

Lesson 11 14 April 2013

Solomon's Prosperous Reign

Lesson Scope: [1 Kings 9:10 through 10:29](#)

Lesson Focus

This lesson tells the story of Israel's amazing wealth and prosperity during the reign of Solomon. This prosperity was the fulfillment of God's words to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:11-14. When God appeared to Solomon the second time, He reminded him that these blessings were contingent upon his continuing obedience (1 Kings 9:4-9). Israel reached the height of her glory because of God's blessing. The prosperity of the Israelite nation depicts the rich spiritual blessings God bountifully bestows on those who serve Him with all their heart.

As New Testament Christians, we can enjoy a spiritual prosperity. Grace and peace are multiplied to us just as silver and gold were multiplied to Solomon. God has given to us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:2, 3). We are blessed with that which will endure long after the silver and gold of this world have passed away.

The importance of material possessions shrinks in comparison to the great eternal purpose of God. The many spiritual blessings of God's people make them exceedingly rich.

This lesson shows us an example of how God answers the prayers of His people and rewards their faithfulness with His blessing. We note that there was much activity in Solomon's kingdom that brought about expansion and increased wealth.

Keep before your class the truth that it is not the Christian's goal to accumulate material wealth. The things of this world will perish. We must not set our affection on these things. Luxurious living has brought many to spiritual ruin. Our wealth is to be laid up in heaven, where we will have "a better and an enduring substance" (Hebrews 10:34).

Lesson Aim: To enumerate the fruits of faithfulness in God's people.

Theme Verse: [Psalm 31:19](#). Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

Lesson Text

The Expanding Kingdom

[1 Kings 9:17-18](#) ¹⁷ And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethhoron the nether, ¹⁸ And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

[1 Kings 9:26-28](#) ²⁶ And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which *is* beside Eloth, 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.

The Godly Appeal

[1 Kings 10:1-10](#) 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 ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. 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.

The Abundant Blessing

1 Kings 10:14-24 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. ²³ So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. ²⁴ And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

Questions for Study

The Expanding Kingdom

1. What examples in Solomon's life demonstrate his zeal for God?
2. How will zeal for God be expressed today?

The Godly Appeal

3. What aspect of Solomon's fame induced the queen of Sheba to pay him a visit?
4. Why is the orderliness and peace among God's people so amazing to the observing world?
5. In what ways can we give a witness that appeals to true seekers?

The Abundant Blessing

6. What invaluable blessings do we enjoy (10:21)?
7. How can we receive and benefit from divine wisdom?

Analyzing the Passage

Solomon was in a building mode (9:17, 18). His navy served commercial rather than military purposes. Much wealth flowed into Israel as imports. Foreign trade and the luxuries available to Solomon, however, led to alliances with heathen nations that contributed to Solomon's downfall.

The queen of Sheba was probably from southern Arabia. She likely heard reports of Solomon's glory from the traders on his trading fleet. She went to visit Solomon to verify these reports and to test the extent of his wisdom. The things she observed moved her to bless the God of Israel.

The unmeasured wealth of Solomon (10:21) typifies "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

Principles and Applications

The Expanding Kingdom

1. God's people thrive on constructive activity (9:17, 18). The Lord expects us to be good stewards of the opportunities and resources that He gives us on both material and spiritual levels. We should remain busy as long as we are physically able. Christians should not view retirement as a license for ease and self-indulgence. Whatever our age, we should be giving the church our active support as a growing and expanding work (1 Corinthians 3:6).

2. Regular worship is an integral part of faithfulness to God (9:25). Right living goes hand in hand with right worship; the two rise or fall together. Those who fail to keep regular times for worship will eventually fail to be faithful to God in other areas of life.

The Godly Appeal

3. Faithfulness to God gives a witness that touches the lives of others (10:1). God receives glory in the world when the people He has redeemed live separated unto Him. Their example, as true disciples of Jesus Christ, is not easily ignored. Like a lamp on a dark night, their lives convey the light of understanding to those who are lost.

