

1 Kings 3 pt. 2 v.5-28

(Ref. 2 Chronicles 1:7-13)

We enter into quite a famous history of Solomon - that of his wisdom, specifically how he came by it.

It is here that we must note that the Bible teaches us that Solomon's wisdom was not intrinsic to his own self. He did not already possess this famous wisdom, or cleverness before he was the king -- nor did he learn it per se from man but was granted this special wisdom from God.

We could consider this a gift born out of God's grace to him.

As a matter of fact in Paul's famous treatise on grace gifts given by the Holy Spirit - the word of wisdom is the first one that he lists. That isn't meaningful in itself but does bear consideration that wisdom is one of the gifts that God is happy to bless his children with.

[1Co 12:7-8 NKJV] 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit [of all]: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

AND, what's more, we are exhorted to ask for wisdom from our heavenly Father.

[Jas 1:5 NKJV] 5 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.

Two notes on gifts given by God. 1. They are not talents or intrinsic abilities that we already possess. 2. They aren't things that we are really good at because we've spent a lot of time learning them or crafting them. That would be considered a skill.

The gifts of God, sometimes called "grace gifts," because of the Greek term used in the New Testament to describe such gifting - are just that - gifts bestowed upon us because of God's good pleasure devoid of our own merit.

Further note, that, as we will see with Solomon, one of the hurdles of actually living out God's word and asking God for wisdom is our own stubborn nature and coming to a place where we realize that we are not as wise as we think we are and becoming humble enough to beg God for His wisdom.

Remember that God's word exhorts us repeatedly: [Pro 3:7 NKJV]  
7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

And again: [Rom 12:16 NKJV] 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

V.5-9 God speaks to Solomon in a dream.

Many people wonder if their dreams have any real meaning. We do see other places in the Bible where God does speak to people through their dreams or try to communicate to them through a vision in their dreams.

For example: Jacob (Gen 28), Joseph had a dream and interpreted dreams (Gen), Daniel interpreted dreams, Joseph the husband of Mary in (Matt 1).

The prophet Joel even wrote: [Joel 2:28 NKJV] 28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

But we must balance that with what is also found in Ecclesiastes, likely written by Solomon himself: [Ecc 5:3 NKJV] 3 For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice [is known] by [his] many words.

The Law also held what to do in the face of dreams or regarding someone who claimed to have dreams: [Deu 13:1-5 NKJV] 1 "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 "and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'--which you have not known--'and let us serve them,' 3 "you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether

you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 "You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. 5 "But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn [you] away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

So many people are drawn to the supernatural things that surely God can and does operate within but sometimes they do so while forsaking the very plain and simple truths of God's word and who He is. That was the danger for Israel and that is the danger for us today.

Let God's Word be true, test the spirits, walk after the LORD your God, fear Him, obey His voice, and keep His commandments.

In this instance it is a very clear interaction. Where we sometimes see symbolism that needs to be interpreted (Daniel, Joseph) here we see clarity. God asks Solomon what he desires.

What a test! When we each take a moment to ask ourselves the same question we may very well see the ugliness that lives within our hearts.

Solomon is dialoguing with the author of all creation who has just asked him what He can give to him. Solomon cannot hide his heart from God and neither can we. God is all-knowing. He already knows what it is that Solomon will ask for. But the question does something for Solomon. It prompts Solomon to some self-reflection and to reflection upon the nature and character of God the Father.

Solomon responds to God and his response is substantial! He had a real, meaningful conversation with the creator of the universe. How this challenges us! We often get stuck in the rote whispering of words.

Verse 6 is all about who God is. He is exceedingly merciful, He is exceedingly kind and He has demonstrated that mercy and kindness here on earth to David. This is a timeless truth - God is merciful and He is kind and He continues to demonstrate those same characteristics towards us.

As it relates to David's condition we see that certainly David was in need of God's mercy and kindness and he was a recipient of it.

Verse 7 Solomon reflects upon who he is. Confronted with the characteristics and power of God, Solomon knows that he is a child - even as an adult. He openly admits that he doesn't know what he's doing. That's good!

