

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

The Splendor of the King

Pastor Steven Gaines

1 Kings 10:1-13

December 27, 2015

Thank you for that beautiful music that praises the High King of Heaven. Well this morning we are going to be looking at the Old Testament for our sermon. Ty had read the latter part of 1 Kings 10, and the reason for choosing this was it was something that had struck me in my own daily Bible reading, this passage in 1 Kings 10, that speaks of the glory of the earthly king. So I thought today we could look at it, and we could learn a little bit more about God's plan, and working through Solomon, and his wisdom, and his wealth. But also, together, look forward to the one who is greater than Solomon, even excelling this in His greatness and glory. So if you have your Bibles, turn with me to 1 Kings 10, and I'm going to read the first 13 verses.

1 Kings 10:1-13 ~

1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. 3 And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 5 the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her. 6 And she said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, 7 but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. 8 Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! 9 Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness." 10 Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

and precious stones. Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 Moreover, the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones. 12 And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, also lyres and harps for the singers. No such almug wood has come or been seen to this day.

13 And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I come before You this morning, oh Father, I thank You for the freedom we have this morning to worship You, to gather together publicly to set Your word before us. Father, I rejoice as well that as we gather together as Your people, that we are not alone, but the Holy Spirit is here indwelling us, working among us. I would pray, Father, that You would give me light and understanding in this passage, and as well that You would open the hearts, and the minds of those who are here this morning, to see something of Your greatness, and Your glory. And I pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

I had the opportunity several weeks ago to go and tour the Biltmore House in North Carolina. Now I had done this decades before, when I was a boy, but I think I saw it as a boy would see it. That is, it was a nice place, it had a lot of rooms, and after the first five or six rooms, they all just started to look the same. And it was very impressive, but just didn't take away, let's say, that full sense of awe, and splendor that was there. But when I toured this house recently, I was very impressed as I thought about especially all the work that went into the preparations for this, siting the house exactly in the right spot on the land, so that it would have certain views. The fact that those who were the architect, and the builder, were touring Europe to look at all kinds of different designs, to see how to make this house. And then the construction of this great structure and its grounds in the 1890s, in a time where there was nowhere near the technology that we have today.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

As you tour the house, you go room after room, and you begin to think, “I think they have a room for everything and for every kind of person and visitor that would come here.” It was decked out for Christmas so you could see there the Christmas table, seating 28 people, and how everything had been perfectly planned for that. And as you learned more about the house, you learned about the community that it supported, and how the wealth that was brought into that area through the house was spilling over into the workers, and into the community around them.

Well today, as we look at 1 Kings 10, we’re going to do a little bit of a tour as well. We are going to be looking at the wealth and the wisdom that God gave to Solomon, and how that manifested itself in Israel at that time. Today I want us to look at 1 Kings 10:1-13, and we’ll be looking at ‘The Splendor of the King’, and that is the title of the sermon, and in particular we will be seeing ‘The Splendor of the King’ as it is displayed through a Gentile, traveling probably a thousand miles to come and see the greatness of Solomon, and his God. And I want to look at ‘The Splendor of the King’ today in four points. The first one is *Testing the King’s Wisdom*, and that will be Verses 1-3. The second one will be *Beholding the King’s Greatness*, Verses 4-9. The third will be *Increasing the King’s Wealth*, and the fourth will be *Approving the King’s Judgment*. So if you want to think in terms of one words, we’ll be looking at *Wisdom*, *Greatness*, *Wealth*, and *Judgment* as we consider this passage.

But as well, as we behold the greatness of God’s earthly king, we will also look forward to the King of kings and Lord of lords, who said that the Queen of the South, that is the Queen of Sheba, will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it. For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold something greater than Solomon is here. As amazing as the earthly wealth and wisdom of Solomon is today, they do not compare with the wealth and wisdom that we find in our God, in our Savior, Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you, by His poverty, might become rich. So let’s begin, and let’s look at this first point, *Testing the King’s Wisdom*.

