

1 Kings 03 - Solomon Marries Pharaoh's Daughter; Solomon Prays for Wisdom; Solomon's Wisdom Tested

I. United kingdom under Solomon (1 Kings 1:1—11:43)

(2) Solomon establishes his kingdom (1 Kings 2:13—4:34)

(B) Solomon marries the Egyptian princess (3:1)

(C) Solomon requests and receives divine wisdom (3:2-15)

(D) Solomon applies his wisdom in judging the proper ownership of the child (3:16-28)

1 Kings 3

(B) Solomon marries the Egyptian princess (3:1) (Cf. 2 Chr 1:1-6)

1 Now Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD, and **thewall around Jerusalem.**

1 Then Solomon formed a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her to the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem.

1 Later, Solomon intermarried with the family of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt by taking his daughter and bringing her to the City of David to live until he had completed building his own palace, the LORD's Temple, and the wall around Jerusalem.

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.

- This note by the author may be out of chronological sequence with the other events of Solomon's life. It is added here as an important historical fact and a portent of things to come.

- God brought Solomon to the throne at a time Israel could flourish with little fear of attack — To the north and east, Assyria and Babylon had not yet risen to greatness; To the south, Egypt's grip on the Mediterranean world had weakened

— With it's power in decline, Egypt welcomed Israel as an ally; to confirm their alliance, Pharaoh gave his daughter in marriage to Solomon

- The marriage strengthened Solomon's kingdom and raised his international prestige, but God's law warned His people not to marry those who did not worship Him (Deut 7:3-6)
- The Pharaoh was likely Siamun (978-959 BC)
- Should Solomon have married "Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women," as well as Pharaoh's daughter? In view of Ex 23:31-33; 34:12-16; Deut 17:17, the answer must be "No"
- The writer likely does not point out Solomon's sins here likely because his purpose in this section was to show the greatness of Solomon; he emphasizes Solomon's failures in 1 Kings 11
- The fact that Solomon could marry such an Egyptian princess shows the social and political height to which God had elevated him! A descendant of former Egyptian slaves became Pharaoh's son-in-law.
- It also showed the low estate to which Egypt had sunk: the giving of Pharaoh's daughter was a concession without parallel in Egyptian history. Normally Egyptian kings took foreign princesses as wives, they did not give up their own daughters to foreign kings.
- Solomon was not as careful about marrying non-Israelites as he should have been. But this union did result in peace with Israel's neighbor to the southwest who was weak during Solomon's reign
- Solomon housed this bride in Jerusalem. After he finished several building projects including his palace, the temple, and other buildings (Cf. 7:2-7), he prepared a special house (a palace) for her (Cf. 7:8).
- "...the wall around Jerusalem" - Josephus commented that Solomon built the walls around Jerusalem larger and stronger than the previous wall [*Antiquities of the Jews*, 8:2:1; Cf. Ps 51:18]

Like a clue inserted into a movie's opening scene, this small detail hints of future problems. Solomon's later years demonstrate the danger of failing to listen to God's warnings (1 Kings 11:1-6).

(C) Solomon requests and receives divine wisdom (3:2-15)

- 2 The people were still sacrificing on the **highplaces**, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days.
- 2 The people were still sacrificing on the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days.
- 2 The people were sacrificing at various high places because the Temple had not yet been built and dedicated to the LORD.
- 2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

- "...high places" - described by the *Ras Shamra* tablets as open-air sanctuaries throughout the land, which were taken over from the Canaanites and converted into centers for *Yahweh* worship

— Before the Mosaic Law, worship on high places was not evil (Cf. Gen 12:7-8; 22:2-4; 31:54), however God commanded His people to worship Him with sacrifices only at the tabernacle, at the place God chose (Deut 12:1-21). The Law forbade offering sacrifices at places other than those God approved, and especially at sites of Canaanite altars, after Israel built the temple in Jerusalem (Deut 12:1-21; 2 Chr 7:12).

