

Doxology
Rev. George M. Schwab, Ph.D.
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1 Kings 3:9

(BHS)

(NASB)

וְנִתְתֵּן לְךָ עַבְדָּךְ So give Your **servant**
לֹבֶשׁ מִזְמָעָן לְשִׁפְטָה אֶת־עָםֶךָ an understanding heart to **judge** Your people
לְהַבִּין בֵּין־טוֹב לְרָעָ to discern between good and evil.
כִּי מֵי יוּכֶל לְשִׁפְטָה For who is able to **judge**
אֶת־עָםֶךָ כְּכֹבֵד תָּהָה: this **great** people of Yours?"

“**Servant**” in line 1 you know from the name, “**Obadiah**,” “**Servant-of-Yah.**” The second word of line 2 actually means, “hearing.” Solomon wants a listening heart to judge God’s people. Most translations interpret “**judge**” as “govern” or “rule.” But his wisdom particularly shined in how he discerned truth in situations where he had to actually *judge*. Thus I used NASB’s “**judge**” to highlight this aspect. Notice that “**great**” in line 5 is the adjective form of the noun **kabod**, “glory.” The *b* sounds like *v* and the *o* is long, “kav-ODE.” God’s people are weighty, difficult, requiring extraordinary acumen.

Perhaps Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders should particularly own this prayer. Before each session meeting, why not start with this?

Stories of a genie in a bottle offering three wishes are about the astuteness of the one rubbing the lamp. Will he waste his wishes? What are the ideal three? What would you wish? Similarly, when you heard Solomon’s story as a young person, didn’t you marvel at how he answered, when God in a dream offered him anything he wanted? Haven’t you wondered if you would be so quick on your feet, in the heat of the moment, to give such a response?

In a word, Solomon's answer was wise. In fact, it shows that he already was wise before he even asked for wisdom. And this should tell you something. The wise value wisdom. (Fools care nothing for wisdom. In Proverbs' opening verses, it lists the sorts of people it is written for—but fools are not on the list, even though they would theoretically benefit the most.)

But notice that Solomon wasn't desirous for general wisdom in the abstract. He asked specifically for wisdom to rule. Skill to administrate. The perceptivity to ferret out truth from error, to discern good from evil.

This relates to the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. When I teach Old Testament part 1, the semester begins with Adam on Mount Eden and ends with Solomon on Mount Zion—thematically going full circle to where it began, with Humanity on the sacred mountain poised to rule for God. Knowing good and evil is a royal trait, needed to rule over the earth effectively.

Solomon was daunted at the weighty prospect of ruling this ponderous and unwieldy population, and asked for competency. Pleased with this, God gave him also, "riches and *kabod*" (3:13). The noun *kabod* (Greek *doxa*) only occurs one other time in 1 Kings, in 8:11, where it is God's *kabod* that filled the Temple. Solomon personally imaged the glory of God. His great wealth was glorious, imaging God's blazing luminosity. And also, in Solomon's wisdom to rule and to judge, Solomon also imaged the wise God who rules the world.

This is what Paul says: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the *doxa* of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of *doxa* to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18). Like Solomon, we reflect and image the *doxa* of the Lord. But our *doxa* is

entirely moral and spiritual. It is seen in how we put our faith into practice, in our righteous dealings, our interest in the things of God, our personal morality.

The crowds marveled at Jesus' wisdom. He said that one greater than Solomon had come (Matt 13:54, 12:42). The wise today follow Jesus and marvel at his words. They seek to emulate him in their lives. The wise have his Spirit within them, moving them to become wiser still.

Would you do as well as Solomon if God offered you anything you wanted? Well, you already have. You answered wisely when, at your conversion, you told God that you will have his Son.

In addition to Jesus, God gives you everything needed to fulfill the particular mission that he has for you. He will give you ample opportunity to shine as his image-bearer in glorious humility and grace, while you go through what on the surface is your mundane, daily life. And someday, you will judge angels (1 Cor 6:3).

Let us make it a point each day to recommit ourselves to wisdom, reflecting God's glory, awaiting our glorious Savior from heaven. Let that be our doxology. Amen. Come, glorious Lord Jesus!