



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
Richard Cimino
December 21, 2009

1 Kings 10

Related Topics: Solomon; Queen of Sheba; Jesus and the Queen of Sheba; Solomon's Kingdom and wealth; The Promises of God Fulfilled; Jesus Greater than Solomon; The Riches in Jesus; The Wisdom of Jesus; Seeking Jesus

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.

There has been some question as to whether this woman was Arabian or Ethiopian. History also tells us that they were known to have queens as well as kings.

Josephus, calls her “queen of Egypt and Ethopia,” as do some Rabbinical writers. The Pulpit Commentary: 1 Kings. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (202)

The other view relates Sheba to *Sabea* — which modern day Yemen is today (Southern Arabia). It was especially famous for its gold, gems, and spices ([Ezek. 27:22](#); [Jer. 6:20](#); [Isa. 60:6](#); [Joel 3:8](#); [Job 6:19](#); [Psa. 72:10](#)). The Pulpit Commentary: 1 Kings. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (202)

The Roman Historian, Pliny the Elder, refers to Sabea as having an abundance of aromatic woods and spices and of gold. (See *Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xii., c. 17* and *Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvii., c. 6*)

Just how badly did this woman want to meet Solomon — hear from him directly — personally view the majesty of his kingdom? Let's say she was from Sabea — as it is the shortest distance. This would have been a journey on camel of some 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) to Jerusalem

This would have been not only long — but miserable. (Mounting a camel — The stink of camels — Camels can only walk or trot). She traveled in the manner of royalty - with a large royal procession, heavily laden with gifts and goods for trade. This would have been a very slow journey — like driving on interstate 5 behind all of the trucks!

THE BIG IDEA HERE — This woman was willing to expend time and energy to find out about *the Name of the Lord*. Jesus makes mention of the length of her journey as a measure of her desire to meet Solomon.

Matthew 12:42 for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *This queen points the path by which all pilgrims of the truth must travel. It is not to be won without effort, without conquest of prejudices, repression of weakness, sacrifices of delights, and long effort. There must be humility, which will gladly learn, if there is ever to be its possession.*

In today's world people decide that they want to satisfy their spiritual curiosity with as little effort or cost as possible.

We also want to note that she made this journey because she had *heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord*. The great prosperity, splendor, and wisdom of Solomon's kingdom were internationally famous — and it was associated with the Name of the Lord! What a great lesson for us in our successes — No matter how well known our successes might be — it is so important that it be equally well known that our success is wrapped up in the Name of the Lord.

ALSO — The purpose of her trip was to test not just Solomon's wisdom — but the claim that all of his greatness was wrapped up in *the Name of the Lord*. Let's see if this guy really does possess wisdom from Yahweh, the God of Israel. God. Literally — *she came to him with parables and riddles*. By way of application — When people here of our lives wrapped up *in the Name of the Lord* they want to see if it's real — or just more religion.

²She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. ³And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. ⁴And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, ⁵the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her.

This woman was a Queen. As a queen she was familiar with the world of royal splendor and luxury. Yet she was so utterly blown away by the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of his kingdom that it took her breath away! Adam Clarke says that this means she fainted!

Listen to her response —

⁶And she said to the king, “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, ⁷but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. ⁸Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.”

behold, the half was not told me — The Queen of Sheba heard wonderful things about Solomon and his kingdom, but upon seeing it with her own eyes she realized it was far greater than she had heard.

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer — *So when we come to Christ, His wisdom and goodness far surpass the power of men and angels to utter. The soul exults in the golden radiance of His love and grace, which are inexpressible. We sink in our own esteem, there is no spirit left in us; while we have ever enlarging conceptions of Christ.*

⁸Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! — It is such a radical experience to serve or work along side a truly great person. Imagine serving a great king who was wiser than any man on earth and possessed more wealth than any man on earth. LISTEN! A Christian is the friend and servant of the King of kings! Serving Jesus is the GREATEST experience knowable by man, (More on this in a bit,)

⁹Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! — This is exactly what God wanted to do for Israel under the promises of the Old Covenant. God promised Israel that if they obeyed under the Old Covenant, He would bless them so tremendously that the world would notice and give glory to the Lord GOD of Israel.

Deuteronomy 28:1, 10 “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth....” ¹⁰ Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called **by the name of the LORD**, and they shall be afraid of you.

There in **Deuteronomy 28** we see that God wanted to reach the nations through an obedient and blessed Israel. If Israel did not obey, then God would speak to the nations through a thoroughly disciplined Israel.