1) Testing the King’s Wisdom:

We read in Verse 1 of 1 Kings 10 that the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, and she came to test him with hard questions. Now you can find, if you want to research this, that there is a lot that has

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

been written about this lady, this Queen of Sheba. It is understood today by most people that she came from the area that today is Yemen, so she was about a thousand miles away or so from Jerusalem when she came to see Solomon. This kingdom of Sabah, as it would be in the Hebrew, she had come from this place, and apparently she had heard something about Solomon, being that far away, probably through people who had traveled, and were doing commerce and business. And apparently she heard enough to cause her to want to make this long and arduous journey to see him. We see here as well that apparently Solomon's fame had spread that he was a man of wisdom, so that when she came it says that she came with *'hard questions'*. This could also be translated as *'riddles'* or *'enigmas'*, these would have been things that would have been very difficult to understand, or to figure out. We don't know the details that are there of what she asked him. There are many passages in Scripture, I think we find sometimes, where we'd like to know more. What were those questions? Perhaps questions that would be very deep for us to ponder as well.

So she came to him, and as would have been the custom, she brought gifts to him. Perhaps in some manner, this interchange between this queen and Solomon, would have been a kind of trade discussion as well because Solomon, as we read in other parts of 1 Kings 10 that Ty read, was already involved, and engaged in trading. So she came, and she had camels, and she had gold, and precious stones, and spices that she was bringing to him. Now as she came to hear of his wisdom, we are reminded of the fact that God chose, in particular, to grant one of his kings a special amount of wisdom. Of course, He gave wisdom to many people throughout Scripture. I think of Daniel, being one of those given the ability to interpret dreams, and also having the ability to be seen as a wise man, to be raised up in stature, and in power, or people like Joseph, who was raised up to such a high position in Egypt. But in particular, we find that this wisdom is manifested in Solomon, and when you look back in the earlier parts of 1 Kings, you find that point in Solomon's life where Solomon was praying to the Lord, and in 1 Kings 3, we have Solomon coming to the Lord, and asking for the following things. In 1 Kings 3:7, we read:

1 Kings 3:7-9 ~ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.⁸ And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹ Give your servant therefore an understanding

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

So you see here that Solomon, when he was asking the Lord for something, he was not asking the Lord in the way that most people probably would have. “Lord, make me great, make me famous, give me wealth, give me riches.” He was asking the Lord to help him because he was humble in his understanding of his abilities. You know how overwhelming it can be to try to lead three people? Or five? Or a family? Or to get a group of people to come together and coordinate, to have the wisdom to understand all the different dynamics that are going on in a company, or an organization? But here God had put Solomon in the place of being a king over a nation of people, and to lead them, and guide them. So this he prayed for, he prayed for these things, for wisdom and understanding. And so in response to this, in Verse 11 of 1 Kings 3, the Lord responds and says to him:

1 Kings 3:11-13 ~ And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. 13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.

So you see here? This was God’s response to his humility, for Solomon desiring the right things to serve as God’s king. So what Solomon got was wisdom that he asked for, but he also got the honor, the influence, the wealth, and the riches that came with it. I think it is important as we approach this chapter, and we consider all of the material outward things that are described there, to remember that these were given in the direct fulfillment of God’s promise to Solomon. This isn’t just a man who is seeking to rise to the top, and to make great things for him, but to remember that this was God’s gift of prosperity to him, and fulfillment of His word.

Regarding his wisdom, we know the famous account that is given to us there, also in Chapter 3, of the issue with the babies. Remember there were the two ladies, and they both had a baby, they were in the same house, and then one of the women was sleeping with the baby, and slept on it, laid down on it, the baby died. So, in some way, she was able to get up, apparently in the middle of the night, and switch these

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

around with the other lady. So one lady wakes up with a dead baby in the morning, but recognizes, “This is not my child,” and so then the other lady has the live child. Okay, but then the question comes, as there is a dispute, so how do you determine what to do in this situation? Perhaps if you are a parent you know what this is like, two kids come to you, and something has happened. You didn’t see it, you gather the evidence and the data, you are called to make the judgments, and understand what is going on. You weren’t there, and you don’t have recordings, or video, and you are trying to listen to every nuance, and you are looking at facial expressions, posturing, and all of these kinds of things that are there. But in this case, how would you make this decision? Well, think about Solomon’s solution, and I’ll just read it straight out here in Chapter 3.

