

...ing into solemn grey, the distant... bathed in the primrose light of sunset, the coolness and balm of the breeze after the burning glare—what must these have been to Him to whose eye the world of nature was an open book, on every page of which he read his Father's name! And this was his native land. Bethany was almost to Him a second Nazareth; those whom he loved were around him, and he was going to those whom he loved. Can we not imagine him walking on in silence too deep for words—His disciples around Him or following him—the gibbous morn beginning to rise and gild the twinkling foliage of the olive trees with richer silver, and moonlight and twilight blending at each step insensibly with the garnish hues of the day, like that solemn twilight of coming agony into which the noonday of his happier ministry had long since begun to fade?—*Farrar's Life of Christ.*

BEREAN NOTES.

B. C. 1015.] LESSON II. SOLOMON'S CHOICE. 2 Chron. 1. 1-17. [July 9.]  
HOME READINGS.  
MONDAY—The Lesson. 2 Chron. 1. 1-17.  
TUESDAY—"The Proverbs of Solomon." Prov. 1. 1-19.  
WEDNESDAY—"Ways of pleasantness." Prov. 3. 1-18.  
THURSDAY—"Leadeth unto life." Matt. 7. 7-14.  
FRIDAY—"But to minister." Mark 10. 35-45.  
SATURDAY—"What wilt thou?" Luke. 18. 35-43.  
SUNDAY—"The king's son." Psa. 72. 1-20.  
TOPIC—Making Choice of Divine Wisdom.  
GOLDEN TEXT—If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally. James 1. 5.  
DOCTRINE—The free agency of man. Mark 33. 11; Matt. 11. 23; John 5. 40.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

David was now dead, and Solomon the accepted and reigning king. A national sacrificial festival was called at Gibeon which was followed by a prophetic dream of Solomon, in which God invited him to ask of him whatever he would. He asked WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE for his official duties, and God, in response, promised all that and more. The TITLE of the lesson is Solomon's choice, more fully stated in the TOPIC as Making Choice of Divine Wisdom. Encouragement to make the same choice is given in the GOLDEN TEXT: If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally. The facts of the lesson are full of interest; but, teacher, with the facts get your class to make the choice. The facts are most easily grasped by following the OUTLINE: 1. "The royal offering." 2. "The great opportunity." 3. "The wise choice." 4. "The divine blessing." The whole lesson beautifully illustrates the DOCTRINE of The free agency of man.

1.6. The royal offering.

1. SOLOMON WAS STRENGTHENED—There was no opposition. The attempt of Adonijah to secure the throne had failed, and all enemies had been put down. Prosperity was on every side, because THE LORD WAS WITH HIM, making him great.

2. ALL ISRAEL—That is, to the nation's representatives, as in the last lesson. 1 Chron. 28. 1.

3. THE CONGREGATION—The officials enumerated in the last verse, and now assembled for the great sacrificial festival. HIGH PLACES—The tops of hills and mountains were anciently favourite places of worship, perhaps as being nearer heaven. As yet the Hebrews continued the practice of thus worshipping Jehovah, but after the religious state of the nation became better settled by the building of the temple it was forbidden. One of these places was at GIBEON, itself on a hill top six miles north-west of Jerusalem. There was the place to which the TABERNACLE of Moses had been removed at some period after the capture of the ark by the Philistines, and where it still remained. After David removed the ark from Kirjath-jearim to his own tabernacle at Jerusalem, he restored the regular service of sacrifices at Gibeon, under the direction of Zadok, the high-priest, and at the same time arranged for a simpler and more spiritual service, without sacrifice on Mount Zion, under the charge of Asaph, a Levite. 1 Chron. 16. 46. 37-41.

4. BRAZEN ALTAR—For the sacrifices, built by Bezaleel 476 years previous. Exod. 31. 2; 38. 1. HE PUT—Better, was there, as in the margin of reference Bibles. Upon this great ALTAR SOLOMON OFFERED A THOUSAND BURNT-OFFERINGS, or, rather, caused them to be offered by the priests, as sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. It was a great day.

7. The great opportunity.

7. THAT NIGHT—The night following the day of these offerings. DID GOD APPEAR—In 1 Kings 3. 5 we learn that it was in a dream. But it was none the less real because it was while he was asleep.

This was one of God's ways of speaking to men. Num. 12. 6; Matt. 1. 20. He speaks to us now in the Bible, and in whatever way he speaks we ought to hear him. AND SAID—So it was not a mere dream. ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE—Never before did the great God come to a young man of nineteen and bid him ask for just that thing in all the universe which he most desired. One compares it to "a sheet of white paper, with the signature of a millionaire, sent to a man for use." It was an invitation to an honest youth of high position who "loved the Lord," 1 Kings 3. 3, and "lovedly wished to be a good king." But Jesus said to us all, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 14. 14. All that we ought to desire he bids us ask for. Solomon seized his great opportunity; so should we seize ours.

