

Judgement and Justice

I Kings 10:1-9

- Wisdom really stands out in the world
- When we make wise decisions, we represent something different
- The world often takes notice

- This is particularly true of those who are curious
- They wonder if there is any truth in the gospel
- If this God they have heard about is real and at work in the lives of people

- A curious person plays a key role in today's text
- She comes to prove one of God's servants with hard questions
- And she finds the stories about his wisdom are true
- That his "Judgement and Justice" are remarkable
- Which is our theme of the day

- We have a slightly longer-than-usual passage of the day
- But there are a lot of important details
- So it is important that we read the full text
- Before taking a closer look...

I Kings 10:1-9

1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

- When this queen discovers the wisdom of Solomon, she is amazed
- But she looks beyond Solomon himself

- Recognizing Solomon's God as the Giver of Wisdom
- The One who blessed him and sat him on the throne in Israel
- This account is somewhat well-known
- But worthy of close examination
- Before we approach our primary text
- We need to address the story behind Solomon's wisdom
- The event that changed him and made him worthy of his reputation
- It is found a in the early part of the same book...

I Kings 3:5-12

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

- Solomon asked for an understanding heart
- To discern between good and bad
- So he might be a competent judge for his people
- And God granted him these requests and more
- The queen of Sheba discovers this is true
- But she has her doubts at the beginning...

I Kings 10:1

1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

- Solomon's reputation grows
- And he becomes known even in Arabia
- This queen appears to have been from a place called Arabia Felix

- It's southern Arabia, possibly modern-day Yemen
- Enough details have come to her in Sheba
- That she feels this king is worth paying a visit
- So she can test him
- To see if he is really the kind of wise leader people say he is
- The phrase "concerning the name of the Lord" is interesting
- It appears that Solomon's wisdom is always connected to Jehovah when it is spread abroad
- His is the One True God to which the temple is dedicated
- And to which Solomon himself is dedicated
- Her questions may have been riddles
- The Arabians (and many in the ancient world) were known for testing people in this way
- And so she arrives...

I Kings 10:2

2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

- This queen arrived with all of her wealth on display
- And when she came to Solomon, she told him everything that was on her mind
- One commentator said she discussed with him "all the doubts and difficulties wherewith her mind was perplexed"
- As you would expect, Solomon responded with wisdom from God...

I Kings 10:3

3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

- Whatever may have been hid from others she asked, was revealed to Solomon
- This was knowledge and understanding from God alone
- Nothing was too deep for him, none of her riddles too complex
- He understood
- And she recognized this...

I Kings 10:4-5

4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,
 5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

- This queen recognized not only Solomon's wisdom
 - But his industry and organization and leadership
 - And seeing it, essentially, took her breath away
 - That's what the final phrase of verse five means
- She saw the palace that he built
 - And the banquets that he held
 - The way in which his people served him
 - What they all wore
 - And the way in which he offered sacrifice to the Lord
- When she did
 - She recognized how different he was
 - And she responded...

I Kings 10:6-7

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

- We mentioned at the beginning
 - This queen was skeptical
 - She heard stories about Solomon's wisdom - and Solomon's God
 - But she needed to see for herself
- That which had been given to Solomon by God exceeded her expectations
 - This is often the case with God's blessings
 - And always the case when God's attributes are reflected by His saints
- The world takes notice
 - Their pre-conceived ideas are challenged
 - This queen noticed a few things in particular...

I Kings 10:8

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

- Those who served the king were happy
 - They were not simply serving out of duty to their country
 - Their service was genuine and with joy
 - Therefore they served continually
 - Observing and learning
- This was a testament to Solomon's leadership

- And the character of his God...

I Kings 10:9

9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

- The character of Solomon reflected well on God
- It was clear his blessings were from a certain kind of God
- They were so unusual, it was obvious

- This God obviously loved Solomon
- And He loved the nation of Israel
- So He placed this wise king on the throne
- And gave him the knowledge and understanding to reign

- To do judgement and justice

- God promises to give all of His children wisdom
- In abundance
- We read about it in James...

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

- This same God provides wisdom for us today
- And He responds in the same way He responded to Solomon
- When we humbly come to Him
- He provides wisdom in heaping portions
- And never reprimands His children for asking
- So...ask!

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023