**I WILL GIVE YOU A WISE AND DISCERNING HEART**

1 Kings 3:1-28

Key Verses 12

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.

**Introduction**

Wisdom is the ability to use our knowledge efficiently. Oftentimes we might have seen very smart people who do many unwise things because they lack wisdom. But it’s impossible for us to be wise or manufacture wisdom. Where then does it come from? It comes from God. According to James 1:5, God is willing to give it to us generously. We are looking for wisdom in google or mobile app stores as the technology is advanced more than we can possibly imagine. They are very useful indeed. But the wisdom stems from God and His words. May the Lord help us to follow the footsteps of Solomon who sought God’s wisdom to serve Him and His people well. Especially in these dark times we need God’s wisdom. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we may humbly rely on His wisdom by going back to the Bible with all our hearts and souls. Amen.

1. Read verses 1-9. What efforts did Solomon make towards God and for the people? (1-4) What did the Lord say to him in a dream? (5) What did he ask of God? (6-9)

1-1, Read verses 1-9.

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. 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. 3 Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 4 The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the Lordappeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” 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. 7 “Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 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?”

1-2, What efforts did Solomon make towards God and for the people? (1-4)

***Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. 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. 3 Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 4 The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.***

* Solomon was already married and had a child, Rehoboam. But after establishing his seat on the throne, one of the first things he does is to marry an Egyptian princess.

Kings 9:16 reads, *“Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife.”*

* Politically this is a wise thing for him to do because it was a strategic marriage that solidified an alliance between Egypt and Israel. But it would influence him negatively. Here are 2 reference verses!

*Nehemiah 13:25-27 reads, “So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"*

*1 Kings 11:1-4 reads, “But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.”*

* Solomon showed his love for God through his action here in this passage, through obeying God’s commands except that he was worshiping at the wrong location, the high places which were old pagan worship areas.
* The reason they did this was because Israel didn’t have a central place to worship. And so we find Solomon at Gibeon because that’s where the tabernacle and the ancient bronze altar were, and he wanted to offer sacrifices to God.
* David did move the ark only to Jerusalem without moving a tabernacle together. It was probably that he wanted to make his people to be satisfied with that in Gibeon and let both his and their earnest desire subsided for the temple, for God forbade him to build it when he was a king.
* But Solomon was supposed to build a temple soon according to God’s will. So by now Solomon and people couldn’t but give offerings in high places, especially at Gibeon.

1-3, What did the Lord say to him in a dream? (5)

***5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”***

* “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” That’s a lot of pressure, especially if you had to answer right away, especially as a young man.
* In similar ways, we have God’s promises. Matthews 7:7 says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and your will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”-
* John 15:7 reads, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”
* 1 John 5:14 reads, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

1-4, What did he ask of God? (6-9)

***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. 7 “Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 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?”***

* Solomon first recalled God’s kindness to his father David and such a beautiful relationship between God and David. Solomon gets to his point and asks for a discerning heart.
* Solomon wrote, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Prv 1:7)
* Solomon must have known that he must obey the Lord by keeping God’s commands in order for his heart to be prepared to lead others.
* The word, “Discerning” means understanding. Solomon asked for more than great knowledge; he wanted discerning or understanding, and he wanted it in his heart, not merely in his head.
* Actually, the ancient Hebrew word translated understanding is literally, "hearing." Solomon wanted a hearing/listening heart, one that would listen to God well.
* Ephesians 1:18 reveals that apostle Paul prayed for believers, asking that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened.
* This listening to God will also enable him to listen to others. Solomon’s desire for an obedient, listening heart is based on his wish to administer justice in Israel.
* Justice can only emerge when the king is able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil.
* Although Solomon has already shown political wisdom, he knows that long term wisdom and success reside where David found it, that is, in an ongoing relationship with the Lord. That’s where true wisdom comes from.
* Also he called his people as God’s chosen great people. In this way he showed respect for God’s people and asked God’s help to govern them properly.

