

The Queen Of Sheba

Introduction.

1. One of the most intriguing and fascinating figures in the Old Testament is the Queen of Sheba, referred to by Jesus as “the queen of the South.” (1 Kgs. 10:1-13; 2 Chron. 9:1-12; Matt. 12:42).

a. In the lesson text Jesus first responded to the scribes and Pharisee who came to Him seeking a sign.
(Matt.12:38-42)

Matt 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

Matt 12:39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and {yet} no sign ill be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

Matt 12:40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matt 12:41 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

Matt 12:42 "{The} Queen of {the} South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

b. Jesus gave them the sign of Jonah and told them that as Jonah was “three days and night in the belly of Sea Monster” that the Son of man would be “in the heart of the earth” the same time.

1) The Greek “ketos” does not mean “whale,” but it has the meaning of a “huge or great fish, a sea monster.”

• This was “a great fish” God prepared to swallow Jonah. (Jon. 1:17).

• The Hebrew text has the word “dag” meaning “fish” used with the adjective “great.” There are no whales in the Mediterranean Sea.

2) “The three days and three nights” was an idiomatic expression for 3 days. (Jn. 2:19-21; Matt.16:21; 26:61; 27:63).

3) He died on Friday and was raised from the dead early Sunday morning. (Matt. 28:1).

c. Jesus next reminded them of “the queen of the south” who is called the queen of Sheba in the Old Testament. (1 Kgs. 10:1, 4).

1) The Bible does not reveal her name.

2) Some sources outside the Bible give her a name.

• Arab writers call her Balkis and Ethiopian writers name her Makeda.

- Abyssinians claim her as their ancient queen. They trace the descent of their present king from a son whom they claim was from a son born to Bathsheba and David. There is no proof for this tradition and the Bible does not support this tradition.
2. There is uncertainty about the location of Sheba.
 - a. Both the inspired books of 1st Kings and 2nd Chronicles identify her kingdom as “Sheba.”
 - b. Some scholars think that her country was the Sabeian kingdom of Yemen in Southwestern Arabia. It controlled the trade route by which precious spices, metals and other commodities were transported from Southern Arabia to Palestine and beyond.
 - c. Others, like Josephus, think that she was from Ethiopia (Abyssinia) toward the south of the Red Sea.
 - d. It is difficult to be certain of the exact location of Sheba, but the exact location is not of great importance.
 3. We can be sure the phrase “queen of the South” would suggest her kingdom was south of Palestine and the words “from the ends of the earth” indicates she traveled a long way to visit with Solomon.
 4. **We know nothing about the beauty of the queen of Sheba.**
 - a. Some traditions suggest she was a woman of great beauty.
 - b. Though this is possible, the Bible is silent about her beauty. It does speak of her great wealth.
 5. In our text, Jesus condemned some of the “scribes and Pharisees” for demanding “a sign,” when He had just exorcized a demon from a man who had previously been both blind and mute. (Matt. 12:22).

Matt 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man {who was} blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

Matt 12:23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"

- a. The miracle of the exorcism left him in perfect health, yet the “scribes and Pharisees” wanted to see “a sign.”
 - b. It was in this context that Jesus called them “an evil and adulterous generation.” (Matt. 12:39).
 - c. He informed them that the long deceased generation of Ninevites who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and the long deceased “queen of the South,” whose quest to hear Solomon’s wisdom brought her all the way from southwest Asia to Palestine, would condemn them in the judgment.
 - d. The judgment is the last judgment occurring when Christ comes the second time. (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10).
6. It is Jesus’ reference to “the queen of the South” that will be the focus of this lesson.
 - a. He obviously was alluding to the inspired testimony about this queen recorded in both 1 Kings 10:1-13 and 2 Chronicles 9:1-12.
 - b. What lessons can we learn from “the queen of the South” that will help us and keep her from rising up in

the judgment to condemn us?

Lessons We Learn From The Queen of Sheba

She Had Her Interest In The Right Things

1. The “queen of Sheba” wanted to expand herself in at least two areas and having “heard of the fame of Solomon” she consulted him for help: (1 Kgs.10:1,6)

1 Kin 10:1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions.

1 Kin 10:6 Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom."

a. There is nothing in the biblical record to suggest that “the queen” was seeking after anything more than “wisdom.”

b. She tried him with “difficult questions.”

1) This may include riddles.

2) She likely had many questions about “Jehovah” the God of Solomon. (1 Kgs. 10:1).

3) The Bible is silent about what he revealed to her, but one would like to think he revealed to her the creation account and the many other wondrous things about God.

c. Some have created fictitious stories that have her and Solomon romantically involved.

1) There is nothing in the Scriptures to suggest or even hint at this.

2) Solomon had a great weakness for women (1 Kgs. 11:3), but there is no support for concluding romance was involved in their encounter.

