

Bible Readings

1 Kings 3:1-15

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

3 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 LORD appeared 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?"

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 honour—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.

James 1:1-7

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

Greetings.

Trials and Temptations

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your

faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ 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. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

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Sermon: Give your servant a discerning heart**15-Aug-01**

G'Day Church Family

We're continuing our series on the OT book of 1 Kings.

It would be great to have your **bible turned to 1 Kings 3** - and you may have a sermon **outline** - if you'd like to **take notes**.

Let me **ask God** to grant us **understanding** this morning

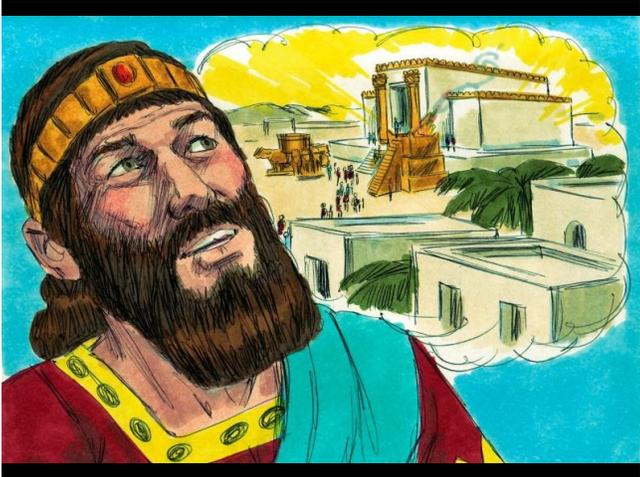
Let's pray...

Intro

- We left Solomon **last week** - with the statement in **1 Kings 2:46**
The kingdom was now established in Solomon's hands.
- **Solomon** had done some **gardening** and **weeded out 4 men** who would have **put his kingdom in danger**
- It's important now that **Solomon begins** his **reign** in a **wise** way - he **needs great wisdom**
- Speaking of wisdom
- Have you noticed how often we come across **wise warnings?**
- Like - a **wise warning** on a **cordless drill** - *not to be used for dental work*
- Or - a **warning** on **deodorant** - *not to spray it in your eyes*
- Or - a **warning** on a **sunshield** for your **car** - *not to drive with sunshield over your windscreen*
- Or - I like this one - a **warning** on a **baby stroller** - *not to fold the stroller with the baby in the stroller*
- Why do we **need these** **wise warnings?**

- Because - we have a problem using wisdom
- Let's see how wise Solomon is....

[PowerPoint 1-Kingdom]



Context (1 Kings:1-3)

- We pick up the story in **verse 1** - where **Solomon** makes an **alliance** with the Pharaoh of **Egypt** by **marrying Pharaoh's daughter**
- It was quite common in the **culture** of the day to **arrange royal marriages** - which came with conditions - and brought **alliances between countries** - and allowed trade and protection
- Solomon makes this alliance because **Egypt is Israel's biggest enemy** and he thought it **wise to have peace with his biggest enemy**
- This **alliance** can be seen as a **sign** that **Israel** has a **place of honour among the nations** - and also give us a **surprise** that the nation of **Egypt** that held the **ancient Israelites as slaves** - now wants an alliance with Israel

