

1 KINGS 10:14-29

A. Introduction

1. In our elders' meetings, we're tracing the story of King Solomon, from his coronation to his burial, as recorded in 1 Kings 1-11.

As well as seeing how he points us to the 'one greater than Solomon', we're going to focus in on what we can learn as elders from his life and particularly his downfall, as we seek to lead those whom God has made us overseers over.

2. The Queen of Sheba after visiting Solomon concluded that "*in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard.*"

She was right.

"King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart." (1 Kings 10:23-24)

God had kept His promise to Solomon.

"I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for – both riches and honour – so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings." (1 Kings 3:12-13)

3. God not only gave Solomon wisdom – He gave him wealth.

He gave him treasure.

The word 'gold' appears 10x in this passage.

"The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land. King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekas of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon." (1 Kings 10:14-17)

Solomon had so much gold that it led to silver being devalued.

"All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days." (1 Kings 10:21)

"The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills." (1 Kings 10:27)

Added to the gold and silver, were the exotic animals along with the horses for his chariots.

"The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons." (1 Kings 10:22)

"Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift – articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules." (1 Kings 10:25)

He gave him a throne like no other.

"Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom." (1 Kings 10:18-20)

4. Yet all this wisdom and all this wealth was dangerous for Solomon.

In Deuteronomy 17 we find instructions for how the king should live and rule.

“The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.” (Deuteronomy 17:16-17)

Solomon is commanded not to accumulate too much gold and too many horses.

Solomon breaks both of these commands.

He acquired too much gold.

“King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.” (1 Kings 10:23)

He acquired too many horses.

“Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.” (1 Kings 10:26)

The scene is set for what will happen in 1 Kings 11

5. But there are two things that are striking about what Solomon does here.

B. He uses the wisdom God gave him to be foolish

1. It was because Solomon was so wise that he was able to get so much gold.

He used his wisdom to run an efficient trading fleet.

“The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.” (1 Kings 10:22)

2. It was because Solomon was so wise that he was able to get so many horses.

He used his wisdom to negotiate with the Egyptians.

“Solomon’s horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue – the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.” (1 Kings 10:28-29)

By trading with Egypt, Solomon was going to the place he was forbidden to go to.

3. Application.

As we pray that God would give us more wisdom for our lives and ministry, we need to be aware that this gift that God gives can be used to pursue foolish paths and to be more skilled in doing so.

This can show itself in our leadership of this church, when having more wisdom can open up new temptations to sin that we previously did not have (e.g. a desire to show off how clever we are).

Wisdom can be dangerous.

Praise God that Jesus did not use the wisdom God gave Him to be foolish.

C. He uses the wisdom God gave him to be faithless

1. As Solomon uses the wisdom God gave him to accumulate more gold and more horses, it was easy for him to think that he no longer needed God to provide for him and protect him.

He put his trust in his wealth.

He put his trust in his weapons.

2. Application.

As we pray that God would give us wisdom for our lives and ministry, we need to be aware that this gift that God gives can lead to us trusting in things other than God to provide for us and protect us.

This can show itself in our leadership of this church, when we trust not in God but in things such as our strategies, or the money in the church's bank account or having the right connections.

Wisdom can be dangerous.

Praise God that Jesus did not use the wisdom God gave Him to be faithless.