

# 1 Kings 3 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

1 Kings 3:1  
1 Kings 3:2  
1 Kings 3:3  
1 Kings 3:4  
1 Kings 3:5  
1 Kings 3:6  
1 Kings 3:7  
1 Kings 3:8  
1 Kings 3:9  
1 Kings 3:10  
1 Kings 3:11  
1 Kings 3:12  
1 Kings 3:13  
1 Kings 3:14  
1 Kings 3:15  
1 Kings 3:16  
1 Kings 3:17  
1 Kings 3:18  
1 Kings 3:19  
1 Kings 3:20  
1 Kings 3:21  
1 Kings 3:22  
1 Kings 3:23  
1 Kings 3:24  
1 Kings 3:25  
1 Kings 3:26  
1 Kings 3:27  
1 Kings 3:28

Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[1 Kings Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

## THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

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**1 Kings 3:1** Then Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem.

- **Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt;** 2Ch 18:1 Ezr 9:14
- and took: 1Ki 7:8 9:24 1Ki 11:1
- the city: 2Sa 5:7 1Ch 11:7
- his own: 1Ki 7:1-12
- the house: 1Ki 6:1-38 7:13-15 2Ch 2:1-4:22 Ezr 5:11

- the wall: 1Ki 9:15-19

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 16:12 It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, For **a throne is established on righteousness.**

Nehemiah 13:26 "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? (FOREIGN WIVES - Neh 13:23-25) Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin.

1 Kings 2:46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he went out and fell upon him so that he died. Thus **the kingdom was established in the hands of Solomon**

Exodus 34:13-16+ "But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim 14 –for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God– 15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.

Deuteronomy 7:3-4+ "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them (CANAANITES Dt 7:1-2); you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. 4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

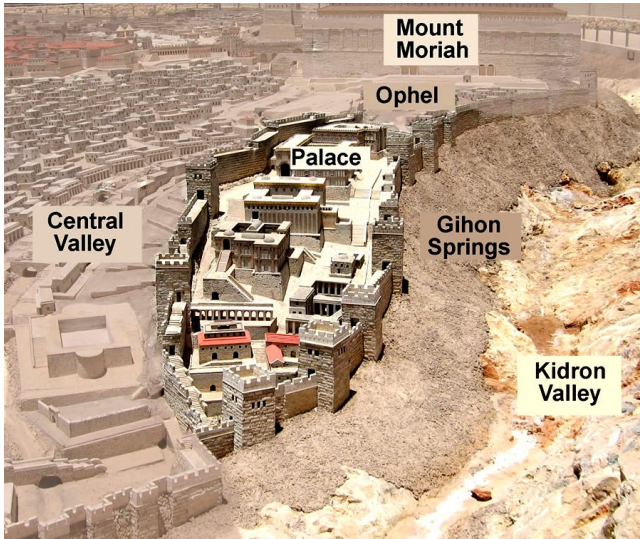
Deuteronomy 17:14+ "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses (GOD CHOOSE SAUL, THEN DAVID AND THEN SOLOMON), one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman. 16 "Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' 17 **"Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away;** nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. 18 "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. 19 "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.

2 Chronicles 1:1-13 Now Solomon the son of David established himself securely over his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and exalted him greatly. 2 Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds and to the judges and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' households. 3 Then Solomon and all the assembly with him went to the high place which was at Gibeon, for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. 4 However, David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place he had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. 5 Now the bronze altar, which Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of the LORD, and Solomon and the assembly sought it out. 6 Solomon went up there before the LORD to the bronze altar which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. 7 In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you." 8 Solomon said to God, "You have dealt with my father David with great lovingkindness, and have made me king in his place. 9 "Now, O LORD God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?" 11 God said to Solomon, "Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you." 13 So Solomon went from the high place which was at Gibeon, from the tent of meeting, to Jerusalem, and he reigned over Israel.

1 Kings 11:1+ Now King Solomon **loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh:** Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

2 Corinthians 6:14-15+ **Do not be bound together** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) with unbelievers; for (TERM OF EXPLANATION - 4 REASONS GIVEN!) what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

NORTH



WEST  
Ancient City of David (Replica)

EAST

## THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED BUT WITH EARLY WARNING SIGNS

**Then** - This is one of the more important "**then's**" (see [then](#)) in this book (there are 151 "**then's**" in 1 Kings). Why do I say that? First, note the context. Here he was with the "kingdom established" (1Ki 2:46) in his hands. What else could a person want? Well, for one thing once you get to the top of the hill in the little game called "king of the hill" your main object is to stay on top by whatever means necessary. So here we find Solomon "on top" and forming a politically expedient alliance with Egypt! This is man's way, not God's way. Why didn't he simply focus on cleaning out the high places (1Ki 3:2). These were enemy strongholds in God's land and would come back to wreak havoc on the children of Israel (1Ki 11:1ff). God had warned Israel over and over...clean out the idolatry...no compromise...no mercy...be radical and exterminate this vermin from "the Land". But they were apathetic and complacent and unfortunately it seems quite comfortable with the status quo. The book of Judges set the pattern for Israel with the repeated phrase "did not drive out..." the pagans and their idolatry (Jdg 1:19, 21, 29, 30, 31, 33+). And as a result of Solomon's failure to extirpate the evil spiritual strongholds, they persisted in the land in the form of these high places. But now was the golden moment to be seized. Solomon could have led the people in a radical destruction of the high places but instead we see this chapter begin "**then Solomon formed a marriage alliance...**"

**THOUGHT** - The little (or big) word "compromise" plays out in so many lives, just as it would prove to do in the case of Solomon's life. Holy people cannot compromise with unholy people and think there will be no consequences! Do not be deceived beloved. If you are compromising in some area of your life, you can be assured you too will reap consequences (Gal 6:7-8+, Hosea 8:7). Mark it down as axiomatic - **COMPROMISE ALWAYS YIELDS COSTLY CONSEQUENCES!**

Recall David's charge to Solomon was crystal clear in 1Ki 2:3-4 "Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, 4 so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

**Solomon formed a marriage alliance** ([chathan/hathan](#)) **with Pharaoh king of Egypt** (cp Dt 7:3 although this refers to intermarriage with Canaanites): The marrying of a princess of one royal house to someone in a foreign royal family customarily sealed a political alliance in the ancient Near East. (See note on 2Sa 5:13-15+) However, the giving of Pharaoh's daughter to a foreign king is virtually without precedent (but see 1Ch 4:18). The fact that the king of Egypt did so testifies to his respect for Solomon but also to the decline of Egyptian power for heretofore the Pharaohs forbade foreign marriages. This Pharaoh saw it to his

political advantage to ally with the stronger nation Israel. And clearly Solomon saw it was to his political advantage and so he chose to conform to the pattern of the world. The tragedy is that Solomon was forming an unholy alliance with Egypt, the very nation from which God had liberated the nation, the nation that was "the antithesis of everything Israelite!" (Walter Brueggemann)!

**THOUGHT** - This alliance suggests that early on Solomon was seduced by power. And this by the man who wrote Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." This just proves the point that head knowledge and/or theological knowledge does not necessarily produce heart (transforming) knowledge, the heart of course being the controlling influence in one's life. Sadly, two of the men I disciples in very in depth Bible study and were both relatively mature in the faith, failed to let their head knowledge control their heart and both ended up divorcing their wives after pursuing sexual dalliances! This was so sad and the consequences in both cases were so severe! Beloved reader the message is clear "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." (Pr 4:23+)

*"Unequal matches of the sons of God with the daughters of men have often been of pernicious consequence."*

-- Matthew Henry

**And took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David:** Marriage with an Egyptian princess was not a transgression of the law, as it was only marriages with Canaanite women that were expressly prohibited (Ex 34:13-16; Dt 7:3-4), whereas it was allowable to marry even foreign women taken in war (Dt 21:10ff.). At the same time, it was only when the foreign wives renounced idolatry and confessed their faith in Jehovah, that such marriages were in accordance with the spirit of the law. There is no evidence that Pharaoh's daughter expressed belief in the one true God, so on that grounds this marriage would have been condemned. Later Solomon built a palace for Pharaoh's daughter (1Ki 7:8; 9:24; 2Chr 8:11)

It is interesting to note that Pharaoh gave Gezer as dowry to his daughter. Gezer lay on the route between the seaport of Joppa and Jerusalem and provided for an unhindered trade route through the city.

Note that the **city of David** (2Sa 5:7; 1Ki 2:10) refers in this context to the fortress of Zion in Jerusalem and not to Bethlehem of David's hometown (i.e., 1Sa 16:1), but here it refers to Jerusalem. Solomon extended the city to the north, where he also built the temple. See related topics [SPECIAL TOPIC: MORIAH, SALEM, JEBUS, ZION, JERUSALEM](#) and "[Why did God allow Solomon to have 1,000 wives and concubines?](#)"

**Patterson** adds "That such a marriage came about gives some indication of the importance of the kingdom Solomon inherited from his father as well as the decline of Egyptian power at this time. Formerly Egyptian Pharaohs consistently refused to allow their daughters to marry even the most important and powerful foreign kings. In this instance it appears that Pharaoh felt it to be advantageous to ally himself with Solomon, giving him not only his daughter but also Gezer as a wedding gift. This would give him clear trade routes through Palestine. Solomon, on the other hand, could by this means secure his southern border. The rendering "made an alliance with Pharaoh" reflects accurately the literal Hebrew: "became Pharaoh's son-in-law," which stresses the relationship between father-in-law and bridegroom rather than that between the bride and the bridegroom. This was a rather common practice as a means of cementing and maintaining international agreements and securing a nation's borders....Pharaoh's daughter was not housed in David's palace. She was not to live in David's palace "because the places the ark of the LORD has entered are holy." (Borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 42](#))

**Eugene Merrill** adds that regarding the marriage alliance indicating Solomon's power - "That this is the case is clear from his willingness to provide his own daughter as a wife for Solomon, a concession almost without parallel in Egyptian history since it was a candid admission to the world of Egypt's weakness and conciliation. Normally Egyptian kings took foreign princesses but did not give up their own daughters to foreign kings." (Borrow [Kingdom of priests : a history of Old Testament Israel page 292](#))

**Edersheim** adds "Such a union was not forbidden by the law [which only forbade alliance with the Canaanites (Exod 34:16; Deut 7:3)], nor was the daughter of Pharaoh apparently implicated in the charge brought against Solomon's other foreign wives of having led him into idolatry (1 Kings 11:1-7). In fact, according to Jewish tradition, the daughter of Pharaoh actually became a Jewish proselyte. Still, Solomon seems to have felt the incongruity of bringing her into the palace of David, within the bounds of which "the Ark of the Lord" appears to have been located (2 Chron 8:11), and she occupied a temporary abode "in the city of David," until the new palace of Solomon was ready for her reception." ([Quoted by Paul Apple](#))

**Until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD(Jehovah) and the wall around Jerusalem:** Both Solomon's palace and the temple are called a **house**. Just as Solomon occupied the palace, the Lord was considered uniquely present with His people in the temple. This verse sounds innocent enough, but the order is suggestive -- **finished...his own house and the house of the LORD**. The fact is that Solomon spent more time and resources building his own domicile than he did on the

Temple he built for Jehovah! (read 1 Kings 6 and compare it with 1 Kings 7).

**Rod Mattoon** - Solomon makes an alliance with Egypt and seals it by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh. This was a very significant marriage. The Amarna Tablets of the 18th Egyptian Dynasty stated that no daughter of Pharaoh was to be married to a foreigner. By the 21st Egyptian Dynasty, Egypt was very weak and saw an advantage to making an alliance with Israel. Solomon treated her royally indeed. He built her a palace (1Ki 7:8), and her dowry was the city of Gezer (1Ki 9:16). The unfortunate truth of this marriage was it set a pattern for Solomon which led to his ruin. Solomon married heathen wives to form alliances with other nations. These women turned his heart from the Lord to idolatry. He had hundreds of concubines and wives....The Bible gives us a New Testament principle for today that is related to this incident. Christians are not to date or marry unsaved people lest they turn their heart from the Lord. You are not to use dating or marriage as a mission project to get someone saved. Wait until they are born again first before you consider courting or marrying them. (see 2Co 6:14-15+) ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

**Tony Merida** applies this passage to our lives today - Solomon was living out the values of his culture, but he was violating God's word. A prevalent example of this today is cohabitation. When people talk about cohabitation, they have many reasons couples should live together. They say things like, "You should test drive the car before you buy it." "It's economical." "You need to see if you're compatible." The problem is it's not God's plan for marriage. Repeatedly we come back to this fundamental issue: Under whose authority are you living? What are you allowing to shape you? Culture? Feelings? Or Scripture? The writer of Proverbs says, "The one who trusts in himself is a fool, but one who walks in wisdom will be safe" (Prov 28:26). Don't trust in your own mind or the minds of others, but look to God's Word for wisdom, and you will experience freedom and fulfillment. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings](#))

**William Sanford LaSor**: Solomon's reign can be evaluated politically and spiritually. Politically, it is splendid. Spiritually, it deteriorates into idolatry. For some strange reason, Christian literature has idealized Solomon so that he hardly resembles the scriptural portrait. ([Quoted by Paul Apple](#))

**Guzik** makes an interesting observation - This was not Solomon's first marriage. 1 Kings 14:21 tells us that his son Rehoboam came to the throne when he was 41 years old, and 1 Kings 11:42 tells us that Solomon reigned 40 years. This means that Rehoboam was born to his mother – a wife of Solomon named Naamah the Amomitess – before he came to the throne and before he married this daughter of Pharaoh....2 Samuel 3:3 tells us that David married the daughter of a foreign king: Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. Marrying a foreign woman was not against the Law of Moses – if she became a convert to the God of Israel. What did not ruin David did ruin Solomon.

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**Formed a marriage** ([02859](#)) (chathan/hathan) means to become related by marriage and can refer to the entire marriage process (Ge 34:9, Dt 7:3, Josh 23:12), becoming a son-in-law (1Ki 3:1) and/or forming a political alliance (2Chr 18:1).

**Feinberg** on the verb form **chathan/hatan** - The denominative verb occurs only as a Hithpael "make oneself a daughter's husband," "become somebody's son-in-law." (KJV, ASV, and RSV render alike in Joshua 23:12, "make marriages.") Joshua, in his final address to Israel, explicitly warned them against contracting marriages with the native Canaanites lest the latter become a snare to the people of God (Joshua 23:12-13). Once Solomon was established on the throne of Israel, he began the well-known practice of contracting marriages for political purposes (1 Kings 3:1). The nation had been admonished on this very score with regard to the nations already resident in the land of promise (Deut. 7:3). The questionable value of contracted marriages to settle problems between peoples had already been witnessed in the case of the sons of Jacob and Shechem the Hivite, who had violated the sanctity of Jacob's household. Saul the king enticed David to become his son-in-law to satisfy his inordinate jealousy (1 Samuel 18:26-27). Examples of the relationship of sons-in-law to a father-in-law are seen in the history of Jacob (Genesis 29-31) and Moses (Exodus 2:20-22; Exodus 4:18).

THE RELATED NOUN - **hātān**. Daughter's husband, bridegroom. The first designation shows the relationship to the bride's father; the second, to the bride. (KJV, ASV, and RSV translate alike.) Some twenty references to the noun are found in the OT. The root appears in Ugaritic as noun and verb.

Married life was the normal state among the Hebrews. The family was the basic social unit. Marriage had important family and tribal consequences. If a woman proved unsatisfactory to her husband, she would return to her father's house, with an aftermath of strained relations between the families (Judges 14:20; 1 Samuel 18:19). The natural procedure, then, was for the families involved to contract the conditions for the union. This did not rule out automatically the consent of the couple (Genesis 24:8), and love matches were possible also (Genesis 29:20; Genesis 34:3; Judges 14:1; 1 Samuel 18:20). The husband was his bride's master (Isaiah 62:4), but this was not an absolute norm (Genesis 21:10ff.). When the husband was incorporated into the tribe of his wife, the children were considered as belonging to her tribe or family (cf Jacob and Laban, Genesis 31:31, 43; Moses and Jethro, Exodus 2:21; Exodus 4:18).



Betrothal among the ancient Israelites was a binding agreement, considered a part of marriage (Genesis 24:58, 60). Dowry was paid to the parents of the bride, and this was the central element in the betrothal. In Jacob's case it took the form of a stipulated number of years of service; for David it involved a specific task for Saul (1 Samuel 18:25). The betrothal consisted of a settlement of the terms of the marriage in the presence of witnesses. The union could take place some months or even years after the betrothal. Unfaithfulness of a betrothed couple was considered adultery (Deut. 22:23, see also Matthew 1:19).

At the time of the marriage the wedding procession was the first part of the ceremonies (Psalm 45:15). The friends of the bridegroom (John 3:29) went, as a rule by night, to take the bride and her party to the groom's home (Matthew 9:15), an event marked by much joy (Jeremiah 7:34). The marriage supper took place in the home of the groom, a feast as elaborate as means permitted. No formal religious ceremony was part of the marriage ceremony, unlike our custom. The union was consummated in the bridal chamber or tent (Genesis 24:67).

The biblical basis for marriage is in Genesis 2:18, 24. It is to be monogamous (Genesis 2:24). Polygamy was common (Judges 8:30; 2 Samuel 5:13), but the assumption underlying references in Psalm 128; Proverbs 12:4; Proverbs 31:10-31 is monogamy. The prophets used marriage as a figure of God's love for Israel (Isaiah 61:10; Isaiah 62:5; Hosea 2:21-22; Song). Marriages which involved close relations (but not first cousins) were forbidden (Leviticus 18, 20). Children were a blessing and barrenness a misfortune (Psalm 127:3-5). Little is known about the marriage ceremony. The act is referred to simply as "taking a wife" (Exodus 2:1). Some type of feast as a celebration took place (Genesis 29:22). Processions for the bride and groom were a chief part of the celebrations.

Bibliography: Burrows, M., The Basis of Israelite Marriage, American Oriental Society, 1938. Epstein, L. M., Marriage Laws in the Bible and the Talmud, Harvard University Press, 1942. Goodman, P. & H., The Jewish Marriage Anthology, Jewish Publishing Co., 1965. Kahana, K., The Theory of Marriage in Jewish Law, Brill, 1966. Neufeld, E., Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws, Longmans, 1944. (See online [TWOT page 334](#))

Gilbrant - This verb **chathan/hatan** refers to taking a wife with special emphasis on the fact that the groom is linking himself to his wife's family. Not only is he gaining a wife, he is also gaining a father-in-law, a new authoritative figure. The word is used in the OT only the Hithpael stem, for reflexive action. Sometimes it simply means "to become a son-in-law." It is found particularly in reference to Israelites intermarrying with the people of Canaan, one of their besetting national sins. God forbade it (Deut. 7:3), and Joshua warned against it (Josh. 23:12), but Israel did it anyway. In fact, such forbidden marriages were still a problem among the Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 9:14). The word is also used for David's marriage to Michal, which made him son-in-law to King Saul (1 Sam. 18:21ff, 26f). Such a marriage would entail a serious status shift for David, as he would become part of the royal lineage. David's prestige caused Saul to want David to join himself to the royal household, rather than be a rival. A second sense is the more formal, **"to form a marriage alliance"** with someone. **The OT gives only negative examples of this meaning.** Shechem proposed marriage to Jacob's daughter, Dinah, as a way of building closer relationships between his people and the Israelites (Gen. 34:9). Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh for political reasons (1 Ki. 3:1), and Jehoshaphat allied himself with king Ahab through marriage (2 Chr. 18:1). The Qal participle is used as a noun, referring to a relative on the wife's side of the family, usually the father-in-law (Deut. 27:23 being the only biblical example of "mother-in-law." Most OT references use it as a title for Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses (Exo. 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-27). Chāthan is also used in Judg. 4:11 as part of the family line of Jael, slayer of Sisera (cf. vv. 17-21). It can also be used to describe the father of a concubine, thus broadening beyond a formal marriage contract (Jdg. 19:4, 7, 9). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

CHATHAN/HATHAN - 11V - allied himself by marriage(1), become the son-in-law(4), formed a marriage alliance(1), intermarry(4), marriage alliance(1), son-in-law(1). Gen. 34:9; Deut. 7:3; Jos. 23:12; 1 Sam. 18:21; 1 Sam. 18:22; 1 Sam. 18:23; 1 Sam. 18:26; 1 Sam. 18:27; 1 Ki. 3:1; 2 Chr. 18:1; Ezr. 9:14

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## Tony Merida's Outline - Solomon's Wisdom 1 KINGS 3:1–5:18 - Exalting Jesus in 1-2 Kings

Main Idea: The new king, Solomon, attained and used God-given wisdom.

