



“Give therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge they people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” I Kings 3:9

Dependence Upon God

Lesson Subject: To rely upon God for wisdom in the discharge of all of our duties.

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Topic: Solomon; Wisdom.

“Give therefore, they servant an understanding heart to judge they people, that I may discern between good and bad . . .” I Kings 3:9. What an appropriate attitude toward the responsibilities of leadership. Blessed is the nation whose new leaders approach their task with the spirit of prayerful dependence upon God. Blessed is the church whose leaders are possessed with such a spirit. Today's study intends to create such a spirit in you.

God is the source of all true wisdom. Earthly wisdom is sensual and devilish. **“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy,”** James 3:17. Such wisdom is not of unregenerate man. It is not received in schools of learning nor by years of experience. **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth unto all men liberally, and unbraideth not; and it shall be given him,”** James 1:5. How important it is to learn to depend upon God for wisdom in daily affairs!

Today's study deals with the change in leadership of the nation called Israel. David had been king of the people for many years. He had grown very elderly and infirm. He knew his days were soon to end. His love for his people caused him concern as to who would become their leader upon his death. His heart turned to Solomon, his son. The choice was wise. The religious devotion of the father passed on to the son. As David was “a man

after God's own heart,” so Solomon began his reign on his knees before God.

I. A FACT OF LIFE, 2:1-2

Man's life upon earth is limited. **“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away,”** Psalm 90:10 The normal life span of man is seventy years. Sometimes it may be even eighty, but a long life is short when one considers the duration of time and the endless eternity. Man is born to die. His life upon earth is limited. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment, Hebrews 9:27.

Death is no respecter of persons. The rich die, and the poor die. The young die, and the old die. The famous die, and the unknown die. The ruler dies, and the ruled die. It is not surprising, therefore, to read, **“Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die . . .”** verse 1.

Death of the king necessitated a change in national leadership. David looked to Solomon, a son born to Bathsheba, as his successor to the throne of Israel. The nation needed a man with the spirit of Solomon as she had needed a man with the spirit of David.

David was a man of war. Solomon was a man of peace. David was needed to unify the nation, to subjugate her enemies, and to establish her military strength. Solomon was needed to beautify her cities, to build the temple of the Lord, and to govern her in peace. Each man was particularly fitted for the contribution which he made.

God has many jobs to be done as He works His purpose among men. He has a man for each job. Moses was God's man to lead Israel through the wilderness. Joshua was God's man to lead Israel in the conquest of Canaan. God will provide the right man for the right task at the right time.

Do not be disturbed when God changes the leadership of His people. Often the change of pastor will greatly excite a congregation. Members will say, “I just don't see how our church can get along without Bro. So-and-So.” Such an attitude indicates doubt as to the purpose and work of God. Men come and go. God's purpose remains constant, and His work goes toward its consummation,

It is a fact of life that “man that is born of a woman is of few days , . . He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not,” Job 14:1-2. Why be distressed when God's time for one man ends? He is working according to a divine plan which reaches from

eternity to eternity. Trust His judgment. Be ready to be used of Him according to His divine choice.

II. A SOLEMN CHARGE, 2:2-4

King David was greatly concerned about the nation over which he had ruled for many years. He wanted to be sure that they had a king after he was gone. He desired that the king be a faithful man who would govern the nation wisely. Therefore, David called his son Solomon and gave him a solemn charge. The charge can be applied to all who assume positions of trust and leadership.

“I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man,” verse 2. There can be no substitute for “manly maturity in one who would be a leader of God's people. The same appeal for manliness occurs over and over again throughout the Bible.

The New Testament carries the injunction, **“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong,”** I Corinthians 16:13. To be manly means to be watchful, to be steadfast, and to be strong. Such qualities are very important in each Christian. Since he is the representative of God in the world, he is an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven. Manly maturity is expected of him.

God is concerned with the maturation of His children. He set in the church offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher. The purpose of those ministries was to mature the believers so that they could serve Him and so that the entire body of Christ would be built up. Each believer who reads these words has a part in helping other believers to grow into the full maturity provided in Jesus Christ.

Manly maturity should be accompanied by humble obedience. **“And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself,”** verse 3.

God's revelation of His will lies as a solemn obligation upon men to obey. In that sense, it is “the charge of the Lord.” To live according to God's revealed will is to “walk in his ways.” The whole life is to be guided by the will of God. Even the practical affairs of each day are to be influenced by an awareness of His will.

Obedience in daily life is to be performed in view of the total revelation of God. Believers are to “keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his

judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses.” Statutes refer to the general principles which God has laid down. Commandments speak of specific directions he has given. Judgments include God's revelation concerning acts which are evaluated as right or wrong. Testimonies refer to God's witness concerning man's obligations and opportunities in the service of God. Each aspect of God's revelation must be considered by the person who would live in a manner pleasing to Him.

Manly maturity and humble obedience should be accompanied by a spirit of faithful dependence upon God. David gave this reason for Solomon to obey the Lord, **“That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel,”** verse 4.

Many years before, God had promised David a continuing posterity upon the throne of Israel. David responded. **“And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said,”** II Samuel 7:25.

God determines which nation endures and which nation falls. He sets kings upon the throne and deposes them at His will. The Biblical principle is expressed in this way: **“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain,”** Psalm 127:1. How dependent men are upon the good pleasure of God. They make great plans, boast great things, and act as if they were masters of their own fate. **“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that,”** James 4:15. Poor man. He acts as if he were his own master, not thinking that each breath comes from God.

Would you be a happy and fruitful Christian? Accept David's solemn charge to his son, Solomon, as a guideline for your life. Be marked by manly maturity, humble obedience, and faithful dependence upon God. That is the way to be prosperous and to have good success.

III. A PROPER PRAYER, 3:4-10

There is a great revelation made concerning the man Solomon. The Scriptures recount, **“And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father . . .”** verse 3. His personal devotion, challenged by the solemn charge from his dying father, made the new king acutely aware of how much he needed the help of God.

Gideon was located about five miles northwest of Jerusalem. There was an altar there where people worshiped Jehovah. For some reason, the

particular place had special significance to Solomon. He went there to seek the Lord in prayer.

In the nighttime, the Lord appeared to Solomon, saying, **“Ask what I shall give thee.”** Solomon told God that he felt like a little child in trying to assume the heavy duties of king over Israel. He acknowledged that God had set him upon the throne and that he looked to God for help. There he presented his petition, “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this so great a people?” verse 9.

What a prayer! Solomon was concerned about being a good king under God. He recognized the nation was God's chosen people. He knew he was responsible to God for how he governed the people. He acknowledged his inability and that only God could qualify him to be the kind of king whom the nation needed. He prayed that he might serve God as king. What an example for Christian prayer today!

Did God answer Solomon's prayer? Yes, indeed! God replied, **“... 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,”** verse 12. Time testified to the faithfulness of God. **“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much, and largeness of heart . . . And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt . . . And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon . . .”** I Kings 4:29-34.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him,” James 1:5. Solomon's example proves that the promise is valid. It is as applicable today as it has ever been. Today's lesson has aimed to teach you “to rely upon God for wisdom in the discharge of all your duties.” Consider this challenging promise: **“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths,”** Proverbs 3:5-6. It is safe to trust the Lord. He does not disappoint those who rely upon Him.