

1 Kings 10:1-13

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

10 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. 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.

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! 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.”

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.

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.)

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.

Matthew 12:38-42

The Sign of Jonah

³⁸ Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

³⁹ He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.

Context (Israel's Mission)

[PowerPoint 1-Context]

- In the **last few weeks**, we have seen **Solomon build the Temple** – and establish it as a **worship centre for the people** of Israel
- We've seen **Solomon ask God for wisdom** – and **God granting** him not only wisdom – but also wealth and honour
- **Solomon and Israel** are the **envy of** all the **surrounding nations**
- And notwithstanding what we said last week – about the dangers of wealth and honour
- We have to acknowledge this **wealth and honour** are a **blessing from God**
- **Wealth and honour** only become a curse and a problem — **if** they become **more important than God** – and become the things we worship instead of God

[PowerPoint 2-Mission]

- With Israel now established
- What was Solomon and Israel's mission anyway?
- Well from **Deut 28:1, 10**

*If you **fully obey** the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high **above all the nations on earth**.*

*Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are **called by the name of the LORD**, and they will **fear you**.*

- And from **Isaiah 42:6-7**

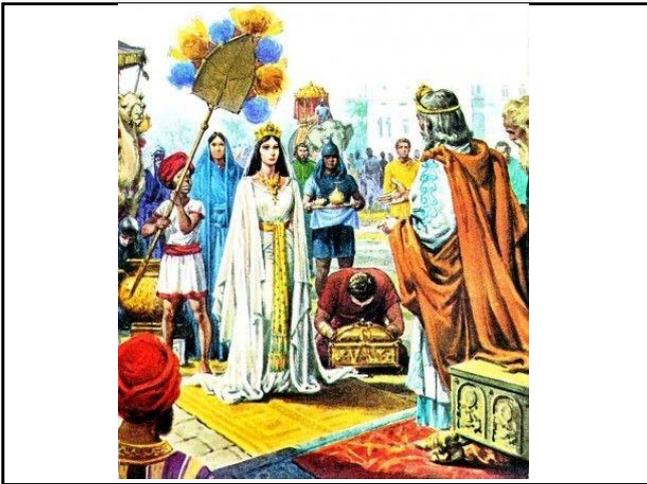
"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand.

*I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and **a light for the Gentiles**, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.*

Intro (A Royal Visit)

- And so, we come to a Royal visit in 1 Kings 10 [Please turn there now]

[PowerPoint 3-Royal Visit]



- The Queen of Sheba **comes from a long way south of Israel** [Southern Arabia or even Ethiopia] to visit King Solomon
- The Queen arrived with her own **entourage**
- A **caravan** of camels – carrying **spices, gold** and **precious stones**

The Queen of Sheba comes to King Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-13)

Why did the Queen of Sheba visit?

[PowerPoint 4-Why?]

- **Why** did the **Queen** of Sheba come to **visit** King **Solomon**?
 - The **Queen** was **rich** in her own right – so she didn't **come to receive gifts**
 - She heard about **Solomon's fame** – there's no doubt that he was the **most famous King in all the nations** at the time
 - But more importantly she'd **heard about Solomon's relationship with the Lord God YHWH** – that's amazing, isn't it?
 - She'd not only heard of Solomon's wisdom and fame – but had also heard that **Solomon's success** was because of **his relationship with God**
 - And so, she came with some hard questions – presumably about his relationship with the Lord God

- How would we answer such questions as: Who is God? Why do we believe in God? What's the meaning of life? Why do we have faith in Jesus? What's our hope? What happens when we die? And so on...
- Shouldn't we be able to ask these hard questions?

What did the Queen of Sheba find?

[PowerPoint 5-What she found?]

