

Reading: 1 Kings chapter 10

Key Thought: God offers us unconditional love – but are his blessings unconditional too?

Context: Following the Dedication of the Temple, and before we consider Solomon's success and riches, it's worth considering what happened in chapter 9. So, the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time (the first time was recorded in 1 King's 3 verses 1-15, when Solomon asked for wisdom). This time the Lord offered Solomon a conditional covenant. "If you walk before me faithfully ... and obey my laws ... I will establish your throne over Israel forever. But ... if you or your descendants turn away from me ... I will cut off Israel from the Land, and the Temple will become a heap of rubble." (Sadly, during the following 400 years this was to come true. Solomon's legacy was not as successful as his reign: the northern tribes would fall to the Assyrians and the south to the Babylonians).

Content: In chapter 10, we see how Solomon's fame and riches increased. So rich and famous was he that his fame grew internationally, resulting in the visit from the Queen of Sheba and her retinue. A great deal is made of these 11 verses in films about Solomon, but what actually happened? We read here that the Queen brought many gifts for Solomon, including the equivalent of 4 metric tons of gold, exotic spices, and precious stones. Verse 13 tells us that Solomon reciprocated the giving, and then she left. Significantly, The Queen of Sheba didn't just praise Solomon, but she also acknowledged that his wisdom, power and wealth were from the hand of God.

Solomon's riches included:

- Literally, tons of gold (verses 14-17) and everything was made of gold that could be!
- A great throne overlaid with ivory and gold (verse 18)
- A fleet of ships (verse 22) and a shipyard (1 Kings 9 verse 26)
- More and more wealth in the form of presents from visiting Heads of State (verses 23-25)
- Chariots, horses and stables (1 Kings 4 verse 26)

He was a successful King, a very wise leader and an outstanding business man, because God had promised to bless him. However, it should be remembered that this blessing was conditional on him following the Laws of the Lord, and staying close to God – putting God's Kingdom first and not his own.

Challenges:

- **With great wealth comes responsibility.** All that we have comes from the hand of God and his desire is that in turn, we should bless others.
- **With fame comes responsibility.** If it is known that God has blessed us, we should be willing to give Him the glory and to witness to His provision in our lives.
- **With wisdom comes responsibility.** If God has given us wisdom in any field (and most of us have talents - whether it be music, catering, the ability to create things, the 'gift of the gab', ability to study the Scriptures, working with children, singing, cleaning etc etc.) then there is a responsibility on us to share what we can do in God's service.

None of us will ever be like Solomon. But, as part of our Lord's kingdom, we can be Kings in God's eyes. (Read Revelation 1 verse 6 King James version) God promises that he will bless us when we put Him first, and when we obey what he tells us to do. With blessing comes conditions and responsibility. (To understand this, read the parable of the talents – Matthew 25 verses 14-30))

Communicate:

Feel free to let us know if you have any questions or comments about this study. Perhaps you have a testimony or word of encouragement that might help others. Or maybe you would like prayer as you begin a new thing for God in your life. We will gladly get back to you.