Unit 12, Session 1

A Son Requests Wisdom

Summary and Goal
In this session we meet Solomon, the third and final king of Israel’s golden age as a united kingdom. In 2 Samuel 7:11-13, God promised to establish an eternal kingdom through King David and his descendants. The life of Solomon shows God making good on that promise. We will see that Solomon began his reign with the humble acknowledgment that he didn’t know how to do what he had been called on to do. So he asked God for wisdom (see Jas. 1:5). God is all-knowing; He is the source of all wisdom. The pattern for obedience we learn from Solomon is simple yet profound: We ask for wisdom; God provides wisdom; and we exercise that wisdom. When we make decisions according to God’s wisdom, the world stands in awe.

Session Outline
1. The Request for Wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-9)
2. The Gift of Wisdom (1 Kings 3:10-15)
3. The Exercise of Wisdom (1 Kings 3:23-28)

Session in a Sentence
God gives His people wisdom from above.

Christ Connection
Solomon reigned with great wisdom and insight, yet he was still an imperfect king who needed God’s forgiveness. Solomon foreshadows the coming of a greater king—Jesus, in whom are hidden “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

Missional Application
Because we have received God’s perfect wisdom in Christ Jesus, we depend on His wisdom from above to live as a testimony to our all-wise God.
**GROUP TIME**

**Introduction**

**INSTRUCT:** As group members arrive, ask them to join in groups of 3-4 to try to fill in the table on page 94 in their DDG. After a couple of moments, call for responses, and then provide the answers below as needed.

**WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE IN COMMON?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>George Washington</th>
<th>John Adams</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Carson</td>
<td>Jay Leno</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Bear” Bryant</td>
<td>Ray Perkins</td>
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They Each Succeeded Legends in Their Fields

• John Adams was the second President of the United States, after George Washington, who helped secure victory in the American Revolution and served as president for two terms and refused to run for a third term. Adams was defeated by Thomas Jefferson in his bid for a second term.

• Jay Leno became the host of *The Tonight Show* following Johnny Carson, who had been the star of that show for almost thirty years. Leno enjoyed popularity for his own twenty-two year stint as host.

• Ray Perkins followed “Bear” Bryant as the head football coach of the Alabama Crimson Tide. Bryant was a popular and winning coach at Alabama for twenty-five years. Perkins was a successful coach at Alabama, but he stayed there only four seasons.

**INTERACT:** Ask the group the following question, *which is not included in the DDG.*

> What would be difficult about succeeding a popular, successful leader?

(wanting to change things to your own preferences; dealing with the comparisons made between you and the previous leader; not being trusted by those you are leading)

**SUMMARIZE:** In this session we meet Solomon, the third and final king of Israel’s golden age as a united kingdom. Solomon succeeded his popular and successful father, King David. Solomon began his reign with the humble acknowledgment that he didn’t know how to do what he had been called on to do. So he asked God for wisdom. God is all-knowing; He is the source of all wisdom. The pattern for obedience we learn from Solomon is simple yet profound: We ask for wisdom; God provides wisdom; and we exercise that wisdom. When we make decisions according to God’s wisdom, the world stands in awe.

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Point 1: The Request for Wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-9)

EXPLAIN: Briefly fill in the gaps between David’s final days and Solomon’s ascension to the throne.

- The Book of 1 Kings opens with Adonijah, the oldest surviving son of David (see 2 Sam. 13:18), vying for the throne (1 Kings 1:5-10). But Adonijah’s power grab was thwarted by Solomon’s mother, Bathsheba, who reminded David of his intention for Solomon to succeed him (1:11-27). So David himself organized Solomon’s coronation parade (1:28-40). Then David, on his deathbed, made Solomon swear to execute justice on two of his political enemies (2:1-9), an oath he fulfilled (2:28-46). Furthermore, Adonijah attempted a second coup and was executed for it (2:13-25). Finally, Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh of Egypt by marrying his daughter (3:1). Solomon loved the Lord by following in the steps of David, but he also followed some misguided practices regarding his worship of the Lord (3:2-4).

