

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 5B**

**THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS**

**CHAPTER 10**

**INTRODUCTION**

It is very hard for the obedient Christian to live in a dark and wicked world and yet remain faithful and true. For the world to look up to the Christian is more often than not near impossible. The world despises Christians and what Christians stand for. There are more nicknames used to mock Christians than any other religion. The world will not come to a Christian because of his Christian principles.

But when the Christian is endowed by God with great wisdom, even the world of unbelievers will take notice. They take notice in their carnal ways by showering the Christian with earthly treasures. This is the only way they know how for these to them are treasures. Solomon who was endowed with such high wisdom from God received such treatment from a Queen and the world over.

Under such circumstances, it is incumbent upon the Christian to keep both his feet firmly on the ground and not allow all these earthly glory heaped upon him by renowned men and

women to go to his head. Solomon may have wisdom in earthly matters as described in this chapter but he fell into the sin of the pride of life by the demonstration of his great opulent lifestyle. He lost his head and his firm footing on God and allowed the wealth of the world and worldly fame to take over and led him down the path of indulgence and a self-seeking life.

The bottom line is that Solomon had forgotten the Giver and had replaced Him with the many gifts that he received. The most dangerous time in the Christian's life is not when he is in want and struggling to make a living but when he is rich and famous and when pride sets into his heart. He could soon forget the LORD who has once upon a time been his personal confidante in all matters. God would then be slowly but surely replaced by Mammon and Fame. These are the two great enemies for the Christian living in the free world of entrepreneurship, freedom and untold wealth.

Learn well from this chapter of Solomon's life. Solomon lived a life of splendour as the great Temple builder of God's only dwelling place on earth. He behaved like a heathen, which was typical of kings of the rest of the world. His blessing turned into his greatest curse! This chapter is a warning to us all and a rebuke to those who have already turned into worldly Solomons!

**OUTLINE**

1. The Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon (vv.1-13)

2. More of Solomon's wisdom wealth and works (vv14-23);
3. Solomon Ruined by Fame and Fortune (vv. 10:24-29)

### COMMENTARY

#### The Queen of Sheba Visits King Solomon – 10:1-13

Solomon's reputation for wisdom and wealth was world-renowned. The queen of Sheba was interested, particularly concerning "the name of the LORD". She wanted to visit Solomon and test his wise sayings. The name of the queen was not mentioned. Sheba was the name of the land in which she was the queen. She was not the wife of a king. Sheba was the land of the Sabaeans in south-west Arabia, which is today called Yemen.

Her purpose was stated clearly for us in the Bible. She came "to prove him with hard questions". The phrase "hard questions" came from the root word, which means "to tie into knots or riddles". She wanted to ask Solomon all kinds of riddles to test how wise he really was. She knew how to conduct herself in such circumstances. She did not come empty handed nor did she come alone.

She came with a very large entourage bringing many gifts of camels, spices, much gold and precious stones. It seems that she was leading a trade mission. The distance to Jerusalem was about one thousand and two hundred miles. That was a very long journey and yet she took the trouble to travel days with all the

personnel and gifts and goods to test Solomon. She came with many questions. They were riddles that she sought answers for, and these concerned the name of the LORD or how Solomon became a successful ruler. She was impressed with Solomon's wide knowledge of things (10:3) and was amazed by his wisdom and the magnificent palace, which he had built (10:4). She was also impressed with the royal banquet, and the apparel of Solomon's ministers and officers. Having seen all these, she was so overwhelmed that she exclaimed that "there was no more spirit (breath) in her". She was breathless! She testified that all that she had heard of Solomon were true. Initially, she was sceptical, but after she had seen with her own eyes, she concluded with the remark, "the half was not told me," (v.7).

She even commented on how happy and fortunate all of Solomon's servants were, to have such a wise king. "*Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.*" (v.8). The word for happy here is blessed. It is the same word translated in Psalm 1:1 as blessed. Were the citizens of Israel really happy to have such a wise king like Solomon who could answer all riddles and compose thousands of songs?

She then blessed the LORD, Solomon's God who had set him on the throne of Israel because the LORD loved His people Israel (v.9). "*Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of*

*Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.*" This does not mean that she was a convert to the LORD (YAHWEH). She gave recognition to Israel's national God (YAHWEH). Her words need not necessarily be an expression of personal faith. One thing is sure. Her visit confirmed how great and famous Solomon had become. Her statement was correct when she said that the LORD made him king in order to do judgement and justice. These are the hall marks of any good government.

She gave gold, spices and precious stones to Solomon and also gave to Hiram many algum trees and precious stones. Solomon in return gave her all that she desired. Obviously there was some kind of trade treaty signed. The queen of Sheba then "turned and went to her own country, she and her servants" (10:13).

