

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 10:1-13

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1 Kings 10:1-13

Verse 1

¹ When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship to the Lord, she came to test Solomon with hard questions.

- The queen of Sheba was the ruler of the Sabeans, a nation in southern Arabia. She traveled approximately 1,200 miles to visit Solomon.
- The text gives us two reasons for her visit: 1.) She had heard about Solomon; and 2.) She had heard that he was blessed by YHWH.
- She wanted to ask Solomon “hard” questions” to test him. This, then, was an opportunity for Solomon to tell her about YHWH and how he had been blessed by God.

Verses 2-5

² Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind. ³ Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. ⁴ When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, ⁵ the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the Lord, she was overwhelmed.

- The Queen came to Solomon with a great caravan and appropriate gifts.
- She talked with Solomon about all that was on her mind and he answered her questions. Nothing was too hard for him to explain.
- The Queen was “overwhelmed” by what she saw at Solomon’s court and by his great wisdom.

Verses 6-8

⁶ She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. ⁷ But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁸ How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!

- She told Solomon that what she had heard about him was understated and that what she saw impressed her.

Verse 9

Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to maintain justice and righteousness.”

- She said that YHWH, Israel’s God, had blessed Solomon and through Solomon, the people of Israel.
- But she did not profess personal faith in YHWH as the one true god or even as her personal god.

Verse 10

¹⁰ And she gave the king 120 talents of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

- The Queen of Sheba gave Solomon gifts.

Verses 11-12

¹¹ (Hiram’s ships brought gold from Ophir; and from there they brought great cargoes of almugwood and precious stones. ¹² The king used the almugwood to make supports for the temple of the Lord and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. So much almugwood has never been imported or seen since that day.)

- Gold and almugwood were in great supply in Solomon’s court. Almugwood was used for making musical instruments.

Verse 13

¹³ King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

- Solomon also gave gifts to the Queen. She left his court and returned to her own country.
- Solomon's fame had spread through the known world. God had richly blessed Solomon and the nation of Israel. This was the highest moment in the history of Ancient Israel. All the other nations knew that Israel was powerful and wealthy and blessed by YHWH.

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