Commentary: In most monarchies, the firstborn son is generally considered to be the heir to the throne. But Solomon wasn’t David’s oldest son, far from it, in fact (1 Chron. 3:1-5). But God often violates our social norms to bring attention to His divine ways. Isaac was Abraham’s second-born (Gen. 17:15-19). Jacob was Isaac’s second-born (Gen. 25:24-26). Judah was Jacob’s fourth born, and Joseph was Jacob’s eleventh-born (Gen. 29–30). Even David was the youngest of his brothers (1 Sam. 16:6-13).

READ 1 Kings 3:5-9 (DDG p. 95).

5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, “Ask. What should I give you?”

6 And Solomon replied, “You have shown great and faithful love to your servant, my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, righteousness, and integrity. You have continued this great and faithful love for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today.

7 “LORD my God, you have now made your servant king in my father David’s place. Yet I am just a youth with no experience in leadership. 8 Your servant is among your people you have chosen, a people too many to be numbered or counted. 9 So give your servant a receptive heart to judge your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?”

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 95) to highlight Solomon’s humility in his response to God’s question.

In the preamble to his answer to God’s question, Solomon acknowledged that the only reason he was king in the first place was because God was faithful to the promise He had made to his father, David. It took humility for Solomon to admit that he was in the position he was in because of his father’s faithfulness and not because of his own abilities. Furthermore, he acknowledged that the task of leadership in front of him was too large for him.
• Solomon considered himself a young man having no leadership experience (v. 7), nor did he believe God had chosen him specifically for any hidden leadership skills, being that he was just one among the people of Israel God had chosen (v. 8).

• Solomon’s admission of his lack of leadership experience is all the more remarkable when you consider all the events that happened in chapters 1–2. Solomon could have pointed out his leadership in dealing with Adonijah and carrying out David’s deathbed wishes. Even David already considered his son a wise man (2:9). But there is a difference between earthly wisdom and wisdom from above (Jas. 3:13-18).

INTERACT: Ask the group the following question.

Why is humility necessary to request wisdom from the Lord? (without humility, we will already be wise in our own eyes; without humility, we will ask the Lord for wisdom in order to boast, promote ourselves, or profit from His gift; so we ask for the things according to His will, not ours)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 95) to explain what Solomon asked of the Lord: a receptive heart to carry out his newly acquired leadership responsibilities.

In humility before the Lord, Solomon asked for a receptive heart to lead his people well and discern between good and evil. Solomon was asking for what would position him to succeed as Israel’s king over a long reign: God-given wisdom that would guide him through any situation he faced. He was also asking for a mind-set willing to accept direction and correction from the Lord. With so many glamorous options before him, Solomon chose wisdom to be a blessing to his people as king.

Commentary: In the New Testament, Paul describes discernment as a spiritual gift (see 1 Cor. 12:7-10). A person with the spiritual gift of discernment can distinguish which works, writings, teachers, or teachings are influenced by the Holy Spirit and which are not.

INSTRUCT: Ask group members to use the scale in their DDG (p. 95) to evaluate their first step when faced with a new responsibility.

What is your first step when faced with a new responsibility?

Panic  Plan  Pray for Wisdom
Point 2: The Gift of Wisdom (1 Kings 3:10-15)

READ 1 Kings 3:10-15 (DDG p. 96).

10 Now it pleased the Lord that Solomon had requested this. 11 So God said to him, “Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life or riches for yourself, or the death of your enemies, but you asked discernment for yourself to administer justice, 12 I will therefore do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again. 13 In addition, I will give you what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, so that no king will be your equal during your entire life. 14 If you walk in my ways and keep my statutes and commands just as your father David did, I will give you a long life.” 15 Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant, and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he held a feast for all his servants.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 96) to point out the two reasons God delighted in Solomon in this passage: his request and his motive.

