

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:16,334

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:16,334 --> 00:00:20,853

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations but not necessarily

3

00:00:20,853 --> 00:00:27,731

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

4

00:00:27,731 --> 00:00:33,329

There is an age-old legend that somewhere in these forgotten wastelands lie the fabled

5

00:00:33,329 --> 00:00:36,048

Solomon's minds.

6

00:00:36,048 --> 00:00:41,927

The Bible states that Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches.

7

00:00:41,927 --> 00:00:47,925

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 603 score and six talents

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00:00:47,925 --> 00:00:49,324

of gold.

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00:00:49,324 --> 00:00:54,523

In modern terms that means 13 and a half tons.

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00:00:54,523 --> 00:01:00,161

The Bible also lists great quantities of other valuables.

11

00:01:00,161 --> 00:01:02,280

Where did they come from?

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00:01:02,280 --> 00:01:05,879

Where did his caravans travel to find his fabled minds?

13

00:01:24,514 --> 00:01:39,349

For centuries the Israelites had been nomads.

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00:01:39,349 --> 00:01:51,506

From the time they left Egypt they had no land to call their own.

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00:01:51,506 --> 00:01:59,743

Being David according to the Bible brought them a dream, a city of their own, Jerusalem.

16

00:01:59,743 --> 00:02:04,742

Having at last won his kingdom David felt his own hands were too stained with blood to be

17

00:02:04,742 --> 00:02:12,500

the builder of God's house so he abdicated to his favored son, Solomon.

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00:02:12,500 --> 00:02:22,897

Here in the spring of Silom, outside the walls of Jerusalem, Solomon was anointed king.

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00:02:22,897 --> 00:02:27,295

The first temple was built by Solomon and it made Jerusalem the center of the Jewish

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00:02:27,295 --> 00:02:29,734

religion for all time.

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00:02:29,734 --> 00:02:34,493

It was Solomon who transformed Jerusalem into an ancient wonder.

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00:02:34,493 --> 00:02:39,092

Today it's the center of three great religions.

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00:02:39,092 --> 00:02:43,091

For Christians it's the scene of the crucifixion.

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00:02:43,091 --> 00:02:47,329

For Muslims it's the place where Mohammed climbed to heaven.

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00:02:47,329 --> 00:02:52,248

And for Jews the wailing wall has special significance because it is all that remains

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00:02:52,248 --> 00:03:03,724

of the western wall, the site of Solomon's temple.

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00:03:03,724 --> 00:03:07,963

Solomon had to secure and develop the territories David had won.

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00:03:07,963 --> 00:03:11,442

It was the largest land empire in the Near East.

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00:03:11,442 --> 00:03:16,880

By defeating the Philistines the Israelites created a kingdom which stretched from Bersheba

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00:03:16,880 --> 00:03:24,158

in the south to Dan in the north.

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00:03:24,158 --> 00:03:39,434

Caravan trails crossed the kingdom from north to south and east to west.

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00:03:39,434 --> 00:03:44,592

Solomon found himself controlling the crossroads of trade for the civilized world and so was

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00:03:44,592 --> 00:03:51,670

able to command a steady income in tolls for safe passage.

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00:03:51,670 --> 00:03:55,869

Solomon built six mighty fortresses which secured the main trade routes of the Middle

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00:03:55,869 --> 00:03:59,508

East.

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00:03:59,508 --> 00:04:04,146

To the northeast stretching along what is now the Lebanese coast with the kingdoms of

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00:04:04,146 --> 00:04:08,425

Phoenicia.

38

00:04:08,425 --> 00:04:15,783

The Phoenicians had great resources of timber and metal and skill in working them.

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00:04:15,783 --> 00:04:18,742

What they lacked were agricultural products.

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00:04:18,742 --> 00:04:22,541

To compensate the Phoenicians turned to trade.

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00:04:22,541 --> 00:04:26,860

Solomon had an abundance of grain.

