



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Queen of Sheba: Wisdom and Truth”

Pastor Bruce Fidler – 5/25/2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What was your favorite subject in school?
- How do you usually respond when somebody challenges or questions you?
- What kind of literature do you like to read?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

1 Kings 10:1-10, 13 (ESV) *Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her. And she said to the king, “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.” Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones. Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon... And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants.*

This passage underlines some of the characteristic of the queen of Sheba:

She was clearly very wealthy & successful. She came with a very great retinue, with special spices, very much gold & precious stones. South Arabia was especially known for their spices, which were used in medicine, cosmetics, and religious rites.

She valued justice & righteousness. When she praised Yahweh for Solomon, she expressed the conviction that rulers are to exercise justice & righteousness.

She highly valued wisdom & was hungry for truth. She heard of Solomon's wisdom & fame, which was associated with Yahweh, and journeyed 2000 kilometers to visit him. She withheld belief in the extent of the reports about Solomon and his God until she could hear and see it for herself. She came to test him with hard questions; lit. "riddles"; i.e., "enigmatic sayings or questions that cloaked a deeper philosophical, practical, or theological truth" (EBC)

She was spiritually perceptive & open. She was overwhelmed when she heard his wisdom, saw his prosperity, and experienced Israel's worship. She credited Yahweh, his God, and became convinced of Yahweh's love because of his having chosen Solomon to lead Israel.

She was prudent. Solomon's recent control of various trade routes, including the Red Sea, likely threatened the lucrative caravan trade in which the Sabaeans engaged with merchants from India, East Africa, and the Middle East as they crossed the Sabean territory. The language and context of the exchange of gifts between Solomon & the Queen suggest that a trade agreement was successfully established between the two kingdoms. Biblical wisdom according to Proverbs involves godly living, healthy relationships, and prudence in the affairs of life.

She was blessed & became a blessing. She was rewarded for her hunger and search for wisdom and truth. God blessed her spiritually, intellectually, aesthetically, and materially through her encounter with Solomon. She returned to serve her people with new revelation.

Jesus made reference to the queen of Sheba in Matthew 12:42 (ESV) [cf. Luke 11:31] *"The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. "*

Matthew tells us that Jesus criticized the religious leaders of his day for their lack of spiritual hunger and thirst for truth. In contrast, one thousand years earlier the Queen of Sheba traveled 2000 kilometers to meet Solomon in hopes of learning from him.

Luke tells us Jesus criticized the crowds as well for the same lack of spiritual hunger and thirst for truth. They had gathered because of his healing and deliverance power, but many of them weren't ultimately hungry for either God or truth.

The Place of this story in the Grand Story

God had promised Israel that if they would faithfully honor and obey him, he would exalt them and bless them as a nation for the purpose of drawing the nations to himself through them. The kingdom Solomon inherited from his father, King David, was a partial fulfillment of that promise. The rule & reign of Jesus Christ is the true fulfillment of that promise. That means Solomon himself foreshadows the rule & reign of Jesus Christ.

Likewise, the Queen of Sheba symbolizes the return of the nations to God. Already now God is drawing the nations to himself because of King Jesus. The ultimate fulfillment of the promise will take place when Jesus returns to fully establish his kingdom on a renewed earth. Like the Queen of Sheba we are to go up to the house of God and learn from King Jesus, be overwhelmed

by him, and then go back to our own people and represent him to them by serving them with his wisdom and testimony.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What is the next step you need to take to grow in your knowledge of Christ? When are you planning to take it?
- Do you read your Bible on a daily basis? What method do you use? How is it working for you?
- What do you think your part as a follower of Christ is in regards to bringing the Light of the World to other nations?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Pray for increase in wisdom and understanding.
- Pray for opportunities to make the name of Jesus known among the nations that are within Nashville.
- Pray for direction as to what your next step is in order to grow in your knowledge of Jesus.