

General Church Education



Solomon's Wisdom and Judgment

1 Kings 3:1-28; 4:20-34

Lesson 3

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

Solomon's Wisdom and Judgment

1 Kings 3: 1-28; 4:20-34

Teacher Background

If the Lord granted anything we wanted, would we ask for an understanding heart? Adults might be wise enough not to ask for wealth and power but for something good and useful. Solomon's choice enabled him to make intelligent and caring decisions. This is illustrated by his judgment of two women who both claimed a baby as their own. While Solomon's solution may seem harsh, it quickly identified the child's mother. Solomon's wisdom 'surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of the Egyptians.' The internal sense tells us that he had a deep understanding of good and truth and was aware of factual knowledge. Both of these are essential for making wise and loving decisions.

Young adults tend to make quick, emotionally charged choices. They often resist the voice of reason and may need help to understand Solomon's request. They can be led to see that if Solomon had followed his emotions, he might have become angry and threatened the women—hoping to force the truth from them. However this unwise approach would have had different results.

Focus Points

- The Lord granted Solomon's wish for an understanding heart.
- Solomon demonstrated his wisdom when two women asked for his judgment.
- Solomon's wisdom and power grew.

Readings from the Writings

"It is the mark of someone 'wise', and it is wisdom, to be moved by love to put truths into practice and the mark of someone 'wise in heart' and wisdom of heart to be moved by love to put good into practice; and from the meaning of 'putting wisdom in the heart' as being moved by the Lord, and so by the good of love, to do those things, for the good of love originates in the Lord. All such people will and do what is good and true for goodness and truth's sake, because good and the truth that goes with good are the Lord as He exists with them; for those things which originate in Him, and so which are His, are also He Himself." *Arcana Coelestia* 10336

"The wisdom of Solomon surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of the Egyptians' (1 Kings 4:30). Here 'the wisdom of the sons of the east' means interior cognitions concerning truth and good, and so means people who possess them." *Arcana Coelestia* 3762

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kings 3:9)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Use 1 Kings 3 to Find the Answer

Use a copy of the Word to find the verse in 1 Kings, chapter 3.

Heart Quotation

Choose a colorful piece of paper and cut out a large heart. Choose one or more of the heart quotations to cut out, mount in the heart shape and decorate.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. The lines for Saul and David are completed for you as an example. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

King Solomon's Riches and Honor

The Lord not only gave King Solomon a wise and understanding heart but rewarded him with riches and honors. Compare these with the type of riches people receive for doing good deeds today. Consider the blessing of doing something to make others happy. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-king-solomons-riches-and-honor-1-kings-3-1-kings-4.pdf>

Solomon's Maze

Find your way through a maze by following passages from the Word. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-solomons-maze-1-kings-3-1-kings-4.pdf>

Solomon's Wisdom and Judgment

1 Kings 3:1-28; 4:20-34

Vocabulary

tribute—a periodic payment one state or ruler makes to another

proverb—a short saying stating a general truth or piece of advice

subdued—brought under (his) control

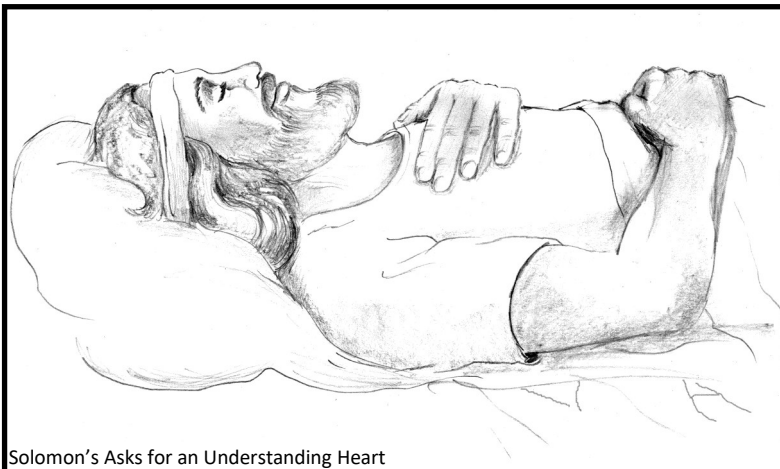
Solomon Asks for an Understanding Heart

After Solomon became king, the Lord appeared to him “in a dream”. The Lord opened his spiritual eyes and ears so He could speak with him from heaven. The Lord told him that he could have anything he wanted. Yet, Solomon asked for one thing:

“An understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil.” (1 Kings 3:9)

King David, Solomon's father, had conquered many nations. While each nation had its own king, Solomon ruled over the kings and they paid tribute to him each year. So Solomon ruled a large kingdom. Therefore, he needed to understand their traditions and feelings. He also needed to know what was right or wrong so that he could act fairly and justly or wisely at all times.

