

God's Blessing rests on those who hear his voice and obey his will

November 13, 2016

I remember hearing the story of Billy Graham and how he became the "man for the hour" taking the gospel message all over America and to other nations. He is a respected, god-fearing man who has had the blessing of God on his life and now Franklin, his son has taken up the torch. This past year, Franklin set aside all speaking engagements and focused entirely on visiting every capital in every state in the U.S, leading the people in prayer and calling people to repentance. Billy struggled with faith as a young man for his parents were not wealthy and he was not a talented speaker. He felt the call of God to be a minister and went to Bible School. There he met a very talented young man who could draw large crowds, had a special gift for getting money and also drew Billy's girlfriend away from him because she was convinced that Billy wouldn't be successful in the ministry. There were times that he would express doubts to Billy about the truth of God and the Bible and Billy didn't always know how to answer him. After a while the crowds dwindled and the man ended up being a pastor of a small congregation. The day came that he stood and told his congregation that he no longer believed the Bible and he gave up the ministry and started teaching and writing literature trying to convince people to turn their back on God. His faith was not grounded in the word; he trusted in his own talents and abilities. Billy shared his dismay with his mother and she told him to get alone with God and He would reveal the truth to him. Billy found a place in a wooded area and there he knelt in prayer. Before the day was over, Billy knew that God had called him and he was not alone; God was with him. Billy's crusades were led by the Spirit of God and he still has influence in our world. Franklin continues speaking the gospel message and God has blessed his ministry throughout the world. I thank God for Franklin's obedience spending this past year crisscrossing America reminding people that God is our country's only hope. Billy's reward is laid up in heaven; the other man gave up his faith and will answer for his deeds one of these days. Billy didn't seek fame, or fortune, but he has been used by God to draw wandering souls into the kingdom of God.

In 1 Kings 3 we are introduced to King David's son, Solomon who succeeded his father to the throne after David's death. We get a glimpse of Solomon's character in this chapter as Solomon was faithful in worshipping God by sacrificing and burning incense to the LORD in high places until the temple of the LORD was finished. King David had drawn the plans, provided the material and now Solomon was going to be the one to put it all together.

Verse 3 tells us that Solomon loved the LORD and he walked in the statutes that King David had walked in before him. In verse 5, it says that the LORD appeared one night to

Solomon in a dream while he was at Gibeon. Solomon had just taken over his father's throne and here the LORD asked him what he would like God to give to him.

Solomon began by mentioning the wonderful attributes of God and his mercy that had been shown to his father, David as he walked before God in truth, righteousness, and in uprightness of heart. He showed appreciation to God for being kind to King David in giving him a son to succeed him after his death on his throne. He told the LORD that now that his father is dead and he is the king, he is but a child; He didn't know how to go out or come in. He calls himself a servant of the LORD and he is in the midst of a great people that are God's chosen people and there is a multitude of them. He then asked God to give his servant an understanding heart to judge God's people, that he would be able to discern between good and bad. For who is able to judge this your great people?

The speech pleased the LORD. He responded by saying, "Because you have asked for this thing and didn't ask for a long life for yourself, neither did you ask for riches for yourself, nor did you ask for the lives of your enemies, but you asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, Behold, I have done according to you worlds. I have given you a wise and an understanding heart so that there will be no one to compare with you in the past and there will be no one to compare with you in the future. Besides this, I will give you things that you didn't ask for; both riches and honor so that there will be no king that can compare with you all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as you father David did walk, then I will lengthen the years of your life.

When Solomon awoke, he went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

His wisdom was evident in the way he dealt with people. He was a fair and just king. God blessed him with great wisdom and people had great respect for him. Because of the justice and fairness that he showed in dealing with the people, they recognized that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice. His fame went out from Jerusalem and other countries learned of the wisdom of Solomon and how the LORD blessed him and his people.

