

## Blank Check – 2 Chronicles 1:1-12

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. *Best Life*

1. I like scanning the magazine racks because I've discovered the titles & articles are a great way to get an idea of what's going on in the culture.
2. A few years ago a *new* magazine came out called *Best Life*.
  - a. It's aimed at men, with articles about clothes, exercise, money management, travel & gadgets.
  - b. Supposedly if a guy follows the magazine's guidance, his is "the best life."
3. Uhhh – No! Sorry.
  - a. Because *absent* from that magazine & from most popular culture is **the most important thing of all.**
  - b. What that is we'll see in our study today.

### II. TEXT

#### A. V. 1

**<sup>1</sup> Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and exalted him exceedingly.**

1. Kings tells us the very beginning of Solomon's reign wasn't without some drama.
  - a. One of his half brothers thought he ought to be king & made a bid for the throne.
  - b. Chronicles skips that & moves to the point where Solomon is securely in place.
2. God blessed him just as He'd promised his father David He would.
3. And in these early years, Solomon loved the Lord.

#### B. Vs. 2-6

**<sup>2</sup> And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' houses. <sup>3</sup> Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. <sup>4</sup> But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to *the place* David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him *there*. <sup>6</sup> And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.**

1. The only part of the ancient tabernacle David had brought to Jerusalem was the ark of the covenant.
2. The rest of the tabernacle, including the massive bronze altar where they made

- the daily offerings, was 6 miles NW of Jerusalem at the city of Gibeon.
3. Since Gibeon was the central place of worship for the kingdom Solomon gathered Israel's leaders *there*.
    - a. He wanted them to know he intended to follow in his father's footsteps of keeping the worship of God at the center of national life.
    - b. This was something David had hammered into Solomon; Israel safety & success rested in her devotion to God.
    - c. So here at the beginning, Solomon convened an assembly to inform everyone his father's policy would be his.
    - d. A thousand offerings made that crystal.

### C. V. 7

**<sup>7</sup> On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"**

1. God appeared to Solomon with a remarkable offer. **"ASK! What shall I give you?"**
  2. The words are wide open. Solomon understood God was giving him *Carte Blanche* - a blank check.
  3. *Whatever* Solomon asked, God would do for him.
  4. God made Solomon this offer because years before his father *David* had wanted to build God a temple.
    - a. God told David while He was pleased with his desire he couldn't build it, but that his son who reigned after him, *would*.
    - b. God then promised David he would bless Solomon mightily.
    - c. This offer was God *keeping that promise*.
  5. But it's also a *test*: For in the face of such a grandiose offer, *what will Solomon choose?*
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6. Indeed, if God appeared to *you* & made this offer, *what would you ask for?*
    - a. Fame? Wealth? Power? Possessions? Position?
    - b. This is something we need to ponder → What would I ask for?

### D. Vs. 8-10

**<sup>8</sup> And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. <sup>9</sup> Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. <sup>10</sup> Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"**

1. Solomon was overwhelmed by the task before him.
    - a. He was probably no more than 20 & had stepped into shoes that were way too big for him.
    - b. So he asked for the wisdom to rule wisely.
  2. You know what this tells us about Solomon?
    - a. He already had *some* wisdom; enough to know what he had wasn't enough.
    - b. He who seeks wisdom is already wise. It's the fool who spurns wisdom.
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3. Solomon asked for the *practical wisdom* to rule well.
    - a. As king he was a judge, a general, an administrator, & a leader.

- b. Each of these roles required a different skill-set.
  - c. Solomon knew he lacked the knowledge to perform these roles.
  - d. So he asked for the *practical wisdom* to rule beyond what his years had taught him.
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- 4. A young new president of a bank made an appointment with his retired predecessor to seek some advice.
    - a. He began by saying, “Sir, you’ve been a successful president for years. I was wondered if you’d be kind enough to share with me some of the insights that have been the key to your success.”
    - b. The older man replied: “Young man, 2 words: **Good decisions.**”
    - c. The younger man said, “Thank you, but how does one know which are **good** decisions?”
    - d. The man replied, “One word, young man: **Experience.**”
    - e. The junior asked, “But how does one get experience?”
    - f. The retired president said, “2 words: **Bad decisions.**”
  - 5. Experience **is** a good teacher **if** we’re willing to listen to it.
  - 6. But many young people think they’ve got the answers to the world’s problems; that they know better than their parents how things ought to be done.
    - a. They think everyone over the age of 35 is mentally impaired but **they’ve** got it figured out & the world ought to be turned over to them.
    - b. If God came with this offer to them, their request would be to put them in charge.
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- c. When these young idealists actually have to live on their own, & get a chance to try their ideas, they realize their naïveté.
- 7. Solomon lived under no such delusion. He **knew** the task was greater than he was, so he asked for the wisdom to rule well.
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### **E. Vs. 11-12**

**<sup>11</sup> Then God said to Solomon: “Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king— <sup>12</sup> wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like.”**

- 1. God gave Solomon his request—the wisdom to rule.
- 2. He was so blessed by the young man’s request, He also promised the things he **could have** asked for but didn’t; wealth, health, & great honor.