- I. Understanding Wisdom
- II. The Wisdom of Solomon
  - A. Early warning signs (3:1–4)

- B. Seek wisdom (3:5–15).
- C. Use wisdom (3:16–4:20).
- D. Spread wisdom (4:21–5:18).

### III. Someone Greater than Solomon Is Here.

**1 Kings 3:2 The people were still sacrificing on the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days.**

KJV 1 Kings 3:2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

BGT 1 Kings 3:2 πλ ν λα ς σαν θυμι ντες π το ς ψηλο ς τι ο κ κοδομ θη ο κος τ ν ματι κυρ ου ως ν ν

LXE 1 Kings 3:2 **Nevertheless** the people burnt incense on the high places, because a house had not yet been built to the Lord.

NET 1 Kings 3:2 Now the people were offering sacrifices at the high places, because in those days a temple had not yet been built to honor the LORD.

CSB 1 Kings 3:2 **However**, the people were sacrificing on the high places, because until that time a temple for the LORD's name had not been built.

ESV 1 Kings 3:2 The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.

NIV 1 Kings 3:2 The people, **however**, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD.

NLT 1 Kings 3:2 At that time the people of Israel sacrificed their offerings at local places of worship, for a temple honoring the name of the LORD had not yet been built.

NRS 1 Kings 3:2 The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.

NJB 1 Kings 3:2 The people, **however**, were still sacrificing on the high places, because at that time a dwelling-place for the name of Yahweh had not yet been built.

NAB 1 Kings 3:2 **However**, the people were sacrificing on the high places, for up to that time no temple had been built to the name of the LORD.

YLT 1 Kings 3:2 Only, the people are sacrificing in high places, for there hath not been built a house for the name of Jehovah till those days.

GWN 1 Kings 3:2 The people were still sacrificing at other worship sites because a temple for the name of the LORD had not yet been built.

BBE 1 Kings 3:2 **But** all this time the people were making their offerings in the high places, because no house had been put up to the name of the Lord till those days.

RSV 1 Kings 3:2 The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.

NKJ 1 Kings 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.

ASV 1 Kings 3:2 **Only** the people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of Jehovah until those days.

DBY 1 Kings 3:2 **Only**, the people sacrificed on the high places; for there was no house built to the name of Jehovah, until those days.

- **Only the people:** . 1Ki 22:43 Lev 17:3-6 26:30 De 12:2-5 2Ch 33:17
- was no: 1Ki 5:3 1Ch 17:4-6 28:3-6 Ac 7:47-49

## Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:27,30 (WARNING TO ISRAEL FOR HER DISOBEDIENCE) Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me....30 **I then will destroy your high places**, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you.

Numbers 33:52+ (GOD'S COMMAND TO ISRAEL TO DESTROY HIGH PLACES WHEN THEY ENTERED PROMISED LAND) then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and **demolish all their high places**; (THERE IS NO RECORD IN JOSHUA OR JUDGES THAT ISRAEL DEFINITELY DESTROYED THE HIGH PLACES).

Judges 2:2+ and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land;**you shall tear down their altars.** But you **have not obeyed Me**; what is this you have done?

Deuteronomy 12:12-14+ "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. 13 "Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place (THESE WERE OFTEN "HIGH PLACES") you see, 14 but in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

Jeremiah 2:20 "For long ago I broke your yoke And tore off your bonds; But you said, 'I will not serve!' For on every high hill And under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.

2 Chronicles 1:3+ Then Solomon and all the assembly with him **went to the high place which was at Gibeon**, for (term of explanation - explaining why it was "kosher" to do this) **God's tent of meeting was there**, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon **built a high place for Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and **for Molech** the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.



Hill of Gibeon as seen from nearby mosque Nebi Samwil  
(Parsons Bible Pictures)

The NAS translation misses something important here, failing to translate the Hebrew "raq" which NAS does translate in 1Ki 3:3 as "except." The KJV is more accurate rendering it **"Only** the people sacrificed..." The HCSB has **"However**, the people were sacrificing...." NIV has "The people **however**...." The Septuagint has **"Nevertheless** the people..." **However** often indicates a contrast or qualifies what is being said. You say "So what?" Well, the point is that the fact that the people were still sacrificing at the high places was not a good thing, even though overall Solomon's kingdom was in good condition. There was just this one little point of "spiritual leakage," which would in fact prove to be one of the problems that led to Solomon's fall (1Ki 11:7, cf 2Ki 16:4).

**The people were still sacrificing ([zabach](#)) on the high places ([bamah](#))** - Dt 12:14 stated that it was not right to offer sacrifices in any place but where the tabernacle and ark were (symbolizing God's presence). The tabernacle was now at Gibeon, (2 Ch 1:3+) and therefore Solomon going to the **high place** to sacrifice incurred no censure from Yahweh. Israel had been commanded to bring their sacrifices to the tabernacle, and the tabernacle at this time had been erected on the high place at Gibeon (1Ch 16:39, 21:29) after temporary sojourns at Gilgal, Shiloh and Nob. It is possible that this situation contributed to David's strong desire to build a permanent temple for the worship of God at Jerusalem. Note that the text says high places plural implying that Gibeon was not the only high place, but it would have been the only one that had the divine seal of approval! The problem with **high places ([bamah](#))** were also used by pagans to worship their idols and sadly these high places would ensnare the Israelites into pagan practices and idolatry! One is reminded of the first "high place" which was not a natural structure like a mountain but was a place the people built exclaiming "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." (Ge 11:4+)

*As soon as God had established his people in the Land of Promise,*



*they were to worship at a sanctuary in the place appointed by God.*

**Patterson** adds that the "high places" "were open-air sanctuaries that were mostly found on hill tops (1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 16:4), but also in towns (1 Kings 13:32) and in valleys (Jer 7:31; Ezek 6:3). De Vaux (pp. 284–88) points out that they were mounds or knolls, places of eminence for purposes of worship....The **high places** were a constant sore point in Israel, and the prophets of God frequently spoke out against them. There were two basic problems with them: (1) they detracted from the principle of the central sanctuary (Dt 12:1–14); and (2) since worship at high places was a Canaanite custom, syncretism was not only a very real danger but an all too common occurrence. Israel was specifically forbidden to utilize pagan high places and altars (Dt 12:2–4, 13), and as soon as God had established his people in the Land of Promise, they were to worship at a sanctuary in the place appointed by God. Eli's time the tabernacle had been at Shiloh; but with the Philistines' capture of the ark, Shiloh lost its significance as the place of God's presence among his people. Even after the ark was returned by the Philistines, it remained for years in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam 7:1), until David removed it to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6) to a tent he had prepared for it there (v.17). In the meantime the tabernacle was removed from Shiloh after the capture of the ark. The ark next appears at Nob (1 Sam 21), where it remained until Saul massacred the priests there (1 Sam 22). At some point after this event, it was moved to Gibeon where it is mentioned in connection with Zadok's high priestly ministry (1 Chronicles 16:39–40). There were then, in effect, two tabernacles during David's reign. The one in Gibeon was without the ark; the one in Jerusalem had the ark but not the original trappings of the tabernacle (2 Chronicles 1:3–5). This state of affairs matched that of the double priesthood of Zadok and Abiathar. (Borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 44](#))

**Paul Apple** - Discernment was needed to guard against destructive syncretistic practices that would undermine genuine worship.

During the period of the Judges, the Israelites adopted the Canaanite custom of offering sacrifices at **high places**. These were on hilltops and other elevations. The pagan Canaanites felt that the closer they got to heaven the more likely was the possibility that their prayers and offerings would reach their gods. The pagan Canaanites felt that the closer they got to heaven the more likely was the possibility that their prayers and offerings would reach their gods. Offering sacrifices at places other than the tabernacle was prohibited in the Law (Lev 17:3-4<sup>+</sup>). Nevertheless this practice was commonly observed in Israel at this time, even by Solomon. (from [my commentary](#) on Ezekiel 6:3)



The First "High Place"  
The Tower of Babel by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1563)

*(High places) probably originated at the Tower of Babel  
and then was carried worldwide by the subsequent dispersion*

**Henry Morris** - Worship in high places was forbidden in the Mosaic law (Lev 26:30) because of its universal association with the idolatrous polytheistic pantheism of other nations. Such practice probably originated at the Tower of Babel and then was carried worldwide by the subsequent dispersion. During the period of the Judges the Israelites adopted the Canaanite custom of offering sacrifices at...high places. These were on hilltops and other elevations. The pagan Canaanites felt that the closer they got to heaven the more likely was the possibility that their prayers and offerings would reach their gods. Offering sacrifices at places other than the tabernacle was prohibited in the Law (Lev 17:3,4). Nevertheless this practice was commonly observed in Israel at this time, even by Solomon.

**Charles Ryrie** feels that "The use of high places to worship the Lord before the Temple was built in Jerusalem was not the abomination it later became." I would suggest that it was a testimony to incomplete obedience which would fester and become a full blown cancer to their soul. Within a short time these hilltop areas or high places would prove to be a setting where Canaanite religious rites could infiltrate Israel's worship (1Ki 11:7 2Ki 16:4).

When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they were supposed to destroy all the hilltop shrines of the Canaanites (Nu 33:52 Dt 7:5 12:3) and build instead their own centers of worship at divinely approved sites (Ex 20:24; Jdg 6:24; 13:19 1Sa7:17 9:12, 13). Worship at these sites was acceptable until the central sanctuary discussed at length in Dt 12 was built.

**Because** - Term of explanation. This one is easy to interrogate and answer unlike some of Paul's Terms of explanation! As with the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 1:3+ the writer gives the rationale for why worship at this high places was allowed by Jehovah.

**There was no house** (no Temple yet in Jerusalem) **built for the Name of the LORD (Jehovah) until those days.** "Name" represented the character and presence of the Lord (cf. Ex 3:13, 14). He had promised to choose one place "to put His Name for His dwelling place" (Dt 12:5+). The temple at Jerusalem was to be that place (cf. 1 Kings 5:3, 5 8:16, 17-20, 29, 43-44, 48, God answer to King David's prayer = 1 Kings 9:3, 7). In the ancient Near East, to identify a temple with a god's name meant that the god owned the place and dwelt there.

**Bob Utley** - In the ANE (Ancient Near East) marriage alliances were like peace treaties. The fact that such a powerful nation as Egypt was willing to give Solomon a princess shows the power and prestige of Israel at this time. The Law of Moses condemned the inter-marriages with Canaanite women but never Egyptian women (cf. Gen. 24:3; Deut. 7:3). Jewish tradition says she became a proselyte. This may be true, for even in Solomon's later years when his other wives caused him to apostatize (1 Kgs. 11:4,6), there was never any Egyptian gods or practices in Israel. Notice the building projects that Solomon did before he built her a palace (1 Kgs. 7:8; 9:24). (1) his palace, (2) the Lord's temple (cf. 1 Kings 6), (3) the protective walls around Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:15; 11:27).

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**Sacrifices** (slaughter, offer sacrifice) ([02076](#)) **zabach** to slaughter or kill an animal for sacrifice. Moses told Pharaoh that this was one reason the Israelites wanted to leave to "sacrifice to the LORD our God." (Ex 3:18, 5:3, 8, 17, 8:8, 25-29, 13:15). **Zabach** could refer to slaughter of animals for food (Dt. 12:21; 1 Sa 28:24). Zabach was used to seal a covenant (Ge 31:54). Sacrificial animals were presented to gods or the true God; Jacob's sacrifice was to God (Gen. 46:1) as were most of these sacrifices, but the nations sacrificed to other gods as well, such as Dagon (Judg. 16:23) or the gods of Damascus (2 Chr. 28:23).

**Vine** - This word is a common Semitic term for sacrifice in general, although there are a number of other terms used in the Old Testament for specific sacrificial rituals. There is no question that this is one of the most important terms in the Old Testament; zābaḥ is found more than 130 times in its verbal forms and its noun forms occur over 500 times. While there were grain and incense offerings prescribed as part of the Mosaic laws dealing with sacrifice (see Lev. 2), the primary kind of sacrifice was the blood offering which required the slaughter of an animal (cf. Deut. 17:1; 1 Chron. 15:26). This blood was poured around the altar, for the blood contained the life, as stated in Lev. 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life" (rsv). Since the blood was the vehicle of life, it belonged to God alone. Because the blood is the life, and because it is given to God in the process of pouring it about the altar, it becomes the means of expiating sin, as an offering for sin and not because it becomes a substitute for the sinner. Zābaḥ is also used as a term for "slaughter for eating." This usage is closely linked with "slaughter for sacrifice" since all eating of flesh was sacrificial among ancient Hebrews. The word carries this meaning in 1 Kings 19:21: "And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh... and gave unto the people, and they did eat." ([Vine's Dictionary](#))

**High places** ([01116](#)) **bamah** Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - [NET Note](#) = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp Isa 58:14) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Chr 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and **Josiah** (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about **Josiah** 300 years earlier = 1Ki 13:2) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son **Manasseh** rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them!

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high places** in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

One of the most incredible (and saddest) verses in the OT (in my opinion) is "Then Solomon built **ahigh place** for [Chemosh](#) the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon." (1Ki 11:7, cp 1Ki 3:3 = Solomon had "half a heart" for God!) This was too much for Jehovah and He declared that the 12 tribes would be split as a result of Solomon's sin! Sin is costly. You may think you are getting away with it, but you are not! You may think you are the wisest man in the world (like Solomon) but you are really the most foolish (as Solomon was)! There was one high place that was not idolatrous (at least not at the outset) - "Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness." (2Chr 1:3, cp 1Chr 16:39-40, 21:29).

In Amos we see **bamah** is used in a description of Jehovah - For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind And declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness And treads on the **high places** of the earth, The LORD God of hosts is His name. (Amos 4:13, cp Micah 1:3)

**Bamah** - Over 100x in 91 verses translated in **NAS** as heights(3), high place(19), high places(76), places(1), waves(1). - Lev 26:30; Nu 22:41; 33:52; Deut 32:13; 33:29; 1 Sam 9:12ff, 19, 25; 10:5, 13; 2 Sam 1:19, 25; 22:34; 1Kgs 3:2ff; 11:7; 12:31f; 13:2, 32f; 14:23; 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kgs 12:3; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 17:9, 11, 29, 32; 18:4, 22; 21:3; 23:5, 8f, 13, 15, 19f; 1 Chr 16:39; 21:29; 2 Chr 1:3, 13; 11:15; 14:3, 5; 15:17; 17:6; 2Chr 20:33; 21:11; 28:4, 25; 31:1; 32:12; 33:3, 17, 19; 34:3; Job 9:8; Ps 18:33; 78:58; Isa 14:14; 15:2; 16:12; 36:7; 58:14; Jer 7:31; 17:3; 19:5; 26:18; 32:35; 48:35; Ezek 6:3, 6; 16:16; 20:29; 36:2; Hos 10:8; Amos 4:13; 7:9; Mic 1:3, 5; 3:12; Hab 3:19

**LORD** (03068) [Jehovah](#) (*I am; the eternal living one*). The Scripture appellation of the supreme Being, usually interpreted as signifying self-derived and permanent existence. The special and significant name (not merely an appellative title such as Lord [adonai]) by which God revealed himself to the ancient Hebrews (Ex. 6:2, 3). This name, the Tetragrammaton of the Greeks, was held by the later Jews to be so sacred that it was never pronounced except by the high priest on the great Day of Atonement, when he entered into the most holy place. Whenever this name occurred in the sacred books they pronounced it, as they still do, "Adonai" (i.e., Lord), thus using another word in its stead. The Massorets gave to it the vowel-points appropriate to this word. This Jewish practice was founded on a false interpretation of Lev. 24:16. The meaning of the word appears from Ex. 3:14 to be "the unchanging, eternal, self-existent God," the "I am that I am," a covenant-keeping God. (Comp. Mal. 3:6; Hos. 12:5; Rev. 1:4, 8.)

The Hebrew name "Jehovah" is generally translated in the Authorized Version (and the Revised Version has not departed from this rule) by the word LORD printed in small capitals, to distinguish it from the rendering of the Hebrew Adonai and the Greek Kurios, which are also rendered Lord, but printed in the usual type. The Hebrew word is translated "Jehovah" only in Ex. 6:3; Ps. 83:18; Isa. 12:2; 26:4, and in the compound names mentioned below.

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of high places in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - High places, very simply, were places of worship on elevated pieces of ground. High places were originally dedicated to idol worship (Numbers 33:52; Leviticus 26:30), especially among the Moabites (Isaiah 16:12). These shrines often included an altar and a sacred object such as a stone pillar or wooden pole in various shapes identified with the object of worship (animals, constellations, goddesses, and fertility deities). It seems that, at times, high places were set up in a spot that had been artificially elevated; 2 Kings 16:4 seems to differentiate the "high places" from the "hills."

The Israelites, forever turning away from God, practiced Molech worship and built high places for Baal (Jeremiah 32:35). Although Solomon built the temple of God in Jerusalem, he later established idolatrous high places for his foreign wives outside of Jerusalem and worshiped with them, causing him the loss of the kingdom (1 Kings 11:11). The people were still sacrificing at the pagan high places before the temple was built, and Solomon joined them. After the Lord appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon, the king returned to Jerusalem and sacrificed offerings; however, he continued to waver between the two places of worship.

Not all high places were dedicated to idol worship. They played a major role in Israelite worship, and the earliest biblical mention of a site of worship, later called a "high place," is found in Genesis 12:6–8 where Abram built altars to the Lord at Shechem and Hebron. Abraham built an altar in the region of Moriah and was willing to sacrifice his son there (Genesis 22:1–2). This site is traditionally believed to be the same high place where the temple of Jerusalem was built. Jacob set up a stone pillar to the Lord at Bethel (Genesis 28:18–19), and Moses met God on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1–3).

Joshua set up stone pillars after crossing the Jordan (Joshua 4:20) and considered this a high place of worship because the Israelites "came up from" the Jordan onto higher ground. The high places were visited regularly by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 7:16). High places as sites of Canaanite idol worship (Judges 3:19) extended into the period of Elijah (1 Kings 18:16–40). God would name only one high place where sacrifice was authorized, and that was the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). God

commanded that all other high places be destroyed. King Josiah destroyed them in 2 Kings 22—23.

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#### QUESTION - [Why did Solomon worship at a high place?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - In [2 Chronicles 1](#) we are told that Solomon, early in his reign, worshiped at a high place. 2Ch 1:3 reads, “Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God’s tent of meeting was there, which Moses the LORD’s servant had made in the wilderness.”

The text is clear that the reason Solomon worshiped at this high place was that the [tabernacle](#) (also called the tent of meeting) was located there. This was the same tabernacle that the children of Israel, under Moses’ leadership, had constructed in the wilderness many years previously. Prior to the construction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, the tabernacle was the place God had chosen for worship.

In fact, King David had previously worshiped the Lord at this high place in Gibeon. 1 Chronicles 16:39 notes, “David left Zadok the priest and his fellow priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place in Gibeon.” With the tabernacle was the altar of burnt offering (see 1 Chronicles 21:29).

While in Gibeon, “Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD in the tent of meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it” (2 Chronicles 1:6). That night, the Lord appeared to Solomon and offered to give him anything he requested. When Solomon [requested wisdom](#), God promised to give it to him, along with vast wealth, possessions, and honor (verse 12).

In [2 Chronicles 2](#), Solomon prepared to build the Jewish [temple](#) as a place for his people to worship the Lord. [First Kings 6:38](#) notes that construction of the temple took seven years to complete. Once the temple was finished, Solomon had the tabernacle and the [Ark of the Covenant](#) placed inside the temple, and from then on the temple was the place for Jewish worship.

Though Solomon later was led astray into idol-worship by his many wives, his experience in [2 Chronicles 1](#) of worshiping at a high place was a noble one that God honored. It was only after the temple was completed that Gibeon was no longer considered a place to worship the Lord.

