

March 12, 2021

BIBLE STUDY

Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.

37 Market Street, New Haven, CT 06513
Bishop M. Ruel McCoy, Sr., Servant / Shepherd
The Late Bishop E. Samuel Green, Establishmentarian

“THE HALF HAS NOT BEEN TOLD”

2 Chronicles 9:1-31

II Chronicles 9:1 "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart."

Perhaps the most famous event in Solomon's reign was the visit by the queen of Sheba. Modern historians identify Sheba with the South Arabia Kingdom of Saba in present-day Yemen. Ethiopians claim the Queen of Sheba as part of their heritage, and through her union with King Solomon, Ethiopians also claimed a connection between their kings and the Davidic monarchy of Israel. The queen's existence is disputed among modern historians. However, we believe in the inerrancy of scripture and the bible in multiple passages establishes her existence and significance. By her report, the wisdom and wealth Solomon possessed was known far and wide.

I Kings 10:1 "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions."

The addition of the statement in 1 Kings "concerning the name of the LORD" is very important. The fame of Solomon and his kingdom had spread to the lands around them. This queen was very wealthy and came to see Solomon, bringing many camels laden with gifts. There were so many people named Sheba, that it is difficult to determine which of the persons the country of Sheba was named for. She had not only heard of Solomon's great wealth, and magnificent buildings he had erected, but had heard of his great wisdom, as well.

II Chronicles 9:2 "And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not."

Solomon spent a great deal of time with her, as he would with any monarch of honor who visited him. He tried to answer her questions as fully as he could. He showed her his home and everything else she had wondered about. She, of course, was not allowed to see the ark.

II Chronicles 9:3 "And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,"

Solomon informed her that his wisdom was a gift from God. No one could deny that he had great wisdom. His judgments were just but filled with wisdom only God could have given him. A good example of this is how he settled the argument of the two women, over who the baby belonged to. His house was magnificent. There was gold and silver in abundance. Some of the greatest artisans of that day had done the engravings and decorations.

II Chronicles 9:4 "And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her."

In 1 Kings chapter 4, we went into great detail on the amount of food furnished for Solomon's table. Solomon, probably, had a state dinner in her honor. The food so far surpassed anything she had ever seen, and she was very impressed. Many exotic foods were brought in from other countries. Solomon had need for nothing. The sitting of the servants is, possibly, speaking of his officers, who would have been invited to such an affair. The finest apparel in all the world was Solomon's. Even the stairs, that he ascended up into the house of the LORD by, were elegant. "There was no spirit in her" means it was so wonderful it took her breath away. The king's thoughtful answers to her difficult questions and the sight of his wealth took her breath away.

II Chronicles 9:5 "And she said to the king, [It was] a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom:"

II Chronicles 9:6 "Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen [it]: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: [for] thou exceedest the fame that I heard."

II Chronicles 9:7 "Happy [are] thy men, and happy [are] these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom."

She had heard of the greatness of Solomon and his kingdom, but she had not believed any of it, because it seemed impossible. Now that she had seen this, she was terribly impressed. It was far beyond even what she had heard. It seems, that all of the greatness of the buildings and the wealth they represented did not impress her as much, as the wisdom of Solomon.

II Chronicles 9:8 "Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, [to be] king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice."

These words are those of the Queen of Sheba. We can take notice here, that the queen spoke of the LORD as the God of Solomon, not her own God. She recognized Him as powerful above other gods, but she did not express a desire for Him to be her God. This seems so strange, because she really gave the LORD credit for Solomon's accomplishments.

II Chronicles 9:9 "And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon."

120 talents of gold is speaking of 72 million dollars worth of gold at 400 hundred dollars per ounce. The spices of the part of Arabia, that she came from, were well known for being the finest in the world. The precious stones are not explained any further than here. This was a tremendously valuable gift to bring Solomon.

II Chronicles 9:10 "And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum trees and precious stones."

II Chronicles 9:11 "And the king made [of] the algum trees terraces to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah."

II Chronicles 9:12 "And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside [that] which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants."

These terraces, made with the algum wood were, probably, the terraces that were spoken of earlier as the ascent for Solomon to the temple. The beautiful wood was used for musical instruments, as well. The decorations, and all of the grandeur associated with the temple and Solomon's home were, probably, what greatly impressed the queen. This algum was, probably, red sandal-wood. We are not told exactly what Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba. The things he gave her were, probably, things she could not get in her own land. Whatever Solomon gave her was even greater than what she had brought him. Though she had brought some of her own stockpile of wealth to Solomon, he sent her back with more than she had delivered.

II Chronicles 9:13 "Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold;"

II Chronicles 9:14 "Beside [that which] chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon."

II Chronicles 9:15 "And king Solomon made two hundred targets [of] beaten gold: six hundred [shekels] of beaten gold went to one target."

Mention of the queen's visit led the chronicler to a catalog of Solomon's riches. His annual income of twenty-five tons of gold did not even include the revenue brought in by his commercial navy or the tribute (that is, the taxes) paid to him by lesser rulers. The 666 talents of gold would have 999 thousand ounces of gold. At 400 dollars per ounce, that would be worth 399 million dollars. This is almost beyond comprehension. There were so many ways that Solomon was getting all of this wealth. Of course, some of it was gifts from people, like the Queen of Sheba. The targets contained about 300 ounces of gold for each target. A shekel is a half-ounce of gold. This target, on today's market, would be worth 120 thousand dollars at 400 dollars per ounce. The fact that they made targets of gold, shows just how plentiful it was.

