

## IVORY AND APES AND PEACOCKS

### 1 KINGS 8:44 – 10:22

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~ The fame of King Solomon's wise rule over the nation Israel has spread throughout the known world at the time in which we are studying in this report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, roughly 984 BC. We have examined myriad buildings and homes Solomon built, the offerings to God he made, and his superior wisdom and wealth in previous reports. In this extended report, we will consider the dedication of a brand-new temple in Jerusalem. The temple is commonly referred to as Solomon's temple; but our safari labels it David's temple, because we now know from the Word of God that Solomon was merely carrying out the instructions his father David had given.

Remember, it was David's idea to build a temple in the first place, David created the blueprints for it, he provided the financing, and God gave David credit for having it in his heart to build; although David was not permitted by God to actually participate in the construction process. So, we're going to give David credit for the temple. We will also see God's second appearance to Solomon and the visit from the Queen of Sheba in this report. It's lengthy; but there are spiritual truths in this section of Scripture we don't find elsewhere in Holy Writ. If you have your Bible, I urge you to pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment, and then read this section of Scripture before reading this report. It is a formula for study that requires some effort; but said effort is always well-rewarded, my beloved.

David's purpose for building the temple was that there might be a tangible sanctuary in the world for the Name of the True and Living God. That would give God's people a place where they could approach God and bow before Him in proper worship. Likewise, this was to be the place God would meet with man in a manner that man could comprehend and understand. This is not the pagan type of a temple in which some indistinguishable god is imagined. The True and Living Jehovah could never dwell in a house constructed by man, and Solomon also said, "... *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God!*" Yes, God is everywhere – omnipresent – but God is

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also transcendent – meaning *ABOVE* His creation. Solomon even called the temple merely God’s footstool....

## **VIII**

***44 If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name:***

***45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.***

***46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;***

~ This prophecy looks forward to the day in which God’s chosen people, Israel, would sin against Him and, as a result, be sent into captivity. When that day arrives, and the temple is destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, these are the instructions they were to follow. Well, there is no man that sinneth not – according to Scripture. Some imply they don’t sin, and some say sin doesn’t exist, but God says you *DO* sin, friends. You can just write that down. Confession of sin in prayer is what Daniel did when he opened his window towards Jerusalem and prayed against the decree of King Darius. The result of his prayer was Daniel being thrown out of the palace and landing in the lion’s den. I guess prayer does change things. Well, Daniel confessed his personal sins *and* the sins of the people. We can thank God He forgave Daniel – and the children of Israel – as we read on here – because the rest is history....

***47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;***

***48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto***

***thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:***

***49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause,***

***50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:***

***51 For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron:***

***52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.***

***53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.***

***54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.***

~ The question concerning the proper position for prayer is repeatedly asked. Well, if you want a legal description for the proper way to pray – here it is in verse fifty-four. I don't think it is essential, because some people can't get down like that – or they might not get back up. Jesus prayed looking up into Heaven. I think we can pray anytime and anywhere in any position. Victor Hugo said, "...the soul is on its knees many times regardless of the posture of the body!" The way I see it, the only thing that really matters is the posture of our hearts. Is our life acceptable enough to even enable us to pray? I think if we are physically capable of kneeling down and spreading your hands towards Heaven, then we should do so; but it commends you not to God. If your heart is right, your prayer will be

right; and if your heart is wrong, then your prayer will ALWAYS be wrong. It's really just that simple; and yet, just that complicated....

