

## **Bible Readings**

### **1 Kings 3:16-28**

#### **A Wise Ruling**

<sup>16</sup> Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> "During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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."

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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.'"

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

<sup>26</sup> 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!"

<sup>27</sup> Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother."

<sup>28</sup> 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.

### **Colossians 2:1-5**

I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. <sup>2</sup> My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**Sermon: What a discerning heart looks like****5-Sep-21**

G'Day Church Family

We're resuming 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**

- This morning we going to be looking at how **King Solomon showed great wisdom**
- What is wisdom anyway?

[PowerPoint 1-wisdom definition]

*the ability to make sensible decisions and give good advice because of the experience and knowledge that we have*

- So - what's the difference between **knowledge** and wisdom?
- Well for example
  - Knowledge is knowing that a **tomato is a fruit** - wisdom is knowing not to include it in a fruit salad
  - Knowledge is knowing that a **street is a one-way street** - wisdom is knowing to look both ways before crossing - just in case a car has gone down the one-way street the wrong way!
- So, wisdom is **applying the knowledge and experience you have to situations in life**

- Are **men wiser than women** - or are **women wiser than men**?
- It would be very wise of me - to not go any further with that question
- Who is the **wisest human being** that ever lived?
- Well, it **depends in what field** we're looking at
  - If we are thinking of **America presidents** - who is the wisest - George Washington, Abe Lincoln, JFK, Roosevelt, Clinton, Obama, Trump, Biden?
  - If we're think of **Aussie PMs** - who is the wisest - Robert Menzies? Gough Whitlam? Bob Hawke? Paul Keating? John Howard? Sco-Mo?
  - In **philosophy** - is it Socrates or Plato or Aristotle?
  - In **physics** - is Albert Einstein the wisest?
  - In **Maths and Physics** - is Isaac Newton the wisest?
  - In Sunday **Jaffa and Scripture** teaching - we'd probably say - King Solomon

### Context

- Picking up our story of King Solomon - back in chapter 2 of 1 Kings
- In 1 Kings 2:46 - we read that:

[PowerPoint 2-1 Kings 2:46]

The kingdom was now established in Solomon's hands.

- Then in our last look at Solomon's story [a couple of weeks ago] - we saw in 1 Kings 3:5 that once Solomon's kingdom was established - **God appeared to**

**Solomon in a dream and said "Ask for whatever you want me to give you"**

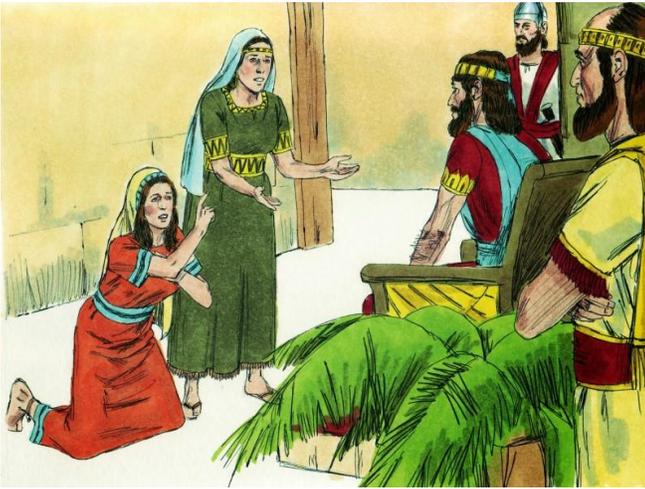
[PowerPoint 3-2 Kings 3:9]

- And **Solomon** in verse 9 of chapter 3 - **asked God for** "a discerning heart [literally a God-listening heart] so that he could govern God's people and so that he could distinguish between right and wrong; because who is able to govern this great people of God's without wisdom from God?"
- **God was very pleased with Solomon's request.**
- So - God not only gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart (1 Kings 3:12) - but He also gave Solomon what he didn't ask for - both wealth and honour - so that there will be no king like Solomon (1 Kings 3:13)
- As we hit **today's passage** from 1 Kings 3:16-28
- We see what a **discerning heart** (a God-listening heart) **looks like**

### Wise King Solomon (1 Kings 3:16-28)

- We pick up the story in verse 16 - **2 prostitutes** came before King Solomon

[PowerPoint 4-2 women]



- The 1<sup>st</sup> woman asked Solomon to judge their case
- The 1<sup>st</sup> woman explained that she had a baby and 3 days later the 2<sup>nd</sup> woman had a baby also. They were the only people living in the house. Therefore, there were **no witnesses**.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> woman's baby died because she lay on him during the night; so, **she got up and took the 1<sup>st</sup> woman's baby from her whilst she was asleep and swapped the live baby with the dead baby.**
- When the 1<sup>st</sup> woman woke up to nurse her baby - her **baby boy was dead** - but when she looked closely, she **realized that it wasn't her baby**
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> woman **denied this version of events** and said the living baby was hers.
- King **Solomon had to decide who was telling the truth.**
- The author of 1 Kings wants us to believe the 1<sup>st</sup> woman whose baby is alive and has been swapped by the 2<sup>nd</sup> woman.

