

2 Chronicles Chapter 9

The ninth chapter is the same with (1 Kings 10:1; except 2 Chron. 9:26), which agrees with (1 Kings 4:21).

The same with (1 Kings 11:41).

Only in (2 Chron. 9:29), it is more largely expressed that the acts of Solomon's reign were written in the book of Nathan the prophet.

And in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Or rather "concerning Jeroboam", as the Septuagint and some other versions, in which Iddo is called Joel.

And by Theodoret said to be the same that prophesied of Jeroboam and his altar (See notes on 1 Kings 13:1).

Verses 1-28

See notes on 1 Kings 10:1-29.

2 Chronicles 9:1 "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart."

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon; she Admires His Wisdom and Magnificence. (2 Chron. 9:1-12).

"Hard questions":

Consisted in riddles (Judges 14:2).

And enigmas and primitive use of clever but unsound reasoning, in which the Arabians found some considerable portion of their mental gymnastics.

These, no doubt, bore some mild cousinly relationship to the proverbs and songs of Solomon, and his treasures of botanical and natural history facts (1 Kings 4:29-32).

"All that was in her heart":

The expression simply means all that she had so desired to get information upon, since she had heard of the fame of Solomon.

(See the notes on 1 Kings 10:1-9).

1 Kings 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."

The addition of the statement "concerning the name of the LORD", I believe is very important.

The fame of Solomon and his kingdom had spread to the lands around them.

This queen was very wealthy and came to see Solomon, bringing many camels laden with gifts.

There were so many people named Sheba, that it is difficult to determine which of the persons the country of Sheba was named for.

She had not only heard of Solomon's great wealth and magnificent buildings he had erected, but had heard of his great wisdom as well.

2 Chronicles 9:2 "And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not."

"Nothing hid from Solomon":

I.e. nothing obscure to him, no question too knotty for Solomon.

Solomon spent a great deal of time with her, as he would with any monarch of honor who visited him.

He tried to answer her questions as fully as he could.

He showed her his home and everything else she had wondered about.

She of course, was not allowed to see the ark.

2 Chronicles 9:3 "And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,"

"And when the queen of Sheba":

Visits Solomon; she Admires His Wisdom and Magnificence.

We must not pass it over without observing, that those who know the worth of true wisdom will grudge no pains or cost to obtain it.

The queen of Sheba put herself to a great deal of trouble and expense to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

I am sure that Solomon informed her that his wisdom was a gift from God.

No one could deny that he had great wisdom.

His judgements were just, but filled with wisdom only God could have given him.

A good example of this is how he settled the argument of the two women, over who the baby belonged to (1 Kings 3:16-28).

His house was magnificent.

There was gold and silver in abundance.

Some of the greatest artisans of that day had done the engravings and decorations.

2 Chronicles 9:4 "And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her."

And the meat of his table (see 1 Kings 4:22-23).

Translating our thoughts rather violently into modern language, we might picture the queen inspecting the kitchens of the palace, and remember that the kitchens of an Oriental court did the work, not of an individual "table."

But of those of a very large domestic and official retinue.

The sitting of his servants.

The word here used occurs forty-three times, and is rendered in the Authorized Version thirty-two of these times as "habitation" or "dwelling."

Of the remaining eleven times, one or other of those words would be almost the synonym of the word used, and in every case the rendering "dwelling."

If kept to the general idea of a dwelling or resting-place more or less temporary, would not be inappropriate or inconsistent with the evident drift of the connection.

Referring to their apparel, we find in the parallel mention, as here, of the cupbearers.

Though the matter of their apparel is not included as it is here.

Part of the difficulty of the verse arises from the consideration that up to this point the contents of the successive clauses of it may compose possibly enough a sharp graphic description of the daily banquet scene.

"His ascent by which he went up":

Render (if the text be sound), his manner of going up.

I.e. the pomp with which he went up (so Targum).

In (1 Kings chapter 4), we went into great detail on the amount of food furnished for Solomon's table.

Solomon probably had a state dinner in her honor.

The food so far surpassed anything she had ever seen, and she was very impressed.

Many exotic foods were brought in from other countries.

Solomon had need for nothing.

The sitting of the servants is possibly speaking of his officers, who would have been invited to such an affair.

The finest apparel in all the world was Solomon's.

Even the stairs that he ascended up into the house of the LORD by, were elegant.