3) The Bible records her returning home to her people. (1 Kgs. 10:13).

d. “the name of the LORD” - “name” was just a way of saying she wanted to learn about the “LORD.” The Hebrew literally has “Yahweh” often today translated “Jehovah.”

2. If we have our interest in the right things, then we will try to expand ourselves in the areas of “wisdom” and “the name of the LORD” and to do this we need to look to Jesus. We need to dedicate ourselves to Jesus and His word.

3. “A greater than Solomon”

a. The expressions greater than Jonah or greater than Solomon or greater than the temple **are all neuter in gender** and refer to Jesus’ message not to Jesus Himself. Jesus was and is far superior to Solomon, but this is not the point Jesus is making in this context.

- b. The gospel message is the wisdom of God. (1 Cor.1:24, 30,31; 2:13; Eph.3:10).
4. If our interest is not in the “wisdom of God” and “the name of the LORD,” then be warned, because “the queen of the South will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us.

She Was Willing To Sacrifice To Get To Solomon

1. If we travel in a straight line from modern day Yemen to Jerusalem it would be about 1,400 miles. (1 Kgs.10:1,2; Matt.12:42)
 - a. Considering she traveled in a large “retinue” [a large group] and that they could not have traveled in a straight line, it would have taken months to make the trip.
 - b. Yet, “the queen of the South” was willing to make that sacrifice and travel “from the ends/uttermost parts of the earth.”
2. Whenever the church assemblies it is an opportunity for us to come and hear the “wisdom of Christ” and “the name of the LORD.”
3. Yet, many in this generation are not willing to make the little effort it takes to assemble to worship God and learn from His word.
4. To those I would offer this warning, the queen of the South will rise up in judgment and condemn them for their indifference in regard to our God and His will for us.

She Opened Her Heart To Solomon

1. The “heart” has reference to the “inner man.” (1 Kgs.10:2)

1 Kin 10:2 So she came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about **all that was in her heart.**
2. All the things that puzzled or troubled her she disclosed to Solomon, hoping he could provide the correct answers.
 - a. He “answered all her questions.” (1Kgs.10:3).

1 Kin 10:3 Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was hidden from the king which he did not explain to her.
 - b. She heard, observed, and praised Solomon and God.(1 Kgs.10:4-9).

1 Kin 10:4 When the queen of Sheba perceived all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built,
1 Kin 10:5 the food of his table, the seating of his servants, the attendance of his waiters and their attire, his cupbearers, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.
1 Kin 10:6 Then she said to the king, "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.
1 Kin 10:7 "Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed {in} wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard.
1 Kin 10:8 "How blessed are your men, how blessed are these your servants who stand before you continually {and} hear your wisdom.

1 Kin 10:9 "Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

c. When we hear and carefully observe Christ, we will praise Him. (Eph. 1:3)

Eph 1:3 Blessed {be} the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly {places} in Christ,

3. God is not primarily interested in the outward man, but the "hidden person of the heart." (1 Pet.3:4; 1 Sam. 16:7).

1 Pet 3:4 but {let it be} the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

1 Sam 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God {sees} not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

4. Christ's will, contained in the inspired documents of the New Testament, holds the answers to the things that that we need to be happy now and in eternity.

5. If we neglect or refuse to let Christ help and strengthen our "inner man," (Eph.3:16) then be warned, "the queen of the South" will rise up in the judgment and condemn us.

She Honored Solomon With Gifts

1. Impressed and thankful for his help, the "queen of Sheba" wanted to honor Solomon, so she gave him expensive gifts. (1Kgs.10:2, 10-12)

1 Kin 10:2 So she came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones. When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.

1 Kin 10:10 She gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great {amount} of spices and precious stones. Never again did such abundance of spices come in as that which the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon.

1 Kin 10:11 Also the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir a very great {number of} **almug** trees and precious stones.

1 Kin 10:12 The king made of the almug trees supports for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also lyres and harps for the singers; such almug trees have not come in {again} nor have they been seen to this day.

- "Almug" - a tree, possibly the red sandalwood.

2. The more we know about Christ, the more we will be like the "queen of Sheba" and say, "indeed the half was not told me." And, like the queen we will want to honor Him:

a. With the gift of thanks (1 Cor.15:57; 2 Cor.9:15)

1 Cor 15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

b. With the gift of dedicated service. (Rom.12:1,2)

Rom 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship.

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3. If we refuse to honor God by honoring His Son, then be warned, “the queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with our generation and condemn it.”

Conclusion.

1. If we do not wish “the queen of the South” to rise up in judgment against us and condemn us, then we need to have our interest in the right things, consulting the right person - Christ.

2. Christ is much greater than Solomon and His wisdom is much greater than Solomon’s.

3. We need to be willing to sacrifice for the right things.

a. We need to listen, observe, and praise God.

b. We need to honor God by honoring His Son. (Jn. 5:23).

John 5:23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

c. One cannot spurn the Son and honor God, but must honor the Son to truly honor the Father.

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