

Assessments of Solomon in 1 Kings

Direct answer

In the strict sense of **explicit theological evaluations**, the principal assessment outside chapter 11 is **1 Kings 3:3**. It gives Solomon a qualified positive verdict: he “loved the LORD” and walked in David’s statutes, **except** that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places. This opening assessment deliberately anticipates the closing verdict in **11:4–6**, where his heart is no longer wholly devoted to the LORD and he “did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.” Scholars commonly recognize these as the two clearest, corresponding evaluations of Solomon’s reign.^[1]^[2]^[^3]

Main evaluations

Passage	Assessor	Assessment
1 Kings 3:3	Narrator	Qualified approval: Solomon loved the LORD and followed David’s statutes, but worshiped at the high places. ^[4] ^[5]
1 Kings 3:10–14	The LORD	Solomon’s unselfish request pleased God; God granted unmatched wisdom, riches, and honor, while making long life conditional upon obedience. ^[6] ^[7]
1 Kings 3:28	Israel	The people stood in awe because they recognized that God’s wisdom was in Solomon to administer justice. ^[4] ^[8]
1 Kings 4:29–34	Narrator	Strongly positive: God gave Solomon extraordinary wisdom and understanding; he surpassed other sages, and people from many nations came to hear him. ^[9] ^[10]
1 Kings 5:12	Narrator	God fulfilled his promise by giving Solomon wisdom, displayed in peaceful and effective relations with Hiram. ^[11] ^[12]
1 Kings 8:66	Israel	The people blessed the king and returned home joyful after the temple dedication, recognizing the good God had done for David and Israel. ^[13] ^[14]
1 Kings 10:6–9	Queen of Sheba	Solomon’s wisdom and prosperity exceeded the reports; she interpreted his kingship as evidence of God’s love for Israel and his appointment to execute justice and righteousness. ^[15] ^[16]
1 Kings 10:23–24	Narrator/world	Solomon surpassed all earthly kings in riches and wisdom, and the world sought out the wisdom God had placed in him. ^[17] ^[18]
1 Kings 11:4–6	Narrator	Decisively negative: Solomon’s heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD; he followed other gods, did evil, and failed to follow the LORD fully as David had. ^[19] ^[20]
1 Kings 11:9–13	The LORD	God condemned Solomon for turning away and breaking the covenant, and announced that most of the kingdom would be torn from his dynasty—though delayed and limited for David’s sake. ^[21] ^[20]
1 Kings 11:31–33	The LORD through Ahijah	The verdict is restated: the kingdom will be divided because Solomon forsook the LORD, worshiped foreign gods, and failed to walk in God’s ways as David did. ^[22] ^[23]

Literary pattern

The most important literary pairing is 3:3 and 11:4–6. At the beginning, Solomon *loves the LORD* but his devotion is already qualified by the high places; at the end, he *loves many foreign women*, builds high places for their gods, and fails to follow the LORD fully. The repetition of “love,” “heart,” “David,” and “high places” makes chapter 11 a reversal and final judgment of the qualified approval in chapter 3.^{[24][25][26]}

The intervening assessments demonstrate that Solomon truly received divine wisdom and used it in judgment, administration, diplomacy, and temple building. Consequently, chapter 11 does not deny his giftedness; it judges his **covenant fidelity**. Kings’ ultimate criterion is not brilliance, wealth, construction, or international prestige, but whether the king does right in the LORD’s sight and follows him wholeheartedly.^{[27][28][29]}

Teaching formulation

A concise classroom answer would be:

- **Opening spiritual assessment** — 3:3: Solomon loved the LORD and followed David, but compromised at the high places.
- **Wisdom assessments** — 3:10–14; 3:28; 4:29–34; 5:12: God approved his request, granted wisdom, and Israel witnessed that wisdom in action.
- **Public and international assessments** — 8:66; 10:6–9; 10:23–24: Israel blessed him, the Queen of Sheba praised his wisdom and justice, and the narrator declared him unrivaled in wisdom and wealth.
- **Final spiritual assessment** — 11:4–10, restated in 11:31–33: His divided heart led to idolatry; he did evil, broke covenant, and brought judgment upon the kingdom.

Thus, if “assessment” means the standard moral verdict used throughout Kings, 3:3 is the **other primary assessment**. If the term includes all evaluative statements about Solomon, the broader list above captures the major assessments distributed through chapters 3–10 before the final verdict in chapter 11.^{[3][27]}

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