

**1Kings 3:1 ¶ And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.**

“affinity” = “to contract affinity by marriage:—join in affinity...make marriages....”

Solomon established a treaty with Egypt in effect by marrying the Pharaoh's daughter. He took her home to live in the city of David until he finished building his own house, the house of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem. Eventually, he built her a house of her own.

*1 Kings 7:8 “Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch.”*

Commentators remark that this alliance testified to the fact that Israel had grown in power to such an extent that Pharaoh considered it desirable.

The NIV notes: “The rendering “made an alliance with Pharaoh” reflects accurately the Hebrew (lit., “became Pharaoh's son-in-law”), which stresses the relationship between father-in-law and bridegroom rather than that between the bride and the bridegroom. This was a rather common practice for cementing and maintaining international agreements and securing a nation's borders.”

The IVP Commentary adds this note: “The fact that Solomon received a daughter of the pharaoh demonstrates he is in a stronger position than the monarch of Egypt at that time.”

Still, this alliance was not in accordance with the LORD's will according to verses in a later chapter.

*1 Kings 11:1–2 “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.”*

**1Kings 3:2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.**

**1Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.**

It is noted that the people of Israel sacrificed in high places because there was no house of the LORD in those days. Though Solomon loved the LORD and lived in accordance with his father's commitment to the religious laws, he also sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

I have learned that in the ancient world the people sought out higher ground to

worship their “gods” because they felt like that got them closer to the place of their abode in the heavens. Though the tabernacle of Moses and the altar was located in Gibeon and the tabernacle of David with the ark and an altar in Jerusalem, Solomon and the people still made use of the high places. This was in direct disobedience to God’s will.

*Leviticus 17:3–4 “What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people....”*

*Numbers 33:51–52 “Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places....”*

**1Kings 3:4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 1Kings 3:5 ¶ In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.**

Gibeon is called the great high place because that is where the tabernacle was located. Solomon went there to offer a thousand burnt offerings upon that altar. In Chronicles we are told that he was accompanied by “all the congregation,” which I assume would mean most of the people living between there and Jerusalem.

While he was there, the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night and asked Solomon what he would like the LORD to give him. The encounter in this dream was real; God chose to communicate with Solomon’s spirit while his body was asleep.

Have you ever thought about what you would say if the LORD asked you that question? That thought actually led to the composition of one of my poems that I will include at the end of this chapter.

**1Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.**

**1Kings 3:7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.**

**1Kings 3:8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.**

**1Kings 3:9 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**

**thy so great a people?**

Remember—Solomon is talking with God in a dream. Solomon began his response by noting how the LORD had treated his father David with great mercy because his life had been characterized overall by integrity, righteousness and spiritual morality. He acknowledged that the fact that he was now king was an act of kindness to David. Solomon admits to the LORD that he doesn't feel qualified to rule as king ("I am but a little child") over such a great nation that could not easily be numbered. Now the king gets to his request—He asks for an understanding heart to be able to rightly judge the people and discern between good and bad.

The Hebrew for "understanding" includes many things: including "to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc...) carefully...diligently...(be) obedient...." Solomon is basically saying that he wants to be able to rule intelligently in careful accordance to God's will without prejudice or bias of any type.

**1Kings 3:10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.**

**1Kings 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;**

**1Kings 3:12 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.**

**1Kings 3:13 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.**

**1Kings 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.**

The LORD was pleased with Solomon's request. He told Solomon that because his request was not for riches or death to his enemies but for a desire to rule justly, he was not only going to give him what he asked for but also much more. He would give Solomon wisdom and understanding to the extent that never before or never again would another man be his equal. He was also going to give him riches and honor to the degree that no other king would be his equal for as long as he lived. Both of those promises were unconditional. The LORD then gave him one conditional promise. If he would live in obedience before the LORD as his father David had, he would be allowed to live a longer life.

**1Kings 3:15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.**

When Solomon woke up, he realized that his encounter with the LORD had been

in a dream. He went home to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD and offered up yet more burnt and peace offerings that provided a feast for all of his servants.

**1Kings 3:16** ¶ Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

**1Kings 3:17** And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

**1Kings 3:18** And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

**1Kings 3:19** And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

**1Kings 3:20** And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

**1Kings 3:21** And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

**1Kings 3:22** And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king.

The writer now includes a prime example of Solomon's wisdom. It seems to be implied that this event occurred shortly after Solomon's encounter with the LORD.

We are told that two harlots come before the king seeking justice. The first woman to speak explained that both she and her roommate had babies three days apart. No other people were in the house. Her roommate's child had died in the night because the mother rolled over on it and smothered it. When the woman awoke and realized what had happened, she exchanged the two babies. When she awoke the next morning to nurse her child, she saw that it was not her own.

The second woman declared that the living baby was hers and the dead baby the other woman's. The first woman again declared that the living child was hers.

**1Kings 3:23** Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living.

**1Kings 3:24** And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

**1Kings 3:25** And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

**1Kings 3:26** Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide it.

**1Kings 3:27** Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in

**no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.**

King Solomon pointed out that it was one woman's word against the other. He then called for a sword. When the sword was brought, the king ordered the soldier to divide the living child in two and give half to each woman. The mother of the child couldn't bear to see her son killed and quickly told the king to give the child to the other woman. The other woman urged the king to divide the child so that neither could claim it. The king quickly discerned the true mother of the child through her willingness to give him up rather than see him killed.

**1Kings 3:28 And 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.**

The news of this event quickly made its way throughout Israel and inspired great respect. They saw that he possessed the wisdom of God and judged accordingly.

“What Shall I Give Thee?”

By Sharon Cravens

“What shall I give thee?  
God inquired of Solomon one day.  
What if He asked me the very same thing?  
I wondered what would I say.

Would I ask for an understanding heart?  
To know the bad from the good?  
Would I ask to be clay in the Potter's hands?  
For the strength to do what I should?

To be known as God's friend?  
To be free from pride?  
To possess a heart that is pure?

The choices are many.  
Which one is best?  
I want to be very sure.

The more that I pondered,  
The shining light of truth began to dawn.  
He couldn't give more than He already had—  
His precious only Son.

As an heir with Christ, there is nothing I lack.  
I have everything that I need.

The choices I make show the value I place  
On my gift from the King of kings.

He gave me the Spirit to teach me  
And empower me from above.  
It's up to me to obey Him  
And submit to Him in love.

I'd never trade with King Solomon  
For his wisdom, wealth and fame.  
I have so much more that is mine to claim  
In Jesus' holy name.

So, thank you, dear Lord for your patience and love,  
For Your mercy and Your grace.  
Please help me to humbly serve You with joy  
Till I see You face to face.