4. God uses the faithful to answer the questions of seekers (10:1-3). The people around us are seeking for answers, but they often seek for them in the wrong places. God has revealed in the Scriptures the answers to life's important questions. We are responsible to communicate those answers, especially to those who inquire.
5. The world at times is amazed as it observes the life of the faithful (10:4-7). As God's glory is revealed in and through the church (Ephesians 3:20, 21), the world sees what God can do in the lives of ordinary people. Contented, purposeful living is so rare in our day, something to be envied. What God's people have does not come from within themselves; it is a display of God's power and blessing. Orderliness and peace are truly the work of God.
6. Faithfulness to God issues into a life of joy and peace (10:8). Solomon's servants were happy because God was in their midst. Their deepest needs were being met, filling them with peace and satisfaction.
7. The Lord blesses the faithful with sound judgment and justice (10:9). The Law that God had given Israel provided comprehensive direction for harmonious human relationships. Jesus' teaching and example recorded in the New Testament do the same for us. We need wisdom to understand and apply the Word, but God offers it freely. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally.... and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

The Abundant Blessing

8. The Lord has blessings beyond measure for the faithful (10:18-23). Unlike Solomon, the church today is not blessed with the unmeasured wealth of this world, which perishes. God has promised incorruptible treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19, 20). The spiritual blessings we have in Christ cannot be purchased with money. They are worth far more than that, yet the poorest may possess them.
9. God gives wisdom to the faithful (10:24). Unlike the wisdom of this world, true wisdom acknowledges God's existence, His power, and His right to hold men accountable. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Important Teachings

1. God's people thrive on constructive activity (9:17, 18).
2. Regular worship is an integral part of faithfulness to God (9:25).
3. Faithfulness to God gives a witness that touches the lives of others (10:1).
4. God uses the faithful to answer the questions of seekers (10:1-3).
5. The world at times is amazed as it observes the life of the faithful (10:4-7).
6. Faithfulness to God issues into a life of joy and peace (10:8).
7. The Lord blesses the faithful with sound judgment and justice (10:9).
8. The Lord has blessings beyond measure for the faithful (10:18-23).
9. God gives wisdom to the faithful (10:24).

Answers to Questions

1. What examples in Solomon's life demonstrate his zeal for God?

Solomon put diligent effort into his building projects and into strengthening the kingdom. He observed regular times of worship before the Lord. He made profitable use of his material resources.

2. How will zeal for God be expressed today?

One who has a zeal for God will take time for communion with God through Bible reading and prayer. As parents, we should provide well for our children, especially for their spiritual welfare. We should do our part to edify the body of Christ, helping to expand the church by reaching out to the lost.

3. What aspect of Solomon's fame induced the queen of Sheba to pay him a visit?

It seems that the primary attraction was his zeal for the Name of the Lord (10:1). She understood that Solomon's wisdom and prosperity were the fruit of his devotion to God and of God's blessing upon him.

4. Why is the orderliness and peace among God's people so amazing to the observing world?

The world does not enjoy such peace and order, because these things cannot exist in the absence of righteousness and holiness. The world seeks but never finds true peace, because they are not in God's order; neither are they at peace with God or with others.

5. In what ways can we give a witness that appeals to true seekers?

We should live in a God-honoring way. The focus of our work should

be for others rather than for self. We should stand loyal to God in every aspect of life.

6. What invaluable blessings do we enjoy (10:21)?

We have the blessing of a full redemption, which the Old Testament prophets foretold but did not experience. We who have lived in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have had unprecedented opportunities.

Our Christian schools, plentiful supply of Bibles and other good literature, and religious freedom are just a few of God's blessings too valuable to account for.

7. How can we receive and benefit from divine wisdom?

We can receive wisdom by asking God for it (James 1:5). If we wisely use the little wisdom that God gives us, He will entrust us with greater things. God gives His best to those who are willing to trust every part of their lives to Him.

Summarizing the Lesson

"As it is written, he hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:9-11). God has given us all the wisdom and spiritual riches we need to be fruitful today.

O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Wealth that can never be told;
Riches exhaustless of mercy and grace,
Precious, more precious than gold!
—Fanny Crosby

Research Guide

1. For further information about the kingdom of Sheba, see Isaiah 60:6; Jeremiah 6:20; and Ezekiel 38:13.
2. Check a Bible dictionary for a description of Solomon's building projects and economic expansion.