

KING SOLOMON GAINS WISDOM

I Kings 3:1-15

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"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."

I Kings 2:10-12

H. David Nichols
Gethsemane Baptist Church
Adult Sunday school Class

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THE WORSHIP AND PRAYER OF SOLOMON

I Kings 3:1-15

When King David died, he was buried in Jerusalem (Vs. 2:10). However, at that time there were a lot of people in Israel who were not completely loyal to him or his throne. His son, Adonijah tried to steal the throne even before David was dead. Joab, the general of his army and Abiathar, the priest plotted against him trying to crown the ambitious son, Adonijah. Shimei, the overt traitor cursed and mocked David as he was escaping from Absalom's rebellion. Before he died King David gave his son counsel on how to deal with these people. David called Solomon "a wise man." (Vs. 2:9) and encouraged him to be strong and obey the commands of God and in doing so his kingdom would be established. (2:2-4)

I Kings chapter two recounts how Solomon deals with all of these disloyal people. The conclusion of the matter is given in verse 12. *"Then sat Solomon upon the*

throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.”

Solomon was a man of wisdom in his own right. He “was about twenty years of age when he ascended the throne.” (Wycliffe. P. 313) Solomon had grown up with the example of his father, David and the Godly testimony of Nathan, the priest of God. He had learned from them a love for the God of Israel. *“And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.”* (Vs. 3:3) To recognize in the eyes of God the accession of Solomon to the throne of Israel, Solomon called all the people of Israel to Gibeon to a great gathering to worship and sacrifice to the Lord. (II Chron. 1:3) At this time the Temple had not yet been built in Jerusalem. The people had built areas dedicated to the worship of Jehovah that were located in elevated locations. Thinking that a high place would bring them closer to God. Solomon was very eager to obey the admonition of his father, David and express his love and faith in God. (I Kings 2:2-4) “The one thing that was wanting in the place of sacrifice at Gibeon, (viz. the ark of

the covenant with the gracious presence of Jehovah,) was supplied by the Lord in the case of this sacrifice by a direct revelation in a dream, which Solomon received in the night following the sacrifice. There is a connection between the question which God addressed to Solomon in the dream, "*What shall I give thee?*" and the object of the sacrifice, viz. to seek the help of God for his reign." (K.&D. Vol. 3. P. 41.) Because Solomon was already a wise person, (Cp. 2:6 and 9) he answered the question God asked with great wisdom and because of that God gave him great understanding. The question God asked Solomon is challenging to New Testament believers. If God were to ask, "What shall I give you?" how would you answer? The promises of the New Testament are abundant. In most prayer meetings however the average prayer request is to heal this infirmity; provide for that financial need and so forth. Do we desire the godly understanding that God gave Solomon? How often do we seek to grow in grace or spiritual understand? John the Apostle set the example for an appropriate prayer request in

III John 4. *“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”* Of course, there is nothing wrong with praying for physical needs. However, would we be pleased if God gave us physical health that was as vigorous as our spiritual health? God’s question, “What shall I give you?” is challenging.

Solomon answered this question by, first acknowledging that he had been placed in a position of great responsibility. *“O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.”* (Vs 7-8) With this in mind Solomon asks God for an “understanding heart.” (literally “a hearing heart’, a heart inclined to do thy will.” {Wycliffe. P. 313}) Great wisdom comes as we truly understand the mind and circumstances of the people we lead or seek to advise. He wanted to know what his people thought and felt. In understanding he

would be able to “*discern between good and bad*: (Vs. 9) This request pleased God because it proved that Solomon placed the welfare of his people above his own personal needs. God’s reaction was, you have “*asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment.*” (Vs. 11b) God mentioned the things that Solomon could have asked for but did not. He could have asked for long life, or riches, or victory over his enemies. Because he put God’s people first, God gave him wisdom and all these things as well. With these things Solomon would be a better King. With long life he could rule his people justly for generations. With riches he could provide for the nation and give them prosperous lives. Victory over his enemies meant that the people would live in peace and prosperity. The result is that Solomon was the greatest king in all of history because he knew the great blessing of God. He was reminded in verse 14 that these blessings were contingent upon his obedience to the leading of God just as his father, David had said. (Vs. 2:2-4) Solomon was so moved that he returned to Jerusalem and “*stood before the ark of the covenant of*

the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.” (Vs. 15) His people knew that he credited the Lord God Jehovah as the source of his wisdom and blessing. God made Solomon the wisest King in all history. He promised him, “so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.” (Vs. 12b)

K&D = Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes.
C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. Vol. III. William B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1982.

Wycliffe = The Wycliffe Bible Commentary. By Charles F.
Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison. Moody Press, Chicago, Il. 1962.

