

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 3:2-15

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1 Kings 3:2-15

Verses 2-3

² The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. ³ Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

- Throughout Solomon's reign, it was common practice for people of Israel and for the king, himself, to worship both YHWH and other gods. The "high places" were the places where shrines were built to false gods and where the people and the king worshipped these gods.
- In the early years of his reign, Solomon followed the instructions of his father, David, in serving YHWH. But at the same time, he worshipped false gods.
- The temple, where YHWH would be worshipped, had not yet been built. But the "high places" were already established.

Verses 4-5

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

- Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices. Gibeon was a "high place." In fact, it was the most important "high place." There, Solomon offered 1000 burnt offerings. But these offerings were to a false god.
- That night, as Solomon slept at Gibeon, YHWH appeared to him in a dream and invited Solomon to ask for anything he wanted.

Verses 6-9

⁶ Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You

have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

⁷ “Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

- Solomon, unaware of the irony that YHWH would appear to him when he was worshipping false gods, responded to YHWH with great and proper respect and humility.
- Solomon recognized that he needed discernment. He is unaware that he lacks it. He is doing what must offend YHWH, worshipping false gods, but he does not seem to understand that that would offend YHWH. None-the-less, he asks YHWH for what he needs, discernment to govern Israel wisely. He wants to be able to tell the difference between right and wrong so that he may do what is right.

Verses 10-15

¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³ Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴ And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” ¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream.

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

- YHWH is pleased with Solomon’s request for a discerning heart and agrees to give him that for which he asks. YHWH will give Solomon a wise and discerning heart and also wealth and long life.
- Then Solomon awoke and realized that YHWH had spoken to him in a dream.

- He went back to Jerusalem and went to where the Ark of the Covenant was kept and made proper offerings to YHWH. Then he held a celebration for all the people. But he did not give up worshipping at the “high places” (See 1 Kings 11:4-8).

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