**IF I HAD ONE WISH**

In 1704 the French author and storyteller Antoine Galland published his original book of fairy tales he titled *The Arabian Nights*. In it were tales like *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, and *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor.* But perhaps the most famous story was *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp*. It has been told and retold in many languages and nations for the past 300 years. Disney, of course, turned it into a blockbuster animated movie in 1992. An orphan boy discovers a lamp and soon after rubbing it is greeted by a powerful genie that can grant him three wishes (FYI – in the original book he has unlimited wishes… sigh). There were three restrictions: “I cannot kill anyone. I cannot make one fall in love. I cannot revive dead people. Oh, and ex-nay on the wishing for more wishes.”

In the movie version he says, “Genie, I wish for you to make me a prince.” That’s one. “Genie, I wish you to save my life from drowning.” That’s two. “Genie, I wish for your freedom.” That’s three. Oh, he also got the girl.

Compare that to the evil Jafar’s three wishes when he captured the magic lamp. “Genie, I wish to rule on high as Sultan.” That’s one. “Genie, I wish to become the most powerful sorcerer in the world.” That’ two. “Genie, I wish to become an all-powerful genie.” That’s three. So, he’s sucked into the lamp and is buried forever! Aladdin and Jasmine live happily ever after. The end.

But, alas, this is only a fairy tale, right? No, not really. It very well could have been lifted right out of the Bible. About 3,000 years ago (he reigned from 970 – 930 B.C.) a young prince came to the throne of a growing empire and was immediately overwhelmed with the task of ruling such a vast people. He does not get a magical lamp, but he gets a miraculous dream. He is told by God, not Genie, to ask for any wish (only one, not three). I’m sure he gave great thought to that amazing opportunity. If made that offer, for what would you wish?

I Kings 3:5-9 reveals Solomon’s answer. “*I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”*

God was so pleased with this young man’s wish that He gave him a bucket full of extras that he didn’t even ask for. It was far better than any BOGO deal! It was an WOG4 deal. Wish One Get Four. He not only gave Solomon a wise and understanding heart, but threw in “*both riches and honor… and I will lengthen your days*” (I Kgs. 3:13-14). It was a better deal than Aladdin ever dreamed. And, it was no fairy tale.

You would hope that this story would also end with the words, “And he got the girl and they lived happily ever after. The end.”

Sadly, it doesn’t. The dream-come-true turned into a horrible nightmare, at least as far as Solomon’s happiness is concerned. Most of you are well aware of his life’s story. He does indeed get the princess (Pharaoh’s own daughter), but gets 999 more as well. He builds a harem of 700 wives and 300 concubines (secondary wives of a lower class) – I Kgs. 11:3. He becomes so rich that silver could be treated as mere rock pebbles (I Kgs. 10:21). To read I Kings 10 leaves me breathless. The Queen of Sheba would summarize it well: *“It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 7 However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard” (10:6-7).* But doesn’t that sound like a happily-ever-after story?

In what might be called an autobiographical book Solomon gives us the inside scoop on his real life. It reads like some tragic “The Rich and The Famous” biographies of wealthy tycoons and Hollywood celebrities. What you see is NOT what you get. What you see in the Penthouse photo shoot, or the Red Carpet walk at the Oscar’s, is all smoke and mirrors. You wouldn’t trade places with them for love or money. There’s a very good reason the divorce rate and the suicide rate are almost a foregone conclusion among such people. Solomon seemed just as miserable.

*“I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind”* (Eccl. 1:14). Other translations put it this way: “*I found everything to be futile, chasing after the wind*” (CSB); “*everything is just as senseless as chasing the wind*” (CEV). One commentator wrote, “It is everything you have left after you pop a bubble.”

Why do I write this today?

After watching the race riots, the lootings, the burnings, the vitriol of hatred spewing from angry hearts, I asked God for one wish. Before I tell you mine, tell me yours. What would you wish for if given Solomon’s dream-come-true request from God? In a simple one word, or one phrase, or even one sentence, describe what you would say to God if given such a chance. I’d love to see your response.

I’ll tell you mine tomorrow.

Until then, wish upon a star, but then pray to the Bright and Morning Star. Dreams can come true.

I love you.

Rick

P.S. By the way, I got the girl too, and lived happily ever after.