After Solomon’s time, many wicked kings of Israel used “high places” for worshiping false gods. For example, King Jehoram of Judah “built high places on the hills of Judah and . . . caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves and . . . led Judah astray” ([2 Chronicles 21:11](#)). In most contexts, high places are associated with false worship. However, in Solomon’s worship at the high place in Gibeon, he worshiped at the tabernacle and presented offerings to the Lord God.

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#### Life Lessons from a Flawed Hero By Dr. Woodrow Kroll

Scripture: 1 Kings 3:1–3 and 11:1–6, especially 1 Kings 11:4 (NIV)

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God as the heart of David his father had been.

Introduction: Alexander the Great conquered the world, yet died at age 33 in a drunken stupor. Hannibal may have crossed the Alps with elephants, but he had three bushels of gold rings taken off knights he slaughtered; and he later committed suicide. Julius Caesar conquered eight hundred cities across Europe and the Middle East, but he was stabbed by his closest friends. Napoleon was the scourge of Europe, yet he died in banishment.

Have you noticed that some who leave a strong mark have tragic lives? Solomon was like that. He was the wisest, wealthiest man who ever lived; yet there’s a tragedy to his life, and we can learn from it. From my study of his life, it seems to me that Solomon made three gigantic mistakes.

1. The Mistake of Unholy Alliances (1 Kin. 3:1). Solomon did what he thought he needed to do to solidify his power, but instead of pleasing God, he did the opposite. In 1 Kings 1:5, even before he became king, his throne was challenged by a half-brother. In 1 Kings 1:7, some of his father’s allies betrayed him. Solomon’s position was threatened, and that’s why he made an alliance with Egypt. Instead of making alliances with the right people in his country, with the priests and Levites and leaders in his family, he went to his worst enemy. A lot of people do that. Instead of seeking counsel from godly people, we go to the world for help. That’s why 2 Corinthians 6 warns about being unequally yoked with unbelievers. We often apply that to marriage, but it has to do with every area of life, whether business or friendship.

2. The Mistake of Allowing Dark Corners to Remain (1 Kin. 3:2–3). The second mistake Solomon made was in allowing dark corners of sin to remain in his life. According to 1 Kings 3:2–3, Solomon worshiped Jehovah but tolerated incense on the high places. The “high places” were altars on hills around the country devoted to pagan gods, especially the gods of the Canaanites. While Solomon did some wonderful things, he tolerated pagan gods. Blessing comes, not from giving God a corner of our lives; it

comes from wholly following Him, giving Him everything. Those dark corners always come back to haunt us.

3. The Mistake of Allowing the World to Draw Us Away from God (1 Kin. 11:1–4). Once Solomon became wealthy, his mind drifted from God a bit. In the course of getting everything he wanted, represented by his seven hundred wives, the call of the world drowned out the call of God. See 2 Timothy 4:10 and 1 John 2:15–17. The Bible is clear on this. For you and me as Christians to invest all of our time in this world, to invest all of our energy in this world, to invest all of our money in this world—that isn't just silly, it's stupid! But sometimes the distractions of the world cause us to have a life like Solomon's. He did very well at first. Then he became wealthy, wise, and powerful; and the world became a strong attraction to which he did not summon the energy to resist.

Conclusion: If you and I want to be joyous and fruitful Christians, we can learn from Solomon. We cannot allow these things to go wrong in our lives, because if we do they can spoil our hearts the way they spoiled Solomon's. We must always be aware of how closely we live with God. We can be as wise as Solomon yet still have a foolish life like him if we're not a person after the heart of God. Let me encourage you today to check out, not how wise or wealthy you are, but how closely you're living with God. How intimate are you with God? Are you the person after God's own heart like King David? Or are you a person who has been extremely blessed like King Solomon, yet you haven't handled that blessing very well? Now is the time to change. And that's the good news—God will help you do that in Christ Jesus, His Son.

More from Dr. Kroll

George Barna says that in the evangelical church in America and Canada today, there is much of the world in our churches. We choose to believe only what we want to believe from the Bible; and we choose to believe from the world what we want to believe. Barna says, "We've made an amalgam religion"—what strikes our fancy! And he's absolutely right! Instead of understanding the Word of God and drawing our strength from the Word of God, we draw our strength from here and from any other place we can find. Solomon did the same thing. That was a mistake. God will accept nothing less than total obedience from us. He certainly would accept nothing less from Solomon. Read Deuteronomy 6:4–5. God never accepts from us a piece of an offering. He never accepts from us a partial sacrifice. That's why Paul says in Romans 12 that we are to totally be sacrificed to Him, to give everything over to Him: to give all of our finances to Him and give all of our children to Him and all of our grandchildren to Him, all of our days to Him and all of our nights to Him—we give it all to Him. He takes care of us because He loves total obedience. Solomon was only partially obedient. He made some mistakes. And making that mistake robs us of the blessing that Solomon lost. This is a man who was extremely wealthy but apparently quite unhappy at the same time because he made many unholy alliances, tolerated sin, and allowed his heart to drift from its pure love for Jesus.

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STOP AND THINK Text: 1 Kings 3:9 Read: vv. 1–13. J Dean Cameron

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to discern between good and bad...."

INTRODUCTION: Principal, teachers, seniors of the graduating class of — High School of 19 —, ladies and gentlemen: I count it an undeserved privilege to address you on this auspicious occasion.

Beloved students, I feel that it would desecrate the purpose of this important meeting, should I clothe myself in the vestment of superficial words which would offer you no more than cheap entertainment. Therefore it shall be my purpose to communicate to you thoughts which will stimulate a desire in your hearts to acquire the ability to "discern between good and evil"; for at no previous time in the history of the world has there existed a greater need for discriminating between the real values of life and those vices which rob one of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

STOP AND THINK! WHAT IS EDUCATION DOING FOR ME?

1. Am I gaining ability to be useful to mankind?
2. Is education awakening my best qualities?
3. Can I work with others without having my own way?
4. Would I choose one like myself as a trusted friend?
5. When I am wrong, can I gracefully admit it?
6. If I knew I could get by, would I steal?
7. Am I always blaming others for my failures?
8. Do I think the world owes me a living?
9. Would I hire a man like myself in my business?
10. Could I admire a teacher like I would be?
11. Would I trust a doctor like I would be?
12. Would I trust a lawyer like I would be?

STOP AND THINK! IN YOUR QUEST FOR HAPPINESS THERE ARE SOME THINGS STANDING READY TO CORRUPT YOUR



LIFE.

1. Greed stands ready to destroy your sense of sharing.
2. Hate stands ready to embitter and sour your life.
3. Prejudice stands ready to corrupt your mind.
4. Selfishness stands ready to destroy your character.
5. Undisciplined sex stands ready to pollute marriage.
6. Disrespect is ready to make you a social outcast.

STOP AND THINK! You have just one life to live!

STOP AND THINK! Just one wrong decision could ruin the only life you shall ever possess! (Mark 11:22).

STOP AND THINK ABOUT YOUR CREATOR.

1. God speaks to you through His Word, Heb. 1:1–3.
2. God has something to say to you about life, Ps. 1.
3. God speaks to you about His fellowship, John 14:23.
4. God speaks to you about sin, Rom. 6:23.
5. God speaks to you about the time to seek Him: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not," (Eccles. 12:1).

If I could command the pen of a Samuel Adams; if my talents were equal to the pertinence of a Jefferson; if my soul could vibrate with the zeal of a Patrick Henry; if I could catch but a single spark of those electric fires wrested from the sky by Benjamin Franklin and flash a message to future graduating classes, I would herald forth the words of God's prophet:

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. 6:8).

As young people of this turbulent twentieth century, I challenge you to accept Christ as your Savior and make Him "Senior Partner" of your life; that you may have "an understanding heart to ... discern between good and bad" (1 Kings 3:9).

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20–21).

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### **James Smith - SOLOMON'S CHOICE; or, FULLNESS OF BLESSING 1 Kings 3:1–16**

"True wisdom is not gotten, but is given;

Not dug out of the earth, but dropped from Heaven:

Heavenly, not earthly, is the brightness of it."

—LYTTON.

It was said of Solomon that "the Lord loved him" (2 Sam. 12:24). How fitting it is to find it stated now that "Solomon loved the Lord" (v. 3). Surely the love of God for us should awaken in our hearts love to Him. It was a very exceptional opportunity that came to Solomon when God said to him, "Ask what I shall give thee." Such special privileges, laden with Almighty and eternal possibilities, don't usually come within the reach of any of God's servants without some unusually solemn preparation. It was certainly so with Solomon.

He had gone to Gibeon, a journey of seven miles, and had a long and solemn time of great sacrificing. "One thousand burnt-offerings" he has seen laid on the altar. His whole mind and heart were filled with thoughts of the holiness of God, the horribleness of sin, and the great holocaust atonement. As Solomon lay down that night to sleep, with a deep sense of his own weakness and unworthiness, God appeared to him in a dream, with such an offer of grace as was sufficient for all his needs. If we would be honoured of God, then our souls and in our substance we must honour him. We shall consider—

I. The Divine Offer. "God said, Ask what I shall give thee" (v. 5). Let us pause and think of who it is that makes this offer. This "I" is the I that filleth eternity. It is the offer of Him who is the Creator and Possessor of all, whose Name is Holy, and whose nature is Love. Think again of the abounding generosity of the offer. "What I shall give thee." Only one chance like this is needed to enrich a soul for time and eternity. In making this offer God was as it were laying all the wealth of His Divine Character and Kingdom at the feet of Solomon, that he might be filled out of all the fullness of God. But does the Lord come to us with an offer like this? Yea, He has done more, for in the gift of His Son the whole wealth of "His unsearchable riches" lie continually before us for our daily appropriation. Even without our asking, yea, while we were yet sinners, He gives His all in dying for us.

II. The Wise Choice. "Give Thy servant an understanding heart" (v. 9). It was not enough that he should have the opportunity of choosing; he must make up his mind and speak out his request. Every Gospel hearer has the opportunity of making such a choice,

but how few like Solomon seek the hearing heart (margin). It was a wise choice, because it—

1. COVERED ALL HIS NEED (vv. 7, 8). A heart quick to hear the guiding, comforting words of God would strengthen and sustain him, as a “little child” set by the grace of God “in the midst of a great people.” If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God (James 1:5). “Christ is made of God unto us wisdom,” etc. In choosing Him we choose that which covers all our need.
2. PLEASED GOD (v. 10). It pleased God, because what he asked was not for any mere selfish advantage, but for His honour and the good of His people. We always ask amiss when we would consume it on our own pleasures (James 4:3, margin). Are not our prayers often choked with the cares and anxieties of self-interest?

### III. The Abundant Answer.

1. HE GOT WHAT HE ASKED. “I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart” (v. 12). God alone can work in us such a gift as this. This is eternal life to know Him. The promises of God are meant to be claimed and definitely fulfilled in the experience of the believer. Ask and ye shall receive.
2. HE GOT MORE THAN HE ASKED. “I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour” (v. 13). He sought first the Kingdom of God, and all other things were added, and added in such plentitude that Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches (1 Kings 10:23). He that findeth Christ findeth wisdom, and happy is that man, for riches and honour, and length of days are his (Prov. 3:13, 16). “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Lord, give me the “hearing heart,” that Thy will may be done in me, and that the people may be blessed through me.

**1 Kings 3:3 Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.**

AMP Now Solomon loved the Lord, walking [at first] in the statutes of David his father, **except [for the fact that]** he sacrificed and burned incense in the high places [ignoring the law that required all sacrifices to be offered at the tabernacle].

EXB Solomon showed he loved the Lord by following the commands his father David had given him, **except** many other places of worship were still used to offer sacrifices and to burn incense [Lhe sacrificed and burned incense at the high places; 3:2].

KJV 1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: **only** he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

BGT 1 Kings 3:3 καὶ γὰρ ἠγάπησεν Σαλωμων τὸν κύριον πορεύεσθαι ἐν τοῖς προστάγμασιν Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ πλὴν ἐν τοῖς ὕψιστοις θυεὶν καὶ θυμᾶν

LXE 1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the Lord, so as to walk in the ordinances of David his father; **only** he sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.

NET 1 Kings 3:3 Solomon demonstrated his loyalty to the LORD by following the practices of his father David, **except** that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

CSB 1 Kings 3:3 Solomon loved the LORD by walking in the statutes of his father David, **but** he also sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

ESV 1 Kings 3:3 Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father, **only** he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places.

NIV 1 Kings 3:3 Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, **except** that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

NLT 1 Kings 3:3 Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the decrees of his father, David, **except** that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship.

YLT 1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loveth Jehovah, to walk in the statutes of David his father --**only**, in high places he is sacrificing and making perfume --

- **loved:** De 6:5 Dt 10:12 Dt 30:6,16,20 2Sa 12:24,25 Ps 31:23 Mt 22:37 Mk 12:29,30 Ro 8:28 1Co 8:3 Jas 1:12 2:5 1Jn 4:19,20 5:2,3

- **walking:** 1Ki 3:6,14 1K 2:3,4 1Ki 11:34 1Kin 15:3 1Ch 28:8,9 2Ch 17:3-5 Joh 14:15,21
- **except he:** 1Ki 15:14 22:43 2Ki 12:3 14:4 15:4,35 18:4,22

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 12:24+ (NOTE THE LORD LOVED SOLOMON) Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him

### HARBINGER OF SOLOMON'S DOWNFALL - PARTIAL OBEDIENCE

A **harbinger** is something that foreshadows or announces a future event.

**Now** - We are thankful it says "now" but wish it would have said something like "now always" or "now and forevermore." This "now" would prove to be a "transient now" in time. Solomon would lose track of his good beginning. He reminds me of Paul's words to the Galatians "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (Gal 5:7+)

**THOUGHT** - Oh my, I am convicted as I wrote that note and Paul's quote. God is looking not just for great starts, but even more for great finishes. O Lord, without the empowerment of Your Spirit and wisdom of Your Word, we do not stand a chance to finish like Paul in 2Ti 4:7+, so we plead with You to bestow on us your grace to be able to testify like Paul "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (1Co 15:10+). All for the sake of Your Kingdom and Your glorious Name, and in the Name of Your Son. Amen

**F B Meyer** - 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, Hosea 6:4.

**Solomon loved ([ahab/ahab](#)) the LORD ([Jehovah/Yahweh](#)), walking** (metaphor for conduct, lifestyle) **in the statutes of his father David** - This is a great passage as it parallels Jesus' words to His disciples in John 14:15- "If you love Me, you will keep [tereo](#) - guard, observe, preserve) My commandments." Love of God is reflected not just by our lips but by our life and how we conduct ourselves. Love of God is best shown by obedience to God. As Samuel told Saul "To obey is better than sacrifice." What a difference a few years make for 1 Kings 11:1+ sadly begins with similar words "**Solomon loved**" but by then his love for Jehovah had been replaced by love for many foreign women including the daughter of Pharaoh mentioned in 1Ki 3:1! As Jesus made crystal clear "No one can serve two masters; **for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other.** You cannot serve God and wealth." (Mt 6:24+)

*Solomon is the only man in the entire Bible who is said to have "loved the Lord," in so many words*

**Philip Ryken** - The Bible describes him as a man after David's own heart: "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father" (1 Kings 3:3). This is virtually the highest praise that any person could ever receive. In fact, Solomon is the only man in the entire Bible who is said to have "loved the Lord," in so many words. (See [King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power - Page 44](#))

**Except** - This has to be one of the saddest "exception clauses" in the Bible. Solomon's failed to completely follow the Lord as exhibited in his continual worship at the high places, a point of departure which would eventually lead to the division of his Kingdom (1Ki 11:7+).

*Partial obedience is  
Complete disobedience!*

**He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places ([bamah](#))** - Once there was a central temple for worship of Jehovah, the high place like Gibeon which was temporarily allowed, were to be banned and even destroyed (Lev. 17:3-5; Dt. 12:14 2Ki 23:8). And as best I can determine there is no clear provision given that allows multiple high places (noting that high places is plural here and in v2). This suggests to me that Solomon's worship at "high places" was not "kosher," for after all he could have worshiped at either Gibeon or Jerusalem (where the Ark was in a tent). And so as Solomon's story unfolds, the **high place** became a snare, a trap that eventually led the wisest man who ever lived (other than Jesus) into idol worship!

**THOUGHT** - What are the "**high places**" in your life that you have refused to destroy because you like the

wisest man that ever lived, King Solomon, have made them an "exception clause" and you have underestimated the deceptive power of sin (Heb 3:13<sup>+</sup>). Be assured that God reads the "fine print" and He desires that we be wholly holy as He is holy. Remember that...

SIN...

*Will take you farther than you ever meant to stray  
Keep you longer than you ever meant to stay &  
Cost you more than you ever thought you'd have to pay!*

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**Loved** (0157) **aheb/ahab** means to love and can convey the idea of liking things (like bribes - Isa 1:23, wisdom - Pr 4:6, wine - Pr 21:17, peace and truth - Zech 8:19, food - Ge 27:4, 9, 14). The most important uses in the OT are as an expression of God's love of people (Dt 4:37, Hosea 3:1), man's love for God (Ex 20:6, Ps 116:1) and man's love for his fellow man (Ge 29:32, Ru 4:15-note, 1 Kings 11:1 = a forbidden love by backslidden King Solomon!!!) The first use of aheb in the OT is instructive as it is found in Ge 22:2 where Yahweh instructed his servant Abraham to "'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.'" Notice that at the outset, we see that an inherent quality of this love (in many contexts) is that it is costly. God wants us to love Him above EVERYTHING, even our own flesh and blood. Matthews writes that Ge 22:2 "is the final test of the man's faith, the closing bookend to his discovery of God's sufficiency to achieve the promises made at Haran." (New American Commentary) As an aside God frequently "tests" His people to reveal their trust and obedience (cp Ex 15:25, 16:4, Judges 2:22<sup>+</sup> - in this last one they failed repeatedly). In Ge 25:28 there is a hint that Isaac's love was at least somewhat conditioned on the fact that Esau provided game for him to eat (cp Ge 27:4, 9, 14 of Isaac's love for the savory dish). In addition, Isaac's love for Esau is contrasted with Rebekah's love for Jacob (not to say of course that Isaac did not love Jacob but that he seemed to have a greater degree for Esau because he was as they say "a man's man!" Compare Jacob's greater love for Rachel than Leah - Ge 29:30, Jacob's greater love for Joseph - Ge 37:3,4) In Ex 21:5 we see one of the great examples of man to man love where a slave willingly stays with his master because he loves him -- now that is surely sacrificial love! In Dt 4:37 we see the first use of aheb to describe God's unconditional love for His chosen people Israel -- He loved them then, He continued to love them in their unfaithfulness (because that is the nature of true love) and He will bring them "from Egypt" (so to speak) at the end of this age when Messiah returns and all the believing remnant are saved (Ro 11:25-27<sup>+</sup>)! In short, God's love transcends time and endures throughout eternity for His chosen people and for every Gentile that has been grafted into "the rich root of the olive tree," (Ro 11:17<sup>+</sup>). In [the Shema](#) Israel is instructed "'You shall **love** the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Dt 6:5)

**AHEB/AHAB IN KINGS AND CHRONICLES** - 1 Ki. 3:3; 1 Ki. 5:1 = "FRIEND"; 1 Ki. 10:9 = "the LORD loved Israel forever"; 1Ki. 11:1; 1Ki. 11:2 = "Solomon held fast ([dabaq](#) - "stuck like glue") to these in **love**"; 2Chr. 2:11; 2Chr. 9:8; 2Chr. 11:21; 2Chr. 19:2; 2Chr. 20:7; 2Chr. 26:10

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#### **QUESTION - [How did God respond when Solomon asked for wisdom?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In 1 Kings 3:3, Solomon is described in the following positive terms: "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father." One night, the Lord appeared to [Solomon](#) and said, "Ask what I shall give you" (1Ki 3:5). In response, Solomon answered, "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" (1Ki 3:9).

The passage notes, "It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this" (1 Kings 3:10). God delights to give [wisdom](#) to those who truly seek it (Proverbs 2:6-8; James 1:5). God responds to Solomon's request for wisdom by promising three different gifts. The first is the wisdom Solomon had asked for: "I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you" (verse 12).

First Kings 4:29-34 records the details of Solomon's wisdom: "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom."

The second gift God gave Solomon was wealth and fame: "I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days" (1 Kings 3:13). Solomon would become known as the wealthiest king of his era.

The third gift God gave him was conditional—a long life based on Solomon’s obedience: “And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days” (1 Kings 3:14). After God made these promises, “Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream” (verse 15).

