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Solomon's Wish

First Kings 3:1-15 and Second Chronicles 1:1-13

Solomon's wish DIG: What was wrong with Solomon marrying Pharaoh's daughter? What was wrong with the Israelites and Solomon himself worshipping on the high places? Why were they worshipping there instead of the Temple? What was the extent of Solomon's love for ADONAI? What was the result of Solomon delaying building the Temple? Why didn't he just worship at Gibeon all the time? Why did God use dreams to communicate? What was Solomon's agenda as king? Whose interests did he have at heart and why? What else did God promise Solomon? Why? Why did Solomon worship and throw a party?

REFLECT: What can Solomon teach us about joining spiritual forces with worldly people who are working against the Kingdom of God? Have you ever sensed God's will in a dream? How does ADONAI's word come to you? Do you need a special "appearance" from Him? Can you rely solely on His Word? Whose interests are close to your heart? How can you minister to them this week? What will it take? Do your own needs weigh heavily? Or are you concerned about everyone else so that you don't take care of yourself? Who has your interests at heart? How can you identify with your spirit being willing but your flesh being weak?

With great privilege comes great responsibility.

If you could wish for anything in the world, what would it be? Some people wish they had different abilities - more brains, better looks, or stronger skills. Others wish for a change in their life circumstances. There is something they have that they wish they didn't have, or something they don't have that they wish they had. What would you wish be? Better yet, what if your biggest wish really would come true? And what if that person asking you what you wanted had infinite resources? That was the opportunity that **ADONAI Elohim** gave to **King Solomon: Tell me! What I should give you?**⁷⁵

Wisdom had already played an important role in the narrative, guiding **Solomon** in **his** treatment of those who were a threat to **him** (**to see the link click [Ap - Putting the Kingdom First](#)**). It will now play an even greater role here. It is important to understand that **Solomon's** reign has so often been divided into two fairly equal parts; an earlier period, in which **he** was obedient to **YHVH** and was consequently (along with **Isra'el**) blessed; and a later period, in which **he** was disobedient to **Ha'Shem** and was consequently (with **Isra'el**) judged by **Him** and the Kingdom was torn away (**First Kings 11:11**). This is undoubtedly very tidy, but it represents a massive over-simplification. There were signs of trouble right from the start.⁷⁶

Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter: Before we get to **the wisdom** of **Solomon**, we must first read **First Kings 1:1-3**. **Solomon's** very first royal act was to **marry the daughter** of **Pharaoh**. This union was problematic. Since we have no reason to think that **Pharaoh's daughter** had faith in **the God of Isra'el**, we can only conclude that **Solomon** was **unequally yoked** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Bi - Do Not be Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers**). **Solomon formed an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt by marrying Pharaoh's daughter (First Kings 3:1a)**. **He** was seduced by power as well as sex. Taken alone, this might be considered as nothing more than a historical note. But given its placement in the text, we may appropriately suggest that its function is more than informative. The note about the marriage is surely designed as a foreshadowing of **Solomon's** future apostasy (see **Bx - Solomon's Wives**). On two counts, **Pharaoh** must be considered a threat and a contrast to everything **Israelite**. First of all, **Pharaoh** embodied a concentration of imperial wealth and power, a center of commerce whereby the security of the state consists in trade and military power. As such, **Egypt** was a powerful contrast to the simple, covenantal faith **Israelite**.⁷⁷

*Dear Almighty Heavenly **Father**, So, I looked for You in the Sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Since Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips will praise You. So I will bless You as long as I live. In Your name I lift up my hands. My soul is satisfied as with fat and oil, so my mouth praises You with joyful lips (Psalms 63:3-6). How wonderful it is to trust and to follow Your steadfast love! Life on this earth is short. Earthly pleasures are really only momentary. Living with our eyes focused on Your great love for all eternity is so very important.*