Solomon received instant feedback from the Lord that He was pleased with Solomon’s request. But we cannot detach Solomon’s request from his motive behind that request. Had Solomon asked for long life, riches, or the death of his enemies, these would have indicated that Solomon’s chief preoccupation was himself. Instead, Solomon sought wisdom so he could administer justice for God’s people. Solomon cared more about God’s people than himself. That is the heart posture of a person in whom God delights.

- **Request:** God is pleased when His people ask for wisdom and ask for things that align with His purposes and will. He doesn’t criticize His people for asking Him for wisdom but delights to give it, and His Word promises He will give it. There is no better case study for the truth of James 1:5 than Solomon. It makes perfect sense to ask God for wisdom because He is omniscient, knowing all things.

- **Motive:** God heard Solomon’s words and looked beyond the surface of Solomon’s request to his heart behind it. When He did, God was pleased by the motive He saw in Solomon. Instead of capitalizing on what appeared to be a golden opportunity to secure much for himself, Solomon focused on God’s people and God’s glory in what he requested. James 4:3 tells us that our motives need to be the first thing we put under the microscope when we find our prayers are not being answered. Our desires should line up with God’s desires, just as Solomon’s request matched God’s heart for justice and His concern for the poor and oppressed among His people (see Deut. 15:7-8; Isa. 58:6-7; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:8; Zech. 7:9-10).
FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 96).

God Is Omniscient: Scripture teaches that God is all-knowing. His knowledge is complete, and as He is outside of time, He has known from all eternity whatever will come to pass. In response to God’s omniscience, we admit our finite knowledge and trust His decisions as wise and good.

Essential Doctrine “God Is Omniscient”: Scripture teaches that God is all-knowing. He is the One who “has perfect knowledge” (Job 37:16), and this knowledge extends to all things past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. His knowledge is complete, and as He is outside of time, He has known from all eternity whatever will come to pass. In response to God’s omniscience, we admit our finite knowledge and trust His decisions as wise and good.

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 96) to highlight God’s heart to bless His children abundantly. Note the extent to which God blessed Solomon with wisdom, honor, and riches.

God answered Solomon’s request—He made him the wisest human being in all of history. And more than that, God was so pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom that He also blessed Him with honor, riches, and the potential for a long life. Giving generously to His children is at the center of God’s heart. He is our loving Father who delights in giving good gifts to His children (Matt. 7:11).

- **Wisdom:** Solomon composed three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs. He also gained scientific knowledge of trees, animals, birds, reptiles, and fish (1 Kings 4:29,32-33). In this we see the scale of God’s generous gift of wisdom: it far surpassed what was needed for Solomon to rule over God’s people. God delights in not merely meeting our needs and requests but surpassing them.

- **Honor:** Solomon was known around the world for his wisdom and prosperity. Kings sent envoys to listen to his wisdom and counsel (4:30-31,34; 10:23-24), and the Queen of Sheba acknowledged the greatness of his wisdom and prosperity (10:1-8).

- **Riches:** Solomon’s wealth was so vast (10:14-29) that the people didn’t even bother to count silver in Israel, as if it were the value of pennies (10:21). We must understand that God does not guarantee material riches to His faithful followers, even if they ask for wisdom. What we can be sure of is that when our desires are in line with God’s desires, He works powerfully in us beyond what we can ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

INTERACT: Ask the group the following question.

Why do you think God wants us to ask Him for wisdom instead of just giving it to us? (this is an opportunity to humble ourselves before God; so He can bless us far beyond we ask or think; so we recognize He is the source of true wisdom; to counteract our inclination toward pride)
Point 3: The Exercise of Wisdom (1 Kings 3:23-28)

SUMMARIZE: In 1 Kings 3:16-22, we learn that two prostitutes lived in the same house, and each gave birth to a son. When one son died in the night, his mother switched him with the other woman’s son and then claimed that the living son was hers. There were no witnesses in the house at the time to vouch for either woman. So to settle the argument between them, they brought the case to King Solomon to judge.