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00:04:26,860 --> 00:04:29,779

The Phoenicians were a great maritime power.

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00:04:29,779 --> 00:04:36,577

Their alliance with Solomon would make him the richest merchant prince in the world.

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00:04:36,577 --> 00:04:41,415

In exchange for grain Phoenicians sailed the oceans and traveled to the limits of the known

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00:04:41,415 --> 00:04:47,933

world and beyond seeking trade goods.

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00:04:47,933 --> 00:04:53,812

As harbors assumed a new importance they would become bases for a Phoenician sea trade and

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00:04:53,812 --> 00:04:59,770

provide homes for Phoenician skills and technology.

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00:04:59,770 --> 00:05:06,288

He sent 10,000 men to cut the cedars of Lebanon, timber for his great building projects and

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00:05:06,288 --> 00:05:09,127

for his new shipyards.

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00:05:09,367 --> 00:05:19,124

Even today the remains of slipways still run down to the sea.

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00:05:19,124 --> 00:05:22,563

Phoenicians built and manned the ships.

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00:05:22,563 --> 00:05:28,082

Not just vessels to ply the coastal trade but ships which could go on a three year voyage

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00:05:28,082 --> 00:05:32,640

to the land of Tharshish.

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00:05:32,640 --> 00:05:37,999

The Israelites were by tradition a nation of nomadic farmers and without his Phoenician

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00:05:37,999 --> 00:05:44,517

allies Solomon could have achieved none of his greatness.

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00:05:44,517 --> 00:05:50,755

This ship stove like all Phoenician work was of distinctive design.

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00:05:50,755 --> 00:05:55,673

Phoenician style became the art nouveau of Solomon's kingdom using techniques which became

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00:05:55,673 --> 00:06:01,592

traditional and have changed little since.

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00:06:07,990 --> 00:06:28,064

Metalworking too was virtually a Phoenician monopoly.

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00:06:28,064 --> 00:06:33,062

They had the skills for making not only the necessities of life but for working rare metals

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00:06:33,062 --> 00:06:34,062

as well.

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00:06:34,622 --> 00:06:38,661

The metal arrived already refined in England.

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00:06:38,661 --> 00:06:47,018

Along with the cargoes of precious metals the ships brought apes and peacocks and ivory.

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00:06:47,018 --> 00:06:53,656

Their skill at working with gold keystone the craft of the Phoenicians and creates the mystery

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00:06:53,656 --> 00:06:57,695

where did Solomon's gold come from.

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00:06:57,695 --> 00:07:01,974

The answer to the question may be found in the extraordinary relationship that developed

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00:07:01,974 --> 00:07:04,693

between the Israelites and the Phoenicians.

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00:07:04,693 --> 00:07:06,452

Each had what the other needed.

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00:07:06,452 --> 00:07:13,050

To find Solomon's mind it's important to understand the trade between the two nations.

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00:07:13,050 --> 00:07:18,329

The Phoenicians opened up to Solomon the trade routes of the world.

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00:07:18,329 --> 00:07:25,287

In return Solomon guaranteed them a regular supply of oil and wheat.

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00:07:25,287 --> 00:07:32,645

This agricultural surplus gave him his purchasing power and was the real basis of his wealth.

73

00:07:32,645 --> 00:07:43,481

A sledge with stones bedded in its bottom is still used for threshing on remote Bedouin

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00:07:43,481 --> 00:07:44,481

farms.

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00:07:44,481 --> 00:07:49,759

The wheat is spread on the threshing floor and the continual circulation of the sledge

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00:07:49,759 --> 00:07:52,359

gradually separates the grain.

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00:07:53,358 --> 00:07:58,157

It is a timeless method common throughout the Near East and is probably not so different

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00:07:58,157 --> 00:08:01,356

to methods in use at the time of Solomon.

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00:08:08,754 --> 00:08:14,352

Tossing the wheat in the air separates the chaff which is blown away in the wind.

