

## ***The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon***

**Jacopo Robusti, called Il Tintoretto**

Oil on canvas

Venetian, 1518–1594

### **The Story**

The setting of this narrative is the court of Solomon, Israel's wisest and most prosperous king. The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon is recorded in 1 Kings: "Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions. . . . Solomon answered all her questions. . . . Then she said to the king, 'It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. Nevertheless I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. You exceed in wisdom and prosperity the report which I heard'" (1 Kings 10:1, 3, 6–13, NASB).

### **The Picture Book**

Tintoretto creates a pageant-like SETTING to capture the pomp and wealth of this historic meeting:

- Notice the lavish garments—not only of the king and queen, but also of the servants.
- The golden pillars, rich fabrics, and tapestries around the throne are a clear display of Solomon's wealth, but his welcoming gesture insinuates a gentility. Although objects of gold and ivory in the foreground are a reference to the queen's wealth and political stature, her reverent body language reveals her deference to Solomon.
- The expanse of the courtyard and palace is further accentuated through the artist's use of linear perspective. Viewers are drawn into the depth of the painting and on through the arch.