***55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,***

***56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.***

***57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:***

***58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.***

***59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:***

***60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.***

***61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.***

***62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.***

***63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.***

***64 The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and***

*meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.*

*65 And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days.*

*66 On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.*

## **IX**

*1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do,*

*2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.*

*3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*

~ This is where God appeared to Solomon a second time, and He did so to encourage his heart. God tells Solomon He will meet with him in this temple. This was the place for Solomon to come worship; and for the people of the entire world to come and worship. Of course, the temple speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the tabernacle speaks exclusively of Christ. Today, the Lord Jesus Christ is our *only* approach to God. As we read on, God sets David as the human standard in verse four. This is not a very high standard to meet; and, at the same time, it is a very high standard – because David had a tremendous capacity for the Lord, and a deep desire and love for God. David sinned, failed, faltered, fumbled and fell repeatedly

– but David’s faith never failed, he got up every time because he came to God in confession. David deeply desired an unbroken fellowship with God.

Verse four says David walked in integrity of heart. That’s so important, friends – so – very – important. We have so much subterfuge in worship and Christian service today; actually, it is alarming the levels of misinformation we see on this forum on which I teach. The amount of hypocrisy exhibited by so-called Christians is frightening. Most people are so extremely pious that they don’t believe they need to study the Word of God, and they don’t think these reports have anything for them. The truth is: they don’t want to hear God. Those people are simply not interested in the Word of God; although they make quasi-religious posts incessantly. When was the last time you truly talked to the Lord in prayer about your sin, friends? He already knows all about them. See, David walked before God with honest integrity in his heart an upright man – because He confessed his sins in prayer. Don’t miss that.

Allow me to speak freely from experience, friends: there is more dishonesty and hypocrisy in a church service every Sunday morning than there is in a strip club the night before or anywhere in the business world. There is a man who has been totally dishonest in his business dealings with the community from a home where he has not set a Godly example to his children. He struts into church with a Bible under his arm and he speaks of God, the will of God and spouts out all sorts of pious platitudes. Well, he has the people fooled – but he isn’t fooling God. When was the last time you honestly confessed the facts of your sins to God? See, David did that – and the Lord straightened David’s sins out – which is why David was a man after God’s own heart....

***4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:***

***5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.***

***6 But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them:***

***7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:***

~ God kept His promise in verse five as the Lord Jesus sits on the Throne of Heaven today. God also kept His Word as Israel is in the precise condition described in verse seven – they are nothing in this world but a byword today. Most people cannot locate prophecy in the first book of Kings, but here it is. This eschatological section of Scripture has all come to pass literally. If you go to Jerusalem today, you find the temple has been razed and the Mosque of Omar stands in its place! Why? – Israel forsook God, friends. Verse nine tells us this answer – we’re not guessing – this isn’t my opinion, it’s not my religious philosophy – this is what the Word of God teaches. Read it for yourself.

Modern day Israel rejects Jesus Christ as the Messiah and has placed their trust in the gods of science and education. Well, as we read on, Solomon encounters difficulty with old man King Hiram. It seems there was friction between the two. Verse twelve reveals Hiram felt shortchanged by Solomon’s end of the contract. Apparently, there had been a misunderstanding that led to a levy being placed on the people to obligate them to pay for the house and temple. That wasn’t a problem for Solomon, because he cornered the gold market of his day and was the world’s superpower; but it was a big problem for Hiram....

***8 And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?***

***9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.***

***10 And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,***

***11 (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.***

***12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not.***

***13 And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.***

***14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.***

***15 And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.***

***16 For Pharaoh King of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.***

***17 And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethhoron the nether,***

***18 And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,***

***19 And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.***

***20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel,***

***21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day.***

***22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.***

***23 These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.***

***24 But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo.***

***25 And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.***

***26 And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Elath, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom.***

***27 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.***

***28 And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon.***

**X**

~ This chapter records a visit from the Queen of Sheba; and showcases the heavy influence of Solomon on the civilized world at the time in which we are studying. It reveals that Solomon had succeeded in witnessing for God to the ends of the earth. Now, this is one of the more important chapters we have in Scripture because that witness to the world is seen only in this one incident; and it is a tremendous illustration. This chapter is designed to

show us the enormity of the wealth and reign of Solomon as God's representative to all nations.

The queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem in response to what she had heard. Of course, she didn't believe half of what she had heard, but it was intriguing enough to check it out. She quickly discovered half the story hadn't even been told. Sheba had heard a temple had been built in which the True and Living God could be approached – but she had no idea what that meant; and no conception of what she would actually find. Naturally, she wants to know more to attempt to understand it. So, she comes with some fair, legitimate and difficult questions for Solomon....

***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 burnt offerings by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.***

~ You'll notice a change of the word "ascent" to "burnt offerings" in verse five. That is the proper translation. Solomon went up to God in the burnt offering we learned about in Leviticus; and the burnt offering speaks more fully of being in Christ and His substitutionary death than any of the other four required temple offerings. The Queen of Sheba and the outside world came to know about the Lord Jesus Christ in the day in which we are studying through the Levitical burnt offering. Without the shedding of

blood, there is no remission for sins. That was quite a shocking and offensive testimony to this woman, you may be sure. The testimony she gives reveals she came to know the True and Living God before she returned home.

The queen of Sheba was wealthy, educated and very smart; but she was still impressed by the wisdom, buildings, palaces, luxury and bounty of King Solomon. The temporal prosperity was something that even she had never seen before. We are studying the very brief and passing historical period in which the children of Israel were faithful and true witnesses to the entire world for God....

***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.***

***10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.***

***11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.***

***12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.***

***13 And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.***

***14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,***

***15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen , and of the traffick of the spice merchants , and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.***

***16 And King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.***

***17 And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.***

***18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.***

***19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.***

***20 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.***

***21 And all king Solomon's drinking vessels 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 nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.***

***22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.***

~ So, Solomon continues his building program, and we see a great development in the kingdom of Israel at this time. Many other nations and individuals came to know God during this period – not just the Queen of Sheba – similar to that recorded in the book of Acts. Acts accounts for three outstanding conversions: the Ethiopian Eunuch, Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius. However, we know that literally thousands came to know Christ during the time of the Acts of the Apostles. Here, thousands came to know God in the temple at Jerusalem, just as the queen of Sheba had.

Our Spiritual Safari ends this report reading about the gold that was given to and taken by Solomon. The measures we are given are meaningless to me, honestly. I'm sure someone can calculate six hundred three score and six talents of gold – but I have no idea how much that was or is. Suffice it to say Solomon had a whole bunch of gold. The luxury in his court was unimaginable and beyond excessive.

Interestingly, it seems Solomon is beginning to experience dissatisfaction with his prosperity and affluence. This may not seem to be serious, but the apes were for entertainment. I think the Jerusalem zoo was as illustrious as any buildings we have considered so far. The peacocks were brought for beauty; and ivory speaks of outrageous and wanton decoration. We see today's report end on a frivolous and tragic note; which is symptomatic of some very bad things to come in future reports. Solomon was called by God to give a witness to the world. The world was coming to his door searching for God; but Solomon was too busy playing with apes and peacocks – not to mention spending and hoarding gold and silver. All Solomon was doing was satisfying the whims of his heart; and of those around him.

What are you busy doing today? What's important in your life? Is getting out the Word of God important to you, or are you gathering up and hanging around a bunch of monkeys? If you say the Word of God is important to get out to the world, you should begin studying that Bible. If you're going to give it out, you need to know it properly, correctly and completely – or someone is going to come along and dash your hopes with it. This is indicative of nothing but pure whimsical entertainment for Solomon.

Do you pay more for your pleasures than you pay to support the Word of God being taught by someone who loves and believes God? What about the beauty aspect of your life? More money is spent by the average Christian for their wardrobe, appearance and cosmetics than they ever even think about giving to the work of the Lord. Are you so busy making money that you have no time to study your Bible and give directly to the Lord? Do you give any of that money to proper Bible teaching? Well, if you're saved, you're called to give a witness to the world, friends. Honestly, I don't see many of us doing a whole lot of anything worthwhile for God. May the Lord have mercy on us for playing with our apes and staring at our peacocks. How shameful we all truly are ~