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00:08:22,950 --> 00:08:28,068

It is then winnowed before being ground in a stone curn.

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00:08:28,068 --> 00:08:33,346

The grain is poured into the center of the curn and emerges as flour for the baker.

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00:08:33,346 --> 00:08:52,341

Agricultural produce was brought in to be stored in great warehouses and granaries.

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00:08:52,341 --> 00:08:59,539

For one month in the year each of the twelve provinces had to feed the capital.

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00:08:59,539 --> 00:09:04,137

These new cities were built under the supervision of Phoenician craftsmen.

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00:09:04,137 --> 00:09:10,016

Bears were the skills which crafted the masonry, walls and staircases, cutting the stone into

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00:09:10,016 --> 00:09:13,255

accurate geometric blocks.

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00:09:13,255 --> 00:09:19,333

This doorway with its decorated capitals is typical of Solomon's style of architecture.

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00:09:19,333 --> 00:09:25,771

Their greatest work however was the building of Solomon's new Jerusalem where the workmen

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00:09:25,771 --> 00:09:30,210

were personally supervised by the Phoenician king.

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00:09:30,210 --> 00:09:35,928

The stone was quarried locally and the city was transformed from a small fortress town

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00:09:35,928 --> 00:09:39,767

into one of the wonders of the ancient world.

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00:09:42,286 --> 00:09:47,564

Deep under the present city lie the remains of Solomon's buildings.

93

00:09:47,564 --> 00:09:54,043

Solomon's palace once stood here and the walled up arches of the Golden Gate are on the site

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00:09:54,043 --> 00:09:58,241

of the entrance to the temple.

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00:09:58,241 --> 00:10:07,279

The layout was similar to a much smaller temple found at Arad near the Dead Sea.

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00:10:07,279 --> 00:10:16,196

At one end was the Holy of Holies and in the center of Jerusalem was the sacrificial altar.

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00:10:16,196 --> 00:10:21,674

Quoted from the Bible, three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace

98

00:10:21,714 --> 00:10:28,472

offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord.

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00:10:28,472 --> 00:10:33,391

Solomon's temple was furnished in gold and gold leaf decorated the richly carved cedar

100

00:10:33,391 --> 00:10:35,390

paneling.

101

00:10:35,390 --> 00:10:40,989

The fame of his magnificence spread far beyond the frontiers of Solomon's own kingdom and

102

00:10:40,989 --> 00:10:48,386

the great of the world came to see for themselves and wonder.

103

00:10:48,426 --> 00:10:54,545

Ezekiel refers to silver, iron, tin and lead coming from Tharshish.

104

00:10:54,545 --> 00:10:58,063

These metals with gold could come from Spain.

105

00:10:58,063 --> 00:11:04,222

The ivory, apes, peacocks and additional gold could have been shipped from North Africa.

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00:11:04,222 --> 00:11:09,900

Such a voyage might well have taken three years.

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00:11:09,900 --> 00:11:14,499

Solomon struck a deal with the Phoenician king Hyrum.

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00:11:14,499 --> 00:11:20,137

In view of the success of their joint operations in the Mediterranean, they agreed that together

109

00:11:20,137 --> 00:11:25,175

they would open up new trade routes to the south in the Red Sea.

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00:11:25,175 --> 00:11:30,254

The Bible tells us that a joint fleet was built at Etzion Gabaer.

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00:11:30,254 --> 00:11:34,133

Was this the port from which the Phoenician gold ship sailed?

112

00:11:34,133 --> 00:11:40,571

A world-renowned metallurgist undertook archaeological excavations.

113

00:11:40,571 --> 00:11:42,410

Professor Rothenberg.

114

00:11:42,410 --> 00:11:47,009

This would not be a possible sight for a port.

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00:11:47,009 --> 00:11:49,648

You wouldn't possibly be able to build a ship there.

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00:11:49,648 --> 00:11:53,287

The winds are so strong, the south winds are devastating.

