

1 KINGS 3:5-14 -- SOLOMON'S GREAT PRAYER FOR WISDOM!!

1Ki 3:5-14 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" [6] And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. [7] Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. [8] And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. [9] Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" [10] The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. [11] Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, [12] behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. [13] And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. [14] So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

The Biblical Setting:

- In chapter two, we have David giving his final instructions to Solomon; the death of David; Solomon executing Adonijah, the half-brother of Solomon who had wrongfully tried to ascend to the throne as king; Abiathar exiled; Joab executed and Shimei executed.
- Chapter three begins somewhat doubtfully. We see Solomon's affinity with Pharaoh and the two problems in verses two and three: *1Ki 3:2 Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. 1Ki 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.*
- Yet there were **hopeful features in Solomon's love for God, and the devotion and obedience by which it was proved**. It remained, however, to be seen, **which of these influences was to triumph in the outworking of his character**. That is always the most urgent, question in life. With too many the early dew and morning cloud pass away, leaving no trace, *Hos 6:4*.
- We have here an account of a gracious visit which God paid to Solomon, and the communion he had with God in it, which put **a greater honor upon Solomon than all the wealth and power** of his kingdom did.

1Ki 3:5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

- The place. It was in Gibeon; that was the great high place, and should have been the only one, because there the tabernacle and the brazen altar were, *2Ch 1:3*. There Solomon offered his great sacrifices, and there God owned him more than in any other of the high places.
- The time. It was **by night, the night after he had offered that generous sacrifice**, *1Ki 3:4*. The **more we abound in God's work the more comfort we may expect in Him**; if the day has been busy for him, the night will be easy in him. Silence and retirement befriend our communion with God. **His kindest visits are often in the night**, *Psa 17:3*.
- The manner. It was in a dream, when he was asleep, his senses locked up, that God's access to his mind might be the more free and immediate. In this way God used to speak to the prophets (*Num 12:6*) and to private persons, for their own benefit, *Job 33:15, Job 33:16*.

- Solomon saw the glory of God shine about him, and heard a voice saying, Ask what I shall give thee. Not that God was indebted to him for his sacrifices, but thus He would testify His acceptance of them, and signify to him what great mercy He had in store for him, if he were not wanting to himself. Thus he would try his inclinations and put an honor upon the prayer of faith. God, in like manner, condescends to us, and puts us in the ready way to be happy by assuring us that we shall have what we will for the asking, Joh 16:23; 1Jo 5:14. What would we more? *Ask, and it shall be given you.*

1Ki 3:6 And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

- The pious request Solomon hereupon made to God. He readily laid hold of this offer. Why do we neglect the like offer made to us, like Ahaz, who said, *I will not ask?* Isa 7:12. Solomon prayed in his sleep, God's grace assisting him; yet it was a lively prayer. What we are most in care about, and which makes the greatest impression upon us when we are awake, commonly affects us when we are asleep; and by our dreams, sometimes, we may know what our hearts are upon and how our pulse beats. Solomon's making such an intelligent choice as this when he was asleep, and the powers of reason were least active, showed that it came purely from the grace of God, which wrought in him these gracious desires.
- Now, in this prayer, Solomon acknowledges God's great goodness to his father David, 1Ki 3:6. He speaks honorably of his father's humility, that he had *walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You*, drawing a veil over his faults. But he speaks more honorably of God's goodness to his father, the mercy he had shown to him while he lived, in giving him to be sincerely religious and then recompensing his sincerity and the great kindness he had kept for him, to be bestowed on the family when he was gone, in *giving him a son to sit on his throne*. Children should give God thanks for his mercies to their parents, for the sure mercies of David. God's favors are doubly sweet when we observe them transmitted to us through the hands of those that have gone before us.

1Ki 3:7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 1Ki 3:8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted.

- He owns his own insufficiency for the discharge of that great trust to which he is called, 1Ki 3:7, 1Ki 3:8. And here is a double plea to enforce his petition for wisdom:
- That his place required it, as he was successor to David ("*You have made Your servant king instead of my father David*," who was a very wise and good man: Lord, give me wisdom, that I may keep up what he wrought, and carry on what he began") and as he was ruler over Israel: "Lord, give me wisdom to rule well; for they are a numerous people, that will not be managed without much care, and they are thy people, whom thou hast chosen, and therefore to be ruled for thee, and the more wisely they are ruled the more glory You will have from them."
- That he wanted it. As one that had a humble sense of his own deficiency, he pleads, "*Lord, I am but a little child* (so he calls himself, a child in understanding, though his father called him *a wise man*, 1Ki 2:9); *I know not how to go out or come in* as I should, nor to do so much as the common daily business of the government, much less what to do in a critical juncture." Those who are employed in public stations ought to be very sensible of the weight and importance of their work and their own insufficiency for it, and then they are qualified for receiving divine instruction. Paul's question (*Who is sufficient for these things?*) is much like Solomon's here, *Who is able to judge this thy so great a people?* 1Ki 3:9.

