

### I. A Gracious Offer, 4, 5.

V. 4. *Gibeon*; a place famed in early times for the cunning device of the inhabitants to secure a treaty with Joshua and the Israelites, Josh. ch. 9. Here (2 Chron. 1: 4, 5) were the tabernacle and the brazen altar made at Sinai by Bezaleel. Here, too, Zadok, the high priest, was in charge of the sacrifices, 1 Chron. 7: 39. Hence it was a suitable place for the solemn religious service described in the Lesson. *To sacrifice*; to inaugurate his reign with sacrifice, following the precedent of 1 Sam. 11: 15. *A great high place*; the hill on which Gibeon was built. It was a central place of sacrifice, distinguished from all others (v. 3) by the presence of the high priest. *A thousand burnt offerings*. This shows the large number of people present. Solomon had invited all the leaders of the nation to take part in this act of worship, 2 Chron. 1: 1-3. The services lasted perhaps seven or eight days. It is likely that Solomon offered petitions along with the sacrifices and received this vision in answer. Only a small portion of the sacrifices — the fat of the inwards — was burnt. The rest of the animal, except the shoulder, which was the priest's portion, was eaten by the offerer and his friends.

V. 5. *The Lord appeared to Solomon*. The word translated "appeared" here is the technical term for a theophany or external manifestation of God to the senses, 2 Chron. 1: 7. *In a dream by night*; a frequent form of divine visitation. (See Gen. 31: 11; 41: 25.) "These prophetic dreams in which supernatural disclosures were made to men of the will of God, must of course be distinguished from those dreams which arose from purely natural causes." (Prof. W. H. Green.) *And God said, Ask what I shall give*. God made him an offer limited only by his capacity to receive. (Compare Matt. 7: 7, 8.)

### II. A Prudent Request, 6-10.

Vs. 6, 7. *Mercy*. The same Hebrew word is translated *kindness* later on in the verse. The kindness of God to David was shown (1) during his lifetime and (2) in giving him a successor. *As he walked before thee*; not as deserving the loving-kindness of God

but as responding to it. "Walking" means the general course of life. *In truth*; in a sincere manner without pretense. *Righteousness*; upright dealing with his fellowmen. *Uprightness of heart*; without crookedness or perverse purpose. These words show how Solomon respected his father and valued his example. *Thou hast given him a son*; fulfilling the promise of 2 Sam. 7: 12-14, and continuing the blessings of the father to his son. *O Lord my God*. He has thought of Jehovah as his father's God, now he speaks of Him as his own God, whom he would serve. *Thou hast made thy servant king*. God has laid heavy responsibilities upon him, the first reason for his choice of wisdom. *A little child*. His youth and inexperience were a second reason for his choice. See Time and Place for his age. *To go out or come in*; to lead his life and rightly manage public affairs, Num. 27: 17; Deut. 28: 6; 1 Sam. 18: 13, 16.

Vs. 8-10. *Thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people*. His cares and duties as ruler of a people selected and saved for so great a destiny formed a third reason for the king's choice. *An understanding heart*. Another translation is "a hearing heart." Solomon desired that his decisions should be those which he had learned from God. *Discern*; distinguish clearly the facts and come to a right decision on every case that might arise. *Thy so great a people*. Solomon asks for this great intellectual endowment not for his own sake, but for the sake of the people. *The speech pleased the Lord*. The Lord is pleased when His servants are ready to receive that which he is waiting to bestow and when their desires are unselfish.

### III. A Divine Answer, 11-15.

Vs. 11-13. *Not asked for thyself*. God answers prayers that seek fitness for services rather than opportunities of enjoyment. *To discern judgment*; literally to "hear judgment;" that is, to follow divine guidance in all matters that come before him. *None like thee*. This refers, not so much to the amount of knowledge, as to the power of using it. (See v. 29.) *That which thou hast not asked*. To forget self in something noble ensures a more abundant blessing, Matt. 6: 33; Luke 12: 31.