

Lesson 26 - King Solomon: Man of Wisdom, Man of Foolishness

1 Kings 1 – 11

Purpose: To encourage us to use their blessings wisely and to enter the temple worthily.



My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

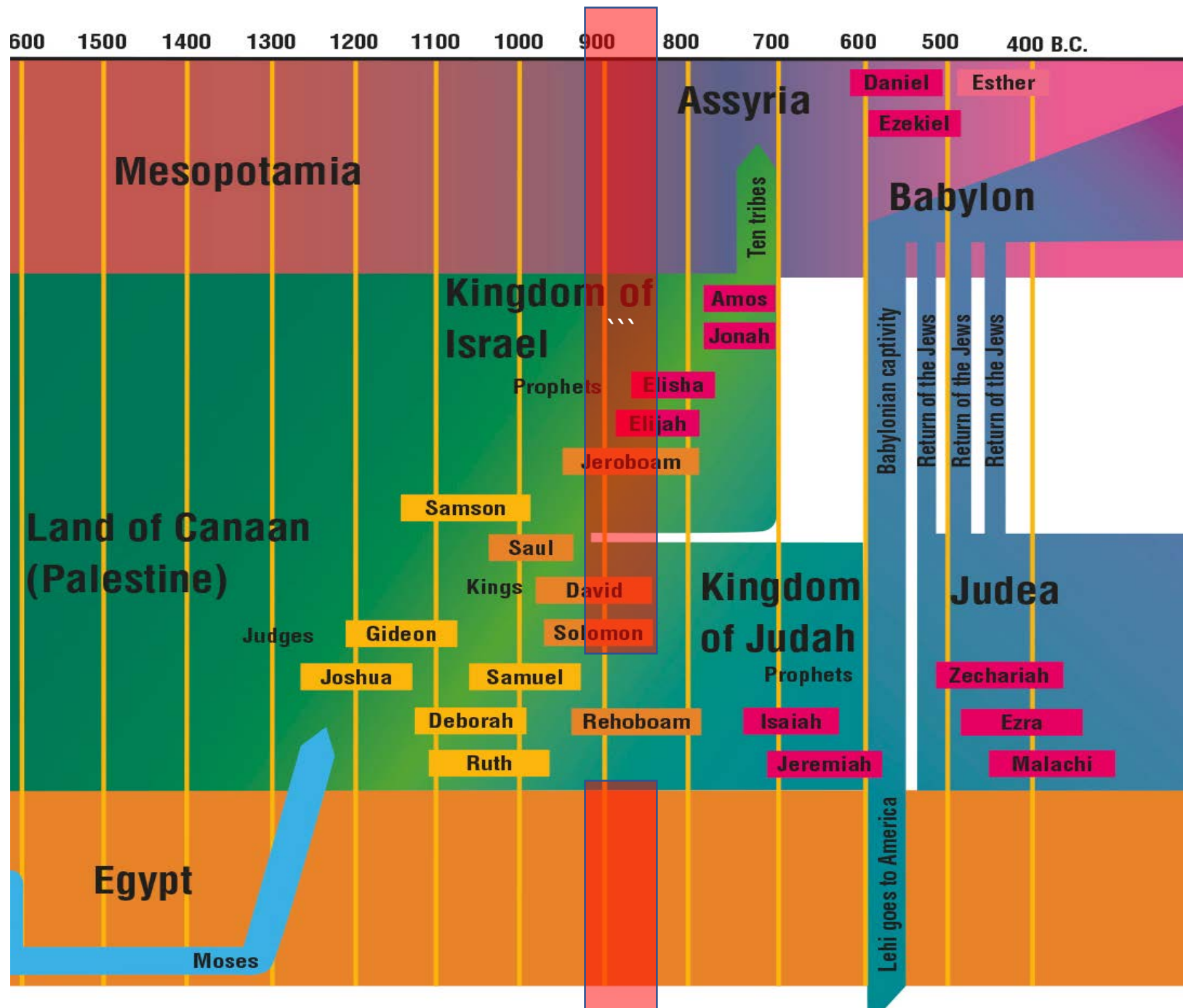
Last Week's Lesson Challenge

The Book of Psalms can be a special place to find solace and relief from the difficulties we face. Unique among the scriptures, the Psalms are passages of calm, faith and worship of the Savior.