1Ki 3:9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

- He begs of God to give him wisdom (1Ki 3:9); *Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart*. He calls himself Your servant, pleased with that relation to God (Psa 116:16) and pleading it with Him: "I am devoted to You, and employed for You; give me that which is requisite to the services in which I am

employed.” Thus his good father prayed, and thus he pleaded. Psa 119:125, I am thy servant, give me understanding. An understanding heart is God's gift, Pro 2:6. We must pray for it (Jam 1:5), and pray for it with application to our particular calling and the various occasions we have for it; as Solomon, *Give me an understanding, not to please my own curiosity with, or puzzle my neighbors, but to judge Your people.* That is the best knowledge which will be serviceable to us in doing our duty; and such that knowledge is which enables us to discern between good and bad, right and wrong, sin and duty, truth and falsehood, so as not to be imposed upon by false colors in judging either of others' actions or of our own.

1Ki 3:10 The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. 1Ki 3:11 Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,

- The favorable answer God gave to his request. It was a pleasing prayer (1Ki 3:10): *The speech pleased the Lord.* God is well pleased with His own work in his people, the desires of His own desires, the prayers of His Spirit's convicting. By this choice Solomon made it appear that he desired to be good more than great, and to serve God's honor more than to advance his own. Those are accepted of God who prefer spiritual blessings to temporal, and are more solicitous to be found in the way of their duty than in the way to preferment.
- But that was not all; it was a prevailing prayer, and prevailed for more than he asked.

1Ki 3:12 behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.

- God gave him wisdom, 1Ki 3:12. He fitted him for all that great work to which he had called him, gave him such a right understanding of the law which he was to judge by, and the cases he was to judge of, that he was unequalled for a clear head, a solid judgment, and a piercing eye. Such an insight, and such a foresight, never was prince so blessed with.

1Ki 3:13 And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.

- He gave him riches and honor over and above into the bargain (1Ki 3:13), and it was promised that in these he should as much exceed his predecessors, his successors, and all his neighbors, as in wisdom. These also are God's gift, and, as far as is good for them, are promised to all that *seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, Mat 6:33.* Let young people learn to prefer grace to gold in all that they choose, because *godliness has the promise of the life that now is, but the life that now is has not the promise of godliness.* How completely blessed was Solomon, that had both wisdom and wealth! He that has wealth and power without wisdom and grace is in danger of doing hurt with them; he that has wisdom and grace without wealth and power is not capable of doing so much good with them as he that has both. Wisdom is good, is so much the better, with an inheritance, Ecc 7:11.

1Ki 3:14 So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

- But, if we make sure of wisdom and grace, these will either bring outward prosperity with them or sweeten the want of it. God promised Solomon riches and honor absolutely, but long life upon condition (1Ki 3:14). *If you walk in My ways, as David did, then I will lengthen thy days.* – David gave Solomon those very instructions in 1 Kings 2:3. He failed in the condition; and therefore, though he had riches and honor, he did not live so long to enjoy them as in the course of nature he might have done. Length of days is wisdom's right-hand blessing, typical of eternal life; but it is in her left hand that riches and honor are, Pro 3:16.
- Note first, the way to obtain spiritual blessings is to be importunate for them, to wrestle with God in prayer for them, as Solomon did for wisdom, asking that only, as the *one thing needful.*
- Second that the way to obtain temporal blessings is to be indifferent to them and to refer ourselves to God concerning them. Solomon had wisdom given him because he did ask it and wealth because he did not ask it.

SUMMARY - 1Kings 3:5-15

- How much do you love the Lord? Are there any “excepts” in your life?
- Solomon worshipped, praised the Lord and offered many sacrifices.
- Lord appeared by night in a dream. – Ask, What shall I give you? Do you ask?
- Four (4) “You have (vs. 6-8) –standing on the promises of God
- Notice the humility – I am a little child. *1 Chron. 22:6-18* account of this prayer.
- Give an understanding heart to judge your people – to discern between good and evil
- His insufficiency – Who is able to judge?
- God is pleased! Solomon has asked for a wise and understanding (hearing) heart.
- Solomon’s requests were not selfish! He has not asked for long life or for personal riches or for life of his enemies.
- *What do you ask for? Do you prefer grace to gold?
- Granting of long life was conditional –“If you walk in My ways”
- Goes to Jerusalem and worships! How thankful are you? Even if promises are not yet fully performed

THE LOVE OF GOD – Frederick Lehman- The Daae Family Singers

1. *The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin.*
 - Refrain:
*Oh, love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—The saints’ and angels’ song.*
2. *When hoary time shall pass away, And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men who here refuse to pray, On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God’s love so sure, shall still endure, All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam’s race— The saints’ and angels’ song.*
3. *Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Though stretched from sky to sky.*