— They were prohibited in the Law (Lev 17:3-4; Deut 12:13-14; Jer 7:31; Ezek 6:3-4; Hosea 10:8), but so long as the tabernacle was migratory and the means for the national worship were merely provisional, the worship on those high places apparently was tolerated

— Hence, as accounting for their continuance, it is expressly stated here that God had not yet chosen a permanent and exclusive place for his worship

— Evidently the people justified their disobedience by the fact that they did not have a permanent palace (temple) where *Yahweh* could dwell

— It's possible that they also did not consider worship at high places wrong until the Ark was reunited in a central sanctuary (tabernacle or temple, Cf. 1 Sam 9:11-25)

The tabernacle no longer held the ark of the covenant, so some confusion about where to worship may have existed. A generation before Saul began his reign, Israel lost the ark in battle (1 Sam 4:1-11). Upon the ark's return (1 Sam 6:1-16), Israel failed to restore it to the tabernacle. Later, David placed the ark in a special tent in Jerusalem (1 Sam 6:21-7:2; 2 Sam 6:1-18), where Levites cared for it (1 Chr 16:1-6,37-42).

The high places threatened the purity of the Israelites' lives and their love for God. The Lord commanded His people to offer sacrifices at His altar alone. The one place of worship pointed to God's one and only Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14) and His sacrifice for us. God has provided only one way for people to come to Him—through faith in His Son (John 14:6; Heb 4:14-16; 10:19-22).

Throughout the world today and in history, God's people worship Him with joyful, beautiful diversity. But it is in accordance with His true revelation of Himself and His will in His Word. We are not to seek and honor Him according to our own needs and fancies, but according to His truth.

3 Now Solomon **loved the LORD**, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he was sacrificing and burning incense on the high places.

3 Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

3 Solomon loved the LORD, and lived according to the statutes that his father David obeyed, except that he sacrificed and burned offerings at the high places.

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

- "...loved the LORD" - *áhab*, expresses more than a feeling; more fundamentally, a commitment to *Yahweh* that manifests itself in obedience to His Word

— This is high praise that the OT only uses to describe Solomon

— Solomon's commitment to the Lord, like David's, accounted for much of the blessing that came on the king, and through him to the people

- The only deviation from the Law ascribed to Solomon at this time was his worship at the high places and his polygamy; otherwise, Solomon followed God faithfully

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, because that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

4 The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

4 The king used to go to Gibeon to sacrifice, since there was a famous high place there, where Solomon once offered 1,000 burnt offerings on that altar.

4 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.

- Evidently the Mosaic tabernacle, along with the brazen altar, still stood at Gibeon (1 Chr 16:39-40; 21:28-29; 2 Chr 1:3,5-6)

— Josephus (inaccurately) wrote that it was located at Hebron

— The tabernacle may have been moved from Nob to Gibeon after Saul's slaughter of the priests of Nob (1 Sam 22:18-19)

— Gibeon was one of the "high places" where the people offered sacrifices to *Yahweh*

- Burnt offerings symbolized the dedication of the worshipper's person to God (Lev 1)

— By offering 1,000 of these sacrifices, Solomon was expressing his personal allegiance to *Yahweh*

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what *you wish* Me to give you."

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what *you wish* Me to give you."

5 The LORD appeared to Solomon one night in a dream and told him, "Ask me for whatever you want and I'll give it to you."

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

- Evidently that very night the LORD revealed Himself to the king in a dream

— Such revelations were not that uncommon in ancient Israel (Cf. Gen 28:10-15; 37:5-7; etc.)

— God invited Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted (there seems to be a cause-and-effect relationship between Solomon's loving generosity in making his offering to the Lord and God's loving generosity in making him this offer)

— God responded to Solomon's dedication (v4) in a way that He would not have had the king failed to dedicate himself to God; God's response to him was in response to his offerings

- God's offer of "whatever you want" constituted a test for Solomon: would he request something for his own glory, or for God's glory?

— Solomon showed his heart for God by asking something for God's glory (v9)

6 Then Solomon said, "You have shown great faithfulness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great **faithfulness**, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

6 Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

6 So Solomon said:

"You have demonstrated abundant gracious love to your servant David, my father, as he lived in your presence truthfully, righteously, and uprightly in his heart. In addition, you have kept on showing this abundant gracious love by giving him a son to sit on his throne today.