SAY: Solomon had asked the Lord for discernment. To discern something is to divide truth from fiction, right from wrong, God’s ways from the world’s ways. How fitting, then, that in the first test of Solomon’s new God-given wisdom, his solution was to divide a baby, literally.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 3:23-28 (DDG p. 97).

23 The king replied, “This woman says, ‘This is my son who is alive, and your son is dead,’ but that woman says, ‘No, your son is dead, and my son is alive.’” 24 The king continued, “Bring me a sword.” So they brought the sword to the king. 25 And the king said, “Cut the living boy in two and give half to one and half to the other.” 26 The woman whose son was alive spoke to the king because she felt great compassion for her son. “My lord, give her the living baby,” she said, “but please don’t have him killed!” But the other one said, “He will not be mine or yours. Cut him in two!” 27 The king responded, “Give the living baby to the first woman, and don’t kill him. She is his mother.” 28 All Israel heard about the judgment the king had given, and they stood in awe of the king because they saw that God’s wisdom was in him to carry out justice.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 97) to show how this episode demonstrated the wisdom God had given Solomon to give justice to his people.

Voices from the Church

“From the beginning of Scripture to the end, we see a God who longs for justice and righteousness in the world and who calls us as his people to join him in seeking it. And that’s part of what it means to be God’s people.”

—Kristen Deede Johnson

It says much about God’s heart for the marginalized that this first recorded test of Solomon’s wisdom was not for the benefit of a wealthy prince but to settle a dispute between two prostitutes who had no standing in society. Solomon was able to look past the degrading label of “prostitute” to see that this situation involved a mother. In calling for the living child to be cut in half, Solomon was counting on the true mother’s maternal instinct to win out over greed and deception. When she displayed her selfless compassion for her child, he was able to give her justice along with her son.
• Though the woman was a prostitute, she was an image-bearer of God and thus entitled to an advocate, no matter her place in society. Solomon himself would later write, “Speak up for those who have no voice, for the justice of all who are dispossessed” (Prov. 31:8).

• Like all the other gifts of God, our wisdom is to be used for the benefit of others, not merely for our own benefit. As we steward well God’s gifts in this way, we follow the pattern God has set before us in giving the greatest gift of all—Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection brought about great good for us, a sinful people who had no standing before our holy God.

INTERACT: Ask the group the following question.

How have you seen God-given wisdom bless His people and the world? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 97) to point out the purpose of Solomon’s God-given wisdom: to bring glory to God.

While Solomon’s wise judgment in this case certainly established his credibility to lead, his people rightly understood that Solomon’s wisdom came not from himself but from God (1 Kings 3:28). A person employing God-given wisdom never draws selfish attention to himself or herself. Instead, God-given wisdom informs the ultimate purpose of that wisdom: to bring glory to God.

• Hiram, the pagan king of Tyre, praised the Lord for giving David such a wise son in Solomon (5:7). And another pagan ruler, the Queen of Sheba, was so amazed with Solomon’s wisdom and prosperity that she too gave glory to God (10:9). The blessings of God upon Solomon directed people’s attention to the One who rightly deserves all praise and glory—the God of all wisdom.

Illustration: “If you’ve ever driven into Washington, DC, on Interstate 395 late at night, you’ve seen the magnificent splendor of the Washington Monument like a shining ivory needle illuminated against the night sky. Hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of lights shine directly on the stone pillar, memorializing the father of our country. Yet I doubt you have ever noticed, or maybe even thought about, those expensive, brilliant lights. That’s because they are there to illuminate something else. If they are doing their job, you’re not thinking about them; you’re thinking about the Washington Monument.”

INTERACT: Ask the group the following question.