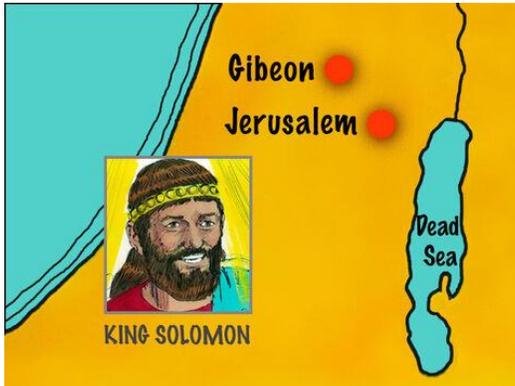
- But the **marriage** to an **Egyptian woman** who **worships other gods** - is also a **warning** of what lies ahead for Solomon - as his **many foreign wives** turned his eyes away from the **God** of Israel
- There's **another potential danger** highlighted in verse 2
- The **worship** and **sacrifices** held on **high places**
- It seems altars in high places were **allowed** in these times as long as sacrifices were made to the Lord and no other gods? This was **allowed** because the temple had **not been built yet**. Although it does the **beg the question why** the **sacrifices** were **not** carried out **only** at the **tabernacle**?
- It could be that some of these **high places** and altars were **left over from** **Canaanite occupation**. These **high places** posed a **threat** to the pure worship of Yahweh because they represented **conflicting loyalty** if these places had **idols** erected - which the Israelites could **worship instead of or as well as Yahweh**. The **Israelites** were expressly **forbidden to use such places** for worship in Deut 7:5 and 12:3. Although God did sanction them to erect special altars from time to time, to worship Him (see Exodus 20:24; Deut 12:6-14).
- From Solomon's reign onwards the **tolerance of high places** led to **amalgamation of different religions** [syncretistic] **worship** and **abandonment of religious beliefs** [apostasy]; so high places became an abomination and **showed the difference between a good king and a bad king** (2 Kings 17:7-18; 23:4-25)

- It seems at this stage Solomon had heeded his father, David's advice from 1 Kings 2:3-4; as v3 says he **loved the Lord and walked according to the instructions David gave him**. However, there is an **EXCEPT** - **Solomon did offer sacrifices and burned incense on the high places**. The author of 1 Kings seems to be saying **sacrifices on high places wasn't acceptable although they happened**.
- In general, we get a sense that **Solomon loved the Lord** - but also put himself in difficult position - by intermarrying with other nations - and not worshipping God as laid down in Deuteronomy. What we have here is the sowing of the seed of a "divided heart" - trying to **please God and please himself**
- Application - a **warning for us** of the wisdom of **a divided heart towards God** - **God wants our full commitment to Him** - not our leftovers.
As Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount - Matt 6:24 - **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**. There is a **danger of loving things of the world more than God** - things like our hobbies, pastimes, entertainment, sports, music (1 John 2:15) - which are okay in themselves - but **should not replace our love and worship of God**

When asking for wisdom (vv4-15)

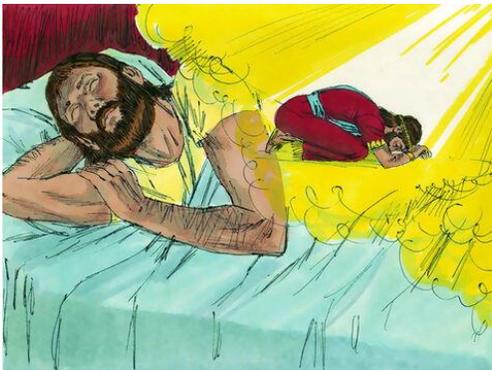
- The story continues in verse 4

[PowerPoint 2-Gibeon]



- Solomon goes to a place called **Gibeon** (about 10km north of Jerusalem)
- It's the **most important high place** at the time because as 2 Chron 1:2-3 says - the **tabernacle of the Lord was there**
- Solomon made a **huge sacrifice** to the Lord - **1000 burnt offerings** - in v4 - **showing his wealth and his love for the Lord**
- And it was there at **Gibeon** that the **Lord (v5) appeared** to Solomon in a **dream**

[PowerPoint 3-Dream]



- We shouldn't see this as the sort of dreams we have - which are often **confusing or bizarre** - [share my recurring dream]
- Solomon's **dream is very real** - more of a **vision** or a **prophetic dream**

- **Examples** of this are **Jacob's dream of a ladder to heaven** (Gen 28:10-17) and the **Lord speaking to Samuel** (1 Sam 3) (see also Judges 7:13; 28:6; Dan 2:4; 7:1) - as well as **God speaking to Joseph** (Matt 1:20; 2:13, 22)
- In this dream **God says to Solomon: Ask for whatever you want me to give you**
- I wonder what we would ask for? A husband? A wife? Many children? Money? Holiday? A bigger house? A caravan? A better job? COVID to end?
- Would we ask for ourselves only? Or for others?
- What about asking for your *family members to become Christians?*
- What about asking for a *revival in our land* - so more and *more people turn to God and believe in our Lord Jesus?*
- Look what Solomon asks for in v9
- He asks for a *discerning heart*
- Literally a *God-listening heart*
- A heart that listens for *God's whispers, God's questions, God's offers, God's instructions and God's promises*
- A heart that has wisdom - to see as God sees, to hear as God hears and to think and act as God acts
- I reckon - we can learn a lot from **Solomon's dream** - so let's have a look

