**WISE KING, HAPPY PEOPLE**

1 Kings 4:1-34

Key verse 25

During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

**Introduction**

 During David’s reign as king, God used him to build up and establish the young nation of Israel’s place in the region. During that period, because of war, they didn’t have time to establish the governmental structure that was needed to govern a growing nation. God allowed rest and peace to the kingdom under Solomon’s kingship. He was given outstanding wisdom from the Lord. Then he used his wisdom to organize the kingdom. The title, “wise king, happy people” may remind us of our relationship with our Lord God. Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd”. As long as the good shepherd, Jesus Christ leads us, even during this pandemic, we are led to the spring of water welling up to eternal life. May the Lord help us to be led continually by our Lord, Jesus Christ’s leadership and to obey His command to lead wandering souls. In this stressful time, nothing is more important than having Jesus’ truth dwell in our hearts. May the Lord help us to grow into Jesus’ image so that we may influence others as a source of blessing for God’s glory. Praise Jesus!

1. Read verses 1-19. Who were Solomon’s chief officials. What can we learn from his wisdom to rule over all Israel? (1-6) For what purpose did he establish twelve district governors? (7) Who were they? (8-19)

1-1, Read verses 1-19.

So King Solomon ruled over all Israel. 2 And these were his chief officials:

Azariah son of Zadok—the priest;

3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha—secretaries;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud—recorder;

4 Benaiah son of Jehoiada—commander in chief;

Zadok and Abiathar—priests;

5 Azariah son of Nathan—in charge of the district governors;

Zabud son of Nathan—a priest and adviser to the king;

6 Ahishar—palace administrator;

Adoniram son of Abda—in charge of forced labor.

7 Solomon had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year.8 These are their names:

Ben-Hur—in the hill country of Ephraim;

9 Ben-Deker—in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan;

10 Ben-Hesed—in Arubboth (Sokoh and all the land of Hepher were his);

11 Ben-Abinadab—in Naphoth Dor (he was married to Taphath daughter of Solomon);

12 Baana son of Ahilud—in Taanach and Megiddo, and in all of Beth Shan next to Zarethanbelow Jezreel, from Beth Shan to Abel Meholah across to Jokmeam;

13 Ben-Geber—in Ramoth Gilead (the settlements of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead were his, as well as the region of Argob in Bashan and its sixty large walled cities with bronze gate bars);

14 Ahinadab son of Iddo—in Mahanaim;

15 Ahimaaz—in Naphtali (he had married Basemath daughter of Solomon);

16 Baana son of Hushai—in Asher and in Aloth;

17 Jehoshaphat son of Paruah—in Issachar;

18 Shimei son of Ela—in Benjamin;

19 Geber son of Uri—in Gilead (the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and the country of Og king of Bashan). He was the only governor over the district.

1-2, Who were Solomon’s chief officials.

1-3, What can we learn from his wisdom to rule over all Israel? (1-6)

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* The kingdom is a complex place, there are a lot of things to do to run a nation. Listed here are secretaries, army commanders, spiritual leaders, district officers, recorders, labor managers, and governors.
* And again we see Solomon’s wisdom in action as he creates these positions and appoints the right people to administer them.
* Settling local disputes like the one between the prostitutes is essential to a successful reign, but his leadership expertise must extend to broader issues.
* Solomon was a leader of leaders. No wise leader does it all themselves. They know how to delegate responsibility and authority and get the job done.
* Solomon's great wisdom enabled him to see the needs to get, train, and employ the right people to meet those needs.
* The priest … scribes … the recorder: Solomon's government was structured much like that in modern nations. He had officials who served as "ministers" or "secretaries" over their specific areas of responsibility.
* Solomon's leadership was organized. He knew that God is a God of design and organization, and that things simply operate better and more efficiently when organized.
* Praise Jesus Christ who is the head of the church and the author of our wisdom and understanding for all things!

Colossians 1:9-10, 15-17 reads,

 *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through* ***all the wisdom and understanding*** *that the Spirit gives,[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29475e)*] 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way:* ***bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,***

 *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;* ***all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.***

1-4, For what purpose did he establish twelve district governors? (7)

***7 Solomon had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year.***

1-5, Who were they? (8-19)

***8 These are their names:***

***Ben-Hur—in the hill country of Ephraim;***

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* Such an impressive government, and Israel’s growing population, required vast resources to continue operations.
* These district governors were responsible for taxation in their individual districts. The districts were not strictly separated by tribal borders, but often according to mountains, land, and region.
* Solomon's leadership was creative. Solomon knew that the way in the past wasn't necessarily the best way to do it. He was willing to try new things.
* Each one made provision for one month of the year. Taxes were used to support the royal court and the central government.
* It doesn't seem too much to do one-twelfth of the work, so each of these governors didn't feel overwhelmed by the burden of raising so much in taxes.

