**The Wisdom of God**

**I Kings 2:28 – 3:28 (Lesson #3)**

***28 When the news came to Joab —  for Joab had supported Adonijah although he had not supported Absalom —  Joab fled to the tent of the LORD and caught hold of the horns of the altar. 29 And when it was told King Solomon, "Joab has fled to the tent of the LORD, and behold, he is beside the altar," Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, "Go, strike him down." 30 So Benaiah came to the tent of the LORD and said to him, "The king commands, ‘Come out.’" But he said, "No, I will die here." Then Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, "Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me." 31 The king replied to him, "Do as he has said, strike him down and bury him, and thus take away from me and from my father’s house the guilt for the blood that Joab shed without cause. 32 The LORD will bring back his bloody deeds on his own head, because, without the knowledge of my father David, he attacked and killed with the sword two men more righteous and better than himself, Abner the son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. 33 So shall their blood come back on the head of Joab and on the head of his descendants forever. But for David and for his descendants and for his house and for his throne there shall be peace from the LORD forevermore." 34 Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and struck him down and put him to death. And he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35 ¶ The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada over the army in place of Joab, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar. 36 Then the king sent and summoned Shimei and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there to any place whatever. 37 For on the day you go out and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die. Your blood shall be on your own head." 38 And Shimei said to the king, "What you say is good; as my lord the king has said, so will your servant do." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem many days.***

**Vs 28 –** Joab**,** imitates Adonijah’s attempt to find refuge by taking hold **of the horns of the altar** (1 Kings 1:50-53).

*“As far as we can judge, he had shown little respect to religion during his lifetime. He was a rough man of war, and cared little enough about God, or the tabernacle, or the priests, or the altar; but when he was in danger, he fled to that which he had avoided, and sought to make a refuge of that which he had neglected.” (C.H. Spurgeon)*

**Vs 29 -** Different response from Solomon, go strike him down!

**Vs 30 -** Benaiah, goes to the tent (tabernacle), tells Joab that the King commands that he come out, Joab refuses, with the “I will die here.” We can imagine, Benaiah stays at the tabernacle, but he sends word via messenger to the King.

**Vs 31 -** Solomon sends word back. Do as he says, strike him down. For in so doing you will take away the guilt from my father’s (David’s) house over the blood that Joab shed without a cause.

**Vs 32 -** He then explains the guilt of Joab: Without the king’s approval or knowledge, he killed with the sword two men who were more righteous than he and in a **time of peace**.

**Vs 33 -** Solomon then declares that their blood, has come back on the head of Joab and the heads of his descendants (forever). He then pronounces a blessing upon the house of David.

This blessing is conditioned by the Lord: *“that the LORD may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’” (1Ki 2:4 ESV)*

**Vs 34 –** As the King commanded, Benaiah strikes down Joab and has him buried in his own house.

We can guess that Benaiah, **followed Ex 21:14** and removed him from the tabernacle and then executed him:

**Vs 35 -** The King places Benaiah as the commander of the armies of Israel, and Zadok is elevated to serve in the place of Abiathar.

**Vs 36-38 -** So, Solomon is taking this opportunity to set everything in order. He sends for Shimei, the one who cursed David when David fled from Jerusalem, during the coupe of his son Absalom.

Shimei was associated with the household of the former King Saul and showed himself as a threat to the House of David (2 Sam 16:5-8). You can read about how Shimei met David when he returned and confessed his sins (2 Sam 19:18-22).

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***39 But it happened at the end of three years that two of Shimei’s servants ran away to Achish, son of Maacah, king of Gath. And when it was told Shimei, "Behold, your servants are in Gath," 40 Shimei arose and saddled a donkey and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants. Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath. 41 And when Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned, 42 the king sent and summoned Shimei and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD and solemnly warn you, saying, ‘Know for certain that on the day you go out and go to any place whatever, you shall die’? And you said to me, ‘What you say is good; I will obey.’ 43 Why then have you not kept your oath to the LORD and the commandment with which I commanded you?" 44 The king also said to Shimei, "You know in your own heart all the harm that you did to David my father. So the LORD will bring back your harm on your own head. 45 But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever." 46 Then the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck him down, and he died. So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.”***

**Vs 39-40 –** Some time passes… Shimei has two servants who run away from Jerusalem to Gath.

**VS 41-43 -** Solomon rehearses what has happened, which is also the charge that Shimei has not kept the word that **he swore by the LORD!**

But it is not just an oath, the King of Israel had given a command and explained the penalty of disobedience to the command.

