

Gold

At the start of Solomon's kingship, he requested that God give him wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-9). We usually make lessons about how God was pleased since Solomon asked for wisdom rather than riches and gave him riches and honor in addition to a wise and understanding heart (1 Kings 3:10-14). In later years, Solomon wrote, *"How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver"* (Proverbs 16:16). When we consider the value of Gold in the World's marketplace, the value of most things are judged against it. Even the value of pearls, jewels, other metals, and one-of-a-kind artifacts have less worth than the gold that is traded for them. The Bible uses Gold in two ways.

Gold is used in descriptions within God's Word because there is nothing of higher intrinsic value in this physical land. It helps us understand the priceless value of God's wisdom. Writing of the Word of God, David said, *"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold"* (Psalms 19:7-10).

The Gold overlaying the walls and furniture in the Tabernacle and Temple becomes a vision of the eternal home in heaven described in Revelation. Gold was used in the Tabernacle and Temple because nothing on earth exceeds the resistance to corrosion nor has the brilliant shine of polished Gold. Golden artifacts made about the same time as the Tabernacle in 1440-1435 BCE still show the same craftsmanship and beauty as when they were made. Compared with the eternity God exists in, there may be a time that Gold would deteriorate, but in the time of the memory of men, gold seems to be everlasting. Therefore, what better example do we have to imagine the permanence of God's Holy abiding place?

Another aspect of gold, relative to the Word of God acting within a person, is the purification process from raw ore to pure metal. High heat is required to free the gold from the rock holding it and burn off impurities. God's word has a similar influence on the minds of people. First, separating them from the defilements of the world by the new birth, and finally, discipleship removes them further from evil temptations (Romans 6 and Hebrews 6). When considering the metal, the longer the refinement process, the purer the gold becomes until it is 99.99% pure. We are also continuously tested and purified as we confront and overcome trials daily. After overcoming each trial, we become stronger, and wisdom is added to the knowledge of God's Word, helping us grow toward spiritual maturity (James 1:2-5). Job knew this as he said, *"When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold"* (Job 23:10).

We could spend many pages on the value and virtue of gold, but they would fail to place gold above the value of God's word and wisdom. In Job chapter 28, there are several contrasts between the value of God's wisdom and the value of gold. If you search the earth for gold, you can find the rock that contains the gold. But the Word of God and wisdom cannot be found by searching the Earth, and the understanding of spiritual things cannot be found in the land of the living nor in the sea. Further, pure gold cannot buy wisdom, nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold (Job 28:12-20).

David and Solomon remind us that by storing up vast quantities of gold, there is no reward and, in the end, all would belong to someone else (Psalm 49:10); (Ecclesiastes 2:18). But in the accumulation of God's knowledge and wisdom, there is great reward (Psalms 19:11). One of the benefits of God's wisdom is the knowledge of good and evil and how one is to live before God. The Psalmist said, "Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You" (Psalms 119:11). To live a life here that is acceptable to God, the knowledge of God's word, digested and made a part of our self, is needed. Even as precious as gold is to earthly economies, it cannot purchase the purity God demands for His children. It takes the knowledge and wisdom of God to make us obedient children, "Not conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior (1 Peter 1:14-15).

As we labor in Christ's kingdom, can we say, "My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield better than choicest silver" (Proverbs 8:19)?