

SOLOMON SOUGHT WISDOM

1 Kings 1 - 3; 2 Chronicles 1:1-13

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Solomon

Key-locations: Gibeon and Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Solomon replaced his father David as king (1 Kin 2:10-12; 3:6, 7).
- Solomon's wisdom: David told Solomon that he was a wise man (1 Kin 2:9); Solomon told God that he didn't have wisdom to carry out his duties (1 Kin 3:7); he asked the Lord for wisdom (1 Kin 3:9-12); God promised Solomon the wisdom he asked for (1 Kin 3:12); people knew Solomon had wisdom from the Lord (1 Kin 3:28).
- God's promises: God promised Solomon wisdom (1 Kin 3:12); God promised what Solomon did not request, riches and honor (1 Kin 3:13); God promised a long life to Solomon conditioned on his obedience (1 Kin 3:14).
- Each of two prostitutes claimed that the living baby was hers: first one to speak (1 Kin 3:19-21); the other one's claim (1 Kin 3:22).

Key-attitudes:

- God's pleasure with Solomon's request for wisdom.
- Solomon's humility when he requested wisdom.
- Each prostitute's determination to have the living son.
- People's admiration for Solomon's wisdom.

Initial-situation:

David died and Solomon sat on the throne of his father David. Solomon's rule was firmly established. Solomon showed his love for the Lord by living according to the ways of his father David.

Initial-problem:

In a dream, God asked the new King Solomon what he wanted.

Final-situation:

People in Israel realized Solomon received wisdom from God to administer justice.

BIBLE STORY

David died and Solomon sat on the throne of his father David. King Solomon's rule was firmly established (1 Kin 2:10-12).

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kin 3:1).

Solomon showed his love for the Lord by living according to the ways of his father David (1 Kin 3:3).

Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to God. The Lord asked Solomon in a dream, "What do you want me to give you?"

Solomon requested, "O Lord my God, you've made me king in my father's place. I don't have the wisdom to do my job. Give me a discerning heart to rule your people and to discern between right and wrong. Without wisdom, it's impossible to govern this great people of yours."

The Lord was delighted with Solomon's request, and promised Solomon, "You've asked for wisdom and not for a long life, nor riches, nor the death of your enemies. I'll give you what you requested. I'll give you wisdom and an understanding heart. I'll also give you what you didn't request: riches and honor. And if you follow me and obey my laws and commands, I'll give you a long life" (1 Kin 3:4-15; 1 Chr 1:2-12).

Two prostitutes came before King Solomon. One said, "This woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby and three days later, this woman also had a baby. One night, this woman's infant son died. She took my son from my bed while I slept. She put my son by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. The next morning, I got up to nurse my son, and there was this dead baby! But when I looked at him in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't my baby."

The other woman countered, "No! Mine is the living baby. Yours is the dead baby!"

King Solomon requested, "Bring me a sword and cut the living baby in two; give half to one and half to the other."

The mother of the living baby pleaded, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!"

But the other one said, "If I can't have him, neither will you. Cut him in two!"

Solomon gave his ruling, "Give the living baby to the first woman. She's the real mother."

People in Israel realized Solomon received wisdom from God to administer justice (1 Kin 3:16-28).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Solomon show his love for the Lord?
2. When Solomon was dreaming, what question did the Lord ask him?
3. What did Solomon request from the Lord?
4. If God asked you what you wanted from him, what would you request?
5. What did the Lord promise Solomon beyond what Solomon requested?
6. What precondition did Solomon have to meet for God to keep his promise to give Solomon a long life?
7. What challenge did Solomon face that allowed him to prove his wisdom?
8. How can we receive wisdom from God today?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Following common practices of what everyone is doing, can put a person on a downward spiral.** Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married his daughter (1 Kin 3:1). Marriage between royal families was a common practice in ancient Near East, because it built alliances and friendships with surrounding nations. However, this marriage was the beginning of Solomon's downfall. Solomon's foreign wives brought their gods to Jerusalem and eventually enticed him into idolatry (1 Kin 11:1-6).
2. **The person who is aware of his own inability to face a God-given challenge, and who seeks help and wisdom from God, will experience God enabling him.** Solomon was not a child in age. Before his death, David called Solomon a man (1 Kin 2:9). Solomon felt he was raw and inexperienced in matters of government. He was like an infant learning to walk alone, and could not govern without help. Solomon's awareness of his inability inspired him to seek ability and wisdom from God. God enabled Solomon to have the wisdom he needed (1 Kin 3:7-9).
3. **The person who desires characteristics that please God will experience bonus benefits.** Solomon asked God for wisdom. He received wisdom, but he received other bonuses, such as wealth and honor (1 Kin 3:11-14). The person who seeks the Kingdom of God (Mat 6:33) will receive other bonus benefits from God. He will discover that God will also bless him with other good things (Rom 8:32).
4. **God is the source of wisdom.** The Lord who gave wisdom to Solomon (1 Kin 3:28).
5. **Wisdom is proved in problem-solving situations.** The ruling of the case between two prostitutes, each claiming to be the mother of a child, gave evidence of Solomon's wisdom (1 Kin 3:16-27). After the ruling, the Israelites saw that Solomon had wisdom from God (1 Kin 3:28).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Role-playing Drama:

Invite a man and two women to dramatize each of the two prostitutes begging to have the living child and Solomon giving his ruling.