

WEEK 29 | SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2026

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Primary Scripture: 1 Kings 3

Supporting Scripture: James 1:5 | Matthew 12:42 | 1 Corinthians 1:30

Memory Verse, 1 Kings 3:9: Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil.

BIBLE TIMELINE PLACEMENT

David has died, and his son Solomon now sits on Israel's throne. Last week we watched David the shepherd king confess he still needed the LORD to be his own shepherd. This week Solomon, only a young man, faces the same enormous task David once carried, and he responds the same way David would have wanted, by turning to God instead of trusting his own strength.

2 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Solomon becomes king at what most historians believe was a very young age, likely still a teenager or in his early twenties, immediately after his father David's death. His prayer takes place at Gibeon, an important worship site north of Jerusalem, since the Temple had not yet been built. Offering a thousand burnt offerings there was an act of worship and consecration, not unusual for a new king seeking God's favor at the start of his reign. God appearing to Solomon in a dream was a recognized, legitimate way God communicated with people in this period of Scripture, not a strange or uncertain event. In the ancient world, a king's most important daily responsibility was serving as the supreme judge for his people, settling disputes no one else could resolve. That is exactly the kind of wisdom Solomon asks for here, the practical, moral discernment needed to judge fairly, not simply cleverness or trivia knowledge. Understanding this helps explain why Solomon calls himself a little child. He is not exaggerating false humility. He genuinely feels the weight of a job far bigger than his own experience.

3 WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PASSAGE

God appears to Solomon in a dream at Gibeon and makes an extraordinary offer, ask what I shall give you. Solomon's response reveals his heart. He first acknowledges God's steadfast love to David, then admits his own inadequacy, I am but a little child, I do not know how to go out or come in. He is facing the responsibility of ruling God's vast, chosen people, and he knows he cannot do it on his own strength.

Rather than asking for long life, riches, or victory over his enemies, three things any king in the ancient world would have wanted most, Solomon asks for an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil. His request is entirely about being equipped to serve God's people well, not about personal gain.

God is pleased with this request precisely because Solomon did not ask for himself. God grants Solomon a wise and discerning mind unmatched by anyone before or after him, and adds riches and honor on top of it, things Solomon never even asked for. God also promises long life if Solomon continues walking in obedience.

The chapter then shows this wisdom in action. Two women living in the same house both claim to be the mother of the same living baby, after one baby died in the night. With no witnesses and no way to prove either claim, Solomon orders the living child divided in two between them. The order is never meant to be carried out, it is a test. The true mother immediately begs Solomon to give the baby to the other woman rather than see it harmed, revealing her identity through her love. All Israel hears of this judgment and stands in awe, recognizing that the wisdom of God is in Solomon.

4 KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

1. What This Reveals About God (1 Kings 3:10 to 12)

God delights in generosity that exceeds what we even ask for. Solomon asked only for wisdom, and God gave him wisdom, plus riches and honor he never requested. This reveals a God who is not stingy but overflowing in goodness toward those who trust Him rather than themselves.

2. What This Reveals About People (James 1:5)

People are not naturally equipped for the tasks God calls them to. True wisdom does not come from our own experience or cleverness. It is a gift we must ask God for, and He gives it generously to anyone who asks.

3. How This Points to Jesus (Matthew 12:42, 1 Corinthians 1:30)

Solomon received wisdom as a gift from God, but centuries later Jesus said someone greater than Solomon had come, Himself. Jesus does not merely receive wisdom, He is the wisdom of God for us, and unlike Solomon, whose heart later turned away, Jesus never fails.

5 GOSPEL CONNECTION

Solomon's story reveals something every person needs, wisdom we do not have on our own and cannot manufacture ourselves. Solomon received that wisdom as a gift the moment he admitted his own inadequacy and asked God for help. Yet even the wisest man who ever lived eventually let his heart wander from God later in life. Solomon's wisdom, however great, could not keep him faithful forever. Jesus is greater than Solomon. He is not merely wise, He is Wisdom itself, and everyone who comes to Him receives a wisdom that never runs out and a righteousness that never fails.

Simple Gospel Sentence: Jesus is greater than Solomon, because Jesus does not just give us wisdom, He is our wisdom, and He never fails us the way we fail Him.

6 QUESTIONS CHILDREN WILL ASK

Why didn't Solomon ask to be rich or to live a long life?

Solomon knew the job of leading God's people was too big for him to handle alone, so he asked for the one thing that would actually help him do it well. God was so pleased with this request that He gave Solomon riches and long life anyway.

Was Solomon really going to cut the baby in half?

No, Solomon never intended to hurt the child. It was a clever test to reveal which woman truly loved the baby enough to give him up rather than see him harmed.

Can I ask God for wisdom too?

Yes. The Bible tells us in James 1:5 that if anyone lacks wisdom, they can ask God, and He gives generously to anyone who asks Him.

Was Solomon the wisest person who ever lived?

Solomon was given more wisdom than anyone in his time, but the Bible tells us Jesus is even greater than Solomon. Jesus is not just wise, He is wisdom itself.

Did Solomon stay wise and faithful his whole life?

Solomon's wisdom was real, but later in his life his heart turned away from God in some serious ways. It reminds us that even the wisest people still need a Savior, which is exactly why Jesus matters so much.

7 TEACHER SUMMARY

Big Idea	True wisdom is a gift God gives generously to anyone who admits their need and asks Him for it.
What God Did	Gave Solomon wisdom beyond anyone before or since, plus riches and honor Solomon never even requested.
How It Points to Jesus	Jesus is greater than Solomon, not merely wise but Wisdom itself, and unlike Solomon, His heart never fails.
Error to Avoid	Do not turn this into a formula, ask unselfishly and God will reward you. The point is Solomon's humble dependence on God, not a clever prayer technique. Also avoid presenting Solomon as a flawless hero, since his story later includes real failure.
Hope to Emphasize	Anyone who feels unequipped for what God has called them to do can ask God for wisdom exactly like Solomon did, and find it fully and finally in Jesus.