



1 Kings 4

1 Kings 3: 10- 13 *“It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. 13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you.”*

I have often said that something in the Bible is usually preceded by something else. To be fair, it's tougher to say that about Genesis 1:1. However, John 1:1 might answer that. We can't have 1 Kings 4 without chapter 3. Duh, 3 comes before 4. True, but Solomon asked for Wisdom over riches. It was a good call. If you read chapter 4, you will find that God did all he said he would do in the verses above. He blessed Solomon with wisdom, power, and riches. They say that Solomon took most of the promised land in his reign. God can say yes.

Did Solomon suck up to God? Did he say the right thing? There are arguments regarding that theory. Clearly, Solomon took Gods blessings too far. Yet, did he? People love to quote God saying that the Israelites must not have too many horses in Deuteronomy 17:16. In our 1 Kings 4-chapter God clearly blessed Solomon with horses and riches. I will contend that God says yes more than you think. He does it without contradicting himself.

Remember that God gave Pharaoh passion to harden his heart. In English, God let him have what was already there. Pharaoh wanted the Israelites back. God let his desires get the best of him. It says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Actually, God let him have his passions and desires that were already there. It's the same with Solomon. This young king wanted wisdom. I believe that. Yet, deep down he wanted riches and fame too. Over time this part of Solomon's character came out.

Sometimes there are Hebrew or Jewish sayings like "have peace and prosper." In the Bible there is a curious saying that began with God and Abraham "as numerous as sand of the sea." I found at least 13 of these. I'm betting indirectly there are more. God is always offering way more than we can count. Take a look at verse 20 "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy."

You could find similar verses telling us all is well before the Flood and before the time of the Judges. This chapter is famous directly because of the saying "be careful what you wish for." Yes, Solomon wanted wisdom. In his heart, I bet he wanted a lot more. It's not really his fault. He lived in a kingdom and palace. It's like this generation we live in. We live in abundance. We pray for peace and prosperity. Yet, I fear we're getting a whole lot more.

God will say yes. The hard lesson is discernment. What are our real motives? Years ago, my mother-in-law died while we were going through divorce. I was desperate to have my wife back. I told her one day that maybe God was trying to get her attention. That stupid statement by me infuriated her towards me and God. I had good intention because I wanted her back. I also wanted her to see God. However, in the back of my heart I wanted her to see the evil of her ways. I wanted God to punish her.

I was wrong and I regret those words and feelings. God did bless me with his presence in my life. Yet, I tried to take it further. Solomon was glad God said yes. Yet, he kept collecting. He kept gathering. He also kept bragging, showing off, and displaying his wealth. He built God's temple but his own palace towered over God's. It was not even close. Solomon began with asking for wisdom but ended in being pillaged of his kingdom. God will say yes. Yet, we need to really stop and think about what we're really wanting before the yes comes.