1 Kings 3:23-25 ~ Then the king said, “The one says, ‘This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead’; and the other says, ‘No; but your son is dead, and my son is the living one.’” 24 And the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So a sword was brought before the king. 25 And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.”

I remember as a kid, when I first heard the story, I thought, “Really? What is going on here? This is not right!”

1 Kings 2:26-27 ~ Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, “Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death.” But the other said, “He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him.” 27 Then the king answered and said, “Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother.”

So this was one example given to us in Scripture. I think it is a representative example that is displayed to us about Solomon’s wisdom. Of course, you can also read Proverbs to get a lot of the wisdom that God worked through Solomon as well. So from our text here, we have this queen coming to seek out and to ask him questions, hard questions, enigmas, and riddles, and we can look at the text and see how he did, how his performance was in doing this. It says in Verse 3 of 1 Kings 10:

1 Kings 10:3 ~ And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

Now what would that be like? To find a human being that you could take all of your deep questions, things that are enigmas, things that are paradoxes, or antinomies, and to find that person that you could go to and everything that you could possibly bring that person could set you straight, and could explain it in a way that you were satisfied. And apparently God gave Solomon the wisdom to do this right here at this point.

I think it is important to see here that God had given him comprehensive wisdom, it was not one particular area. Some of you today may be experts in a field, there may be a certain singular area where you are sort of top notch in your understanding and knowledge. But if you took that, and you went across all fields of knowledge and understanding, you would find that you would sink down to a low place in a lot of the others. That is just the way we are. We can get so far, some more than others, but here was Solomon in his comprehensive wisdom. I think we can look as we see what God had done in Solomon's life, and as we see the wisdom that was imparted to Solomon, the king, we find that this was just a small portion of the wisdom of God manifested in a human being. That is, as great as he was, and even known not only in Israel, but throughout the world where his fame had spread, that this is just a small token, or portion of God's wisdom that is displayed in him.

As I mentioned earlier, the New Testament tells us that in Christ we have one who is even greater than Solomon. We find the wisdom of Christ displayed in His earthly life, as He is being constantly pounded by the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, and the religious leaders, and they are trying to trick Him, and twist His words, and try to put Him in the position where there is no way that He can respond rightly. And yet, on every occasion, in submission to His Father's will, He responds in the way that needs to happen. Sometimes there is not an answer. Sometimes there is a question that is given back in exchange, the wisdom of Christ.

We see His shrewdness in dealing with the rich young ruler who came to Him with questions, pointing ultimately to his own covetous position. We find, as well, in Christ, the wisdom in the Gospel itself, because we read that the Gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. So that in the Gospel itself, that Christ Himself, by becoming weak, and humbling Himself, and becoming a man, and

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

dying for sinners, displays the wisdom of God, showing that the philosophies of this world are foolishness.

So today I would ask you, have you looked to Christ, Your Savior, as wisdom, the one who is the source of our life in Christ Jesus? Who is the wisdom from God? Do you look in those times of perplexing misunderstanding, a question of what to do, decisions to make, situations are thrust upon you, and you don't know what to do? I would tell you to look to Christ, to find in Him the one who, in His word, and in His example, has shown us the way, and has given us wisdom from God. Let's move on to our second point, *Beholding the King's Greatness*.

2) Beholding the King's Greatness:

We read in Verse 4 that when the Queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and then it talks about a number of things. It says she had seen the house that he had built, and remember in Solomon's life, there were two major things that he built. He built the temple. God had given him that privilege to build the temple, and he also built the house of the Forest of Lebanon, which was the king's palace. She saw the food of his table, the seating of his officials, the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, the burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord. It says there was no more breath in her. She was breathless as she beheld all of these things.

We see here a mention of the realm of his greatness that most likely, in the reference to the house that he had built, this is the temple, the house of the Lord. Or in other places, his own palace is referred to differently. She also sees his food that is laid out there, so you have this abundant provision for himself, and everyone that is connected with him, his officials. So here is this great king, and all the splendor, but here are all his officials before him, and the way they are decked out in their clothing, and their position.