8.10. The wise choice.  
8. GREAT MERCY—Compare 1 Kings 3. 6. THIS MERCY was in giving David his son to REIGN IN HIS STEAD. This is a statement of fact prefacing the request. God put him there, and he could ask for his guidance.

9. THE PROMISE—Probably this in 2 Sam. 7. 12-14: "I will establish his kingdom. I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son." He feels the need of a divine help to rule rightly OVER A PEOPLE SO NUMEROUS as were those of his realm. It is good to have a promise to plead when we pray.

10. GIVE ME NOW—Solomon now asks for what he supposed the promise implied, and at any rate for what he needed. WISDOM—A sound and correct judgment for the proper conduct of his administration. KNOWLEDGE—A broad, intelligent grasp of the truths a king should know. GO OUT AND COME IN refers to his whole official conduct. WHO CAN JUDGE—To hear and decide causes judicially was a part of his duty. No wonder that he felt his incompetency! His choice was truly a wise one. We all may make the same choice for the position where God has placed us.

11.17. The divine blessing.

11. GOD SAID—We now have God's reply to Solomon's choice. Five things might have been asked for but were not, riches, wealth, honor, life of enemies to his throne, and LONG LIFE. It would not have been wrong to have asked for either of them, but he was more intent on his duty to his people and the honor due to his God. This was IN HIS HEART as his deepest, strongest desire. His request showed the true nobleness of his character, and was very pleasing to God. 1 Kings 3. 10.

12. IS GRANTED—What he asked is given, not, however, by an impression which relieved him from study, thought, care, and labor. God gives WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE now to earnest souls that need it for the duties to which they are called, and who in humble reliance on him reverently ASK for it. But four of the other things not asked for are also given, RICHES, WEALTH, and HONOR, and (1 Kings 3. 14.) on the condition of faithful obedience, long life. He sought God's glory first, and all other things are added. Matt. 6. 33. O! how sad that he did not persevere in this way to the end. Yet God's promises were wonderfully fulfilled. Solomon's reign was one of peace and glory, and over an empire which extended from Egypt to the Euphrates.

13. CAME TO REIGN—Returning from Gibeon to Jerusalem, he devoted himself diligently to the development and enriching of his kingdom. (Compare 1 Kings chaps. 3 and 10.) The statements which follow cover years of time.

14. CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN—To a certain extent these were needful, but multiplying them was forbidden by law. 15. SILVER AND GOLD AND STONES—By his commercial regulations. The entire traffic between the West and East passed through his dominions and was in his power. He traded by sea, was also large and prosperous. CEDAR AND STYCIAMORES—The latter is native; the former were planted, while much cedar wood was probably imported.

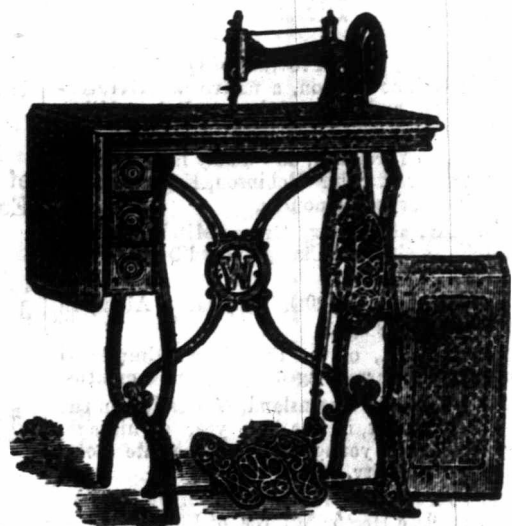
16, 27. HORSES—Jewish traders brought them from EGYPT, and sold them not only to Jews, but to the subject and tributary kings. The average price of a CHARIOT was about one hundred and seventy-five dollars of our money, and of horses about forty-five dollars.

Lessons. 1. Surely wisdom in its earthly sense is better than gold. Yet much more in its higher, which brings us to act rightly with reference to God. He only is truly wise who strives to please the Lord. Let it be asked for, and it shall be given. Job. 28. 28; Psa. 111. 10; 90. 12; Dan. 12. 3; Matt. 7. 24; Eph. 5. 15. 16.

2. Solomon's choice was a grand one. He turned away from all things else to sober, stern duty. God recognized his perfect freedom of power to choose, but the choice was his own. So let all who study this lesson, who are equally free, and responsible because they are free, choose their portion this day. Psa. 84. 10; Matt. 7. 24-27; Heb. 11. 24-26.

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