

2Chronicles 9:1 ¶ And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

2Chronicles 9:2 And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.

This chapter starts with a record of the visit from the Queen of Sheba. Easton's Dictionary defines Sheba as follows: "Sheba, in fact, was Saba in Southern Arabia, the Sabaeans of classical geography, who carried on the trade in spices with the other peoples of the ancient world. They were Semites, speaking one of the two main dialects of Himyaritic or South Arabic. Sheba had become a monarchy before the days of Solomon. Its queen brought him gold, spices, and precious stones (1 Kings 10:1-13). She is called by our Lord the 'queen of the south' (Matt. 12:42)."

The NIV Commentary provides more insight about this location: "It is the best-watered and most fertile area of Arabia. By employing an extensive irrigation system, it developed a strong agricultural economy. But its chief strength lay in its being a center of trade. Its location kept it fairly secure from the power struggles in the Fertile Crescent and at the same time enabled it to be a convenient trade depot for traffic involving Africa, India, and the Mediterranean countries. It was famous for its trade in perfumes, incense, gold, and precious stones."

I've heard it suggested that the area of southern Arabia now known as Yemen has been identified with Sheba.

This queen had evidently heard a lot about Solomon's wealth and wisdom and decided to visit him herself to ascertain the truth of what she had heard. She traveled with a large caravan bringing gifts of spices and a great amount of gold and precious stones. She also came prepared with a list of hard questions to prove his wisdom. "Hard questions" is defined as referencing a puzzle or riddle. JFB explains: "The Orientals delight in this species of intellectual exercise and test wisdom by the power and readiness to solve them."

When he received her, she shared with him all that was in her heart. He, in turn, answered all her questions; he held nothing back and answered every question thoroughly.

**2Chronicles 9:3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,
2Chronicles 9:4 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.**

The queen was overwhelmed after witnessing his wisdom, his palace, the bounty

of his table, the comportment and dress of his servants, administrative ministers and cupbearers, and the great burnt offerings (from the Hebrew for “ascent”) he made at the house of the LORD.

2Chronicles 9:5 And she said to the king, *It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom:*

2Chronicles 9:6 Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: *for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.*

2Chronicles 9:7 Happy *are* thy men, and happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.

2Chronicles 9:8 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, *to be* king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.

2Chronicles 9:9 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba declared to Solomon that everything she had heard about him was true. She admitted that she did not believe it until she had witnessed it first hand. She revealed that what she had heard had not done justice by half to the truth that she had witnessed. She noted that those who served him were quite blessed to benefit from his wisdom.

The queen then pronounced a blessing on the “LORD thy God” that had been pleased to place him on “His” throne and serve as “His” king. She declared that it was because of God’s love for Israel that He had established them as a kingdom forever and made Solomon king to rule over them with justice and righteousness.

This woman recognized what a blessing it was to serve such a good and wise king. We, as believers, are privileged to serve the best and wisest King. I think we sometimes lose sight of that blessing in light of the cares and distractions of this world.

Guzik made a great observation: “Jesus used the Queen of Sheba as an example of a seeker: *The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.* (Matthew 12:42) If the Queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendor of his kingdom so diligently, *how much more* should people today seek Jesus and the glory of His Kingdom. She will certainly also rise up in judgment with this generation.”

The queen gave Solomon a gift of 120 talents of gold as well as a great amount of spices and precious stones. The record in Kings clarifies that it was the abundance of spices that she gave that was so unique.

1 Kings 10:10 “...there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen

of Sheba gave to king Solomon."

The IVP Commentary quantifies the gold as "amounting to nearly eight thousand pounds (four tons)." As I looked for today's dollar equivalent, the amounts varied by source; but it seems clear that it would be over \$100,000,000.

2Chronicles 9:10 And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum trees and precious stones.

2Chronicles 9:11 And the king made *of* the algum trees terraces to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah.

2Chronicles 9:12 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.

It is noted that in addition to the gold from the Queen of Sheba, the fleet of ships sent out by Hiram and Solomon brought back gold from Ophir, algum trees and precious stones. The king used the algum trees to make terraces to the temple and his palace and musical instruments for the singers at the temple. These types of instruments had never before been seen in the land of Judah; this is probably a reference to how the sound of the instrument is affected by the type of wood used to make it.

Solomon did not allow the queen's generosity to go unreciprocated. Not only did he answer all her questions, he also gifted her from his own treasuries. She then returned to her own country.

