

Solomon Judges with Wisdom and Justice

***Key Verse: “All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.”
—I Kings 3:28***

***Selected Scripture:
I Kings 3:16-28;
II Chronicles 9:8***

AFTER THE DEATH OF DAVID, his son Solomon was anointed king of Israel. Desiring to follow faithfully in his father's steps, Solomon properly sought God's help. He said, “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people.” (II Chron. 1:10) Seeing Solomon's humble condition of heart and his noble desire, God granted his request and gave him great wisdom and knowledge, saying, “that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king.”—vs. 11

Almost immediately, Solomon's wisdom was tested. Paraphrasing I Kings 3:16-22: Two women approached the king concerning a most serious matter. Both had been living in the same house, and each had given birth to a child just three days apart from the other. Only they and their newborn children lived in the house. The child of the second woman lived only a few days and died during the night. Realizing this, she went to the room of the first woman, who was sleeping. She took the living child from beside the sleeping mother, and laid the dead child

in her arms. When the mother of the living child rose up in the morning, she saw the dead child in her arms, at first thinking it was hers. Almost immediately, however, she realized it was not her child, but that of the other woman. She approached the woman who had taken her living child during the night, but the woman denied that any wrong had been done, and claimed that the living child was indeed hers. Thus both women testified to the king that the living child was theirs, and the dead child belonged to the other.

The great wisdom of Solomon was shown in his response to the two women. He said, “Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.” (vss. 24,25) On the surface, such a response seems repulsive to the human mind. However, as we will see from the response of the two women, it is clear that Solomon had no intention of carrying out such a cruel deed. In the wisdom he had gained from God, he knew that the truth would come out because of the way he had responded. The woman who was the real mother of the living child could not bear the thought of the king’s proposal to divide the child, so she gladly said she would give up the child to the other woman, so it would not be slain. On the other hand, the mother whose child had died, and who had cruelly switched the two children, coldly responded that it would be fine with her if the king divided the living child.—vs. 26

This was all King Solomon needed to hear. He gave the living child to its rightful mother, unharmed. (vs. 27) Our Key Verse indicates that word of Solomon’s wise actions quickly spread throughout Israel. Most importantly, the people recognized it as the wisdom of God. Truly, God’s wisdom in all ages is beyond human comprehension. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”—Rom. 11:33 ■