

The Queen Of Sheba Meets The King

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[0 : 0 0] A little to the chapter we read in 2 Chronicles chapter 9. Now when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions, having a very great retinue and camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones.

And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing hidden from Solomon that he could not explain to her.

And so on. The Queen of Sheba had a ship and her daughter sailed in it. What was the name of her daughter? When I was a wee boy, I always used to ask, I used to think it was the most brilliant riddle.

What was the name of her daughter? I have no idea whether the Queen of Sheba had a daughter at all. And I very much doubt if she did that her name was Anne. But when I was a wee boy, I used to think that I was so smart.

Now the Queen of Sheba is in many ways quite a remarkable character. We've been going through different characters in the Bible alphabetically.

[1 : 1 4] And obviously as I've come to cue, you're quite limited. And I thought, well, we'll look at a queen. There was either Queen Esther, Queen Jezebel, Queen of Sheba.

There were a few queens that you could look at. And when I think even of the great contrast between two queens who were of a pagan background, one was Jezebel and the other, the Queen of Sheba, you see a huge difference in their character.

They both were in search of something. Jezebel was in search of power. She had an extraordinary lust for power. She wanted to be the boss.

And she was the power behind the throne during the reign of Heab. And her great desire was to promote the false worship of Baal. And so she had as many Christians, as many believers killed as possible and tried to remove the worship of God from the land.

But she couldn't because she was fighting against the God of heaven. And of course we know the story of how Elijah was the great prophet at that time. And we find that Jezebel in the end was eaten by the dogs outside the wall of the city.

[2 : 3 1] You see, it's a very, very solemn and serious thing to fight against God. And that's what she tried to do. But here's this woman, and again she had a great desire, but her great desire was for learning.

She had a great thirst, obviously, for wisdom, for understanding. And that's what brought her to seek out and to search out for Solomon.

Now we don't know an awful lot about the Queen of Sheba. Some people think that she was from Ethiopia or down by Yemen. Certainly in the known world at that time, she was from a great distance.

Because the New Testament talks about her that she came from the ends of the earth. In fact, Jesus talking about it, that's how he described it. That she came from the ends of the earth.

Because, obviously, in the known world at that time, she came from a great, great distance. Now, as we see, her great desire was for wisdom.

[3 : 3 6] And she wanted to know as much as she could. Now, of course, we live in a day where the search for wisdom still continues, where people are still searching for knowledge and for wisdom.

But the tools available to us today are quite extraordinary. People just, if they want to find out anything instantly, they just Google. But, obviously, way back then, the abilities to find out were extraordinarily limited.

Now, we don't know how the Queen of Sheba heard about Solomon. It was, no doubt, probably through people trading and people traveling, that she heard about this king in the land of Israel,

way, way up north.

And that he was extraordinarily clever. That he had great wealth. And he was also somebody who was unbelievably wealthy. That his kingdom was like no other kingdom.

That there was just a splendor, almost an extravagance of riches in every quarter. But on top of that, there wasn't anybody with wisdom like it.

[4 : 51] And so, there's no doubt that this queen, who had this thirst for knowledge and for understanding and wisdom, when she heard that, she said to herself, Well, I must go and meet with this man.

I have to go and meet Solomon. Now, as we look at the Queen of Sheba and the journey to Solomon, obviously, we have to think a little about Solomon. And Solomon, for most of his reign, was a good king who followed in the footsteps of his father, David.

But he wasn't as committed to the Lord as David was. And Solomon, we'll see in a moment, we all know the story of Solomon.

Solomon began his reign really well. But Solomon ended his reign with a huge level of disappointment.

And in many ways, Solomon resembled his father. And to a certain extent, had some of the same issues and problems that his father had as well.

[5 : 56] One of the things that, if David, you were to say the weaknesses in David's life, one of the obvious weaknesses was his weakness for multiplying wives to himself.

He took loads of wives. And people say, well, God permitted that in the Old Testament. Well, no, he didn't.

Because if we go to Deuteronomy, it tells us there, the Lord says that when the time comes when Israel will have a king, there were certain things the king wasn't to do.

The king wasn't to, in any way, to take his people back to Egypt because the Lord had delivered them from Egypt. He wasn't to multiply horses to himself, nor was he to multiply wives to himself. So what David did was in direct disobedience to the command of God. Some people say, oh, the Lord, it was different in those days. It wasn't. God had, that was his decree.

