

1 Kings 3.3-15**Solomon: Wisdom Requested and Granted****Read 1 Kings 3.1-15****I / INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS**

We will begin a survey and study of **1 & 2 Kings**. First, a brief introduction to these historical books...

What will we discover in these histories?

1. The books of **Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel, and 1&2 Kings** contains the whole story – from beginning to end – of the people of Israel in the Promised Land God has given them after He had delivered them from bondage in Egypt.
2. If you read **1&2 Kings – along with 1&2 Samuel** – you will find the records the histories of the kings of Israel from their first King, Saul, to the end of the kingdom, the dynasty, and the monarchy.
3. In fact, these books, taken together, will take us to the end of the national independence of Israel as a nation. **2 Kings** will end with a description of the fall and destruction of Jerusalem, their capitol, and the nation's being carried off into captivity to Babylon.
4. [**2 Kings 17** will also record the previous fall of the northern kingdom of Israel {as distinguished from the southern kingdom of Judah} when they were invaded and carried off into captivity to Assyria.]
5. [We also need to remind ourselves about the split or division of these two kingdoms recorded in **1 Kings 11.26-ch 12**. This divided kingdom (secession) occurred after Solomon's death early during the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. From the time of that split, the northern tribes and kingdom are called 'Israel,' and the southern tribes and kingdom are called 'Judah.']

However, these records are not just royal or national chronicles [they recorded and kept meticulous records of their national affairs – especially their royal reigns.

They are specifically Yahweh's holy critiques and evaluations of their relationships with Him.

1. Here is an excellent Purpose Statement for these books from Yahweh's holy perspective: *“The books of Kings continue the story of kingship begun in Samuel, and their primary purpose is to record the ‘covenant failure’ of the Hebrew united and divided monarchies. The Biblical narrative implicitly balances the notion of God’s sovereignty and the reality of human freedom and declares that God was justified in exiling His people for the failure of the kings of Israel and Judah to uphold the ideals of the Davidic covenant.”* [A Survey of the Old Testament / Andrew E. Hill & Jonathan H. Walton]. **This theme also serves to show us the ultimate failure of all human kings and our need for King Jesus to come with His Gospel and salvation!**
2. You will find Yahweh's specific commands and His certain consequences for their disobedience to Him and violating His covenant He made with them in **2 Samuel 7**.
3. David solemnly charged Solomon to keep these covenant conditions in **1 Kings 2.1-4**.

Here in 1 Kings...

1. David had reigned as king over the united kingdom for about 40 years, as recorded in **2 Samuel**.
2. But now his death is imminent. **1 Kings 1.1** begins the book with that announcement.
3. There was a brief power struggle from one of David's other sons. Adonijah attempted to pre-empt any other succession and enthrone himself / **1 Kings 1.5-27**.
4. This prompted David to publicly announce that Solomon would be his successor / **1 Kings 1.26-53**.
5. David gave Solomon some stern and specific instructions concerning how he should administer the kingdom's affairs / **1 Kings 2.1-9**.
6. David dies / **1 Kings 2.10-12**.

7. Solomon begins well, showing wisdom already in how the kingdom should be ruled in justice / **1 Kings 2.13-46.**
8. Chapter 2 ends with the words: **So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.**

II / SOLOMON BEGINS HIS REIGN / WARNING SIGNS ALREADY! / 1 Kings 3.1-3

➤ Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt...

1. Although this was a common practice among kings and nations in that day, Yahweh had specifically prohibited His people and nation from making any kind of alliance with 'foreign' nations, and especially Egypt! / **Deuteronomy 17.14-17.**
2. ALSO...this same Hebrew word for '*made a marriage alliance*' is translated '*intermarry*' in **Deuteronomy 7.3.** Yahweh prohibited intermarriage with other nations because He knew that this would lead their hearts and allegiance away from following Him 'to serve other gods,' which is precisely where it led Solomon's heart / **1 Kings 11.3-4.**
3. **God knows our hearts and He knows what He's talking about when he makes such warnings and prohibitions!**

➤ Solomon also sacrificed and made offerings at the high places...

1. Yes, Solomon did love the LORD [v 3], but already his love for Yahweh was divided and distracted by his other loves and desires. Yahweh's unconditional and non-negotiable First and Greatest Commandment has always been to '**love Yahweh your God with ALL your heart...**' / **Deuteronomy 6.4-5**
2. These '**high places**' had been left over from the previous inhabitants of the land. They were the prominent places of worship to their idols and false gods. What Israel had done was to 're-dedicate' them to the worship of Yahweh. But, again, this was a violation and disobedience to Yahweh's command to establish only one place of worship that He would choose for them / **Deuteronomy 12**

III / SOLOMON GOES TO GIBEON TO WORSHIP YAHWEH / v 4

1. This appears to be an expression of his gratitude to Yahweh for establishing him as king over Israel and to commit himself to follow and serve Yahweh in all his ways – to seek the blessing of Yahweh on his reign and on the people of Israel.
2. He made a most generous expression of worship to Yahweh by offering **a thousand burnt offerings on the brazen altar** that was still being housed in Gibeon.

IV / YAHWEH IS PLEASED WITH SOLOMON'S WORSHIP – AND OFFERS TO GIVE HIM WHAT HE MOST WANTED – SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM / vv 5-9

1. **v 5** / At Gibeon, as Solomon was worshiping Yahweh, He appeared to Solomon in a dream and offers: "**Ask what I shall give you?**"
2. Stop for a moment, and ask yourself: "*How would I answer that same question from God?*" The fact of the matter is, we want all kinds of things and ask for things in our prayers all the time! What we ask for reveals and expresses what we most want. So, if you could have anything you most want, what would that be? This is a heart-searching question and examination we all would do well to conduct and answer.
3. Here's what we will find out about Solomon's request: it was perfectly synced with and aligned with God's pleasure, God's desires, and for God's glory! His mind was thinking in sync with Yahweh's mind and his own heart was beating in rhythm with Yahweh's heart. So should ours!