I think it is important too, for us to see the fact that she was very enamored with his worship of Yahweh, the true God. For she was marveling at the sacrifices that he made to his God. I don't know about you, but sometimes it is easy to sort of become blase about the things we see. Our modern technology has given us the ability to visually, in graphic form, see things that are just incredible, and so we are always now longing for, "What is the next level up?" of the thrill that we are going to get.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

In the same way, we can look at things and not be so much in wonder and awe, but remember that this Queen of Sheba, who had come from the south, she came with her own gold, and her spices, and her wealth, from a position of great power, and when she came and saw Solomon, she was royalty herself, she was left breathless because she had seen his greatness in its totality. That it was as if every realm of his kingdom that she could look at and see, that there was this amazing superiority to anything else that existed at that time. Now she goes further in expressing her response in Verse 6, and she says:

1 Kings 10:6-7 ~ And she said to the king, “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, 7 but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it.

And she says:

1 Kings 10:7 ~ ...And behold, the half was not told me.

So here she's expressing this breathless type of feeling and approach. But she goes further and she says:

1 Kings 10:9 ~ Blessed be the Lord (that is Yahweh) your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.”

So we have here a little bit of a testimony that she was looking at him not just in earthly physical terms, but she was seeing that what had happened to Solomon and what God had given to him was not just his own, but was something that the Lord had done for him. The impact of the Queen's visit was not limited to a few impressive elements, but included every aspect of his reign, his administration, his worship, the accoutrements of his palace, and the overflowing blessings experienced by those living and serving within this realm.

Consider this for a minute. If you've had the benefit before of being in an environment where you were working for someone or under someone's benevolence and kindness, and when they prospered, you prospered. When things went well for them, it overflowed to you, and you experienced the benefit of that, just as we in our country have benefited from prosperity ourselves in this place and at this time. And perhaps in the same way, you've been in situations before where people weren't prospering, and that lack of prosperity overflowed to you. If the

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

boss in the head of the company said, “I just want you to know that we’re going to give you guys the smallest cubicles that any company has ever had, and we are going to give you the lowest salaries in the industry,” and kept going down the list, “just to show you how we’re going to overflow how things are going for us, it’s all going to overflow down to you.” Well, there’d be no joy and no glory in that, but I think we see here with Solomon it wasn’t just his selfishness that he was hoarding this all to himself, but that it was overflowing in its bounty to everyone who came in contact with him.

Today as we look at King Solomon’s greatness, we should also look ahead to the greatness of Christ. Consider some of the things that we know of Him. Number one, He was involved in creating the world and everything, for Colossians tells us that for by Him all things were created, that is, things in Heaven and earth, visible, invisible, thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities. So if Solomon was king over this great and grand empire, the Lord Jesus Christ was the one there at creation, that was the one establishing the creation itself. We see as well that in His administration or His management, that it says in Colossians 1 of the Lord Jesus Christ, that in Him all things hold together. What an amazing concept when you think about the complexity of the universe and all of the creatures just on earth itself, not to mention all the planets and all the galaxies that exist in this world, and yet everything is working together and being in some way, amazing to us, held together in Christ. Consider the position of the Lord Jesus Christ. For in Ephesians 1 we see that He is far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, that all things are under His feet, and that He has been made to be head over all things to the church. What an amazing picture of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today I would call you to look upon Christ the King and His greatness, that perhaps in your life right now, you’re not feeling so great, or you’re struggling, or perhaps you are thinking that you are so great this morning, and you’re looking to what you’ve accomplished. Well, regardless of which side or which position you’re in at the moment, you need to look to Christ, because if you’re extolling your own greatness and accomplishments, or thinking and pondering in your mind all the things that you’re going to do, well, those things will pale compared to the greatness of Christ. If on the other hand you find yourself in a lowly place, you can look to your Savior and trust in Him and His position. So let’s move on now to the third point:

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

3) Beholding the King's Wealth:

We're going to talk a little bit about wealth more in particular here in Verses 10 to 13, and we're also going to be considering some of the verses at the end of the chapter. Well, it says here in Verse 10:

1 Kings 10:10 ~ Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold,...

Now, remember that a talent is—you probably have these footnotes in your Bible, so you might have to refer to a few of these for some measurements and mathematics here. A talent was about 75 pounds. So if you just calculate that out, I think that comes out to about 9,000 pounds of gold that she brought him. And I know probably many of us, there's gold in different places, that we have. Maybe you have some at your house, or in a bank, or stored up somewhere. So she brought 9,000 pounds, just to give a feeling for what she brought at that time. And then it says she also brought:

...a very great quantity of spices...