The first two gifts were unconditional. Solomon was known as a man of great wisdom (1 Kings 3:28) and as a king of great wealth and influence. But was Solomon known as an obedient king who experienced a long life? By the grace of God, Solomon reigned for 40 years (1 Kings 11:42), a long period for one king to reign. However, Solomon’s obedience was mixed. He had [many wives](#), including foreigners who influenced him to sacrifice to their gods. His great wealth also contributed to unwise excesses. Solomon began well, as his humble request for wisdom shows, but he later disobeyed God. Solomon was spared more severe punishment for the sake of his father, David (1 Kings 11:11–12).

**1 Kings 3:4 The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.**

- Gibeon: 1Ki 9:2 Jos 9:3 Jos 10:2 1Ch 16:39-40 1Ch 21:29 2Ch 1:3,7-12
- a thousand: 1Ki 8:63 2Ch 1:6 7:5 29:32-35 30:24 Isa 40:16 Mic 6:6,7

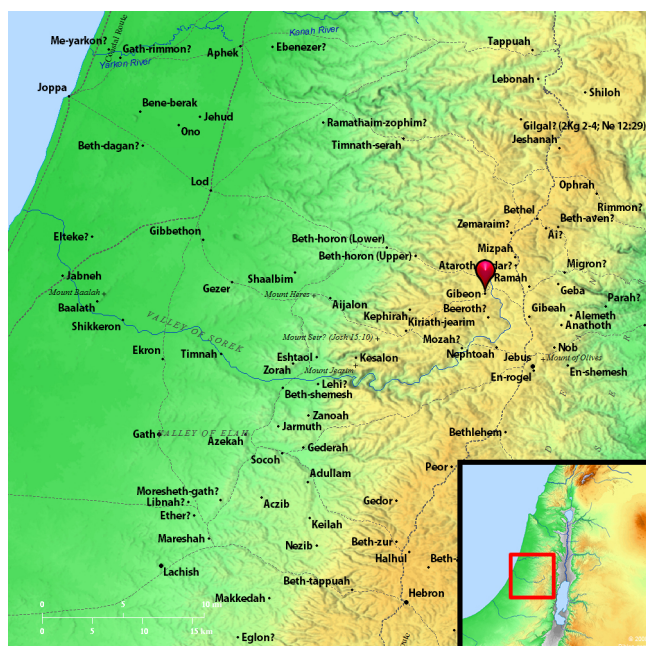
### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 16:39-40 He left Zadok the priest and his relatives the priests **before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place which was at Gibeon**, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which He commanded Israel.

1 Chronicles 21:29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering **were in the high place at Gibeon at that time**.

2 Chronicles 1:3+ Then Solomon and all the assembly with him **went to the high place which was at Gibeon**, for God’s tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

1 Kings 11:7-8+ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. 8 Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.



Site of Gibeon  
(Jerusalem not shown but Bethlehem is Adjacent)

**The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar** - Solomon demonstrates his love for Jehovah by going 4 miles NW to worship. Notice the phrase **went down**, which might surprise you because he was going to go up to the high place. The point is that whenever one leaves Jerusalem (which is

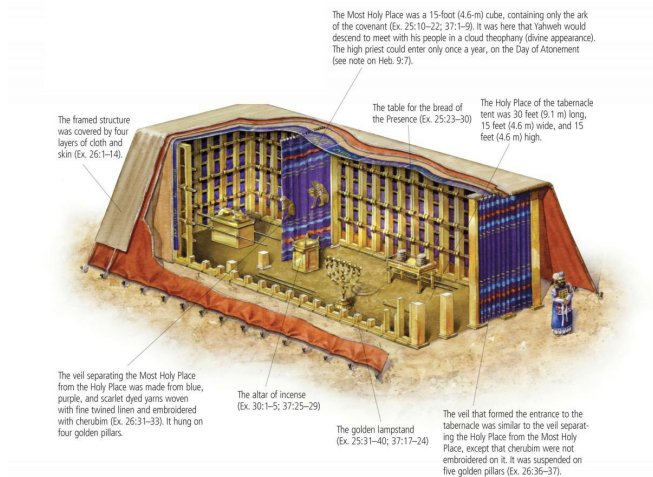


elevated) it is described as going down and vice versa if one goes to Jerusalem, they are going up. As noted in the [passage below](#), the bronze altar and the Tabernacle were still in Gibeon after having been moved from Nob, probably after Saul's slaughter of the priests of Nob (1Sa 22:18, 19 2Ch 1:3). The Ark of the Covenant, however, had been taken to Jerusalem (2Sa 6:12-17).

## Related Resources:

### ■ [BURNT OFFERINGS.](#)

**Paul House** writes of Solomon's worship at the **great high place** "For now this practice is excusable, but Solomon's long-term commitment to the high places is contrary to God's law and David's example." (Borrow [NAC - 1.2 Kings page 108](#))



**The Tabernacle (Note Ark of Covenant Actually in Jerusalem at this time)**



**Bronze Altar of Burnt Offering**

2 Chronicle 1:5-6+ adds some detail describing the **great high place**...

Now the bronze altar (depicted above), which Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur (Ex 31:1-5+), had made (Ex 27:1-8+), was there **before the tabernacle of the LORD** (depicted above - but Ark was not there but in Jerusalem), and Solomon and the assembly sought it out. Solomon **went up** (THIS SUPPORTS THE PREMISE IT WAS ACTUALLY A "HIGH PLACE") there before the LORD to the bronze altar which was at the tent of meeting (TABERNACLE), and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

**Bob Utley - the high place which was at Gibeon** Later in Israel's history these "high places" (1Sa. 9:12-14; 10:5,13; 1Ki 3:3a; 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kgs. 12:3) are condemned because of their connection to fertility worship (cf. Nu. 33:52; Dt. 12:2; 1Ki 11:7). See Special Topic: [Fertility Worship in the ANE](#). and [Fertility Cults](#) But here this was a gesture of faith (cf. 1Ki 3:4; 1 Chr. 16:39) of the new king seeking YHWH's help and blessing before the Tabernacle (cf. 1Ch 21:29; also called "the tent of meeting"). The ark of the covenant had been taken to Jerusalem by David and placed in a special tent (2Ch 1:4; 2Sa 6:17; 1 Chr. 16:1). Gibeon was about four miles NW of Jerusalem. [SPECIAL TOPIC: MY SERVANT.](#)

At this time worship of Yahweh at great high place was clearly acceptable to the LORD, but it was never meant to be the norm after the Temple was built. Moses describes God's statutes regarding worship of Jehovah...

These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. 2 "You shall utterly destroy all the places (**THE HIGH PLACES**) where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3 "You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. 4 "You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God. 5 "But you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His Name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come (HIS TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM). 6 "There you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill

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**The Sanctuary at Gibeon:** Gibeon was the seat of an ancient sanctuary, called in 1 Ki 3:4 "the great high place." Here, according to 2 Ch 1:3, was the tabernacle made in the wilderness—but see 1 Ki 8:4. It was the scene of Solomon's great sacrifice after which he slept in the sanctuary and dreamed his famous dream (1 Ki 3:4 ff; 9:2; 2 Ch 1:3,13, etc.). By "the great waters that are in Gibeon" Johanan overtook Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and freed the captives he had taken from Mizpah (Jer 41:11 ff). Among those who returned with Zerubbabel were 95 "children of Gibeon" (Neh 7:25; compare 3:7). At Gibeon Cestius Gallus encamped when marching against Jerusalem from Antipatris (BJ, II, xix, 1). ([ISBE](#))

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**Philip Ryken** has some powerful application points from these early warning signs in Solomon's life...

So while it is true that Solomon was a king after David's heart, a man who loved the Lord, it is also true that he had a wandering heart that loved money, sex, and power—the very temptations that led to the downfall of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei in chapter 2. The warning signs of Solomon's tragic downfall are present from the very beginning of his story, which is not just black and white, but colored by shades of gray.

In other words, Solomon was a lot like us. He loved the Lord, as every Christian does. But he also had some other loves in his life—sinful passions that had the power to destroy his spiritual leadership. He did not love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, and strength (see Deut. 6:5). While there is some truth to the view that Solomon's life started out more positive spiritually, before ending up more negative, the deeper truth is that like every other believer, he was always as much a sinner as he was a saint.

We face the same struggle. In the famous words of Martin Luther, each of us *issimul iustus et peccator*—at the same time both righteous and a sinner. Through faith in Jesus Christ, and on the basis of his perfect life and atoning death, we are perfectly righteous in the sight of God. Yet for as long as we live in this sinful world, we will continue to struggle with remaining sin. This means that the warning signs of our own tragic downfall are present right in our own hearts.

*The sins that go along with money, sex, and power  
have the capacity to destroy us.*

What sinful desires have the power to destroy your life the way money and sex and power divided Solomon's kingdom? We too are tempted by the love of money, the pleasure of sex, and the seduction of power. We face these temptations every time we reach for a credit card, get on the Internet, or start figuring out the best way to get what we want out of other people. Do we recognize how much danger we are in? The sins that go along with money, sex, and power have the capacity to destroy us. ([1 Kings - Reformed Expository Commentary | REC](#))

**1 Kings 3:5** In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish me to give you."

- the Lord: 1Ki 9:2
- in a dream: Ge 28:12,13 Nu 12:6 Job 33:14,15 Mt 1:20 2:13,19
- Ask what: 2Ch 1:7-12 Mt 7:7,8 Mk 10:36,38-51 11:24 Joh 14:13,14 15:16 Jas 1:5,6 1Jn 5:14,15

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 1:7+ In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you."

### **JEHOVAH APPEARS AND SPEAKS TO SOLOMON IN A DREAM**

In Gibeon the LORD ([Jehovah](#)) appeared to Solomon in a dream at night - God often gave revelation in dreams (Ge 26:24 28:12 46:2 Da 2:7; 7:1 Mt 1:20 2:12, 19, 22). However, this dream was unique, because it represented a two-way conversation between the Lord and Solomon.

**And God said, "Ask (command) what you wish me to give you."** - Do not think that because Solomon just offered a thousand burnt offerings God is now "paying him back." No, God's ask is based on His grace, His generous bestowal of unmerited favor to

sinful men.

*The gift which I feel I should crave beyond every other boon is holiness, pure and immaculate holiness.*

**C H Spurgeon** - If in a vision of the night the Lord should say to us as he did to Solomon, **"Ask what I shall give you,"** I do not think any of us would hesitate. I cannot imagine myself asking for riches or honor or even for wisdom, unless it were wisdom of a far higher order than is commonly esteemed among men. The gift which I feel I should crave beyond every other boon is holiness, pure and immaculate holiness. The one thing I desire beyond everything else is to be perfectly free from sin, and to lead an unblemished life without sin of omission or sin of commission.

Believers are also invited by God to ASK...there are some caveats and some of the main caveats are that we exhibit obedience, faith, abiding, and asking in His will (cf Ps 66:18, Pr 15:8, Pr 15:29, Jn 9:31, Ps 34:15)

- Matthew 7:7+ "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
- John 15:7+ **"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,** ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
- 1 John 3:21-22+ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments** and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.
- 1 John 5:14-15+ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **if we ask anything according to His will,** He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- James 1:5-8+ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But **he must ask in faith without any doubting,** for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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**Rod Mattoon** - In this dispensation or period, God at times would speak to a person in dreams. He spoke to Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, the Apostle John, and Joseph, the husband of Mary. God does not speak to us through dreams and visions today because He doesn't need to do this. His revelation of truth is complete. We have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to give us direction and guidance in our decisions. Those who claim doctrinal revelation from God are deceived or our deceivers. A religion or preacher can be judged by his attitude toward the Word of God.

Many cults have been started by men or women who claimed revelations from God in dreams and visions. These dreams contradicted Scripture. The dreams of Joseph Smith lead to the start of Mormonism. The visions of Mary Baker Eddy lead to the founding of the Christian Science movement. Beloved, God NEVER leads us to contradict His Word! ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [How did God use dreams and visions in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - God used dreams and visions (visions are "waking dreams"; see Numbers 24:4) several times in the Bible to communicate with people. Visions seem to have been common enough that their lack was sorely noted. An absence of visions was due at times to a dearth of prophets (1 Samuel 3:1) and other times due to the disobedience of God's people (1 Samuel 28:6).

#### **Old Testament Dreams and Visions**

God used visions in the Old Testament to reveal His plan, to further His plan, and to put His people in places of influence.

*Abraham* (Genesis 15:1): God used a vision to restate the Abrahamic Covenant, reminding Abram that he would have a son and be the father of many nations.

*Abimelech* (Genesis 20:1-7): Abraham's wife, Sarah, was beautiful—so beautiful that when Abraham came into a new area he occasionally feared that the local ruler would kill him and take Sarah for himself. Abraham told Abimelech king of Gerar that Sarah was his sister (she was his half-sister). Abimelech took Sarah into his harem, but God sent him a dream telling him not to touch Sarah because she was Abraham's wife. The king returned Sarah to her husband the next morning; the dream had protected Sarah and safeguarded God's plan for Sarah to be the mother of His chosen people.

*Jacob* (Genesis 28:10-17): Jacob, with his mother's help, stole Esau's firstborn inheritance. Jacob then fled Esau's anger, and on his journey he had his famous dream of a ladder reaching to heaven on which angels ascended and descended. In this dream Jacob received God's promise that Abraham's blessing would be carried on through him.

*Joseph* (Genesis 37:1-11): Joseph is one of the most famous dreamers, and one of the most famous dream-

interpreters, in the Bible. His first recorded dreams are found in Genesis 37. They showed through easily deciphered symbols that Joseph's family would one day bow to him in respect. His brothers didn't appreciate the dream and in their hatred sold Joseph into slavery. Eventually, Joseph ended up in prison in Egypt.

*Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker* (Genesis 40): While in prison Joseph interpreted some dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. With God's guidance, he explained that the cupbearer would return to Pharaoh's service, but the baker would be killed.

*Pharaoh* (Genesis 41): Two years later, Pharaoh himself had a dream which Joseph interpreted. God's purpose was to raise Joseph to second-in-command over Egypt and to save the Egyptians and the Israelites from a horrible famine.

*Samuel* (1 Samuel 3): Samuel had his first vision as a young boy. God told him that judgment was coming upon the sons of Samuel's mentor, Eli. The young Samuel was faithful to relay the information, and God continued to speak to Samuel through the rest of his life.

*The Midianite and Amalekite armies* (Judges 7:12-15): The pagan enemies of Israel had a divinely inspired dream. God told Gideon to sneak into the enemy camp at night, and there in the outposts of the camp, Gideon overheard an enemy soldier relate a dream he had just had. The interpretation, from another enemy soldier, mentioned Gideon by name and predicted that Israel would win the battle. Gideon was greatly encouraged by this revelation.

*Solomon* (1 Kings 3:5): It was in a dream that God gave Solomon the famous offer: "Ask what you wish Me to give you." Solomon chose wisdom.

*Daniel* (Daniel 2; 4): As He had done for Joseph, God placed Daniel in a position of power and influence by allowing him to interpret a foreign ruler's dream. This is consistent with God's propensity to use miracles to identify His messengers. Daniel himself had many dreams and visions, mostly related to future kingdoms of the world and the nation of Israel.

## **New Testament Dreams and Visions**

Visions in the New Testament also served to provide information that was unavailable elsewhere. Specifically, God used visions and dreams to identify Jesus and to establish His church.

*Zacharias* (Luke 1:5-23): God used a vision to tell Zacharias, an old priest, that he would soon have an important son. Not long after, Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth, had John the Baptist.

*Joseph* (Matthew 1:20; 2:13): Joseph would have divorced Mary when he found out she was pregnant, but God sent an angel to him in a dream, convincing him that the pregnancy was of God. Joseph went ahead with the marriage. After Jesus was born, God sent two more dreams, one to tell Joseph to take his family to Egypt so Herod could not kill Jesus and another to tell him Herod was dead and that he could return home.

*Pilate's wife* (Matthew 27:19): During Jesus' trial, Pilate's wife sent an urgent message to the governor encouraging him to free Jesus. Her message was prompted by a dream she had—a nightmare, really—that convinced her that Jesus was innocent and that Pilate should have nothing to do with His case.

*Ananias* (Acts 9:10): It would have taken nothing less than a vision from God to convince Ananias, a Christian in Damascus, to visit Paul, the persecutor of Christians. But because Ananias was obedient to God's leading, Paul regained his sight and found the truth about those he was trying to kill.

*Cornelius* (Acts 10:1-6): God spoke to an Italian centurion named Cornelius who feared the God of the Jews. In his vision, Cornelius saw an angel who told him where to find Simon Peter and to send for him and listen to his message. Cornelius obeyed the vision, Peter came and preached, and Cornelius and his household full of Gentiles were saved by the grace of God.

*Peter* (Acts 10:9-15): While Peter was praying on the rooftop of a house in Joppa, God gave him a vision of animals lowered in something like a sheet. A voice from heaven told Peter to kill the animals (some of which were unclean) and eat them. The vision served to show that Christians are not bound by kosher law and that God had pronounced Gentiles "clean"; that is, heaven is open to all who follow Jesus.

*Paul*: Paul had several visions in his missionary career. One sent him to preach in Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10). Another encouraged him to keep preaching in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11). God also gave him a vision of heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1-6).

*John* (Revelation): Nearly the entire book of Revelation is a vision John had while exiled on the island of

### Today's Dreams and Visions

With the completion of the Bible, God does not have to use dreams and visions as much as He did before. That is not to say that He cannot or does not; God can communicate with us however He chooses. But when we have a decision to make, our first stop should always be the Bible, not a dream. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**1 Kings 3:6 Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day."**

KJV 1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

BGT 1 Kings 3:6 κα ε πεν Σαλωμων σ πο ησας μετ το δο λου σου Δαυιδ το πατρ ς μου λεος μ γα καθ ς δι λθεν ν πι ν σου ν ληθε κα ν δικαιοσ ν κα ν ε θ τητι καρδ ας μετ σο κα φ λαξας α τ τ λεος τ μ γα το το δο ναι τ ν υ ν α το π το θρ νου α το ς μ ρ α τη

LXE 1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, Thou hast dealt very mercifully with thy servant David my father according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee, and thou hast kept for him this great mercy, to set his son upon his throne, as it is this day.

NET 1 Kings 3:6 Solomon replied, "You demonstrated great loyalty to your servant, my father David, as he served you faithfully, properly, and sincerely. You have maintained this great loyalty to this day by allowing his son to sit on his throne.

CSB 1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to Your servant, my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness, righteousness, and integrity. You have continued this great and faithful love for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today.

ESV 1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.

NIV 1 Kings 3:6 Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

NLT 1 Kings 3:6 Solomon replied, "You showed faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued your faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.

NRS 1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today.

NJB 1 Kings 3:6 Solomon replied, "You showed most faithful love to your servant David, my father, when he lived his life before you in faithfulness and uprightness and integrity of heart; you have continued this most faithful love to him by allowing a son of his to sit on his throne today.

NAB 1 Kings 3:6 Solomon answered: "You have shown great favor to your servant, my father David, because he behaved faithfully toward you, with justice and an upright heart; and you have continued this great favor toward him, even today, seating a son of his on his throne.

YLT 1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon saith, 'Thou hast done with Thy servant David my father great kindness, as he walked before Thee in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with Thee, and Thou dost keep for him this great kindness, and dost give to him a son sitting on his throne, as at this day.

- **servant:** Nu 12:7 2Sa 7:5
- **great:** 2Sa 7:8-12 12:7,8 22:47-51 1Ch 29:12-14 Ps 78:70-72
- **lovingkindness,** Ps 13:6 116:7 119:17 2Co 9:5,11



- **according:** 1Ki 2:4 9:4 15:5 2Ki 20:3 Ps 15:2 18:20-24
- **that:** 1Ki 1:48

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 1:8+ In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you." 8 Solomon said to God, "You have dealt with my father David with great lovingkindness, and have made me king in his place. 9 "Now, O LORD God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.