What challenges will we face in using God-given wisdom to bring glory to God? (our own sinful pride; the rejection of others who refuse to glorify God; a sense of awkwardness to deflect others’ praise to the Lord; our sinful desires that distract us from God’s wisdom and will)
My Mission

EXPLAIN: Though wise beyond precedent, Solomon wasn’t perfect, and he would commit some grievous sins after being given wisdom by God. In this we see that wisdom is not what we need to save us; we need God’s wisdom in Jesus, wherein we find God’s mercy and grace. But when Solomon exercised godly wisdom, insight, and compassion, as he did with his ruling in the case of the two prostitutes, he foreshadowed the coming of Jesus—the greater King in whom “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). And one day King Jesus will come in perfect wisdom to judge all the world and to usher in His perfect peace and justice.

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 98), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we have received God’s perfect wisdom in Christ Jesus, we depend on His wisdom from above to live as a testimony to our all-wise God.

- What is one area of your life in which you need to seek God’s wisdom right now? Pray to God for His wisdom.
- In what ways can your group use wisdom to seek justice for the marginalized this week?
- How will you live and speak this week so that others may exalt Jesus?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, give us wisdom to live as Your representatives who seek to be conformed to the image of Christ, Your Son, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Like Solomon, we have sinned by not rightly utilizing the gifts You have given us, and thus, we also need the forgiveness that comes through Jesus, the wholly wise and good King. Give us wisdom by Your Holy Spirit to live on mission for the fame of Your name. Amen.

PACK ITEM 11: PRAY FOR WISDOM: Cut out these bookmarks and pass them out to group members to remind them that true wisdom comes only from God, and He willingly grants it to those who ask it of Him.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 99-101), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 102) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 99-101) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 102) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 99-101) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 5 as a part of point 3 in the session: Don’t forget that all these issues Solomon faced when trying to judge between the two women are issues that modern-day judges, police officers, and politicians have to face every single day. Leaders need our prayers.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- Day 4: “We are to be servant leaders who follow Christ Jesus in total dependency while simultaneously leading others in total humility.”
- Day 5: “Leading with wisdom is hard, and without our prayer support, it may be impossible.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 102) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

- Encourage group members to pray together for God to grant one another wisdom for the sake of Christ’s glory and the good of His people.
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
Additional Commentary

Point 1: The Request for Wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-9)

“In contrast to his own personal and experiential lack of stature, Solomon must lead a people whose greatness is first measured by the fact that they were chosen by God. Solomon now becomes the head of the nation once led by Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David. According to Deuteronomy 17:14-20, he must embody God’s standards for the people. Israel’s greatness is also measured by its growing population. Solomon senses that perhaps old ways of governing may not meet the current needs of his subjects. Given this personal dilemma, Solomon requests ‘a discerning heart.’ This phrase literally means ‘a listening heart’ or ‘an obedient heart.’ In the Old Testament ‘hearing’ and ‘obeying’ come from the same word, a linguistic trait with practical implications. Only those who obey authority figures have really heard them. Solomon must obey the Lord by keeping God’s commands in order for his heart to be prepared to lead others. This listening to God will also enable him to listen to others. Solomon’s desire for an obedient, listening heart is based on his wish to administer justice in Israel. Justice can only emerge when the king is able ‘to distinguish between right and wrong’ (lit., ‘good and evil’). Justice can become a quite complicated goal, as 3:16-28 proves. Only knowledge of what God considers fair and unfair can guide the king to act justly with any consistency. Though Solomon has already exhibited political craftiness, he knows that long-term wisdom and success reside where David found it—in an ongoing relationship with the Lord.”

“Amazingly, God blessed Solomon not only by making him both militarily and economically strong, but also by making Israel’s enemies and potential enemies weak. And those who were on friendly terms with Solomon were blessed themselves. Such a situation was reminiscent of God’s promise to Abraham to bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him (Gen. 12:1-3). God worked both in the smallest details to bless Israel and on the grander scale of the entire ancient Near East in order to fulfill His promises to His people.”

