

1 KINGS WEEK FOUR – “And Then There Was Sheba”

September 23, 2021

Questions for 1 Kings 10-11

This week we're only going to cover two chapters since chapter 11 is the end of Solomon's story. This week we're introduced to the Queen of Sheba. Modern historians identify Sheba with the South Arabian kingdom of Saba located in present-day Yemen. Once again Solomon's story introduces us to a nameless woman of royal heritage. Unlike Pharaoh's daughter (who we have come to know as “Trish” in our class), many simply refer to her as “Sheba.” According to 1 Kings, she brings a caravan of valuable gifts for King Solomon. The Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon is also told in 2 Chronicles 9. This story has undergone extensive Jewish, Islamic and Ethiopian elaborations, and has become the subject of one of the most widespread and fertile cycles of legends in the Middle East.

1. What kind of “hard questions” do you think Sheba may have presented to Solomon? What kind of wisdom do you think she was seeking? What sort of wisdom do you suppose Solomon offered?
2. From a purely practical and historical point of view, what is the most likely reason the Queen of Sheba came to Israel?
3. What do you suppose the author meant by, “there was no more spirit in her” in 10:5?
4. Does the Queen's declaration in verse 9 mean that she converted to the God of Israel?
5. Who are “all the Kings of Arabia and the governors of the land?” (10:14-15)
6. Why would anybody in their right mind want “apes and peacocks” and why would the author even mention that in this list of Solomon's treasures?
7. What are the sins of Solomon and how does God judge him and his house?
8. Does it seem that God's judgment on Solomon concerning his foreign wives is coming up a little late in the game? What was the *real* reason for God's anger with Solomon?

9. What is the definition of idolatry?

10. Who were Solomon's three rivals? What do you think of the idea that God "raised up" these rivals to bring an end to Solomon's reign? Does this mean they acted as God's agents?

11. Who was responsible for the north-south split in the kingdom?

12. Who was Ahijah and what kind of role did he play in the breakdown of Solomon's kingdom?

13. Why was Solomon spared witnessing the kingdom's breakup?

14. What was God's promise to Jeroboam?