2 Samuel 7:15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him (DAVID), as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GOD'S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS

Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness ([hesed](#); Lxx = [eleos](#)) to Your servant (['ebed](#); Lxx = [doulos](#)) David my father, according as he walked before You (see Coram Deo) in truth (['emeth](#)) and righteousness ([tsedeqah](#)) and uprightness (speaks of integrity) of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness ([hesed](#)), that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day - Solomon rightly and reverently twice acknowledged God's great lovingkindness, His great covenant faithfulness, loyalty and love, and ultimately the fact that He was beginning to fulfill His [covenant promises to David](#) though His gift of the monarchy to his son Solomon.

**Dale Ralph Davis** - Solomon's prayer, then, is a proclamation of the fidelity of God. His prayer begins with praise of Yahweh's dependability. That is proper in itself—God should be so praised. But it is also useful for the prayer, for as we praise in prayer we are encouraged in petition, for we realize as we rehearse Yahweh's record that we are coming to a faithful God. Praise then becomes the basis of confidence. ([See his MP3 series on 1 Kings](#))

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**Lovingkindness** ([02617](#)) [hesed/chesed/heced](#) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20+, Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises.

**Vine** writes that...In general, one may identify three basic meanings of **hesed**, and these 3 meanings always interact -- **strength**, **steadfastness**, and **love**. Any understanding of **hesed** that fails to suggest all three inevitably loses some of its richness. **Love** by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet **strength** or **steadfastness** suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. **Hesed** refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Jehovah and Israel). But hesed is not only a matter of obligation but is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. **Hesed** implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law. ([Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#)) (Bolding added)

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#### QUESTION - [What is the Davidic covenant?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Davidic Covenant refers to God's promises to David through Nathan the prophet and is found in 2 Samuel 7 and later summarized in 1 Chronicles 17:11–14 and 2 Chronicles 6:16. This is an unconditional covenant made between God and David through which God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. The Davidic Covenant is unconditional because God does not place any conditions of obedience upon its fulfillment. The surety of the promises made rests solely on God's faithfulness and does not depend at all on David or Israel's obedience.

The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David. First, God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants). This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:10, "I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore." God then promises that David's son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this

son (Solomon) would build the temple. This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:12–13, "I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name."

But then the promise continues and expands: "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (verse 13), and "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (verse 16). What began as a promise that David's son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple turns into something different—the promise of an everlasting kingdom. Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House. This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.

The promise that David's "house," "kingdom," and "throne" will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign. The covenant is summarized by the words "house," promising a dynasty in the lineage of David; "kingdom," referring to a people who are governed by a king; "throne," emphasizing the authority of the king's rule; and "forever," emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel.

Other references to the Davidic Covenant are found in Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9; Isaiah 9:7; 11:1; Luke 1:32, 69; Acts 13:34; and Revelation 3:7. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**1 Kings 3:7 "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in."**

- **You have made** Da 2:21 4:25,32 5:18,21
- **a little:** 1Ch 29:1 Job 32:6-8 Ec 10:16 Jer 1:6 Mt 18:3,4
- **to go:** Nu 27:17 De 31:2 1Sa 18:16 2Sa 5:2 Ps 121:8 Joh 10:3,4,9

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 29:1 Then King David said to the entire assembly, "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is still young and inexperienced and the work is great; for the temple is not for man, but for the LORD God.

2 Chronicles 1:8+ Solomon said to God, "You have dealt with my father David with great lovingkindness, and have made me king in his place.

### A GREAT BEGINNING: HUMILITY & SENSE OF INADEQUACY

**Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant** ('[ebed](#); Lxx = [doulos](#)) **king in place of my father David** - Solomon sees himself as a **servant** and acknowledges Yahweh's authority and sovereignty in bestowing the monarchy on him rather than on Adonijah. Solomon knew he was in the center of God's will. When we are sure of God's will, there is no need to plot and scheme. Solomon showed restraint in waiting for David to keep his promise and appoint him ruler.

**Yet** - Term of contrast. King, yes, but still a youth.

**I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in** - Solomon was about 20 yo when he became king but would have been like a **little child** in knowledge and wisdom in governing the nation of Israel. What do we clearly see in Solomon's heart at this time? He is humbly confessing his inadequacy to govern God's chosen people. The phrase **go out or come in** is an idiom that describes the ability to lead as we see in other OT passages (Nu 27:17; Josh 14:11; 1Sa 29:6; 2Ki 11:8).

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**Rod Mattoon** ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#)) points out the value of a sense of inadequacy ...

Moses felt inadequate.....

Exodus 4:10,13+—And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

Jeremiah felt inadequate....

Jeremiah 1:6—Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

Paul also felt inadequate...

1 Corinthians 15:9+—For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

**ED:** Isaiah felt inadequate...

Isaiah 6:5+ Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

*True humility is not self-degrading.*

*It is self-forgetfulness and God-dependent.*

These were all humble men whom God used. True humility is not self-degrading. It is self-forgetfulness and God-dependent. The humble man looks to the Lord for strength and ability. He gives God the glory for his accomplishments. That is what the Lord wants us to do too. Our Lord can equip us for the task He wants us to accomplish. Without Him, we will fail.

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*Usefulness begins  
with inadequacy*

**THOUGHT-** Do you feel inadequate for some task for God? Then great! You are in just the right place for God to use you! When God calls you to do something for Him, rest assured He will enable you to accomplish the task!

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### **1 Kings 3:7-9 (Our Daily Walk) THE CHOICE OF A LIFE-WORK**

"I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in... Give Thy servant an understanding heart."-- 1 Kings 3:7-9.

WE SHALL never rightly choose our life-course until we are determined to put first things first. Wealth, honour, fame, the surpassing of our rivals, are not the chief things to be considered, or our judgment will be impaired and our vision distorted. It was because Solomon desired and sought the kingdom and glory of God, that He gave him also the things for which he did not ask (1 Kings 3:13; Matthew 6:33).

Impressed by the greatness of his responsibilities, the young king had gone to Gibeon to worship God. He wished to fulfil his opportunities to their highest measure, and to serve his fatherland, but he realized his inefficiency. Do you feel like this? You realize the wonderful opportunities and responsibilities of life in this marvellous age, and long to be of service to God and your fellows, but what can you do? You are but as a little child, and "know not how to go out or come in." "Going out" stands for the active life in the world of men; "coming in" for the hours spent in the home, in recreation and society. It is like the systole and diastole of the heart's action, which should be alike consecrated to God and of service to man.

Solomon asked for an understanding heart, that he might discern between good and bad. We all need this faculty, that we may discriminate between things that look very much alike, but are different in nature and direction (Hebrews 5:14; Phil 1:9-10; marg. R.V.). It is not an endowment of intellectual power, but of moral taste and discernment. It has been said, that the difficulty in life is not to discriminate between white and black, but to choose between the different shades of grey. In our fellowships, recreations, literature, business--we are in urgent need of the understanding heart, which listens for and heeds the voice of God.

Solomon offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon the altar (1 Kings 3:4). We are required to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God, which is our reasonable service. Our career is often determined by our circumstances, or by our special gifts and talents, and, on the whole, we succeed best in doing what we like best. But if we yield ourselves to do God's will, He will direct our paths.

**PRAYER** - O God, make us diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. May we prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. AMEN.

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### **When Life Is Too Big**

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. —1 Kings 3:7

Today's Scripture : 1 Kings 3:4-14

As a young man, Jimmy Carter was a junior officer in the US Navy. He was deeply impacted by Admiral Hyman Rickover, the

mastermind of the US nuclear submarine fleet. Shortly after Carter's inauguration as President, he invited Rickover to the White House for lunch, where the admiral presented Carter with a plaque that read, "O, God, Thy sea is so great, and my boat is so small." That prayer is a useful perspective on the size and complexity of life and our inability to manage it on our own.

Solomon too knew that life could be overwhelming. When he succeeded his father, David, as king of Israel, he confessed his weakness to God, saying, "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" (1 Kings 3:7). As a result, he asked for the wisdom to lead in a way that would please God and help others (1Ki 3:9).

Is life feeling too big for you? There may not be easy answers to the challenges you are facing, but God promises that, if you ask for wisdom, He will grant it (James 1:5). You don't have to face the overwhelming challenges of life alone. -- Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Each day we learn from yesterday  
Of God's great love and care;  
And every burden we must face  
He'll surely help us bear.  
—D. De Haan

Recognizing our own smallness can cause us to embrace God's greatness.

*So may we stand in awe and praise,  
Through all our fleeting, numbered days.  
For in our smallness, we embrace,  
The boundless beauty of His grace.*

**1 Kings 3:8 "Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.**

- **people:** Ex 19:5-6 De 7:6-8 1Sa 12:22 Ps 78:71
- **too many:** Ge 13:16 Ge 15:5 Ge 22:17 1Ch 21:2,5,6 27:23,24

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 1:9+ "Now, O LORD God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled (SEE [DAVIDIC COVENANT](#)), for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth (Ge 13:16+)

### **SOLOMON ACKNOWLEDGES GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY & HIS INADEQUACY**

**Your servant** ('[ebed](#); Lxx = [doulos](#)) **is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen**([bahar/bachar](#); Lxx = [eklego/eklegomai](#)) - Note Solomon's acknowledgement that he is the servant of Yahweh, that the people he rules over belong to Yahweh and that He had chosen them from all the people of the earth to be His own possession (Ex 19:5+).

**A great people who are too many to be numbered or counted-** This recalls God's promises to Abram/Abraham (Ge 13:16+ Ge 15:5+ Ge 22:17+) Solomon recognizes that he could not govern such a great number in his own wisdom and discernment, which sets the stage for his incredible request of God. This is a great attitude to begin his reign with and reminds me of Paul's words in 2Co 3:5-6+ "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." Wisdom from God would make Solomon adequate.

**John MacArthur:** Based on the census, which recorded 800,000 men of fighting age in Israel and 500,000 in Judah (2Sa 24:9), the total population was over 4 million, approximately double what it had been at the time of the Conquest (see Nu 26:1-65). (See [1 Kings 1 to 11, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes: The Rise and ... - Page 7](#))

**1 Kings 3:9 "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"**

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KJV 1 Kings 3:9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

BGT 1 Kings 3:9 καὶ ὁ σεῖς τὸ ὅλ σου καρδὴν κοῖν καὶ διακρνεῖν τὴν λαὸν σου ν δίκαιος ν τὸ συν εἶν ν μὲν γὰρ καὶ κακὸ τι τς δυν σεται κρνεῖν τὴν λαὸν σου τ ν βάρ ν τὸν

LXE 1 Kings 3:9 Thou shalt give therefore to thy servant a heart to hear and to judge thy people justly, and to discern between good and evil: for who will be able to judge this thy great people?

NET 1 Kings 3:9 So give your servant a discerning mind so he can make judicial decisions for your people and distinguish right from wrong. Otherwise no one is able to make judicial decisions for this great nation of yours."

CSB 1 Kings 3:9 So give Your servant an obedient heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

ESV 1 Kings 3:9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"

NIV 1 Kings 3:9 So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

NLT 1 Kings 3:9 Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

NRS 1 Kings 3:9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

NJB 1 Kings 3:9 So give your servant a heart to understand how to govern your people, how to discern between good and evil, for how could one otherwise govern such a great people as yours?"

NAB 1 Kings 3:9 Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?"

YLT 1 Kings 3:9 and Thou hast given to Thy servant an understanding heart, to judge Thy people, to discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this Thy great people?"

- **Give:** 1Ch 22:12 29:19 2Ch 1:10 Ps 119:34,73,144 Pr 2:3-9 3:13-18 Pr 16:16 Jas 1:5 3:17
- **understanding:** Pr 20:12
- **to judge:** 1Ki 3:28 Ps 72:1,2 Pr 14:8 Ec 7:11,19 9:15-18 Joh 5:30
- **discern:** 2Sa 14:17 Isa 11:2-4 1Co 2:14,15 Eph 5:17 Php 1:10 \*Gr: Heb 5:14
- **who is able:** Ex 3:11,12 4:10-13 Jer 1:6 Mt 3:11,14 2Co 2:16 3:5

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 1:10+ "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?" 11 God said to Solomon, "Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you."

Colossians 1:9-12+ For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and **to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding** 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Ephesians 1:17-19+ (PRAY) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a **spirit of wisdom** and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These



are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

Philippians 1:9-11+ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Proverbs 1:1-5+ The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: 2 To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, 3 To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity; 4 To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion, 5 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,

Proverbs 4:3-9 When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, 4 Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live; 5 **Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding!** Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 "Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. 7 "The beginning of wisdom is: **Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.** 8 "Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her. 9 "She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty."

## SOLOMON SEEKS HEART TO DISCERN GOOD FROM EVIL

**So give Your servant** (['ebed](#); Lxx = [doulos](#)) **an understanding** ([shama](#)- a listening, hearing) **heart** ([leb](#)) **to judge** ([shaphat](#); Lxx - [diakrino](#)) **Your people to discern** ([bin/biyn](#); Lxx = [suniami](#)) **between good and evil** - In the parallel passage "**Understanding heart** is more literally a "hearing heart" tuned to the voice of God (the "FM" band so to speak) so he could lead Israel as God would want the nation to be led. A hearing heart is a heart willing to listen and willing to learn. It's a teachable heart. And ultimately it is an obedient heart. The phrase suggested not only the willingness to listen to all sides of an issue, but also the desire for the ability to reason.

**THOUGHT** - Is Solomon's request not a great prayer for all of us to frequently prayer? I frequently pray Colossians 1:9-12+ for myself, my family, my disciples and my missionaries. Two other great prayers we can pray are Ephesians 1:17-19+ (for "spirit of wisdom") and Php 1:9-11+. And since this prayer is in God's will, He will answer it (1Jn 5:14-15+). Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge correctly. Have you ever prayed Scriptures like these for others? Most prayer requests I hear are for physical things, but in Scripture most by far are for spiritual things like wisdom, etc. If you begin to pray these prayers just mentioned, I can guarantee you two things - you will please your Father and you will receive answers to these requests. God is far more interested in our holiness than He is in our happiness and health.

*"Blessed is the man who listens to me,  
Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.*

-- Proverbs 8:34

**Rod Mattoon** says "An understanding heart means "a hearing heart or teachable heart." We need an understanding heart to hear God's voice and obey it when He speaks to us through His Spirit. Hearing is so important to the Lord that the ear is the first sense organ to function in the womb and the last one to stop functioning in death. We need a heart that has patience to hear a case and understand it fully. Hearing is the door to discernment, blessing, and wisdom."....Unfortunately, Solomon did not pray for spiritual discernment. If he had, many of his blunders could have been avoided in his home. May we learn from his mistakes and ask God for **spiritual discernment**, wisdom, and an understanding heart (Solomon prayed for "**discernment** to understand justice.")....Understanding takes the truth of God's Word and puts it into practical applications for our lives in the areas of marriage, work, child training, spiritual service, government, finances, etc. If you want understanding, you need a knowledge of the character and nature of God. Who is He? What is God like? What does He expect? One takes this knowledge and applies it to their life. God is holy; we should be too. God loves us; we should love others. God hates sin; we should hate our sin too. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

Jay Adams points out that the **discern** ([bin/biyn](#)) "is related to the noun *bayin*, which means 'interval' or 'space between,' and the preposition *ben*, 'between.' In essence it means to separate things from one another at their points of difference in order to distinguish them." **Discernment**, then, is a synonym for **discrimination**. So **discernment** is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking about truth. The discerning person is the one who draws a clear contrast between truth and error. **Discernment** is black-and-white thinking—the conscious refusal to color every issue in shades of gray. No one can be truly discerning without developing skill in separating divine truth from error

*The ability to make righteous judgments  
in complex situations is a gift from God.*

-- Paul Apple

**For** (term of explanation) **who is able to judge** ([shaphat](#)) **this great people of Yours** - This rhetorical question would imply that the only one truly able to judge would be God, which is why Solomon was asking for God's discernment.

**Paul House** - Justice can become a quite complicated goal, as 1Ki 3:16–28 proves. Only knowledge of what God considers fair and unfair can guide the king to act justly with any consistency. Though Solomon has already exhibited political craftiness, he knows that long-term wisdom and success reside where David found it—in an ongoing relationship with the Lord. (Borrow [1,2 Kings](#))

**R. D. Patterson:** The responsibilities facing Solomon were all the greater in that Israel was God's chosen nation. She had to be governed in accordance with God's precepts if the people were to experience his blessing. A wisdom that God alone could give was needed here.

**THOUGHT** - And how better to hone this skill than to "eat" and meditate on the Proverbs! (cf uses of bin/biyn in Ps 119:27, 95. Are you periodically reading the Proverbs? If 'Yes,' then the next question is are you "speed reading" them? Or are you pausing to ponder them, chewing and tasting the savory morsels of truth with your "spiritual palate" that they might be totally "digested" into your inner being, the Spirit using the truths gleaned to renew your mind (cp Eph 4:23+, 2Cor 3:18+, Ro 12:2+)? Instead of the "proverbial" recommendation of "Read one chapter of Proverbs every day of the month, so that at the end of the month you will have read the entire book," you might consider reading one single proverb a day, writing it down and then pondering it throughout the day! While reading a chapter a day is commendable, I fear many "thru the Bible reading programs" are much like swallowing a choice cut of filet mignon without chewing or savoring each bite!).

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**Understanding** (listening, hearing and then obeying) ([08085](#)) [shama](#) means to **hear** (Adam and Eve hearing God = [Ge 3:8, 10](#), [Ge 18:10](#) = "overheard"), to **listen** ([Ge 3:17](#), [Ge 16:2](#) [= this was a big mistake and was the origin of Jews and Arabs!] [Ex 6:9,16:20, 18:19](#), Webster's 1828 on "listen" = to hearken; to give ear; to attend closely with a view to hear. To obey; to yield to advice; to follow admonition) and since hearing/listening are often closely linked to obedience, **shama** is translated **obey** (1 [Sa 15:22](#), [Ge 22:18, 26:5, 39:10](#), [Ex 19:5](#), **disobedience** = [Lev 26:14, 18, 21, 27](#)) or to understand. KJV translates **shama** "**hearken**" (196x) a word which means to give respectful attention. Of God's hearing in general or hearing our prayers ([Hab 1:2](#), [Ps 66:18](#), click here for more in the Psalms, cf God's hearing in [Zeph 2:8](#), [Ge 16:11, 17:20, 30:17, 22](#), [Ge 21:17, 29:33, 30:6, 17, 22](#); [Ex 2:24](#), [Ex 16:8, 9, 12](#), [Nu 11:1, 12:2](#)). **Shama** means "to hear intelligently and attentively and respond appropriately." In other words to hear does not convey the idea of "in one ear and out the other!"

The greatest significance of the use of **shama** is that of relation of man to God, especially where the context speaks of **obedience**. Obedience is the supreme test of faith and reverence for God. The Old Testament conception of obedience was vital. It was the one important relationship which must not be broken. While sometimes this relation may have been formal and cold, it nevertheless was the one strong tie which held the people close to God. The significant spiritual relation is expressed by Samuel when he asks the question, "Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying** (shama) the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to **obey** (shama) is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 [Sa 15:22](#)). It was the condition without which no right relation might be sustained to Yahweh. This is most clearly stated in the relation between Abraham and Yahweh when he is assured "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast **obeyed** (shama) my voice" ([Ge 22:18](#)). In prophetic utterances, future blessing and prosperity were conditioned upon obedience: "If ye be willing and **obedient** (shama), ye shall eat the good of the land" ([Isa 1:19](#)). After surveying the glories of the Messianic kingdom, the prophet assures the people that "this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently **obey** (shama) the voice of Yahweh your God" ([Zec 6:15](#)). On the other hand misfortune, calamity, distress and famine are due to their disobedience and distrust of Yahweh.