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's request—so pleased that He promised Solomon riches and honor as well. He also promised Solomon long life if he would walk in His way and keep His commandments. He renewed the covenant He had made with so many Israelitish leaders. So Solomon began his reign as a righteous leader.



Solomon's Asks for an Understanding Heart

Solomon's Judgment

Shortly after this Solomon's wisdom was tested. Two women came to him with a baby. They had given birth to boys just three days apart, but one baby had died. Each woman claimed the baby was hers. One woman told Solomon that the other mother's child had died during the night, but that she had taken the living child and put the dead baby into her arms. The other woman

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denied this. You can imagine that they were emotional. It would have been hard for Solomon to tell who was telling the truth.

What Solomon suggested did not seem wise at first, but something that you might think was cruel and threatening. He said that he would divide the child and give each woman half of the baby. Solomon knew that a person who would steal someone's child might not have the compassion that most mothers would have.

He was right. The real mother was willing to give up her child so the child would live, while the thief was willing to let Solomon divide the baby. Solomon never would have allowed the living child to be divided and killed, but his threat revealed which woman was the child's mother.

Can you think of any other ways Solomon might have discovered who was the real mother?

When the People of Israel heard of Solomon's judgment, they could see that the "wisdom of God was in him to administer justice" (1 Kings 3:28).

Solomon's Wealth and Power Grow

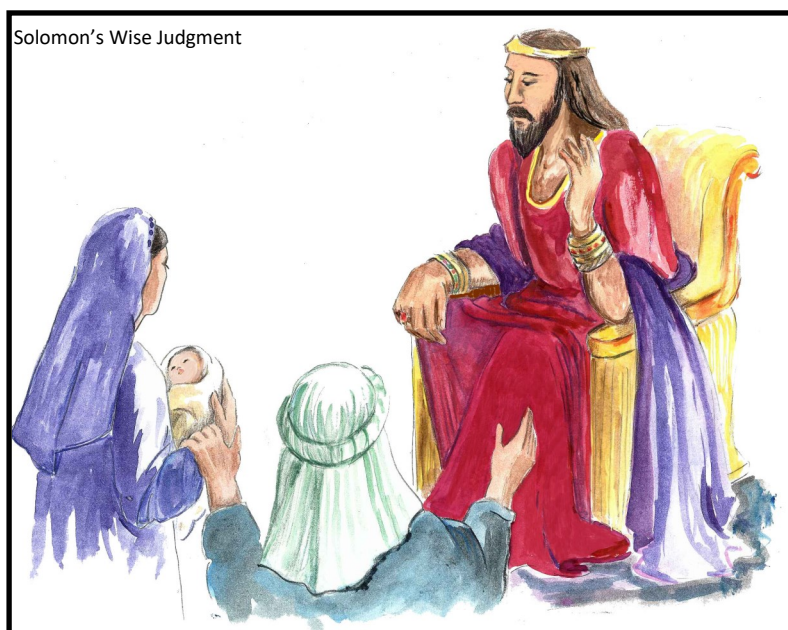
As the Lord promised, Solomon became powerful and wealthy. The kingdoms around him that David subdued and that paid him taxes and left Judah and Israel in peace.

"And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." (1 Kings 4:25)

Solomon had many horses, chariots, and people to serve him. The people under his rule provided him with an abundance of food, both for those who ate at his table and for his livestock. He had everything he needed. As long as Solomon followed the Lord and kept His commandments, the Lord blessed him with power and riches.

Solomon's Wisdom Grows

"God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore." (1 Kings 4:29)



the sand on the seashore." (1 Kings 4:29)

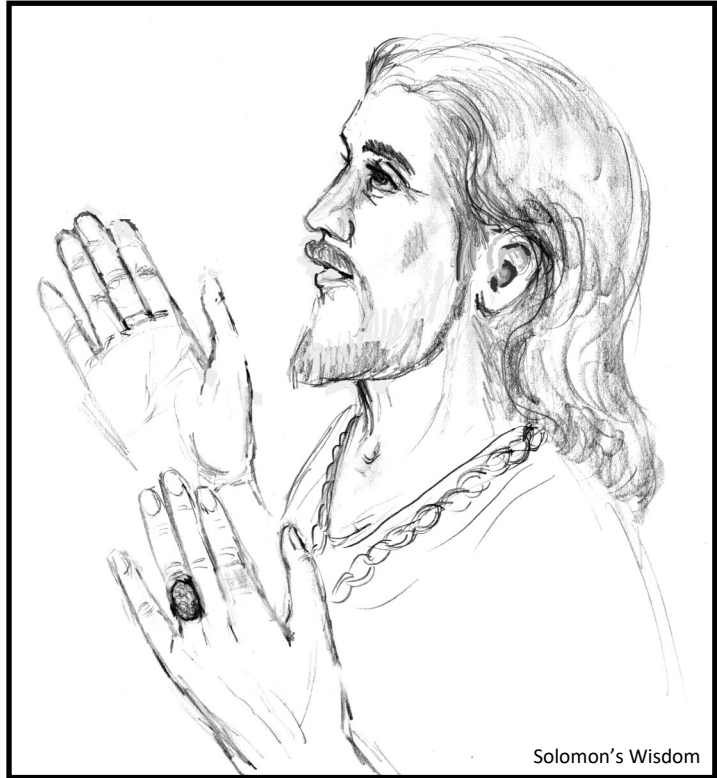
The Word tells us that Solomon was wiser than all the other wise men of his time. He was so famous for his wisdom that people from the surrounding nations came to hear what he had to say.

