

I KINGS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Kings chapter 10 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Solomon is now the king in Israel and his kingdom has been firmly established. We are some 20 years into his reign and the temple is built and has been dedicated. His home and administrative buildings are completed. The kingdom is prospering. It is wealthy, there is peace and their king is wise! In fact, his fame is going to spread throughout the land, areas outside the land of Israel, as we will see tonight. But, we are also going to see that as the door of compromise was opened just a little, it came flying open and with devastating consequences. With that said, let's begin reading tonight in I Kings chapter 10, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

I KINGS 10**VERSE 1**

1. Here we see someone who has heard about the wisdom of Solomon, the wealth of his kingdom and came to hear and see it for herself. She came to find truth and she had heard that Solomon had the truth. The Queen of Sheba came from the area of southwest Arabia, an area that is known as Yemen today. Thus, her trip was a long one, some 1,200 miles from this area in Arabia to Jerusalem and yet, she made this difficult journey to see and hear the wisdom of Solomon!

VERSES 2-5

1. Keep in mind that Sheba was the homeland of the Sabians and they traveled to do business from Syria to east Africa and even to India and their trade was in gold, gemstones, perfumes and rare spices and thus, that is what we see the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon with. And when she arrived she could not believe what she saw and the wisdom of Solomon. It blew her mind!

2. Not only was there the wisdom of Solomon, but also the riches of the kingdom took her breath away. As she looked she saw the number of servants he had, the elaborate tables to eat at and the number of people who sat at them. For a Queen to be shocked at all that she saw, it had to be impressive.

3. There was more than just Solomon's wisdom, his wealth and the wealth of the kingdom. There was also the spiritual aspect to it as the glorious temple stood before her. Now this phrase in The New King James Version of the Bible here in I Kings 10:5, "**and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Lord.**" is better translated, "**and his burnt offering by which he went up unto the house of the LORD.**" In other words, the Queen of Sheba watched as Solomon went before God and offered a burnt offering. I wonder what people see in us as they watch our lives, if they see the work that Christ has done in us and through us and for us as He went to the cross of Calvary to pay in full for our sins? They should see that as this burnt offering that the Queen of Sheba saw was a witness to her!

VERSES 6-9

1. Have you ever tried to explain the beauty of the Rocky Mountains or the Grand Canyon or some other beautiful place to someone before? If you have I am sure you have found the difficulty in explaining all that you have seen, you just can't do it justice and that was true with the Queen of Sheba. Others tried to tell her about Solomon and his kingdom but they just could not do it justice because when she saw it, she was blown away! And she not only saw the beauty but how joyful the people were to serve their king. What a great lesson for us. That when we share Christ with people they should desire to have what we have and when they do come to Him, they will find out that what we have told them will not compare to what they experience in Christ! They too should be blown away!

2. Remember what God promised Israel that if they obeyed Him He would bless them tremendously and the world would take notice of what God was doing? In Deuteronomy chapter 28 we are told, **“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. . . . 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.”** Deuteronomy 28:1, 10.

Also, in I Kings 8:41-43 we see Solomon make this prayer as the temple was being dedicated, **“Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name’s sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.”** That is what we see here with the Queen of Sheba!

Now the big question is this, “Did the Queen of Sheba come to know the true and living God?” Some argue that she was just a seeker and thus, we don’t really know if she came to saving faith in the God of Israel! In fact, Russell Dilday said this regarding the Queen of Sheba, “Her statement about the blessings of the Lord on Israel and Solomon in verse 9 were no more than a polite reference to Solomon’s God . . . There is no record that she accepted Solomon’s God, who was so majestically edified by the temple.” And Wiseman wrote this, “*Praise to the LORD* implies recognition of Israel’s national God and need not necessarily be an expression of personal faith.”

I do believe that the Queen of Sheba came seeking and I also believe that she left knowing. First of all she gives glory, not to Solomon but to the Lord who has positioned Solomon over this kingdom. Secondly and more importantly is what Jesus said about her in Matthew 12:42, **“The queen of the South will rise up in the 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.”** Jesus is saying that they had, the Jews, someone far greater than Solomon that stood before them, they had the Son of God and yet, they did not believe. While the Queen of Sheba believed by listening to the words of Solomon and because she believed, she will sit in judgment of those who have rejected Christ! So I do believe she came seeking and left knowing!

