

## Have Mercy on Us Son of David

by Pastor Marvin R. Barham

We begin our text in **1 Kings 3:5-14** *5In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father **great mercy**, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in **uprightness of heart with thee**; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him **a son to sit on his throne**, as it is this day. 7And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. 8And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9Give therefore thy servant an **understanding heart to judge** thy people, **that I may discern between good and bad**: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? 10And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11And 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**; 12Behold, 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. 13And I **have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour**: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. 14And **if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.***

Here we find Solomon honoring the God of his father David. Solomon, now assuming the throne of his father, shares with God what he had observed as a gift from God to his father David – Mercy. He recognizes that this mercy was a reward for his father’s uprightness with God. It is presumed that God sees the same heart in Solomon and grants Him another gift. The gift God grants is “Wisdom” to compliment “Mercy”. With mercy in Solomon’s heart, God grants him understanding and discernment in sound judgment. But note that God also gives Solomon something he did not ask for – riches and honor, both of which came with a qualifier – “if you walk in my ways”. Why? I believe the answer lies within the very wisdom of God and that indeed it was part of gaining the very thing that Solomon had asked for. **It is in the conflict between desires of the flesh (riches, power, fame, and the honor of men) and Godly desires (His Kingdom and righteousness) that the ability to discern good from bad, as Solomon stated, results in learning what is good and vain judgment.** We find throughout Solomon’s life, following this encounter with God, that Solomon experiences all kinds of issues displeasing and costly, only to find in the end that all is vanity if not for the love and mercies of God. **He finds that true Wisdom is only found in relationship to God Himself and seeking him out. I believe that the mercy of God is found in the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of God is found in living a life of obedience to all of God’s ways.** We see this **pattern of mercy, wisdom, and obedience** in Isaiah 55:3-7.

**Isaiah 55:3-7** *3Incline your ear, and come unto me: **hear, and your soul shall live**; and I will make an **everlasting covenant** with you, even **the sure mercies of David**. 4Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. 5Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. 6 **Seek ye the LORD***

*while he may be found, **call ye upon him while he is near: 7**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him **return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him**; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

In ancient Judaism it was not uncommon for the term “*Son of David*” to be utilized as it often referred to ones Jewish roots or genealogy. However, in the context of Jesus, particularly in Matthew, it takes on much more connotation than mere lineage. Indeed, the Jewish roots and character of Christ is aforementioned in the use of the term “*Son of David*” (Smyth and Helwys 2006). However, we find the term used by those who needed healing, were outcast, or were rejected among the cultural norm. Did they call to Him simply in reference to His lineage through Uriah’s wife and David’s adulterous affair, or was it because of the similarities to Solomon, the offspring of David?<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the use of the term “*Son of David*” could have alluded to the fact that Solomon was born of the seed of a King but from the womb of a woman who was undeserving of royalty. Solomon was born outside of normal royal lineage, yet he was chosen to succeed his father as King. Jesus too was born of the seed of a King to a woman whom was unlikely to have a Son to become a King. Jesus too was born of unusual circumstances yet was to take His Father’s throne. Was this why they called Him “*Son of David*”? Could it be that the attributes and character that Christ demonstrated were similar to the heart of David towards God as found in **Acts 13:22** “*And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave their testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a **man after mine own heart**, which shall fulfil all my will.*”? Or could it reflect the heart of Solomon that continued in a deep love for the Lord God as found in **1 Kings 3:3** “**3***And Solomon **loved the LORD, walking in the statutes** of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.*”?

Jesus was viewed as a great teacher of the law and prophecies. He often spoke using *sapiential* methods such as *proverbs, maxims, aphorisms, riddles, parables, and allegory*. **Sirach 18:29** (Apocrypha – Wisdom of Solomon) makes reference to those who become teachers of such wisdom, “*They that were of understanding in sayings became also wise themselves, and poured forth exquisite parables.*” This alone would have given sufficient reason to be compared to the wisdom that had been credited to Solomon. In inter-testamental Jewish literature Solomon is considered to have had collected the wisdom to cure diseases and bring deliverance from devils or captivity to evil spirits. (Witherington, Jesus the Sage, Fortress 1995)<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it would have not been uncommon or unnatural for these early Jewish believers to refer to Solomon’s healing knowledge as news of Jesus’ ability to heal the sick and cast out devils traveled from city to city.<sup>1</sup>

In **Mark 10:46-52** and in **John 9:32** we find where find revelations as to why many would have considered such healing wisdom to only come from someone who had the Wisdom of Solomon. First, in the Old Testament we find no recordings of Kings, Priest, or Prophets healing the blind. And second, it was understood in Jewish culture that no blind person could be healed if they were born blind, because it was the judgment of God upon their parents or upon some sin of their own.<sup>1</sup> Basically, there was no mercy to be bestowed upon these. Their plight was eternal. Yet, Jesus comes showing mercy with what they perceived was the "*Wisdom of Solomon*." **But from whom did the Wisdom of Solomon come? It came from his seeking God. It was the Wisdom of God.**

