

## January 28

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Chronicles 9 & 10

**Key Verse:** “And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which Cod had put in his heart.” (2 Chronicles 9:23)

### Overview

Not only did all the kings seek to hear Solomon’s wisdom, but a certain queen did also. This famous queen of Sheba probably came from the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula (modern-day Yemen) and traveled by caravan to Jerusalem. She was amazed by all she saw and heard; it was more than she expected. The chronicler includes this story to illustrate the wisdom and wealth of Solomon as a result of God’s blessing (the commentary on 1 Kings 10 gives more details).

To further express Solomon’s splendour, the inspired writer described Solomon’s wealth with specific details, telling of the gold shields, the great ivory throne, the gold drinking vessels, and the many horses and chariots he had acquired. During Solomon’s reign, God’s promise to Abraham concerning the boundaries of the land was fulfilled (9:26; Genesis 15:18). No doubt the chronicler included this information to encourage the returned exiles of his day to obey God and serve Him faithfully, that He might bless Israel once again.

Much detail found in 1 Kings is omitted by the chronicler. For example, we do not read of Solomon’s many foreign wives who contributed to his downfall by having him build idolatrous shrines around Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:1-7). Nor do we read the details about Jeroboam (found in 1 Kings 11:26-40), where we learn he had been anointed of God to rule the northern tribes; and because Solomon attempted to kill him, he fled to Egypt (10:2). The writer does not include this information because he is giving history as it relates to the plan of God for Judah. The history of the northern kingdom (Israel) is not mentioned unless it is in connection with Judah (the southern kingdom). The failures of Solomon are not mentioned, just as the failures of his father David were not mentioned, since they were more personal and did not change God’s plan for His people.

In chapter ten, it is made clear that the division of the kingdom under Solomon’s son Rehoboam was the plan of God (10:15). The sins of Solomon contributed to this split. We are given here the background of how it came about (the commentary on 1 Kings 12 gives some additional information). God sovereignly separated the more faithful tribe of Judah from the apostate northern tribes.

When Rehoboam had gone to Shechem, a centre for the northern tribes (about fifty kilometers north of Jerusalem), to receive their pledge of allegiance after Solomon had died, he was met by Jeroboam, the popular leader. Rehoboam did not heed the wise counsel of the elders who had served under Solomon as advisors. Rather, he foolishly listened to his peers, who advised him not only to despise the people’s request for less taxes but make their burden even heavier than had his father. If Solomon used whips to cause the submission of his subjects, Rehoboam said he would use scourges, which are whips inlaid with pieces of sharp metal (10:11, 14).

This was a turning point in the history of Israel, which was henceforth divided, and this all resulted from unbelief and sin among God's chosen people. Eventually, their sin led to the Exile — the very condition Solomon had mentioned in his prayer (6:36-39); but God promised to hear their sincere prayers and bring back those who called on Him and repented. The Lord was faithful, even to the point of sending His own Son Jesus to be their deliverer, but they rejected Him, and only a remnant remained faithful. Those who believe in Jesus, no matter what their nationality, "to them He [gives] the right to become children of God" (John 1:11-13).

### **Prayer**

O God, You have revealed Yourself so wonderfully. Please give us the grace of obedience so we may serve You faithfully, not turning to our own ways which are the ways of death.