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00:11:53,287 --> 00:11:56,726

It's the worst place in the world to look for a port.

118

00:11:56,726 --> 00:12:04,244

The only sight I can see is a small island called Jezirat Faroun, the coral island,

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00:12:04,244 --> 00:12:09,882

Sarsevellat, which has a natural port, a beautiful anchorage.

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00:12:09,882 --> 00:12:14,561

Then in the biggest storm it will be quite, in that small bay.

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00:12:14,561 --> 00:12:20,399

It's the only natural port and I'm sure this is the sight.

122

00:12:20,399 --> 00:12:24,838

Here excavations unearthed warehouses and workshops.

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00:12:24,838 --> 00:12:29,356

Were the remains of caulking pitch and tar which were found beside the small fortified

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00:12:29,356 --> 00:12:33,755

harbor used on Solomon's new fleet?

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00:12:33,755 --> 00:12:38,874

The whole island was enclosed in a fortified wall, part of which still exists at the base

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00:12:38,874 --> 00:12:42,792

of later fortifications.

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00:12:42,792 --> 00:12:46,271

This new port would open up a whole new hemisphere.

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00:12:46,271 --> 00:12:49,950

It would challenge the land routes across Arabia.

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00:12:49,950 --> 00:12:57,148

Eventually, the Phoenicians would reach India and circumnavigate Africa.

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00:12:57,148 --> 00:13:04,306

Could Solomon's mines have been in one of these new and distant lands?

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00:13:04,306 --> 00:13:10,904

The existence of Solomon's sea trade brought strength and wealth to his land.

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00:13:10,904 --> 00:13:17,942

It also brought the most famous woman of the time to him with a sense of need and humility.

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00:13:17,942 --> 00:13:28,099

The Queen of Sheba came from southern Arabia, the wealthiest region of the Semitic world.

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00:13:28,099 --> 00:13:33,537

She brought gold supposedly from her mines, frankincense and myrrh from deserts in her

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00:13:33,537 --> 00:13:42,615

kingdom and spices and other goods derived from her trades in India.

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00:13:42,615 --> 00:13:51,652

Solomon with his Phoenicians obviously disturbed very much the overland route and as they

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00:13:51,652 --> 00:13:56,730

were after the same raw materials and after the same trading partners, the obvious thing

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00:13:56,730 --> 00:14:01,129

to do was to make a common enterprise.

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00:14:01,129 --> 00:14:08,087

And so the lady came up to talk to the king and he was clever enough in this case to say,

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00:14:08,087 --> 00:14:12,886

okay, let's do it together.

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00:14:12,886 --> 00:14:17,724

She had arrived with a great train of camels.

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00:14:17,724 --> 00:14:20,283

The camel had only recently been domesticated.

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00:14:20,963 --> 00:14:29,641

It had opened up the possibilities of trade across the waterless desert.

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00:14:29,641 --> 00:14:33,040

So it seems they concluded their trade treaty.

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00:14:33,040 --> 00:14:38,358

In return, Israel would have provided her with agricultural produce and manufactured

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00:14:38,358 --> 00:14:43,077

products of third countries like Phoenicia.

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00:14:43,077 --> 00:14:46,916

The Queen was certainly impressed by what she had seen.

148

00:14:46,916 --> 00:14:51,994

Thy prosperity exceeded the fame which I heard.

149

00:14:51,994 --> 00:14:56,713

Silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

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00:14:56,713 --> 00:15:00,152

Everything at his court was made of gold.

151

00:15:00,152 --> 00:15:06,230

But where did it all come from?

152

00:15:06,230 --> 00:15:10,828

While the Queen was in Jerusalem, another cargo of gold and precious stones arrived

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00:15:10,828 --> 00:15:13,548

from Solomon's port in the Red Sea.

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00:15:13,548 --> 00:15:19,106

This jar was labeled gold of Ophir.