VERSES 10-13

1. The Queen of Sheba came from an area that was known for their rich spices and thus, this Queen not only gives to Solomon an abundance of these spices but also gold and precious stones.

2. We are also told that Solomon gave to her all that she desired and thus, there are many traditions out there regarding this and yet, the Scriptures are silent. Some say that he gave to her the Ark of the Covenant, which I doubt, but now the Ark is being watched over by the people in this area and the area that many feel is Ethiopia. Another legend says that Solomon had a son named Menelik by the Queen of Sheba who took the Ark back to Ethiopia. Supposedly, King Solomon had this son by the Queen of Sheba when she came to visit Solomon (I Kings 10:1-13; 2 Chronicles 9:1-12). When he grew up Menelik returned to Jerusalem for a copy of the Ark of the Covenant, which Solomon gave to him! But Menelik secretly switched the real Ark with the replica. Menelik took the real Ark back to Ethiopia. The only problem with that is that Sheba is located in Saudi Arabia not Ethiopia, but when it comes to tradition, anything goes, but again, I don't buy it.

VERSES 14-15

1. Look at all this gold that came to Solomon in one year, 666 talents of gold or some 100 pounds and at a rate of \$400 per ounce, Solomon's income was over 426 million dollars per year besides the other things that were coming in. And don't think for a minute that the number 666 is arbitrary. The Holy Spirit is showing us that this multiplication of wealth is evil, it is in defiance of what the Lord said back in Deuteronomy 17:17! It is not that money or possessions are evil but when there is the love of these things, which Solomon was in love with these things, then it is evil!

VERSES 16-17

1. Solomon has these shields made of gold. The large shield had about 2 pounds of gold or \$13,000 apiece. The smaller shields had about ½ pound of gold and cost about \$3,200 apiece. And these shields were kept in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Were these shields used in battle? Absolutely not, they would be too heavy for battle and gold was too soft to be used as a shield and thus, they were for display.

VERSES 18-20

1. Can you imagine having this beautiful ivory and then covering it with gold. This was his throne and it is hard to even imagine what this looked like. I think of Mr. T and the gold he wore around his neck and this is Mr. T. on steroids!

VERSE 21

1. In other words, the kingdom was wealthy; silver was not looked upon as being of worth, of value!

VERSE 22

1. The Jews were not a seafaring people and thus, he hired outside of Israel to bring in possessions from other countries. It was Hiram who manned Solomon's fleet of ships and brought back great possessions from other countries. Monkeys should most likely be translated peacocks. It seems that Solomon keeps obtaining more and more exotic things to satisfy his desires. And the reality is, he is not satisfied and that is why he needs more and more things. And that is true for us, we will never be satisfied with things, for it is the Lord who brings to us satisfaction in our lives. He fills that void within us and we try to fill it with other thing and it won't work!

VERSES 23-25

1. Solomon had asked the Lord for wisdom to rule the nation by and God had given Solomon this great wisdom. And yet he used that wisdom for his own gain. It was a gift of God and Solomon was charging people to hear his wisdom. He was making a profit off of God! Our gifts are to be used for the glory of God, not to make a profit off of. Peter expounds on this by saying "**Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.**" I Peter 5:2. Yes, there are costs to run a ministry, but are we asking for more, are we fleecing the flock of God for our own gain? You see, that is dangerous and like Solomon, it will never satisfy!

VERSES 26-29

1. We see Solomon multiply wealth, making silver as nothing and gold flourished in the land. Back in Deuteronomy 17:17 God said that the future kings of Israel were not to multiply wealth. Now you can argue that God said He would bless Solomon and thus, that is what we are seeing here. I disagree, Solomon was bringing this wealth into his kingdom and thus, this is strike one for Solomon! You see, 6 is the number of man and thus, as we saw with his income of gold, 666, it is man's efforts to bring this wealth in and not God!

Now we also see that Solomon is multiplying horses and trading them and again, the Lord said that the future kings in Israel were not to do this, and again this is found in Deuteronomy chapter 17. This is strike two for Solomon! And as we get into the next chapter in a minute, we will see him multiply wives and again, God forbid this in Deuteronomy chapter 17 and that will make strike three for Solomon, he is out!