- Solomon summarizes the dilemma in v23 - it's a question of '**the 1<sup>st</sup> woman says A**' and '**the 2<sup>nd</sup> woman said B**' - in other words it's **one person's word against another** - and there were no witnesses.
- We may have faced that same dilemma as a parent when 2 of our children **both claim to be telling the truth** - it's difficult to tell who is fair dinkum!

### [PowerPoint 5-Baby]



- So, **Solomon decided** to take a **sword** and **shock horror**, **cut the living baby in half** - and give each woman half a baby!
- Don't try this at home folks!
- **Solomon's reasoning** is that the **threat of death** to the baby would reveal the real **mother's feelings** with an urgent appeal to save the child's life.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> woman being the mother of the living baby; and out of love for her son (v26) pleads with King Solomon not to kill the child but give the child to the 2<sup>nd</sup> woman. The 1<sup>st</sup> woman would rather have the child live without her - than for the child to die.

- Whereas the 2<sup>nd</sup> woman who is not the real mother of the living baby is **totally okay with the King cutting the living baby in two?** How callous! How bizarre?
- From the 2 women's responses, **Solomon** was able to **determine** that the **love of the real mother** meant she would not want any harm to come to her child and was **willing to give up (sacrifice) her child** to the other woman. So, Solomon rules that the 1<sup>st</sup> woman is the mother of the living baby (v27).

[PowerPoint 6-2 Kings 3:28]

- When the people of Israel heard the King's verdict, look at v28 - **they held Solomon in awe** because they saw he had wisdom from God to administer justice.
- God had answered Solomon's prayer from 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?"

[PowerPoint 7-mirror]



- Let me take a **little diversion** just for a minute and talk about the Greek Philosopher - **Socrates** [470BC-399BC]

- After his service in the army, **Socrates** devoted himself to his **favourite pastime** - the **pursuit of truth** and the **meaning of life**
- His reputation as a philosopher, literally "a lover of wisdom" soon spread all over Athens and beyond. When **Socrates** was told that the **Oracle of Delphi [a priestess called Pythia]** had said to one of Socrates friends that **Socrates was the wisest man in Athens**, Socrates didn't respond by boasting or celebrating - but instead he **tried to prove the Oracle was wrong**
- Socrates decided to find out if anyone knew what was truly worthwhile knowing in life, because anyone who knew that - would surely be wiser than him. He set about questioning everyone he could find; but no one could give him a satisfactory answer. Instead, **everyone he talked to pretended to know something they clearly didn't know.**
- Finally, **Socrates realized** that the **Oracle might be right after all.** **Perhaps** he, **Socrates**, was the **wisest man in Athens** because he alone was prepared to admit his ignorance rather than pretend to know something he did not!
- Those **other philosophers** - **believed their own hype** that they were the wiser than they really were
- Back to Solomon then - what about his wisdom?
- **Solomon began his reign very well** in 1 Kings 3 - and the wisdom he received from God in dealing with the two prostitutes was remarkable indeed.

- But it **didn't occur to Solomon** that **he must maintain his faithful and obedient relationship with God** - or risk becoming unwise -even foolish
- By that I mean - by the time we get to 1 Kings chapter 11 - we see Solomon's wisdom is not maintained. And we read in 1 Kings 11:4 that Solomon intermarried with many foreign wives who turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not devoted to the Lord God (1 Kings 11:4)
- So, the point for us is - Solomon began well - he certainly made the most amazingly wise decision with the 2 prostitutes - but then we Fast forward to 1 Kings 11:1-5
- It's an epic fail.
- All he has been blessed with - has **gone to his head** and he's **forgotten his first love** - he's **forgotten God**
- So, **let's not be like Solomon**
- As wise as Solomon is - he is a **type and shadow** of a greater one to come after him- who has the **ultimate discerning heart** [God-listening heart].
- That's **Jesus** of course!
- In **Jesus we have the ultimate wise King** - someone greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42)

### Wiser King Jesus (Colossians 2:1-5)

- Which brings us to our NT passage from **Colossians 2:1-5**
- [\[Please turn there now\]](#)
- And it brings us to wise King Jesus

## [PowerPoint 8-Colossians 2]

- In this passage Paul prays for the Colossians to have the full riches of complete understanding, in order to know the mystery of God (v2)
- What's the **mystery of God?**
- The mystery of God is Jesus - see v3
- And - in Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
- In other words - Jesus is the *ultimate source of God's wisdom*
- If we tap into Jesus' wisdom - it's like opening a treasure chest of infinite wisdom
- Paul wants the Colossians to tap into Jesus' wisdom - so that in v4 - they are not deceived by fancy talk and fine-sounding arguments
- And that's what we must do too - tap into Jesus' wisdom - so that we are not fooled by the world's wisdom - especially in an age of misinformation and conspiracy theories!
- Let's consider some examples of Jesus' wisdom

### Examples of Jesus' wisdom

1. At **age 12** - Jesus and his family went to Jerusalem for Passover - Jesus was accidentally **left behind at the temple** - they found him **sitting among the teachers** listening to them and asking them questions. **Everyone who heard Him was amazed at his understanding and his answers** (Luke 2:41-52)
2. In **John 4** when Jesus spoke with the **Samaritan woman at the well** - He **treated her with compassion and kindness** - and with **incredible insight** -

and He **knew all about her previous marriages** and her current **lifestyle**.