"There was no spirit in her":

Means it was so wonderful it took her breath away.

2 Chronicles 9:5 "And she said to the king, [It was] a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom:"

The queen of Sheba put herself to a great deal of trouble and expense to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

And yet, learning from him to serve God, and do her duty, she thought herself well paid for her pains.

Heavenly wisdom is that pearl of great price, for which, if we part with all, we make a good bargain.

She Admires His Wisdom and Magnificence.

2 Chronicles 9:6 "Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen [it]: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: [for] thou exceedest the fame that I heard."

"The one half of the greatness of thy wisdom":

Kings has simply, "the half was not told me."

The chronicler has made an explanatory addition.

See 1 Chron. 12:29; 2 Chron. 30:18, for the word marbith, "increase," "multitude."

Which occurs thrice in the Chronicles and twice elsewhere.

"Thou exceedest the fame":

Literally, thou hast added to the report.

Kings, more fully, "Thou hast added wisdom and weal to the report."

2 Chronicles 9:7 "Happy [are] thy men, and happy [are] these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom."

She had heard of the greatness of Solomon and his kingdom, but she had not believed any of it because it seemed impossible.

Now that she had seen this, she was terribly impressed.

It was far beyond even what she had heard.

It seems, that all of the greatness of the buildings and the wealth they represented did not impress her as much, as the wisdom of Solomon.

Verses 8-12

Solomon's wisdom and riches were so vast that the Queen of Sheba concluded: "thy God loved Israel".

This was affirmation that Israel was God's covenant people, even citizens of the world and leaders of pagan nations could see it (Deut. 7:8).

2 Chronicles 9:8 "Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, [to be] king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice."

“His throne”:

The thought that Solomon sat on God’s throne is not included in the queen of Sheba’s words (in 1 Kings 10:9).

The blessing of God on Israel and on Solomon was to last as long as he followed the LORD as David had (2 Chron. 7:17-21).

These words are those of the Queen of Sheba.

We can take notice here, that the queen spoke of the LORD as the God of Solomon, not her own God.

She recognized Him as powerful above other gods, but she did not express a desire for Him to be her God.

This seems so strange, because she really gave the LORD credit for Solomon's accomplishments.

2 Chronicles 9:9 "And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon."

"She gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold":

This was indeed a royal gift.

"Any such spice":

The parallel has "no more such abundance of spices," and "of spices very great store."

The Arabian spices, and their land and even sea borne fragrance, as also the very lucrative trade they created, are often alluded to by historians.

The spices of the part of Arabia, that she came from, were well known for being the finest in the world.

The precious stones are not explained any further than here.

This was a tremendously valuable gift to bring Solomon.

2 Chronicles 9:10 "And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum trees and precious stones."

Kings, “And the fleet also of Hiram which carried gold from Ophir.”

The phrase is altered here to correspond with (2 Chron. 8:18).

"Brought algum trees": (see 2 Chron. 2:8).

LXX, Vulgate, "ligna thyina;" Syriac, "acacia wood".

Kings, "brought from Ophir almug trees in great abundance."

In the Mishna 'almûg is "coral;" and the Rabbis ascribe a red color to the algum wood.

The Pterocarpus Santalinus has blood-red wood with black streaks, is fragrant, and is used in works of art, as well as for burning.

2 Chronicles 9:11 "And the king made [of] the algum trees terraces to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah."

"Terraces":

Perhaps "raised paths."

In (1 Kings 10:12), a different Hebrew word is used, which means probably "railings" ("pillars," A.V.).

"Psalteries":

Compare note (1 Chron. 13:8).

"And there were none such seen before in the land of Judah":

A shortened paraphrase of, "There came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day" (Kings).

"The land of Judah" is a phrase which indicates how utterly the northern kingdom was excluded from the editor's thought.

These terraces made with the algum wood were probably, the terraces that were spoken of earlier as the ascent for Solomon to the temple.

The beautiful wood was used for musical instruments as well.

The decorations and all of the grandeur associated with the temple and Solomon's home, were probably what greatly impressed the queen.

This algum was probably red sandal-wood.

2 Chronicles 9:12 "And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside [that] which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants."

"Besides that which she had brought unto the king":

Over and above that which was an equivalent for the presents she had made him (see note on 1 Kings 10:13).

We are not told exactly what Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba.

The things he gave her were probably things she could not get in her own land.

