

WISDOM AND JUSTICE / Sunday School- July 15, 2012

Unifying Topic: SOLOMON JUDGES WITH WISDOM AND JUSTICE

Lesson Text

I. King Solomon's Dilemma (I Kings 3:16-18)

II. King Solomon Listens (I Kings 3:19-22)

III. King Solomon's Verdict (I Kings 3:23-28)

IV. King Solomon's Prosperity (2 Chronicle 9:8)

The Main Thought: And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment. (I Kings 3:28, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People need a just and wise mediator when life presents unjust situations. To whom may we go to receive justice? Because of Solomon's relationship with God, he was able to make just and wise choices.

Lesson Aim: To learn that Solomon used his God-given wisdom to ensure justice was given to the right mother.

Life Aim: To teach Christians to use their wisdom not for personal gain solely but to promote justice and compassion.

3:16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

3:17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

3:18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

3:19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

3:20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

3:21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

3:22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

3:23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

3:24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

3:25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

3:26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

3:27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

3:28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

9:8 Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.

HISTORY:

The Books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings used to be one book. The authorship is unknown. They are but one book until the sixteenth century, divided into two parts, and went with the Jews under the common name of Kings. ¹The Books of 1 and 2 Kings received their names because they document the reigns of the 40 monarchs of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah following David. Israel had 20 kings, and Judah had 20, including one female who usurped the throne: Athaliah. It centers the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah, beginning with David and ending with Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. Some of the events in Kings are not in chronological order. They appear in the text as they do usually to make a point. The major lesson that Kings teaches its readers is that failure to honor the revealed will of God results in ruin and destruction.

OUTLINE:

A. Solomon's succession to David's throne 1:1—2:12

1. David's declining health 1:1-4

2. Adonijah's attempt to seize the throne 1:5-53

¹ www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1kings.pdf

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

3. David's charge to Solomon 2:1-9
 4. David's death 2:10-12
- B. The foundation of Solomon's reign 2:13—4:34
1. Solomon's purges 2:13-46
 2. Solomon's wisdom from God Chapter 3

SYNOPSIS of 1 Kings 3:1-15

3:1-3 Solomon made a peace treaty with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, by marrying his daughter. Solomon brought her to the City of David. This was when Solomon was still building his palace, the Temple of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem. The Temple to honor the LORD had not yet been finished, so people were still making animal sacrifices on altars at the high places. Solomon showed that he loved the LORD by obeying everything his father David told him to do, except that Solomon continued to go to the high places to offer sacrifices and to burn incense.

3:4-5 King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice because that was the most important high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. While Solomon was at Gibeon, the LORD came to him at night in a dream. God said, "*Solomon, ask me what you want me to give you.*"

3:6-9 Solomon answered, "*You were very kind and loyal to your servant, my father David. He was faithful to you and lived a good, honest life. And you showed him the greatest kindness when you let his son take his place as king. LORD my God, you have made me the king in my father's place, but I am like a small child. I don't have the wisdom I need to do what I must do. I am your servant here among your chosen people. There are so many that they cannot be counted. So I ask you to give me the wisdom to rule and judge them well and to help me know the difference between right and wrong. Without such great wisdom, it would be impossible to rule this great nation.*"

3:10-14 The LORD was happy that Solomon asked for wisdom. So God said to him, "*You did not ask for long life and riches for yourself. You did not ask for the death of your enemies. You asked for the wisdom to listen and make the right decisions. So I will give you what you asked for. I will make you wise and intelligent. I will make you wiser than anyone who ever lived or ever will live. And I will also give you what you did not ask for. You will have riches and honor all your life. There will be no other king in the world as great as you. And I will give you a long life if you follow me and obey my laws and commands as your father David did.*"

3:15 Solomon woke up and knew that God had spoken to him in the dream. Then Solomon went to Jerusalem and stood before the *Ark of the Covenant of the Lord* (the Lord's Agreement). He offered a burnt offering and fellowship offerings to the Lord and then gave a party for all of his officials (*Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)*).

LESSON:

1 Kings 3:16-18 King Solomon's Dilemma

3:16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. **3:17** And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. Solomon's wisdom was quickly put to the test as two prostitutes came before him with an argument to be settled. They both were pregnant, occupied, and lived in the same house when one of the women had her baby.

3:18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. Now, the baby is three days old and the other woman delivers her baby too in the house. Both slept with their baby; no stranger came in. They were the only ones in the house with their babies.

1 Kings 3:19-22 King Solomon Listens

3:19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. **3:20** And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. The first woman declares that the other woman's child died during the night because she laid on him; that she got up at midnight and exchanged her child for the living child as the baby's mother slept.

3:21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. When the first woman of the first born child got up to feed her baby, she found a dead baby in her arms. This was strange and as she thought about it that morning, she knew it was not her son that she had three days ago. And she claimed the dead baby was not hers.

3:22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. The woman that had her baby on the third day tells the king the living son was hers and the dead son was of the other woman. The Israelite king represented the highest court of appeal and was the foundation of all administration and justice. Solomon listens intently.

I Kings 3:23-28 King Solomon's Verdict

3:23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. **3:24** And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. Both women seemed to be arguing the same thing to the king—the dead son is not mine but it is the living son that's mine. The unusual wisdom of the king then calls for a sword to be brought to him.

3:25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. God showed Solomon what to do: divide the living child—one half goes to each. That settles it!

3:26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. The rightful mother cried out for her child's sake. She could not stand to see her child harmed. However, the other woman whose baby it was not, cried out for the king to go ahead and slay the baby because she knowingly knew it was not hers; she had no parental ties to the baby.

3:27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. The king seeing that the first mother wanted the child to live and not die no matter what, even going to the point of allowing the other woman to have him. Therefore, the king ruled, do not kill the child but give the living child to the first woman who is the real mother of the child.

3:28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment. The people heard about the judgment that was given by the king and perceived that this magnificent wisdom came from God, and were in awe.

2 Chronicle 9:8 King Solomon's Prosperity

Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice. The Queen of Sheba had heard about Solomon's wisdom from others, but now she really believes because she had seen it with her own eyes. She has seen how God loves Israel and has established her forever. She couldn't help but give honor and praise to God. She recognizes Solomon's greatness is from Yahweh and that Solomon sits on God's throne as His king.

SUMMARY:

²This story gives an example of Solomon's wisdom. It is evidence that God answered Solomon's prayer. Solomon does not merely show human wisdom here. It seemed impossible to decide who the real mother was. Both women seemed to be arguing the same thing. But God showed Solomon what to do. So Solomon knew that the real mother would love the child. She would not want to see someone kill it. She would rather let the other mother have the boy. This event shows that God was directing Solomon's judgments. This judgment impressed the whole nation. They saw that God had given wisdom to their king.

APPLICATION:

The God-given gift from God will always be tested. Right decisions always start with trusting the relationship you have with God. Be true to Him and He will always be true to you.

² <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/1kings-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>