

1 Kings 10 - Solomon is visited by the Queen of Sheba

Discussion outline for Virtual Vestry October 4

[1 Kings 10](#) (see also [2 Chronicles 9](#)) reads as a bragging sheet of all of Solomon's wealth and greatness. The visit of the Queen of Sheba serves to show how great Solomon was. I looked about for a few points to set the scene of the visit of the Queen of Sheba, except that it's not clear where the Queen of Sheba came from. Some hypothesise the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen) and others say she came from Africa somewhere. One thing we do know though is that, by the end of his life, Solomon was not that impressed by all his wealth, declaring it meaningless (for example, see [Ecclesiastes 5:10](#)).

Why do you think this account of Solomon's wealth and greatness is written down here, i.e. what purpose does it serve?

What would you think, as an Israelite/Jew, looking back on these descriptions of Solomon's wealth and greatness?

I have often wondered why wealth is accumulated by some and passes others by. Solomon's wealth would seem to imply there's something in the notion of the prosperity gospel. On the other hand, Jesus was essentially a blue collar worker (a carpenter) up until he left home to live as a travelling rabbi, financially supported by others (many of them women).

Discuss. Consider also what Jesus said in [Luke 12:27](#).

In verse 8 the Queen of Sheba talks about the happiness of the royal household to hear Solomon's wisdom and then in verse 9 she says that "because the Lord has loved Israel forever" she has placed Solomon on the throne to execute justice and righteousness. The Queen of Sheba seemed to be on to something here, something more important than wealth.

Discuss

One explanation I have for the purpose of all this splendour is that it made the Queen of Sheba come and look. In fact, the Queen of Sheba came to test Solomon with hard questions and riddles. It also says that Solomon answered them all. She was then impressed and made statements about the love of God for Israel in 1 Kings 10: 10.

Is there a Godly purpose and use for wealth?

How does this compare to the prosperity gospel that says that you have to be blessed by God through wealth?

In verses 23-25, it talks about all the kings of the earth coming to Solomon to bring gifts and to "hear the wisdom God had put in his heart." However, I feel that the importance of Solomon's wisdom is a little overshadowed by the list of his wealth. Having said that, it is not because of wealth that the kingdom is split in two after Solomon. It is because of idolatry. While Solomon and his wisdom was a witness for God, the wealth is perhaps a double-edged sword.

What do you think is a danger of all this wealth? (compare verses 28-29 with [Deuteronomy 17:16](#))

To avoid the temptations of wealth, should we seek to be poor or is there something else we should ascribe to? Compare with [Phillipians 4: 11-13](#).

The Queen of Sheba notes how happy the royal officials must be to be part of Solomon's court and to hear his wisdom. One of my thoughts as I read this chapter was the thought that Solomon and his wealth and wisdom was a reflection of God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit ruling in heaven. We often talk about the issues and problems that scripture presents us and can sometimes be somewhat negative. I thought we might end on something a little different.

Feel free to discuss what God ruling in heaven might look like for you.