Teacher's notes and answer key

Makeda or Bilqis – Who Was the Queen of Sheba?

Subjects: English · Religious Studies · History | recommended from age 13 (B1) | Video: 8:21 min

Answers B

1. A queen from Sheba travels to King Solomon with a caravan of gold, precious stones and spices, tests him with hard riddles and leaves impressed. She is never given a name.

2. The merchant Tamrin told her about Solomon's wisdom; she wanted to see him and learn from him herself. She gives up sun worship and turns to the God of Israel.

3. The hoopoe tells him about Sheba, a woman ruler with a magnificent throne whose people worship the sun. She consults her council and sends gifts instead of fighting, to test him.

4. Her throne is brought in an instant and disguised ("Is this your throne?" – "It is as though it were the very one."); in the palace she mistakes a glass floor for water.

5. The Ark of the Covenant; the Ethiopian Orthodox Church says it rests in a chapel in Aksum, guarded by a single monk.

Answer C

Correct numbers from top to bottom: 4 – 7 – 1 – 6 – 2 – 8 – 3 – 5

Notes on D and E

D (e.g.): the Red Sea as a bridge, Sabaean trade across the water, a temple with Sabaean features at Yeha (Ethiopia); both shores were closely connected.

E: Makeda – Kebra Nagast (14th century) / the merchant Tamrin tells her about Solomon / son Menelik, the Ark goes to Ethiopia / ancestor of the emperors (until 1974), tabot and the Timkat festival; Rastafari. Bilqis – Quran, chapter 27 (the name comes from later tradition) / the hoopoe gives her away, Sulayman's letter / she sees her mistake and submits to God with Sulayman; the Quran leaves the rest open / model of a wise ruler, the Mahram Bilqis temple near Marib (Yemen).

Content note and age

Recommended from age 13. The Ethiopian version implies that Solomon uses a trick to make Makeda spend the night with him (not shown); the tasks deliberately do not ask about it. The Bible, the Quran and Ethiopian Orthodox tradition are living religious traditions – please treat them with respect.

Sources: 1 Kings 10, Kebra Nagast (14th century), Quran chapter 27; there is no archaeological evidence for the queen.

The narrator's voice and the illustrations in the video are AI-generated; the script follows the established tradition. You are welcome to copy and share this worksheet for classroom use.

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