

Matthew 12:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Analysis

The queen of the south (βασίλισσα νότου, basilissa notou)—The Queen of Sheba traveled over 1,200 miles to hear Solomon's wisdom (1 Kings 10). Jesus emphasizes her extraordinary effort: **from the uttermost parts of the earth** (ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς, ek tōn peratōn tēs gēs), literally 'from the ends/extremities of the earth.'

A greater than Solomon is here (πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὕδε, pleion Solomōnos hōde)—Solomon's wisdom was legendary (1 Kings 4:29-34), yet Christ is Wisdom incarnate (1 Cor 1:30). The queen sought wisdom; Israel rejected it when it stood before them in flesh. Her initiative condemns their apathy.

Historical Context

The Queen of Sheba's visit (c. 950 BC) exemplified Gentile responsiveness to divine wisdom. Jesus's double witness—Nineveh and Sheba—established that even pagans would judge Israel's unbelief, a devastating rebuke to Jewish privilege and presumption.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What effort are you willing to expend to gain Christ's wisdom compared to the queen's 1,200-mile journey?
2. How does Christ's claim to be greater than Solomon's wisdom intersect with Colossians 2:3, that in him are 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'?

Interlinear Text

βασίλισσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ^{τῆς}
The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with
G938 G3558 G1453 G1722 G3588 G2920 G3326

τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτήν, ὅτι ἦλθεν
G3588 generation G3778 and shall condemn it for she came
G1074 G2532 G2632 G846 G3754 G2064

ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν
from G3588 the uttermost parts G3588 of the earth to hear G3588
G1537 G4009 G1093 G191

σοφίαν Σολομῶντος καὶ ἴδού, πλεῖον Σολομῶντος
the wisdom Solomon and behold a greater than Solomon
G4678 G4672 G2532 G2400 G4119 G4672

ὧδε
is here
G5602

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 17:5 (Parallel theme): While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

John 1:14 (Parallel theme): And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Isaiah 7:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 3:17 (Parallel theme): And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 1:18 (Parallel theme): No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

1 Kings 5:12 (Parallel theme): And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

1 Kings 10:24 (Parallel theme): And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

1 Kings 3:9 (Judgment): Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

1 Kings 3:12 (Resurrection): Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

1 Kings 4:29 (Parallel theme): And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.