

# THE WISDOM OF GOD IN KING SOLOMON

I Kings 3:16-28

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*“And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.”*

I Kings 3: 28

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## THE WISDOM OF KING SOLOMON

It had been a wonderful time of worship and sacrifice that day in Gibeon. (I Kings 3:4) Thousands of sacrifices had been offered to the Lord and the Father was pleased. He came to Solomon in a dream that night to offer him special wisdom and understanding. Solomon loved the Lord God, Jehovah. He had seen the blessing of God on his father David's kingdom. The young king strove to obey the words of David when he said, *"And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:"* (2:3) Because of his devotion God promised to bless Solomon with wisdom and an understanding heart. (3:11-12) As if in an effort to demonstrate that wisdom, the writer of Kings includes in his history a profound example of the wisdom that Solomon possessed. "As a proof that the Lord had bestowed upon Solomon unusual

judicial wisdom, there is appended a decision of his in a very difficult case, in which Solomon had shown extraordinary intelligence.” (K & D. V. 3 P. 43) The case before Solomon had no doubt stumped all the judges that had heard the case before it came before the throne of the king. It must have been heard by a series of judges before it came to Solomon. They would have rendered a verdict or referred the case to higher or more senior judges. This is similar to the structure that Moses’ father-in-law advised Moses to implement in Exodus. (Exodus 18:14-26) Moses appointed judges and *“And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.”* (Exodus 18:26) These two women had brought their dispute through the system with no satisfaction and have now arrived at the highest, wisest, court in the land, the throne of Solomon.

Notice, first of all, that these women are not women of good character. They were “two harlots”. They are referred to in the story only as “two women”, “one woman” and “the other woman”. They conducted

their business in a house they shared. The result of this business was the birth of two babies. While these children were born of fornication, they were innocent children with no guilt of their own beyond the fallen sinful nature all men have from the fall of Adam and Eve. (Romans 5:12)

One of the new born children was accidentally smothered by his sleeping mother. When this mother discovered the tragedy, instead of mourning her son, she switched the little body with the other child. She was hoping that the other mother would not notice that the baby was not hers. Thus, the dispute began. They both accused the other of the switch.

Solomon, on listing carefully to the two women's story, recounts, "*The one saith, this is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.*" (Vs. 23) He then asks for a sword to be brought and commands that the living baby be divided into two parts. Each woman was to be given a part. He would have never have allowed the child to be killed. He was watching the reaction of each woman to see how they

responded to the thought of the baby's death. When he saw one of the women cry out in defense of the child, he knew that she was the actual mother. He then stops the sword and said, *"Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof."* (Vs. 27) Truly, only a cold, callous heart would allow an innocent baby to be killed. The actual mother cried out to stop the slaying of the child because, *"her bowels yearned upon her son."* (Vs 26) "The mother whose maternal instincts were stirred within her, quickly voiced vehement protest." (Wycliffe. P. 314) She would rather see the child given to the other woman rather than see it killed. The other woman, not caring for the welfare of the child, said, *"Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."* (Vs. 26) She felt no sympathy for the helpless little one. How very hard must a person's heart be to give consent to the death of a little child!

The court, that day, saw the wisdom of their king. *"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."* (Vs. 28) The result was they learned that

they could trust the godly wisdom of their king.

In conclusion, there are four points to be made from this story.

- a) A mother knows her child. God puts in the heart of the mother a recognition of her child. In like manner our heavenly Father knows His children. (Isaiah 49:15-16)
- b) A real Mother would rather give the child up than to see it killed. This is a natural protective reaction placed in the mother by God. (Isa 66:13)
- c) God gave Solomon an understanding heart. He understood the love of a mother for her child, and felt sure that the real mother would never allow her son to be killed.
- d) There is no harder heart than a heart that would allow the taking of a child's life. God knew that child before his birth. (Psalm 139:13-16) Every child is special and precious.

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.