In chapter 5, it says that God gave Solomon wisdom and very much understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore. He was wiser than all men from the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt. His fame was in nations all about him for there was no one as wise as he in all the lands. He spoke 3000 proverbs, and he wrote 1005 songs. He spoke about nature such as the trees of Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts and the fowl and of creeping things and of fish. People for all over came to hear the wisdom of Solomon and even the kings of the earth came to hear him. People built the temple of the LORD and many cities and

buildings were built by Solomon. Solomon became very wealthy and his fame spread far and wide.

In chapter 10, the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came with hard questions to test him for herself. She came with a great train, with camels that bore spices, and very much gold and precious stones; and when she had come to Solomon, she talked with him of all that was in her heart. Solomon answered all of her questions; there was not anything that was hid from the king, which he didn't tell her. When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom and the house that he had built, and all the food that graced his table, servants that waited on him, attendance of his ministers, their apparel, and his cupbearers and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD, she was overcome with amazement.

She said to Solomon, "What I heard in my own country about your achievements and wisdom is true. I could not believe it then, but now I have come and seen it with my own eyes. I was not told even half of it. Your wisdom and wealth are much greater than I had heard/ Your men and officers are fortunate because in always serving you, they are able to hear your wisdom. Praise the LORD your God who was pleased to make you king of Israel. The LORD has constant love for Israel so he made you king to keep justice and to rule fairly." Then she gave Solomon 9000 pounds of gold and many spices and jewels. No one since that time has brought more spices than the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. Solomon used gold and juniper wood and jewels that Hiram brought to him by ship for the house of the LORD and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. Such fine juniper wood has not been brought in or been seen since that time. King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she wanted and asked for in addition to what he had already given to her from his wealth. Then she and her servants returned to their own country.

People from all over the known world came and brought riches and goods to Solomon and were so impressed with his wisdom and knowledge. His fame was widespread and the people under his rule were well taken care of. However, Solomon had many wives that were not Israelites. These women turned his heart to compromise his worship with idols and because of that his kingdom was not passed down to his children. Jesus Christ will one day sit on the throne of David and righteousness once again will fill all the earth and the Spirit of the LORD will fill the inhabitants of the earth.

In Proverbs 3, there are some words of wisdom that Solomon has preserved for us. It tells us not to forget God's laws but let your heart keep his commandments for length of days and long life and peace shall they add to you. Keep mercy and truth close to you; bind them around your neck and write them on the tables of your heart. Then you will find favor and good understanding in God's sight and in man's sight. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path. Don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and

depart from evil. Then your body will be healthy and your bones will be strong. Honor the LORD with your wealth and the first fruits of your crops. Then your barns will be full and your wine barrels will overflow with new wine. If you continue reading this chapter you will find that happiness comes from finding wisdom and understanding for it is worth far more than silver or gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you would want is equal to it. With her right hand, wisdom offers you a long life; and with her left hand she gives you riches and honor. Wisdom will make your life pleasant and will bring you peace. As a tree produces fruit, wisdom gives life to those who use it and everyone who uses it will be happy. The LORD made the earth using his wisdom. He set the sky in place using his understanding. With his knowledge, he made spring flow into rivers and the clouds drop rain on the earth. Hold on to wisdom and good sense and don't let them get out of your sight. They will give you life.

(James 1:5) gives counsel to those going through trials. When you have all kinds of troubles, be filled with joy. Troubles come to test your faith and they will teach you patience. Let the patience show itself in all that you do. But if you need wisdom, you should ask God for it.

He is generous and enjoys giving to all people so he will give you wisdom. But when you ask, be sure to believe and not doubt. Don't be double minded for he that doubts is like a wave in the sea, blown up and down by the wind. These people are thinking in two different directions at the same time. They can't decide about anything they do. They should not think they will receive anything from the LORD.

As we move forward towards the end of the year and the beginning of a new one, I desire your prayers that I will seek God's wisdom for our little church that his will may be carried out in all of our lives. I will also continue to pray for you.