[7 : 05] So David flew in the face of that. And you may say to yourself, oh, well, David got off with it. No, he didn't. If we were to do a study on the family life in David's palace, you would come across one of the most dysfunctional families ever, where there was intrigue and incest and murder.

There was every conceivable thing going on. And that is as a result of his flagrant disobedience to the Lord. So what David did, Solomon did a hundred times more.

And Solomon multiplied to himself at the most outrageous level, where he had so many wives and so many concubines.

And the thing was that the very thing that the Lord warned by multiplying wives was that there was a fear that that would take them away from the Lord is exactly what happened with Solomon.

Because Solomon married quite a lot of pagan women. And Solomon began to compromise. And let's remember, compromise is always danger. Solomon began to compromise because what he did was he built places of worship for his pagan wives.

[8 : 27] Not that Solomon had any intention of going to worship with them. But as inevitably happens over a period of time, the compromise, once you start to compromise, it ended up that Solomon went with them and it tells us so sadly that his wives turned his heart away from the Lord.

And Solomon found himself in a place where some years earlier he would never, ever, ever have envisaged himself arriving. And that was purely because he began to compromise.

Now that was a great difference between David and Solomon. Because at no point in David's life did David ever, ever compromise the worship of God. In fact, there were few people ever in the Bible who ever worshipped God with so much passion and so much love and so much dedication and so much commitment as David.

So there was this great difference. So it's just a warning to us how compromise, that we can end up, you know, once you begin to compromise the truth, and once you begin to get a wee bitty comfortable in the place of compromise, you begin to justify to yourself why you're doing what you're doing.

And all of a sudden it becomes acceptable and then it becomes all right and then it becomes the norm. That's what happens in society. That's how society goes in a downward spiral.

[9 : 55] Once you begin to compromise a wee bit and then you begin to accept things and you say, oh, I'm not too sure. But it doesn't take long until it becomes the norm and we go down and down and down.

Anyway, as we know, Solomon started brilliantly and his reign was one where he really put the Lord first. Now you remember when Solomon came to the throne, he was absolutely overwhelmed because he was taking over from David, his father, who was really a legend in his own lifetime. Every so often there are people who come along in different fields in life and they're kind of like almost head and shoulders above anybody else. And two of the greatest, or possibly the greatest leaders that Israel ever had was Moses leading them through the wilderness and David the king. And that's why you find Joshua, who took over from Moses, and Solomon, who took over from David, both of them were absolutely petrified. They felt utterly overwhelmed in what they were doing.

And that's why you find in the book of Joshua, the Lord is saying over and over and over again, oh, be of good courage. Don't fear. I'm with you. Be courageous. Because obviously Solomon was feeling overwhelmed.

[11 : 15] And then when David, when after Solomon took over from David, he felt exactly the same. And you remember how the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream.

And the Lord said to Solomon, just as he began his reign, ask me for whatever you wish. Now I've often thought about that. And I suppose it's something you would ask yourself as well. How would you answer that? Supposing the Lord was to say to you and say, I will give you anything you want. You ask me for whatever you want.

You know, that's a really, really challenging question. And I'm sure at different stages of life you would ask for different things. Maybe when you were young you would ask for power and you would maybe say, make me a billionaire.

Give me fame. Give me fortune. Give me this. Give me that. I don't know. Maybe as you get old you'd be asking for health and for strength and for energy and for comfort and for peace.

[12 : 22] You might be asking different things. But when God came to Solomon and he said, ask me what you will. Solomon said to the Lord, you know Lord, I feel like a little child.

I have been given this huge task of exercising justice and rule in this kingdom and I don't feel up to it. I feel like a child.

And Lord, what I want from you is wisdom and discernment so that I will know how to go in and out and how to judge your people righteously.

And the Lord was so pleased with Solomon's request that he hadn't asked for power or wealth or he hadn't asked for to have rule over all the enemies or anything like that.

But he asked for God's wisdom to fill his heart. The Lord said, you know what? I'm going to make you, I'm going to give you wisdom like nobody else has ever had.

[13 : 29] I'm going to make you the wisest man possible. But I'm going to give you more than that. I'm going to give you what you didn't ask for. I am going to give you extraordinary wealth and I'm going to give you complete peace so that you will have dominion, rule over all enemies right throughout your reign.

