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Solomon’s Wisdom
First Kings 4: 29-34

Solomon’s wisdom DIG: What were Solomon’s areas of expertise? How do you suppose he came by his special wisdom? How many ways does the biblical author describe wisdom?

REFLECT: What is wisdom? How is it different from intelligence? How can we gain wisdom? In what areas would you like more wisdom? Is it available today? How can you get it?

For ADONAI gives wisdom, from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.



As Philip Ryken relates in his commentary on **First Kings**, **Solomon’s** wide and peaceful kingdom, with its bountiful table, helps us to see the Kingdom of **God** (**to see link click Au – Solomon’s Kingdom**). But the best of any kingdom is the king himself – not just his wealth and power, or the peace and prosperity he brings, but his own royal person. Therefore, **First Kings 4** ends by reminding us of **Solomon’s** outstanding characteristic, the one supreme and **God**-given gift that distinguished **him** from all the other kings in the world. **ADONIA** had invited **Solomon** to ask for

anything **he** pleased. What pleased **Solomon** to ask for was something that pleased **God** to give: the gift of **wisdom** (see **As – Solomon's Wish**). **The king** had demonstrated that gift in the famous incident regarding the two prostitutes and the two babies (see **At – A Wise Ruling**). At the end of **First Kings 4** the author celebrates the **wisdom** of his **king** by using the vocabulary for **wisdom** in almost every verse.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise you, for **Your wisdom** knows no boundaries! **You** know the future before it happens – Amazing! **You** know every detail of our lives! No one can pull something over on **You** because **You** understand all details of our lives and the depths of our hearts – Wow! How incredible that **Your** infinite wisdom is wrapped up in **Your** fantastic love! **You** are always seeking ways to guide us to **Your** great love! It is such a comfort to know that **You** never give any rule or command that could hurt us, rather they are more like lifeboats in the ocean of sin and ignorance. Your **wisdom** gives us life! Others who follow their own ways may look like they have it all. **But when I tried to make sense of this, it was troubling in my eyes – until I entered the Sanctuary of God, and perceived their end. Surely You put them in slippery places. You hurled them down to destruction. How suddenly they became a ruin – (Psalms 73:16-119a). Wisdom** is joy in following **You** and pleasure that lasts for eternity.*

*The only way to have eternal **wisdom** is to have an intimate daily walk with **You** as **the Lord** of our lives. **Your wisdom** is always perfect, always pure, always exactly what is the best! Thank **You** that as we follow **You**, we will always be walking in the best path. **You** do allow trials in our lives. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** As we conquer trials and temptations in your strength with a heart of love to please **You**, the trials bring blessings by giving us opportunities for eternal rewards **(1 Corinthians 3:11-15).** We love you and delight in following **Your wisdom** in all we do, say and think. Please bless us with **Your wisdom** in how to live our lives in ways that best glorify **You**. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

The Bible declares this **wisdom** in many ways. It begins by simply asserting that **God gave Solomon wisdom.** Then **Solomon's wisdom** is demonstrated by means of an analogy from nature: **God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore (First Kings 4:29). The king's wisdom** was not infinite, of course, because only **God** is infinitely wise, by **Solomon** was **wise** beyond anything that

any human being could measure. **His wisdom** was like **the sand on the seashore**. This analogy reminds us why **the king** asked for **wisdom** in the first place; **the people he** had to govern were **too numerous to count (First Kings 3:8)**. Yet **ADONAI** gave **Solomon wisdom** sufficient for **his** calling – **wisdom** like **the sand on the seashore**.

Next, **Solomon’s wisdom** is demonstrated by comparison with other **wise** men: **Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East** (Arabs, Chaldeans and Babylonians, famed for their **wisdom**, astrological and scientific learning), **and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite – wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations (4:30-31).** Most of these men are long forgotten, but they were nearly as famous in their day as famous poets or songwriters are today. **Ethan and Herman,** for example, were poets; **they** wrote **Psalms 88** and **89**. Yet by comparison, **Solomon** was **wiser** than them all. His world-famous wisdom was superior to all the intellectual giants of Egypt, Persia, and Babylon – the great centers of learning in the ancient world.

Solomon’s wisdom was also demonstrated by the things **he** wrote and spoke. The Bible tells us that **he spoke three thousand proverbs** (some are included in the book of **Proverbs** but most of them are lost) **and his songs numbered a thousand and five (4:32).** Many of these wise sayings and lyrical ballads are preserved in the Scriptures. We find **the king’s** praise songs in **Psalms 72** and **127**. We read **his** love **songs** in **the Song of Songs (Song of Songs 1:1)**. We learn **his proverbs** for daily life from the book of **Proverbs**, most of which were written by **the king himself (Proverbs 1:1)**. As a result, **Solomon’s** literary output is impressive both in quantity and quality.

