



JUDGES  
AND  
KINGS



## WINTER 03

DECEMBER 21, 2025

### LESSON TEXT

I Kings 3-11;  
II Chronicles 1-9

### FOCUS VERSES

I Kings 3:11-12  
<sup>11</sup>And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;  
<sup>12</sup>Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

### TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

God blessed Solomon as long as he lived in covenant with God.

# Solomon's Wisdom

AS I PRAY FOR  
WISDOM,  
I WILL SEEK GOD'S  
COVENANT IN  
EVERY AREA  
OF MY LIFE.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

After David's reign, his son Solomon was chosen as the next king of Israel. God's promise for David to always have a descendant reign on the throne was already coming to pass. Although Solomon wisely began as a humble king who built the Temple for God to dwell, the end of his reign as king was mired in war and idolatry. Solomon's foolishness would eventually lead to the Divided Kingdom of Israel and Judah, showing us both an important development in human history and our own need to guard against an enemy of covenant: selfishness.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** If God offered to grant any of your requests, what would you ask for?

**Teacher Tip:** Connect the group's answers to set up the story of God offering to answer Solomon's request.

**Lesson Connection:** Share the Lesson Connection.

### I. SOLOMON PRAYED FOR WISDOM

#### A. Solomon's Prayer

**DISCUSS:** *When you feel unequal to a task, what do you do?*

#### B. God's Answer

#### C. If we trust God and seek His wisdom, He will bless us.

**DISCUSS:** *How important is your prayer time to you? When do you have it?*

### II. SOLOMON BUILT THE TEMPLE

**DISCUSS:** *How do you reach out for others' help and not feel threatened by their strengths?*

#### A. Israel in the Promised Land

#### B. The Dedication of the Temple

**DISCUSS:** *What do God's promises in II Chronicles 7:14 mean to you?*

#### C. I will pray to continually live in covenant with God.

### III. SOLOMON STRAYED FROM COVENANT

#### A. Solomon's Disregard **V**

**DISCUSS:** *Are you surprised by Solomon's sharp decline spiritually? How do we avoid the same trap?*

#### B. God's Covenant with Jeroboam

#### C. Wisdom alone is not enough; I must have a heart that continually seeks after God.

**Internalizing the Message** **I**

## *PRAYER FOCUS*

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to give us wisdom
- For God to help us remain faithful to His plan and purpose

## LESSON CONNECTION

The tale is told of a weary traveler who visited a war-torn European village after World War II. The war had ravaged their possessions and even their trust. They hoarded their food and what little they had left, keeping it hidden away from outsiders. When the traveler entered their village, he asked if they had any food to share. All the villagers shook their heads and tried to send him away, but he would not be discouraged. He simply smiled and replied, “That’s okay. I’ll make stone soup instead.”

They looked puzzled. *What’s stone soup?* From his pocket the traveler pulled out a small, polished stone and placed it in a pot and filled the pot with water. As he brought the water to a boil over a fire, he commented, “This is going to be delicious. I just wish I had a little seasoning for some extra flavor.” One villager ran home and returned with some salt and a few herbs. The traveler-turned-cook sprinkled the seasonings into the soup. He continued to stir and said, “This soup would be even better with a carrot or two.” Another villager brought a handful of carrots, and the cook cut them up and added them to the soup.

The people were mesmerized by this traveler’s stone soup recipe. Before long, they could smell the soup cooking. Several came around and the outsider willingly scooped out soup for those nearby him. They ate and laughed and smiled. Their bellies and hearts were full. After their shared meal, one of the villagers asked what they were all thinking: “How did you make such a delicious soup with a stone?” The traveler wisely answered, “I didn’t. The stone is just a reminder that we need what each of us has to offer.”

Knowledge told the traveler that the villagers were unwilling to share their meager rations with an outsider, but wisdom drew them all together and showed them that we all need each other. Wisdom and knowledge are often connected, but they are two different things. Someone once said, “Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting a tomato in a fruit salad.” Someone hearing this explanation asked, “Does that mean ketchup is a fruit smoothie?”

