

# **STUDY OF FIRST KINGS (LESSON P-08)**

## REVIEW

### I. UNIFIED NATION

- A. SOLOMON'S ASCENSION TO THE THRONE
- B. THE WEALTH AND WISDOM OF SOLOMON
- C. SOLOMON'S BUILDING ACTIVITIES

## **CURRENT LESSON**

### **D. THE GOLDEN AGE OF SOLOMON [10:1-29]**

#### **1. THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA [10:1-13].**

The Queen of Sheba probably came from what we know today as the country or territory of Yemen.

10:1-13] - In Biblical times, it was considered royal sport for rulers with a reputation to test each other's abilities. The primary purpose of the Queen's visit was to find out whether Solomon's pretensions to wisdom were equaled by his performance.

A long train of those beasts of burden forms the common way of travelling in Arabia; and the presents specified consist of the native produce of that country. Of course, a royal entourage would be larger and more imposing than an ordinary caravan.

Jewish writers make the claim that this queen was converted, through Solomon's influence, to the worship of the true God; but there is no record of her making any gift or offering in the Temple. These claims are not substantiated.

Parenthetically, along with the valuable presents of the Queen of Sheba, is mentioned a foreign wood (almug), which was brought in the Ophir ships. It is thought by some to be sandalwood; by others, to be a species of fragrant fir. Solomon used it for stairs in his temple and palace (2 Chronicles 9:11), but chiefly for musical instruments.

Solomon not only gave his illustrious guest all the insight and information she wanted; but, according to the Oriental fashion, he gave her ample payment for the presents she had brought.

## **2. THE GLORY AND POWER OF SOLOMON'S EMPIRE [10:14-29].**

10:14-16] - Solomon was blessed with a tremendous income!

The great encouragement he gave to commerce was the means of enriching his royal treasury. His fortifications in various parts of his kingdom gave complete security to the caravan trade from the dangers of marauders and thieves; and it was reasonable that, in return for this protection, he should exact a certain toll or duty for the importation of foreign goods.

He also had built several "storage cities", which were used as "merchandise marts" where the caravan merchants unloaded their bales of spices and other commodities and sold them. According to established practices, Solomon would have retailed them in the Western markets at a profit.

"The revenue derived from the tributary kings and from the governors of the country" must have consisted in the tribute which all inferior magistrates periodically bring to their sovereigns in the East, in the shape of presents of the produce of their respective provinces.

10:16-17] - Normally, defensive arms were made of wood overlaid with leather; but these were covered with fine gold, which would not have been very practical in actual warfare. It was appear that these articles were intended only for the use of the palace guards as a display of his wealth. (see 1 Kings 14:26).

10:18-21] - Apparently, every article of equipment and furniture in his throne room was overlaid with gold!

10:22-26] - Gold and silver was obtained in such great abundance from the

West that it was considered "business as usual". "Tarshish" came to be a general term for the West (Jonah 1:3).

His cargo ships made the circuit every three years. The ivory, apes, and peacocks might have been purchased on the north coast of Africa, where those particular animals were to be found. They are specifically named because they were probably the rarest articles on board – even more so than the gold – which was found everywhere in Solomon's kingdom.

His wealth exceeded all others; and it grew phenomenomally every day.

The throne was made of veneered ivory; in the form of an armchair, with a carved back. The ascent to it was by six steps, on each of which stood lions, in place of a railing while a gilded lion stood at each side which probably supported a canopy. A golden footstool is mentioned (2 Chronicles 9:18) as attached to this throne, whose magnificence is described as unrivalled.

It has been said that little things portray the true character of a man more certainly than the big ones. A casual reader might see little significance in Solomon's assembling large numbers of horses. However, the Mosaic law particularly forbade the King of Israel to amass horses from Egypt: "But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way" (Deut 17:16).

10:27-29] - The court of Solomon was ever open to receive both native and foreign admirers. The reputed wisdom of Solomon, plus the grandeur of his public buildings, including the Temple, inevitably attracted many visitors.