### **F. The Best?**

- 1. The name “Solomon” has become synonymous with wisdom.
  - 2. To this day the phrase, “the wisdom of Solomon” refers to an exceptionally skillful solution to a perplexing dilemma.
  - 3. We honor Solomon’s excellent choice when faced with God’s incredible offer.
    - a. It seems so selfless & wise!
    - b. And indeed, God blessed him.
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4. But was Solomon's request for wisdom ***the best thing*** he could have asked for?
    - a. It was a ***good*** request, **but was it the best?**
    - b. Not really.
  5. Surely the deep longing of his father for communion with God was ***better!***
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6. In Psalm 27:4 David shares his innermost heart when he says -  
**One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life.**
    - a. ***This*** is why David wanted to build the temple!
    - b. It wasn't because he wanted to erect a ***monument*** as a great builder.
    - c. He wasn't interested in leaving a ***landmark!***
    - d. David wanted to build a temple because he yearned for the return of God's glory!
      - 1) He'd read the Scriptures; how when the ark of the covenant was installed in the holy of holies the Shekinah appeared above it.
      - 2) This is why he brought the ark to Jerusalem, because it was the one thing that was most intimately connected to the visible presence of God.
      - 3) For David, the temple was all about being close to God.
      - 4) That was his all consuming desire.
  7. There's no evidence in Solomon's story he ever had the devotion to God that marked his father's life.
  8. And for all his wisdom, Solomon's later years were marked by apostasy & the most grotesque sin.
  9. Indeed—to the degree he possessed wisdom, to the same degree he fell to foolishness when he turned his back on God.

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. Seeking the Best

1. Take a look at 1 Chronicles 29:1 -  
**Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; . . .**
  - a. At this point, David had begun turning over some royal duties to Solomon to perform.
  - b. But when David introduced him to the leaders of the nation, he pointed out his son's ***inadequacies***.
2. Now look at 1 Chronicles 22:5 –  
**Now David said, "Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, . . .**
  - a. You get the sense David saw Solomon this as inadequate to the task of ruling.
  - b. Let's read on – 1 Chronicles 22:11-13  
**<sup>11</sup> Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. <sup>12</sup> Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding,**
    - c. Note that – David put the idea of the ***need*** for wisdom into Solomon's mind.
    - d. He was young & inexperienced, so he ***needed*** wisdom & understanding; but that's not all . . .

and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. <sup>13</sup> Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed.

3. All this can be summed up by a heart that loves & is devoted to God.
  - a. But Solomon didn't take this later part to heart like he did the need for wisdom.
  - b. He saw himself the way his father saw him – as “young & inexperienced” & the best way to compensate for his inadequacies was by gaining wisdom.
  - c. Neglected was the higher imperative of desiring God.

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4. But you know what – when **David** was originally anointed king, he **too** was young & inexperienced.
  - a. He was just a lad, tending his father's few sheep.
  - b. What set David apart & commended him as the next king of Israel was his heart for the Lord.
  - c. It wasn't his wisdom or understanding – it was that he longed for God & yearned for others to want Him too.
  - d. A heart for God can be steered into the right path in **any** situation or circumstance.
  - e. **That's** why God made David king.
5. It's too bad Solomon only heeded the first half of his father's instructions.
  - a. What incredible potential Solomon possessed!
  - b. But it was all wasted because he failed to set his heart on God.

### **B. Seek Him First**

1. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said,  
**Seek first the kingdom of God & His righteousness, & all these things shall be added to you.**
2. If we seek God **first**, everything else will be taken care of; just as God blessed Solomon with all he **hadn't** asked for.
3. Listen to the words of Psalm 37:4 -  
**Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.**
  - a. When God is our chief delight, it edits & alters what we long for.
  - b. When staying close to Him is our aim, God knows it's safe to bless us because those blessings won't become a distraction.
4. In Psalm 16:11 we find –  
**You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**
  - a. Happiness, joy, & pleasure are the **byproducts** of seeking God.
  - b. If we set your sights on pleasure, we'll never attain it.
    - 1) You may enjoy it for a moment, but it **won't last** – It won't **satisfy**.
    - 2) You see, **pleasure** isn't a worthwhile **objective**.
    - 3) It's meant to be the evidence we're **doing the right thing** – which is loving & serving God.
    - 4) **Happiness** isn't the goal – it's the fruit, the evidence & overflow of

communion with Christ.

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5. Bob & Bill were next door neighbors.
    - a. Bob was one of those guys who had to have the newest & best of everything.
      - 1) Whenever a new gadget or appliance came out, he was one of the first to get it.
      - 2) He subscribed to 2 dozen magazines so he could stay up on all the trends & news.
      - 3) He was forever coming over to Bill's showing what new thing he'd just picked up.
    - b. Bill was the opposite; he lived simply but was always happy with what he had.

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  - c. One day Bob came over to Bill's all excited.
    - 1) He'd just bought a brand new 52" Sony Bravia XBR 1080p HD LCD TV.
    - 2) He listed off all the specs to Bill who was oblivious to all the numbers & tech terms.
    - 3) He just listened to Bob, smiling, saying, "That's great Bob."
  - d. When Bob was finally finished & turned to go, he saw Bill's old 19" Kmart TV.
  - e. Bill was watching one of Bob's favorite movies; one he hadn't seen in years.
    - 1) He turned to Bill & asked, "How are you getting that movie? It's my all-time favorite."
    - 2) Bill told him it was a classic movie channel on cable.
    - 3) Bob replied, "What's cable?"
6. Bob had one of the best TV's money can buy, but he had no idea what it was for!!
    - a. He had no idea what cable was or that you could connect it to the TV & watch programs.
  7. Okay – silly story: But what's even more silly – beyond silly all the way to tragic, is the fact that many people are like Bob: they've invested themselves in pursuing the good life but left out the most important thing of all – connection to God through faith in Christ.
  8. They miss the big picture while they spend all their time & efforts at surrounding themselves with that which in the end is just a distraction.