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.

- "...faithfulness" - *hesed*, kindness, loyal love; the Hebrew word encompasses so many aspects of love and loyalty that no one word or phrase can translate it fully

— It can refer to covenant kindness, steadfast love, loyal love, faithful love, unending love, great love. Lovingkindness, mercy, goodness, faithfulness and loyalty are embedded in one wonderful, dynamic word

— The word is central to God's identity, particularly in the OT; He describes Himself as *abounding in hesed*

— It is God's never-ending, gracious covenant love for His people (Cf. Ex 34:6-7; Neh 9:17; Ps 25:10; 32:10; 85:10; 86:5,15; 103:4; Jer 31:3) and His people's loyal love for others (Gen 24:49; 47:29; Joshua 2:12,14; Ruth 1:8; Hosea 12:6; Micah 6:8)

— *Hesed* means God includes our most painful losses in His unshakable promise to bring us lasting joy (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28)

7 And now, LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am *like* a little boy; I do not know how to **go out or come in**.

7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

7 Now, LORD my God, you have set me as king to replace my father David, but I'm still young. I don't have any leadership skills.

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.

- The king acknowledged his own immaturity and need for God's wisdom: Solomon was about 20 years old when he took the throne

— In calling himself a "little child" (*na'ar*, immature person) he was admitting his inexperience (Cf. 1 Chr 22:5; 29:1)

— His words show that he viewed himself as dependent upon God, not self-sufficient; God's servant, and a servant of God's people rather than his people

- "...go out or come in" - refers to life outside the home, in the discharge of one's duties (Cf. Deut 31:2; 1 Sam 18:16)

— It refers to leadership skills (Cf. Num 27:17; Joshua 14:11; 1 Sam 29:6; 2 Kings 11:8)

8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.

8 Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.

8 Your servant lives in the midst of your people that you have chosen, a great people that is too numerous to be counted.

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 So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil. For who is capable of judging this great people of Yours?"

9 So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

9 So give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people, so I can discern between good and evil. Otherwise, how will I be able to govern this great people of yours?"

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?

- Solomon was concerned that he would be able to function effectively as the vice-regent of Yahweh. His responsibility as the leader and judge of God's people weighed heavily on him.

— So he requested a discerning heart (lit., "a hearing heart") tuned to the voice of God so he could lead Israel as God would want the nation to be led

— He acknowledged his dependence on God by referring to himself as God's servant

10 Now it was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

10 It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

10 The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for this,

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

11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself a long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice,

11 God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice,

11 so God told him:

"Because you asked for this, and you didn't ask for a long life for yourself, and you didn't ask for the lives of your enemies, but instead you've asked for discernment so you can understand how to govern,

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;

- Solomon placed the good of God's people above his personal peace or prosperity and above any desire to become a powerful and popular king

— His values were in the right place from God's perspective, so God promised to give him what he requested. He would possess a wise heart (v12) and be able to discern and render fair judgments (v11).

12 behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

12 behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

12 look how I'm going to do precisely what you asked. I'm giving you a wise and discerning mind, so that there will have been no one like you before you and no one will arise after you

like you.

12 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.

13 I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.

13 I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.

13 I'm also giving you what you haven't requested: both riches and honor, so that no other king will be comparable to you during your lifetime.

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.

- Since Solomon sought what was most important, God also promised to give him what was of secondary importance, riches and honor, to further enable him to govern God's people effectively

— Solomon was to be the richest and most honored king of his day

— The Wisdom literature of Solomonic and post-Exilic days bears testimony to the high desirability of wisdom (Prov 8:11-36; Eccl 12:9-11)

14 And if you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."

14 If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."

14 If you will live life my way, keeping my statutes and my commands, just like your father David did, I'll also increase the length of your life."

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 Then 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 burnt offerings and made peace offerings, and held a feast for all his servants.

15 Then 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 burnt offerings and made peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

15 Then Solomon woke up and realized that he had dreamed a dream. Then he went back to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the LORD's covenant, offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and threw a party for all of his servants.

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.