**Vs 44-46 -** Now Solomon, deals with the heart of the matter: **"You know in your own heart all the harm that you did to David my father.”** The LORD will bring back your harm on your own head.

Harm will come to you, but blessings to the King and the throne of David.

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***“1 Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt. He took Pharaoh’s daughter and brought her into the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem. 2 The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD. 3 Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places. 4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." 6 And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.***

**Vs 1 -** Here we are told, what Solomon did, simply as a matter of fact. He entered into an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt and married Pharaoh’s daughter and brought her to the city of David, to Jerusalem.

This marriage is problematic for a few reasons. This highlights that although Solomon loved God, he had seeds of a divided heart already present. We will see this over the course of I Kings, as these seeds **germinate**, **sprout,** and **bloom**!

1. We have no reason to think that Pharaoh’s daughter had faith in Yahweh, thus Solomon is unequally yoked, spiritually.

Although not stated, we suspect she is young, beautiful, and desirable, and I suspect that this love of beautiful women, even foreign women is germinating right here.

God had been clear:

*“****12*** *Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst.* ***13*** *You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim* ***14*** *(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),* ***15*** *lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice,* ***16*** *and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.” (Ex 34:12-16 ESV)*

Eventually, this small lapse in judgement, this sin in one area, will lead Solomon into out and out idolatry, and a love for ***“many foreign women.”***

*“****1*** *¶ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,* ***2*** *from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.* ***3*** *He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.* ***4*** *For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.” (1Ki 11:1-4 ESV)*

It is impossible to take fire to our bosom and not be burned **(Pro 6:27).**

1. Likely Solomon was seduced by not only Pharoah’s young, beautiful, desirable, daughter, but the thought that Israel had the potential, through an alliance with Egypt, to become a dominant, world power. This was also likely very attractive to the young king.

There is a problem! God desired for Solomon’s trust not to be in Pharoah’s horses or chariots, **but in Yahweh, HIMSELF!**

Here is what David wrote in Psalm 20:

*“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” (Ps 20:7 ESV)*

1. In verse two, we are told of a third issue: Solomon and his people were worshipping the one true and living God. Yet, we read in verse 2: ***The people were sacrificing at the high places, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the LORD.***

For reasons, we do not fully comprehend, the people were worshipping (not exclusively) at the tent tabernacle, but at various high places as well.

These high places were elevations where people from other nations worshipped foreign deities, and became associated (throughout the Old Testament) with pagan idolatry.

**Here we learn that the people and as well as Solomon were worshipping Yahweh at various “high places.”**

**Vs 3 -** We are told clearly and plainly that Solomon loved Yahweh and that (at least early on) he walked in the statutes of his father David.

Only, NKJV “except”, Holmon “but”- Let how the writer has set this up. He loved the LORD, BUT, EXCEPT, ONLY… **Vs 3b, he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places** which appear to be presented as exceptions to his love for God.

Solomon loved God, **but** he was sacrificing at various high places.

**What do we make of Solomon’s worship at these high places?** Some scholars believe that prior to the temple being completed this was acceptable.

God had spoken plainly about this in Deuteronomy:

*“****1*** *¶ "These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.* ***2*** *You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.* ***3*** *You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.* ***4*** *You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way.” (De 12:1-4 ESV)*

Equally, in the same context Moses recorded, as revealed by God:

“**5** ¶ But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, **6** and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.” (De 12:5-6 ESV)

**As you process this, I am about to make it a little more complex…**

**Vs 4** - Solomon “used to” offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar at Gibeon!

But there is something else here that I want you to see:

*“1 ¶ Solomon the son of David established himself in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great. 2 Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to all the leaders in all Israel, the heads of fathers’ houses. 3 And Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness, was there. 4 (But David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place that David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.)” (2Ch 1:1-4 ESV)*

OK, so when Solomon came into power, the tabernacle was in Gibeon, but the mercy seat (the ark of the covenant) was in a tent that David had pitched for it in Jerusalem.

