THE QUESTION

Did the early Christians see King Solomon as a total failure?

Asked by a THF member on August 31, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 10 numbered quotations · the 27 early Christian passages and 66 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-the-early-christians-see-king-solomon-as-a-total-failure

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

No. The early writers honored Solomon as a wise king and a prophet whose words they still quoted as Scripture. But they also warned that he fell into idolatry through women and lost the grace he had been given. They used him as a warning that gifts must be kept by faithful obedience.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 6

God truly gave Solomon wisdom

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen says Solomon asked God for wisdom and received it. He points to the queen of Sheba, who came to test him and found his wisdom even greater than she had heard. For Origen, Solomon's wisdom was a real gift from God.

1 “Solomon too, because he asked for wisdom, received it.”

later in the same passage

“Moreover, Solomon was so wise that the queen of Sheba, having heard his name and the name of the Lord, came to test him with difficult questions, and spoke to him all things, whatever were in her heart.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *Against Celsus* 45 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 16, page 6** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 6

They honored him as king and prophet

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Gregory Thaumaturgus opens his version of Ecclesiastes by calling Solomon a king and prophet, greatly honored and wiser than all men. Theophilus also calls him a king and a prophet and quotes his Proverbs to teach purity of heart.

2 “These are the words spoken by Solomon, the son of David, the king and prophet, to the whole Church of God. He was a prince greatly honored, and a prophet wiser than all other men.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Gregory Thaumaturgus,** *Metaphrase of Ecclesiastes* 1 (c. 240–270 AD) **Source 19, page 6** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

3 “So Solomon, who was a king and a prophet, said, "Let your eyes look straight ahead, and let your eyelids look directly before you. Make straight paths for your feet."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Theophilus of Antioch,** *To Autolycus* 13 (c. 169–183 AD) **Source 4, page 5** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 6

His writings were still read as Scripture

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Alexandria says Solomon bears witness for Christians and quotes his Proverbs about God-given wisdom. Lactantius even treats words he credits to Solomon as a prophecy of the plot against Christ. Solomon's sins did not cancel the worth of his writings.

4 “Solomon also clearly bears witness for us, saying, "Human understanding is not in me, but God gives me wisdom, and I know holy things,"”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 5.11 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 7, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

5 “But from Solomon, who foretold these things, to the time when they were fulfilled, one thousand and ten years passed.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Lactantius,** *Divine Institutes* 16 (c. 290–320 AD) **Source 24, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 6

Yet he fell into idolatry

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian lists Solomon with Saul and David as men who began well and later fell. Solomon had been given grace and wisdom, yet women led him into idolatry. Tertullian says only the Son of God stayed without sin to the end.

6 “Solomon, whom the Lord had given all grace and wisdom, was led into idolatry by women, 1 Kings 11:4. For only the Son of God was granted this: to remain without sin to the very end.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Prescription Against Heretics* 3 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 10, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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POINT 5 OF 6

Grace stayed while he walked in God's ways

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian uses Solomon as a warning to believers. While Solomon and Saul walked in the Lord's ways, they kept the grace God gave them. When they left God's discipline, grace left them. Cyprian also notes that God raised up an enemy against Solomon after he sinned.

7 “Solomon also, and Saul, and many others, as long as they walked in the Lord's ways, were able to keep the grace given to them. When the Lord's discipline was forsaken by them, grace also forsook them.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 22, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

8 “And again, when Solomon sinned, and departed from the Lord's commandments and ways, it is recorded, "And the Lord stirred up Satan against Solomon himself."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 21, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 6

Christ is the greater Son of David

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Lactantius says the promise of an everlasting kingdom to David's son was not fully met in Solomon, who reigned forty years and built a temple of stone. It points to Christ and His Church. Origen recalls Christ's words that a greater than Solomon is here.

9 “Besides, the reign of Solomon was not everlasting, for he reigned forty years. In the next place, Solomon was never called the Son of God, but the son of David.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Lactantius,** *Divine Institutes* 13 (c. 290–320 AD) **Source 26, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
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10 “what He taught was greater than Solomon, in these words: “Behold, a greater than Solomon is here,””

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 3 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 17, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not say whether Solomon repented before he died or what his final state was.
- They do not give a full account of his life, only short uses of his example.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 27 early Christian passages and 66 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–27, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 28–32, in Bible order), then 61 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *27 passages from 11 writers*

Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · sources 1–2*

1 *Dialogue with Trypho* (on point 6) from the other words of David, which I quoted earlier, and which you incorrectly claim refer to Solomon because they are inscribed for Solomon, it can be proven that they… [continues online] **read ›**

2 *Dialogue with Trypho* (on point 6) further convince you that you have misunderstood the Scriptures, I'll remind you of another psalm, inspired by the Holy Spirit and spoken to David, which you claim refers to… [continues online] **read ›**

Theophilus of Antioch, *c. 169–183 AD · sources 3–5*

3 *To Autolycus* 25 (1885 English) “after these kings Solomon reigned, who also, by the will of God, was the first to build the temple in Jerusalem… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *To Autolycus* 13 (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** “accordingly, who was a king and a prophet, said: Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you: make straight paths for your feet… [continues online] **read ›**

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5 *To Autolycus* 10 (on point 3) Him, and His holy Word which was always present with Him. Therefore He speaks thus by the prophet Solomon: "When He prepared the heavens I was there, and when He… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · source 6*

6 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (on point 6) “Solomon was a servant, but Christ is indeed the Son of God… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 7–9*

