

## 1 Kings 3

Written by K B Napier  
Thursday, 05 November 2015 15:33

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Here, we are shown the righteousness of Solomon, and the fact that God gave him a special gift of wisdom, far above that of every other man alive. His wisdom affected all of Israel and lives on to this day. The very first test of his God-given wisdom came in the form of a very complicated legal case... could YOU have decided the outcome? I can only say that Solomon's decision was brilliant and extremely clever. It was, however, primarily, *God's* wisdom. Which is why it spread all around Israel like wildfire!

We must all strive to think clearly with the wisdom we have been allotted. God helps us in this by giving us discernment. Do you use your discernment, or are you too afraid to speak in holy manner?

### Verses 1-3

1.

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

2.

Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

3.

And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

The first two phrases, "And Solomon..." to "... Pharaoh's daughter", all mean the same thing – that Solomon became the Pharaoh's son-in-law: *châthan*. This marriage immediately joined Israel and Egypt in a bond of friendship, making a powerful alliance. It is possible Solomon married his bride in Egypt, for he "took Pharaoh's daughter" and afterwards travelled with her to Jerusalem, where several building projects were taking place: the making of his own palace, and the building of the Temple. To date, God's house was in temporary dwellings. Yet another project was the encircling security walls, making the city a fortress. That is, the original 'city of

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David'; the larger walls came later.

Because there was no permanent Temple, everyone worshipped God and made their sacrifices "in high places" or *bamah*. This could refer to a mountain top or to a place used for religious rituals, such as a flat raised area. In this text a mountain top is meant. Unfortunately, such tops were also used to worship pagan deities. Perhaps this is one major reason why a permanent Temple was needed; to keep people focused on God. Solomon "loved the LORD" and lived an holy life, sacrificing and burning incense to Him on the same mountain tops. Note how Solomon wanted to separate the true God from false gods, by erecting a solid Temple. Do we, in our day, separate what is godly from what is pagan?

### Verses 4-9

1.

And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

2.

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

3.

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.

4.

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.

5.

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.

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6.

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?

We see that the “high place” used by Solomon and righteous Hebrews was the top of Gibeon mountain, considered to be the “great” (older/larger) high place to worship. This place was also an old priestly Benjamite city about five miles from Jerusalem, where the tabernacle was sited. We are told that Solomon sacrificed one thousand times at this site.

While Solomon was staying at Gibeon, possibly after making sacrifices, he received a dream from God, in which God asked what He should give to the new king. Later in the dream we see that the question was a test of Solomon’s character.

Solomon replied that God gave his father, David, mercy and blessings for living righteously and acting in a holy way, as well as a son (himself) to carry on his reign. Though he was now king, said Solomon, he was a spiritual and social novice, a “little child” who had no idea what to do as king. He was king of a large nation whose numbers could not be counted\*. ‘Therefore’, he said to God, ‘give me understanding so that I can rule well, able to know good from evil... for how else can I rule this people?’

*(\* Modern atheistic historians have tried to persuade the world that there is no real verification that the Hebrews were noted as a great nation of any size. Latest archaeological finds, however, prove that David and Israel were indeed mighty and a large nation. Remember the rule – if God says it in His word, then it is true!).*

### Verses 10-14

1.

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

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2.

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;

3.

Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

4.

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.

5.

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.

Solomon's answer pleased the Lord. God loved the fact that Solomon did not seek his own riches or attainments, or that God should destroy his enemies, but, instead, asked only for discernment to make sound judgments. Thus, God said, He would give Solomon his wish for wisdom, plus a reign that would be greater than any other reign either before or after his time. From this we can be assured that Solomon was indeed the greatest king of Israel and Judah ever. And, because he never asked for them, God also gave him untold wealth and power.

The combined gifts from God ensured that all the nations of his time paid reverence to Solomon during his reign, recognising his unrivalled authority and power. Additionally, if Solomon lived as did his father, David, God would give him a long life as well.

This would seem to be a template for our own lives: not to call upon God for our own

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enrichment or ease from fear, but, rather, to offer Him our faith and unstinted service. That is, to look steadfastly upon Him and seek His requirements of us, plus wisdom. He will then give us things we have *not* asked for, as a reward for faith. Note that God did not once mention David's errors and sins, but only his 'core' character of holiness.

