

## Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 5, 1 Kings 3

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 5, 1 Kings 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture analyzes 1 Kings 3, focusing on Solomon's early reign. It highlights the religious chaos of the time, marked by a displaced Ark and competing worship practices. **Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter is examined as a compromise of faith**, and the lecture contrasts this with Solomon's request for wisdom from God to govern his people. **The text also looks at the example of Solomon's discernment with the two prostitutes**, illustrating his ability to distinguish between right and wrong. **Oswalt emphasizes God's hesed, or passionate devotion, towards humanity**, despite human failings, while also stressing the importance of an exclusive and pure relationship with God.

**2. 9 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →  
Historical Books → Kings).**



**Oswalt\_Kings\_Sessi  
on05.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 5, 1 Kings 3

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 3, incorporating direct quotes where relevant:

#### Briefing Document: 1 Kings 3 - Solomon's Early Reign

##### Overview:

This lecture focuses on the middle section of Solomon's story (1 Kings 3-10), specifically chapter 3. While superficially everything appears positive, Dr. Oswalt emphasizes subtle hints suggesting underlying problems. The chapter explores the chaotic religious landscape at the beginning of Solomon's reign, his alliance with Egypt, and God's gift of wisdom. The key question the lecture poses is: "What are you choosing today that is going to catch you 50 years from now?"

##### Key Themes and Ideas:

- Religious Chaos & the High Places (Bama):** The lecture sets the scene by highlighting the religious disarray that followed the capture and return of the Ark of the Covenant, and destruction of the Tabernacle at Shiloh. The Ark resided at Kiriath-Jearim for 20 years, and the Tabernacle moved and another was at Nob. This chaos contributed to the proliferation of worship at "high places" (*bama*), which were localized worship shrines. Dr. Oswalt explains, "From now on, until Hezekiah. But they worshiped on the high places." This localized worship is problematic because it threatens the oneness of God. "How easily then does God in his oneness get divided up?" This also undermined the thrust of Deuteronomy, which demanded worship at "one place," and for 200 years, they didn't quite get the point.
- The Alliance with Egypt (Marriage & Treaty):** Oswalt underscores the significance of Solomon's alliance with Pharaoh through marriage. This was a common practice for treaties between countries. "When countries made treaties with one another, they very, very commonly did two things. Number one, there was a marriage. And number two, you recognize the other people's gods." Dr. Oswalt stresses that this act directly contradicts God's commands in Exodus 34:12-16, where God warns against making treaties with the inhabitants of the land to avoid being ensnared by their religious practices. This marriage can be seen as "prostituting" themselves to false Gods. The world will pay a high price to get your soul, and they offered Solomon Gezer.

- **God's Jealousy/Zeal:** Dr. Oswalt delves into the meaning of God's jealousy. "For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Now, you know the word there. It can also be translated as zealous, zealous, and jealous." He clarifies that this isn't petty jealousy, but the protective zeal of a father for his child, wanting the best for them and guarding them from harmful influences. God wants a marriage covenant with us that is exclusive and pure.
- **Solomon's Love for the Lord:** The lecture highlights the way Solomon shows love for the Lord by "walking in the statutes of his father." However, this is immediately qualified by the phrase, "Except he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places." This introduces the idea that Solomon's righteousness isn't absolute, that there are "accepts" in his walk.
- **The Gift of Wisdom:** Solomon's prayer for a "listening heart" (a discerning heart) is a central focus. He asks for wisdom to govern and to "distinguish between right and wrong." Oswalt emphasizes that "judge" in this context means "govern," to bring people into the appropriate order. This pleases God greatly, and he grants Solomon not only wisdom but also wealth and honor beyond compare. God knew, and still chose Solomon to bless him.
- **God's Unconditional Blessing vs. Conditional Blessing:** Dr. Oswalt emphasizes that God's blessing is initially given without qualification but is then followed by a conditional promise in verse 14: "If you walk in obedience to me... I will give you a long life also." This highlights the ongoing nature of the relationship between God and Solomon, one that requires continued obedience.
- **The Prostitute's Story:** The story of the two prostitutes is presented as an example of Solomon's discernment at work. The king doesn't choose based on worldly standards, he chooses the most humble people of society. He sees past their words, he understands their motivation, and he is interested in life more than death. "One begins with life and the other begins with death. Maybe a listening heart heard that." The author has intentionally selected this story, and that says something about who the king cares about.
- **The Importance of Humility and a Listening Heart in Prayer:** Solomon's prayer at Gibeon provides a model for how we should approach God. We must be humble, acknowledge who God is and His faithfulness, and be concerned for others. Solomon asked for wisdom to govern the people. He didn't twist God's arm, or try to get as much as he could for himself, he asked for the needs of the people.