How important it is to make a daily habit of turning our thoughts back to you all thru

out the day. It is such a bonus to have **Your Word** which we can read before sleep and then meditate on your power and glory. **When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You through the night watches. For You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to You - Your right hand upholds me (Psalms 63:7-9).** Often, more than once daily, we feed our bodies. To keep our spiritual life healthy we need to also feed it more than weekly, more than once a day. Meditation on **Your** power and love is a special weapon which brings victory to our heart, no matter what the circumstances are. Drifting away can happen slowly and without notice. **For this reason it is necessary for us to pay especially close attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. (Hebrews 2:1).** Being intentional about giving **You** our thoughts and time as first in our lives is so wise and brings peace and joy. Remembering **Your** love, our wise and powerful Heavenly **Father**, is truly a great gift and joy! **You** are Awesome! In your Holy **Son's** name and power of resurrection. Amen

Secondly, **Egypt** is, of course, a name that resonates throughout the TaNaKh with negative connotations: oppressor, arch-enemy of old, and a source of temptation (**Exodus Chapters 1-15**). **Deuteronomy**, in particular, had warned against a **return to Egypt (Deuteronomy 17:16)** in terms of relations that were too close, and had explicitly forbidden intermarriage with foreigners, lest **the Israelites** be led into apostasy (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Ca - Warning Against Idolatry**). Thus, as much as **Solomon loved ADONAI**, there were some ominous warning signs that **his love** was not wholehearted and the seeds of **his** downfall were already sown. This too is a warning for us - a warning not to try to advance our position by joining spiritual forces with worldly people who are working against the Kingdom of **God**.⁷⁸

The author uses **the queen's** arrival in Jerusalem as an opportunity to make a point about **Solomon's** priorities. **He brought her into the City of David, [where she lived] until he had finished building his own palace, the House of ADONAI (the Temple) and the wall around Yerushalayim (First Kings 3:1b).** We find later in the book something that helps us understand what is written here. For in **First Kings 6:38-7:1** we learn that **Solomon** spent almost twice as much time building **his palace** as **he** did building **the Temple**. This prepares us for later parts of the story. Indeed, we cannot but ask whether the author does not intend for us to see the influence of **his** foreign wife in this. For the question of divided loyalties has already been raised above, and this particular foreign wife, living in temporary

accommodations while **her** new palace was being built, had a particular vested interest in the process of the building program.⁷⁹

Misplaced worship: However, the people were still sacrificing on the high places (First Kings 3:2a). The word **however**, is intended to stop us in our tracks. Although conditions were outwardly good, there was something rotting beneath the surface. **The people were still sacrificing on the high places. They** were a constant sore point in **Isra'el**, and the prophets of **God** frequently spoke out against **them**. There were two basic problems: First, **they** detracted from the principle of a central Sanctuary, and secondly, since the worship at **high places** was a Canaanite custom, therefore syncretism (combining different beliefs) was not only a real danger, but an all-too-common occurrence. Even though **the Temple** had not yet been built, **the LORD** clearly instructed **the Israelites** that those cultic worship centers were to be destroyed when **they** entered the Promised Land (**Numbers 33:52**). Then **they** were to worship at a Sanctuary in the place appointed by **Him** (see **Deuteronomy Ct - The Place to Worship ADONAI**). There is, of course, nothing here to suggest that **the people** had already succumbed to temptation. The implication is that they do worship **the Name**, even if it was not in the ideal place. But the potential for disaster is clear enough, and in **First Kings 11:33** we will learn of **a people** who eventually followed **Solomon** into sin (see **Ca - A House Divided**).⁸⁰

The history of the Tabernacle: The latter part of the verse gives us the reason for the use of various **high places** for worship. **Because no House (Temple) had yet been built for the name of ADONAI (First Kings 3:2b)**. Before Eli's time, **the Tabernacle** had been as **Shiloh**; but with the Philistines' capture of **the ark**, **Shiloh** lost its significance as the place of **God's** presence among **His people**. Even after **the ark** was returned by the Philistines, it remained for years in **the house of Abinadab (1 Sam 7:1)**, until **David** moved it to **Jerusalem** (see the commentary on **the Life of David Cr - The Ark Brought to Zion**) to **a tent he** had prepared for **it**. **The Tabernacle** next appeared at **Nov** (see **the Life of David Av - David at Nov**), where **it** remained until **Sha'ul** massacred **the priests** there (see **the Life of David Bd - Sha'ul Kills the Priests of Nov**). At some point after this event, **it** was moved to **Gibeon**, where **it** is mentioned in connection with **Zadok's** high priestly ministry (**First Chronicles 16:39-40**). There were then, in effect, two **Tabernacles** during **David's** reign. The one in **Gibeon** was without **the ark**; the one in **Jerusalem** had **the ark** but no trappings of **the Tabernacle (Second Corinthians 1:3-5)**. This state of affairs matched that of the double