- What did the **Queen** of Sheba **find**?
- She found that **Solomon had great wisdom** and **could answer all her questions** – nothing was too hard for him to explain to her
- Again, we should see this as a **blessing from God** – that **Solomon has such wisdom**
- Then in v4 & 5 – when the **Queen saw everything Solomon had** - Solomon's wisdom, the splendour of the Palace, the hospitality and table settings for entertaining – and all the servants working for Solomon – as well as Solomon's worship of the Lord God and the sacrifices he made at the Temple
- She was **overwhelmed** – it literally means "***it took her breath away***" (we would say today she was **gob-smacked**)

What the Queen of Sheba said

[PowerPoint 6-What she said?]

- But it's what the **Queen of Sheba said** – that should grab us most
- Look at the Queen's **response** to all she sees – in verses 6 to 9
 - **Everything she's heard** about Solomon, his wisdom and achievements – was **all true**
 - Now that she's seen it with her own eyes – seeing is believing. What she was told back in Sheba about Solomon and his country – was **only the half of it** – **what she saw is way beyond her expectations**

- Not only that – she says – the people of Israel and all Solomon’s workers should be so happy – that they have Solomon’s wisdom before them all the time
- And then v9 – **the Queen makes an amazing statement** - *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*
- Amazingly, the **Queen acknowledges** that God placed Solomon on the throne of Israel, because He delights in Him – and **she acknowledges** that **God has an eternal love for Israel** – God’s love endures forever (as Psalm 136 reminds us)
- And she even **knows God’s purpose** in **making Solomon King** – it’s to **maintain justice and righteousness** (so people are right with God and approved by God)
- Remember the **Queen** is not from Israel – that’s amazing, isn’t it?

The Royal Gifts Exchanged

[PowerPoint 7-Gifts Exchanged]

- Like any Royal visit – **gifts are exchanged**
- Some unusual gifts that Queen Elizabeth has received over the years
 - In 1972 – an elephant called Jumbo from Cameroon government – donated to London Zoo
 - 500 tins of pineapples from Australia as a wedding present
 - A pair of cowboy boots from USA as the Queen loves horses 1991
 - A totem pole from Canada – 1958
 - A bag of salt from British Virgin Islands – form of rent-cum-gift
 - A grasshopper shaped wine cooler from France – 1974 from President George Pompidou
 - Teeth from a sperm whale - from Fiji
- The **Queen of Sheba’s gifts** are a bit **more conventional** than this

- See v10 – the **Queen gives King Solomon – 120 talents of gold** (\$161 million) plus large quantities of **spices** and **precious stones**
- That’s amazing until we see in v13 – **Solomon gives the Queen all she desired and asked for**

Fulfilment

[PowerPoint 8-Fulfilment]

- What’s going on here?
- What prompted the Queen of Sheba to travel about 1500 miles (2400km) from the South to go **to Jerusalem?**
- Well, it’s a **fulfilment of Deut 28:1, 10**
- The **Queen saw Solomon’s Israel** as the nation *above all nations on Earth* and she saw that the people of Israel are ***called by the name of the Lord their God***
- It’s **like Solomon** and the nation of **Israel** are a **lighthouse** – shining towards all the other nations – drawing them towards recognising Israel’s God, YHWH
- Here in 1 Kings 10 - **Solomon and Israel fulfil their role as a light to the other nations around them**
- The Queen’s **visit** is also an **answer to prayer**
- Back in chapter 8 verses 41-43
- Solomon prayed that foreigners ***would hear of God’s great name*** – and they would ***come toward His temple*** –
- And Solomon urged God to do whatever the foreigners ask of Him, so ***that all peoples of the Earth may know God’s name and fear Him***
- And Solomon also prayed in v60 of chapter 8
- That ***all the peoples of the Earth may know that the Lord is God and there is no other***
- And **here is a foreigner** – the Queen of Sheba – a very long way from home – **acknowledging the Lord God of Israel!**

- As the Queen of Sheba left and returned to her homeland
- **She is in no doubt about Israel's God – and that there is no other God like Him!**

Coming to King Jesus (Matthew 12:38-42)

- But that's **not the last mention of the Queen of Sheba**
- If we **turn to our NT passage from Matthew 12:38-42**
- We pick up the story of the **religious leaders** in Jesus' time