In **Proverbs 3:13-20** and in **Proverbs 8** we find the use of *anthropomorphic* text to personify God's wisdom in human attributes.<sup>1</sup> Wisdom here is painted for us as the picture of a woman because the Hebrew language was very pictorial and is an active language with the root of most words being a verb. The Hebrew word used here is *hokmah* meaning wisdom, and takes its feminine context through Greek influence reflecting the word *Spohia* which is a feminine noun.<sup>1</sup> Ben Witherington III states, "This personification of the mind, or wisdom, or saving plan of God was further developed in later Jewish wisdom literature. For example, in Solomon we hear about how God's people were saved by Wisdom, or in **Sirach 1 (Apocrypha)** we hear of how Wisdom became tangible and incarnate in Torah, or in **1 Enoch 42** we hear about how Wisdom came down from heaven and urged God's people to repent, but they rejected Wisdom and so she returned to heaven to be with God. All of this needs to be borne in mind when we look carefully at some teachings of Jesus, because in fact, it is especially apparent in both Matthew's and John's Gospel that Jesus is being portrayed as **God's wisdom come to earth in the flesh** in the form, not of a book like Torah, but as a person – Jesus. **Jesus is seen as the human embodiment of the mind of God, and God's living revelations come in person.**"<sup>1</sup>

Look at **Matthew 11:19-20** and **28-30**. In Jewish culture the term "yoke" was used for Torah. When one became of age to understand the wisdom of Torah he/she took on the weight of the 613 laws to live by.<sup>2</sup> Jesus refers to Himself as both the Son of Man, or Wisdom, and the Son of God, Wisdom of God made flesh. He is revealing both His divine origin and His divine Wisdom of which both the Jews would recognize.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this gives new insight to "*My burden is easy and My yoke is light*". In what the letter of the law could not do the Spirit of the law fulfilled. Jesus came not to do away with the law but fulfill it. The law was the way of God for man to live in love with God. It came from the mind of God and was the Wisdom of God. **Jesus was the embodiment, the fulfillment of that law. He was the wisdom, the way, the truth, and the life.**

Having said all this, how does this apply to us, our daily lives, and our walk with God? To answer

this we must have gained some understanding as to what mercy is, who wisdom is, and the relationship between the two. **Mercy is the favor of God bestowed upon us when we are yet undeserving. Mercy comes out of compassion and an unconditional love. The acts of mercy come from the motive of love and the well of transcendent wisdom. Mercy is found in the wisdom of God.** David tells us in **Psalms 111:10** *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”* And in **Psalms 9:10** *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”* Fear is the beginning of wisdom. Fear of God is to obey His law out of the motive of our love for Him. **It is in having an intimate love for the ways of God that wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are obtained and life is given.**

Jesus Christ is the Word, He is the Wisdom of God made flesh. He was the Ways of God, the Wisdom granted to Solomon. He was healing, He was deliverance, He was mercy granted to God’s people through David and Solomon. And so He is to you and I today who, as Solomon, the lepers, the blind beggars, and gentiles who cried out for mercy from the Son of David, **they were undeserving of a royal priesthood and inheritance, yet the mercy of God is given us through His Wisdom that came and was sacrificed for our redemption.** What a greater inheritance have we that we might hold in our hand, seek to understand and embrace with our minds and hearts the very person and wisdom of God – His Word. **What a people are we that we might know the healing, deliverance and mercies found only in the Son of David, the Wisdom granted Solomon, the Wisdom of God incarnate - the Word of God.**

Mercy is the breath you just took. Mercy is the food you eat. Mercy is the loved ones, the friendships, the relationships you have every day. Mercy is the fact that you can see, hear, smell, and live each day. Mercy is that God owes you nothing, not even a chance to live, but He grants it to you every moment. Mercy is the fact that you would not even have knowledge of life or liberties were it not for Him. **Mercy and true life are found only in the Wisdom of God. The wisdom of God only comes to those who seek Him with their whole heart in obedience to His ways. Are you a Son of David? Do you have that heart that in upright relationship seeks the Wisdom of God? “His mercies are new every morning.” If you need mercy each day, then you must get in His Word each day and hide His wisdom in your heart.**

1 Ben Witherington III, Son of David/Wisdom of God, [www.4truth.net](http://www.4truth.net)

2 Dr. Ron Moseley, 613 Laws of God, [www.MoseleyHistory.com](http://www.MoseleyHistory.com)