priesthood of **Zadok** and **Abithar**.⁸¹

A man after David’s heart: Solomon loved ADONAI, living according to the regulations set forth by David his father (First Kings 3:3a). This is virtually the highest praise that any person could ever receive. In fact, **Solomon** is the only person in the entire Bible who is said to have **loved ADONAI**, in so many words. **His** heart was full of holy affections for **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. **He** adored **YHVH** and responded to **Him** emotionally. **He** felt a deep spiritual longing in **his** soul, a passionate yearning for a closer relationship with **Him**. But as much as **he loved the LORD**, it seems that **Solomon’s love** was not wholehearted. **He** married an Egyptian; **he** did not keep the Torah. Then we are bound to ask: what kind of **“love”** was this?

Except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places (First Kings 3:3). It seems that **his** loyalties were divided. And in a way the choice of the word **love** itself reflects that – at least within the context of the book of **Kings**. It is certainly a word that has been chosen carefully. And it is difficult to avoid the impression that its use here has quite a bit to do with the fact that it reappears twice in **First Kings 11:1-2** in relation to **Solomon’s** other great **“loves”** – the foreign women, of whom **Pharaoh’s daughter** was one. The question here in **First Kings 3:1-15** about the completeness of **his love** is compounded if we are aware of the end of **his** story and how fragile this **“love”** did indeed turn out to be. The lack of **his** wholeheartedness would become painfully obvious later in **his** life. **The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:40-43).** This would eventually lead not only to **his** own apostasy, but also to the apostasy of **the nation** itself (see [Cz - The Divided Kingdom: The Rise of Idolatry](#)).⁸²

So while it is true that **Solomon** was a **king** after **David’s** own **heart**, a man who **loved ADONAI**, it is also true that **he** had a wandering **heart** that **loved** money, sex, and power – the very temptations that led to the downfall of **Adonijah, Joab,** and **Shim’i** (see [Ap - Putting the Kingdom First](#)). The warning signs of **Solomon’s** tragic downfall were present from the very beginning of **his** story, which is not just black and white, but colored by shades of gray.

In other words, **Solomon** was a lot like us. **He** loved **the LORD**, as every believer does. But **he** also had some other **“loves”** in **his** life – sinful passions that had the power to destroy **his** spiritual leadership. **He** did not **love ADONAI his God with all his heart and soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4)**. While there is some

truth to the view that **Solomon's** life started out more positive spiritually, before ending up more negative, the deeper truth is that like every other believer, **he** was always just as much a sinner as **he** was a saint.⁸³



ADONAI appears to Solomon: This is the first of two personal appearances of **God** to **Solomon** (for the other see [Br - Solomon's Choice](#)). Here, **Ha'Shem** approves of **Solomon's** attitude as expressed in **the king's** prayer; in the latter passage **YHVH** approves of the Temple **Solomon** had built, but also warns **him** to continue to remain true to **the LORD**. That **God** had in such a remarkable way declared **Himself** willing to pour out **His** blessing on **Solomon** and **his** work made **the king** all the more responsible for **his** later apostasy. With great privilege comes great responsibility.⁸⁴

Solomon's prayer for wisdom: We are now in a better position to approach the story of **Solomon's** request for **wisdom**. For it is the **Solomon** we have just met - a divided, conflicted, sinful **Solomon**, with only a very practical grasp of **God's** dealings - who now comes to worship. **One time the king went to Gibeon** (five miles north of **Jerusalem**) **to sacrifice** because **the tent** that housed **the Tabernacle** was located **there**. **Then Solomon spoke to all Isra'el - to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges and to every leader in all Isra'el, the heads of clans. Solomon and the whole community with him went to the high place at Gibeon, because in that place was God's tent of meeting, which Moshe the servant of ADONAI had made in the desert. And the bronze altar crafted by Bezalel** (see the commentary on [Exodus Ew - The Appointment of Bezalel and Ohaliab](#)) **was in Gibeon in front of the Tabernacle. So Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar and the whole leadership of Isra'el inquired of the LORD there.** The assembly lasted all day and **the people** remained at **Gibeon** for **the night**,

including **Solomon**. **That night, ADONAI appeared to Solomon in a dream (First Kings 3:4-5a; Second Chronicles 1:2-3 and 5-6).**

The dream consisted of **three parts**.