[PowerPoint 9-Sign, Nineveh & Queen]



- **The leaders are asking Jesus for a sign to prove who He is**
- It's a **crazy request** – Jesus' has **performed miracle after miracle** – He's **taught amazing things** – and **taught with authority** – He's **told them who He is and where He came from**
- But still, they ask for a sign?
- **Jesus is having none of it**
- He says the **sign of Jonah** is enough for them
- Just as Jonah spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish – He – **Jesus** – **will spend 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the Earth**
- Of course, Jesus is **referring to His pending death and resurrection 3 days later.**
- Jesus is **scathing towards these religious leaders** - and says in v39 **they are a wicked and adulterous** (unfaithful to God) generation.

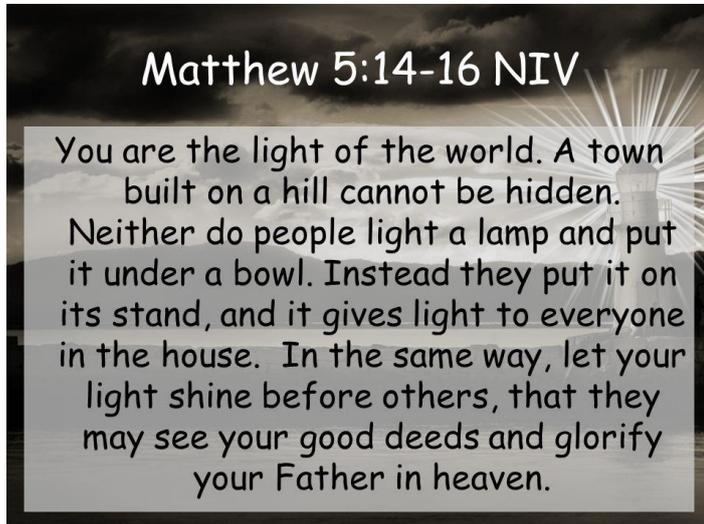
- Jesus then **commends the Queen of Sheba** (who He refers to as the **Queen of the South**) for **coming** such a **great distance to see King Solomon**.
- Now **these religious leaders** have one greater than Solomon, standing right before their eyes and they are **unbelieving, cynical, sceptical, dismissive and hostile toward the Son of God!** It's **inexcusable** Jesus says!
- Jesus' point is that the Queen of Sheba's search and commitment to hear about Solomon's God, puts the Pharisees and teachers of the Law and most of the Jews at the time, to shame.
- In fact, Jesus goes as far as saying the **people of Nineveh** (who listened to the prophet Jonah and repented) and the Queen of Sheba repented - having had less "light" than the Pharisees and teachers of the Law and their generation, who have the "light of the world" standing in front of them!
- And remember the **people of Nineveh** and the **Queen of Sheba** are **non-Jews** (Gentiles) –
- Jesus' point is: the Jewish religious leaders having this greater light (of Jesus) and rejecting Him – will **still have to face a great judgment day** as we all do - facing Jesus as the Judge. And their rejection of this greater light (Jesus) is indefensible – and embarrassingly – when they are judged – guess who will be watching in the judging courtroom – **the Queen of Sheba will be there** – and she will be **condemning them for their rejection of Jesus**
- The bottom line is – everyone on this planet must seek the Lord whilst He can be found (Isa 55:6) – and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord – **will be saved** (Rom 10:13)
- So, if you're here this morning - and you haven't already admitted your sin before God and turned back to Him - and put your faith in our Lord Jesus – and accepted His death for the forgiveness of your sins – and believed in His resurrection that gives eternal life – today is the day to do so – so that you don't wind up – being condemned on Judgment Day!