Yes, this was a very transitory time for the tabernacle as God was preparing for the temple to be built.

The reason, Solomon and the people were going to Gibeon and sacrificing was because the tent tabernacle was there.

That means, and I did not say it because I did not want to get into it yet. But when Joab (or Adonijah) fled and grabbed hold of the horns of the brazen altar they went to Gibeon.

**Vs 5 -** How Solomon fell asleep, or where he fell asleep is not explained, only that the LORD, appeared to Solomon, in a dream in the night. In this dream, God asked Solomon a question.

***“What shall I give you?”***

**Vs 6 -** First, in response to God’s question, Solomon responds by rehearsing God’s love and faithfulness that he showed his father, David.

1. You have shown **great and steadfast love** to ***“your servant”*** my Father David. He acknowledges that this happened, because David walked with God.

1. **You have kept, this great and steadfast love, even following his death, by placing me, his son, on his throne**.

You are a compassionate God, whose love extends beyond the recipient to the children of the recipient.

Your love for David, even after David has gone, is manifested in your extension of kindness to me!

1. **Vs 7-9 –** You have made me king, although I am but a child (in experience), and I have no idea what I am doing.

You did not pick me because I am the **smartest**, the **best looking**, the **most prepared**. You picked me because of **grace**.

For if it was on merits, abilities, or skills otherwise, you likely would have picked someone like Adonijah.

Your grace, Solomon is saying, still amazes me in that you picked me. But, I have no clue (oh Lord), I am like a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.

1. **Vs 8 -** You picked me, by grace, and chose me to lead your great people, **a people that cannot even be numbered**. I am out of my league. I am in over my head. **This job exceeds my experience and my capabilities.**
2. **Vs 9 –** The ask… Please God, give me an **understanding mind** to govern **YOUR PEOPLE**. So that I can discern between good and evil, right and wrong, and thus in righteousness and justice, govern this, great **people of yours**.

**There is the ask and what an amazing ask.** I hope you see the **humility of Solomon**, I hope you sense, how he senses the immensity of leading God’s people. I hope you feel that he feels, **he is ill-equipped** for the job.

He asks for an understanding mind, literally in the Hebrew he is asking for a **listening heart.** Solomon had followed David’s council, now he is asking **God for the ability to hear and follow God’s council!**

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***10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 behold, I now do according to your word. 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. 13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. 14 And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." 15 And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.***

**Vs 10 –** God knew what Solomon would ask for, God is sovereign. But the writer wants us to know that this request, and all requests like this, are pleasing to God.

**Vs 11-13 - God responds.**

Because his ask glorified God and His Kingdom, God declares, **I will also give you things that you did not ask for.**

You did not ask for long life, riches, or the lives of your enemies.

But instead, you: ***have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,*** I give to you:

1. A wise and discerning mind: ***“so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.”***
2. Vs 13 – Riches and honor so that **“no other king shall compare with you, all your days.”**

God told Solomon, there will **not** be another king like you!

**Vs 14 –** Now God sets up a conditional promise: If you walk in my ways, if you keep my statutes, if you keep my commandments, I will even lengthen your days.

Solomon like David reigned 40 years. If he was 25 (estimate) when he came into power, that means he died around 65. Not a long life. We will see why in the coming weeks.

**Vs 15 –** Solomon awakes from the dream, wherever he was exactly and whatever that looked like, and he comes to **Jerusalem to stand before the ark of the covenant.**

This makes sense, only when we understand what David had done, and how he had separated the ark from the tabernacle. In this intermediate time period prior to the building of the temple.

Here in Jerusalem, before the ark of the covenant, Solomon ***offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.***

Pause… Why did he leave Gibeon and go to Jerusalem to do all of this? God makes these great and precious promises to Solomon at the tabernacle. Solomon returns to Jerusalem ***offered up more burnt offerings and peace offerings and made a feast for all his servants.***

Solomon responds to God’s love and kindness.

