

## 1 KINGS 3:1-15

### A. Introduction

1. In our elders' meetings, we're going to be tracing the story of King Solomon, from his coronation to his burial, as recorded in 1 Kings 1-11.

As well as seeing how he points us to the 'one greater than Solomon', we're going to focus in on what we can learn as elders from his life and particularly his downfall, as we seek to lead those whom God has made us overseers over.

2. In the opening half of 1 Kings 3, Solomon shows us two things that every leader needs.

### A. Love for the Lord

1. Solomon is the only man in the entire Bible who is said to have loved the LORD (although it is clear that he is not the only man to have done so).

"Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statues of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar." (1 Kings 3:3-4)

He showed his love by worshipping God and offering many costly sacrifices.

2. But there are hints that Solomon's love for the LORD was not or will not be exclusive.

"Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem. The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD." (1 Kings 3:1-2)

The first hint is the alliance that Solomon made with Egypt – rather than trusting in God alone, he aligns Israel with a foreign power.

The second hint is his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter – this was a marriage of a believer to an unbeliever.

The third hint is that the building of his palace comes before the building of the temple – as we'll see he would spend more time and money on his own home.

The final hint is that he did not get rid of the high places – in fact he went to one of them to offer sacrifices to the LORD.

Sadly, this is an ominous foreshadowing of what is going to happen to Solomon, yet he was still someone who loved the Lord.

3. Leaders of God's people need to have a love for the Lord.

And this should be obvious to those they lead.

Yet we need to be aware of those things that could turn our love away from the LORD.

The temptations Solomon faced are real ones facing us – power, sex, wealth, and other idols.

### B. Wisdom from the Lord

1. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and invited him to ask for whatever he wanted.

"At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." (1 Kings 3:5)

This seems to be in response to the love Solomon showed for the LORD by offering that great sacrifice.

## 2. Solomon's response showed that he loved the LORD.

"Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (1 Kings 3:6-9)

Solomon acknowledges the kindness God had already shown to him in making him king of Israel.

But he also recognises his need for God's help.

He says that he did not know how to rule like a king.

He knew that ruling over God's people was a huge responsibility.

He asks for God to give him the wisdom needed to lead God's people.

Again we have an allusion to Solomon as being like a new Adam, asking for the knowledge of good and evil rather than trying to take it, in order to have the skill to rule well.

## 3. God was as pleased with Solomon's request as well as with what Solomon did not request.

"The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice; I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for – both riches and honour – so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did. I will give you a long life." (1 Kings 3:10-14)

He gave Solomon the wisdom he needed to rule God's people and so much more.

So Solomon thanked God for everything He had given him.

"Then Solomon awoke – and he realised it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court." (1 Kings 3:15)

## 4. God has made us overseers over His people who are part of this local church.

This is a huge privilege.

It is also a huge responsibility – who is sufficient for this task?

We desperately need God's help and especially His wisdom to lead well.

His wisdom is available to us in the Lord Jesus who is the wisdom of God, and who gives His disciples including His under shepherds, instructions about how they are to oversee His people.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)

We must not forget to thank God for all the help He gives to us.