

“Breathtaking”
1 Kings 10:1-13
(Preached at Trinity, December 13, 2020)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we have seen, the fame of Solomon reached far and wide. **Chapter 4** ended:
1 Kings 4:34 NAU - "Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom."
There is a bit of hyperbole here, but the author wants us to know that there was none to compare with Solomon. Surely, his fame extended across the known world of his day.
2. As we enter **Chapter 10** we read of the fame of Solomon extending over 1000 miles to the land of Sheba.
 - A. Most locate Sheba in South Arabia, present day Yemen or Ethiopia or may have included both. We can see how far the fame of Solomon had spread.
 - B. The Queen of Sheba had heard of Solomon’s wisdom, his discernment in judgment, the lavish feasts he would enjoy, his throne of unmatched beauty, the beautiful gardens he built, and his many building projects including the Temple and his own lavish palace.
 - C. As she heard of Solomon’s fame, she determined to investigate to see if it was true. What we read is interesting. In the days of Solomon monarchs seldom made diplomatic journeys in person. Most often, they would send emissaries. We can see this with Hiram and Solomon in **Chapter 5**
1 Kings 5:1-2 NAU - "Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always been a friend of David. ² Then Solomon sent word to Hiram"
 - D. With the Queen of Sheba she determined to make the journey in order to investigate for herself and see Solomon face to face.
Her journey would have been long and difficult. She had to cross the Arabian desert, continue along the coast of the Red Sea, and cross the Jordan River as she made her way to Jerusalem.
It would have taken over six months to make the journey.
3. Sheba was a wealthy kingdom, rich in gold and precious stones, incense and exotic spices. In spite of this vast wealth, Tyre was often unable to feed itself. This partly explains the wealth of riches the Queen of Sheba brought with her. She was interested in establishing a trade market.
 - a. But the text tells us far more. She came because of Solomon. She had heard of his fame and she had to know more. She had to see for herself.
 - b. The only thing we know about this queen is what we read in this passage. Ethiopian legend portrays the Queen of Sheba as beautiful, intelligent, resourceful and adventurous. She would have been one of the most powerful women of her day. Yet, she felt humbled as she learned about Solomon. Could it be true that such a king existed? She determined to embark on this long and difficult journey to meet Israel’s wise king.

4. **Verse 2** tells us she came with a large entourage and a great train of camels carrying riches from her kingdom.
 She came to view Solomon's kingdom and to test Solomon's wisdom with many difficult questions.
 The text tells us that she found all that she saw breathtaking.
1 Kings 10:4-5 NAU - "When the queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, ⁵ the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her." The word for "spirit" can mean "breath."
 Her response was basically, "This is unbelievable!" She was overwhelmed by what she saw.
5. There are a couple important truths we need to consider on this text.
- I. Every blessing is from the hand of God
- A. The Queen of Sheba was amazed by what she saw
1. She was speechless, breathless. All of the wind was sucked out of her.
 2. She knew something more. **Verse 1** tells us she had heard of the fame of Solomon but also had heard about "the name of the LORD."
 This was an answer to Solomon's prayer:
1 Kings 8:43 NAU - "do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, to fear You"
 3. She knew there was a Divine element behind the fame of Solomon.
 Even this pagan queen understood that there could be no earthly explanation to describe the excellence of King Solomon.
1 Kings 10:9 NAU - "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."
 4. She knew it had a Divine source and she came from afar to see what God had done.
1 Kings 10:1 NAU - "Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions."
- B. We must live in a state of gratitude
1. Every good blessing has a Divine source.
James 1:17 NAU - "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."
 2. We are about to see the sad fall of Solomon into sin. The danger is to presume that wealth always leads to sin.
 Material blessings can give us opportunity to magnify the goodness of God before the people of this earth.