That's not so impressive to us today, of course. If we want spices, it's Publix or Kroger, or somewhere like that, and you can just load up the cart and do that. But in that day, that would have been something of greater value than today, and she brought those as well. And then it says she also brought precious stones with her to Solomon. Now, one issue that we see here in this chapter is the issue of wealth. And from the last part of the chapter in this one, you just can't get around it. This chapter is just smothered in wealth and prosperity. In fact, if you look at Verse 14 to the end of the chapter, you find that there's a word that's used ten times. Do you know what that word is? It's gold. You read those verses, and if you pay attention, you see it's gold, and then it's gold, and then it's gold, and it's gold. So what's the point here?

Well, we see here in elaborating on it that Solomon had gifts of gold. He had them from the Queen of Sheba, but he also had gold coming in as he was having his traders and merchants that were going out. So gold was flowing in year by year and at different times. It also says that he had shields of gold, when you look over in the latter part of the chapter. He had 200 shields of beaten gold, and I think this is about 15 pounds of gold in each shield. Looking back at the dimensions, and these were in his house, his palace, the dimensions that are given there, it was 100

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

cubits by 50 cubits, so that's 75 feet by 150 feet. So within a building of this size, there were 500 shields of gold, just to give some perspective on what this was.

The big shields has 15 pounds, and apparently the smaller shields had almost 4 pounds of gold. Now just imagine the tour that this queen must have had. "Let me show you my palace. There's a gold shield there. Number two, number three," and then now you're up to 100, and now you're up to 200. "Let me show you the smaller gold shields that we have, and we'll start with one of those, and we'll work our way around as well." Well, that would be enough if he just had the gifts of gold, even more that he had the shields of gold, but there's more gold. It turns out the throne has gold as well, not to mention ivory and the lions that were crafted there as well. And in addition to that, we find out that the drinking vessels that he used were gold as well. So it just keeps going on and on, and then the fact that all of the vessels in the king's palace were of gold.

Well, gold is not the only aspect of wealth here, but he also had this special wood that was brought in and imported, the almug wood and the cedar. And it says in Verse 27 of 1 Kings 10 that silver was so common, it says that it was as common as stone, that it was basically nothing. Can you imagine what that would be like? Now, perhaps you lived in the days where our coins still had silver in them—quarters, and dimes, and half dollars. So there was a time that silver was more common in its usage. But apparently there was so much wealth in his kingdom that silver was as nothing. It would have probably been treated like stainless steel in the way that we would use that. Can you even imagine what that would be like?

The chapter goes on to talk about his chariots, his horsemen, his fleet of ships, his merchants, his traders. Apparently he was not only impacting Israel, but he was all over in these other nations, and his people were having a great impact throughout the known world even to the point that you have these really peculiar things that were being imported in. He talks about ivory, but then you have this discussion about apes, and depending on your translation, it's peacocks or baboons. We don't usually think about this when we read the Old Testament, but apparently this interest in the different animals that God had made were bringing into this place.

Well, the final analysis with the wealth that's given to us in Verse 20 is the like of it was never seen in any kingdom, and in Verse 23, that:

1 Kings 10:23 ~ Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

Now, let's just pause for a moment and ask the question, how should we view all this wealth? How should we deal with or encounter this kind of prosperity? Well, I'm going to present to you what I think are probably four misunderstandings or incorrect approaches. One of those incorrect approaches is to think that God's material blessing in our lives is always a direct reflection on how we are pleasing Him. So I'll just say that again. To think that there's always a direct correlation between how I'm being blessed materially and how I'm doing spiritually. Let's just put it like that. That is a definite misunderstanding, and of course, we could go through Scripture and we could work that out. But you could also look at perhaps get a list of the most wealthiest people in our world today and go down the list, and perhaps even just look and say, "How many of those people really honor and love Jesus Christ?" I'm not saying that they all don't, but really I think we would find that many of those people don't, and God has blessed them materially and given them prosperity. So there's not a direct correlation there.

