

The Kings and I

Lesson 4: The Kingdom Reaches a Climax

I Kings 10

TEACHING NOTES

The Queen of Sheba Looks at You (I Kings 10: 1-10 ; Luke 11:31-32)

* **Background:** {Optional – summarize or skip depending on time}

- As you are turning there a little **background** to help use appreciate this story.

- Today's encounter occurs at the **height of the OT Kingdom of Israel** – Israel is a nation numbering in the millions of people, fully occupying the land of Canaan promised to Abraham, with great wealth and power. Solomon has recently completed a 13 year massive building project that included a grand palace complex and the magnificent Temple of the Lord, which we have just seen filled with His glory!

- **Today in America it is hard to understand the full significance of this – this kingdom stood as the glorious fulfillment of great promises God had made 1,000 years before, and it was a true marvel to behold**

* I got a small taste of what an ancient kingdom might have looked like this summer as I got to join a missions team in the **Kingdom of Cambodia**. I was struck first by the name – it is **still called a Kingdom**, and it does indeed feel different than the US

- People travel the globe to go to Cambodia to see the great ruins at **Angkor Watt**, the 800-1,000 year old ruins of the kings cities and temples. (*Amazing Race*)

* I was struck first by **the sheer size of and scope** of the projects – the great elephant wall stretching as far as the eye can see, temple many stories high with thousands of intricate hand carvings, building spread over acres now intermingles with the forests around them – all carved from stone, made without modern tools

- I was also struck by **what these building represented** – On the outside of the cities and on the outer walls of the temples there great statues and carvings showing the conquests of the kings. **But the heart of the city was the temple.**

* Here you see the Bayon Temple, with hundreds of pillars each carved with 4 **faces of Buddha** that can be seen from all around. And here is just a small part of the massive carving depicting the **Hindu story of creation** with the 100 demons and 100 gods battling over the sea of milk with all the heavens looking on.

- Even today, in the **modern Palace** of the reigning King in Phnom Pehn you find the Kings' Palace sitting across from the **Silver Temple** and a dozen other temples

- Seeing these ruins has given me just a small taste of what it must have been like to see these Kingdoms in all of their glory... And these are the **kingdoms of false gods** ... today's story brings us to the pinnacle of the early earthly **kingdom of the One True God!**

* **READ I KINGS 10:1-10**

* **3 Observations about the Queen of Sheba** (also called “the Queen of the South”)

* **1) She Hears ... and She Comes (10:1-2 ; 6-7)**

Queen of Sheba Hears

- Exact location unknown – most think it is in Yemen
- Journey of over **1500 miles overland** to Israel
- Rumors reach her of Wise king and vast, glorious kingdom\
- Also note in verse 1 “**concerning the name of the Lord**” – not jus curiosity trip or even business trip, also interest in seeing this people’s god

She Comes to see

- **has doubts**
- but even if it is even half true, well worth the trip
- Brings great entourage and gifts to show honor and will friends

* **2) She Sees ... and She is Overwhelmed (10: 3-5 ; 7-8)**

She Questions

- Asks all she wishes
- Riddles and questions common in that day
- Most likely also feeling out for Trade deals and alliances
- Solomon answers all

She Takes a Close Look

- House, temple
- Food, offerings
- Seating of officials, servants
- Clothing, cupboards
- She is **very observant**, checks under the carpets in the back hallways!
- Leithart notes parallels in this passage between what she sees and experiences in the **King’s House** and the **House of God**

She is Overwhelmed

- **Took her breath away**
- **The half not told her**
- Wisdom, Prosperity surpass all report
- Happiness of men and servants is obvious!
- When overhear servants not grumbling about job and king, rather excited that they get some of the droppings of his wisdom!

* 3) She Speaks ... and God is Praised (10:9-10)

She Speaks

- **Blessed be the Lord your God**
- Delight in you, set you on Throne
- Lord loved Israel ... Forever
- Made you king .. to execute righteousness and justice

God is Praised

- all she saw – naturally responded with praise not to Solomon but to God!
- **First fruit of covenant with Abraham**
 - In Genesis God Promised to make for Himself a People Raising
 - Numerous as the Sand and Starts
 - Living in the land of Canaan (land of milk & honey)
 - Pour out His blessing on them
 - Kings, and nations of kings come from his line
 - which in David becomes an “Eternal Throne”
 - And that **all the nations be blessed** through him!

- Note: this incident with the Queen of Sheba shows the **Kingdom of Israel in all it's glory**. It should be the first taste of a great future. Unfortunately in this very chapter Solomon will fall, and within a generation the nation will be divided and head into judgment and ruin. But this story shows a brief shadow of the glory God had promised and meant for His people.

How does this Story apply to us in the 21st Century?