2. Now could this have been prevented? Absolutely. Again, in Deuteronomy 17:18-20 we are told, **“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”**

The future kings of Israel were to copy the Law down, either the book of Deuteronomy or the first five books of Moses so that they would know for themselves what God desired for their lives. Solomon had God's Word to read, we don't know if he did read it, I think he did. We don't know if he copied the Words of God down but in either case he did not believe it or did not think it applied to him and he was wrong! What a valuable lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives! It is as Agur said in Proverbs 30:8-9, **“Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches — Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.”** In other words, give me what I need, not more or less so I won't become distracted and deny you by my actions!

You see, someone once said, “This Book will keep you from sin. And sin will keep you from this book.” How true that is. David said in Psalm 119:9-11 this very thing, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”** God's Word is living and it is powerful and it will change our lives for the better if we allow the Holy Spirit through the Word to do that!

Poole makes these remarks regarding the future kings and the Word of God, “The Scriptures, diligently read and studied, are a powerful and probable means to keep him humble, because they show him that, though a king, he is subject to a higher Monarch, to whom he must give an account . . . sufficient to abate the pride of the haughtiest person in the world, if he duly consider it.” That truly is the key, not only know the Word of God but then applying it to our lives!

You see, no man is above what God has said in His Word to us. Solomon, the wisest man who has ever lived, played the fool. Yes, Solomon got away with it for a while, but it eventually caused him to fall hard. Don’t play the fool, heed the Words of God found in the Bible; it is what is best for our lives!

3. As I close this section, listen to these words from J. Vernon McGee. He wrote,

Solomon really built up tremendous wealth in the kingdom. At that time he actually cornered the market on gold, silver, and precious stones.

My friend, what are you busy doing today? Are you getting out the Word of God or are you in the business of gathering a bunch of apes? Do you pay more for entertainment than you do for the Word of God? How about the peacocks for beauty? More money is spent today on beauty preparations than is given to the Lord’s work. What about gold, silver, and precious stones? Are you so busy making money that you have no time left for the Lord? Oh, my friend, we are called to witness to the world. God have mercy on us for going into the business of apes and peacocks. How frivolous!

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible
Vol. II, pp. 269-270

What a wake-up call for us as Christians today. Are we amassing treasure on this earth or are we gathering treasure that will be in heaven, eternal rewards? That is a question each of us needs to deal with between the Lord and us.

I KINGS 11

VERSES 1-3

1. Here we see Solomon multiply wives unto himself. And Solomon is going to find out that you cannot violate the word of God and win. It will be these foreign wives that turn his heart from the Lord, just as he was warned in Deuteronomy chapter 17, and he is going to even go to the extreme of building shrines for his wives to worship their gods, and Solomon himself will seek after them. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines, which were legal partners but did not enjoy the same standing as wives, they were in a sense a legal mistress! He had 1,000 women and yet he was suppose to be the wisest man?

Now some may argue that many of the Old Testament leaders had multiple wives and thus, it must not be wrong. There is no rebuke by God for it. If you feel that way let me show you that your Mormon leanings are wrong! Remember what we are told in Matthew 19:4-6, **“And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”**

Jesus takes us back to the very beginning, the Garden of Eden and the book of Genesis as we see God bringing Adam and Eve together and notice that it says that a man is to be joined to his wife and not wives! Thus, this was wrong and it was in direct disobedience to what God said back in Deuteronomy chapter 17 as we have said already!

2. God had appeared to Solomon twice and yet we read here in I Kings **“Solomon clung to these in love.”** Notice that he did not cling to the Lord, but to his wives, to his material possessions, and it was these very things that were driving him away from the Lord. God never appeared to David, and yet he did not fall into idolatry. Why? Because David clung to the Lord, he clung to the Word of God! David said in Psalm 119, **“I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding: Therefore I hate every false way.”** Psalm 119:101-104. If Solomon clung to God’s Word, he would not have fallen into idolatry.

G. Campbell Morgan sums it up like this for us. He wrote, “The whole story of King Solomon is full of the most solemn value. His was a life full of promise, but it ended in failure and gloom, because his heart turned from loyalty to God, in response to the seductions of his sensual nature.” Again, another important lesson for us, who or what are we clinging to!

VERSES 4-8

1. When Solomon started out down this road, do you think he thought it would ever bring him to this point where he is turning from the Lord and worshipping these other gods? Absolutely not and thus, what a warning to us, that traveling down this road of compromise will only bring about destruction to our lives! God knows best and thus, may we listen and obey His Words to us! Now, if the wisest man in the world can fall like this, what hope do we have? Our hope is only found when we cling to the Lord Jesus Christ, abiding in Him!