Another misunderstanding is that we are supposed to view 1 Kings 10 and any passages like it, in a negative and critical manner towards Solomon. That would be an easy way is to look at this and say, well, if you know the flow of things in chapter 11, we see Solomon's decline, because his heart has turned away to worship other Gods. So we know he does decline. So it's easy sometimes to look at this and think all prosperity and material wealth is bad. I don't think we should do this, and I think the fact that God promised to give Solomon these things, and then He did what He said He would do, shows us that we should not view this chapter in that way, but God was fulfilling His promise to bring glory to Himself.

Another misunderstanding or incorrect view, and this is more from times past and other churches outside of us, is that the visible church should reflect the earthly wealth and prosperity that God gives through ostentatious display, through enormous cathedrals, and through earthly vestments and things that would bring glory to those that serve in the ministry, and to the church buildings themselves. So I think this is a misunderstanding, probably not one that we're struggling with at the moment here.

The last one I think that's important is a misunderstanding would be to say that we cannot rejoice in the prosperity that God brings to us, that is, to almost feel like if God blesses us materially, we have to feel bad about it a little bit. Or maybe we don't feel bad about it, but we should feel a little bit bad about it instead of actually rejoicing and saying, "Praise the Lord, God. Thank You for all that You've given," because everything He gives to us is from Him.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

So it doesn't matter where you are on the spectrum. If He has given you this much, then praise God and thank Him for it, and be blessed for it. And if He gives you this much, well, praise God and give thanks for it. And now there are other questions. Now what do you do with what He gives you? That's a whole nother issue as well, that we need to be faithful stewards. But I think it's important for us that we don't let our hearts set upon those riches and that wealth, but that at the same time that we can bless Him and thank Him for what He has done on our behalf.

Well, as we look forward to Jesus Christ, the King who is greater than Solomon, we can find that as much as material prosperity is an earthly blessing that we give thanks for, that we should look to the wealth and the riches that we have in Christ. And I'm going to read some verses kind of in rapid succession out of Ephesians. There are five verses or portions of verses to remind us of this concept of the wealth and riches that we have, and what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 1, we find out that redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, was done according to the riches of His grace, that in the grace of God we have His riches. That in Ephesians 1:18, that in the prayer, having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we would know what is the hope to which He has called us, that we are to know what is the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints. What a beautiful picture of His holy people that He has called out, that in the saints we have the glorious inheritance.

In Ephesians 2, we find out that He worked this wonderful grace in our lives so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace. Think about that—immeasurable riches of His grace. In Ephesians 3:8, Paul could say that although he was the least of the saints, that grace was given to him to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. And then in Ephesians 3:16, that according to the riches of His glory, the prayer says, "May He grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being."

What a great encouragement that we have in these verses as we read this, that today if you are on the low end of the scale and you are struggling with your material provision, that you could look and see that in Christ you have a wealth of riches and a provision for your life. And that if you are on the other end of the scale, on the higher end, that you should not look to your riches and your wealth, and prosperity, and your possessions, to be ultimate, but rather to see them as gifts

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

of God, and to see in a much greater and superior way the riches of the grace of God that He has given you.

Today I would ask you, if you look at this and you see no glory in Christ and His greatness, no glory in His wealth and His riches, that I would call you to come to Christ, to turn from whatever kingdom you are building up in yourself and in your world, to turn from your sin, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, to experience the riches of His grace, not looking to your own works, or your own merit, or your own abilities, but look to the Lord Jesus Christ and His riches. This leads me to our last point:

4) Approving the King's Judgment:

We find in the Gospel of Matthew that the Lord Jesus Christ refers back to the visit of the Queen of Sheba. I'm going to read just a few verses around that, and then see how that brings even greater light to us for this passage in understanding the role of this visit.

In Matthew 11 and 12 as Jesus was ministering, He was receiving opposition from the religious leaders, from the Pharisees, and at the end of Matthew 12, it says:

Matthew 12:38 ~ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

So we're changing gears a little bit. We're out of Israel and the Old Testament, and now we're here and Jesus is ministering. So the Pharisees are asking for a sign. They want a sign for Him to do.

Matthew 12:39 ~ But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."