* **Jesus gives us the Interpretation (Luke 11:29-32)** (see also Is. 60-61, Rev. 21)

READ Luke 11:31-32

You will be judged on your response to Christ ... **Because He is Greater**

* **1) God Promises a Greater Kingdom and Greater King**

- When Israel fell into sin and God said he would judge her, he added this in **Isaiah chapters 60 & 61**

Just listen to some excerpts ... picture this glorious kingdom God is promising:

1-3: Arise, shine for your **light has come**.... A darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the people; but the Lord will arise upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising

5-6: Then you shall see and be radiant; **you shall thrill and exult**, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of nations shall come to you ... **all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.**

10-11: Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for **in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I had mercy on you.** Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut.

14: All who despised you shall fall at your feet; **they shall call you the city of the Lord**, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel

16: and **you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer**, the Mighty One of Jacob.

19-20: **The sun shall be no more your light by day**, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but **the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.** Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself, for **the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of morning shall be ended.**

21-22: **Your people shall all be righteous**, they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, **that I might be glorified.** The least one shall become a clan and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it.

61:1-2: **The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me**, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...

* 2) Jesus Brings that Greater Kingdom as the Greater King

In Luke 4 Jesus stands in the Synagogue and reads the scroll of Isaiah 61 ending with “**Today this Scripture is fulfilled** in your hearing”

Earlier, at Jesus birth, **magi from the East** come bearing great gifts, gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh, just as Isaiah foretold

In Mark 1, after his Baptism, Jesus begins his ministry by saying “**The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the Good News**”

The time is Fulfilled, Jesus fulfills all we see in the OT and in Kings:

- Christ = True Wisdom, True Temple, Final Sacrifice, King of Kings

The Kingdom is at hand:

- He promises joy, peace, love, an abundant life, a new heart, the removal of the penalty and power of sin and death, a right relationship with God ... A kingdom not of might or power or governments, but a kingdom of transformed people who know the God of the universe and are adopted as His sons and daughters!

* 3) The Spirit Guarantees an Eternal Kingdom and Eternity with the King!

– **people from every people, tribe and tongue ... Mansions, streets of gold, gates of gems...**

- **wipe away every tear, eternal joy**

- Banquet of the Lamb, worship and praise

- **Rev. 20:** no sun or moon – the Light of God himself!

* Jesus' Application to Our Life:

* Greater Kingdom and King ... therefore **Greater Response Expected**

- **We should do far more than any before!**

- and the half has not been Told!

- So how far would you travel for this?

- Queen of Sheeba traveled the earth and gave more spice and other gifts than ever given to any king

- poor woman poured perfume worth entire years salary on Jesus' feet

- He asks for no less that everything, our very lives themselves

- Yet he offers so much more

Two Challenges to You and Me Today:

*** 1) Come to this Great King!**

- If you do not know this Jesus or are not sure if you are part of this Kingdom, come!
- You can bring your questions and doubts – God not scared of even the toughest questions ... but come, take a closer look
- And if you have been looking but have not yet repented and believed in this Good News, no better day than today, for today is the day of salvation!
- The promise is that all who repent and believe shall inherit Eternal Life

*** 2) Allow others a taste of this Great Kingdom!**

- So often we talk of sin and repentance, we talk of suffering and pain in this life, we talk of the need to read the Bible and pray, we talk of the shortcomings of the church and the need for changed lives... **but do we talk about and live out the glory of this kingdom?**

The Queen of Sheba was so intrigued by the rumors she heard of this kingdom of Solomon that she traveled the globe to get a glimpse of it. How is it that our friends have not decided to travel down the street to hear of this greater Kingdom? Maybe they have not heard of it?

Have those around you and the church here seen this Kingdom?

- **what kind of a kingdom are we calling people to come to?** If someone walked into our church today, observed our service, listened to what we are talking about, looked around at how the people are responding, talked to the people around them, what would their first impressions be?

I remember a few months ago there was an **article in the local paper** about a church I had attended that was just that, a **non-religious reporter came two separate Sundays** and then wrote an article about what he found.

What might he write **if he came here**, or if he **came to your workplace** and observed you this week?

The Queen of Sheba would remind us **this week to Ask Yourself**

* **Do people HEAR anything intriguing?**

- Do people around me hear anything that might intrigue them to come?

* **Do people SEE anything breath-taking?**

- Do people around me see anything that might their breath away?

* **Do people have reason to SPEAK praise to God?**

- Do people around me have reason to speak praises for God's good work?

What will the Queen of the South say at the judgment when she looks into your eyes and asks if you have come to the King?

What will she say as she turns to your neighbor and asks if they have been drawn to the Kingdom through you?

This Week: Taste and See that the Lord is Good, then give others a taste of God's great Kingdom and Christ, the great King of Kings and Lord of Lord

Next Class:

❖ **I Kings 5-9 – The Centerpiece of the Kingdom** - Building and Dedicating the Temple

❖ **Also:** More in depth discussion of Christ fulfill the Temple

{Note: I will be away next week, but there will be a video that will lead you through the study and discussion. Next week is central to who God is and how He relates to us!}