First, God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask me! What I should give you" (First Kings 3:5b; Second Chronicles 1:7)? The LORD did not put any conditions on **the king's** request, but simply invited **him** to ask for whatever **he** wished. This was an amazing offer of generosity in which **YHVH** was immediately and generously available to **the king**.

The **second** part of **the dream** was **Solomon's** well-crafted response. Notice where **Solomon** began. **He** didn't start with **his** request; **he** began with the past, with what **YHVH** had done. **Solomon said to God, "You showed your servant David my father great kindness (see the commentary on Ruth Af - The Concept of Chesed), as he lived before you honestly and righteously, having an upright heart with you. You have continued this great kindness (Hebrew: *chesed*) to him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, and have made me king in his place (First Kings 3:6; Second Chronicles 1:8).**

And now, turns from the past to the present circumstance, **ADONAI my God, you have been faithful to your promise to David my father. For you have made me king over a people as numerous as the grains of dust on the earth (Genesis 13:16); but I am a mere child - I don't know how to lead (First Kings 3:7; Second Chronicles 1:9). Solomon's wise** request was based on a proper knowledge of **his** own limitations. Like **Moshe** before **him (Exodus 4:10)** and **Jeremiah** after **him (Jeremiah 1:6)**, **Solomon** was somewhat doubtful of **his** own abilities. When **he** called **himself a mere child**, **he** meant that **he** was inexperienced and thus dependent on **YHVH** to give **him** the help **he** needed.

Moreover your servant is among your people, whom you chose, a great people so numerous that they cannot be counted. He had used **wisdom** before in dealing with affairs of state, seemingly with great competence, yet now, **he** confessed that **he** didn't know **how to lead** and the task seemed overwhelming. **He** knew how limited **he** was, but **he** also knew how unlimited **God** was, and so **he** prayed for **divine wisdom. Therefore, give your servant a discerning heart** (literally meaning "a listening **heart**" or "an obedient **heart**"), **wisdom and knowledge, so that I will be able to lead Your people, and discern between good and evil - for who is equal to leading this great people of yours" (1**

Kings 3:8-9; 2 Chron 1:10)? The fear of ADONAI is the beginning of wisdom (Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 15:33). Solomon apparently only just learned this. Because **he** has learned it, however, and has now placed **himself** in a humble and submissive position in relation to **God**, seeking the common good rather than simply **his** own, the blessings of **God** are now to follow.⁸⁵

Solomon’s situation was unique: **he** alone inherited **David’s** throne, so only **he** could pray exactly this prayer. But this **wise** request is still an excellent example for us to follow. Unlike **Solomon**, “I am not the king,” writes one commentator, “but shouldn’t I pray like one?” Yes, we should pray like **Solomon**. With all due reverence, we should acknowledge our own limitations, openly admitting how weak we are in honoring our parents, serving our spouse, raising a child, loving a neighbor, leading a ministry, sharing the Gospel, or anything else that **God** calls us to do. Then, with confident faith, we should ask **God** for **the wisdom** we need to serve **Him** well in whatever **He** has called us to do. In ourselves, we are unequal to any of the tasks **God** has given us, but we can ask **Him** to give us a listening and obedient **heart**. We should not ask this for ourselves, primarily, but for the good of **God’s people** and the sake of **His** Kingdom.⁸⁶