- Inspired by this revelation Solomon turned from the high place and proceeded to the divinely appointed place of worship, the tabernacle

— He did not enter the most holy place; only the high priest could enter there once a year (Lev 16). But the king stood before the ark of the LORD's covenant, outside the tabernacle facing toward the ark.

- Burnt offerings expressed the complete dedication of oneself to God and fellowship offerings symbolized the fellowship people can enjoy with God and with others through God's grace. Solomon's feast expressed his joy and gratitude to his court.

(D) Solomon applies his wisdom in judging the proper ownership of the child
(3:16-28)

16 Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him.

16 Then two women who were harlots came to the king and stood before him.

16 Right about then, two prostitutes approached the king and requested an audience with him.

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

- This incident was undoubtedly included at this point to show that God had indeed given Solomon the wisdom He promised (Cf. v12)

17 The one woman said, "Pardon me, my lord: this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house.

17 The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth to a child while she *was* in the house.

17 One woman said, "Your majesty, this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a child while she was in the house.

17 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.

18 And it happened on the third day after I gave birth, that this woman also gave birth to a child, and we were together. There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house.

18 It happened on the third day after I gave birth, that this woman also gave birth to a child, and we were together. There was no stranger with us in the house, only the two of us in the house.

18 Three days later, this woman also gave birth. We lived alone there. There was nobody else with us in the house. It was just the two of us.

18 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.

19 Then this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him.

19 This woman's son died in the night, because she lay on it.

19 This woman's son died overnight because she laid on top of him.

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

20 So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your servant was asleep, and she laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast.

20 So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead son in my bosom.

20 She got up in the middle of the night, took my son from me while your servant was asleep, and laid him to her breast after laying her dead son next to me.

20 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.

21 When I got up in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead! But when I examined him closely in the morning, behold, he was not my son, whom I had borne!"

21 When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead; but when I looked at him carefully in the morning, behold, he was not my son, whom I had borne."

21 The next morning, I got up to nurse my son, and he was dead. But when I examined him carefully in the light of day, he turned out not to be my son whom I had borne!"

21 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.

22 Then the other woman said, "No! For the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." But the first woman said, "No! For the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son." So they spoke before the king.

22 Then the other woman said, "No! For the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." But the first woman said, "No! For the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son." Thus they spoke before the king.

22 "Not so," claimed the other woman. "The living child is my son, and the dead one is yours."

But the first woman said, "Not so! The dead child is your son and the living one is my son." This is what they testified before the king.

22 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.

- A dilemma which, of course, has become a classic

23 Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son who is living, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'"

23 Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son who is living, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! For your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.'"

23 The king said, "One of them claims, 'This living son is mine, and your son is the dead one' and the other claims 'No. Your son is the dead one and my son is the living one.'

23 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.

24 And the king said, "Get me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king.

24 The king said, "Get me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king.

24 "Somebody get me a sword." So they brought a sword to the king.

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

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

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

25 "Divide the living child in two!" he ordered. "Give half to the one and half to the other."

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

- Solomon demonstrated insight into basic human nature, here maternal instincts. This insight enabled him to understand why people behave as they do and how they will respond. This was a gift from God and is an aspect of wisdom.

26 But the woman whose child *was* the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply stirred over her son, and she said, "Pardon me, my lord! Give her the living child, and by no means kill him!" But the other *woman* was saying, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; cut *him!*"

26 Then the woman whose child was the living one spoke to the king, for she was deeply stirred over her son and said, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide *him!*"

26 The woman whose child was still alive cried out to the king, because her heart yearned for her son. "Oh no, your majesty!" she said. "Give her the living child. Please don't kill him." But the other woman said, "Cut him in half! That way, he'll belong to neither one of us."

26 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.

27 Then the king replied, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother."

27 Then the king said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother."

27 The king announced his decision: "Give the living child to the first woman. Don't kill him. She is his mother."

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

28 When all Israel heard about the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, because they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

28 When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

28 When this decision that the king had handed down was announced, everybody in Israel was amazed at the king, because they all saw that God's wisdom was in him, enabling him to administer justice.

28 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.

- This incident demonstrates that God indeed gave Solomon the unusual wisdom He had promised