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***16 Then two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 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. 18 Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. And we were alone. There was no one else with us in the house; only we two were in the house. 19 And this woman’s son died in the night, because she lay on him. 20 And she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while your servant slept, and laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast. 21 When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, behold, he was dead. But when I looked at him closely in the morning, behold, he was not the child that I had borne." 22 But the other woman said, "No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours." The first said, "No, the dead child is yours, and the living child is mine." Thus they spoke before the king.***

**Vs 16 -** So these two women, have no doubt exhausted the legal options and the legal system in Israel. We should not image that this happened last night, but rather a bit ago, and these two women have been working through the legal system and no judge has been able to rightly decide their case.

**Vs 17-21 -** We see the testimony of the first harlot. We live in the same house. I had a baby, three days later she had a baby. We were alone in this house, with our newborn babies. One night, her infant son died, because she rolled on him and killed him. Then she did the unthinkable. In the night, she got up and swapped the children, and left me with the dead baby in my arms.

When I awoke to nurse him, he was lifeless and cold. I was grief stricken, beyond hope, but once the day dawned, I could see that this was not my child. Then I realized, as I am reporting now that she switched the babies.

This is a sad, miserable, and wretched story. This story is loaded with sin and heartache. This is a story of **whoredom**, **infant death**, and **kidnapping**. This is a story of **filth**, but it is in this horrible setting or **moral degradation,** that we are going to see the **wisdom of God**!

**Vs 22** – The other woman speaks, no details rather just simply a refutation, this child, the living child is mine!

**This then, before the throne of the King, turns into something we might see in Peoples’ Court or something like that. With the two women going back and forth, possibly screaming, crying, etc.**

No, the dead child is yours…. No, the dead child is yours.

No wonder this has not been settled, we do not have 2 witnesses, we lack DNA abilities, or a lie detector.

Imagine with me… You are one of the guards or servants in the throne room.

**This is impossible. This was a serious test of the gift that God had promised!**

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***23 Then the king said, "The one says, ‘This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead’; and the other says, ‘No; but your son is dead, and my son is the living one.’" 24 And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought before the king. 25 And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." 26 Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him." 27 Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother." 28 And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.”***

**Vs 23** - The king rehearses the testimonies.

**Vs 24** - OK, in the throne room they are waiting to hear what the King will do. Will he dismiss the charges?

He orders a sword. No doubt everyone in the throne room is thinking, **we do not need a sword**, we need a **polygraph**, we do not need a sword we need a **hair follicle** and **23 and me**.

This makes no sense. I would remind you, what you know, but we need to be reminded. The wisdom of God is often viewed as foolishness by lost men and women. Here, at least at this point, the king’s wisdom seems foolish.

**Vs 25 -** There in the throne room everyone gasps!

**Vs 26 -** The writer now records what he learned as the story was shared. The woman of the living child, that woman’s heart went out for the life and welfare of her son. She quickly determined; it would be better for him to live with the other woman than to die.

She cries out to the King! Please Lord, give the living child to her.

But the other woman, in her pain, in her envy, in her desire to see others suffer the broken heart she is suffering, cries out NO! Divide him and we each get half.

**Vs 27 -** You can imagine the electricity that went through the throne room. The **majesty and the wisdom of God being on open display in Solomon.**

Here in seconds, with no additional witnesses, no additional evidence outside of these two **totally different testimonies,** Solomon rightly determines the mother and everyone knows his conclusion is right and just.

**Vs 28 -** You can imagine this story spread like wildfire throughout the nation. The judgment that the king had rendered in this impossible situation.

All stood in awe at the king. The Hebrew word is **ירא** (*yaw-ray’).* It means to **fear**, to be **afraid**, to be **terrified**, or to stand in **awe**. They recognized God had given **Solomon amazing wisdom to judge his people.**

They perceived that this wisdom, had at least as its main reason for being given was for the administration of justice. They feared Solomon, for Solomon had the wisdom of God to rightly judge God’s people.

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**Point of Application and Pictures of Jesus and/or the Gospel:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_