4. **v 6-7a** / Solomon begins by extolling the love of Yahweh, His faithfulness to His promises to his father David. This entire expression is a confession that Yahweh had faithfully fulfilled every promise that He had made to David in 2 Samuel 7.
 - a. Solomon is where he is that day because Yahweh had made and kept His promise to David that **“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.” 2 Samuel 7.12**
5. **v 7b** / Solomon humbly and freely confesses his inadequacy to be the king he wants to be and knows he ought to be to represent Yahweh well and serve Yahweh’s people in ways that benefit them best.
6. He calls himself **“although I am but a little child.”**
 - a. I remember so well when I was called to my first pastorate in 1973. I was only 22 years old. This same conviction and prayer gripped me. I prayed this same prayer to the Lord who was calling me to lead and serve His people. It has never left me even after all these years. After all the experience I may have acquired from all the decades of serving God as faithfully as I have known how, I still feel the same inadequacy and incompetence apart from the wisdom that God must give me each and every day – in each and every circumstance in which I am called to conduct my ministry among God’s people.
7. **v 8 / “your servant” [vv 6, 7, 8, 9]** Solomon uses this word over and over to refer both to his father David and also to himself. He has no illusions of his own worthiness, innate abilities, or qualifications to perform this ministry Yahweh has called him and given him to do.
 - a. And neither should any one of us. Regardless of what position we may have, or what service Jesus gives us to perform ... regardless of how well-known and prominent or how obscure, unseen, and unrecognized by others we may be – we are nothing more than **‘servants...as the Lord assigned to each’ / 1 Corinthians 3.5**
8. **v 9 / “Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil...”** SO...THIS is what Solomon wants more than anything else and what he asks Yahweh to give him.
 - a. **“an understanding mind”** is a mind that is committed to God’s will, what God wants, in sync with God’s own mind as revealed in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. It is a mind that is committed to knowing God and schooled by being saturated with God’s Word, and trained by the consistent practice of unquestioning obedience. It is a mind that has rejected any arrogance in its own wisdom, and instead humbly submits to God’s will. / **Proverbs 3.5-8**
 - b. We are commanded to pray for this same kind of wisdom in our own personal contexts and experiences. **James 1.5: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.**
 - c. We will use this wisdom that God gives us in order to conduct all our relationships with others in ways that represent Him well and in ways that He Himself is doing. Listen to how James contrasts our own self-willed wisdom with the wisdom that comes from God: **Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.** ¹⁴**But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.** ¹⁵**This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.** ¹⁶**For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.** ¹⁷**But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.** ¹⁸**And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. / James 3.13-18**

V / YAHWEH IS PLEASED AGAIN & YET MORE – AND PROMISES TO GIVE SOLOMON WISDOM ... AND SO MUCH MORE BESIDES! / vv 10-13

1. **“It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this...”** Do you know the surest way to know that what you ask for when you pray will please Him? The answer really is simple: just ask Him for what you already know He wants you to have? And how do we know what He wants us to have? Again, the answer is simple: Delight yourself in Him! Love Him with all your heart. Find all your joy, satisfaction, and contentment in Him. Make Him all the life-portion and possession you want. Fill your mind, heart, and will with His Word. **Psalm 37.4: Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.** Because when you delight yourself in Him, what you want and all you want is Him! And He promises to give you all of Himself that you want!
 - a. In fact, that is precisely what God has done by giving us Christ! ***Jesus Christ is, in Himself, the very fulness of the very God, “and you have been filled in Him...” / Colossians 2.9-10.***
 - b. And when God gives us Christ, He gives us ALL things! **Romans 8.32: He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?**
 - c. **Ephesians 1.3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...**
2. SO ... Yahweh promises Solomon that He will give him, not only what he asked for, a wise and discerning mind, but He will also give him many other blessings he didn't ask for: both riches and honor.
3. And if Solomon will just obey Yahweh as He has commanded, Yahweh will fulfill and perpetuate the covenant promises He had made to David – give Solomon a long life.

I have always told the people I was teaching and leading over the years: “You can be just as wise as Solomon was!” Of course, I've always been met with a great deal of skepticism from the humble folks I have associated with. *“How can that be? Nobody was as wise as Solomon? Solomon was in a wisdom class all to himself. He was not only the valedictorian of his wisdom class – he was the ONLY-torian of his class! Didn't even God say, ‘Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you?’”*

And, of course, the answer to all of that is: “Yes!” But, at the same time, Yahweh gave Solomon the wisdom He asked for because Solomon would need that wisdom to do what God had given him to do. And God makes you the same promise! You don't need the wisdom God gave Solomon because God doesn't give you the same life assignment He gave Solomon. But God makes the same promise to you for what He has given you to do: **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him / James 1.8.** God promises to generously and freely give you all the wisdom you will need to do what He has given you to do ... if you ask in faith and use it faithfully for His glory! **In this way, we all can and will be as wise as Solomon in our own contexts.**

AND BESIDES ALL THAT ... When Jesus Christ came with His Gospel, He declared Himself to be wiser and greater than Solomon! **The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here / Matthew 12.42.** We all confess that. Well, Jesus' wisdom [to know God] has been given to us when we receive Him.

1 Corinthians 1.24: “...to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 1.30-31: And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,³¹ so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

SO LET'S ALL MAKE IT OUR AIM TO PLEASE GOD THIS SAME WAY BY LIVING, SERVING, AND PRAYING BY THE WISDOM WE HAVE IN CHRIST!