

The Kings

King Solomon, The Wise King – Part I

The nation of Israel has only had two kings, Saul and David. Saul and David were different from the other nations where kings either inherited the throne or took the throne in a powerful overthrow. God had chosen Saul and David and placed them on the throne.

When David dies, Solomon inherits the throne. He also inherits a powerful nation, which had been established by his father King David.

1 Kings 2:24 What is Solomon's understanding of why he is on the throne?

1 Kings 2:46 tells us that the kingdom was now firmly in Solomon's hands.¹ Now what? Solomon has to determine what kind of leader he will be.

1. **1 Kings 3:1-2** is an interesting verse to reflect on. Solomon's first act was to establish and alliance with the Pharaoh of Egypt. This alliance shows the growing power of Israel. It also does something else for Solomon, he gains a wife and with that wife a dowry.

- a. **See 1 Kings 9:16** – What town served as the dowry?

This town would later serve Solomon's building projects because it was at the crossroads of two important trade routes. Note any commentary your Bible has to offer about this town.

2. **1 Kings 3:2-4** How did Solomon show his love for the LORD?

3. **1 Kings 3:7-9** The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream. What was Solomon's request?

- a. Why was this his request?

¹ In 1 Kings 1-2 As King David neared death, Solomon's half brother, Adonijah, the son of Haggith, attempted to make himself king of Israel. The prophet Nathan learned of this attempt. Nathan conferred with Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. They were able to arrange for the dying King David to name Solomon as the new king of Israel. Not until Adonijah has been killed and those with him have been either killed or made powerless is Solomon firmly on the throne without threat or challenge.

4. **1 Kings 3:10-14** The Lord was pleased with Solomon's request. What did He say He would give to Solomon?

5. **1 Kings 3:16-27** Describe Solomon's first wise act.

No matter how much power or authority an individual has the people are watching to see how that leader will make decisions. The people of the nation are wondering if the new leader will be a trusted and faithful leader or if he will be a powerful tyrant.

6. **1 Kings 3:28** How did Israel respond to King Solomon's decision?

7. **1 Kings 4:1-19** Now that Solomon is established on the throne he organizes his administration.

- a. In some ways the names are rather meaningless to us. However, we might take note of one name, Adoniram in vs. 6. What is he in charge of?

- b. Why might this be important?

8. **1 Kings 4:7-18** are also important. Notice the twelve districts do not correspond to the twelve tribes.

- a. Why is this important?

- b. What was required of each district?

According to commentaries (e.g. The Interpreter's Bible² & the Layman's Bible Commentary³), Solomon does not include Judah in this reorganization. Thus Judah was probably exempt from this tax and favored against the rest of the country (north vs. south). Later when we note that Judah was not required to provide the conscripted labor, we can see the tension as the north is dominated by the south.

9. **1 Kings 4:29-31** King Solomon's wisdom is described.
- a. What are some of the descriptions and the results of his wisdom?

10. **1 Kings 4:32-34**
- a. What were Solomon's abilities?
 - b. How did the rest of the world respond?

1 Kings 5

Solomon Begins Preparations To Build The Temple

11. **1 Kings 5:3** Why was King David not allowed to build the Temple?
12. **1 Kings 5: 6** Hiram was probably King of Tyre before Solomon was born. What message does Solomon send to him?
- a. **1 Kings 5:7-9** What is Hiram's response?

² The Interpreters Bible, Volume 3 Abingdon Press 1954 p.47

³ The Layman's Bible Commentary, Volume 7 John Knox Press 1972 p. 28

b. **1 Kings 5:12** What is the result?

13. 1 Kings 5:13-14 Solomon will need workers to build his temple and palace complex.

a. What does he order from the people?

b. **Four months a year to be given to the government!** What percent tax does that amount to?

REFLECTIONS

1. At one time or another many of us find ourselves in leadership positions.

a. What kind of leaders inspire you to follow them?

b. When we are in a leadership position, give some thoughts about what we can learn from Solomon?

c. Who have been leaders in your life who have inspired you, who have served as an example to you?

d. Without naming names (or becoming too political), what have been some leadership qualities that have left you feeling frustrated, unhappy, even leaving an organization in turmoil?