The **third** element was **ADONAI’s** answer. **What Solomon had said in making this request pleased ADONAI. God said to him, “Because you have set your heart on this instead of asking long life, riches for yourself, or the death of those who hate you, but rather you asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself, so that you would be able to administer justice over whom I made you king - I am doing what you requested. I am giving you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been anyone like you, nor will there ever again be anyone like you” (First Kings 3:10-12; Second Chronicles 1:11). He** was so pleased with what **Solomon** asked that **He** granted **his** request. **The king** became what **God** promised: the **wisest** man who ever lived. This gift went beyond **Solomon’s** natural intellectual ability (which must have been exceptional), to give **him the** kind of spiritual insight that can only come from **the LORD (Proverbs 2:6)**. To this day we can learn from **the king’s wisdom** by reading **his wise** sayings in the book of **Proverbs**, studying **his wise** philosophy of life in **Ecclesiastes**, and hearing **his wisdom** about love and romance from **the Song of Solomon**.

But I am also giving you what you didn’t ask for, riches and honor greater than that of any other king throughout your life. Thus, **Solomon** received the very gifts **he** had bypassed in **his** request for **wisdom**. In **His** sermon on the mount

(see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Cz - Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount](#)) **Yeshua** echoed those same thoughts for us today: **But first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33). More than that, if you will live according to my ways, obeying my statutes** (Hebrew: *hachukkim*, meaning *to write into law permanently*) and **ordinances** (Hebrew: *hammishpatim*, meaning *a judgment of the court*) **like your father David, I will give you a long life, riches, wealth and honor such as no king before you has ever had; and no king after you will have as much" (First Kings 3:13-14; First Chronicles 1:12-13). ADONAI** was careful to remind **Solomon** that **his** obedience to **God's** covenant and **his** devotion to **YHVH** were the keys to **his** future blessings. It was not good enough that Solomon be obedient at the outset. **He** needed to make good **choices** along the way, the **choice** of listening and obeying, for it was in **choosing** obediently that **Isra'el** and **its king** would **choose life** (see the commentary on [Deuteronomy Fq - Choose Life](#)).

The way for us to follow **Solomon's wise** counsel is to study the Scriptures, **which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Yeshua Messiah (Second Timothy 3:15)**, and to seek **the wisdom of God in the Person of the Ruach Ha'Kodesh**. For as **wise** as **Solomon** was, the Bible says that **ADONAI** is **wiser** still. This explains why, when **Matthew** speaks of the world-famous **wisdom of Solomon**, it goes without saying that **something greater than Solomon is here (Matthew 12:42)**. And that **something greater** is **Yeshua Messiah**, the divine **Son of God** and **the wisdom of God (First Corinthians 1:24)**.⁸⁷

Then Solomon awoke - and he realized it had all been a dream. He came away from the high place at Gibeon, from in front of the Tabernacle and returned to Yerushalayim (see [the history of the Tabernacle](#) above). For David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath -Jearim to the place he had prepared for it because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem (Second Chronicles 1:4). There, Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings (see the commentary on [Leviticus Ai - The Burnt Offering](#)) and fellowship offerings (see the commentary on [Leviticus Ak - Peace Offerings](#)). He also made a feast for all his officials so that they might also rejoice in thanksgiving at the renewed manifestation of God's grace toward Isra'el and the house of David (First Kings 3:15; Second Chronicles 1:13a).

Summary statement: Because **Solomon's** reign is presented as an ideal for the post-exilic community, special note is taken of the times of joy and celebration in

his kingdom. Every phrase here illustrates that **David's** blessings continued under **his son. Solomon the son of David grew stronger and he reigned over Isra'el; ADONAI his God was with him, making him greater and greater (Second Chronicles 1:1 and 13b).**

The **wisest** thing we could ever do is to give our lives to **Yeshua Messiah**. The supreme **wisdom** of **the Lord** is available to us for the asking, **wisdom** for even the little things of everyday life. It may seem tempting to envy **Solomon** for the invitation **he** was given to ask for anything **he** wanted from **ADONAI**. But **God** is ready to grant us **Solomon's** wish and give us **a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12). Yeshua** told us to simply **ask** and it would be given; everyone who **asks** will receive (**Matthew 7:7-8**). Do you need **wisdom** for work, for the future, for a broken relationship, for an obstacle in ministry, or for problems in your family? The Bible gives this promise to anyone who asks in faith: **If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you (James 1:5 NIV).**⁸⁸