

God provided Solomon with an amazing opportunity that likely no other man has been given. Solomon was asked to name the gift that wanted God to give him. However, Solomon selflessly asked for a gift that would primarily benefit the people of Israel because he understood that he was not prepared for the task of ruling over the nation due to his youth and inexperience.

Verses 1-6: David had recently died and left Solomon, his son, on the throne over Israel (1 Chr. 29:26-28). Being a new king, Solomon sought the LORD's guidance and asked the leaders of Israel to accompany him to the tabernacle at Gibeon in order to worship and offer sacrifices there. After their arrival, Solomon offered 1,000 burnt offerings on the brazen altar that was in front of the tabernacle at Gibeon.

7 In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

“In that night did God appear [to be visible] unto Solomon” – The LORD responded to Solomon's desire for guidance, which is what God promises to those who seek Him (**Deut. 4:29** “*But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul*”). The parallel passage (1 Kings 3:5, 15) tells us that the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. We are not told what specifically that Solomon saw when the LORD appeared to him. When the LORD came to Samuel, apparently Samuel only heard the LORD's voice, but Solomon apparently saw some sort of manifestation of the LORD in his dream.

“and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee” – The LORD offers Solomon an amazing gift, although it is far from giving him a “blank check.” Obviously, the LORD would not have given Solomon anything that would contradict His will (**1 Jn. 5:14-15** “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*”). Also, the LORD knew what Solomon would ask for and would probably never have made the offer if Solomon was going to ask for something selfish. It served the LORD's purposes for Him to offer Solomon this choice.

8 And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

Solomon acknowledges what God has done for his father David in allowing his son to inherit the throne after his death. Although it was common practice in that day for kings to pass their throne to their son, that was not the case for David's predecessor. Although Saul had been chosen by God to be king over Israel, his family's claim to the throne ended with his death. That precedent implied that David would only be able to pass his throne to his own son if God approved. Solomon understood that it was God's mercy that allowed him to become king after David's death.

9 Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

“Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established [fulfilled]” – Solomon is referring to the Davidic Covenant, in which God promised that David's descendants would be on the throne forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16; 1 Chr. 17:11-14). Solomon understood that his coronation was the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise and he asked God to continue fulfilling it.

“for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude” – The evidence that God was keeping His promise to David was the fact that Solomon was now king and responsible for the well being of the people of Israel. Solomon recognized that the magnitude of his responsibility was great because of the sheer number of people living in Israel.

10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?

“Give me now wisdom and knowledge” – Knowledge is the possession of information and wisdom is the understanding of what to do with the information that you have. Wisdom is ineffective without information to act upon, and information has little value without the wisdom to know how best to utilize it. Solomon recognized that he needed both in order to meet his responsibilities as king.

“that I may go out and come in before this people” – The phrase “go out and come in” refers to the daily duties that Solomon needed to perform in his responsibilities as king and he knew that he needed God's help to do them. Thus he chose to ask God for wisdom and knowledge so that he could be a responsible king over Israel.

“for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?” – Scripture teaches that leaders are like shepherds over the people that they lead, and God holds them responsible for how well they care for their people. In Ezek. 34, God chastises the leaders of Israel for using their positions to benefit themselves instead of seeking the welfare of the people that they were responsible for ruling (**Ezek. 34:2** “*Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?*”). Solomon recognized that serving as king over such a large number of God's chosen people was a huge responsibility for even the most capable of men, much less a new king like Solomon. In the parallel passage in 1 Kings 3, Solomon acknowledged his youth and inexperience (**1 Kings 3:7b** “*I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in*”), two factors that made him feel especially inadequate to the task of ruling as king. Solomon apparently felt overwhelmed by the responsibility and asked God for the wisdom and knowledge that he would need to responsibly govern Israel.

11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

“And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart” – God could see what was in Solomon’s heart and knew that this request was not an attempt by Solomon to trick Him into giving him more than what he asked. God had allowed Solomon to name what he wanted God to give him, and he had asked for something that would primarily benefit the people of Israel. God saw the honesty and selflessness of Solomon’s heart and was pleased by the request (**1 Ki. 3:10** “*And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing*”).

“and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life” – Solomon could have asked for these things that would have primarily benefited himself, but he didn’t. He understood his responsibilities as king and wanted to help his people instead of selfishly using them to benefit himself.

“but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge [rule; govern] my people, over whom I have made thee king” – God had made Solomon king over His people and Solomon recognized that he was accountable to God for how well he ruled over Israel. Thus he asked God for the wisdom and knowledge to be the responsible king that God wanted ruling over Israel.

12 Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

“Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee” – One of the reasons that Solomon’s request pleased God was because of its selflessness (**1 Ki. 3:11** “*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*”). Solomon’s request also pleased God because it was in accordance with His will. The best way to get our prayers answered is to ask for things that we know is God’s will (**1 Jn. 5:14-15** “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him*”). Since Solomon’s request pleased Him, God willingly granted it.

“and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour” – God was so pleased with Solomon’s request that He decided to also grant the things that Solomon did not selfishly ask for. The wisdom and knowledge that Solomon would receive would enable him to gain riches, wealth and honor as God blessed him.

“such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like” – The account of God granting Solomon’s request here in 2 Chronicles is more compact than the one in 1 Kings 3. Here, God promises that the gifts Solomon will receive will be greater than what any kings before him or after him will have. We know that this promise applies to both the gift of wisdom and knowledge and the gift of riches, wealth and honor because this is specifically stated in **1 Ki. 3:12-13** (“*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. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days”). God also promised a long life to Solomon on the condition of obedience (**1 Ki. 3:14** “*And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days”).**

Verses 13-17: Solomon returns to Jerusalem and, through the wisdom that God gave him, begins to make Israel a wealthy nation. Verse 15 describes the amount of wealth that Solomon was accumulating (“*And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance*”). However, the passage also describes the number of horses that Solomon acquired for the protection of Israel and that they were acquired from Egypt, something that God had forbidden for Israel’s kings to do. In fact, **Deut. 17:16-17** lists three prohibitions for the kings of Israel and Solomon broke all three (“*But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold*”).