

The Great King

1 Kings 3:4-15

INTRODUCTION

- A. This nation has been blessed to have had several great leaders.
 - 1. George Washington molded this country together after the Revolutionary War.
 - 2. Abraham Lincoln kept this nation together through her darkest days.
 - 3. Franklin Roosevelt courageously fought a world war and the Great Depression.
- B. Israel also had her fair share of great leaders.
 - 1. Moses led the Israelites from captivity to the Promised Land.
 - 2. Joshua led the Israelites in their conquest of the Promised Land.
 - 3. David was a man after God's own heart.
- C. No doubt the greatest leader Israel ever saw was King Solomon.
 - 1. Solomon was indeed a great king.
 - a. During Solomon's reign, Judah and Israel ate, drank, and rejoiced (1 Ki. 4:20).
 - b. "God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore" (1 Ki. 4:29).
 - c. When the Queen of Sheba came to see Solomon, she was amazed to see all Solomon had built and to hear all Solomon's wisdom (1 Ki. 10:1-13).
 - 2. This evening, we want to examine what made Solomon such a great leader--his conversation with God.

THE GREAT REQUEST, vv. 4-9

- A. Solomon went to the great high place at Gibeon, v. 4.
 - 1. Generally, when we read of "high places" the term denotes a pagan shrine.
 - a. The word has that connotation in v. 3—Solomon burned incense at the high places.
 - b. However, this high place was used for true worship of God.
 - 1) At this time the Mosaic tabernacle was at Gibeon.
 - 2) The altar upon which Solomon made sacrifices at Gibeon was the brazen altar of burnt offerings in the tabernacle.
 - 2. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.
 - a. In all likelihood, "a thousand" is an exaggeration meaning "many."
 - b. The point here is that Solomon offered many sacrifices to God.
- B. While Solomon was at Gibeon, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and asked Solomon what he should give him, v. 5.
- C. Solomon replied to God, vv. 6-9.
 - 1. Solomon recounted the goodness God had shown to David, v. 6.
 - a. God had shown great mercy to his servant David.
 - 1) "Mercy" here does not mean "unmerited favor."
 - 2) Rather the term denotes God's faithfulness to the covenant he made with David.
 - a) The covenant was that one would rise to the throne and that this king would build the temple (2 Sam. 7:12-16).
 - b) God was faithful to that covenant.
 - b. God bestowed favor on David, because he walked before God in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart.
 - 1) God did not just grant his favor to David to be granting favors.
 - 2) God granted his favor to David because David was a man who honored God.
 - c. God had continued his faithfulness to David by granting the throne to David's son.
 - 2. Solomon was but a child king, v. 7.
 - a. Solomon may have only been about 20 when he ascended to the throne, and he

- recognized that he did not have the experience needed to be king.
- b. Solomon said that he did not know how to go out or come in. In other words, Solomon did not know how to behave as a king.
3. Solomon was leading the people of God, v. 8.
 - a. These were the people God had chosen--Solomon was not just a king of any nation; he was the king of God's people.
 - b. God's people were so plenteous they could not be numbered or counted.
 - 1) This again is exaggeration.
 - 2) However, we need to understand the point--God had fulfilled his promise to Abraham to give him as many descendants as sand at the sea or stars in the sky.
 4. Because Solomon is leading God's people, he needs an understanding heart, v. 9.
 - a. Solomon requested an understanding heart to judge God's people.
 - 1) The term "understanding" has to do with hearing.
 - a) The term means "listen to," "pay attention."
 - b) The idea is that Solomon wanted a heart that would listen to his people.
 - 2) This understanding heart would give Solomon the ability to judge between God's people.
 - b. This understanding heart would allow Solomon to discern between good and evil. Solomon would know what he should and should not do as king.
 5. Solomon asked, "Who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"
 - a. This rhetorical question gets at the heart of the matter.
 - b. Leading God's people required special ability--not just everyone could lead the people.
 - c. Solomon wants wisdom so he can lead God's people as God would have him to do.
- D. Application:
1. We, too, need to ask God for wisdom--We need to ask for this wisdom so that we can know his will.
 - a. God's will is often difficult to understand; Peter found parts of Paul's epistles difficult (2 Pet. 3:16).
 - b. If we lack wisdom, we are to ask God for it (Js. 1:5).
 2. Solomon did not pray selfishly.
 - a. Solomon could have asked for anything--riches, honor, fame--But he prayed for wisdom to lead God's people.
 - b. We need to be careful that when we pray we don't pray selfishly.
 - 1) Sometimes we view God as a cosmic Santa Claus who should give us all we desire.
 - 2) We need to be concerned about others and their needs--Solomon was worried about the needs of his subjects.
 3. Have you asked God for wisdom? Have you prayed unselfishly?

THE GREAT BLESSING, vv 10-15

- A. Solomon's speech pleased God, v. 10.
 1. Surely, God tires of individuals asking for whatever they want.
 2. Solomon asked unselfishly for wisdom, and God was honored.
- B. God grants Solomon's request, vv. 11-12.
 1. Solomon did not ask for what some of us might have, v. 11.
 - a. Long life for himself;
 - b. Riches for himself;
 - c. The life of his enemies.
 2. God did according to Solomon's word and gave him a wise and understanding heart, v. 12.
 - a. This wise and understanding heart would allow Solomon to judge between good and evil.

- b. There has never been nor shall there ever be someone wiser than Solomon.
- C. God also gave Solomon what he had not asked for, v. 13.
 - 1. God gave Solomon riches and honor; 1 Kings 10 describes Solomon's great wealth.
 - 2. God promised Solomon that during his lifetime no king would be as wealthy as he.
 - a. "So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom" (1 Ki. 10:23).
 - b. No foreign king could equal the wealth and wisdom of Solomon.
- D. If Solomon would walk in God's ways as David, his father, had done, God would lengthen his days, v. 4.
- E. Just as God blessed Solomon, he will bless us as well.
 - 1. If we seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, God will provide for our needs (Mt. 6:33).
 - 2. God gives us richly all things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17).
 - 3. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (Js. 1:17).

CONCLUSION

- A. Solomon awoke from his dream. He went to Jerusalem and offered God sacrifices, v. 15.
- B. If God had asked you what he could give you, how would you answer?
 - 1. God will give eternal life if we come to him?
 - 2. Will you come to Jesus now?