⁹Blessed be the Lord your God — **QUESTION:** Was this a true confession of faith, expressing allegiance to the God of Israel. It is very possible, if not most likely, that this was nothing more than a recognition of Israel's God but not necessarily an expression of personal faith.

It is one thing to be a seeker, and as a seeker to be impressed with the goodness of Jesus in the life of a believer, but it is another thing altogether for that seeker to respond to what he or she understands about the Name of the Lord and make a personal commitment to Jesus.

This speaks to the philosophy of ministry that says the mission of a local church is impress seekers with facilities and programs and organization and professionalism and because they are so impressive men and women will come to personal faith and commitment to Jesus. It appears that the Queen of Sheba returned home impressed by not converted.

Regardless of the result of her search, we can admire her seeking.

- She came from a great distance
- She came with gifts to offer
- She came to question and to learn
- She came and saw the riches of the king
- She came for an extended period
- She came telling all that was on her heart

Again — the words of Jesus concerning this woman —

Matthew 12:42 ⁴²The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

If the Queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendor of his kingdom so diligently, *how much more* should people today seek Jesus and the glory of His Kingdom. She will certainly also rise up in judgment with this generation.

¹⁰Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones. Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. ¹¹Moreover, the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones. ¹²And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, also lyres and harps for the singers

You guitar players can relate to this — think of incredibly rare Brazilian rosewood or some other exotic wood.

No such almug wood has come or been seen to this day. ¹³And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she

asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants.

given her by the bounty of King Solomon — One translation reads this as “according to the royal generosity.”

To understand the MEANS of King Solomon — the personal wealth from which Solomon gave gifts to this woman — the Holy Spirit saw fit to record for us Solomon’s annual income.

¹⁴Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, ¹⁵besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land

666 talents = 9,000 pound = 144,000 ounces @ \$1,100/oz. = \$1.5 billion

Lets try to wrap our heads around this portion of his annual income. If a millionaire told his wife to go out and spend \$1,000 /day and told her to NOT come back until she had spent \$1 million, she would not come until 3 years had passed. If this man’s wife had to spend \$1 BILLION at the rate of \$1,000/day, his wife would not come back for 3,000 years OR - If you had a stack of \$1,000 bills, \$1 million would make a stack 8 inches high. But if that stack added up to \$1 BILLION, that stack would be 115 FEET higher than the Washington monument, which is 555 FEET tall. Solomon was making A LOT of money!

HUGE POINT HERE — This description of Solomon's measure of generosity to the Queen of Sheba also describes the measure of God's generosity towards us. He gives out of HIS bounty! He gives according to HIS generosity.

Isa. 9:6 Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.)

“God” — The greatest Lover

“So loved” — The greatest degree

“The world” — The greatest number

“That He gave” — The greatest act

“His only begotten Son” — The greatest Gift

“That whosoever” — The greatest invitation

“Believeth” — The greatest simplicity

“In Him” — The greatest Person

“Should not perish” — The greatest deliverance

“But” — The greatest difference

“Have” — The greatest certainty

“Everlasting Life” — The greatest possession

¹Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers. Garland TX: Bible Communications.

HOW Generous is God to us in Jesus Christ?

Eph. 2:7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants.

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer — *She had to leave the magnificent monarch, congratulating those who ever stood in his presence; we, on the other hand, need never pass out of the presence-chamber of our King. Fed on His provision; living on His royal bounty; and satisfied with His goodness. He also gives all our desire, and "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think:"*

¹⁶King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold; 600 shekels of gold went into each shield. ¹⁷And he made 300 shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

These shields were all for show — just ridiculously expensive decorations in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, They were of zero use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This shows Solomon with the *image* of a warrior king, but without the *substance*.

According to one commentator (Dilday) each large shield was worth about \$120,000. The smaller shields were worth \$30,000. \$33 million was invested in giving the IMPRESSION of being a man of war!

¹⁸The king also made a great ivory throne and overlaid it with the finest gold. ¹⁹The throne had six steps, and at the back of the throne was a calf's head, and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests, ²⁰while twelve lions stood there, one on each end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom. ²¹All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.

No Tupper Ware for Solomon — No free plastic cups from McDonalds.

²²For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. ²³Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom.

The promises of **Deuteronomy 28:1-14** were fulfilled in his reign:

Deuteronomy 28:12 *The Lord will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.*

Just a thought here — Think of how America has gone from being the lender and giver (rebuilding Japan and Germany) to being the Borrower. The United States pays off its borrowed money by selling Treasury Bonds. Our debt is so great now that China said last week *'The world does not have Money to buy more US Treasuries'* (*Drudge Report 12.21.09*)

²⁴And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.