[Mat 18:3 NLT] 3 Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We don't see Solomon behave proudly. He is not overly impressed with himself or what he has achieved even though he is the King in Israel. It appears that he has a moment of clarity about God's grace towards him.

Solomon also realizes something about the people that he is called to serve and rule. They are God's special people.

[Deu 32:9-10 NKJV] 9 For the LORD's portion [is] His people; Jacob [is] the place of His inheritance. 10 "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

Realizing just how insufficient his own ability, talent, training is faced with such a task (remember the Israelites, while chosen by God, were stiff-necked and stubborn people) Solomon implores God for "an understanding heart...to discern between good and evil."

We typically distill Solomon's request down to wisdom but that is not technically what he asked for. He asked for an understanding heart to be able to discern good from evil and to judge God's people.

Note - Solomon knows these are God's people first. Ultimately God must rule over them. No matter which human occupies the throne of Israel it is God who will rule over them. The fullness of this truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Fully man, fully God, King of all Kings.

What we see is that because Solomon abased himself, he humbled himself, God blessed him with much more.

[Jas 4:10 NKJV] 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

V.11-15 God responds to Solomon. Remember it was God who initiated this conversation and now God finishes it.

Because Solomon wasn't focused on his own personal gain God gave him much more. Beware, don't turn this into the application of this history. The application is not, if I don't ask for things then God will give me everything. NO! God knows our hearts!

The application of this scripture is found in the truth that God cares for his whole congregation through one man.

This isn't necessarily about Solomon being wise. Yes, he is wise. But, the beneficiaries of Solomon's wisdom are the people. The beneficiaries of justice and understanding are the people. The kingdom benefited from the blessings and riches of the king in their midst.

This finds its most complete fulfillment in Christ! BECAUSE, Solomon eventually fails. He is a man like any other man, fraught with inadequacies.

V.16-28 Solomon's God-given wisdom anecdotally displayed.

This is counted as the premier illustration of Solomon's wisdom. How he is clever enough to discern the truth in a very volatile situation.

What is the purpose of this history? While on the surface level it appears to be simply a demonstration of Solomon's supernatural discernment that God gifted him with there is another layer.

What we see here is this new king confronting the human condition in all of its shades of depravity, desperation, and even love.

These two women who live together are harlots, prostitutes. Their work is not enviable. Their lives are hard, dangerous, and humiliating. The Law had several prohibitions against prostitution as well, with punishment including the death penalty. Moreover, the OT uses prostitution as an illustration for how God's people turn away from him and seek after other gods.

What do they seek? Well, one of them seeks justice. Why? She has found love - the love of her child more than likely born through prostitution.

This is quite complex. Two sinners, one of which is clearly lying, seeking justice. Do they deserve justice? The kind, merciful heart says, "yes." But, they do not deserve justice based on the merit of their own morality or righteousness. They don't have any intrinsic righteousness. They have devalued their own worth so much that they literally sell themselves to other people. Now the motives for

their condition are irrelevant. At this moment, they are who they are.

They receive justice because of who the king is. He is the discerner of hearts, the one who will extend justice to these depraved souls in the middle of their messed up situation. AND, whatever love is there between a mother and her child is preserved by the king's ruling.

My heart hurts for these women but they serve as a type for all of humanity who will one day stand before the only wise king and judge. We are them. We are devoid of any intrinsic righteousness that compels the king to right the wrongs done against us and yet He does so out of His mercy, goodness, wisdom, and perfect justice.

This is what we yearn for. Though we have sold ourselves many times over. We are all subject to that great King of all Kings - Jesus.

And just as “all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king,” so shall all be subject to that great judgment of our King.

[2Co 5:10 NKJV] 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things [done] in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Our hope on that day is that we are His subjects, citizens of His kingdom, under His protection, He Himself having born in His body the punishment for our crimes so that we may be with Him for eternity.

[1Jo 4:17 NKJV] 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.