You won't be troubled by enemies. And so Solomon had this incredible reign as king. And he was a, I suppose, Solomon's request is a classic example of the New Testament where we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

righteousness. And the Lord says, all the other things will be added to you. That's something that so often we don't take to heart. God says, you put me first.

I guarantee you, you put me first and I will add the other things to you. The temptation in this life is to ask the Lord for this and that and the next thing and as an afterthought, oh Lord, give me a bit of spiritual vitality, help me to know you a little better.

But so often we can pray about all the temporal things and almost forget him. The Lord says, no, it's the other way around. Put me first. I guarantee you, if you put me first, I will sort the other things.

[14 : 56] And that's, was so true in the life of Solomon. And so here's this man, Solomon, with all his great wealth and his fame has gone far and wide.

Now Jesus, talking about the Queen of Sheba, he talks about the Queen of Sheba coming to see Solomon. And he talks about Solomon's wisdom and Solomon's wealth.

But then he addressed all the people and he said to them, but a greater than Solomon is here. The Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to see Solomon.

But the one who is greater than Solomon, who has all wisdom, Solomon only, though he was the wisest of men, his knowledge and his wisdom was still limited.

The wisdom of Jesus is, is complete. And so Jesus is saying, there's a greater than Solomon here. And so tonight, just as we look at the Queen of Sheba, I want us to think of her seeking and searching for Solomon and coming to him as, as we would someone coming to seek and to search for the Lord Jesus.

[16:11] Now it doesn't tell us, but I wouldn't be surprised if when the Queen of Sheba way back in her own land said, you know what, I'm going to see this King Solomon.

I've heard so much about him. And I can imagine her courtier saying, what? Do you know where he stays? And she says, no, but I know that it's way, way, I know that it's hundreds, maybe thousands of miles away, we're going.

And her advisors will be saying, but you can't. You don't know the exact route. You have to go through wilderness, you have to go through deserts, you have to go through heat, you might be facing wild beasts, you might be facing bandits and robbers, your life is in danger, don't even think about it.

Queen, Sheba, what are you thinking of? Don't go on that journey. And you know, the moment a person begins to hear about King Jesus and begins in their heart to say, I want to know a little more about Jesus, the alarm bells will start ringing.

The alarm bells from hell, the alarm bells from the world, the alarm bells from your own human nature will be saying, hey, hey, hey, no, no, no, no, no, no, don't get too serious about that.

[17:37] Just leave that alone. Don't start because, you know, you see, when you start going down that road, you have no idea, you don't know what you're going to let yourself in for. You're comfortable where you are.

You're in control of your life where you are. If you become a Christian, you're going into unknown territory. You don't know what will happen. Just stay where you are.

Take your chance. And so there'll be all these kind of voices booming away the moment a person begins to show interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember, the world does not want to lose you. If you're here tonight and you're not a Christian, the world does not want to lose you because the world loves its own. Remember that, the world loves its own.

It doesn't want to lose you. And the world wants to hold on to you. And the world is powerful. And the world is saying, hey, no, look, do not, do not go down that road because you're going to lose so much.

[18:46] Well, at one level you will because the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that discipleship involves taking up our cross, denying ourselves, and following him.

And straight away you say, yeah, exactly, that's just what I was saying. I don't want this. I don't want to be going around with all this kind of stuff, heavy stuff and bow down and denying stuff.

I don't want to go down that route. I still want to be a Christian. Well, you can't do it both ways. And the world does not want to lose you.

But remember this, there is nothing more important in the whole wide world than your soul.

Supposing you took all the wealth that Solomon had, and all the wealth in all the kingdoms of this world just now, and suppose you bore down and gathered all the oil that is everywhere in this world, and all the gas, and all the coal, and all the gold, and all the everything, and measured it all up, all the wealth together.

You wouldn't have a calculator, I don't think that could count the wealth of it. Jesus says, you know what, your soul is of more value than all that. Because what will a person give in exchange for a soul?

[20:12] Nothing. Supposing you gain the whole world, and that means everything. Supposing you became the most powerful person in the world, and owned and had everything.

It's not worth losing your own soul. That's what Jesus says, and Jesus is the truth. As we're saying today, we hear so many opinions about so many things, and we don't know, is that right, or is this right?

We're not sure, so often we're confused. Well, there's no confusion with Jesus, no confusion in his word, it's direct, he's telling us exactly how it is. Except a person be born again, they cannot see the kingdom of God.