### **More of Solomon's Wisdom, Wealth and Works – 10:14-23**

Solomon was unimaginably wealthy. Every year he received 666 talents of gold! In addition to this amount of gold, he received goods from all the merchants and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land (10:14, 15). He made shields of gold and stored them in the house named "the forest of Lebanon". Solomon then made a throne for himself. It was a great throne made of ivory and overlaid with gold.

It was truly impressive – the ivory white in-laid with decorations of shining gold! The throne had six steps leading to it. On both sides of the seat

of the throne were two lions and on the six steps of the throne were twelve lions on both sides. Moreover Solomon made his household utensils of gold not silver. This was needless luxury. He had a fleet of ships that brought gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks (10:22)! Solomon was then using his wealth and fame for his own glory.

The clear warning from God's Word is found in Deuteronomy 6:10-13, "*And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; **Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.** Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.*" [Emphasis added].

These might have been the warnings of the LORD for the people of Israel prior to their entrance into the Promised Land but they were just as applicable to Solomon and still are to us today. He decorated his palace and homes but not the Temple of God. The Temple was not even mentioned at all. Solomon was getting richer and richer by the minute and his fame was spreading like wild fire throughout the ancient world. This was the high point of Israel's kingdom where every citizen

was enjoying wealth and fame and peace throughout the land. But this did not last long as it was founded upon worldly wisdom and wealth not Godly wisdom and Godly foundations i.e. God's perfect and eternal Word.

### **Solomon Ruined by Fame and Fortune – 10:24-29**

Solomon's fame spread far and wide and all the kings of the earth sought to have an audience with him to hear of his wisdom which God had put in his heart. These kings who visited Solomon brought presents of silver, gold, garments, armour, spices, horses and mules every year. Now Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen to boost his army. He even acquired horses and famous linen cloth from Egypt. Solomon grew richer year by year. This accumulation of horses from Egypt was clearly a violation of the prohibition that God had imposed on the kings of Israel. This is sad. Had Solomon become more self-centred and self-serving, forgetting God? The next chapter should tell.

This accumulation of wealth and chariots and horses was categorically forbidden by the LORD. Deuteronomy 17:14-17, *"When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is*

*not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."* Solomon had broken all the rules of God for the king who was to govern God's people. The things that worldly kings sought after must not be found in the heart of God's king and God's people.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

Humans love wise people. This is the way of the world. The world is very impressed by geniuses. He could be a brilliant musician or scientist or a mathematician or a doctor or an artist; it does not matter as long as he is a genius. This was Solomon's blessing from God. He was a genius in many fields. The whole world took notice of him. The problem was that Solomon allowed all these accolades that flooded in from all quarters of the world to go to his head. He became a worldly king where his splendour and greatness was measured no more by his relationship with his LORD but by the grandeur of His palaces and physical wealth and carnal glory. This caused his down fall and what a fall it was for the wisest man on earth!

It was wonderful for Solomon to show all the things that he had done to the queen of Sheba and to astound her with his wisdom and knowledge.

But what was more important was that he should have introduced the LORD his God to her. Nothing is mentioned about this. The queen of Sheba was amazed at everything but she went back without knowing more of the LORD. We must not fall into this trap. It is good to have a beautiful church to show. It is also good to have good works to impress visitors or contacts with. But it is of no use if we do not lead them to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. We should not put too much emphasis on beautiful buildings and spectacular programs which arouse curiosity and draw crowds. It is more important that we give these people who are attracted to us the opportunity to have a personal encounter with God through faith in Jesus Christ. AMEN

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

Monday: 1 Kings 10:1-13; Luke 11:31; Matthew 2:1-11.

Tuesday: 1 Kings 10:14-29; Proverbs 4:23-27; Isaiah 60:1-22.

Wednesday: 1 Kings 10:1-29;

Thursday: 1Kings 10:1-29

Friday: 1Kings 10:1-29

**Discussion Questions**

- 1. What should be the right Christian attitude if God were to endow you with much worldly wisdom in science, maths or IT or whatever skills or gifts? The world takes notice and now it is as if the world were at your feet.

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- 2. Were the people really blessed to have Solomon as their king? See 1Kings 12:1-5.

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- 3. How did Solomon become so worldly if he is supposed to be so wise?

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his affections and his relationship with God?

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4. In what ways is the Queen of Sheba an example for us in respect of the purpose of her visit and her reward?

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5. Compare Solomon's action in verses 26 and, 28 with Deuteronomy 17:16. Was he guilty or not?

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6. Solomon was outwardly at the height of his power, wealth and fame (vv.14-29). But what was going on in his heart with respect of