Last week's challenge is to spend time reading the Book of Psalms and begin to find favorite chapters and verses that you can turn to in times of distress and need.

Would anyone wish to share their thoughts during the past week on the challenge?

The Reign of Solomon 1 Kings 1 - 11



It is believed that David lived between 1035 - 970 BCE, to the age of 65. He reigned as king for 40 years. With those around him still trying to overthrow him in his later years, David, the Prophet Nathan and the High Priest Zadok anointed Solomon to be king.

[1 Kings 1:34-40](#)

34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

37 As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

1 Kings 2:1-11 – David, Knowing He Will Die Soon, Counsels His Son, Solomon, on Being King

1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

3 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:

4 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.

5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

1 Kings 3:5-14

5 In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

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.

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.

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.

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?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

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;

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.

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.

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.

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.

1 Kings 3:9-10

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?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

Solomon asked Jehovah for “an understanding heart” so he could judge the Lord’s people.

What is an understanding heart?

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In his October 1982 general conference address, Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the Seventy spoke of the need to acquire wisdom, "that which Solomon desired so that he could make righteous judgments."

Elder Cuthbert said: "Many of us are not wise, for we are blinded by the material world around us. Wisdom comes from a realization of true values and priorities. It is a spiritual quality, for it is founded on discernment and an understanding heart. Great is the wisdom of the prophets, and all who heed them are blessed."

"The Lord counseled us to `seek not for riches but for wisdom.' (D&C 6:7.) In this general conference pearls of wisdom come from those who have spoken under the inspiration of the Spirit. We would all do well to study and apply the truths that have been declared."

Elder Cuthbert said knowledge by itself can be dangerous, and those who seek to acquire knowledge must also be helped to obtain wisdom. **"Wisdom is a sign of maturity," Elder Cuthbert said. "It is usually related to age and experience, but not necessarily so.** When serving as a mission president in Scotland, I saw the Lord quicken the understanding of many young missionaries so that they developed beyond their years." He said that within five years, six of those missionaries had been called as bishops and two were called to serve in stake presidencies in the British Isles.

1 Kings 3:16-28

16 ¶ Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

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.

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.

19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

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.

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.

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.

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.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

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.

27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

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.

Following Solomon's dream with Jehovah where he requested an understanding heart, we find the familiar story of the two women, a living and dead child and King Solomon.

The story is placed here to clearly illustrate how Solomon used his gift of wisdom to discern which woman was truly the living child's mother.

Gaining Wisdom in Our Lives

Wisdom is the capacity to exercise sound judgment in applying general knowledge and principles to particular circumstances. Thus it consists of both a broad knowledge and understanding of things and the judgment to apply that knowledge properly. Without broad knowledge there cannot be wisdom. **The following are three things we can do to gain greater wisdom – Ask, Sustain effort and exercise patience and Foster personal reverence.**

Ask. In spiritual matters, asking is a prerequisite to receiving. When the Lord appeared to Solomon, He told him to “ask what I shall give thee” (1 Kgs. 3:5). In all scripture, there is no more frequent injunction than to ask. Thus the gift of wisdom must be earnestly sought (see D&C 46:8–9, 28–30). Unfortunately, many do not ask the Lord for His understanding, choosing instead to rely on their own in an effort to manage their lives. Such arrogance may arise from extensive study or experience. In the end, however, the breadth or depth of one’s expertise is immaterial, for “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Cor. 3:19) and “it profiteth [us] not” (2 Ne. 9:28). Study and experience are good, but only if we “hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Ne. 9:29).

Gaining Wisdom in Our Lives

Sustain effort and exercise patience. The gift of wisdom does not come merely by asking. Solomon did more than just ask; he sacrificed a thousand burnt offerings to the Lord at Gibeon (see 1 Kgs. 3:4). And our efforts must be sustained over time since spiritual knowledge does not come all at once but “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Ne. 28:30). Furthermore, spiritual knowledge comes not on our terms or timetable but on the Lord’s. President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said: “You cannot force spiritual things ... You can create a climate to foster growth, nourish, and protect; but you cannot force or compel: you must await the growth. Do not be impatient to gain great spiritual knowledge.”

