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## "ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE"

– JULY 18. – 1 KINGS 3:4-15. –

WHAT ARE DREAMS? – WHEN THEY SHOULD BE FOLLOWED – SOLOMON'S DREAM – HIS HEART CONDITION REFLECTED – HIS REALIZATION OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES – HIS HUMILITY – HIS REQUEST OR CHOICE – GOD'S APPROVAL AND THE HAPPY RESULTS.

**"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom."  
– Proverbs 9:10.**

WE HAVE nothing to indicate that Solomon ever became very haughty, proud, although he certainly would have been a marvelous man had his great wisdom, honor and wealth not affected in some degree the childlike simplicity which he expressed to the Lord in the dream recorded in today's lesson, which gives us a wonderful insight into Solomon's true character. Incidentally, it is valuable to every man, every woman, particularly at the beginning of life or in connection with the starting of any enterprise, and in proportion as the enterprise is a serious or a difficult one or one directly related to God and His Word.

Solomon initiated his reign by making a feast to some of his friends and the prominent people of his realm. The place chosen was Gibeon. The account tells us of his offering a thousand burnt offerings unto the Lord. This does not signify that a thousand animals were burned entire; but rather that certain portions of them, particularly the fat, were burned as an offering to the Lord, while the food portions became the basis of the [R5714 : page 188] feast. Less meat was eaten then than now, except on such feast occasions. We can see the wisdom of such a general acknowledgment of God and of His inauguration of a new king; and the feast for the people

signifies figuratively the good will of the king and his desire to make his reign one of prosperity, blessing, rejoicing, and helpfulness to all. The Divine ordering of the matter was recognized by the Israelites, who perceived that all things were to be done with an eye to God's approval.

### **ARE DREAMS SIGNIFICANT?**

It was during this feast, which probably lasted several days, that Solomon had the wonderful dream here narrated. That it was supernatural there can be no doubt. Similarly God revealed Himself to others in ancient times, and especially to His people Israel, who had come into covenant relationship with Him at Mount Sinai under Moses. But God was not in similar relationship with other peoples, who were, as we read, strangers, foreigners, outcasts – not in covenant relationship with Him.

Although the Christian Church is peculiarly in relationship with God, and in a much closer relationship than were the Jews under their Law, nevertheless we must not suppose that all dreams which even consecrated Christians may have are to be regarded as inspired. Very evidently the majority of our dreams are merely wanderings of our mind because we are not soundly asleep. For God to make fewer communications with Spiritual Israel by dreams would not signify a lesser interest in their affairs, but rather that He has otherwise provided for them, for their guidance – in the Bible. Additionally, we learn that He wishes us to walk by faith and not by sight; and to direct us continually by dreams would be to interfere with this walking by faith.

St. Paul gives us the key to the matter, saying that "the Word of God is sufficient," that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17.) But there is nothing to hinder God from using a dream as a means of instructing His spiritual children if that should seem at any time to be the appropriate course. Many of the Lord's people have had

more or less experience with such profitable dreams, which seemed to give them the needed instruction or suggestion. Nevertheless there is but one sure way of receiving dreams; namely, to interpret them only in full accord with the Scriptures. The Apostle suggests that if an angel should proclaim to us any other Gospel than this, it should be rejected; and similarly, if a dream should suggest any other Gospel, it should be rejected. The Divine Word is to be the great talisman, test, standard, for everything for the Christian.

### **SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE**

In Solomon's dream the Lord appeared to him, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." So God is asking of all who would become His children. He desires to do them good, but He wishes them to realize their needs and to make requests accordingly. The Apostle suggests something along this line, saying, "If any man [Christian] lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally."

Solomon's answer in his dream shows us a beautiful simplicity of character for a young prince just come to the throne. He recounts God's mercy to his father David, and declares that this was in proportion as King David had walked faithfully with God in righteousness of heart. He expressed appreciation of the fact that God had brought even him to the throne because of Divine appreciation of his father David. Then he recounted to God his own littleness, weakness, and insufficiency for the great position. Touchingly he declared, "I am but a little child." This reminds us of the Apostle's words, "When I am weak, then I am strong." This was really the strength of Solomon's character; namely, that he was meek, was teachable, like a little child – not boastful or self-confident, not blind to his privileges and obligations.

Because of the responsibilities of the kingdom, for which he felt himself so incompetent, Solomon prayed, "Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to **[R5715 : page 188]** judge Thy people [to administer justice to them], that I may discern between

good and bad: for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?" Is it any wonder that we read further that in the dream the Lord manifested His good pleasure at this request? "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 [justice]; therefore, 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. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days."

"I knelt before Thy gracious Throne,  
And asked for peace with suppliant knee;  
And peace was given: not peace alone,  
But love, and joy, and ecstasy."

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