The most famous use is the so-called "**Shema**" in [Dt 6:4](#) "Hear (a command, in Greek [Lxx](#) = [present imperative](#) - habitually, continually) O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

SHAMA IN KINGS - 1 [Ki. 1:11](#); 1 [Ki. 1:41](#); 1 [Ki. 1:45](#); 1 [Ki. 2:42](#); 1 [Ki. 3:9](#); 1 [Ki. 3:11](#); 1 [Ki. 3:28](#); 1 [Ki. 4:34](#); 1 [Ki. 5:1](#); 1 [Ki. 5:7](#); 1 [Ki. 5:8](#); 1 [Ki. 6:7](#); 1 [Ki. 8:28](#); 1 [Ki. 8:29](#); 1 [Ki. 8:30](#); 1 [Ki. 8:32](#); 1 [Ki. 8:34](#); 1 [Ki. 8:36](#); 1 [Ki. 8:39](#); 1 [Ki. 8:42](#); 1 [Ki. 8:43](#); 1 [Ki. 8:45](#); 1 [Ki. 8:49](#); 1 [Ki. 8:52](#); 1 [Ki. 9:3](#); 1 [Ki. 10:1](#); 1 [Ki. 10:6](#); 1 [Ki. 10:7](#); 1 [Ki. 10:8](#); 1 [Ki. 10:24](#); 1 [Ki. 11:21](#); 1 [Ki. 11:38](#); 1 [Ki. 12:2](#); 1 [Ki. 12:15](#); 1 [Ki. 12:16](#); 1 [Ki. 12:20](#); 1 [Ki. 12:24](#); 1 [Ki. 13:4](#); 1 [Ki. 13:26](#); 1 [Ki. 14:6](#); 1 [Ki. 15:20](#); 1 [Ki. 15:21](#); 1 [Ki. 15:22](#); 1 [Ki. 16:16](#); 1 [Ki. 17:22](#); 1 [Ki. 19:13](#); 1 [Ki.](#)

20:8; 1 Ki. 20:12; 1 Ki. 20:25; 1 Ki. 20:31; 1 Ki. 20:36; 1 Ki. 21:15; 1 Ki. 21:16; 1 Ki. 21:27; 1 Ki. 22:19; 1 Ki. 22:28; 2 Ki. 3:21; 2 Ki. 5:8; 2 Ki. 6:30; 2 Ki. 7:1; 2 Ki. 7:6; 2 Ki. 9:30; 2 Ki. 10:6; 2 Ki. 11:13; 2 Ki. 13:4; 2 Ki. 14:11; 2 Ki. 16:9; 2 Ki. 17:14; 2 Ki. 17:40; 2 Ki. 18:12; 2 Ki. 18:26; 2 Ki. 18:28; 2 Ki. 18:31; 2 Ki. 18:32; 2 Ki. 19:1; 2 Ki. 19:4; 2 Ki. 19:6; 2 Ki. 19:7; 2 Ki. 19:8; 2 Ki. 19:9; 2 Ki. 19:11; 2 Ki. 19:16; 2 Ki. 19:20; 2 Ki. 19:25; 2 Ki. 20:5; 2 Ki. 20:12; 2 Ki. 20:13; 2 Ki. 20:16; 2 Ki. 21:9; 2 Ki. 21:12; 2 Ki. 22:11; 2 Ki. 22:13; 2 Ki. 22:18; 2 Ki. 22:19; 2 Ki. 25:23

**Discern** (consider) (0995) [bin/biyn](#) means to understand or perceive. **Bin/biyn** conveys the same idea as our word discrimination. It entails the idea of making a distinction as in 1Ki 3:9 where Solomon ask God for the ability "to **discern** (bin/biyn) between good and evil". Many of the OT uses of **bin/biyn** are translated "**understanding**," an understanding which is the result of comparative "study" or "mental separation". **TWOT** - The verb **bin/biyn** refers to knowledge which is superior to the mere gathering of data....yāda generally describes the process whereby one gains knowledge through experience with objects and circumstances. **bîn** is a power of judgment and perceptive insight and is demonstrated in the use of knowledge. God has absolutely perfect discernment and understanding - see 1Ch 28:9, Job 28:23, Ps 139:2.

**Roy Zuck** - The word בִּין (**bin/biyn**) means basically "to distinguish, to separate." From this is derived the common meaning, "to discern, to see distinctions, to perceive." In the causative Hiphil form, בִּין means "to cause to discern, to cause to perceive." According to this verb, teaching is not simply imparting facts (though it certainly includes that), but it is helping others acquire the ability or skill to discern. Gabriel, for example, caused Daniel to understand (בִּין) the vision of the ram and the male goat (Da 8:16). When Ezra opened God's Word before the people, the Levites caused the people to understand or perceive it (Neh 8:7-9). Jojarib and Elnathan, "men of discernment" (מְבִינִים, Ezra 8:16), were teachers. The Levites were teachers—men who helped others discern the things of God (2Chr 35:3). And some of them, including Chenaniah, were music teachers; they helped others understand and discern music (1Chr. 15:22). Real perception into spiritual matters comes only from God ("the Almighty giveth them understanding," Job 32:8), and such insight comes, only in accordance with His Word (Ps 119:109). Believers need spiritual insight and perception from the Lord so that they may keep His law (Ps. 119:34), learn His commandments (Ps 119:73), know His testimonies (Ps 119:125), and live (Ps. 119:144). Teaching, then, is helping others grow in spiritual perception so that as a result, they may live for God. It is striking that in some verses the verb בִּין is followed by two accusatives—one the person, and the other the subject matter (see Ps. 119:27; Isa 28:9; Da 10:14). In other words, according to these verses both pupils and content are to be "taught." God helps others have perception and discernment, but it is with reference to divine content—His written revelation. (Bibliotheca Sacra. Hebrew Words for "Teach")

**Judge** (08199) [shaphat](#) is a verb that means to judge or govern. While it frequently translated judge, this is somewhat misleading as shaphat is not typical of the modern concept of judge (as in a court of law), but is much more inclusive -- to function as ruler or governor - individuals (Jdg. 16:31; 1 Sa 7:16), king (1 Ki. 3:9); even God Himself (Ps. 50:6; 75:7) because He is the source of authority and will eventually conduct all judgments (Ps. 96:13). In a judicial sense shaphat could refer to the arbitration of civil, domestic, and religious disputes (Dt. 25:1), fulfilled by the congregation (Nu 35:24), by individual judges (Ex 18:16; Dt. 1:16), by the king (1 Sa 8:5, 6, 20) or by God Himself (Ge 16:5; 1 Sa 24:12, 15).

**W E Vine on shaphat** - In many contexts this root has a judicial sense. Shāpaṭ refers to the activity of a third party who sits over two parties at odds with one another. This third party hears their cases against one another and decides where the right is and what to do about it (he functions as both judge and jury). So Sarai said to Abram: "My wrong [outrage done me] be upon thee [in your lap]: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee" (Gen. 16:5, the first occurrence of the word). Sarai had given Hagar to Abram in her stead. This act was in keeping with ancient Nuzu law, which Abram apparently knew and followed. The legal rights to the child would be Sarai's. This would mean that Hagar "did all the work" and received none of the privileges. Consequently she made things miserable for Sarai. As the tribal and family head Abram's responsibility was to keep things in order. This he did not do. Thus Sarai declares that she is innocent of wrongdoing; she has done nothing to earn Hagar's mistreatment, and Abram is at fault in not getting the household in order. Her appeal is: since Abram has not done his duty (normally he would be the judge of tribal matters), "the Lord decide" between us, that is, in a judicial sense, as to who is in the right. Abram granted the legitimacy of her case and handed Hagar over to her to be brought into line (Gen. 16:6). Shāpaṭ also speaks of the accomplishing of a sentence. Both this concept and those of hearing the case and rendering a decision are seen in Gen. 18:25, where Abraham speaks of "the Judge [literally, "One who judges"] of all the earth." In 1 Sam. 3:13 the emphasis is solely on "delivering" the sentence: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth...." In some cases "judging" really means delivering from injustice or oppression. David says to Saul: "The Lord therefore be judge and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand" (1 Sam. 24:15). This sense (in addition to the judicial sense), "to deliver," is to be

understood when one speaks of the judges of Israel (Judg. 2:16): "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that [plundered] them." Shāpaṭ can be used not only of an act of deliverance, but of a process whereby order and law are maintained within a group. This idea also is included in the concept of the judges of Israel: "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time" (Judg. 4:4). This activity was judicial and constituted a kind of ruling over Israel. Certainly ruling is in mind in Num. 25:5: "And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, 'Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-Peor'" (1 Sam. 8:1). The military deliverer was the head over a volunteer army summoned when danger threatened (militia). In the time of Samuel this procedure proved inadequate for Israel. They wanted a leader who would organize and lead a standing army. They asked Samuel, therefore, for a king such as the other nations had, one who was apt and trained in warfare, and whose successor (son) would be carefully trained, too. There would be more continuity in leadership as a result. Included in this idea of a king who would "judge" them like the other nations was the idea of a ruler; in order to sustain a permanent army and its training, the people had to be organized for taxation and conscription. This is what is in view in 1 Sam. 8:6-18 as Samuel explains. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

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It was 5 p.m. on April 12th, 1945, when Vice President Harry Truman ducked into Sam Rayburn's private office in the Capitol. A message was given to Truman that the White House had called. Dialing National 1414, he reached the Press Secretary, Steve Early, who instructed Truman to urgently and quietly come to the White House. Arriving at the White House, he was greeted by Eleanor Roosevelt who said to the Vice President, "Harry, the President is dead." Truman groped for words and asked her, "Is there anything I can do for you Mrs. Roosevelt?" Eleanor replied, "Is there anything we can do for you? You are the one in trouble now."

That night, Truman took the oath of office as President of the United States with his hand resting on a Gideon Bible that they borrowed from the desk of the head usher of the White House. The following Monday, Truman addressed a joint session in Congress. His speech lasted only fifteen minutes, but he closed with these words from this chapter, "*At this moment I have in my heart a prayer. As I have assumed my duties, I humbly pray to Almighty God in the words of King Solomon: 'Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?'*" I ask only to be a good and faithful servant of my Lord and my people." It wouldn't hurt any of our Presidents if they prayed this prayer and meant it. And as God's providence would have it, Harry Truman would play a crucial role in the birth of the Nation of Israel in May 14, 1948 (against the advice of some of his advisors!). See his signed note on May 14, 1948, making the United States the first country in the world to recognize the statehood of Israel! Harry Truman was providentially raised up for "Such a time as this," (Esther 4:14) and God answered his prayer and gave him a heart of wisdom in tune with the Father's heart for His Chosen People!

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## The Wisdom of Solomon

So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.  
For who is able to govern this great people of yours? [1 Kings 3:9]

During the century between the time the tabernacle was destroyed and the temple erected, the people of Israel worshiped properly at various high places. David moved the ark to Jerusalem and established the rest of the tabernacle furniture at Gibeon, and after this the people were only to worship at these two places. There was a high priest in charge of each (1 Chron. 16:37-40). After the temple was built, the original Mosaic laws came back into effect (Deuteronomy 12), and high-place worship was forbidden (though the people sinfully continued to use these worship centers).

At the beginning of his reign, Solomon went to Gibeon to worship the Lord and God appeared to him. God told Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted and God would give it to him. Solomon requested the wisdom he would need to apply the law of God fairly to the people.

Yet there was another aspect to wisdom as well. Solomon was going to build the temple, and we are told that God used wisdom in making the world, and Bezalel used wisdom in making the tabernacle (Prov. 3:19; Exod. 28:3). As we shall see, the temple was a symbol of God's people gathered around his throne. Building the temple was a symbol of building the nation. Thus, it was fitting that Solomon possessed wisdom both to build the temple and to build the nation it symbolized.

Since Israel was to be a priestly nation, ministering God's grace to all the people of the world, the wisdom of Solomon was also evangelistic. His proverbs and sayings were published abroad and drew admiration from all the surrounding nations (1 Kings 4:29-34). People came to visit Israel and hear Solomon, going home with the good news that God was making salvation available through his people. Other nations reformed their laws and customs, benefiting from the wisdom of God's law as taught by Solomon (compare Deut. 4:6-8). Perhaps the most well known of Solomon's admirers was the Queen of Sheba, who traveled a thousand miles to learn

wise leadership and rule from King Solomon (1 Kings 10:1–13).

Coram Deo James 1:5 says that we all have Solomon's privilege of asking for wisdom. Wisdom is practical and enables you to do excellent work in all your tasks, whatever they are. Such wisdom will reform your life and gain praise and influence for God in the lives of other people. Stop now and ask God to pour out his wisdom upon you without measure, and then wisely make use of your wisdom.

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### **Missing: Wisdom** - Ann Cetas

Give your servant a discerning heart . . . to distinguish between right and wrong. 1 Kings 3:9

#### **TODAY'S SCRIPTURE** 1 Kings 3:5–12

Today's Insights - King Solomon's story is complex. In response to Solomon's request for discernment, God blessed him with great wisdom (1 Kings 3:9–12). But the king had trouble applying that wisdom to all of life. Just prior to this passage we see how he was already ignoring God's plan for Israel. In making "an alliance" with Egypt, he married Pharaoh's daughter (v. 1), a pattern he would continue in later years (11:1–8). This turned Solomon's heart to "other gods" (v. 4). The nation thrived under Solomon, but the kingdom would be divided because of his sins (vv. 9–13).

Devotional - Two-year-old Kenneth went missing. Yet within three minutes of his mom's 9-1-1 call, an emergency worker found him just two blocks from home at the county fair. His mom had promised he could go later that day with his grandpa. But he'd driven his toy tractor there, and parked it at his favorite ride. When the boy was safely home, his dad wisely removed the toy's battery.

Kenneth was actually rather smart to get where he wanted to go, but two-year-olds are missing another key quality: wisdom. And as adults we sometimes lack it too. Solomon, who'd been appointed king by his father David (1 Kings 2), admitted he felt like a child. God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you" (3:5). He replied, "I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. . . . So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" (vv. 7–9). God gave Solomon "a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore" (4:29).

Where can we get the wisdom we need? Solomon said the beginning of wisdom is a "fear" or awe of God (Proverbs 9:10). So we can start by asking Him to teach us about Himself and to give us wisdom beyond our own.

In what areas do you need God's wisdom? What might give you a teachable heart?

I'm always in need of wisdom, God. I want to follow Your ways. Please show me which way to go.

(ED: AND EMPOWER WITH YOUR SPIRIT TO WALK THE WAY YOU SHOW. AMEN)

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### **Wandering From Wisdom**

Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil.  
—1 Kings 3:9

#### **Today's Scripture:** 1 Kings 3:4-14

If God offered you anything you wanted, what would you ask for?

When Solomon was given that choice, he asked for the wisdom to discern good from evil so that he might lead God's people well (1 Kings 3:9). "Because you have asked this thing," God told Solomon, "I have done according to your words." He even promised to give him "both riches and honor" (vv.11-13). To this day, Solomon is remembered for the great wisdom God gave him.

Solomon began his rule with devotion to wisdom and a deep ambition to build a magnificent temple to honor God. But something happened along the way. (ED: I THINK IT HAPPENED AT THE VERY OUTSET AS SHOWN IN 1 KINGS 3) His passion for living by God's wisdom was displaced by the allures of the wealth and position God had given him. His marriage to foreign women who worshiped pagan gods eventually led him—and ultimately the nation—into idolatry.

The lesson is clear. Keeping our love for Christ and His wisdom preeminent is a primary objective for those of us who want to live to satisfy God throughout the course of our life. A commitment to following the riches of God's wisdom will enable us to avoid the drift that destroyed Solomon.

Keep your heart in tune with God's wisdom and obey His voice. That's the way to finish well. -- Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission



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Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.  
—Robinson

Monitor your heart daily to avoid wandering from God's wisdom.

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## Growing Wise

Give to Your servant an understanding heart. —1 Kings 3:9

Today's Scripture: 1 Kings 3:5-10

Solomon was a young man charged with the responsibility of governing one of the most prosperous kingdoms in the ancient Near East. Israel was a significant power then, her domain extending from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt. Responsible for so much, Solomon knew he needed help. So when God asked the young king what He could do for him, Solomon did not ask to be healthy or wealthy. He asked to be wise (1 Kings 3:9). This request pleased the Lord.

God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing, . . . I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart" (1Ki 3:11-12).

The word translated "understanding" in Solomon's request (1Ki 3:9) actually means "hearing." God gave Solomon a hearing heart so he could judge the people, and "discern between good and evil."

Wise men and women hear God through His Book. They read other books, of course, but they judge them all by the Word of God. There is no greater wisdom.

If you want wisdom, ask God for it. The apostle James said, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). — David H. Roper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I scanned God's teachings thoughtlessly,  
In haste I did not hear Him;  
Then prayerfully I read once more,  
This time my heart drew near Him.  
—Gustafson

God opens the door of His wisdom  
to those who open their Bibles.

**1 Kings 3:10 It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.**

## Related Passage:

Proverbs 15:8+ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.

## SOLOMON'S REQUEST PLEASES ADONAI

**It was pleasing** ([yatab/yatav](#); Lxx = [aresko](#) in 1Th 4:1) **in the sight of the Lord** (['adonay](#)) **that Solomon had asked this thing** - This is surely one of the high points of Solomon's life with such an unselfish request and one that was pleasing to Jehovah. And as Pr 15:8 (which Solomon wrote) says "the prayer of the upright is His delight," indicating such was Solomon's stature with the Lord at this time in his life. And this is given some missteps the writer of Kings has already recorded in the first part of chapter 3 as discussed above.

**THOUGHT** - Would it be said of all of us that our requests are pleasing to the Lord. Amen



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**Rod Mattoon** - The Bible gives several insights about pleasing the Lord.

1. Pleasing the Lord brings peace in your heart and life.

Proverbs 16:7—When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

2. Pleasing the Lord is the duty of every Christian.

1 Thessalonians 4:1—Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

3. Pleasing the Lord should be the desire of every preacher.

1 Thessalonians 2:4—But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

4. Enoch was an example of a man who pleased God.

Hebrews 11:5—By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Are you pleasing the Lord in your life right now? Make it the priority of your life. Solomon asked for an understanding heart. Let's see what God did for him. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

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One other way to be pleasing to God is to pray Paul's prayer (Colossians 1:9-10+) for yourself and all the saints in your sphere of influence...

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in **all spiritual wisdom** and understanding, so that (FIRST PURPOSE OF THIS PRAYER) you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, **to PLEASE HIM IN ALL RESPECTS**, (HOW ELSE DO WE PLEASE HIM? Jn 15:8+ SAYS BY) bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (NOT HEAD KNOWLEDGE BUT HEART TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE - NOT SMARTER SINNERS BUT MORE LIKE THE SAVIOR. NOT MODERN DAY PHARISEES).

**1 Kings 3:11 God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice,**

KJV 1 Kings 3:11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

AMP God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself a long life nor for wealth, nor for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to recognize justice,

BGT 1 Kings 3:11 κα ε πεν κριος πρ ς α τ ν ν θ ν τ σω παρ μο τ μα το το κα ο κ τ σω σαυτ μ ρ ας πολλ ς κα ο κ τ σω πλο τον ο δ τ σω ψυχ ς χ θ ρ ν σου λλ τ σω σαυτ σ νε σιν το ε σακο ει ν κ ρ μα

LXE 1 Kings 3:11 And the Lord said to him, Because thou hast asked this thing of me, and hast not asked for thyself long life, and hast not asked wealth, nor hast asked the lives of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to hear judgement;

NET 1 Kings 3:11 God said to him, "Because you asked for the ability to make wise judicial decisions, and not for long life, or riches, or vengeance on your enemies,

CSB 1 Kings 3:11 So God said to him, "Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies, but you asked discernment for yourself to understand justice,

ESV 1 Kings 3:11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,

NIV 1 Kings 3:11 So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for

yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice,

NLT 1 Kings 3:11 So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies--

NRS 1 Kings 3:11 God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,

NJB 1 Kings 3:11 'Since you have asked for this,' God said, 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself,

NAB 1 Kings 3:11 So God said to him: "Because you have asked for this-- not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but for understanding so that you may know what is right--

YLT 1 Kings 3:11 and God saith unto him, 'Because that thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thee many days, nor asked for thee riches, nor asked the life of thine enemies, and hast asked for thee discernment to understand judgment,

GWN 1 Kings 3:11 God replied, "You've asked for this and not for a long life, or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies. Instead, you've asked for understanding so that you can do what is right.

BBE 1 Kings 3:11 And God said to him, Because your request is for this thing, and not for long life for yourself or for wealth or for the destruction of your haters, but for wisdom to be a judge of causes;

RSV 1 Kings 3:11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,

NKJ 1 Kings 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,

ASV 1 Kings 3:11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice;

DBY 1 Kings 3:11 And God said to him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself discernment to understand judgment;

- **have not asked for:** Ps 4:6 Pr 16:31 Mt 20:21,22 Ro 8:26 Jas 4:2,3
- **have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice,** 1Ki 3:9

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 1:11+ God said to Solomon, "Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you."

