

## **“The Servants and Their Service”**

### **1 Kings 10**

One of the most outstanding features of the visit of the queen of Sheba in her quest to find out more about the greatness of King Solomon’s kingdom revolves around the description of his servants. Besides noticing the vast wealth and the unmatched wisdom that Solomon possessed, the queen noticed something else about this great king and the kingdom he ruled over. What she saw greatly moved her to the point that the scripture states “*there was no more spirit in her*” (v. 5). Today we might say that it “took her breath away”. Five things are cited about them. She observed the food they ate, the dignity they displayed, the service they rendered, the clothing they wore and the nearness they enjoyed. All were noticed by the queen of Sheba who had made the long journey to check out the validity of the claims made about Solomon. As such, the features of these servants and their service to their king speak clearly of the same qualities that should be exhibited by those who know and love the One who first loved us, 1 John. 4:19.

#### ***“The Food on His Table”***

The first thing listed in her observances was the food that Solomon provided for his servants. They were well-fed by this wealthy king. He met their practical needs and more so from his vast store that kept his servants strong and fit enabling them to fulfill their duties for him. Solomon was not like other kings who selfishly hoarded resources for his own purposes. Instead, he provided for his people just as our Savior does through His precious Word. He keeps His people fit and strong whom He provides for abundantly from His vast store of spiritual resources. He furnishes for us a table in the wilderness and prepares that table to sustain us in the presence of our enemies (Ps 23:5). Like Jeremiah, we can also proclaim, “*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart...*” (Jer. 15:6). When we feed on the word of God, its promises give us strength for the day and strength for the journey, spiritual energy for the tasks and service for our King. When Jonathan, king Saul’s son needed strength, he dipped his staff into honey that he found on his pathway and his countenance brightened as a result. God’s Word is sweeter than the honeycomb (Ps. 19:10) and strengthens our steps for the battle and brightens our countenance in our walk with Him. He brings us to His banqueting table and His banner over us is love (Song 2:3).

#### ***“The Seating of His Servants”***

The next thing she noticed was the seating of the servants”. What this means exactly we cannot be sure, but it does seem to indicate a certain decorum prevailed in their service for the king. If that was indeed the case, it speaks of the grace and dignity that is displayed by those who are dedicated in their service for Christ, who adorn the doctrine of God with their behavior and demeanor. Was it the way in which they sat or how they sat in the presence of their king? It is hard to say, but one thing is certain: it caught her attention to make the comments she made. May we who know Christ serve Him with the same grace and dignity that Solomon’s servants served him! Years ago, when Ronald Reagan was running for president, the administration of the college where I attended invited him to hold a campaign rally on our campus. The press was there, the secret service was there, the major news outlets were all there. It was an “event” to say

the least. Seeing the witnessing opportunity clearly at hand, the entire student body in unison – some 2000 students in all – robustly sang all the stanzas of the hymn “Wonderful Grace of Jesus” (complete with all the parts!). It was a memorable moment to say the least and a dignified testimony of the servants of the King who desire to represent Him well to the visitors of the kingdom they belonged to.

### ***“The Service of His Waiters”***

Closely aligned with the seating of the servants was the service of Solomon’s waiters. If their seating reflected their dignity, then the service of his waiters seems to reflect their diligence. With a great king like Solomon who provided well for those under his rule, it could only mean that those same servants were all too eager to please their king. Like Ittai, the Gittite in the days of David, these servants would most likely testify as he did “*As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, even there also your servant will be*” (2 Sam. 15:21). May that be said of all those who name the Name of Christ! We no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. 4:15). We love Him because He first loved us, and consequently we serve Him and do those things that are well-pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13:20-21). We are exhorted in Rom. 12:11 to be, “*not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord*”. We are His servants – His bondservants – forever indebted to our King.

### ***“Their Apparel”***

The clothing of these servants also caught her attention. The clothes they wore showed the respect they had for their king. This is yet another way in which God’s people can adorn the doctrine of God and glorify the king they serve. Let this truth be an open rebuke to all those who are involved in public ministry who wear jeans which are tattered and torn with the weak excuse that it helps to identify with the common person in the audience. It is plainly putting the people’s preferences above the King’s. Overdressing can be an issue and can cause undue attention, just as much as underdressing. Seek to honor the King with your apparel.

### ***“His Cupbearers”***

The final thing cited in this text that caught the queen of Sheba’s attention was “his cupbearers”. What was it that she saw? Perhaps it was the way they also served or the dignity that they also possessed. Maybe it was as simple as enjoying the proximity that they had to the king they served. Christians also enjoy proximity to their King. We have access as Romans 5:1, Eph. 2:18 and 3:12 declare. We can come “*boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*”, (Heb. 4:16). As Andrew Bonar put it in his timeless hymn “A Mind at Perfect Peace With God” - “So, near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be, yet in the person of His Son I am as near as He”. We have access with confidence with our King. “*But now in Christ Jesus, we who were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ*” (Eph. 2:18).

Perhaps there were many more things that the Queen of Sheba observed in her epic journey. But what we read that she observed is plenty for the believer today to emulate to bring honor to our King, who we delight to serve.

Mark Kolchin – Nov 24, 2024