

King Solomon's Wealth, and The Queen of Sheba's Visit

1 Kings 10

1 Kings 10:1-13 - *"Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.*

Then she said to the king, 'It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness.'

Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. Also, the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great quantities of almug wood and precious stones from Ophir. And the king made steps of the almug wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants."

Background Notes

Sheba was located in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, where Yemen is located today. Most likely the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame from the traders that traveled throughout the known world at that time. (The traders of Sheba are mentioned in Ezekiel 27.) To check out for herself the wisdom and wealth of King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba traveled more than 1200 miles to Jerusalem. And she was not disappointed! In fact, Solomon's wisdom and wealth far exceeded what she had expected. Her conclusion was: *"And indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard."*

"King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked"(v13). The Queen of Sheba's requests likely included trade agreements. These agreements were just as important in the ancient world as they are today. "Almug wood" (v11) was a very strong and beautiful wood, black on the outside, and ruby red on the inside.

We don't know whether or not the Queen of Sheba became a true believer in the God of Israel, but notice that she referred to the Lord in verse 9. However, she began the statement with "the Lord **your** God" - not "the Lord **our** God." *"Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."* This verse and Matthew 12:42 may indicate that the Queen of Sheba became a true believer in the God of Israel, but we can't say that with certainty.

Doctrinal Points

1. All our questions will be answered by the wisdom of the King.

As we've mentioned before, King Solomon and his glorious kingdom present us with a picture of the Lord and His glorious kingdom that will come in the future. In Matthew 6:29 the Lord Jesus referred to the glory of Solomon. And in Matthew 12:42 the Lord Jesus told the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees, *"The queen of the south will rise out in judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon - and indeed a greater than Solomon is here."*

In that verse the Lord drew a parallel between King Solomon and Himself. As Solomon answered all the Queen of Sheba's difficult questions, so all our difficult questions will be answered by the Lord, who is *"greater than Solomon,"* when He returns as the glorious King. All our questions will be answered by the wisdom of our great King.

Do you have any difficult questions? I know I do. Many of my questions have been answered as I've studied the Word of God. But when we're finally with the Lord, all our questions will be answered! *"In Him [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (Colossians 2:3). Won't it be great when we have no more questions? I don't know about you, but I can't wait to have all my questions answered! All our questions will be answered by the wisdom of the King.

2. All our desires will be met by the wealth of the King.

1 Kings 10:14-25 - *"The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides that from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country."*

And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred shields of hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom."

All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. [The apes and monkeys were probably brought in as domesticated pets.] So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present -- articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year."

Verses 14-25 provide us with a further description of King Solomon's wealth. Wow! What wealth! No wonder the queen of Sheba said, *"the half has not been told"*! And no wonder Solomon could grant all the Queen of Sheba's requests. *"Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity" (v13)*

There's a spiritual picture here. Just as Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba all she desired - **all our desires will be met by the wealth of our King!** We, too, will say, *"the half has not been told"*!

Today the Lord has *"blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:2)*. And when He sets up His future kingdom here on earth, all that we need or desire will be provided. At that time we will reign with Him in our new bodies, and all our desires will be godly because they will be line up with the program of our King, the Lord Jesus. There will be no poverty on earth, and there will be worldwide material and spiritual blessing! What a great time that will be! All our desires will be met by the wealth of the King.

Notice verses 24-25: *"Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present - articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year."* I believe this, too, is part of the prophetic picture of Christ's glorious earthly kingdom of the future. Believers who come out of the great Tribulation into the millennial kingdom of Christ, and those who are born during that 1000 years and become believers, will come to Jerusalem from all over the world to worship the King.

Read about this future kingdom in Psalm 72: *"Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him. All nations shall serve Him and He shall live, and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him. Prayer also will be made for Him continually and daily He shall be praised."* What a great time of material and spiritual blessing that will be! All our desires will be met by the wealth of the King.

Practical Application

Don't think that God's blessing on your life means that you are perfect!

1 Kings 10:26-29 - *“And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores that are in the lowland.*

Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price. Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.”

These verses – in fact this entire chapter - reveal that God greatly blessed Solomon with wisdom and wealth. But it would be a mistake to assume God granted these blessings because Solomon was a perfect king. No! Solomon was **not** a perfect king.

In fact, these verses reveal that Solomon was disobedient to God's Law. *“Solomon accumulated chariots and horse... Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue... They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.”* Deuteronomy 17:16 says that the kings of Israel were not to acquire large numbers of horses, nor were they to allow the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses - *“for the Lord has said to you, you shall not return that way again.”*

God gave this law so His people would not trust in their own military might, but would look to God alone for security. And yet we see here that Solomon disobeyed this law. Not only that, but he even became an arms dealer in military horses and chariots!

Deuteronomy 17:17 says that Israel's kings *“must not take many wives... and must not accumulate large amounts of silver or gold.”* King Solomon broke both these laws. 1 Kings 10 says that Solomon had great quantities of gold, and silver was as common as stones in Jerusalem! So God did not bless Solomon because Solomon was perfect.

We, too, experience and enjoy the gracious blessing of God on our lives. Sometimes we assume that these blessings mean that God has placed His stamp of approval on every aspect of our lives - but this is not necessarily the case! Our lives and lifestyles must line up with the commands of the Word of God. Don't think that God's blessing on your life means that you're perfect!