### SOLOMON'S REQUEST TO RECOGNIZE JUSTICE

**God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies - Yourself...yourself...your enemies** clearly speaks of selfish "me" centered requests. And we have to give Solomon much credit here because God essentially gave him "carte blanche!"

**But** - Term of contrast, contrasting what most men would have selfishly asked from God with Solomon's God pleasing request.

**Have asked for yourself discernment to understand** ([bin/biyn](#); Lxx = [sunesis](#)) **justice** ([mishpat/mispat](#); Lxx = [krima](#)) - Solomon asked for an attribute that would make him a great king over God's people. I like the Greek word [sunesis](#) as it is the ability to see parts, like parts of a puzzle, and intelligently put them together allowing a reasoned conclusion or judgment as with the 2 women with one baby!

**Philip Ryken** - If you could wish for anything in the world, what would it be? Some people wish they had different abilities—more

brains, better looks, stronger skills. Others wish for a change in their life circumstances. There is something they have that they wish they didn't have, or something they don't have that they wish they did. What would your wish be? The 2005 television reality show Three Wishes asked that question in small towns across America. In each heartwarming episode the producers made wishes come true, choosing three people to receive the one thing they wanted more than anything else in life. The application said, "We are looking for emotional stories of people in need. We want to help deserving people—people who always help others, but never think of themselves." Then it asked the big question: "If you had one wish in the world and could ask for absolutely anything from the heart, what would it be?" The television producers said that money was no object, which may explain why the show was canceled after only one season: making wishes come true can get very expensive! But what if your biggest wish really could come true? And what if the person asking what you wanted had infinite resources? This was the opportunity that Almighty God gave to King Solomon: "Ask what I shall give you." (See [King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power - Page 44](#))

**Rod Mattoon** - Setting your sights on riches will leave you empty and never satisfied. Putting the Lord first in your life will satisfy the deepest needs in your life. Solomon received great wisdom, but it was up to him to apply that wisdom in all areas of his life. He was basically wise in governing the nation. He was foolish in governing his house. He did not always act wisely and neither do we. Wealth without wisdom and grace can damage your life. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

**1 Kings 3:12** **behold**, I have done according to your words. **Behold**, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

- **I have done** (KJV): Ps 10:17 Isa 65:24 Ro 8:26,27 1Jn 5:14,15
- **I have given**: 1Ki 3:28 2:6,9 4:29-34 5:12 10:3-8,23,24 2Ch 1:11,12 2:12 9:5-8 Ec 1:13,16 Lu 21:15
- **neither** (KJV): Mt 12:42 Col 2:3

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 12:42+ "The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

James 1:17+ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

James 3:13+ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the **wisdom from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose **fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace**. (SOLOMON'S NAME MEANS PEACE AND HIS KINGDOM EXPERIENCED PEACE FOR 40 YEARS)

### GOD SAYS SOLOMON'S WISDOM ONE OF A KIND

**Behold**, ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) **I have done according to your words.** **Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)), **I have given you a wise and discerning** ([bin/biyn](#); Lxx = [phronimos](#)) **heart** ([leb](#))

**Todd Stiles**: We're going to see that wisdom comes from God, is perfectly personified in the Son of God, and is available to the people of God to keep us from compromising our walk with God. (Quoted by [Paul Apple](#))

One question that might be asked is what role did the Holy Spirit play in Solomon's wisdom? If we compare Bezalel in Ex 31:1-5+, we see Jehovah filled this man with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge and in all kinds of craftsmanship to make artistic designs. While I cannot be dogmatic, it seems reasonable to see God's Spirit filling Solomon with wisdom and understanding. Is this not similar for believers today who obey Paul's command to "**Let** the Word of Christ richly **dwell** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) within you, with **ALL WISDOM** teaching and admonishing one another."? (Col 3:16+). One other point is that Solomon clearly was inspired by or "moved by" the Holy Spirit in authoring Proverbs, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. Peter writes that "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but **men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God**." (2Pe 1:21+)

**So that** - This is a term of purpose or result.

**There has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you** - Of course, Jesus is the exception to this statement. While this is a wonderful accolade for Solomon, it was as if God had placed him on a spiritually high mountain, which would make his subsequent fall all the more dramatic. Wisdom is only practical when it is assiduously lived out as enabled by the Holy Spirit.

"True wisdom is not gotten, but is given;

Not dug out of the earth, but dropped from Heaven:

Heavenly, not earthly, is the brightness of it."

—LYTTON.

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**Behold** (02009) **hinneh** is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of **hinneh** in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31 - "And God saw all that He had made, and **behold**, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." **Hinneh** is often used in the idiom "**Here I am**" in Ge 22:1, 7, 11 Ge 27:1, 18, Ge 31:11, Ge 46:2 Ex 3:4 1Sa 3:4, 3:16, 12:3, 2Sa 1:7, Isa 52:6, Isa 58:9. **Hinneh** is used most often to point out people but also to point out things (Ge 31:41, 17:4). God uses **hinneh** to grab man's attention before He brings destruction (Ge 6:13, 17). God uses **hinneh** when He establishes covenants (Ge 9:9, 15:12, 17 [when Jehovah cut the Abrahamic covenant], Ge 17:4, cp Ge 28:13, 15), when He provided a sacrificial substitute for Isaac (foreshadowing His giving us His only Son!) (Ge 22:13). **Hinneh** marks the "chance (The Providence of God)" arrival of Boaz at the field where Ruth was gleaning (Ru 2:4-read about this "chance romance" - [Indeed, "Behold!"](#)). **Hinneh** is used to announce the Lord's sending of a child as a sign and a prophecy of [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#), the Messiah (Isa. 7:14+). In fact **W E Vine** says that it is notable that when **behold** (**hinneh**) is used in Isaiah, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances.

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Hinneh** is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection **idou** (strictly speaking a command in the second person [aorist imperative, middle voice](#)) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: "Behold! See! Lo!" (Thayer) The command is calling for urgent attention. Do this now! Don't delay! It could be loosely paraphrased "Pay attention!" or "Listen up!" to arouse attention and introduce a new and extraordinary fact of considerable importance.

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**G Campbell Morgan** - This was the answer of God to the request of Solomon, when appearing to him at Gibeon He commanded him to ask a gift. Only be it observed, that the context shows that God gave more than he asked. This appearing of God to the new king was all of grace. The first paragraph of the chapter reveals at once the strength and weakness of Solomon. He was strong in that he loved Jehovah, and walked in the statutes of his father David. The weak side of his nature was manifested in his affinity with Pharaoh and marriage with his daughter. Politically it seemed an astute move, but it was unutterably foolish. The perils of mixed motives and a divided heart are very grave. This appearing of God gave him a great opportunity, and his choice again was due to the triumph of the highest side of his character. Realizing his personal disability for the great work devolving upon him, he asked for an understanding heart. God's answer was full of gracious kindness. He gave him what he asked, and superadded the things he might have chosen, yet showed his wisdom in passing by. Long life, wealth, and victory are good things when they come as the direct gifts of God. Should a man from selfish motives choose them rather than ability to fulfil the Divine purpose, they would prove curses rather than blessings. In the case of Solomon, so long as he sought the highest, these lower things were means of blessing to his people.

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**How Much Water Can a Light Bulb Hold?** Thomas Edison had a unique way of hiring engineers. He'd give the applicant a light bulb and ask, "How much water will it hold?" There were two ways to find the answer. The first choice was to use gauges to measure all the angles of the bulb. Then with the instruments in hand, the engineer could calculate the surface area. This approach

could take as long as twenty minutes. The second choice was to fill the bulb with water, then pour the contents into a measuring cup. Total elapsed time: about one minute. Engineers who took the first route, and performed their measurements by book, were politely thanked for their time and sent on their way. Those who took the second route would be hired.

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**FINISHING WELL - Joseph Stowell** - see [Strength for the Journey: Day By Day With Jesus - Page 237](#) (Or [borrow book](#) - if it is "unavailable" put in a month for example -- I put in August because this devotional is on August 12. You could use that little workaround for other months.)

"I WILL GIVE YOU A WISE AND DISCERNING HEART, SO THAT THERE WILL NEVER HAVE BEEN ANYONE LIKE YOU, NOR WILL THERE EVER BE."—1 Kings 3:12

When Solomon took his father's throne, he asked God for one thing— wisdom. He needed wisdom to rule the nation of Israel. Wisdom to distinguish right from wrong and guide his people in the ways of the Lord. God was pleased with Solomon's request.

"So God said to him, 'Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be'" (1 Kings 3:11–12).

Solomon did not ask for temporal things like money, influence, or respect. Instead, he asked for God's guidance, knowing that he could not be an effective king without God at his side. God granted Solomon's request and added to it what he had not asked for: riches and honor. And, if he walked according to the ways of God, he would be given a long life.

First Kings records the early days of his reign. Solomon was devoted to God, eager to follow in the footsteps of his father, and ambitious in his plans to build a magnificent temple to honor God.

But further into his reign, Solomon's life slowly began to shift. His love for, and marriage to, women from foreign countries eventually led to his falling from the ways of God. He became distracted and disoriented, his priorities askew. He gave in to idolatry and led his nation away from God.

Solomon's life is an example and a reminder to each of us that starting well is only the beginning. Keeping our priorities straight, aiming for goals that will ultimately satisfy our Lord, and seeking first God and His kingdom are all high-maintenance objectives for those of us who wish to finish well.

Drift is inevitable unless we monitor our hearts daily staying close to Jesus and obedient to His voice. Mark the drift in your life. (Jer 17:9)

**1 Kings 3:13 "I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days."**

- **I:** Ps 84:11,12 Mt 6:33 Ro 8:32 1Co 3:22,23 Eph 3:20
- **riches:** 1Ki 4:21-24 10:23-29 Pr 3:16

#### **Related Passages:**

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

### **MORE ABUNDANTLY BEYOND ALL THAT SOLOMON ASK**

**I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days** - Solomon's request and God's response reminds me of Jesus' command to disciples in Mt 6:33+ "but **seek** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (cf RICHES AND HONOR TO SOLOMON)."

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily** - The understanding heart was Solomon's supreme request, and it was given him before the morning

light had broken over Jerusalem. But God did exceeding abundantly beyond what he asked or thought. Riches and honor, victory and long life, were thrown in as part of the Divine gift; as paper and string are given by the tradesmen with the goods we purchase. It seems as though our Lord's words were anticipated, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Put first things first.— One of the most important lessons of life is to discern the relative value of the objects within our reach. The child will take the handful of glass beads, and leave the heap of diamonds in the rough. It is the terrible mistake of men that, perplexed by earth's cross-lights, they put evil for good and good for evil; they make earth rather than heaven their center; time rather than eternity their measurement.

Seek God and all things in Him.— Things without God cannot satisfy the craving of the soul. To know God, and to be known by Him, is to possess all things. All that is lovely, strong, or right, in any human being was in the Creator before it entered the creature; having God, you possess all things in Him.

Be more careful of what you are than what you have.— A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth; but in his purity, truth, tenderness, and the properties of his soul. The fruit of the Spirit must ever be manifest in the life of the believer — "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

**1 Kings 3:14 "If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."**

- **if** : 1Ki 2:3-4 1Ch 22:12,13 1Ch 28:9 2Ch 7:17-19 Ps 132:12 Zec 3:7
- **as**: 1Ki 3:3 9:4,5 15:5 2Ch 17:3,4 29:2 34:2 Ac 13:22
- **I will prolong**: Dt 5:16 Dt 25:15 Ps 21:4 Pr 91:16 Pr 3:2,16 1Ti 4:8

#### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 5:16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Deuteronomy 25:15 "You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and just measure, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Proverbs 3:16 Long life is in her (WISDOM'S) right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor.

### **A CONDITIONAL PROMISE OF PROLONGED LIFE**

**If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments** - **IF** makes God's promise conditional. This condition of walking wisely echoes David's charge to Solomon to "Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, 4 so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' (1Ki 2:3-4+ cf 1Ch 22:11-13, cp similar idea of "conditional" statements in 1Ki 6:11-13; 1Ki 9:3-9+; failure to keep the conditions =>1Ki 11:11-13+)

**THOUGHT** - It is one thing to be the wisest man, but it quite another to walk wisely. Paul warned the saints at Ephesus "**be careful** how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise." (Eph 5:15+) The saints at Ephesus failed to walk wisely as indicated by Jesus' words about 40 years later declaring "**I have this against you, that you have left your first love.**" (Rev 2:4+) In a similar way, Solomon's wisdom failed to guide his life choices and his wisdom failed to translate into wise living over the next 40 years of his life! He was taken away from this life 10 years earlier than his father David! O beloved, can I ask you a question? Are you toying with any sin? Are you holding on to any root of bitterness and/or unforgiveness? etc, etc. If you answered "Yes," then I think the lesson from Solomon's life is to immediately lay it aside, throw it off, confess it, repent of it and begin your wise walk today! There will never be a better day to begin!

**As your father David walked** (conducted his life) - Was David a sinner? Did David disobey God? Those questions are rhetorical. God however gives His own testimony of David declaring "**I HAVE FOUND DAVID** the son of Jesse, **A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.**" (Acts 13:22+) Clearly this speaks not of David's perfection but of the direction of his life, his willingness to



confess and to repent. In Psalm 32:5 David wrote "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah." (cf Ps 51:1-19+)

**Then I will prolong your days** - God promises that an obedient life will yield a long life. Solomon as about 20 yo when he became king and only lived to age 60 compared to David's lifespan of 70 yo. Note that this was a personal promise to Solomon and was independent of God's immutable [Covenant with David](#), for Solomon could be replaced by another "son of David" should he disobey (which he did do).

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### What Did God Promise?

If you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, . . . then I will lengthen your days. —1 Kings 3:14

Today's Scripture : 1 Kings 3:1-15

A young man was rebelling against his parents. When he lost his job and his girlfriend, he complained that God was being unfair. He didn't think the Lord was being very loving or was giving him the help He promised in the Bible. What he didn't realize was that Jesus promised a sense of His love and presence only to those who keep His commandments (Jn. 14:21-24; 15:9-14).

We read in 1 Kings 3 that God was pleased when Solomon valued "an understanding heart" over wealth, honor, and long life (vv.9-11). So He promised the king those blessings in addition to the wisdom he requested (1Ki 3:12-14). But Solomon, who was 20 when he became king, died at the relatively young age of 60 (1 Ki 11:42). What happened to the promise of long life? Remember, a condition was connected to it: "If you walk in My ways" (3:14). Because Solomon "did not fully follow the Lord" (1Ki 11:6), God did not give him long life.

If you are God's child by faith in His Son, He has promised never to leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5). Yet you can still expect His loving discipline if you disobey Him (Heb 12:5-11). In such times you can turn to His promise to forgive when you confess your sin (1 Jn. 1:9). By: Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Hold on to God's promises, but don't twist them.

**1 Kings 3:15** Then Solomon awoke, and **behold**, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and made peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

- **awoke**: Ge 41:7 Jer 31:26
- **before**: 2Sa 6:17 1Ch 16:1-2
- **peace offerings**: 1Ki 8:63,65 Lev 3:1-17 7:11-19 2Sa 6:18,19 2Ch 7:5,7-10 30:22-26
- **a feast**: Ge 31:54 40:20 Es 1:3 Da 5:1 Mk 6:21

### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 6:17+ So they brought in **the ark of the LORD** and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

1 Chronicles 16:1-2+ And they brought in **the ark of God** and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.



Ark of the Covenant

**Then Solomon awoke, and behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)), **it was a dream** - But it was a dream that he would remember, unlike most

dreams we have and quickly forget when we awake.

**And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord-** Note that while the Tent (tabernacle) was at the high place in Gibeon, the Ark of the Covenant was in Jerusalem for David had it brought and placed in a tent he had pitched for it. (2Sa 6:17+; 1Chr 16:1-2+) After his special visitation from God, and with God given wisdom, Solomon may have concluded it was more appropriate to present his offerings at the place where the temple would soon be built.

**and offered burnt offerings and made peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.**

**Iain Provan** comments on Solomon now sacrificing before the Ark - Does Solomon now realize where he should have been worshiping all along (before the ark, rather than at the high place)? If so, the first effect of his newly received wisdom is to help him to distinguish in himself between right and wrong (1Ki 3:9). (See [1 & 2 Kings Understanding the Bible Commentary Series](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [BURNT OFFERINGS.](#)
- [PEACE OFFERING.](#)

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#### Summary of the journey of the Ark of the Covenant once it was in the Promised Land:

- Joshua brought both the ark and the tabernacle to Shiloh (Joshua 18:1)
- In days of Eli the ark captured by Philistines and tabernacle sacked (1Sa 4:11, Ps 78:60-64, Jer 7:12, 26:9)
- The ark came back to Kiriath-Jearim (1Sa 7:1-2)
- Saul restored the tabernacle at Nob (1Sa 21)
- Saul moved the tabernacle to Gibeon (1Chr 16:39-40)
- David brought the ark to Jerusalem and built a temporary tent for it (2Sa 6:17, 2Chr 1:4)

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#### 1 Kings 3:16 Then two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him.

- **two women:** Lev 19:29 De 23:17 Jos 2:1

#### Related Passage:

Proverbs 16:10 A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

### THE FIRST TEST OF SOLOMON'S DISCERNMENT

**Then** - Note this time phrase marks progression of events. Solomon apparently almost immediately exercises the gift God had given him in the dream to discern good from evil and understand justice (1Ki 3:11, 28). After all, as the King, Solomon is the highest court of appeal and provides the foundation for dispensing justice. Recall that Dt 19:15 specified one must have at least 2 witnesses and here we encounter two women who in effect are witnesses against the other woman.

**two women who were harlots** ([zanah](#); Lxx = [porne](#) - prostitute) **came to the king and stood before him** - Solomon receives the case of two women who would be lowly regarded in society. This shows Solomon's recognition of the worth of individuals. In most judicial matters one relies on testimony of witnesses, but in this case there are apparently none. These two women would test Solomon's divine gift of discernment.

It is interesting that Solomon spoke several times of harlots in his proverbs...

Proverbs 20:8 A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes.

Proverbs 20:26 A wise king winnows the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

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**Harlots** ([02181](#)) [zanah](#) is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7, Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of [zanah](#) are figurative describing Israel 's

([Jehovah's "wife"](#)) commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1-3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1-3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4<sup>+</sup>; Rev 2:4<sup>+</sup>). In addition zanah describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied. A third figurative meaning is found in Isa 1:21, where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." ([link to TWOT online](#)) [CLICK HERE TO SEE THE REMAINDER OF THIS LENGTHY DEFINITION](#)

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William Smith - Hope was enough. When God uses prostitutes to illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness to him, he's showing you yourself. One of your primary identities is "unfaithful." Sexual immorality as a metaphor is not confined to the Old Testament. James also uses the image to illustrate the heart of our spiritual problems when he calls believers spiritual adulterers. Like paid professionals, we too are repeatedly and intentionally faithless, bearing the consequences in destroyed relationships, both human and divine.

Do you see yourself creating many of your deepest problems while at the same time eliminating any hope for their resolution? Do you realize that, before God, you don't deserve help? It's miserable to realize that the train wrecks of your life are mostly of your own making. And yet, the woman in Solomon's court did something different. She hoped. She believed. She had faith. And that faith changed her life.

She had the courage to believe that she could be heard and helped despite who she was and what she had done. She had the heart to believe that she would be received, and she was right. Her hope was not disappointed. Hope was the only thing she had going for her and, mercifully, hope was enough.

**1 Kings 3:17 The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house.**

- **O my lord:** Ge 43:20 Ro 13:7

**The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house.**

**Iain Provan** writes that "Solomon has already entered an improper relationship with a foreign nation (1Ki 3:1) and will enter several more (1Ki 11:1–2). This in due course leads to idolatrous worship (1Ki 11:7–8). For the moment, however, he is on honeymoon with his new wife, Wisdom, and remains faithful to her. He will thus have no difficulty in seeing through the words spoken to him by the two women who stand before him. He will be able to "discern" (Heb. byn, 1Ki 3:9, 11–12) in the midst of their testimony what is actually true. (See [1 & 2 Kings Understanding the Bible Commentary Series](#))

Impurity leads to deceit. The sin against the body makes other sins easier to commit. Lies lead to more lies. (Rod Mattoon [Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

**1 Kings 3:18 "It happened on the third day after I gave birth, that this woman also gave birth to a child, and we were together. There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house.**

**It happened on the third day after I gave birth, that this woman also gave birth to a child, and we were together. There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house**

**1 Kings 3:19 "This woman's son died in the night, because she lay on it.**

**This woman's son died in the night, because she lay on it.**

**1 Kings 3:20 "So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead son in my bosom.**

- middle of the night: Job 24:13-17 Ps 139:11 Mt 13:25 Joh 3:20
- took: 1Ki 3:21

So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead son in my bosom

1 Kings 3:21 "When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead; but when I looked at him carefully in the morning, behold, he was not my son, whom I had borne."