Our Challenge

- But **surely there is a challenge** for us this morning too

- As followers of Jesus – aren't we meant to be a light to others around us? – just like King Solomon and Israel?
- Jesus says we are – in **Matthew 5:14-16**

[PowerPoint 10-Lights of the World - **READ**]



- We are Jesus' lights for the world
- As a church – at Toukley – we are to be a like a town on the hill – that everyone sees from a distance – and comes to see what's going on – - drawn by the light we shine – and they come to hear why we follow Jesus
- But, what does it look like for us to be a light of the world?
- Being lights for Jesus means:
 1. We must **stay close to Jesus** who is **The Light** – if we want to be lights for Jesus – we need to spend time in His Light – by spending **quality time in His Word** – and absorbing it. The **Queen of Sheba went to great lengths** (literally) to hear about King Solomon's God – **will we go to great lengths to stay close to King Jesus?**
 2. We must **continually congregate with other believers** - When you **place many burning coals together**, the **light becomes more intense, hotter, and burns longer**. In fact, the **"you"** of *"you are the light of the world"* is **plural referring not**

just to Christians individually but corporately. We are **more effective as lights together. We strengthen our individual light by being around other godly believers who are on fire for Jesus.**

3. We must **fight against tendencies to hide our light** – we always run the danger of being either too busy - or too lazy - or too embarrassed - to share our faith in Jesus
4. We must **put ourselves in the most strategic positions** – it's always worth asking ourselves - where can I be most effective in sharing and showing my faith in Jesus – is it in my **marriage**? Is it in my **singleness**? Is it in my **work or at school**? Is it in my **retirement village**? Is it in my **home**? With my **family**? With my **friends**? Is it in the **ministries I'm involved here at church**?
5. We **must be balanced** – remember **we are to give light to the whole house Jesus says** – so **are we only showing the light to some people** – and **not to others** – maybe to our friends and not our family – maybe to our workmates but not at home?
6. We must **practice good deeds** – as we show love and mercy and practical help – **we're showing the love of Jesus and the light of Jesus** – and that attracts people to Jesus. **Let your light shine** is a command – not a suggestion from Jesus
7. We must **have the right motive** – our motive is so that others see our good deeds and glorify the Father in Heaven – it's not for our glory – it's not so people are attracted to us – but so that they are attracted to Jesus.

- As we function as lights for Jesus

1. Our light will **expose the darkness of sin around us** – in two ways – first by simply living a moral life – and second by standing up against sin and calling it out
2. As we give off the light of Jesus and illuminate people's lives – this in turn helps **others around us to grow** – just like plants need light to grow – **believers need the light of Jesus to grow**
3. Just as a bright light can wake people up – as we shine the light of Jesus - **we wake people out of their spiritual slumber** – by our enthusiastic life in living for Jesus

Conclusion (The Greatest Gift)

- To **finish up** then, just one final thought...
- The Queen of Sheba bringing gifts to King Solomon – **reminded me of the wise men [or kings or Magi] who brought gifts to King Jesus at His birth!** – the gifts the wise men brought were **gifts fit for a king** – *gold, frankincense and myrrh*
- But what about when we come to King Jesus as sinners – **all we bring is our sin and sorrow** – and King Jesus in His wonderful grace, mercy and love – **gives us the twin gifts of forgiveness of our sins and eternal life** – in return!
- The **greatest gifts we can ever receive**
- But perhaps in return – **we can give Jesus a gift this morning– by committing to be his lights in the world** – and **sharing that gift of Jesus with others** - so more and more people can come to King Jesus – that's a gift Jesus will always welcome from us!

Let's pray...

Thank You for what we continue to learn from the Old Testament and from Solomon's life.

Thank You that You always keep Your promises and that You do answer prayers in Your own perfect way and perfect timing

Thank You that You love Your people with an eternal love

Thank You that Jesus is The Light of the World and calls us to be His lights to the World

Help us to recommit this morning to the task of being Jesus' lights – calling people out of the darkness of sin and into His glorious light

Help us through the power of Your Word in our lives and through the guidance of Your Holy Spirit – to ask ourselves how best we can be signposts to Jesus – and shine His light towards others – and bring glory to You.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.