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00:15:19,106 --> 00:15:26,744

Ophir certainly existed and it has fascinated biblical scholars for centuries.

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00:15:26,744 --> 00:15:27,743

Where was it?

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00:15:27,743 --> 00:15:34,221

Was it in the East, in Africa, even America?

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00:15:34,221 --> 00:15:39,700

Modern Israelis called this new town Ophira because they believed that Solomon's mines

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00:15:39,700 --> 00:15:50,897

are somewhere nearby in the mountains of southern Sinai.

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00:15:50,897 --> 00:15:55,695

The landscape is littered with the debris of recent war.

161

00:15:55,695 --> 00:16:02,613

But there is no trace of Solomon's mine.

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00:16:02,613 --> 00:16:07,572

Merchants traveling north from the Red Sea towards Jerusalem may have left a clue.

163

00:16:08,571 --> 00:16:21,727

En route, they sought shelter from the heat of the day in the shade of a canyon.

164

00:16:21,727 --> 00:16:30,885

As they wild away the hours, they sometimes carved their names on the rocks.

165

00:16:30,885 --> 00:16:35,683

And once someone carved a Phoenician ship.

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00:16:35,683 --> 00:16:40,202

This is a much larger and more sea-worthy vessel than the small inshore craft which

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00:16:40,202 --> 00:16:44,401

plied the Mediterranean coast.

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00:16:44,401 --> 00:16:49,479

These could have been the ships that sailed the Arabian coast in search of gold.

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00:16:49,479 --> 00:16:54,078

From the size and number of amphora jars they carried, we conclude that these ships were

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00:16:54,078 --> 00:17:00,276

large and strong enough to sustain long voyages.

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00:17:00,276 --> 00:17:04,075

The Red Sea is full of coral reefs and sudden winds.

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00:17:04,075 --> 00:17:07,874

It is a graveyard of ships.

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00:17:07,874 --> 00:17:13,232

And even today, the local fishermen cast their nets in the shallows rather than venture upon

174

00:17:13,232 --> 00:17:15,511

the waters.

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00:17:15,511 --> 00:17:21,350

To avoid the monsoons, the ships would have to leave in July and return in December.

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00:17:21,350 --> 00:17:25,149

So exactly where did these ships travel?

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00:17:25,149 --> 00:17:29,507

Where was Ophir?

178

00:17:29,507 --> 00:17:32,426

What actually is hidden in the deserts of Arabia?

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00:17:32,426 --> 00:17:39,904

We have now geological reports mentioning hundreds of mines, gold, silver and copper,

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00:17:39,904 --> 00:17:47,502

along the western side of Arabia, where a lot of ancient remains have been found, traces

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00:17:47,502 --> 00:17:50,421

of metal making.

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00:17:50,421 --> 00:17:54,700

And I think we should consider this as one of the major centers of early metallurgy in

183

00:17:54,700 --> 00:17:58,699

the Near East or in the ancient world which so far had not been recognized.

184

00:17:58,699 --> 00:18:05,656

So with increased knowledge, our ideas change.

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00:18:05,656 --> 00:18:10,735

In the desolate mountains of the Sinai lie the great mines of Timna.

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00:18:10,735 --> 00:18:14,814

For decades they have been called Solomon's Mines.

187

00:18:14,814 --> 00:18:16,693

But are they?

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00:18:16,693 --> 00:18:22,491

The possibility of locating the mines long excited archaeologists.

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00:18:22,491 --> 00:18:24,171

Timna was untouched.

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00:18:24,171 --> 00:18:27,210

All we had to do is to kind of dust it.

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00:18:27,210 --> 00:18:32,648

Very shallow excavation and here you had complete factories standing with all the remains, working

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00:18:32,648 --> 00:18:35,368

tools, the pottery and the furnaces.

193

00:18:35,368 --> 00:18:39,047

So it's a unique site in the world.

