

1 Kings 10 – Part 1 (vs. 1-13)  
The Testimony of the Queen of Sheba

Introduction
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1. Chapter 10 is another one of those chapters where it's hard to know what the different parts have to do with each other
2. Vs. 1-13 describe a visit from the Queen of Sheba, whereby vs. 14-29 describe Solomon's greatness among all the kings of the earth
3. In some respect, they both serve as a testimony to God's love, goodness, and blessings upon Solomon and Israel and that may be what ties them together
4. I thought about covering all of chapter 10 today, but I think that would do a disservice to the event surrounding the Queen of Sheba because there is a LOT there, so...
  - a. Today we're going to cover vs. 1-13 and I've titled this "The Testimony of the Queen of Sheba"
  - b. Next week, we're going to cover vs. 14-29 and I've titled that "The Testimony of Solomon's Greatness"

A. The queen of Sheba seeks confirmation of what she's heard about Solomon (READ 10:1-3)
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1. Who was the queen of Sheba?
  - a. She's only mentioned here and once by Jesus as the Queen of the South (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31)
  - b. Almost nothing is known about her except that she was a gentile queen of a wealthy kingdom
  - c. It's also not certain where the land of Sheba was, but most scholars associate it with the wealthy kingdom of Saba which was located in southern Arabia
  - d. This would certainly match Jesus' description of her as the Queen of the South, and would explain the gifts of spices and gold she brought Solomon:
    - 1) The Land of Saba was known all over the world for its spice trade
    - 2) Back in 2012 an ancient gold mine was also discovered in the region
  - e. If the queen was indeed from this region, the trip would have been between 1200 and 1500 miles and would have taken over three months
2. Right out of the gate, we are told that she "**heard about the fame of Solomon**":
  - a. More literally, the text says she "**heard a hearing/report about Solomon**"
  - b. Based on the context, this report included at least three things: reports of Solomon's wisdom, his prosperity (7), and more importantly their connection to "**the name of Yahweh**" (1)
    - 1) Back in 4:34, and again in 10:24, we learn that men and kings from all over the earth came to hear Solomon's wisdom
    - 2) Apparently, as word spread about Solomon's wisdom and prosperity, so did word of Yahweh as the source of those things
    - 3) This is precisely what Solomon prayed for when he dedicated the temple:
      - a) Look back at 9:41-43 (READ)
      - b) See also 9:59-60

3. So, the queen of Sheba travels three months and over 1200 miles to see if what she heard is true by testing Solomon **“with difficult questions”**:
  - a. She arrives with a large caravan of gifts: spices, gold and precious stones and proceeds to **“speak with him about all that was in her heart”** (2)
  - b. Not surprisingly, Solomon answered all her questions; there was **“nothing hidden from the king which he did not explain to her”** (3)

**B. The queen of Sheba confesses the truth of Solomon’s wisdom and prosperity (READ 10:4-8)**

1. Clearly, Solomon passed the test!
2. Upon witnessing his wisdom and prosperity, the queen confesses that everything she heard was true (4-6)—in fact, it left her breathless (**“there was no more spirit/breadth in her”**)
3. However, she also confesses that she hadn’t believed the report until she had seen it with her own eyes, and that the report she heard didn’t do Solomon’s wisdom and prosperity justice; they far exceeded the report which she had heard (7)
4. She even spoke of how blessed Solomon’s officials and servants must have been to hear his wisdom continually (8)

1<sup>st</sup> Trip to Disney—I had heard the reports of how awesome it was, but was a bit skeptical and had no real desire to go; it not only lived up to expectations but far exceeded them; every thing from the hotel staff who arranged the girls stuffed animals on the bed, to the spotless parks, to the friendliness of EVERY staff person, to the amazing food, even the chefs coming out to cater to my needs; I was so impressed that we went back 2x times!

**C. The queen of Sheba praises the LORD (10:9-12)**

1. It wasn’t enough for the queen to confess the truth of Solomon’s wisdom and prosperity, or to exclaim how blessed his servants were
2. What she had seen and experienced caused her to praise the LORD (READ 9-10):
  - a. She recognized the LORD’s role in making Solomon king; she refers to the LORD making him king 2x and even says that the LORD **“delighted”** in doing so; this is an emotional word and it means that the LORD found pleasure in making Solomon king
  - b. She recognized that the LORD did this because He loved Israel; it even appears that she recognized the long-term nature of His love for Israel (**“the LORD loved Israel forever”** in some English trans; **“the LORD’s eternal love for Israel”** in others)
  - c. Finally, she recognized the purpose of Solomon’s reign was to **“do justice and righteousness”** for Israel:
    - 1) This refers to how the king is to lead and similar to what was said of King David **“So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people”** (2 Samuel 8:15)
    - 2) We get a great picture of what this should look like from Solomon himself because he wrote a psalm about it (READ Psalm 72:1)
3. The queen of Sheba is the second gentile we’ve seen in 1 Kings who has praised the LORD for placing Solomon on the throne:

- a. The first was Hiram, and like the queen he also recognized that it was an act of God's love for Israel (READ 2 Chronicles 2:11-12)
- b. I imagine they weren't the only two to respond this way because 1 Kings 4:34 and 10:24 tells us that men and kings from all over the earth came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and all that God had placed in his heart
- c. Even though we are not told specifically that others responded in a similar fashion, it's not too far fetched to think that many did

D. The queen of Sheba returns home with both spiritual wisdom and earthly gifts from Solomon (READ 10:13)

- 1. According to this verse, the queen returned home with everything she desired and requested of Solomon, plus some personal gifts from Solomon:
  - a. We are not told what she asked Solomon for, but it could be a reference to goods in exchange for what she brought to him, or as we'll see in a second it could be a reference to the spiritual wisdom and knowledge she received in the answers Solomon provided
  - b. The phrase "**his royal bounty**" is more literally, "**the hand of King Solomon**" which simply means that in addition to what she asked for, Solomon freely gave her some personal gifts
- 2. I described this verse as the queen returning home not just with earthly gifts, but spiritual wisdom, and this is because of something Jesus said in the Gospels (READ Matthew 12:38-42):
  - a. When the scribes and pharisees demanded a sign from Jesus, he refused, rebuked them (and the current generation) for their unbelief, and told them the only sign they would receive would be the sign of Jonah the prophet, which was a reference to his death, burial, and resurrection
  - b. He then stated that both the men of Nineveh and the "**queen of the South**" (a reference to the queen of Sheba) would stand up in the final judgment and condemn them:
    - 1) The men of Nineveh are qualified for this because repented when they heard the preaching of Jonah
    - 2) The queen of Sheba was qualified for this because "**she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon**"
  - c. I believe the only way to interpret this is that the queen of Sheba will be on the right side of judgment which suggests that when she left the presence of Solomon, she took with her the wisdom and knowledge of God that was necessary for salvation

## E. Conclusion

- 1. One way to interpret this historical event is to focus on the wisdom and wealth of Solomon and its impact on the queen; that would certainly be appropriate
- 2. However, I believe there is something greater here in that the story itself illustrates the Gospel and what's required for salvation
  - a. Salvation requires that we be willing to seek out and confirm the truth about God and His Word, just as the queen sought out confirmation of what she had heard about Solomon "**regarding the LORD**":
    - 1) In Matthew 7:7-8 Jesus said, "**Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**" <sup>8</sup> "**For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.**"

- 2) We saw a great example of this in Acts with the contrast between the Jews of Thessalonica and Berea
  - 3) The Thessalonians became violent when Paul preached the Gospel, but the Bereans we are told were “more noble” than the Thessalonians because they not only listened, but searched the Scriptures to determine if what Paul preached
  - 4) It was their willingness to seek out the truth that led to their salvation
- b. Salvation also requires confession of the Truth, just as the queen of Sheba confessed that all that she had heard regarding Solomon and the LORD was true:
- 1) It’s not enough to call ourselves Christians, go to church, or claim we believe the Bible
  - 2) According to Jesus, we must confess Him: **“And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;”** (Luke 12:8)
  - 3) Paul wrote it this way, **“if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”** (Romans 10:9-10)
- c. Salvation results in praise to the LORD, just as the queen praised the LORD for His eternal love for Israel; three times in the opening verses of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul ties our salvation to the praise of God’s glory:
- 1) 1:5-6: **“He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”**
  - 2) 1: 11-12: **“also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.”**
  - 3) 1:13-14: **“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”**
- d. Salvation satisfies our deepest need and desire, just as Solomon’s wisdom and gifts completely satisfied the queen:
- 1) This is the very thing Jesus promised:
    - a) In Matthew 5:6; Jesus said, **“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”**
    - b) In John 4:13-14, He told the woman at the well, **“Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”**
    - c) In John 6:35 He said, **“I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and she who believe in Me will never thirst.”**
    - d) A few verses later He said, **“This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”** (6:58)
  - 2) It reminds me of the classic hymn, **“I Love to Tell the Story”** (use music video)