**And He told her she needed spiritual water that gave eternal life!**

3. And in Matthew 13:53-55 - When **Jesus taught in the synagogue** in his hometown - **those who heard Him were amazed** - and said "**Where did this man get this wisdom and miraculous powers?**"

- Let's also consider some **examples of how Jesus administers justice** - because in the case of Solomon - **Solomon used his wisdom to administer justice**

### Examples of Jesus' justice

1. **Jesus treated** - the **afflicted** - the **outcasts**-the **lepers**-the **lame**-the **tax collectors** - the **vulnerable** of society - **with amazing compassion and gentleness**
  2. At the same time, he **treated** - the **arrogant**, the **puffed up**, the **know it all's** -the **ones who thought they'd arrived** - by challenging their views - answering their questions with his own questions - and challenging them to look at their own hearts before pointing the finger at others - like the case of the woman caught in adultery and her accusers wanting to stone her - Jesus reminded them "**let him without sin – cast the first stone**" (John 8)
- So, what can we take home with us this morning then as we look at the wisdom shown by Solomon and the wisdom of our Lord Jesus?

### Applications for us:

[PowerPoint 9-Applications]

1. #1 - **Solomon's judgement** in this case of the 2 prostitutes is **outrageous and shocking**. Isn't it? Who would have thought of chopping a baby in two! In the same way, **God's judgment on our sin is outrageous and shocking too**. Who would have thought of allowing His perfect/sinless Only Son to take the punishment of our sins? The ways, the works and even the judgments of God can often at first seem strange, dangerous or even foolish to us. But time shows them to be perfect wisdom. As Isaiah 55:9 says "My ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts, says the Lord". In His wisdom, God can bring good out of bad situations - like the case of the two prostitutes - and like in the case of Jesus being crucified. Just like the prostitutes brought their problem to Solomon - we can bring our cases of injustice to God - Ultimately, God knows the truth - ultimately, He is the source of all wisdom. You see, in God's wisdom He doesn't just act on what He sees and hears - He looks at the hearts of people.
2. #2 - We see in these two women the result of The Fall - when sin first came into the world through Adam and Eve - and people and creation became broken. **We see this** in the women's profession as prostitutes which meant they were mistreated by men and considered outcasts of society; **we see it** in the way one woman swaps her dead baby for a living one; **we see it** in the lies the one woman tells to try to get the baby which is not hers; and **we see it** her willingness because of her own loss, to callously let the baby even die rather than the real mother keeping her baby! **One lie leads to another** and

then to deceit and then to evil - people will go to any lengths rather than be exposed. Even today, our lives are messy and God's wisdom is needed as we live out our lives.

3. #3 - This case of Solomon is the ultimate example of wisdom from God. The wisdom of God is to be prized above all worldly wisdom. Therefore, we must keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ...may give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know Him better - as Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:17. [We must ask, seek and knock for wisdom] We must pray we have the same mindset as Jesus (Phil 2:5); so that we can make decisions for our nation, for our church, for our families and in our relationships. And boy don't we need wisdom when it comes to COVID19 and lockdowns and vaccines and border closures! And boy don't we need wisdom when it comes to Afghanistan! And when ask for wisdom we are not to doubt that God will give it to us (as James 1:6 tells us)
4. #4 In the action of the real mother, we see the love, kindness and mercy that God has built into His world, so that a mother loves her child unconditionally even to the point of self-sacrifice. But in far greater way we see the love and grace and mercy of God in sacrificing His Son so we can have forgiveness and eternal life. We too can model that sacrificial love in our lives - can't we?
5. #5 Solomon judges between sinful women in this case. The wisdom and justice that Solomon applied in the case of the two prostitutes foreshadows the wisdom and justice that Jesus brings to our lives. It is a picture of

**the judgment to come, where the only truly wise one, King Jesus, will judge all humankind. On that judgment day - Jesus will sit on His glorious throne (Matt 25:31) and He will separate the sheep [the believers] and the goats [the unbelievers] (Matt 25:32-33). No one can avoid that judgment - and it's imperative that we are His sheep and not one of the goats!**

### Conclusion

Let me **finish** with the **words of James**

[PowerPoint 10-Conclusion]

From James 3:13

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Let's pray...

Father God

Thank You that You are the source of true wisdom

Thank You that Your wisdom is way better than human wisdom

Help us to repent of our pride and our unwise ways

Grant us wisdom as we make decisions for ourselves and our family

Help us to have the same mindset as our Lord Jesus

Help us to model His sacrificial love

Help us to be mindful of the Judgment to come - and to use our time wisely in sharing the Good News of Jesus. In His name, we pray. AMEN.