Point 2: The Gift of Wisdom (1 Kings 3:10-15)

“God’s promise to Solomon was that he would receive what he had asked for: discernment in administering justice and a wise and discerning heart. Discernment in Hebrew conveys the idea of being able to distinguish between options, seeing whether something is right or wrong, wise or foolish. Wisdom primarily describes ‘skill,’ in this context ‘skill in living.’ True wisdom is not about intellectual genius so much as it is about the ability to live in accordance with life as God has ordered it. It is a term that will be used to describe Solomon more than twenty times in the following chapters.”
“Solomon essentially requested wisdom for governing Israel justly (vv. 7-9). The Lord was pleased to grant him a wise and understanding heart and riches and honor as well, while at the same time charging him to walk in [his] ways and keep [his] statutes and commandments (v. 14). David had similarly charged Solomon earlier (see 2:1-4).”

“Since Solomon did not ask for long life or riches or the life of his enemies, God gave him what he did not ask for, both riches and honor, and promised to lengthen his days. Significantly, there is no mention of enemies, confirming that Solomon’s ‘wisdom’ in chapter 2 was of an unenlightened, self-serving kind, which must now be replaced with something higher if he is to rule justly and well over his subjects. It is the fear of the Lord that is the true beginning of wisdom (Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 15:33).

I give you a wise and discerning mind. This wisdom is a supernatural gift from God. It is not innate (as it is implicitly in 1 Kings 2:6-9); and it is not acquired by patient hard work, utilizing careful observation and self-discipline (as it is explicitly in much of Proverbs and in 1 Kings 4:29-34). In the possession of such wisdom Solomon was unparalleled in Israelite history (none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you), as Hezekiah was unparalleled in trust (2 Kings 18:5) and Josiah in obedience to the Law of Moses (2 Kings 23:25).”

Point 3: The Exercise of Wisdom (1 Kings 3:23-28)

“The exceptional wisdom granted to Solomon is next demonstrated in a difficult judicial case. Ancient Mesopotamian kings kept records of exceptional legal cases presented to their deity as a report that they had acted wisely as a just king. The report of Solomon’s judicial activity follows a similar practice.”

“At this point, in the Hebrew, the surviving child is referred to as ‘the one birthed’ or ‘child,’ translated in the English as baby (3:26). Thus far the child had been called son. The change suggests the mother is suddenly willing to let go of her relationship to the young one. She wants him to live, even if he will live as the son of another woman. Meanwhile, the other woman, perhaps out of malice at being hauled into court, demands the grisly division so as to deprive her accuser of the child. Earlier, opposing accusations deadlocked the case. Now, opposing responses release a solution (3:27).”

References

In this volume of The Gospel Project, we cover the roughly one hundred and twenty years of Israel’s heyday: the united monarchy. After decades of the devastating cycle of sin and deliverance and being ruled by a series of judges, the Israelites called on Samuel to appoint a king for them—one like those of the nations around them. God warned His people that what they were requesting would lead to heartache and trouble, but they insisted. So God, in His kindness, gave them what they wanted in order to teach them to trust Him.

What followed was a series of three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon, each ruling for about forty years. In some ways, these kings provide us with examples to follow: the fierce determination of David not to stand for anyone impugning God’s character; the mercy and kindness David showed to a foe and his family; the wisdom of Solomon. But we also discover that each of these three men fell woefully short of being the king God’s people wanted and needed, each one proving God’s warnings true. Bookending God’s people crying out as one for a king at the start of this volume, by the time we finish, we encounter God’s people being divided into two kingdoms.

Our takeaway is clear: The hope of humanity does not rest in any human king or leader but is fixed solely and securely in the King of kings, Jesus Christ. But at the same time, we see that God delights in using His people despite their failings. God would fulfill His covenant with David, even though he committed adultery and murder. This reaffirmed the promises God had made to Abraham generations before. And though Solomon would succumb to polygamy and idolatry, God used him to build the temple, a place for God’s people to worship and be in relationship with God.

So consider as you study: What might God do through us?