Guzik notes: "According to tradition – fanciful stories, perhaps – the Queen of Sheba wanted a son by Solomon, and he obliged her. Her child was named Menilek, and he became the ancestor of all subsequent Ethiopian monarchs."

2Chronicles 9:13 ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold;

2Chronicles 9:14 Beside *that which* chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.

It is noted that Solomon received a tribute of 666 talents (22-25 tons) of gold each year. This didn't even include what he received from merchantmen, the profit from trade with spice merchants, and the tribute from the kings of Arabia and governors throughout the land.

Guzik notes that this amount of gold would value just under \$1,000,000,000,000 in 2015.

2Chronicles 9:15 And king Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of beaten gold went to one target.

2Chronicles 9:16 And three hundred shields *made he of* beaten gold: three hundred *shekels* of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the

house of the forest of Lebanon.

Solomon even used the gold to make targets (shields). He made 200 targets of beaten gold, using 600 shekels or 15 pounds of gold for each target. He also made 300 smaller targets of beaten gold, using 3 pounds of gold for each. He then put all the shields in “the house of the forest of Lebanon,” in the weapons depository.

The NIV Commentary notes: “These verses describe the ceremonial shields that Solomon kept in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. They were wood or basket-work, covered with gold plate instead of leather. The large shield was either oval or rectangular to cover the whole body. The small shield was carried by archers (2Ch 14:8). The weights per shield were about seven and one-half and three and three-fourths pounds respectively.”

2Chronicles 9:17 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.

2Chronicles 9:18 And there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by the stays:

2Chronicles 9:19 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom.

Solomon also made a large throne out of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps ascending to it and a footstool made of gold, both of which were connected to the throne. Armrests were on each side of the seat, and two lions stood on each side of the armrests. A lion also stood on each side of the six steps. There was not another throne like it in any kingdom.

Gill makes this comment concerning the lions: They were “expressive of majesty, and of undaunted courage and resolution to do justice, and of the danger such expose themselves to, who oppose magistrates in the discharge of their office; and in which Solomon was a type of Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah; and for the same reasons were the like portraits on the steps, as follows.”

2Chronicles 9:20 And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: none were of silver; it was not any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

2Chronicles 9:21 For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

All of the drinking cups used by Solomon were made of gold, and all of the utensils in the house of the forest of Lebanon were made of pure gold. Silver wasn't used because it was not valued in the days of Solomon since gold was so abundant.

King Solomon sent his navy out with Hiram's navy every three years to bring back gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks from Tarshish. No one can positively

identify where Tarshish was located, but three years was allowed for each trip.

2Chronicles 9:22 And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

2Chronicles 9:23 And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.

2Chronicles 9:24 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

2Chronicles 9:25 And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

2Chronicles 9:26 And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

The writer declares that Solomon far surpassed other earthly kings in both wealth and wisdom. People came from all over the world to hear wisdom from Solomon—wisdom that God had put in his heart. Every person that came brought a gift—vessels of silver, vessels of gold, clothing, armor, spices, horses, and mules. This continued from year to year.

The IVP Old Testament Commentary adds this note: “Typically a chariot team included three horses with only two being used at any one time and the third kept as a reserve. The three would be stabled together, so twelve thousand horses for four thousand pens is the correct proportion, indicating four thousand chariot teams.”

2Chronicles 9:27 And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that *are* in the low plains in abundance.

Solomon’s actions caused silver to be no more valuable than stones and either planted and / or imported cedar trees so that they were as common as sycamore trees.

2Chronicles 9:28 And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

As wise as Solomon was, he was not smart enough to obey the LORD’s command regarding the possession of horses.

*Deuteronomy 17:14–16 “When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose....**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.**”*

I would assume he reasoned to himself as many do today. Surely the LORD didn't mean that for me. Times are different now. You can't always take the LORD's word literally. And he was just as wrong as those who choose to put their own spin on God's word today.

2Chronicles 9:29 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?

2Chronicles 9:30 And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 2Chronicles 9:31 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

The Chronicler decided to leave out the history of Solomon's rebellion against God as recorded in the book of 1Kings. He does, however, make reference to other sources of information about Solomon—the book of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite and the visions of Iddo the seer regarding Jeroboam the son of Nebat (who became ruler of the Northern Kingdom after its split).

The account closes his account abruptly by noting that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over Israel for 40 years. He was buried in the city of David his father, and his son Rehoboam succeeded him to the throne.