Wisdom appreciates humor, knowing that laughter does good like a medicine. The wisest people know when to share a proverb to help someone or when to tell a clever joke to lift someone’s spirits. Wisdom has a long and treasured history from the days of the Bible until now. Wisdom is God’s universal covenant with everyone. But just as people fail to make a covenant with God in salvation, many choose foolishness over a more abundant life through wisdom. Wisdom is a gift from God, and God offered that gift to Israel’s third king: David’s son, Solomon.

# BIBLE LESSON

## I. SOLOMON PRAYED FOR WISDOM

People who read the Bible primarily know Solomon for two things: (1) his request for God to give him wisdom and (2) his many wives. The political alliances the king created because of the multitude of Mrs. Solomons led him into idolatry and damaged his wise reputation. By having so many wives and concubines, Solomon neglected a most important woman in his life: Lady Wisdom.

The Book of Proverbs depicts wisdom as a woman. Lady Wisdom cries out in the streets. She begs everyone to hear her reproof and take her words to heart. Unfortunately, her attempts to get the attention of the simple ones often fail. They ignore her and face the consequences. Solomon started off having a solid relationship with Lady Wisdom, but somewhere along the way, even he neglected her.

### A. Solomon's Prayer

As a young man, Solomon recognized the importance of courting Lady Wisdom. Tasked with leading a strong kingdom as he followed his renowned father David, Solomon felt inadequate. Having grown up in the palace, he lacked the military skills of his giant-slaying dad. David possessed a strategic mind, honed by many years on the battlefield and the events of his reign.

Solomon felt unequal to his father and the task before him. When the Lord offered to grant Solomon what he wanted, the king humbly admitted he felt like a little child despite his elite status as the king of Israel. Fully aware of the daunting task ahead of him, Solomon wisely asked the Lord for wisdom.

**DISCUSS:** *When you feel unequal to a task, what do you do?*

### B. God's Answer

The God who gives abundant life to us and pours out blessings so large we are unable to receive them not only granted Solomon's request, but the Almighty also granted the monarch riches and honor. The Lord was pleased that Solomon did not ask for wealth, material possessions, or the death of his enemies. Asking the Lord for wisdom was the wisest decision of his young life.

And the Lord blessed Solomon and God's covenant people because of Solomon's request. The Lord gave Solomon rest on every side. This peace put the monarch's subjects at ease. As a result, Solomon and the people could begin work on building the Temple as a permanent dwelling place for the presence of God on earth.

### C. If we trust God and seek His wisdom, He will bless us.

In this New Covenant, we are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). Just as God blessed Solomon's Temple, the Lord wants to bless us. To fully receive the benefits the

Almighty desires to give us, we must place our trust in God and seek His wisdom. The book of wisdom known as Proverbs tells us we should trust in the Lord with all our heart. We should not lean to our own understanding. If we acknowledge the Lord in all our ways, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5–6).

We need a prayer life like young Solomon. During the early days of his reign, he exhibited humility and fully acknowledged his need for God. Despite his inexperience and the fact he was neither a priest nor a prophet, Solomon prayed one of the most powerful prayers in history. We too must covenant with the Lord in prayer, seeking His face before seeking anything else.

**DISCUSS:** *How important is your prayer time to you? When do you have it?*

## II. SOLOMON BUILT THE TEMPLE

Even though Solomon lacked the prestigious reputation his father had, King Solomon could do something his dear ol' dad could not: Solomon could build the Temple. God did not covenant with David to build the Temple because David had shed too much blood. The peace that resulted from Solomon choosing wisdom paved the way for construction.

The Lord also granted Solomon a good relationship with Hiram, the king of Tyre. Hiram possessed both the materials and the expertise to assist Solomon in building the house of the Lord. The alliance between Solomon and Hiram reveals that wise people often seek the assistance of others. While Solomon had wisdom from the Lord and plans for the Temple, the young monarch needed someone to help him make his dream a reality. A wise individual will not feel threatened but will humbly accept someone else's expertise and utilize those talents for the glory of God.