- give: Ge 21:7 1Sa 1:23 La 4:3,4

When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, **behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)), he was dead; but when I looked at him carefully in the morning, **behold**, he was not my son, whom I had borne

1 Kings 3:22 Then the other woman said, "No! For the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." But the first woman said, "No! For the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son." Thus they spoke before the king.

- No! 1Ki 3:23,24

Then the other woman said, "No! For the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." But the first woman said, "No! For the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son." Thus they spoke before the king

1 Kings 3:23 Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son who is living, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'"



## SOLOMON'S DILEMMA

Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son who is living, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'" - Their testimonies clearly conflict and in the face of no witnesses (and no availability of paternity testing which we have today), King Solomon is faced with a dilemma.

1 Kings 3:24 The king said, "**Get** me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king.

Alexander Cutting the Gordian Knot

## WISDOM FOR CUTTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The king said, "**Get me a sword.**" So they brought a sword before the king - Imagine for a moment the thought going through the minds of all present, especially the two women. "Is the king going to kill us both?", etc.

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**The Legend of the Gordian Knot** -- The Gordian Knot was a highly intricate knot tied by Gordius, the king of Phrygia (an ancient region in what is now Turkey). It was said to bind the yoke to the pole of a chariot. An oracle declared that whoever could untie the knot would become the ruler of all Asia. In 333 BCE, Alexander the Great encountered the knot during his conquest of Asia. Instead of attempting to untie it conventionally, he famously "solved" the problem by cutting through it with his sword, demonstrating boldness and thinking outside the box. Symbolic Meaning is that of a Difficult or Intractable Problem. Thus the Gordian Knot represents a problem that is so complicated or entangled that it seems impossible to solve. The phrase "cutting the Gordian Knot" has come to mean solving a difficult problem through bold, creative, or unconventional means, rather than traditional or laborious methods.

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**Rod Mattoon** - Solomon's solution to the problem was to take a sword and cut the baby in half. As Sherlock Holmes would say, "It's elementary Watson." The true mother, even though a harlot, loved her baby unlike 11/2 to 2 million women each year in the USA who abort their babies. The true mother demonstrates elements of genuine love. Love is not selfish. It sacrifices self for the object loved. The true mother would rather see her baby live and do without her than see her baby die. The lying harlots attitude was, "If I can't have it, nobody can." It's ironic that the lying woman did not love or care about this child. So why does she desire it? Why rear the child of another? Why take on an unwanted expense? What is her motivation?

- Fear of reproach and being mocked as a murderer?
- Envy and jealousy of her roommate?

Jealousy leaves a person empty and dissatisfied, never content. Jealousy caters to self, not others. Jealousy and envy count another person's blessings instead of one's own blessings. Jealousy resents the fact that others have what you don't have. This is what the lying harlot did. She resents the other woman and looks at her as a rival. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

1 Kings 3:25 The king said, "**Divide** the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other."

- **Divide:** Pr 25:8

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 20:8 A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes.

Proverbs 20:26 A wise king winnows the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

### SOLOMON DISCERNs DIVISION DECISION

The king said, "**Divide** the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other. Apparently Solomon gives the command to the sword bearer to carry out the division. Solomon appealed to the instincts of a mother's love. Solomon was preparing to cut the [Gordian knot](#)!

**Iain Provan** on Solomon wise use of a sword - His old "wisdom" had led to the use of the **sword** for executions whose justice is questionable (1 Kings 2). His new wisdom leads him in more constructive paths. He still uses the **sword**, but in a more positive way, threatening execution only to achieve justice. The **sword** is functioning in the service, not of the ruthless self, but of the kingdom as a whole. Solomon's sword has become what it is elsewhere in the hands of God (e.g., Ps. 17:13): the instrument of right judgment, of kingly "truth, humility and righteousness" (Ps. 45:2-4). (See [1 & 2 Kings Understanding the Bible Commentary Series](#))

**Treasury of Scripture Knowledge** - This was apparently a very strange decision; but Solomon saw that the only way to discover the real mother was by the affection and tenderness should would necessarily shew to her offspring. The plan was tried, and succeeded; and it was a proof of his sound judgment, penetration, and acquaintance with the human heart, or rather, of his extraordinary and supernatural wisdom. See ver. 28. The two following instances are in some faint manner to be compared to Solomon's decision, inasmuch as they also work upon the human sympathies. Suetonius, in his Life of the emperor Claudian, tells us, that this emperor discovered a woman to be the real mother of a young man, whom she refused to acknowledge, by commanding her to marry him, the proofs being doubtful on both sides; for, rather than commit incest, she confessed the truth. Diodorus Siculus also informs us, that Ariopharnes, king of Thrace, being appointed to decide between three young men, each of

whom professed to be the son of the deceased king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, discovered the real son by ordering each to shoot an arrow into the dead body of the king: two of them did this without hesitation; but the real son of the deceased monarch refused.

**Rod Mattoon** - "What brought the truth out into the open?" The answer is the sword. The sword brought out the best in one woman and the worst in the other. It revealed what was in each woman's heart. The Bible does this too. Hebrews 4:12+—*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Bible preaching will bring out the best and the worst in people. It reveals what is in their hearts. Some choke on the Word in church and don't stay because the pot gets too hot! Others stay and thrive spiritually. The Word of God changes lives. It is truth. ([Treasures from 1 Kings](#))

**1 Kings 3:26** Then the woman whose child was the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply stirred over her son and said, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him!"

- **she was deeply stirred:** Ge 43:30 Isa 49:15 Jer 31:20 Ho 11:8 Php 1:8 2:1 1Jn 3:17 Ps 39:3
- give her: Ro 1:31 2Ti 3:3

**Then the woman whose child was the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply stirred over her son**The proposal to divide the child revealed the true mother's heart for she would rather lose her child to the other woman than that the child should die.

**KJV** is more literal with "for her bowels yearned." The Hebrew word for "**bowels**" is *rehem* which refers to deep love (usually of a "superior" for an "inferior") rooted in some "natural" bond and figuratively speaks of "tender love," such as a mother has for the child she has borne. The Hebrew word for **stirred** or **yearned** (*kamar*) means to grow warm and tender, to become hot, to become emotionally agitated. The idea is to be aroused, to be deeply moved. It indicates something being agitated or moved with respect to something else.

**and said, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him."**Solomon's wisdom appealed to the great instincts of a mother's heart.

**But** (term of contrast) **the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him!"**For this woman Solomon's wisdom appealed to the baser, selfish instincts of this woman's sinful heart!

**Bishop Hall** wrote "Truth demands entireness; falsehood is satisfied with less. Satan, that hath no right to the heart, would be content with a piece of it; God, that made it all, will have either the whole or none."

**1 Kings 3:27** Then the king said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother."

**Then the king said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother.**

**1 Kings 3:28** When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

AMP When all [the people of] Israel heard about the judgment which the king had made, they **[were in awe and reverently]** feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was within him to administer justice.

- **feared:** Ex 14:31 Jos 4:14 1Sa 12:18 1Ch 29:24 Pr 24:21
- **the wisdom:** 1Ki 3:9-12 Ezr 7:25 Ec 7:19 Da 2:21,47 5:11 1Co 1:24,30 Col 2:3
- **to administer justice:** Ps 72:2,4

## CONVINCING PROOF OF SOLOMON'S GIFT OF WISDOM

**When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom**



**of God was in him to administer justice** The incident gave convincing proof of the gift of wisdom. Wisdom is a most esteemed endowment of a king, for they are often called upon to arbitrate in cases that defy the processes of law and precedent.

**THOUGHT** - Does my life and do my decisions serve as a testimony to my family and friends of God's presence and power?

**Wisdom of God** - This exact phrase occurs 5 times in the Bible - 1 Ki. 3:28; Lk. 11:49; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 1:24; Eph. 3:10

We can get INFORMATION "on LINE" (from Google)  
but WISDOM is from "on HIGH" (from God)!

1. **Knowledge** is what is gathered over time through study of the Scriptures. It can be said that **wisdom**, in turn, acts properly upon that knowledge. Wisdom is the fitting application of knowledge.
2. **Knowledge** understands the light has turned red; **wisdom** applies the brakes.
3. **Knowledge** sees the quicksand; wisdom walks around it.
4. **Knowledge** memorizes the Ten Commandments; wisdom obeys them.
5. **Knowledge** learns of God; wisdom loves Him. ([What is wisdom?](#))

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### The Weight of Wisdom

He bore the gift of heaven's light,  
A wisdom pure, divinely bright.  
The world would marvel, nations bow,  
To hear the truth his lips endow.

Yet wisdom's crown is hard to bear,  
Its path demands a life of care.  
For though his mind was richly fed,  
His feet would tread where folly led.

The songs of fame, the lure of gold,  
Enticed his heart, his steps grew cold.  
The wisdom whispered, "Walk this way,"  
But pleasure's voice led him astray.

The heart and mind, a fragile pair,  
One seeks the heights, one lingers there.  
And though the heights his soul could see,  
His footsteps failed to keep the plea.

Oh, Solomon, a king renowned,  
Whose wisdom soared, but whose life unwound.  
Let us take heed, this lesson plain:  
Wisdom misused is wisdom in vain.

So may our steps and wisdom meet,  
To walk the path with steady feet.  
For what we know must guide our way,  
Lest wisdom's light should fade to gray.

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**Wisdom** ([02451](#)) [chokmah](#) from the verb **chakam** - to be wise) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Wisdom** is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life."

[Louis Goldberg - TWOT](#) - The verb is used twenty-six times and most of the passages appear in the Qal stem meaning "be wise," etc. In the Piel stem the meaning is "making wise" or "teaching." Of all the words denoting intelligence, the most frequently used are this verb and its derivatives, which occur some 312 times in the Hebrew OT. About three-fifths of the usages are found in Job, Proverbs, and Eccl.

[The main synonyms are **bīn**, **bīnâ**, and **tebûnâ**. The verb **bīn** is used more widely to mean "consider," "discern" "perceive," but the nouns are close synonyms to **hokmâ** and are used especially in Proverbs and

Job. In the well-known verse Proverbs 4:7, "understanding" is not a higher stage than "wisdom," but a poetic synonym used for emphasis. The root **śākal** is also widely used for ordinary intelligence and skill. It is often used for that wisdom which brings success—even prosperity. This wisdom was possessed by David (1 Samuel 18:14) and will characterize the Messiah (Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 52:13). But the Hiphil participle is used particularly in Proverbs as another synonym of **ḥokmā**. This word, **maśkīl**, is also used extensively to designate a type of psalm. *tûshîyâ*, like *śākal*, has the double meaning of wisdom and the success which is the effect of wisdom. R. L. Harrison]

The essential idea of **ḥākam** represents a manner of thinking and attitude concerning life's experiences; including matters of general interest and basic morality. These concerns relate to prudence in secular affairs, skills in the arts, moral sensitivity, and experience in the ways of the Lord.

The subject **wisdom** was discussed throughout the ancient near east. Mesopotamian wisdom, which originated with the Sumerian, emphasized human experiences, character, and counsel regarding practical advice. The problems of death and suffering were discussed. Egyptian wisdom included the concept of *ma'at* ("truth," intelligence, "justice"), according to which one order existed in the whole universe. J. A. Wilson characterizes it as a created and inherited rightness, which tradition built up into an orderly stability (**Borrow The culture of ancient Egypt** University of Chicago, 1951, p. 48). Gods and men were subject to this order of conduct, which was taught by the priests. Some have felt that much of the OT royal wisdom, which great leaders imparted to their students, was borrowed from Egyptian wisdom (e.g. Proverbs 23:13f. borrowed from the teachings of Amenemope, although it is more likely that an original source reflects a revelation of wisdom.) Ugaritic literature also has a form of maxims concerning the father-son relationship possibly reflecting Canaanite wisdom. A later Arabic derivative of the verb denotes "to restrain from acting in an evil manner."

*OT wisdom is the teaching of a personal God Who is holy and just  
and Who expects those who know Him to exhibit His character  
in the many practical affairs of life*

The wisdom of the OT however, is quite distinct from other ancient world views although the format of wisdom literature is similar to that of other cultures. Reflected in OT wisdom is the teaching of a personal God Who is holy and just and Who expects those who know Him to exhibit His character in the many practical affairs of life. This perfect blend of the revealed will of a holy God with the practical human experiences of life is also distinct from the speculative wisdom of the Greeks. **The ethical dynamic of Greek philosophy lay in the intellect; if a person had perfect knowledge he could live the good life (Plato). Knowledge was virtue. The emphasis of OT wisdom was that the human will, in the realm of practical matters, was to be subject to divine causes. Therefore, Hebrew wisdom was not theoretical and speculative. It was practical, based on revealed principles of right and wrong, to be lived out in daily life.**

In the historical and prophetic books, the word **ḥokmā** is sometimes used just to refer to ordinary intelligence and skill (Exodus 35:35; Daniel 1:4), but even there sometimes the divine and moral wisdom is in view.

The wisdom literature, while sometimes using wisdom as prudence and cleverness, majors on ethical and spiritual conduct. Because God revealed himself to Israel, their sacred literature has the effect of a divine imperative; *ḥākam* refers to godly cleverness and skill, which results in practical action. The one who hears (Proverbs 8:33; Proverbs 23:19; Proverbs 27:11), will be industrious, will know how to talk, and his will, will be in captivity to God's. He will have life. This wins divine approbation.

*ḥokmā*. Wisdom. The usages of *ḥokmā* cover the whole gamut of human experience. Wisdom is seen in the skill of technical work in making garments for the high priest (Exodus 28:3), craftsmanship in metal work (Exodus 31:3, 6), as well as the execution of battle tactics (Isaiah 10:13). Wisdom is required from government leaders and heads of state for administration (Deut. 34:9; 2 Samuel 14:20), including pagan leaders as well as Israelites (Ezekiel 28:4-5). The Messiah demonstrates wisdom and discernment in his function as leader of his people (Isaiah 11:2).

Wisdom is expressed in shrewdness. The woman of Tekoa averted a town's bloodshed in her clever plea for its safety (2 Samuel 20:22). But a shrewd person is not to boast of his gift (Jeremiah 9:22). The ostrich displays traits lacking shrewdness when she acts in her silly selfish manner (Job 39:17). The gift of shrewdness can be used in an ungodly way to deny the omniscience of God (Isaiah 47:10).

Prudence, an aspect of wisdom, is expressed by those who speak with wisdom (Psalm 37:30; Proverbs 10:31), and who use time carefully (Psalm 90:12). This kind of wisdom in the practical affairs of life is derived

from the revelation of God (Isaiah 33:6).

The source of all wisdom is a personal God who is holy, righteous, and just. His wisdom is expressed against the background of his omnipotence and omniscience. By his wisdom God numbered the clouds (Job 38:37), founded the earth (Proverbs 3:19), and made the world (Jeremiah 10:12). Wisdom, being found in God, is regarded as a divine attribute (Job 12:13). He alone knows wisdom in its truest sense (Job 28:20, 23). The wisdom of God is not found in man's speculation. He alone must provide this wisdom for man's guidance so that man can live the best possible moral and ethical life (Proverbs 2:6; Job 11:6).

In proverbial fashion, the Bible personifies divine wisdom so that it seems to be a hypostasis of God, but stops just short of giving it separate existence. This wisdom was brought forth before all things (Proverbs 8:22-31). She has built a house and prepared a banquet for those who will listen to her (Proverbs 9:1f.). She even teaches in public places (Proverbs 1:20; Proverbs 8:1, 6, 11-12). By her instruction her students receive a divine spirit (Proverbs 1:2), the naive become wise, politicians become wise, and those who receive from her wealth are crowned with honor and riches (Proverbs 8:1-21).

This personification of wisdom is unique. While there were gods and goddesses in the ancient near east who were thought to possess the gifts of wisdom it is unlikely that any existed by the name of wisdom. The figure of wisdom in the OT never came to be regarded as a deity independent of the Lord although some such expressions occur in Proverbs 8. These have often been taken as an adumbration of Christ. Wisdom did attain a degree of personification, with features which were by no means abstract. Wisdom should not be regarded as God but it does belong to God; it is one of his attributes. Wisdom has a personal existence in the living word of the NT, but wisdom is not the Logos herself (Delitzsch, Proverbs, p. 183). That Wisdom is personified as a woman in Proverbs 1-9 is partly explained by the fact that the noun is feminine. There the Lady Wisdom is contrasted with the woman Folly who is personified sin. Note the studied contrast of Proverbs 9:4-6 and Proverbs 9:16-18. This personification of wisdom is not found outside these chapters.

Wisdom for man is not only to make one humanly wise, but also to lead him to fear the Lord, for this is the beginning of all wisdom (Job 28:28). True wisdom for man involves knowing the Holy One. So, men are to listen to the wisdom of God with attentive ears (Proverbs 2:2). In fact, inner happiness only comes when man attains this wisdom (Proverbs 3:13) through a strenuous search (Proverbs 2:4), which is actually a search for God himself (Proverbs 2:5). Skeptics will never find this wisdom and will never know the full meaning of life (Proverbs 14:6f.). In the great poem of Job 28 wisdom in this special biblical sense is practically defined as trust in God and the avoidance of sin. (Cf. the emphasis on *hokmâ* as referring to moral wisdom in contrast to sinful folly in R. L. Harris, "Proverbs," in WBC, pp. 553-54.)

**CHOKMAH IN KINGS AND CHRONICLES** - 1 Ki. 2:6; 1 Ki. 3:28; 1 Ki. 4:29; 1 Ki. 4:30; 1 Ki. 4:34; 1 Ki. 5:12; 1 Ki. 7:14; 1 Ki. 10:4; 1 Ki. 10:6; 1 Ki. 10:7; 1 Ki. 10:8; 1 Ki. 10:23; 1 Ki. 10:24; 1 Ki. 11:41; 1 Chr. 28:21; 2 Chr. 1:10; 2 Chr. 1:11; 2 Chr. 1:12; 2 Chr. 9:3; 2 Chr. 9:5; 2 Chr. 9:6; 2 Chr. 9:7; 2 Chr. 9:22; 2 Chr. 9:23

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#### QUESTION - [What is wisdom? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge? WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - Wisdom and knowledge, both recurring themes in the Bible, are related but not synonymous. The dictionary defines *wisdom* as "the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting." *Knowledge*, on the other hand, is "information gained through experience, reasoning, or acquaintance." Knowledge can exist without wisdom, but not the other way around. One can be knowledgeable without being wise. Knowledge is knowing how to use a gun; wisdom is knowing when to use it and when to keep it holstered.

God wants us to have knowledge of Him and what He expects of us. In order to obey Him, we have to have knowledge of the commands. But as equally important as having knowledge is having wisdom. Knowing facts about God and the Bible is not all there is to wisdom. Wisdom is a gift from God. James 1:5 states, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." God blesses us with wisdom in order for us to glorify Him and use the knowledge we have of Him.

The [book of Proverbs](#) is perhaps the best place in the Bible to learn of biblical wisdom. Proverbs 1:7 speaks of both biblical knowledge and wisdom: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, / but fools despise wisdom and instruction." To [fear the Lord](#) is to start on the path to knowledge, and God can then begin to provide us with wisdom through Christ, who the Bible says is wisdom itself: "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

1. **Knowledge** is what is gathered over time through study of the Scriptures. It can be said that **wisdom**, in turn, acts properly upon that knowledge. Wisdom is the fitting application of knowledge.
2. **Knowledge** understands the light has turned red; **wisdom** applies the brakes.
3. **Knowledge** sees the quicksand; wisdom walks around it.
4. **Knowledge** memorizes the Ten Commandments; wisdom obeys them.
5. **Knowledge** learns of God; wisdom loves Him.

**Related Resources:**

- [What is godly wisdom?](#)
- [How can I get wisdom from God?](#)