

“The Deceitfulness of Riches”
1 Kings 10:14-29
(Preached at Trinity, January 17, 2021)

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. The first half of this chapter records Solomon's visit from the Queen of Sheba. She had heard of Solomon's fame and determined she had to make the long journey to investigate for herself. After thoroughly examining Solomon and searching out his kingdom she concluded that it was all astounding. **Verse 5** records, "there was no more spirit in her" Literally, there was no more breath in her. It left her breathless. **Verse 10** tells us she gave to Solomon and **Verse 13** records Solomon gave to her.
2. The chapter is a record of the fame of Solomon. It is testimony to what we have already read.
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."
The Queen of Sheba concluded:
1 Kings 10:7 NAU - "the half was not told me. You exceed *in* wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard."
3. Now as we continue with the second half of the chapter the narrator is simply giving us a record of the vastness of Solomon's wealth. It's as if he is saying, "The Queen of Sheba has declared that the half had not been told. Let me show you the other half."
 - A. The narrator gives his assessment of Solomon:
1 Kings 10:23-25 NAU - "So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. ²⁴ All the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart. ²⁵ They brought every man his gift, articles of silver and gold, garments, weapons, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year."
 - B. In **Verses 14-22** the word "gold" is used ten times. **Verse 14** tells us he took in 666 talents of gold in a year. That's an incredible amount of gold. Today, we measure gold in ounces. The current price of gold is just under \$2000 per ounce. The amount flowing into Solomon's treasury would have ranged in the hundreds of millions of dollars.
 - a. Solomon made gold shields, hundreds of them.
 - b. All of his drinking vessels were of gold, none of silver or pottery
 - C. Gold was so abundant that silver became devalued.
Notice in **Verse 21** the narrator lets us know that nothing was made of silver because silver had no value in the days of Solomon. It was as common as rocks.
4. The riches of Solomon's reign were truly impressive.
 - A. The narrator doesn't give us any sense of moral danger in the riches. Instead, they are put on display for us so we too can stand amazed at the splendor of Solomon's kingdom. We are as amazed as the Queen of Sheba.
And God is being given all the glory, even from this pagan queen.

- B. On one hand, we are to see something of the grandeur of Christ's Kingdom. It is beyond compare. It comprises all glory and excellence. We sing of Zion, GLORIOUS things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God;
- C. But there is something dark at work in the background. Are we being prepared for the transition into **Chapter 11**? Are we supposed to remember God's commands?
Deuteronomy 17:14 NAU - "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,'" **Deuteronomy 17:16 NAU** - "he shall not multiply horses for himself" **Deuteronomy 17:17 NAU** - "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself."
5. What should we make of the abundance of Solomon's wealth? What are the implications for us? Does the Bible give us counsel here?
6. Solomon was the wisest man of his day. His wisdom brought him fame throughout the earth. He had riches untold, and yet, as wise as he was, was he able to discern the danger that riches can bring? Solomon's wisdom could not protect him from the deceit of his wealth and the weakness of human flesh.
 How this should cause us to pray all the more fervently, Lead us not unto temptation . . .
7. There is nothing evil about wealth itself. But it is dangerous. Wealth can deceive us into believing it is ours to keep. It can blind us to our pride. Even Solomon in all his wisdom could not see the idolatry building within his own heart. Was the success of his kingdom blinding him to the true Kingdom?
 Matthew Henry: "Though he had much, he still coveted to have more, being willing to try the utmost the things of this world could do to make men happy."¹
8. What is the Biblical teaching on wealth? These are timeless truths that we need to hear over and over.
- I. Wealth is not wrong in and of itself.
- A. All wealth comes from God
1 Samuel 2:6-7 NAU - "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts."
1 Chronicles 29:12-13 NAU - "Both riches and honor *come* from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. ¹³ "Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name."
1. The first mention of gold in the Bible is described in a positive way as testimony to God's goodness.
Genesis 2:10-12 NAU - "Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there."

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 495.

2. Gold is part of God's common grace in His creation and He has often given it to men in abundance.
 3. We can find many Biblical examples where God has bestowed wealth
 - a. Abraham - Gen. 14:21-24
 - b. Isaac - Gen 26:1-3;12-13
 - c. Joseph - Gen 41:38-42
 - d. Job - Job 1:1,3; 21-22; 42:10-12
 - e. Now we are told of Solomon's abundant wealth
 4. Gold is treasured for its beauty and durability. It is not surprising that a band of gold is an important part of the wedding ceremony.
We also shouldn't dismiss that the tabernacle and Temple were adorned with gold expressing the majesty and glory of God.
 5. There is nothing intrinsically evil about gold. It is a blessing from God.
- B. Seeking wealth, however, must never become our chief priority - we find nowhere in Scripture an encouragement to seek wealth
1. The Biblical command is to "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God"
Matt. 6:33
 2. Our prayer is for our daily bread through which we rest content
Philippians 4:11-13 NAU - "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
1 Timothy 6:7-8 NAU - "For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸ If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."