#1 - Remember the generosity of God (vv5b, 12-14)

- #1 the fact that God says "ask for whatever you want me to give you" - shows us the **generosity of God**
- This lines up with other parts of scripture which tell us that God is generous - **See Eph 3:20** - which says: **God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us**
- And also, from our NT reading this morning, from **James 1:5** - **God gives generously without finding fault...**
- That's exactly what happens with Solomon here
- **Solomon asks God for a discerning heart (v9) - but look what God gives Solomon in vv12-14**
- God not only gives Solomon a wise and discerning heart (v12) - he says there will be no one ever again like Solomon (v12) - God also gives Solomon what he didn't ask for - and gives him wealth and honour - no king equal to him (v13)
- Application - even though we are not kings and even though we don't have the same level of kingdom responsibility as Solomon did - isn't God the same for us -

Isn't that the same way Jesus says God works in the Sermon on the Mount - **Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will open (Matt 7:7)**

Isn't that the same way Jesus says God works in Matt 7:11 - **If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how**

much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Can't we see that God's generosity lures us to pray and ask of him knowing that he can do immeasurably more than we ask because He is generous.

And doesn't this passage urge us to ask for what we need (wisdom) and not for what we want (wealth and honour)

- And doesn't this passage highlight that **true wisdom comes from God** - and for us to gain this wisdom for God - **we need to be connected to God in prayer and meditating on His Word which is the source of true wisdom**

[PowerPoint 5-#2]

#2 - Remember the faithfulness of God (vv6-7a, 8)

- #2 - From Solomon's dream we also learn the **faithfulness of God**
- Notice how Solomon begins in verse 6
- He does not begin with his request but with the past
- He **remembers what God has done** - "you have shown great kindness to your servant, my father, David"
- Solomon **remembers how God has kept his promise** - the covenant made with David in 2 Sam 7.
- **Solomon says this has come true** - Solomon himself is on the throne in place of his father David

- Solomon also refers to another promise in v8 - an ancient promise God make to Abraham - Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number.
- God had promised Abraham and Co that their seed would be uncountable as the sand on the seashore (Gen 13:16; 32:16) - And here in v8 - Solomon declares God has done it.
- Old promises or new promises - God keeps them all!
- Application - For us - remembering God's faithfulness - increases our faith and confidence - when we approach God for wisdom
- As our NT reading from James 1:6 says - when we approach God for wisdom - we must believe and not doubt

[PowerPoint 6-#3]

#3 - Remember the motive for asking is the people of God (vv7b-9)

- #3 - From Solomon's dream we also learn the motive for asking God
- Notice v7b - Solomon shows great humility - He says in his role as the new king - he is child-like in his know how - on how to carry out his royal duties
- And his concern is not for himself - but his concern is for God's people (v8) - Solomon needs a discerning heart (v9)
- Why? - so that he can govern God's people properly - and distinguish between right and wrong - literally between good and evil
- What drove Solomon was not his own selfish needs - but the need for the people of Israel to have discerning leadership

Application

- Shouldn't Solomon's prayer for a discerning heart motivate us as well?
- Shouldn't Solomon's prayer remind us to think of the need of others too.
- We're not a king, but shouldn't we pray like one?
- Shouldn't we pray for a wise and discerning heart before we make a pastoral visit - and before we make that delicate phone call - asking God to give us the words to say?
- Shouldn't we pray for a wise and discerning heart for our church leadership? That they make wise godly decisions and guide our church family in righteousness?
- Shouldn't we pray for wise and discerning hearts for our state and federal government - especially as they lead us through this covid situation? Shouldn't we pray that they don't lean on their own understanding but submit their paths to God and follow His ways and not their own ways?
- Shouldn't we pray for wise and discerning hearts for Christians who are persecuted for Jesus' sake?
- Shouldn't we lay aside our own needs and pray for safety and healing for those in the midst of COVID hotspots in Sydney, and those in other nations struggling with COVID - shouldn't we pray for wise and discerning hearts as to how we can protect our children - now that many are getting infected with COVID?