**DISCUSS:** *How do you reach out for others' help and not feel threatened by their strengths?*

### A. Israel in the Promised Land

The Temple served as a visible reminder of God's covenant with Israel. As a fulfillment of God's covenant to David, the act of building the house of God further cemented Israel in the Promised Land. No longer would they move the Tabernacle from place to place—they were finally home in the Promised Land. Even outsiders from other nations who saw the Temple would know that the Lord dwelled in Israel.

The Temple also reflected the unity of the tribes of Israel. For years they had struggled to remain cohesive. Now the Temple provided a place for them to gather and renew their covenant with God and each other. The Law required Jews to appear at the Temple for three different feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Sukkot (Booths or Tabernacles). These consistent returns to the heart of Jerusalem revealed the wisdom of building the Temple. Those who made the annual pilgrimages remained united in their purpose and their worship.

## B. The Dedication of the Temple

After seven years, over 150,000 workers finished their work on the house of God. It was grand and beyond beautiful. Solomon knew the Temple needed to be dedicated to God. Although human hands had constructed the Temple, the building would be just another beautiful building without the presence of the Lord. Solomon offered numerous burnt offerings and sacrifices. He invited the presence of the Lord into His new house, and Almighty God responded to Solomon's faith.

At the dedication of the Temple, God promised to remember His covenant with the people of Israel and heal their covenant land (II Chronicles 7:14). Even if the people found themselves in exile, they could humble themselves, direct their prayers toward the Temple, and call on the name of the Lord; then the Lord would hear their prayers, forgive their sin, and heal their land.

**DISCUSS:** *What do God's promises in II Chronicles 7:14 mean to you?*

## C. I will pray to continually live in covenant with God.

In our own times of distress, we must realize the Lord will hear our prayers. If we want to maintain our covenant relationship with God, we must be willing to humble ourselves in repentance. We must have faith when we pray. We must call on the name of Jesus, the name above every name.

When we reach out in faith, we renew our covenant with God. In prayer we remind the one who never forgets our covenant of His promises to us. Our God wants us to pray so we reignite and recommit to the covenant we have made with Him. When we do, our Redeemer stands ready to forgive. Our Healer stands ready to cure us of sickness, disease, and oppression. It's all part of living in covenant with Almighty God.

## III. SOLOMON STRAYED FROM COVENANT

Life seemingly could not get any better for Solomon. His relationship with Lady Wisdom was a marriage made in Heaven. Solomon took care of the things of God, and God blessed the king and his people. Because Solomon honored his Creator, the Lord brought honor to Solomon. He soon gained renown for the Temple and for his wisdom. The Queen of Sheba traveled well over 2,500 miles round-trip to hear the wisdom of the king of Israel.

Sadly, Solomon's fame soon soured to infamy. The wise king began walking further and further away from the covenant he had made with God. He deviated from God's plan and eventually from God, putting his relationship with the Lord and the children of Israel at great risk. The successful king began paving the path to failure as he focused on worldly wisdom instead of the wisdom of God.

## A. Solomon's Disregard

Problems in an individual's relationship with God often result from problems in other relationships. Solomon disregarded God's wisdom regarding marriage. He chose

women from foreign lands to be his wives. These politically arranged marriages seemed like a good idea on the surface. They maintained peace between neighboring nations, opened the door to extensive trade, and promoted cultural exchanges. However, they weakened Solomon's allegiance to an exclusive covenant with God.

- ❑ Solomon's wives led his heart astray. The man who built the Temple began constructing shrines for false gods. Worse yet, he drafted his Israelite brothers to complete these idolatrous projects. The king commanded the people of the one true God to build temples for false gods. He even built a place to worship the Ammonite god Molech, the god who required child sacrifice as worship. In II Samuel 1, King David lamented, "How the mighty have fallen," after King Saul died in battle. He may have lamented his own son in the same way after Solomon broke covenant with God and worshiped other gods.

**DISCUSS:** *Are you surprised by Solomon's sharp decline spiritually? How do we avoid the same trap?*

## **B. God's Covenant with Jeroboam**

As a result of Solomon's dalliances with foreign gods, the Lord called Jeroboam to rule over the ten northern tribes. Jeroboam was one of the leaders of Solomon's work forces, an industrious man much like his ancestor Joseph. Solomon not only taxed the people heavily, but he also demanded they work on his building projects. But Jeroboam opposed the king. Fearing Jeroboam's growing influence, Solomon attempted to eliminate him. Jeroboam fled to Egypt, seeking refuge during his forced exile.