Whatever Solomon gave her was even greater than what she had brought him.

2 Chronicles 9:13 "Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold;"

"Now the weight of gold":

The history of the queen of Sheba being ended, the writer returns to give an account of Solomon's riches and magnificence, which he had begun to set forth before.

And first he relates what a vast quantity of gold was brought into his kingdom every year, not only from Ophir, but from other countries.

Into which, perhaps, the queen of Sheba opened him a way, and particularly from Arabia and Ethiopia, which then were replenished with gold, though exhausted by the insatiable avarice of succeeding ages.

From Ophir and Tarshish, and wherever he traded.

The 666 talents of gold would have 999,000 ounces of gold.

This is almost beyond comprehension.

2 Chronicles 9:14 "Beside [that which] chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon."

"Chapmen":

Revised Version the "chapmen".

The English word means "merchant"; compare the verb, "to chaffer" and the German "Kaufmann."

The Hebrew word means “those who go about” as merchants.

This gold probably came by way of tax payments from the merchant travelers, and as tribute money from the kings of the part of Arabia where the blood was mingled.

Jewish and Arabian, and not exclusively and independently Arabian (see the word used in place of our Arabian in the parallel, and Jer. 25:24).

And from those governors (perhaps in some cases superseding older kings), of adjacent countries, that had become in some part tributary to Solomon.

"Governors":

Hebrew Paḥoth, a word applied specially to governors of provinces of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires.

Probably here governors outside the land of Israel are meant.

There were so many ways that Solomon was getting all of this wealth.

He received tribute money, he probably charged taxes on the merchant seamen, as well.

Of course, some of it was gifts from people like the Queen of Sheba.

2 Chronicles 9:15 "And king Solomon made two hundred targets [of] beaten gold: six hundred [shekels] of beaten gold went to one target."

Word for word as (1 Kings 10:16).

"Targets":

Hebrew ḡinnâh, a word meaning a large shield; compare (1 Sam 17:7).

On the other hand, in 2 (Chron. 9:16), Hebrew mâgḡn, small shields are meant.

The English renderings should be transposed so as to be “shields” in (2 Chron. 9:15), and “targets” in (2 Chron. 9:16).

"Went to one target":

Render (also in 2 Chron. 9:16), were spread upon one target.

The targets contained about 300 ounces of gold for each target.

A shekel is a half-ounce of gold.

The fact that they made targets of gold, shows just how plentiful it was.

2 Chronicles 9:16 "And three hundred shields [made he of] beaten gold: three hundred [shekels] of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon."

Solomon constructed the temple in a way that honored God; well-ordered and with all his heart.

Excellence and enthusiasm should be the marks of every Christian endeavor (Col. 3:23).

For the “house of the forest of Lebanon”:

See the note on 1 Kings 7:2-8.

2 Chronicles 9:17 "Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold."

It is not necessary to suppose that the throne was made of solid ivory (Psalm 45:9; Amos 3:15; Amos 6:4).

Or that the overlaying gold concealed the ivory, whether more or less of it.

This is spoken of again in (1 Kings 10:19).

The throne could have been inlaid with ivory, and the wood covered with gold.

It also could have been solid gold over ivory.

2 Chronicles 9:18 "And [there were] six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, [which were] fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by the stays:"

"With a footstool of gold":

This is not mentioned in the parallel passage in (1 Kings 10:18), where see the note (2 Chron. 9:18).

"And stays on each side of the sitting place":

“Revised Version”:

And stays (manuscripts “arms”), on either side by the place of the seat.

"And two lions standing by the stays":

(Or, arms) on each side of the sitting-place.

We may easily imagine, from ancient modeled thrones, that of them the arms were themselves "no small part."

It is remarkable that the parallel does not take notice of the footstool.

2 Chronicles 9:19 "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."

There was a lion on each side of every step, a symbol of royal power, as before observed.

So the Egyptians placed lions under the throne of Orus.

"There was not the like made in any kingdom":

For the matter and form of it.

For its grandeur and magnificence.

There was none at least at that time, whatever has been since; for this is the first throne of ivory we read of.

The lions were on either end of each step going up to the throne.

The lion was the emblem for the tribe of Judah.

The fact that there were twelve represented the twelve tribes of Israel.

These were beautifully carved.

2 Chronicles 9:20 "And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon [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 [not] any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon."