- **Sin and Convenience:** Oswalt uses George Barna to drive home the point that sin often takes root due to its convenience. While Deuteronomy might have been known at the time, the people chose to ignore its commands regarding centralized worship because it was easier and more convenient to worship locally. "I think sin is very good at ignoring what it knows, and it's just inconvenient."

#### **Quotes of Significance:**

- "What are you choosing today that is going to catch you 50 years from now?"
- "How easily then does God in his oneness get divided up?"
- "From now on, until Hezekiah. But they worshiped on the high places."
- "For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."
- "One begins with life and the other begins with death. Maybe a listening heart heard that."
- "I think sin is very good at ignoring what it knows, and it's just inconvenient."

#### **Overall Impression:**

Dr. Oswalt's lecture provides a nuanced understanding of Solomon's early reign. While highlighting Solomon's wisdom and God's blessings, it also subtly introduces potential flaws and warns against the dangers of compromise and localized worship. This is only the beginning of the story.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 5, 1 Kings 3

### A Study Guide to 1 Kings 3: Solomon's Reign Begins

#### Quiz: Short Answer Questions

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What were the two actions Solomon took in 1 Kings 3 that suggest he was not entirely following God's law?
2. Describe the religious situation in Israel at the beginning of Solomon's reign. What evidence suggests it was a chaotic time?
3. What does Dr. Oswalt suggest is the problem with worshipping Yahweh at high places (bama)?
4. What does it mean that God is "jealous"? Explain this concept using the analogy provided by Dr. Oswalt.
5. How does Solomon demonstrate his love for the Lord in 1 Kings 3? What is the caveat mentioned?
6. What does Solomon request from God in his dream at Gibeon? What does this request reveal about his character?
7. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word *hesed*? How does it relate to God's character and actions?
8. In the story of the two prostitutes, what does Solomon discern about the women that allows him to deliver a just verdict?
9. How does the story of the two prostitutes illustrate the concept of wisdom as it pertains to governing?
10. According to Oswalt, what does the placement of the Ark of the Covenant indicate about the faith of the Israelites?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh and married his daughter, which was forbidden by God's law to prevent the Israelites from being led astray by foreign gods. He also offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places, which localized Yahweh and potentially divided the people's loyalty.

2. The religious situation was chaotic because the Ark of the Covenant was not in the tabernacle, the Moses Tabernacle was destroyed, and there seemed to be competing tabernacles and priesthoods. People were worshipping Yahweh in high places, which was against God's commands.
3. Worshipping at high places (bama) localizes Yahweh, making it easier for people to divide their loyalty and think of Him as only the God of a particular place. This undermined the oneness and centrality of God that Deuteronomy emphasizes.
4. God's jealousy is not a petty emotion, but rather a zealous protectiveness like a father's desire for his daughter's well-being. It represents God's desire for an exclusive and pure relationship with his people, rejecting any other gods or idols.
5. Solomon demonstrates his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given to him by his father, David. However, he still offers sacrifices and burns incense on the high places, suggesting there are "exceptions" in his obedience.
6. Solomon requests a discerning (listening) heart to govern God's people and to distinguish between right and wrong. This request reveals his humility, his awareness of his own limitations, and his desire to serve the people justly.
7. *Hesed* refers to the passionate devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when it is undeserved. It reflects God's character of kindness, forgiveness, and unwavering commitment to his people, even when they don't deserve it.
8. Solomon discerns that one woman begins by asking for life, while the other woman begins by asking for death. He recognizes that one woman's primary motivation is love for her child, while the other is motivated by her own rights and desires.
9. The story illustrates that wisdom in governing involves discerning the true motivations and desires of individuals, not just focusing on the surface-level facts. It is about understanding what truly benefits the people and acting in accordance with what is life-giving.
10. According to Oswalt, the Ark of the Covenant is where God places his name according to Deuteronomy. Leaving it out in the wilderness indicated how far the Israelites had sunk in their faith, because it showed disregard for God's explicit instructions about where and how to worship Him.

## Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the complex portrayal of Solomon in 1 Kings 3. How does the chapter simultaneously present him as a wise, God-fearing leader and a flawed individual? What significance does this complexity have for understanding the narrative of his reign?
2. Discuss the significance of Solomon's dream at Gibeon. How does his request for wisdom reflect the values and priorities that should guide a leader of God's people? How does God's response to Solomon's request highlight key aspects of His character and relationship with humanity?
3. Explain the importance of the concept of *hesed* in 1 Kings 3. How does Solomon recognize God's *hesed* towards David? In what ways does the concept of *hesed* shape the relationship between God and his people, as revealed in this chapter?
4. Explore the theme of religious compromise in 1 Kings 3. What actions and attitudes demonstrate Solomon's willingness to compromise on religious principles? How does the text critique or challenge these compromises, and what are the potential consequences of such actions?
5. Evaluate the role of discernment in leadership, as illustrated in the story of the two prostitutes. How does Solomon's wisdom in this case reflect a broader understanding of justice and governance? What lessons can be drawn from this story regarding the qualities of an effective and righteous leader?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ark of the Covenant:** A sacred chest containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments, representing God's presence and covenant with Israel.
- **High Places (Bama):** Worship shrines, often located on elevated ground, where sacrifices and offerings were made to Yahweh or other deities.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew term referring to the passionate devotion of a superior to an inferior, especially when it is undeserved; loving-kindness, mercy, and steadfast love.
- **Nadir:** The lowest point; a time of great despair or adversity.
- **Shiloh:** A city where the tabernacle was located before the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines.
- **Tabernacle:** A portable tent or sanctuary used by the Israelites as a place of worship before the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- **Gezer:** A big, big fortress city that guarded the international highway that guarded the highway to Joppa.
- **Gibeon:** An important high place where Solomon offered sacrifices and received his dream from God.
- **Discernment:** The ability to judge well, the capacity to discern to see into things and see what's going on that's wisdom.
- **Prostitute:** Dr. Oswalt said that the Bible uses that term to describe the people who worship anything in this creation other than him, and this is to violate the wedding.



## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 5, 1 Kings 3, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on 1 Kings 3: Solomon's Early Reign

- **What is the primary focus of 1 Kings 3-10, and what subtle issues are hinted at during this period?**
- The primary focus of 1 Kings 3-10 is Solomon's reign, which initially appears successful and blessed. However, the author subtly hints at underlying problems that become more apparent upon closer examination. The author trusts readers to discern these issues.
- **What was the religious situation in Israel when Solomon became king, and what were some of its characteristics?**
- The religious situation was chaotic. The Ark of the Covenant had been captured decades earlier and moved around. The tabernacle's location was uncertain, possibly existing in multiple places concurrently, like Gibeon and Jerusalem. There seemed to be competing priestly families and worship at high places (bama) was common. This chaos was considered the nadir, or lowest point, after the period of the judges.
- **What was the significance of the "high places" (bama) mentioned in the text, and why were they problematic?**
- High places were worship shrines, often located on hills or elevated areas. Initially, these locations were chosen because the gods were thought to live on mountaintops, closer to heaven. Over time, any worship shrine became known as a "high place." The problem with worshipping at these locations was that it localized Yahweh, dividing God's oneness and leading to a fragmented understanding of His nature. This practice was discouraged by Deuteronomy, which emphasized worshipping God in one central location.
- **Why was Solomon's alliance with Pharaoh and marriage to his daughter problematic, according to the text?**
- Solomon's alliance with Pharaoh through marriage violated God's commands in Exodus 34:12-16. This passage warns against making treaties with the inhabitants of the land to avoid being ensnared by their idolatrous practices. Marrying foreign women could lead to the introduction of foreign gods and the prostitution of

oneself to other deities, leading children astray. God desires an exclusive and pure covenant relationship, which is violated by worshipping other gods.

- **How did Solomon initially demonstrate his love for the Lord, and what "exception" was present in his actions?**
- Solomon initially showed his love for the Lord by walking in the statutes of his father, David, demonstrating obedience. However, he also continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at the high places, indicating an inconsistency or "exception" in his obedience. This exception highlights the importance of complete devotion without excuses or limits.
- **What did Solomon request from God in his dream at Gibeon, and why was this request pleasing to God?**
- Solomon asked for a "listening heart" (a discerning heart) to govern God's people and to distinguish between right and wrong. This request was pleasing to God because it demonstrated humility, concern for the people's well-being, and a desire to govern justly according to God's will, rather than seeking personal wealth or power.
- **What guidelines for effective prayer can be derived from Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 3?**
- Guidelines for effective prayer include humility, acknowledging God's character and past acts of kindness (hesed), seeking a listening heart to discern God's ways, and prioritizing concern for others over selfish desires. Rooting prayer in the understanding of God's faithfulness and His desire for the best for His followers is also crucial.
- **What does the story of the two prostitutes reveal about Solomon's wisdom, and what is the underlying message of the story?**
- The story of the two prostitutes demonstrates Solomon's ability to discern the truth by understanding the motivations of the two women. His wisdom allowed him to see beyond their words and into their hearts, revealing the true mother's selfless love. The story highlights the importance of being motivated by love and the well-being of others rather than selfish desires and personal rights. Solomon's wisdom was used to administer justice and govern effectively, setting him apart as a leader with divine insight.