II Chronicles 9:16 "And three hundred shields [made he of] beaten gold: three hundred [shekels] of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon."

II Chronicles 9:17 "Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold."

II Chronicles 9:18 "And [there were] six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, [which were] fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by the stays:"

II Chronicles 9:19 "And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom."

The two hundred large shields of hammered gold and three hundred small shields of hammered gold were ornamental rather than military in nature; nevertheless, they must have been a very impressive sight. Again, these shields contained 150 ounces of gold for each shield. Each shield would be worth 60 thousand dollars. The throne could have been inlaid with ivory, and the wood covered with gold or it also could have been solid gold over ivory. The lions were on either end of each step going up to the throne. The lion was the emblem for the tribe of Judah. The fact that there were twelve represented the twelve tribes of Israel. These were beautifully carved. Solomon also built a throne unlike anything that had ever been seen before.

II Chronicles 9:20 "And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon [were of] gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon [were of] pure gold: none [were of] silver; it was [not] any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon."

The gold was so abundant, that even the drinking cups were of gold. This is, probably, speaking of the area where the great banquets were held. There was much pomp associated with the reign of Solomon.

II Chronicles 9:21 "For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

The ships were a way to bring in the gold and the other items of trade. Tarshish was across from the coast of Africa. We are not sure whether each voyage took three years, or not. That would have been a long time to cover such a short distance. They could have made many stops, however.

II Chronicles 9:22 "And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom."

II Chronicles 9:23 "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart."

His gift of wisdom, that God had given him, was one of the reasons for his great wealth. There was no king before him, or after him, that had the wealth of Solomon. Of course, this does not include Jesus who owns everything. The chronicler provides an apt summary of the state of affairs during the heyday of Solomon's reign: [He] surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and wisdom. All the kings of the world wanted an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

II Chronicles 9:24 "And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year."

The fact that these were brought year by year, indicates that this was tribute, or taxes. It appears, also, that Solomon accepted things as well as money for the tribute. Probably, Solomon had so much gold and silver, that he needed the animals, and harness, and raiment more than the gold.

II Chronicles 9:25 "And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem."

This was the largest number of horses and chariots of any of his predecessors. It was more than his neighbors, as well. The fact that they were so well-equipped, probably, was one of the reasons they had peace. He had some of them in Jerusalem, but had many of them in the cities in the outskirts to protect Jerusalem.

II Chronicles 9:26 "And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt."

David had defeated these bordering countries in his reign, and Solomon kept them under subjection to himself.

II Chronicles 9:27 "And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycomore trees that [are] in the low plains in abundance."

II Chronicles 9:28 "And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands."

The cedars had been sent into this area by Hiram. They were not native to the land of Israel. The sycamore tree was native to the land, and that is the reason for this. The silver was so plentiful, they did not even bother to weigh it. The all lands, here, is speaking of the horses that came from Arabia, and Armenia.

II Chronicles 9:29 "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, [are] they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?"

II Chronicles 9:30 "And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years."

II Chronicles 9:31 "And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead."

The remaining events of Solomon's reign, from beginning to end were recorded in other places now lost to history. In Scripture, we learn much more about him in 1 Kings, but the events acknowledged there were not part of the chronicler's focus and purpose. Rumblings related to the trouble to come must have been in existence even before this king's death, because we know that many of Solomon's subjects chafed under aspects of his reign. But, it's safe to say that no one in Israel could have foreseen, at the time, that Solomon's death would end Israel's golden age begun under David, pave the way for a bitter division of the nation, and open the floodgates of idolatry. Solomon did not live to see the damage done by his departure from the Lord, but his descendants did. These works, mentioned here, are not in the Bible. These are historical works of that day. Nathan had a great deal to do with Solomon, so his work should be very accurate. Both Ahijah and Iddo are mentioned in other Scriptures, and their works were, probably, highly regarded, as well. Solomon reigned 40 years, and if he was 12 years old when he began to reign, he was about 52 when he died. We do not know for sure how old he was when he began to reign, but he was no more than a youth. His reign was in Jerusalem. The one outstanding thing he was remembered for, was the building of the temple. The city of David is, of course, Jerusalem. He was buried beside his father, David. Rehoboam would reign over Judah in the divided kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to meet Solomon?
2. What did she bring for Solomon?
3. What was she more interested in than the great wealth of Solomon?
4. What did Solomon tell her?
5. What does the statement "there was no spirit in her" mean?
6. After she had seen all of this and talked with Solomon, what was her reaction?
7. Who did she call God in verse 8?
8. How many talents of gold did she bring Solomon?
9. What had the servants of Hiram brought Solomon?
10. What had Solomon made of the algum trees?
11. What did Solomon give the Queen of Sheba?
12. How many talents of gold came to Solomon in one year?
13. Where did some of the other gold come from?

14. How much gold was in one target?
15. How much gold was in one shield?
16. How many steps led up to the throne?
17. What was at either end of each step?
18. What was the emblem of the tribe of Judah?
19. What were the drinking vessels made of?
20. What did all the other kings bring to Solomon?
21. What was meant by them being brought yearly?
22. How many chariots did Solomon have?
23. Silver in Jerusalem was as _____.
24. How long did Solomon reign?
25. Where was the city of David?