Foster personal reverence. Because the Holy Spirit is a “still small voice, which whispereth” (D&C 85:6) and “a still voice of perfect mildness” (Hel. 5:30), we too must be still to hear or feel His voice (see also Ps. 46:10). “Cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter,” the Lord has told us. “Cease from all your light speeches, ... from all your pride and light-mindedness” (D&C 88:69, 121). Our failure to follow this counsel offends the Spirit and diminishes our access to His wisdom.

The Reign of King Solomon

Many kings ascended the throne of Israel from the time of Saul to the dissolution of both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. None of these kings, however, obtained the power and prestige that Solomon did. Nearly a thousand years before Solomon, Abraham had been promised that his seed would receive the land of Canaan for their inheritance, including territory as far north as the Euphrates River. But not until Solomon's time was this promise fully realized. Solomon extended the domain of Israel from the Red Sea on the south to the Euphrates River on the north. The golden age of Israel, started under King David, continued under Solomon. During the forty years that Solomon ruled as king of Israel, there was peace and unity throughout his vast domain.

Solomon Builds Jehovah's Temple

“Soon after Solomon’s accession to the throne he set about the labor, which, as heritage and honor, had come to him with his crown. He laid the foundation in the fourth year of his reign, and the building was completed within seven years and a half. With the great wealth accumulated by his kingly father and specifically reserved for the building of the Temple, Solomon was able to put the [surrounding lands] under tribute, and to enlist the co-operation of nations in his great undertaking. The temple workmen numbered scores of thousands, and every department was in charge of master craftsmen. To serve on the great structure in any capacity was an honor; and labor acquired a dignity never before recognized. ... **The erection of the Temple of Solomon was an epoch-making event, not alone in the history of Israel, but in that of the world.**” (James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, pp. 5–6.)

What Can We Conclude Regarding Solomon's Many Marriages?

Solomon married “strange women,” that is, foreign women, or those not of the covenant. Solomon's marriages were for political expediency and perhaps for personal reasons as well. But these women brought to Israel their idols and heathen worship, which corrupted not only Solomon but the people also.

According to the Doctrine and Covenants, however, some of Solomon's wives were given to him of the Lord: “David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me” (D&C 132:38).

President Joseph Fielding Smith further explained that the Lord “did not condemn Solomon and David for having wives which the Lord gave them.

“Now turn to [2 Samuel] 12:7–8 and you will find that the Lord gave David wives. In your reading of the Old Testament you will also find that Solomon was blessed and the Lord appeared to him and gave him visions and great blessings when he had plural wives, but later in his life, he took wives that the Lord did not give him.” (Answers to Gospel Questions, 4:214.)

Solomon's Kingdom Begins to Break Apart as He Turns Away From Jehovah

Solomon allowed his love for material things and his great accomplishments as a builder to wean him from his early devotion to the Lord. True, he achieved great fame while the temple was being built, and his dedication of the house of the Lord was one of his most spiritual moments; but later, when the Queen of Sheba and other foreign visitors paid their respects, they said little about Solomon's righteousness or wisdom. Rather, they expressed amazement and awe at his tremendous achievements in building. Solomon appears to have grown hungry for the plaudits of men. He decided to construct even grander structures. To do so, he enforced heavy taxation upon his people—so heavy that he eventually forced his people into poverty. Samuel's warnings about what would occur if Israel were governed by a king were fulfilled in every particular. Mismanagement of the nation's wealth left united Israel tottering.

We all enjoy blessings from the Lord. If we are wise, we will accept the blessings with a grateful heart and walk in righteousness before the Lord.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-kings-malachi/chapter-1?lang=eng>

This Week's Lesson Challenge

Solomon was a great king who pleased Jehovah for many years. He built Jehovah's Temple and led Israel in righteousness for most of his 40 year reign.

However, later in life, Solomon turned to material things, the accolades of others and the idols of his foreign wives and forgot his blessings from Jehovah. Within a year of his death, Israel would be divided into two nations.

Our weekly challenge is to count our many blessings that the Lord bestows upon us and strive to always be worthy of his blessings.