7 *Stromata* 5.11 (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** “clearly Solomon shall testify to us, speaking thus: The prudence of man is not in me: but God gives me wisdom, and I know holy things… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Instructor* 2.11 (1885 English; on point 4) “12:27 And Solomon the king plumed himself exceedingly on his riches… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Stromata* 1.21 (on point 2) He also urged Solomon about building the temple. Achias of Shilo also prophesied. And both kings, David and Solomon, were prophets. Sadoc the high priest was the first to serve… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 10–14*

10 *On Prescription Against Heretics* 3 (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 3** “Samuel 11 Solomon, endowed by the Lord with all grace and wisdom, is led into idolatry, by women… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Against Marcion* 8 (1885 English; on point 4) “the contrary, Solomon (as I make bold to affirm) lost even the glory which he had from God, seduced by his love of women even into idolatry… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Against Marcion* 20 (on point 6) “Christ too God's mercy did not depart, whereas on… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *On Prescription Against Heretics* 7 (on point 3) “between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from the porch of Solomon, who had himself taught that the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Against Marcion* 23 (1885 English; on point 4) “Samuel 13 Solomon is rejected; but he is now become a prey to foreign women, and a slave to the idols of Moab and Sidon… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 15–17*

15 *Commentary on John* 6 (on point 1) are a man of blood.” But Solomon, on the other hand, saw God in a dream, and in a dream received wisdom. For the reality of the vision was kept… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Against Celsus* 45 **Quote 1, page 2** “too, because he asked for wisdom, received it… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 3 **Quote 10, page 5** and which was also that wisdom of God before the advent of the Saviour, by means of which Solomon obtained his wisdom, and in reference to which the language of… [continues online] **read ›**

Dionysius of Alexandria, *c. 232–265 AD · source 18*

18 *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (on point 1) “of when he says, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," in 1 Corinthians 3:19. Solomon also experienced this kind of wisdom, a wisdom beyond ordinary prudence… [continues online] **read ›**

Gregory Thaumaturgus, *c. 240–270 AD · sources 19–20*

19 *Metaphrase of Ecclesiastes* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** “words speaks Solomon, the son of David the king and prophet, to the whole Church of God, a prince most honoured, and a prophet most wise above all men… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Metaphrase of Ecclesiastes* 2 (on point 4) “thus it happened that the interests of wisdom declined with me, while the… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 21–22*

21 *Treatises* **Quote 8, page 4** “13:24. And again, when Solomon sinned, and departed from the Lord's commandments and ways, it is recorded, "And the Lord stirred up Satan against Solomon himself." 1 Kings… [continues online] **read ›**

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22 *Epistles* (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** "also, and Saul, and many others, so long as they walked in the Lord's ways, were able to keep the grace given to them… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · source 23*

23 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 3) "wisdom with firmness. For your correction will not kill them, but will rather preserve them. For Solomon says somewhere in the book of Wisdom, "Correct your son, and he will… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 24–27*

24 *Divine Institutes* 16 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** "Solomon in the book of Wisdom used these words: Wisdom 2:12-22 Let us defraud the righteous, for he is unpleasant to us, and upbraids us with our offenses… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *Divine Institutes* 8 (1885 English; on point 2) "Solomon and his father David were most powerful kings, and also prophets, may perhaps be known even to those who have not applied themselves to the sacred writings… [continues online] **read ›**

26 *Divine Institutes* 13 **Quote 9, page 4** "Solomon received the government of the kingdom from his father himself… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Divine Institutes* 18 (on point 3) "Solomon also, his son, who built Jerusalem, prophesied that this very city would perish in revenge for the sacred cross: "But if you turn away from me, says the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *5 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

28 **2 Samuel 7:12** And when your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. **read ›**

29 **1 Kings 4:29** And the Lord gave Solomon understanding and very great wisdom and breadth of heart, like the sand that is by the sea. (Septuagint 3 Kingdoms 5:9 (1 Kings 4:29 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

30 **Proverbs 4:25** Let your eyes look straight ahead, and let your eyelids nod toward what is just. **read ›**

31 **Matthew 12:42** The Queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, someone greater than Solomon is here. **read ›**

32 **1 Timothy 5:12** having condemnation, because they have abandoned their former faithfulness. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *61 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 3:19

Deuteronomy 22:8 · 32:32

1 Samuel 13:14 · 16:6 · 18:8

1 Chronicles 28:3

Psalms 39:7 · 45:6 · 72:1

Proverbs 6:27

Ecclesiastes 1:13 · 2:16

Jeremiah 32:19

Matthew 3:12 · 5:28 · 5:31 · 5:32 · 10:22 · 15:13 · 19:3 · 20:16 · 22:44

Luke 12:22 · 12:24 · 12:27 · 14:28 · 16:18

John 1:1 · 2:19 · 4:34 · 6:66 · 6:67 · 6:68 · 13:12 · 14:27

Acts 3:5

Romans 8:11

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1 Corinthians 1:5 · 2:6 · 2:7 · 3:16 · 3:18 · 7:10 · 15:12 · 15:21 · 15:25

2 Corinthians 4:14

Galatians 5:6

Colossians 2:8 · 2:9

1 Timothy 1:4 · 1:20 · 4:1

2 Timothy 1:15 · 2:17 · 2:19

Titus 3:9

Hebrews 4:15

1 John 1:1 · 2:19

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Did the early Christians see King Solomon as a total failure?” on August 31, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY