, from which we get the noun *kebel*, “fetters” that is found in [Ps. 149:8](#)—a psalm that celebrates the supremacy of Israel over the nations! It would not be surprising, if our interpretation of [9:10-14](#) is correct, to find Hiram calling the region in question “fettered”; for this is a word that reflects what is essentially the nature of his relationship with Solomon. This is not the only time in the Bible, of course, that we find evidence of towns in Galilee being undervalued ([John 1:46](#)).

[9:16](#) / **Pharaoh ... captured Gezer**: It is interesting that the same passage that tells us ([v. 21](#)) of Israelite inability to exterminate the Canaanites also tells us that their enemy of old, the Egyptian Pharaoh, has recently captured Gezer and killed all its Canaanite inhabitants—a city that had hitherto provided forced labor, according to [Josh. 16:10](#). Why are we told of these Joshua-like exploits just at this point? Perhaps for this reason: that it helps us to see clearly just how easily *Solomon*, in all his glory and power, *could* have dealt with the Canaanites in the way deuteronomic law had commanded—if he had wished to. It points to the conclusion, in other words, that he continued to use them as labor *out of choice*, rather than out of necessity, because of his enthusiasm for building—and so willingly put himself at risk of their baneful influence. It should not pass unnoticed, either, that some of the building is of a highly questionable sort ([v. 19](#); cf. the commentary on [4:26](#)).

**9:22 / Government officials:** The NIV's translation obscures an important point, which a more literal translation brings out: "From among the Israelites, Solomon did not make any servant; they were his fighting men, his servants ..." There is something of a play on the concept of "servant" going on here. Given that the point at issue is the composition of the *mas* in [5:13-14](#), we do well to remember that "servants" in [5:6, 9](#) (Hb. *'abadîm*, which the NIV renders "men") refers, not to **government officials**, but to those who will do the work, to those in [5:13-18](#) (both in the *mas* and not). It is much more likely that the distinction in [9:22](#), then, is precisely that implied in [5:13-18](#) between Canaanite "servants" ([5:13-14](#)) and other "servants," now identified as Israelites. A translation that would better bring out the point is: "Solomon did not make any slaves; they were ... his workers."

**9:25 / Fulfilled the temple obligations:** The Hb. is *lit.* "finished the house." The same verb (Hb. *slm*) was found in [7:51](#), and its use here underlines the point that the temple was not truly regarded as "finished" by the authors of Kings until it was ready for worship (cf. the commentary on [7:1-5](#)).