Such quantities of it were brought to him from Ophir, and paid to him in tribute, and given him as presents.

"And all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold":

Not only what were used in his palace at Jerusalem, but in his country house at some little distance.

"None were of silver; it was not any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon":

To make plate of; or silver plate was but little esteemed.

And scarce any use of it made in Solomon's palace, if at all.

Though doubtless it was elsewhere, and especially silver as money.

The gold was so abundant, that even the drinking cups were of gold.

This is probably speaking of the area where the great banquets were held.

There was much pomp associated with the reign of Solomon.

2 Chronicles 9:21 "For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks."

"For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish":

Ships that went to Tharshish (A.V.).

For Tharshish was the name of a place, upon the sea, famous for its traffic with merchants, and a place very remote from Judea, as appears from the three years usually spent in that voyage.

For "Tharshish" (see the note on 1 Kings 10:22).

"Every three years once came the ships of Tharshish, bringing gold":

It is likely a great part of this time was spent in digging for the gold, or in hunting the elephants, apes, and peacocks, and in other transactions of commerce.

"And apes":

The Hebrew word kophim, is both by the ancients and moderns translated apes.

Which creature Pliny calls cephus, and says they were seen but once at Rome in his days, and that they came from Ethiopia.

"And peacocks":

These, being so beautiful a bird, might very probably be brought from foreign countries into Judea as a great rarity, there being none there before.

We dealt with this in (1 Kings 10:22).

The ships were a way to bring in the gold and the other items of trade.

Tarshish was across from the coast of Africa.

We are not sure whether each voyage took three years or not.

That would have been a long time to cover such a short distance.

They could have made many stops however.

2 Chronicles 9:22 "And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom."

By "of the earth" we are, of course, only to understand the kings or people of neighboring nations.

"In riches and wisdom":

The latter of which he asked of God, who graciously promised to add the former, and did so to a great degree.

But what is here said is not to be taken in too strict a sense, but only as intending that he was richer than the kings of the earth in general were at that time.

2 Chronicles 9:23 "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart."

(See the note on 1 Kings 10:23-25).

His gift of wisdom that God had given him, was one of the reasons for his great wealth.

There was no king before him or after him, that had the wealth of Solomon.

Of course, this does not include Jesus who owns everything.

2 Chronicles 9:24 "And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year."

To recommend them, and introduce them into his presence.

"Vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year":

Everyone brought according to the commodities of his country.

And they did yearly, out of great respect to him, and in veneration of him for his wisdom, and for the advantages they received by his wise counsels and instructions.

Besides, it was the custom of the eastern countries not to pay a visit, especially to great personages, without carrying a present.

The fact that these were brought year by year, indicates that this was tribute or taxes.

It appears also, that Solomon accepted things as well as money for the tribute.

Probably Solomon had so much gold and silver, that he needed the animals, and harness, and raiment more than the gold.

2 Chronicles 9:25 "And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem."

Both for war; for though it was a time of peace, he provided against the worst, lest an enemy should come upon him suddenly, and when unprepared.

"Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen":

Of the latter (see notes on 1 Kings 4:26).

"Whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem":

Some of the horsemen were quartered in the cities where the chariots were placed, and some of them in Jerusalem.

To be near the king's person, and to be a guard to him on occasion.

Josephus says, half of them were in Jerusalem about the king, and the rest were dispersed through the king's villages (see the notes on 1 Kings 10:26-29).

This was the largest number of horses and chariots of any of his predecessors.

It was more than his neighbors as well.

The fact that they were so well-equipped, probably was one of the reasons they had peace.

He had some of them in Jerusalem, but had many of them in the cities in the outskirts to protect Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 9:26 "And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt."

This verse corresponds to (1 Kings 4:21).

"From the river":

(R.V.), from the River, i.e. the Euphrates.

"Even unto the land of the Philistines":

The Philistines seem to have been able to keep their independence.

David had defeated these bordering countries in his reign, and Solomon kept them under subjection to himself.

2 Chronicles 9:27 "And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that [are] in the low plains in abundance."

Identical with (1 Kings 10:27).

On this and the following verse, compare the prohibitions of (Deut. 17:16-17).

By the vast quantity he received from Tarshish, this is a hyperbolic expression.

"And cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that [are] in the low plains in abundance":

Not by the growth of them, but by the importation of them from the dominion of Hiram.