3. It is true that wealth puts us in danger. But it is the love of wealth that leads to sin.
1 Timothy 6:8-10 NAU - "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
3. Our material resources must always be seen as a gift from God.
 - a. Sometimes we can overreact to the errors of Charismatic theology and see virtue in being destitute of material goods.
 - b. Solomon knew his bounty was a gift from God.
Proverbs 10:22 NAU - "It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, And He adds no sorrow to it."
Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 NAU - "I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; ¹³ moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor-- it is the gift of God."
Ecclesiastes 5:19 NAU - "as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God."
4. Even with earthly gain, we must guard carefully against extravagance. It can easily lead our heart away from God. If Solomon in all his wisdom failed to see the danger, God help us from falling into this sin.

- II. Every earthly display of wealth and excellence pales in comparison to Christ
 - A. The queen looked upon everything about Solomon and concluded that he was more than she had imagined. He far exceeded her expectations
1 Kings 10:6-7 NAU - "Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. ⁷ "Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed *in* wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard."
 1. Never had she seen a king arrayed in such beauty and excellence.
 2. She considered the great blessing of serving under such a king as Solomon
1 Kings 10:8 NAU - "How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually *and* hear your wisdom."
 - B. As magnificent as Solomon appeared, he could not compare with Christ
 1. One of the dangers of earthly riches is they can obscure the glory of Christ. They are a poor substitute.
 2. And earthly riches are a poor measure of glory. All of Solomon's splendor was measured according to a human standard.
 3. Earthly standards can be deceiving. All earthly standards fail to meet God's standard of perfection and they are overshadowed by Christ's glory.

4. There is one, perfect, righteous standard. Jesus described this
Matthew 12:42 NAU - "*The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*"

III. Blessed are those who are filled with the knowledge of Christ

- A. The Queen of Sheba had heard about King Solomon
 1. She didn't believe what she had heard and set out to investigate
 2. She came and began her investigation.
 She learned that the truth far exceeded what she had heard.
1 Kings 10:6-7 NAU - "Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. ⁷ "Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed *in* wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard."
- B. Most people have little interest in Christ
 1. Many are blessed with hearing the excellence of His person and perfection of His work, but they walk away unimpressed.
 They hear of the promise of forgiveness and life if they repent and follow Christ, but they are uninterested.
 2. Others have heard the truth about Jesus and have concluded, "The half has not been told."
 He far exceeds my expectations. He is worthy of my life and all.
 3. How excellent it is to hear of Christ and want to know more, to investigate the truth claims of the Gospel—to manifest the heart of the Bereans.
Acts 17:10-12 NAU - "The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see whether these things were so.* ¹² Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men."
 4. The Queen of Sheba acted on the limited knowledge that she had and came from afar to learn more. She advanced from unbelief to belief. We aren't told if she became a convert. But her desire to know more is to be commended.
 5. This is the duty of all men concerning Christ. We are accountable for acting upon what we know.
 - a. This was the teaching of Christ
Matthew 12:42 NAU - "*The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*"

- b. The Queen of Sheba came to learn more. This doesn't assure her vindication, but how cursed it is to have access to the Gospel and refuse to come. Jesus' point is unless you bow before Christ you will follow her into judgment.
"Something greater than Solomon is here."
- 6. The Queen of Sheba traveled over 1000 miles to learn more about Solomon.
 - a. She came and she investigated and studied all about Solomon and his kingdom and she found him breathtaking—far beyond her expectations.
 - b. How much more worthy is Jesus? How much more should we give ourselves to learning more about Him?
"Something greater than Solomon is here."
 - c. Too many are satisfied with the knowledge the Queen of Sheba had before she left her palace. They hear about Jesus but they have little interest in Him. Or they investigate and have a favorable view of Christ, but they are not overwhelmed by Him.
 - d. The queen found Solomon overwhelming.
1 Kings 10:7 NAU - "You exceed *in* wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard."

Conclusion:

1. Have you found Jesus more lovely than you ever could have imagined?
"Something greater than Solomon is here."
2. The queen concluded:
1 Kings 10:8 NAU - "How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually *and* hear your wisdom."
Do you see yourself as infinitely blessed to serve such a glorious King as the Lord Jesus Christ and to benefit from His goodness and wisdom?
3. We read that Solomon sent the queen away with riches – **Verse 13** – "all her desire"
1 Corinthians 2:9 NAS - "but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."