

# Solomon Becomes King and Asks for Wisdom

1 Kings 1:1—4:34



## bible verse

COMMITTING TO MEMORY

# Ms

main street

March 6, 2011

## James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask of God, who gives generously without finding fault, and it will be given to him.



## story lesson

BIBLE STORY

This collection of books, 1 & 2 Kings, chronicles the reigns of the subsequent kings of Israel (and later Judah) until the time of the exile (where Israel and Judah are kicked out of their land, taken over by a more superior nation – all because they were covenantally unfaithful to the Lord their God).

The observant reader will notice many themes running throughout this dark and often dreary collection.

- The building and continued maintenance of the tabernacle turned Temple.
- The holiness or dirtiness of the representative of God (the king).
- Amazing works of divine intervention in the course of normal events (for example Elijah and Elisha).
- The theme of exile—being cast out, judged by the covenant faithful God.

The opening and the first parts to the story are excellent. Israel is at the height of her influence in the world. The reader thinks that Israel has arrived! They are being the light to all the nations. Israel's God was on display for the entire world! But then the leader falls into some pretty nasty sin. His son causes a split in the land creating the north (Israel) and the south (Judah). Kind of like the Civil War days in the United States, but without the war part. Then the kings either follow obediently in the ways of the Lord, or disobediently. They are either good in the sight of the Lord, or evil.

There are many high points in this gripping big-picture account of the monarchy of the

land of Israel and Judah. The prophets Elijah and Elisha bring about supernatural miracles and calls back to the Lord.

Theologically speaking, the books of Kings were written to explain to the exiles why they were where they were. Imagine an Israelite sitting beside the Euphrates river in the city of Babylon wondering how his/her people ended up in a land that they did not belong to. Then this Israelite opens up the books of Joshua and Judges, then the collection of Samuel and the Kings, and it begins to dawn on him or her that the covenanted people of God have forsaken him, forgotten him, discarded him. They cheated on their spouse; they had a major affair and forgot the spouse of their youth. The Books of the Kings



is a divinely inspired text which communicates to the exiled (enslaved) Jew (Israelite) that they have forsaken the Lord. It is not just an explanation, however. It is a call to action. A call to change and live out who they are supposed to be – the representatives of the God of the Universe. Some pick up on that and run with it, but very few (they are often called the remnant in Scripture). Some begin to build laws and rules to govern their existence to try and keep every letter of the law (they are called the Pharisees). Some remove themselves from society and try the purist way to go (they are called the Essenes). Still there were many others who just lived on and forgot (they are called nothing).

The post-exilic period in the Bible is the stage for the 400 years of silence between the Old and New Testaments. These attitudes and outworkings of faith and practice will flavor the opening pages of the New Testament, when a young man enters the scene who proclaims that he is the long awaited Messiah (Representative) of Israel.

## REGIME CHANGE

Our hero, King David, is dying. And like any kingdom in the world, people are wondering who is going to be king next. There are a couple of options: Adonijah or Solomon. Adonijah decides to take matters into his own hands and just declares himself king. Officials who support Solomon hears of this and reports to King David. Long story made short, Solomon is decided upon to succeed David. Adonijah's little stint does not last long without the support of his father the king.

After David's death, Solomon (son of Bathsheba) becomes king. He was charged by David to watch carefully how he lived and walk faithfully before the Lord, then the Lord will grant favor and long life to the many descendents of David if they all obey and walk

in the ways of the Lord as well. David also charged his son to build the Temple of the Lord.

Something special happened to Solomon early in his reign asking of the land of Israel. He had a dream, and in this dream the Lord appeared to him and said: "Ask for whatever you want me to give you" (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon responded:

"Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (1 Kings 3:7-9).

# WISH LIST



The Lord was so pleased with Solomon's response, that he gave him riches (which he had not asked for) and rest from his enemies (which he had not asked for), in addition to the discerning heart and wise spirit. The following story is an example of Solomon's wisdom in administering justice:

"Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. One of them said, 'My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me. The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us. During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. The next morning, I got up to nurse my son-and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't the son I had borne.'



"The other woman said, 'No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours.'

"But the first one insisted, 'No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine.'

"And so they argued before the king. The king said, 'This one says, "My son is alive and your son is dead," while that one says, "No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'"

"Then the king said, 'Bring me a sword.' So they brought a sword for the king. He then gave an order: 'Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.' The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, 'Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!' But the other said, 'Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!'

"Then the king gave his ruling: 'Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.'