Solomon expressed his wisdom in proverbs and songs. While Solomon's proverbs are not Divine revelation or part of the Word of God, you can read them in the Bible. They follow the Psalms.

The proverbs often are very beautiful and full of useful ideas of how to live a good life. They tell of the value of education, of helping the poor, of being a good friend, and of working hard. The proverbs also warn of things a person should avoid such as envy, gossip, and pride. They give instructions to both kings and servants—to all people.

Asking for an Understanding Heart

Usually when people think of wisdom they think of being smart—of being able to learn quickly or doing well in school. When people think of a part of the body associated with wisdom, they might think of the brain. Why, then, did Solomon ask for an understanding heart? What thoughts and feelings do you identify when you think of the heart? Possibly love, caring or compassion come to your mind. When heart/love and brain/understanding are put together, you can begin to see what Solomon was asking for and what you might want for yourself.



It is good to love and care for people, but there are intelligent ways to do this, as well as useless ways. An older sister might always want to help her little brother so he does not make mistakes, but if she does everything for him he will never learn to do things for himself. A friend could ask you to steal something from a store, and say you aren't really a friend if you don't go along. If your heart is not ruled by your brain you might join in because you want to show what a good friend you are, but an understanding heart will know better.

We do not know if Solomon was suddenly wiser than he had ever been before, but we do know he was wise and caring enough to know he needed loving wisdom to rule his people well. He wanted to follow the Lord, and he had some idea of what the Lord wanted of him. Perhaps he had been taught by a priest or some other caring adult to read the Word, the source of true wisdom. The Lord can give you an understanding heart if you read the Word, heed the words of wise and caring friends and adults and pray to the Lord to help you follow Him.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kings 3:9)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

Use 1 Kings 3 to Find the Answer

Use a copy of the Word to find the verse in 1 Kings, chapter 3.

Heart Quotation

Choose a colorful piece of paper and cut out a large heart. Choose one or more of the heart quotations to cut out, mount in the heart shape and decorate.

Use 1 Kings 3 to Find the Answer

1 Kings 3

Use a copy of the Word to find the answer to each question and write the number of the verse after the question. The questions are not in the order of the verses.

1. What did Solomon command should be done to the living child two women claimed?
2. What did the Lord give Solomon in a dream by night?
3. What did the Lord give Solomon that he had not asked for?
4. Whose daughter did Solomon marry?
5. How did one woman's child die in the night?
6. What did Solomon ask of the Lord?
7. How many burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon the altar "that was the great high place"?
8. What weapon did Solomon command be brought to him?
9. Why did the people sacrifice in high places?
10. Who received the living child?
11. What was the reason Solomon gave for his special request of the Lord?
12. What did Solomon have to do to have his days lengthened?

Heart Quotation

Using a large piece of colored paper, cut out a large heart shape. Choose one or more of the quotations below. Cut it out and glue it to the center of your heart. Then create a border.

**Give to Your servant
an understanding heart.**

1 Kings 3:9

**God is the strength
of my heart.**

Psalms 73:26

*Wait on the Lord; be of good courage,
and He shall strengthen your heart.*

Psalms 27:14

**Be of good courage, and
He shall strengthen your heart,
all you who hope in the Lord.**

Psalms 31:24

**You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your strength
and your thought.**

Matt. 22:37

**Blessed are the pure in
heart.**

Matt. 5:8

*So teach us to
number our days,
that we may gain
a heart of wisdom.*

Psalms 90:12.

**I will praise the Lord
with my whole
heart.**

Psalms 111:1

*It is the nature of love
to will to share with another,
indeed, to confer joys upon another
whom it loves from the heart,
and to seek its own joys in return
from doing so.*

Conjugal Love 180

Answers

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Use 1 Kings 3 to Find the Answer

1. 27, 2. 12, 3. 13, 4. 19, 5. 1, 6. 9, 7. 15, 8. 24, 9. 2, 10. 27, 11. 9, 12. 14.