This is said in the same figurative way; of the sycamore trees.

Rauwolff says, they are what the Moors and Arabians calls "mumeitz"; which he describes to be as large and as high as white mulberry trees, and having almost the same leaves, but rounder. And their fruit not unlike our figs, only sweeter, and no little seeds within, and not so good.

And are therefore not esteemed, and are commonly sold to the poorer sort, and that they grow in all fields and grounds (of which see note on Amos 7:14).

The cedars had been sent into this area by Hiram.

They were not native to the land of Israel.

The sycamore tree was native to the land, and that is the reason for this.

The silver was so plentiful; they did not even bother to weigh it.

2 Chronicles 9:28 "And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands."

Used to bring.

The verse summarizes (1 Kings 10:28-29; 2 Chron. 1:16-17), and adds that Solomon imported horses "out of all the lands," as well as from Egypt.

The all lands here, is speaking of the horses that came from Arabia, and Armenia.

Verses 29-30

The “rest of the acts of Solomon” are not included in this account.

The author likely assumes that his audience already knows about Solomon’s late-in-life decisions (1 Kings chapter 11).

Nevertheless, this is a reminder of God’s promise to keep a descendant of David on the throne of Israel (1 Chron. Chapter 17), which would culminate in the birth of Jesus, the Messiah (see 1 Kings 11:41-43).

2 Chronicles 9:29 "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, [are] they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?"

(1 Kings 11:41), reports that Solomon’s deeds were written in “the book of the acts of Solomon”.

For the rest of the record of Solomon’s life (read 1 Kings 10:26 – 11:43).

In later years, he turned away from God and, due to the influence of his wives, he led the nation into idolatry.

This split the kingdom and sowed the seeds that led to its defeat and dispersion.

The Chronicles do not record this sad end to Solomon’s life because the focus is on encouraging the returning Jews from Babylon with God’s pledge to them for a glorious future in the Davidic Covenant.

(See the note on 1 Chron. 29:29).

These works mentioned here are not in the Bible.

These are historical works of that day.

Nathan had a great deal to do with Solomon, so his work should be very accurate.

Both Ahijah and Iddo are mentioned in other Scriptures, and their works were probably highly regarded as well.

2 Chronicles 9:30 "And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years."

"Forty years":

The reign of Solomon was thus of the same length as that of his father (see 1 Kings 2:11).

The coincidence is curious; but the accurate historical character of the whole narrative forbids the idea that the numbers given are merely round numbers, signifying long duration.

Solomon reigned 40 years, and if he was 12 years old when he began to reign, he was about 52 when he died.

We do not know for sure how old he was when he began to reign, but he was no more than a youth.

His reign was in Jerusalem.

The one outstanding thing he was remembered for, was the building of the temple.

2 Chronicles 9:31 "And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead."

The account of God's third visit to "Solomon" and the details of Solomon's sinful later life (1 Kings 11:1-13), are omitted by the chronicler.

The city of David is of course, Jerusalem.

He was buried beside his father David.

Rehoboam would reign over Judah in the divided kingdom.

2 Chronicles Chapter 9 Questions

1. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to meet Solomon?
2. What did she bring for Solomon?
3. In 1 Kings, the same statement adds what?
4. What was she more interested in than the great wealth of Solomon?
5. What did Solomon tell her?
6. What was a good example of Solomon's wisdom?
7. Why did the food for Solomon's table impress her?
8. What does the statement "there was no spirit in her" mean?
9. After she had seen all of this and talked with Solomon, what was her reaction?

10. Who did she call God in verse 8?
11. How many talents of gold did she bring Solomon?
12. What other things did she bring him?
13. What had the servants of Hiram brought Solomon?
14. What had Solomon made of the algum trees?
15. What did Solomon give the Queen of Sheba?
16. How many talents of gold came to Solomon in one year?
17. Where did some of the other gold come from?
18. How much gold was in one target?
19. How much gold was in one shield?
20. The throne was made of what?
21. How many steps led up to the throne?
22. What was at either end of each step?
23. What was the emblem of the tribe of Judah?
24. Why were there twelve of them?
25. What were the drinking vessels made of?
26. What did all the other kings bring to Solomon?
27. What was meant by them being brought yearly?
28. Silver in Jerusalem was as _____.
29. How long did Solomon reign?
30. Where was the city of David?