1. Read verses 10-22. What did God promise to give Solomon? (10-14) What did Solomon do after he awoke? (15) What was the first difficult case that came before Solomon? (16-22)

2-1, Read verses 10-22.

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. 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, 12 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. 13 Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. 14 And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” 15 Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court. 16 Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 17 One of them said, “Pardon me, my lord. This woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was there with me. 18 The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us. 19 “During the night this woman’s son died because she lay on him. 20 So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. 21 The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t the son I had borne.” 22 The other woman said, “No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours.” But the first one insisted, “No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine.” And so they argued before the king.

2-2, What did God promise to give Solomon? (10-14)

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* God was pleased with Solomon’s attitude. Instead of wealth, long life, or revenge, amazingly he sincerely desires the ability to help others.
* Indeed he will have a wise and discerning heart, one that will set him apart from everyone in history. Solomon’s wisdom will exceed those who came before and after him.
* Even though he didn’t ask for personal gains, Solomon will get what all kings desire. And in the last verse, we find the secret to a long life, and that’s obeying God.
* Ephesians 3:20 reads, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Solomon experienced God's ability to do far beyond all that we ask or possibly imagine. Praise the Lord!

2-3, What did Solomon do after he awoke? (15)

***15 Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.***

* When Solomon wakes up from this life changing dream, he seals the agreement with a celebration marked by sacrifices and a feast which shows his sincerity and determination to keep the covenant. A covenant is a promise, or agreement, that two parties make with one another.

2-4, What was the first difficult case that came before Solomon? (16-22)

***16 Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 17 One of them said, “Pardon me, my lord. This woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was there with me. 18 The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us. 19 “During the night this woman’s son died because she lay on him. 20 So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. 21 The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn’t the son I had borne.”22 The other woman said, “No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours.”But the first one insisted, “No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine.” And so they argued before the king.***

1. Read verses 23-28. How did Solomon discern the identity of the baby’s real mother? (23-27) How did this show his wisdom in administering justice? Why did all Israel hold the king in awe? (28)

3-1, Read verses 23-28.

23 The king said, “This one says, ‘My son is alive and your son is dead,’ while that one says, ‘No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.’”

24 Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword for the king. 25 He then gave an order: “Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.”

26 The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, “Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!” But the other said, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!” 27 Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.” 28 When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

3-2, How did Solomon discern the identity of the baby’s real mother? (23-27)

3-3, How did this show his wisdom in administering justice?

***23 The king said, “This one says, ‘My son is alive and your son is dead,’ while that one says, ‘No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.’”24 Then the king said, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought a sword for the king. 25 He then gave an order: “Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.”26 The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, “Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don’t kill him!”But the other said, “Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!”27 Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.”***

* He is asked to make a judgment that will determine the fate of two families. The true parental relationship was based and proved by love.
* The true mother would rather have the child live. She put the child’s welfare above her own. Solomon knew that the offer to cut the child in two would reveal who was the true mother and he rewarded the mother’s love accordingly.

3-4, Why did all Israel hold the king in awe? (28)

***28 When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.***

* Such a wise decision could not be hidden. The matter was soon known throughout the kingdom.
* They feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice. The people of Israel saw that Solomon had both the wisdom and the courage to do the right thing as a leader.

**Conclusion**

Today’s passage shows Solomon’s request to the Lord for a wise and discerning heart to govern God’s great people. God was pleased with him and blessed him more than he could possibly imagine. God’s wisdom could not be hidden and it was known soon throughout the kingdom. Likewise when we fear God and seek His wisdom by sincere Bible study, God will make us wise and shine Jesus’ light in this dark world for God’s glory. At the same time, may the Lord help our children be wise from God’s point of view rather than from a worldly point of view so that they may not follow Solomon’s undesirable practice in choosing idol worshipping wives. **One word: A wisdom of God!**