II. We need to recognize the dangers that wealth can bring

- A. There is great danger for those who are seekers of wealth
1 Timothy 6:10 NAU - "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."
1. The danger is real. Jesus gave a warning that cuts us to the quick because we are so wealthy.
Luke 18:24-25 NAU - "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
 2. Material wealth can capture our affections and seize our hearts. The more we have the more we think we need.
 3. Was Solomon's love of material things the beginning of his great fall.
 - a. Possessions and his wives soon took his heart
Jesus said, **Matthew 6:21** – "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

- b. Those who love wealth continually hunger for more.
What was enough wealth for Solomon? Gold shields are of little value in war – too heavy and too soft. But they're pretty to look at. Solomon's shields were objects of beauty.
 - c. Wealth can ultimately lead us from God
 - d. What was on Solomon's mind and heart as he displayed his lavish kingdom before the Queen of Sheba? How did he receive her praises?
- B. Wealth can cause great sorrow
- 1. The love of money will cause us much grief
1 Timothy 6:10 NAU - "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."
 - a. This is opposite from the world's teaching – the world glories in wealth. They honestly believe it is the doorway to happiness
 - b. They keep lists of the most wealthy and how they got their money
 - c. Hollywood parades forth the glamour of the wealthy
 - 2. In the end it drowns men in its deception as they sink deeper and deeper in its mire.
 - 3. Those who are wealthy must not trust in their riches – **Verse 17**
Proverbs 11:28 NAU - "He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf."
Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."
- C. We must not diminish the value of true riches
- 1. Even Solomon declared wisdom to be of greater value than gold
Proverbs 16:16 NAU - "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver."
 - 2. David declared the Law of God of greater value than gold
Psalms 119:127 NAU - "Therefore I love Your commandments Above gold, yes, above fine gold."
 - 3. Peter declared genuine faith of greater value than gold
1 Peter 1:7 NAU - "so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"
 - 4. Jesus Christ is the pearl of great price, the treasure of greater value than all the other riches of this life.
 - 5. Although earthly gold can purchase many things, the precious things of God cannot be bought.
All of the riches of this world will not be able to deliver you from the wrath of God. Eternal life cannot be purchased.
Mark 8:36-37 NAU - "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

6. Our life is just a vapor and will pass into eternity quickly and often unexpectedly.

Luke 12:16-21 NAU - "And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. ¹⁷ "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.'" ²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?' ²¹ "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Conclusion:

1. We may not have as much gold as Solomon, but God has blessed us abundantly. In some ways more abundantly than Solomon. We have an abundance of fresh food in greater variety than Solomon ever knew. Our clothes are far more comfortable with seemingly endless styles and colors. We enjoy greater variety of music with greater availability. Our transportation is better and faster. Communication is instant. Information is boundless. Our lives are filled with an abundance of material things.
2. The wise man realizes that this world's riches are but for a moment and he doesn't set his heart upon them. This was Solomon's fatal flaw. Gold will be soon reduced to rubble. Everything we own and treasure will pass away. And metaphorically speaking, heaven's streets are paved with gold – the value being consumed by the all surpassing glory of God.
3. Solomon's kingdom was spectacular, beyond imagination, breathtaking. But within a single generation it was all gone. The terrible contrast is found in the life of Solomon's foolish son who lost it all. Shishak, king of Egypt came against Jerusalem and took away all of Solomon's treasures.
2 Chronicles 12:9-11 NAU - "So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's palace. He took everything; he even took the golden shields which Solomon had made. ¹⁰ Then King Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place and committed them to the care of the commanders of the guard who guarded the door of the king's house. ¹¹ As often as the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards came and carried them and *then* brought them back into the guards' room."
4. Riches are deceitful. They make endless promises. As Christians we must continually remind ourselves, none of these things can compare with riches of Christ. Nothing can compare with the wealth that comes from reading God's Word. We must keep Job's words ever before us:
Job 31:24-25; 28 NAU - "If I have put my confidence *in* gold, And called fine gold my trust, ²⁵ If I have gloated because my wealth was great, And because my hand had secured so much;
²⁸ That too would have been an iniquity *calling for* judgment, For I would have denied God above."