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00:18:39,047 --> 00:18:44,165

The earliest mining operations we have are from the 4th millennium BC, the very beginning

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00:18:44,165 --> 00:18:47,084

of copper making, the end of the Stone Age.

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00:18:47,084 --> 00:18:53,682

Then again we have the large workings, thousands of mineshafts, actually a date to the time

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00:18:53,682 --> 00:19:01,120

of the new Kingdom of Egypt, roughly the time of the Exodus.

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00:19:01,120 --> 00:19:05,879

In this small temple, the Egyptian landlords and their Midianite workers worshiped the

199

00:19:05,879 --> 00:19:08,798

goddess Hathor.

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00:19:08,798 --> 00:19:13,956

The artifacts found by Rothenburg were made by Midianites from Arabia, famed for their

201

00:19:13,956 --> 00:19:17,075

skill in metal making.

202

00:19:17,075 --> 00:19:22,914

They were made over a period of about 150 years.

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00:19:22,914 --> 00:19:27,832

Then quite suddenly mining stopped.

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00:19:27,832 --> 00:19:33,430

I think it was abandoned mainly because the energy problem became too complicated.

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00:19:33,430 --> 00:19:35,910

They had chopped down all the trees.

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00:19:35,910 --> 00:19:40,628

They must have carried charcoal from great distances.

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00:19:40,628 --> 00:19:44,827

But we should of course take in consideration that in the middle of the 12th century the

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00:19:44,827 --> 00:19:47,026

Egyptian Empire collapsed.

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00:19:47,026 --> 00:19:51,145

The Egyptians retreated into Egypt, left the Asian provinces.

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00:19:51,145 --> 00:19:59,703

We have not found any remains whatsoever that could be collected to Israel.

211

00:19:59,703 --> 00:20:06,261

There are no traces whatsoever of King Solomon or any other Israelite king in the area.

212

00:20:06,261 --> 00:20:11,699

The mines were mined out already long before and have never been worked since.

213

00:20:11,699 --> 00:20:17,937

And we know from the Bible that the Midianites or the Canites as they were called, the Midianite

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00:20:17,937 --> 00:20:21,056

family groups, were the earliest metallurgists.

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00:20:21,056 --> 00:20:28,014

But we have no traces whatsoever of any metallurgy in Israel, in the sources or in the towns

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00:20:28,014 --> 00:20:30,413

excavated.

217

00:20:30,413 --> 00:20:33,693

In Arabia today's gold is black.

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00:20:33,693 --> 00:20:38,251

The rich oil found there.

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00:20:38,251 --> 00:20:42,930

Perhaps this area was also once the origin of Solomon's gold.

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00:20:48,848 --> 00:20:57,485

Did Solomon ever have his own mines or did he simply trade with people that did?

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00:20:57,485 --> 00:21:04,683

After his death his kingdom fragmented and his ships rotted on the shore.

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00:21:04,683 --> 00:21:10,562

Solomon's trading partnership with the Phoenicians had made him the richest man in the world.

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00:21:10,562 --> 00:21:16,320

The magnificence of his wealth was never to be seen again in Israel.

224

00:21:16,320 --> 00:21:22,838

The people who wrote about it, long after his death, made it a legend in its own right.

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00:21:22,838 --> 00:21:26,957

Where it came from was forgotten.

226

00:21:26,957 --> 00:21:34,954

All that was left was a memory of untarnished glory.

227

00:21:34,954 --> 00:21:46,151

The sun had set on the greatest maritime adventure of the ancient world.

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00:21:46,311 --> 00:21:50,030

They began as simple squabbles but held too long.

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00:21:50,030 --> 00:21:52,389

These are the few that devastated hundreds.

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00:21:52,389 --> 00:21:57,468

They thought it would be a clean operation aided by the element of surprise.

231

00:21:57,468 --> 00:22:00,467

They were dead wrong.

232

00:22:00,467 --> 00:22:04,106

Vendettas, all this week at 9 on the History Channel.