

SOLOMON'S REQUEST OF THE LORD

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 3:5-15; 4:21-34

LESSON 255 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge" (Proverbs 23:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 3:5-15

⁵ In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

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.

⁷ And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.

⁸ And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

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?

¹⁰ And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

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;

¹² Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Palestine Occupied

There was a great burden on Solomon when he became king. He had more territory to govern than Israel had ever before controlled. His father, David, had conquered many of the nations around them, and Israel for the first time ruled all the land that God had promised to Abraham and his posterity about 900 years before.

What could Solomon do with so great a domain? He was only nineteen or twenty years old, and he needed wisdom to be able to judge such a great company of people. Solomon had learned from the reign of his father that when Israel followed the law of God, they prospered; and Solomon did want his nation to prosper while he ruled. He purposed in his heart to follow the commandments of God, to bring His favor upon the land. God honored him, and later Solomon could write: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Worship in High Places

At the time Solombn became king, the Ark of the Covenant was at Jerusalem, but the Tabernacle was still at Gibeon. No temple had yet been built, and there was no central place of worship. Altars had been built on many high places for worship to God, but they resembled the altars of the heathen, and there was danger that the hearts of the Israelites might be turned to idols. Solomon's great work was to build the Temple at Jerusalem, so all the Israelites could worship at the same place, in the unity of the faith. This work would occupy many years of his reign.

The Need for God's Help

Solomon realized his need for help from God to rule that great nation, so he went to the Tabernacle at Gibeon to pray. His heart was right with God, so God could commune with him. That night God appeared to him in a dream, and asked what Solomon would like to be given from Heaven. Solomon knew God would answer his prayers, for had not the Psalmist written, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11)? His own father had said, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Psalm 37:37). Solomon wanted peace and knew that God would give it to him.

Solomon spoke to God of the great blessings that had come to David, the greatest of which was that Solomon was now the king. God had promised that David's throne should be established forever, and Solomon had begun the fulfillment of that promise. God had told David more about Solomon, too: "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. . . . my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and

a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

¹³ And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

¹⁴ And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

¹⁵ And 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 up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

1 Kings 4:21-34

²¹ And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

²² And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

²³ Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.

²⁴ For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

²⁵ And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

²⁶ And Solomon had forty thousand

thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee" (II Samuel 7:13-16). This night Solomon was making his consecrations to go ahead and let God work through him to further His Kingdom.

Parents are blessed when they consecrate their children unto the Lord. But think of the blessings that come to the children who will go on with the consecration and yield their lives entirely to the Lord's will! There are blessings unlimited in store for young **people** who **will give all** they have in service to Jesus. God was going to honor Solomon's consecrations with greater blessings than even David had enjoyed.

As the Stars of Heaven

God had promised Abraham that his seed would be as the stars of the heavens for number. It seemed to Solomon that that time had now come. The tribes of Israel had grown until great numbers of people lived in all parts of the Holy Land; and to Solomon, in his helplessness, it seemed that they could not even be counted. How was he to lead all these people? He wanted them to love the Lord; and he wanted them to be happy and prosperous in the land. He was burdened more for the welfare of his people than he was for anything for himself.

He knew there would be trouble among the people, which he would have to settle. He felt himself to be but a child; how could he instruct the older people and tell them what was right or wrong. Only God could help him to make the decisions. The Apostle James wrote: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

That is what Solomon believed, and he asked: "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?"

God was pleased with the prayer. He was glad that Solomon was so unselfish. And because of his unselfish request, God was also going to give him wealth and fame, for which he had not asked.

One Wish

If you were given one wish, what would you ask for? Would it be for a fortune? If you got it, money would not make you happy. You might enjoy spending it for a while, but if you did not use it for the Lord, it would soon bring sorrow. Or if you asked for fame, and everyone who read your name in the newspaper knew what important work you had done, what good would it do if you stood before God and heard Him say, "I know you not"? To be a child of God is the most important thing in the world. "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Timothy 2:19).

The Wisest King

Solomon had asked for wisdom, and God gave it to him. And the prosperity of his kingdom was to be such "that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." Think of it! He would be the wisest, the richest, and the most powerful king in all the world. And if he would continue in the good way that he had chosen, he would live for a great many years upon the earth.

This was a dream, but it was more than an ordinary dream. God often used dreams in the ancient times to give His messages to men. And Solomon meant everything that he said to God in the dream. The first thing he did afterward was to go

stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

²⁷ And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

²⁸ Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

²⁹ And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that *is* on the sea shore.

³⁰ And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

³¹ For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

³² And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

³³ And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that *is* in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

³⁴ And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

to Jerusalem to worship before the Ark of the Covenant, and to offer sacrifices of praise to God for the blessings he was receiving.

God spoke in old times to the prophets through dreams and visions, but to us He has given the Bible. We can know the will of God by reading His Word. He will not change His Word. Someone might have a dream given by God; but it will agree with what the Bible says. God will not give anyone a dream contrary to what He has already written. We will find in the Bible all the instructions we need for our daily living, and our preparation for Heaven above.

Fame

Solomon became well known in all the countries of the known world. Great men and kings brought their treasures to Solomon. Spices and other precious things that did not grow in Palestine were brought from foreign lands; and gold and precious stones were given to Solomon in abundance, until his was the richest country in the world. Thus God prospered Solomon.

All the people enjoyed the prosperity, too. There were no wars, so all the young men could stay home with their families. They had their own thriving farms, and no one went hungry.

Solomon himself was very rich. He had forty thousand horses, and stables built for all of them. There were so many servants and soldiers living at the palace that it took thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, and many other animals and fowls to provide meat for each day.

Wisdom

No one in Solomon's day was as wise as he. He wrote many books so other people could profit by his wisdom, too. He wrote three thousand proverbs, many of which we have in the Bible in the Book of Proverbs; and he wrote a thousand and five songs. He also wrote books about nature — about the fish in the sea, the insects, and the beasts of the forest and field; and about the trees and vines. All these were the works of God's hands, and Solomon loved to consider what God had made.

All the governments of the world sent people to Solomon to learn of his wisdom — God-given wisdom. Daniel wrote: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3). The wisdom God had given to Solomon shone out into the whole world. As long as Solomon followed God and obeyed His commandments, his glory and power continued.

QUESTIONS

- 1 How great was the land of Israel when Solomon ruled?
- 2 To whom had God promised the land originally?
- 3 About how old was Solomon when he began to reign?
- 4 How many people did it seem to him were in the land of Israel?
- 5 How did he go about getting wisdom to rule them?
- 6 Where did Solomon have his marvelous dream?
- 7 What did Solomon ask for when God asked him what He should give him?
- 8 What did God give Solomon?
- 9 Illustrate Solomon's wisdom by some of the things he did.
- 10 What kind of wisdom is most important?