The breadth of **the king’s** knowledge was equally impressive. Not only was **he** skilled in the literary arts, but **he** also had a scientist’s love for the natural world. As **Solomon** wrote **his songs** and **proverbs he spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish (4:33). Solomon’s** knowledge was encyclopedic. **He** knew everything from the tallest tree in the forest **(the cedar of Lebanon)** to the smallest plant growing on the garden wall **(the hyssop)**. **The king** had a love for botany and biology; **he** knew both the plants and animals of **his** native **Isra’el**. In the words of one commentator, **his** interests included what was in the barn and what was in the lake, what graced the skies and what slithered across

the kitchen floor.[105]

With a curiosity as wide as the universe, **Solomon** was interested in everything **God** made. Not surprisingly, **his** writings are filled with many analogies based upon careful observation of the created world. When **he** was not making comparisons with **eagles** in the **sky** or **poisonous snakes (Proverbs 23:5** and **32)**, **the king** was inviting **his** readers to **go to the ant (Proverbs 6:6)** or listen to **the voice of the cooing doves (Song of Songs 2:12). Solomon** was the renaissance man of the ancient world – a naturalist as well as a songwriter, a philosopher as well as a **king**.

If we are **wise**, we will follow **Solomon's** example by finding delight in the world that **ADONAI** has made and learning everything it has to teach us. Gaze at the high constellation in the evening sky. Watch the osprey dive in the mountain lake to claim its prey. Smell the flower that blooms along the path in summertime. Notice the trail of ants crawling from the picnic to the anthill. Do not miss the marvels all around us – the things **God** has made, which **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** can use to teach us how to live.

Since **ADONAI** has left the fingerprints of **His** wisdom everywhere, since there is no place where **God** does not furnish us with raw materials for godly thinking, believers should be seized with a lively curiosity to ponder **His** works, both the majestic and the mundane. The task of **wisdom** is to joyfully describe and investigate all **God's** many works. We may not have **Solomon's** insight, but we can gratefully examine the same data.[106]

The king's wisdom is further demonstrated by **the people** who came to **him** for counsel: **From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom (4:34).** We can see a famous example of **Solomon's** international renown when **the queen of Sheva** came to visit **him** (see **Bu – Solomon and the Queen of Sheba**). But apparently that sort of thing happened all the time. **People** came to visit **him** from all over the world. **Solomon** virtually became an international tourist attraction. By any measure – whether by comparison, by reputation, or simply by the plain assertion of the biblical text – **he** was **the wisest man** in the world.

But **he** was not as **wise** as King **Yeshua**. **Solomon's** kingdom was always pointing us to the greater Kingdom of **Messiah**. **He** sits as a more bountiful table, at which **He** gives **His** own body and blood as life for **His** people (see the commentary on

The Life of Christ Kj – Breaking the Middle Matzah). **He** rules a wider Kingdom, spanning the globe. **He** also governs with superior **wisdom**, for **He** is **greater than Solomon** in every way **(Luke 11:31)**.

The B'rit Chadashah celebrates **the wisdom** of **Yeshua Messiah** in the same ways that **First Kings** shows us **the wisdom** of **Solomon**. At times our **Savior's** superior **wisdom** is simply stated, such as when the apostle **Paul** stated that **Yeshua has become for us** our **wisdom (First Corinthians 1:30)**. On other occasions, **His wisdom** is demonstrated by way of analogy. So, the Bible says, for example, that **in Messiah are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).** If **Solomon's wisdom** was like **the sand on the seashore,** then **the wisdom** of **Yeshua** is like **sand** that has been turned miraculously into diamonds.

We also see the supreme **wisdom** of **Yeshua Messiah** in all **the wise** things that **He** said. Like **Solomon**, **Yeshua** often used memorable metaphors drawn from the created world. **He** talked about farmers sowing their **seed** (see **The Life of Christ Et – The Parable of the Soils**), and the wind blowing wherever it pleases (see **The Life of Christ Bv – Jesus Teaches Nicodemus**), and when **He** did, **He** said many **wise** things about knowing **ADONAI** that will never be forgotten. The royal wisdom of **Messiah Yeshua** is shown further by comparison. **His wisdom** is so superior, the Scriptures say, that even **His** apparent **foolishness** turns out to be **wiser** than the so-called "wisdom" of men (see the commentary on **First Corinthians An – The Foolishness of Worldly Wisdom**). What some people think is only **foolishness** – namely, the cross where **Yeshua** died – actually turns out to be **God's wise** plan for salvation.

Now people from all nations are seeking **the wisdom** of **Yeshua**. It is happening this very day, as people all over the world worship **God** in the royal name of **Messiah the King**. I pray this is happening in your life as well, that you are trusting in **Yeshua**, who is the best and **wisest** of all kings. Feast on **His** grace. Serve **His** wide Kingdom by using your spiritual gift(s). Trust **His wisdom**, believing that **He** knows what is best. Rest in **His peace** as you wait for **His** Kingdom to come. **He** is **the Prince of Peace** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Ck – He Will Be Called the Prince of Peace**) and **His** peaceable Kingdom is not a dream, but a reality.

If you believe, you will see.[107]