VERSES 9-13

1. Here's the thing. God appeared to Solomon twice and many times we think that spiritual experiences will keep us from sin and will keep us faithful to the Lord. As we can see, that is not so. It is the Word of God applied to our lives that helps us to live as God desires. For Solomon, his heart was divided and it took him his whole life to finally recognize that true happiness is not found in books, intellect, possessions, wealth or any other material possession. He spent a good portion of his later years in a backslidden condition because he did not obey God's word. Yes I believe he was saved, but he was not walking with the Lord in his later years. Solomon needed other things to satisfy or try to satisfy him.

David, on the other hand, only needed the Lord. Psalm 27:4 says “**One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His Temple.**” Again, that is where true satisfaction is found and yet, the enemy gets us focused on so many other things and in the end we are not satisfied and many times we have moved farther away from God in our relationship with Him!

2. Now for Solomon, it was a lesson that he was going to learn. A tough one and yet he did learn it. You see, at the end of his life, Solomon saw these possessions as emptiness, vanity. You see, no possessions could satisfy like the Lord. No possessions could bring joy like the Lord. And so Solomon, the wisest man, the richest man, the man who had everything a person could ask or want, came to this conclusion at the end of his life. This is what brings true joy. He said in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, “**Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil.**”

In other words, seek first the kingdom of God, seek His righteousness and you won't have to worry about these other things because God will supply them as He sees fit and you will find contentment, joy and even peace.

3. Now we need to keep in mind that during Solomon's reign he enjoyed times of peace and prosperity, but that was all going to change as God raises up adversaries to bring judgment upon Solomon, and he will divide the kingdom during the reign of Solomon's son. Jesus said in Luke 12:48, "**... For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.**" Solomon was given much by God and thus, much was expected from him, and he fell far short. He was leading the nation into idolatry! How about us, how much has God given to us and thus, He expects us to walk accordingly. It is not that we are perfect because we are not, but God does require us to walk as He has said and it is in relation to how much He has given to us!

VERSES 14-22

1. So now we see God bring judgment upon Solomon and his kingdom. Solomon enjoyed many years of peace but now that is going to change because there is no peace for the wicked the Bible tells us, (Isaiah 57:21). Thus, his first adversary is Hadad, an Edomite who fled to Egypt from Joab and David. We are told in II Samuel 8:13-14, "**And David made himself a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians in the Valley of Salt. He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David wherever he went.**"

Now as Hadad flees to Egypt we see that Pharaoh took a liking to him and gave him great possessions. Maybe he thought this would help him politically speaking but keep in mind that Joab wiped out the males in Edom, but that is a possibility. I am sure Pharaoh saw the hatred that Hadad had for Israel and thus, as he grew that hatred my help Egypt in their fight against Israel. So we see that Pharaoh gives Hadad his wife's sister as a wife and she bears him a son in Egypt.

And think about this. Hadad had all that he could ask for in Egypt, so why did he want to leave and go back home to Edom? The reason he wanted to return home was because of the anger that Hadad had against the children of Israel. The reason he wanted to return home was because this was where he lived, where some of his family still remained. And God will use those things to work out His plan and purpose and thus, Hadad's heart was stirred and he was an adversary towards Solomon. I'm sure there was a lot of bitterness towards David and now that bitterness was extended to David's family, and God used that bitterness to bring judgment upon Solomon.

2. Now why was God doing this to Solomon? Yes, to bring judgment upon him for his idolatry, but more importantly to stir Solomon's heart and to awaken him of his spiritual condition. He wanted Solomon to come to his senses and repent of his sins. With all the peace and prosperity that Solomon enjoyed, this should have been a wake-up call that something was wrong. You see, God will not leave us in the backslidden condition we are in, but will work out His plan to bring us back to Him because He loves us that much.

VERSES 23-25

1. Here we see God raise up another adversary to Solomon and the children of Israel, Rezon, who was from the north country. For a man who had so much, because he walked away from the Lord, because he let other things that he desired to cling to besides the Lord, God brought this judgment upon him, these adversaries who came and brought trouble to Israel. They were losing peace just as we do when we move away from the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ!

VERSES 26-28

1. Now we are going to see that trouble is not only going to come from outside of Israel, but from within also. And the reason is Solomon's walking away from the Lord as we have seen. Here we see that Solomon finds this young Ephraimite, named Jeroboam, who was very industrious and young, and Solomon puts him in a leadership position.