### Read verses 20-28. Describe Solomon’s reign and prosperity, and what does it show us about God’s promises to Abraham and David? (20-28) What warning can we heed from verse 26? (Deuteronomy 17:16)

### 2-1, Read verses 20-28.

20 The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. 21 And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon’s subjects all his life. 22 Solomon’s daily provisions were thirty cors[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+kings+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8867a)] of the finest flour and sixty cors[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+kings+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8867b)] of meal,23 ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl. 24 For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphsah to Gaza, and had peace on all sides. 25 During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree. 26 Solomon had four[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+kings+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8871c)] thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+kings+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8871d)]27 The district governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king’s table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking. 28 They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

### 2-2, Describe Solomon’s reign and prosperity, and what does it show us about God’s promises to Abraham and David? (20-28)

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### Verse 20, “The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy.” reminds us of God’s word of promise given to Abraham in Genesis. God has been faithful in fulfilling His promise at His beautiful time!

* Verse 21 shows that God fulfilled Genesis 15:18-21. *“18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites,Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.””*

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* We see here that Solomon’s kingdom was very prosperous by God’s abundant grace.

***25 During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.***

* This is a proverbial expression for a time of peace and prosperity in Israel ([Isaiah 36:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/isaiah/36/16/s_715016), [Micah 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/micah/4/4/s_897004), [Zechariah 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/zechariah/3/10/s_914010)), indicating safety from both internal and external enemies.

***26 Solomon had four[c] thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses. 27 The district governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king’s table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking. 28 They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.***

### 2-3, What warning can we heed from verse 26? (Deuteronomy 17:16)

***26 Solomon had four[c] thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.***

***16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” (Deuteronomy 17:16)***

* Unfortunately, it also shows that Solomon did not take God's word as seriously as he should. In [Deuteronomy 17:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/deuteronomy/17/16/s_170016), God spoke specifically to the future kings of Israel: But he shall not multiply horses for himself.
* One may argue if 20 or 100 horses violates the command to not multiply horses, but certainly forty thousand (According to Hebrew bible) stalls of horses is multiplying horses.

### Read verses 29-34. Describe how Solomon’s wisdom, insight, and understanding impacted surrounding nations. (29-31) What else did he reveal about his knowledge? (32-34) Think about the relationship between godly wisdom and man’s happiness through this passage.

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### 3-1, Read verses 29-34.

 29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. 34 From all nations people came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

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### 3-4, Think about the relationship between godly wisdom and man’s happiness through this passage.

### Solomon became a prominent and famous man even among kings. In a strong sense, this is the fulfillment of the great promises to an obedient Israel described in [Deuteronomy 28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/deuteronomy/28/1-68/s_181001).

### Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth...Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. (Deuteronomy 28:1 and 10)

### Also in a greater scale, these blessings came upon Solomon more for both Abraham’s and David's obedience than his own.

### Abraham and David were far more loyal and intimate with God than Solomon was, yet God outwardly blessed Solomon more for Abraham’s as well as David's sake. Praise the Lord our faithful God for good!

* This is a small example of heaven on earth that every nation dreams to be always. A kingdom that is ruled by a wise leader is a happy kingdom. Wise leaders are a blessing to be around.
* They are secure in their position and they mentor the others around them. On the other hand, foolish leaders are fearful and insecure, they can’t make wise decisions and they manipulate them. It’s agony living under a foolish leader.
* Jesus’ wisdom is the one that is greater than Solomon. (Mt 12:42, Lk 11:31) Our God is the wisest, he is the one who gave wisdom to Solomon. And if the people of Solomon’s kingdom were happy, just think how happy the residents of God’s kingdom will be.
* God promises that whoever accepts his son Jesus as their Lord and Savior, will rise and be welcomed into his glorious kingdom and those who reject Jesus will rise to be condemned. Rest assured, God is one who keeps his promise.

**One word: Everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree!**