

## Sunday Evening Message Series

### *1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings*

#### Message Three – 1 Kings 3

August 20, 2023

Title – *Wisdom – It's Yours for the Asking*

Text – 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3; James 1:1 – 8

Scripture Reading 1 Kings 3:5 - 9

### Introduction

Read James 1:1 – 8: text verse 5

The word, “wisdom” (σοφία – *Sophia*) in the Bible is used in a variety of ways and can mean different things. The context of the passage is the deciding factor as to precise meaning of the word. In James 1, wisdom could be defined as “the knowledge and practice of the requisites for godly and upright living.”<sup>1</sup> Wisdom in this sense involves knowing what God would want you to do or say in any given situation. Read James 3:13 – 18.

The wisdom I am talking about comes from God.

*"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:1-3)*

I am not referring to the wisdom of the world:

*"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:" (1 Corinthians 2:6-7)*

*"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign,*

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 581.

*and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)*

The text of Scripture that perfectly illustrates the type of wisdom that God wants all of us to have is explained in 1 Kings 3, only here God first asks Solomon what he would want, and Solomon's reply was somewhat surprising. He asks God for wisdom.

Read vs. 1 – 4 of the 1 Kings 3 and explain the context. The Tabernacle of God had wandered in the wilderness prior to Israel's entrance into and conquering of the Promised Land. Once inside of Canaan, the Tabernacle was at Gilgal for a while, and then during the time of the Judges, it was at Shiloh where the ark was taken by the Philistines. The Ark of the Covenant itself went into the Land of the Philistines for a short while and ended up in Kirjath-jearim until David finally brought it to Jerusalem where it was put into a tent, but apparently not the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle (without the ark) went to Nob during the reign of King Saul, and then was moved to Gibeon, which is where it is in our text.

You can see from these four verses that Solomon is getting some things right, but he is also making some unwise decisions. He certainly needs God's help.

**Transition** – In v 5 God gives Solomon the opportunity to ask for anything that he wants. Solomon is a new king. He has been given a new responsibility to lead God's people. It is an awesome task.

If God gave you the opportunity to ask him for anything, what would you ask for?

a million dollars; a new house; a fancy car; good health

In our text today, we will see that Solomon asks God for the one thing that would help him be successful as the leader of God's people; but would also guarantee that he would get all those other things.

Solomon asks God for wisdom:

*"Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" - (2 Chronicles 1:10)*

The dictionary defines wisdom as having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. But the wisdom we are talking about means more than that. It's knowing what God wants you to know. But it is more than just knowing:

Spurgeon said: “Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.”

Vance Havner said, “If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge.”

It’s knowing what to do and when to do it.

It’s knowing the right thing to say, and when to say it.

It’s knowing when to keep your mouth shut.

In our text today, we examine Solomon’s acquisition of wisdom:

## **I Solomon Acknowledges His Need for Wisdom (vs. 6 – 15)**

**A Notice Solomon’s Attitude** (vs. 6 – 8) – Solomon is humble enough to recognize that the job God had given him was bigger than his natural ability. If he was going to succeed, he knew he needed divine help from God.

You and I are in a similar quandary:

God has given you some things to do that are beyond your natural ability. Even though He has gifted you in certain areas, those gifts will not be sufficient on their own - without the help of God – to do all that God expects you to do.

Are you a parent – you need God’s help

Are you in a profession – you need God’s help

Are you a preacher or a teacher – you need God’s help

## **B Notice Solomon’s Asking** (v. 9)

The New Testament epistle of James tells us that we can ask for wisdom from God too; and notice what the answer will be when we ask.

*“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”* - (James 1:5-6)

This is a promise from God.

It is evident from some of the choices and decisions that we make that we often do not have God’s wisdom. Perhaps the reason that we lack the wisdom that God offers us is because we don’t ask:

“...ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2)

## **C Notice God’s Answer** (vs. 10 – 15)

God is pleased when we depend upon Him. He wants us to acknowledge Him:

*"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." - (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

Notice that God give Solomon beyond what he asks for:

*"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." - (Psalm 37:4)*

*"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," - (Ephesians 3:20)*

## **II Solomon's Application of the Wisdom That God Gave Him (vs. 16 – 28)**

This story illustrates the wisdom that God had given Solomon. He was able to discern in a dispute between two mothers who were both claiming to tell the truth.

## **III Solomon's Acquisition of the Benefits That Wisdom Provides**

See – 1 Kings 4:29 – 34

See – 1 Kings 10: 1 - 24

## **Conclusion**

You and I need God's wisdom.

*"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.*

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." - (Proverbs 4:5-9)*

## **How can you get wisdom:**

### **1. Wisdom Begins with God:**

*"And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28)*

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." (Psalm 111:10)*

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7)*

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)*

*"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility."*  
(Proverbs 15:33)

The opposite of being wise is being a fool.

*"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."* (Psalm 14:1 – also Psalm 53:1)

2. You can get wisdom by asking God.
3. You can get wisdom from the Word of God.

The Book of Proverbs is the Book of Wisdom.

4. You can get wisdom from wise counselors.

*"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."* -  
(Proverbs 12:15)

*"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."* -  
(Proverbs 19:20)

5. You can get wisdom from being a soul winner.

*"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."* - (Proverbs 11:30)

6. You get wisdom from experience – learning from your own and others' mistakes.

Illustration

One morning the young new president of a bank made an appointment with his predecessor to seek some advice. He began, "Sir, as you well know, I lack a great deal of the qualifications you already have for this job. You have been very successful as president of this bank, and I wondered if you would be kind enough to share with me some of the insights you have gained from your years here that have been the keys to your success."

The older man looked at him with a stare and replied: "Young man, two words: *good decisions.*"

The young man responded, "Thank you very much, sir, but how does one come to know which is the good decision?"

"One word, young man: *experience.*"

"But how does one get experience?"

“Two words, young man: *bad decisions.*”<sup>2</sup>

7. You can lose the wisdom that God gives you.

When you get to the point where you no longer feel that you need God, or you no longer want what God wants, you will lose wisdom.

Like being filled with the Spirit, having wisdom is a daily decision. You must daily depend upon God for wisdom.

See 1 Kings 11:1 – 11

All the benefits that Solomon had received because of the wisdom that God had given him were lost because Solomon no longer was following God.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael P. Green, ed., *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: The expositor’s illustration file. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).