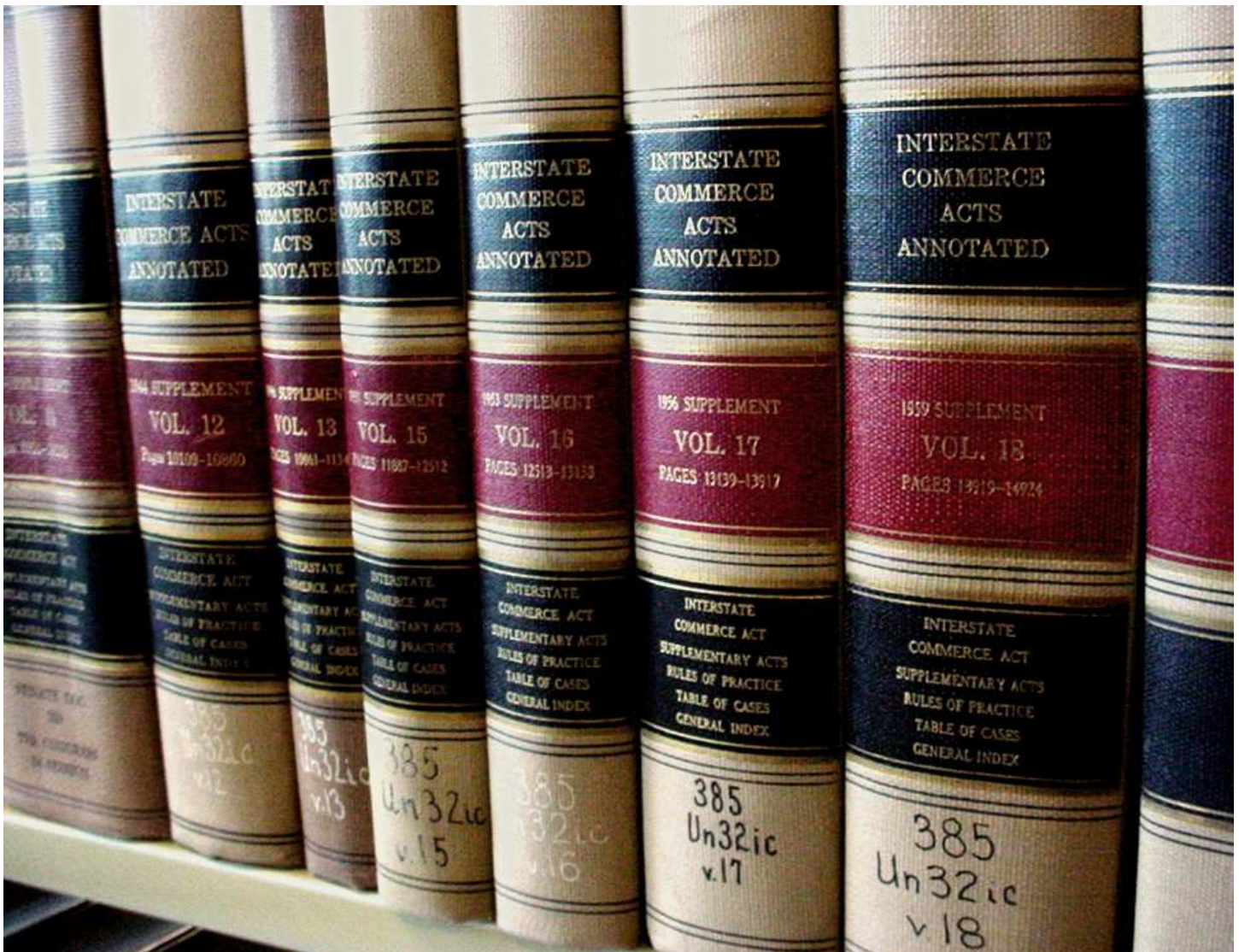
"When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice" (1 Kings 3:16-28).



Solomon had great wisdom that he used wisely. He also had great splendor throughout the kingdom. The people of Israel “were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy” (1 Kings 4:20). Solomon’s fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations that “men of all nations came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom” (1 Kings 4:34).

This was the climax of the nation of Israel. They were being a light to all the nations. There was a God in the world and he was found through a people that he treasured greatly and had covenanted himself with.

It is rather profound the way God interacts with people. I wonder why he gave Solomon the chance He did by giving him all sorts of wisdom, knowing that he was already on a destructive track by marrying the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt (1 Kings 3). Solomon also worshiped on the high places (which is worshiping to other gods) before he built and dedicated the Temple of the Lord. This does not fit my categories. And yet, whilst trusting in faith that God is God and that He knows what He is doing... okay... I can live with that...





## life application

MAKING IT REAL

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### Ask For Wisdom

Sometimes it is as simple as asking for something. Solomon asked for wisdom and God gave it to him in abundance. Do we ask for wisdom often? Or do we just trust in our own “limited” wisdom? Oh to really trust the Lord and to ask for His “wisdom.” Wow, what a change that would make in our lives! We really should take the advice of the letter writer James when he said to ask for wisdom if you lack it, and God, who gives generously without finding fault, will be given to him. Awesome!

### Live in Wisdom

God not only wants us to ask for wisdom, but also to live wisely. Each one of us daily makes choices that are wise or unwise. God wants us to make wise decisions that will be good for us, not bad decisions that will hurt us.



## questions

REMEMBERING

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- 1. Who became king after David?** His son, Solomon
- 2. Who was Solomon’s mother?** Bathsheba
- 3. What did Solomon ask God for?** Wisdom
- 4. Was King Solomon famous in the world?** Yes. People came from all over the world to sit and listen to Solomon’s wisdom.
- 5. Because Solomon asked for wisdom, what else did the LORD God give to him?** Wealth (money) and rest from his enemies
- 6. Which woman did King Solomon side with?** The one who cared for the baby, and didn’t want him to be cut in two.



## coloring sheet

ON THE NEXT PAGE

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**Solomon Becomes King and Asks for Wisdom**