- And as our NT passage from James 1:2-4 reminds us - shouldn't we pray for wisdom as we face all sorts of trials - pray that we can face trials with joy - knowing Jesus has saved us for Heaven - and knowing the testing of our faith - gives perseverance - which brings us to maturity - so that we can help others in the future
- Shouldn't we seek God's concerns - and He will take care of our concerns (Matt 6:33)
- And doesn't this passage also remind us that - the wisdom we gain from God - should be passed on to others - as David did with Solomon (1 Kings 2:1-4 - and as Moses did to Joshua (Deut 34:9)

[PowerPoint 7-#4]

#4 - Remember the goal of asking is to please God (vv10-14)

- #4 - From Solomon's dream we also learn the **goal of asking is to please God**
- Look at v10 - **the Lord was pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom**
- And **God expresses his pleasure to Solomon and gives him both what he asked for (v11-12) and what he didn't ask for (v13)**
- There is something so wonderful - when we see that someone is pleased with us
- Like when we do something for our husband or wife - and they are thrilled - or seeing the face of our child or grandchildren - when we surprise them with something they've always wanted

Application

- Shouldn't the intent of all our praying and worship, both private and public - be to please God?
- We often hear that our worship needs to change to meet people's needs - but that's not the goal of worship - God is the only true audience - we should be genuinely trying to please Him
- Wouldn't it be good if we started our service this morning saying "Lord, this church service this morning is for you, we're here to give You pleasure and glory and honour"

So, to summarize then - when God said to Solomon "ask whatever you want me to give you" - God's generosity lured Solomon to ask for what he needed - and to remember God's faithfulness - and to ask for the needs of his people - and above all else, to want to please God.

[PowerPoint 8-#5]

#5 Don't forget to thank God (vv15)

- When Solomon's encounter with God finished - see v15 - **he awoke from his dream**
- What did he do?
- He returned to Jerusalem - where the Ark of the Covenant was (2 Sam 6; 1 Chronicles 15-16)

- And he **made sacrifices to God** - burnt offerings for the sins committed by himself and the people - and fellowship offerings as a sign of peace with God - and as sign of a desire of unity with the Lord
- In other words, Solomon said **thank you**
- Application
- It's important we confess our sins to God regularly - and particularly in the context of this passage - **confess our neglect in asking for God's wisdom - and confess how we all too often lean on our own understanding**
- It's important we don't just ask God and receive from God - but that we also thank Him for the great things He has done and continues to do!
- And like Solomon it's important we make a public testimony of our relationship with God - there's nothing better than our testimony in how God has dealt with us - **to encourage others**

[PowerPoint 9-Conclusion]

Conclusion/One Greater than Solomon

- Just one final thought to finish up with then
- Our passage from 1 Kings 3 - v12 says: - **God gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart - and that there would be no one like him ever again**
- Well, no earthly king anyway
- But in **Matthew 20:38-42**
- **The Pharisees and teachers of the law - foolishly ask Jesus for a sign - as if Jesus' miracles and amazing teaching weren't proof enough of who Jesus is?**

- Jesus says he will only give them the sign of Jonah - just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for 3 days/nights, Jesus himself will be in the earth for 3 days/nights - clearly referring to His death and resurrection
- Jesus goes on to tell them - that there is someone standing before them -who is greater than Jonah - and greater than the wisest king ever - Solomon.
- That someone is King Jesus
- WE - have access to this wisest of Kings
- And so, we can have confidence as we approach God
- As John says in 1 John 5:13-15

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Let's pray...

Father God, please give us the gift of a God-listening heart. We're desperate for your wisdom, your knowledge and your understanding. May we hear your voice, understand your heart and think as you do. May we speak and act with your wisdom in all our relationships and responsibilities.

Thank you that in your wisdom you sent King Jesus to bring us forgiveness and eternal life; and because of His grace and mercy - we can approach you in confidence, knowing if we ask according to your will, we know that we have what we ask of you. In Jesus name, Amen.