I am the way, the truth, and the life, that no one comes to the Father, but through me. That is it. And let me tell you, there will be loads of voices trying to stop you going to Jesus.

Remember in the pilgrim's progress, when Christian was in the city of destruction, and he said, right, I've got to get out of here. He was reading this Bible, he said, I need to get out of here.

[21 : 19] I want to get to the celestial city. And remember when he began to leave, they all came out and they were shouting after him, where are you going, don't be daft, come back. What did he do?

He put his fingers in his ears, so that he wouldn't hear them, because he knew that if he listened to them, and that powers of persuasion, that he might yield and give in and go back.

So he put his fingers in his ears, so he wouldn't hear. That's what you've got to do. Because tonight, if your soul is being stirred in any way, the devil is going to try and stop you.

You must put your fingers in your ears, so that you don't listen to him. Only one thing matters is that you come to find the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal savior.

You need to go right now. Well, anyway, the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon that he had this great kingdom. And King Jesus has a great kingdom as well. And the thing is that King Jesus' kingdom will last forever.

[22 : 24] Every other kingdom will go. The minister this morning was quoting there from Isaiah about what happened to Babylon.

And it's quite extraordinary. Just as it was the head of gold in Daniel's dream, this mighty empire that ruled the known world, it was a head of gold.

There was no kingdom like it. There was no king like Nebuchadnezzar. It's gone. Gone. But the kingdom of Jesus is forever.

And you know, when you enter into that kingdom, Jesus will take you to be with himself. You know, it works both ways. The moment you become a Christian, you enter the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God enters you at the same time.

the thief on the cross, as he was hanging beside Jesus, he turned and he saw all of a sudden, he turned and he saw Jesus wasn't just an ordinary man.

[23 : 22] Yes, he was a man. But he saw straight out, this is who he said he was. This is a Messiah, this is Son of God. This is King Jesus.

And he turned and he said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said, today you will be with me in paradise. So Jesus has a kingdom.

Now when the queen of Sheba arrived to see Solomon, she had loads and loads of questions. She had hard questions. And you know, that's something that's true with all of us tonight.

We have lots of questions. We have questions about life. We have questions about providence. We have questions about how things are with ourselves.

We have questions about the future. We have questions about faith. There are loads of things. And the Lord wants us to come to him with all these questions.

[24 : 23] Don't just hide them and sit on them in your own life. We need to bring them out into the open and to ask the Lord. And we find in verse 1 that she told him all that was on her mind.

I love that. Now, we don't normally meet somebody and just tell them everything we're thinking and how we feel. You know, sometimes you can be with a person and you can be talking away and maybe you end up saying more than you intend and you go away and say, oh, I wish I hadn't said all that.

You know, sometimes you can bear your soul more than you intend. You say, oh, I said far too much. I wish I hadn't said all that I said. Well, the Queen of Sheba, she told Solomon everything that was in her mind.

And Jesus wants us to do exactly the same. He wants us to go with all our burdens and with all our troubles and with all our worries and with all our cares.

He wants us to go and tell him about how you've been messed up at this and how this has happened to you, about injustices and things that are unfair, there are things that aren't measuring up in your life and you have all kinds of problems and it might be putting you off your sleep and you go to Jesus and tell him.

[25 : 44] Tell him everything that's within your mind. Because the Bible tells us that he has a fellow feeling with us, that he is the high priest who has been touched with a feeling of all our weaknesses.

All these things, all the pains and the sorrows of life. All the things that trouble you. Jesus says, I know, I understand. And that's the wonderful thing when you have somebody who understands you. Well, that's no wonder that Jesus said, a greater than Solomon is here. So the Queen of Sheba told Jesus everything that was within her mind.

Sheba, she had settled down with Solomon and seen his kingdom, seen everything that was there. She had no breath left in her. In other words, she was just utterly overwhelmed. She was kind of saying, whoa, this is too much. And then she's actually saying, I heard the report.

[27 : 01] I heard it. But you know, now that I have come and seen it for myself, the half of it wasn't told me. And that is exactly how it is when we come to faith in Jesus Christ.

We hear about it. This is the important thing, first and foremost, people have to hear. How will you believe unless you hear? You have to hear. But then you have to taste and see that God is good. And you might be here tonight as a Christian, and it might be a long time since you came to faith. Try and remember what it was like when you actually came to faith.