This was another fulfillment of the promises of Deuteronomy 28:

Deuteronomy 28:13 KJV *And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:*

²⁵Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year. ²⁶And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ²⁷And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah.

Would you write in the margins of your Bibles **Deuteronomy 17:14-17**

¹⁴*“When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’*
¹⁵*you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not*

*your brother. ¹⁶Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' ¹⁷And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself **excessive** silver and gold.*

We want to take note of how **the accumulation of gold** is mentioned no fewer than 11 times in [vv. 14, 16–18, 21–22, 25](#). Solomon decorates his palace with it ([v. 16](#)); overlays the finest **throne** ever seen with it ([vv. 18–20](#)); and makes household items with it ([v. 21](#)). It arrives in Israel by various means, including **ships of Tarshish** ([v. 22](#)), ships capable of a journey to such a far-flung western port (see [Isa. 66:19](#); [Ezek. 27:12–15](#); [Jonah 1:3](#)). These ships are said to have sailed to lands so distant that it took **three years** to return with their extraordinary cargo. (see ESV Study Bible)

The chapter ends of this dark note.

²⁸And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price. ²⁹A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150, and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

This was in direct disobedience to **Deuteronomy 17:16**. *¹⁶Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'*

Why did the Lord say these things? Was it because He is a scrooge and does not want us to prosper and enjoy life? Egypt is a type or a picture of the world system in rebellion against God. The world lives for and puts its trust in such things. In the end the unbelieving world becomes slaves to those things. God saved us from those things. God knows the tendency of our hearts to “go back to Egypt,” He knows our tendency to trust in our horses and in our gold.

***1 Tim 6:17** 'As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

God is the only certain thing going. God is worthy of our trust. As we trust in the Lord and in His Word we become free, not slaves.

I want to close by returning to the top of the chapter and the words of Jesus concerning the Queen of Sheba

***Matthew 12:42** ⁴²The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*

If Solomon was worth such a costly effort and journey — how much more worthy is Jesus of all of our attention and effort.

Solomon had the wisdom from God. But Paul tells us that Jesus is ***1 Cor 1:24** the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* But Paul also said in ***Col 2:3*** that in Jesus *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Solomon was a great king. But Jesus is the *King of kings*

Solomon had incredible wealth. But in Jesus there are ***Eph 3:8** unsearchable riches*

Even as we see Solomon, with wisdom from God, answering the queen of Sheba's toughest questions, Jesus Christ is the answer to all questions. If man would but look to Jesus, He will find truth. Jesus is the truth. In a world of lies Jesus says — I Tell you the truth.

The Queen of Sheba sought out Solomon to find out about ***the name of the Lord.*** God became a man — and as a man His Name is Jesus!

Jesus is the *Name above all names.* — *At the Name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. **Phil 2:9-10***

***Acts 4:12** There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*

Even as Solomon revealed himself and his riches to the queen of Sheba, Jesus will reveal Himself and His riches to anyone who comes to Him

***John 15:15** ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

***John 17:24-26** ²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

Even as Solomon loaded her with riches — gave out of his bounty — Jesus pours out the riches of His grace and mercy... His peace and truth

Eph 1:3 ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

Eph 3:20 ²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

All of this for seeking Jesus with the intensity of the queen of Sheba

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Jer 29:11-13 ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart,

Jesus is INCOMPARABLE. Yet He is ACCESSIBLE to you and me. NOW! TODAY! EVERYDAY! Take hold of Him.

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *The sacrifices which men can make for lower objects are the most powerful rebukes of their unwillingness to make sacrifices for the highest.... The same energy and effort which this queen put forth to reach Solomon, and which men eagerly put forth for some temporal good, would suffice to bring them to the feet of the great Teacher. Her longing for wisdom, her discernment of the person who could give it, and her toilsome journey, rebuke men's indifference to Christ's gifts, rebuke their failure to recognise His sweetness and power to make blessed, and their laziness and self-indulgence, which will not take a hundredth part of the pains to secure heaven which they cheerfully expend, and that often in vain, to secure earth..... They who find their way to Him, and tell Him all that is in their hearts, will have all their questions solved.... If we betake ourselves to Him, and learn of Him, we too shall find that 'the half was not told us'; for Christ possessed is sweeter than all expectation.... and to win Him is the only gain in which there is no disappointment, either at first or at last. We may all have the blessedness of His servants, 'which stand continually before' Him, and not only 'hear' but receive into their spirits His 'wisdom.'*