Jeroboam was good at what he did and yet he was not mature, and all that power that is coming his way is going to lead him spinning out of control, into idolatry. Also, some feel that the name Jeroboam means, "may the people be great" and thus, because of that many feel he was popular with the people, they followed after him.

2. That is also true in ministry. You don't put a new Christian into a place of leadership; they need to mature in their faith. We tend to do that with celebrities, sports stars, rock stars, when they accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. And many times it is too much for them, they can't handle it, even if they are use to the spotlight being upon them. You see, as Christians it is not our light that we are to shine, but the light of Christ and thus, as we put them in the limelight and they stumble, they fall, we just can't understand why this happened to them. It is because they are young in the faith. You would never put a child in a leadership position and we should not put Christians that are young in the faith in that kind of position. Remember what Paul told Timothy, "**Do not lay hands on anyone hastily.**" I Timothy 5:22.

VERSES 29-39

1. God is speaking through the prophet Ahijah that Solomon's kingdom will be divided into two kingdoms. Through this acted out prophecy, cutting his own new garment into 12 pieces, giving 10 to Jeroboam, which was to show that 10 tribes were to follow after Jeroboam and two tribes after Solomon's son, Rehoboam. The Northern Kingdom will have its headquarters in Samaria, and they will be called Israel. And the Southern Kingdom will have its headquarters in Jerusalem, and they will be called Judah. Now you would think that this larger nation, the Northern Kingdom of Israel would be more prosperous and last longer but it didn't. The reason is simple. They were wicked, there was not one good king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and thus, judgment came upon them first and then eventually it came upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah, who did have some very godly kings but then the nation declined and they went into captivity and this was also for their idolatry.

2. We also see here God willing to bless Jeroboam, who was not even of the lineage of David, if he will walk in the ways of the Lord. God was looking for anyone to take a stand for Him and lead the nation. God is willing to bless those that obey, the tragic part of all this is that shortly after he was made king over the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam leads these tribes into idolatry. God wants to bless, the thing is, are we willing to walk accordingly, to be obedient to Him, to be faithful?

VERSE 40

1. This is interesting to me because God warned Solomon that judgment was coming upon his descendants and mercy would be shown to Solomon and yet, Solomon is trying to destroy Jeroboam so that he can protect his dynasty! And when Jeroboam finds out that his life is in danger, he flees to Egypt until the death of Solomon. When you look at the actions of Solomon, he is acting much like king Saul did towards David. Saul tried to stop the plan of God and so did Solomon. But both failed. Solomon, instead of trying to kill Jeroboam he should have been repenting of his sin of idolatry and turn back to the true and living God. But man thinks he can prevent the plans of God from coming to pass and in the end, we only find out how wrong we are. And the reality is, do we really want to stop God's plan, for He has what is best and our plans are selfish and they are not good, they are not perfect like our Lord's!

VERSES 41-43

1. Now some feel that because of Solomon's behavior, that he was not saved and thus, died apart from God. They believe that Solomon died in apostasy. Matthew Poole wrote this in regard to Solomon's life, "If he did repent, yet the silence of the Scriptures about it in this history was not without wise reasons; as, among others, that his eternal condition being thus far left doubtful, his example might have the greater influence for the terror and caution of future offenders."

As I read the book of Ecclesiastes, written towards the end of Solomon's life, I see a man who has repented and come back to the Lord. I don't think Solomon died in apostasy but came back to the Lord.

2. Now we see the death of Solomon. And as Solomon passes off the scene after 40 years as king in Israel, we see that his son Rehoboam is now the king in Israel, their fourth king in their history. And it is during his reign that the nation will be divided into 2 kingdoms, the North and the South. We are going to see that the Northern Kingdom of Israel did wickedly and did not have one good king, as I have said. In fact as time goes on they get more and more wicked. The Southern Kingdom of Judah does a little better. They had some good kings and some bad kings. But again, towards the end the bad outweighed the good and they too went into captivity, some 130 years or so after the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And so next time we will pick up the story and we will see Rehoboam as king and the nation is about to be divided.

3. Let me leave you this evening with these words from David to his son Solomon before he ascended to the throne. In I Kings 2:2-4, **“I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,’ He said, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’”** Solomon did not heed those warnings and suffered the consequences. May we learn the lesson!