And then He goes forward to talk about the sign of Jonah being three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, and He talks about the men of Nineveh rising up at the judgment. And then in Verse 42, we read this:

Matthew 12:42 ~ The queen of the South...

Now, that's the Queen of Sheba. Just understand Sheba was to the south of Israel.

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

Matthew 12:42 ~ The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

So what do we do with this? Well, let's do a little bit of a comparison here, because Jesus was doing a comparison to His audience. He was rebuking and He was speaking forth words to these religious leaders who were taking confidence in their misunderstandings, rejecting the Messiah who was before them. What He's saying is that this Queen of Sheba in comparison to the generation He was speaking to, that the Queen of Sheba had relatively few advantages in coming to a correct knowledge of the true God, and that they had tremendous advantages. And yet the Queen of Sheba on the one hand took advantage of those and sought after the Lord, while the generation before Him pushed all those advantages to the side and rejected Him. Consider the fact that for the Queen of Sheba to seek out the truth of God, she had to make a journey of 1,000 miles, based upon reports, we might call it hearsay, to see if it was true. When she came to Solomon, she was able to witness something of his worship, the worship in the temple, the sacrificial system that God had put in place, but the best that she would have been able to see was a shadow of the thing that was to come, a shadow of the Messiah and the final sacrifice for sin, that was to come. She had before her Solomon, who was wealthy and great and wise, but he was just a man, just a man like you and I are. But consider the generation Jesus was speaking to. They had had the law and the prophets, they had the covenants that God had made with their people, and they had the Lord Jesus Christ in front of them, God's Son in the flesh, speaking to them, and they were consciously rejecting Him and ignoring His message.

This is a powerful word to us in Matthew 12, when He says that the Queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it. That's a hard word to hear, to hear that she will rise up in judgment upon them. Today I would ask you, how do you respond to the light that you have been given? I might argue to you today that if you're here listening to this sermon and have been part of this worship service, and have heard the Scriptures read to you, and the truth of the Gospel explained in some basic form, that you've been given more light and understanding than this Queen of Sheba had in her day. So I ask you today as you have seen Christ displayed as the one who is great, the Creator of the world, the sustainer of all things, to see Christ as the one in whom there are riches and glory, to see Christ as the one who is wisdom from God, the Son of God who did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, who

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

took on a human body, who came to identify with us, and ultimately to die as a sacrifice for sin.

I would ask you today, how do you respond to this message with the light that you have received? Do you hear the message? Do you hear of Christ and of the Gospel, but it's of no interest to you, and it just doesn't seem relevant to your current situation? I'd like to explain to you its relevance. The Bible said that there no one righteous, no not one, that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that the wages of sin is death, and the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Today if you have not come to Christ, you are going to experience the wages of sin in this life, but also in the life to come. In the Judgment Day, you will have no one to stand on your behalf, no one that has taken on the penalty of your sin, no one who is your Savior, and you will have an eternity in hell to face. I would call you today not to stay and remain in your sins, but to come to Christ, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. He is a gracious and a glorious Savior. Will you leave your own position, your own thinking about your life, your own philosophy that you have developed in your head, and come and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ this day, experience His salvation, peace with God, and the blessings that come from that?

Let's close in prayer...

Father, we come to You this day, and we rejoice that You have given us Your word. And so, Father, we thank You that You gave us this example of a man that You raised up in Your own timing and power, to bestow Your wisdom, to bestow wealth, and prosperity, and greatness, and glory. And so, Father, we rejoice even more that You have sent Your Son, the one who is greater than Solomon. Father, we come to You asking Your forgiveness for the ways that we have sought after the earthly blessings and have seen the spiritual blessings in reality as dim and as weak. And so Lord, we pray that You would help us by Your Holy Spirit, that we would correct our thinking, our minds, and our understanding, to conform to Your will, and I pray this in Christ's Name, Amen.

"The Splendor of the King"

Video, audio, description, and transcription are licensed under an [Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).



Attribution:

PROVIDENCE CHURCH

Glorifying God by knowing, living and proclaiming His truth in the world

Providence Church, Duluth, GA, USA

www.ProvidenceDuluth.org

Permission for use beyond the scope of this license may be requested by contacting Providence Church, Duluth, GA through their website.