(Note: What was Solomon's 'wisdom' [*chokmah*]? It was shrewdness and prudence in all aspects of life, whether spiritual, mental, or physical; administratively and personal. For us, we can look at it this way... knowledge alone is as nothing, because anyone can acquire it. The New Testament speaks of constantly learning but never using what we learn, which is worthless.

One of the features of someone who has truly understood, is that he can explain what he has learned in his own words, not just parrot-fashion. Many, even with doctorates, have vast knowledge, but cannot apply it uniquely. This is why Solomon spoke of 'understanding'. To be of any use, knowledge must be understood. Then, it must be applied to situations, people, and thinking.

Most with higher learning today [including pastors, preachers and theologians] are worthless or weak, because their knowledge is great, but made sterile by inability to apply the knowledge in a useful and godly way. It is this latter characteristic that marks and separates a genuine man of God from a mere gainer-of-knowledge).

### Verses 15-22

1.

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.

2.

Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

3.

And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

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4.

And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

5.

And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

6.

And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

7.

And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

8.

And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

Solomon awoke from his dream. This does not mean it was any the less more powerful or true than an actual physical meeting. God deals in dreams when they are necessary and they always have a purpose. (I reject the dreams of charismatics, which appear to be psychological desires, delusions, or satanic fakes).

In the morning, Solomon travelled back to Jerusalem, where he went to stand before the ark of the covenant. There, he performed burnt sacrifices and peace offerings, before making a feast for all his servants. It is probable, in this case, that the offering was burnt-up completely, with nothing left to eat, as a worship of Yahweh. It means to give everything to God, keeping nothing back for ones' self. The peace offering signified being as one with God, whole and restored.

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See how Solomon placed great importance on a dream, not wavering in his belief that God had spoken. He could only do this because the dream itself was proven to be from God and not a simple mind-induced one. Today, many charismatics believe in and rely on dreams, even though they cannot be proved to be holy. This is because of their lack of discernment and genuine faith.

That day, two women were brought before Solomon, one of whose tasks was as judge in civil cases. Both women were prostitutes who lived in the same house and both became pregnant because of their sinfulness. One of them gave her account of what supposedly happened... Both women delivered a child on the same day. On the third day after the birth the two women were alone in the house with their babies. That night one of the babies died because the mother unwittingly laid on top of it.

The woman telling the story went on to say that the mother whose baby had died got up at midnight, went to her room, and stole her live baby, laying the dead baby on her chest. The woman continued her story: when she arose next morning to feed her baby, she found it was dead. She insisted that after a short while she realised it was not her baby.

The other woman, who was until now silent, objected, saying, 'No, the living baby is mine; the dead baby is yours.' The one who began the story then argued otherwise – 'No, the baby you have is mine'! A classic "She said, I said" scenario. In those days who could tell the difference?

### Verses 23-28

1.

Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

2.

And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

3.

And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

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4.

Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

5.

Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

6.

And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

The king listened, and then shows that God had truly bestowed real wisdom on him. He spoke without hesitation. 'You both contradict each other'. Solomon ordered that a sword be brought to him. He commanded a servant to cut the baby in half, so that both mothers would receive a half each. It was then that the true mother was made evident; her love for her baby led her to ask Solomon to give the whole, living child to the other woman so that the child lived. The other woman, though, insisted that they receive a half each, though it would kill the child.

In this way Solomon knew who the child belonged to – the real mother would not have her baby destroyed just to win the argument; she would rather lose the baby and keep it alive. The king said, 'Give the child to her, for she is the true mother'.

It did not take long for the news to reach all corners of Israel, because it was a remarkable judgment in what seemed to be an unsolvable case. The case proved to them that God had indeed chosen Solomon as king and gifted him with wisdom. Thus, all the people feared Solomon. That is, they truly were in fear of his judgments, and yet were in astonished awe because of his wisdom.

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In a lesser way, this is similar to proof that God has chosen a preacher or teacher. Does he live according to God's demands and word? Does he obey morality and knowledge? Does he only speak what the Lord has already spoken? Are people enabled and given courage when he speaks? Does he care more for God than he does even for his own life, or the fiery threats of men? Are his words true – in agreement with scripture?

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