Jeroboam would one day return and divide the kingdom between north and south. The rise of Jeroboam reveals that God's Spirit will not always—and does not have to—strive with us. If we break God's covenant, God will covenant with someone else. He will have a called-out people, no matter how many or how few are in it.

Solomon's life serves as a warning. Most people know Solomon for his numerous marriages, but we should pay more attention to his greatest divorce. Solomon separated himself from Lady Wisdom. In the settlement, Lady Wisdom took most of Solomon's kingdom and gave it to Jeroboam. Scorning Lady Wisdom led to the sharp downfall of the once great—even regarded as the wisest—king.

## **C. Wisdom alone is not enough; I must have a heart that continually seeks after God.**

When we look at the life of Solomon, we should appreciate his early years. His prayer life as a young man kept him focused on the right things. As a fledgling king, he devoted himself to Lady Wisdom. She brought joy, peace, and wealth into his life because he sought the wisdom that only comes from right relationship with God. Solomon experienced many happy years because of that single commitment.

However, Solomon failed to realize he needed to continually seek after God. Being right with God in the beginning did not necessarily mean he would be right with God at the end. Perhaps he grew too complacent, thinking the Lord would honor him no matter what. Perhaps growing pride that stemmed from his fame went before his destruction and led to his fall. If we are wise, we will heed the cautionary story of the wise king who became a fool.

**Teacher Option:** Tell the story below or share one of your own to show the need to mix wisdom with godly character.

## INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

While Scripture compares wisdom to a lady, ornithologists (feather and fowl experts) say Wisdom is a bird. She is an albatross, in fact, and the oldest one at that.

- 1 Wisdom, a female Laysan albatross, is believed to be over seventy years old. One might never know it from her stately white gullet, long beak, and brown broad feathers, but she was first tagged in the north Pacific Ocean in 1956 and has been tracked across the decades.

Perhaps Wisdom is most famous for hatching her brood well into her senior years. So all eyes turned to her at the end of 2022 when Wisdom's long-time mate went missing. For over a year Wisdom remained alone, and a leader of the bird refuge where she is known to reside stated in March of 2024 that it was highly unlikely she would be able to find another mate.

However, in December Wisdom made headlines for laying her sixtieth egg. Though no one is reported to have thrown a baby shower or gender reveal party, Wisdom was celebrated as the oldest known bird to have laid an egg. Her story has been picked up by major news outlets around the world as they ponder the wonder of the septuagenarian (in her seventies) bird still nurturing offspring.

Think of the vocabulary collisions in the story. First, the term *albatross* is loaded with mixed meanings. It can mean a rare but prizeworthy golf achievement when an athlete pulls off a near-impossible shot, scoring three under par on a single

hole. Yet it can also be used to refer to a person who causes trouble or inhibits a person from achieving a purpose. With all of those connotations, scientists chose to name the oldest living albatross Wisdom.

Perhaps this quirky but true account can remind us today of the connection between wisdom and purpose. Though Solomon provides a cautionary tale that wisdom separated from God's covenant plan is dangerous, maybe on an elementary level Wisdom the albatross reminds us that longevity connected to purpose can be fruitful. Something innate deep within Wisdom the bird called to her to seek a mate, despite the odds—seemingly because of a natural instinct to nest and nurture. Whether having purpose multiplies her longevity or she simply follows her instincts in her unusually long life, she has not resigned herself to rest on her nest. Wisdom chooses to continue with the purpose sparked within her; the results have made people take notice.

On a much more significant level, our lives are sparked with purpose. It may involve service at church, influence in the lives of family members, witnessing to our community, honoring God through special talents, and on the list could go. This purpose God calls us to is much more special than that of Wisdom the albatross. We can impact our world with the gospel. We'll need wisdom to do so, and then we'll need to use that wisdom according to God's covenant plan. Let us pray today for wisdom to steward our gifts in ways that honor our God-breathed purpose.