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## QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON

– AUGUST 1. – 1 KINGS 10:1-10,13. –

KING SOLOMON'S RENOWN – A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR – SOLOMON'S

GREAT ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATS – HIS LITERARY ATTAINMENTS – "THE HALF WAS NOT TOLD" – "A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE" – RICHES OF DIVINE FAVOR.

**"Wisdom is better than rubies." – Proverbs 8:11.**

IN ANSWER to King Solomon's prayer for wisdom, God promised him both wisdom and riches that would make him world-famous. By the middle of his reign King Solomon had accomplished marvels for his nation. Its fame spread to every land. He was known as the wise king, the peaceful king, the rich king.

We may suppose that the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon was about the middle of his reign – after he had been manifesting his wisdom for twenty years. She came, it is supposed, a journey of 1,500 miles, with quite a large retinue of servants and camels, and with valuable presents, gold and Arabian perfumes. Our lesson gives the queen's own statement of her object in coming to see King Solomon, and of how she found the facts to be more than double all of her anticipations and all the stories that had been told respecting King Solomon's wisdom and riches and the prosperity of his kingdom.

## THE WONDERS OF SOLOMON

The Temple of the Lord, the materials of which his father

David had prepared for him years before, was one of the first marvels of King Solomon's reign. Its beauty and its cost as a religious edifice were a world marvel. Then the king's own palace and the corridor, or ascent which led from his house to the Temple, were marvelous for that time, and indeed for any time until the wonders of engineering and architecture brought forward during the past century, which is noted in the Bible as the period of God's preparation for Messiah's Kingdom. – Nahum 2:3.

Another great engineering feat of King Solomon was called the Pools of Solomon – the system of water supply [R5722 : page 205] for his capital, Jerusalem. These pools were connected by covered aqueducts, the first known in history. Additionally, he built strongholds or fortresses throughout his kingdom, for its defense against invaders. Furthermore, he extended the boundaries of his kingdom to the full limits set by the Lord prophetically long before. (Genesis 15:18.) This brought his kingdom down to the seacoast. Near Joppa (Jaffa) he had a harbor for ships, which is now completely cut off from the sea, and, having gradually filled up with earth, has become a beautiful orange grove.

But his largest port of entry was at the city of Tyre – not in his own domain. He did business through the king of Tyre; and unitedly their ships traversed the Red Sea, the Mediterranean, etc., bringing commerce from all parts of the world, and affording good facilities for importing goods not produced in Palestine. It was through this means that King Solomon became so very rich that figuratively it was said that the precious metals became as common as stones in Jerusalem.

## **A ROYAL VISITOR**

Busied with these enterprises, and at heart loyal to God, Solomon's reign, by the time of the Queen of Sheba's visit, seems to have been a most wonderful one. Later, satisfied with the

blessings of the present life, the king seems to have been less wise and less a man after God's own heart and less thoughtful for his people. It is difficult, especially for the poor, to realize how great are the temptations of the rich and the danger that even a wise man may become foolish through the gratification of every desire of his heart. Incidentally, we should not forget King Solomon's literary achievements. He wrote three thousand proverbs and a thousand songs. Surely the Lord did for him to the full all that He had promised.

It was this great King Solomon that the Queen of Sheba visited, with presents of gold and spices, desiring to learn to a certainty respecting his wonderful wisdom and skill. Her declaration was that the rumors which had reached her were less than half of the reality which she beheld and heard. She had questions to ask, probably respecting God and the future life; for apparently she recognized in Solomon more than human wisdom, and accredited to him wisdom from on High. She exclaimed, "Blessed be Jehovah thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel! Because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee king to do judgment and justice. Happy are thy men, happy these thy servants, which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom." "And King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all of her desire, whatsoever she asked; besides which, he gave her of his royal bounty" – a present. So she returned to her own country with her retinue.

### **"A GREATER THAN SOLOMON"**

Jesus remarked on the story of our lesson, and marveled that there were no more to appreciate Himself and the wonderful lessons which He set forth respecting the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 12:42.) For people to travel a long distance merely to know about the wisdom of God such as King Solomon possessed, would imply that if it were known that a still wiser One could be conferred with, He would be sought; and if it should be known that this wiser One

was heir to the world, and that He was seeking a Bride for His joint-heirship, how many might be expected to hasten to Him and to accept the generous proposal!

This is exactly the condition of things. God's Son, according to the Divine Program, is selecting a Bride class. To be acceptable as a member of this class, we must hear of how the Wisdom of God centers in Jesus, how He is the Father's Agent and Representative in all the work of creation, past, present and future. Additionally, we must be so thoroughly impressed with this matter that we would leave all to go to Him to prove the matter for ourselves, to be convinced. Thus coming to Jesus, we are sure to be accepted, not merely that we might ask, as the queen did, for certain blessings, but that the King would enter into a covenant of espousal.

The fact that not all are attracted to the Lord is the basis for our opportunity; for the Scriptures declare that the Bride of the Lamb is foreordained of God. The first opportunity to be of this elect company was given to the natural seed of Abraham. Had they accepted their privileges, the Church would have been completed in Jesus' day; but, as the Bible tells us, the Jews knew not the time of their visitation – did not appreciate who was with them – the Greater than Solomon. (Luke 19:44.) They did not inquire for the Kingdom nor for the terms of membership. They crucified the Prince of Life, unwittingly.

Nevertheless, a wonderfully large part of that little nation, as "Israelites indeed," accepted Jesus, giving themselves wholly to Him – surrendering their wills. Then the nation was set aside temporarily while the door of this High Calling to membership with Christ was thrown open to the Gentiles. The unreadiness of the Gentiles to receive the Message of God is indicated by the fact that it has required all the eighteen centuries since to complete the elect number which, apparently, is only 144,000 altogether, "out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue."

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