When the newness, when the light shone in, when the peace filled your heart, when the sense of just being able to go to the Lord with anything, just the thrill of having all these other Christians who were part of your family, of how church became so different.

Because sometimes you went to church just to, as it were, to say, well, I've done my duty. That's me. That's me. I count that one out. Now you wanted to go. The word of God became real.

[28 : 15] God was speaking to you. Put your mind back. Think of these days. Because sometimes we can get used to it. Sometimes we can lose our way a wee bit. But remember what it was like.

And you're saying to yourself, wow, this is, I heard about it. But now I know, I've tasted and seen that God is good. Now the thing is, God hasn't changed.

We change. Our spiritual appetite changes. Our hunger sometimes change. sometimes, sadly, along the way, we can become even cynical as Christians.

We can lose the edge. We can become bitter. We can have this and that. And we can allow loads of things in. That spoil of fellowship with the Lord. And we lose the edge.

Illness. All these things. Tiredness. There's loads of things that can come in and affect our spiritual enjoyment of the Lord. But that doesn't change the fact that we still belong to him.

[29 : 17] And that he hasn't changed. And that we can still discover this vitality, this vibrance, this wonder of the kingdom. But whatever we get here is only the tiniest taste of what is yet to be.

because one day we will be ushered into his kingdom. At the moment the kingdom has come in with us. But then it's going to be turned round and we will be brought into the palace of the king to live there forever.

And we'll be like the queen of Sheba then. Our breath as it were will be taken away. We will be overwhelmed and we'll be saying the half was not torn. Oh yes I had a taste down there.

I remember services, I remember fellowships, I remember times where the Lord grew so close, I remember times where my heart thrilled. Oh it was just a little taste of what is here now forever and ever and ever and ever.

Please tonight go to King Jesus. Queen of Sheba I'll tell you it was some journey she undertook. It was a huge effort and a mighty struggle.

[30 : 36] But when she went back home she said you know what it was worth it all. And there is no Christian who will say at the end of the day you know it wasn't worth it.

Okay we have good days we have bad days but at the end of the day there's not a Christian who will turn around and say you know I made a mistake. Wish I'd never come to Christ.

there's not one soul in heaven that will ever say you know that was a mistake that day I came to Jesus. Every soul in heaven will say the greatest day ever ever ever in my life was the day the Lord laid his heart and his hand upon me.

You make sure then tonight that you come to King Jesus. Let us pray. Lord our God we pray that we may indeed hear your word and that we might respond to it.

We pray that we will not put these things away from us because we are dealing with the issues of life and death. Life is fragile. Maybe even some of us might not even be here tomorrow.

[31 : 52] We don't know what a day or an hour may bring. And so we pray Lord that we will be ready when the voice of death calls for us. And that we will go to be with you forever.

We ask oh Lord that you will be merciful to us and that you will help us in all that we are about. We pray to bless the fellowship and the minister afterwards as he speaks to us. And we pray that you will do us good and that we will know your blessing and take away from us our sin.

In Jesus name we ask it. Amen. We conclude singing in Psalm 45 from the Scottish Psalter. Psalm number 45 from the Scottish Psalter.

And this is the second version. It's on page 270. We sing from verse 9. Psalm 45 second version and verse 9.

Among the women honorable king's daughters were at hand. Upon thy right hand did the queen and gold of offer stand. O daughter hearken and regard and do thine ear incline.

[32 : 59] Likewise forget thy father's house and people that are thine. Then the king desired shall be thy beauty vehemently. Because he is thy lord do thou him worship reverently.

The daughter there of Tyre shall be with gifts and offerings great. Those are the people that are which thy favor shall entreat. Behold the daughter of the king all glorious is within.

With embroideries of gold her garments wrought have been. She shall be brought unto the king in robes with needle wrought. That fellow virgins following shall unto thee be brought.

Verses 9 to 14 or Psalm 45. O daughter hearken and regard unto thy hearing fly thy minds forget thy father's house and people love are thine and all the king is are shall be thy beauty hear hear hear and hear behold he is thy lord to thou them worship reverently thee the daughter then of star shall be with gifts and offerings pay pray those of the king the last are rich and neither shall end thee and may may hold the daughter of the king the day of your sins within and with and pride her needs of all her garments not have been she shall be brought down to the king in ropes with needle rod her fellow virgins following shall and he be brought down to the king shall be brought apostles apologies centre. I read the wrong version and you did a great job going from a short metre to a common metre.

Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.