

## **Lecture #14B – Exposition of I Kings 1-2**

### **Chapter 1 – Solomon Chosen – 1016 B.C.**

#### **vs. 1-4 – David and Abishag**

David is 69 years old<sup>1</sup> and in failing health. His life of being on the run and fighting battles surely has caught up with him.

A specific malady is that he cannot stay warm, despite being covered in clothes or blankets. To ease David's discomfort, a young woman named Abishag ("Father of, or given to, error")<sup>2</sup> is brought in. She became something of a wife/concubine to David, but her role was more that of a caregiver.

Edersheim writes:

"The story of Abishag is only introduced in order to explain the occasion of Adonijah's later execution. Of course it must be viewed in the light of the toleration of polygamy, nor could the object which the physicians had in view have been otherwise secured."<sup>3</sup>

#### **vs. 5-10 – Adonijah Claims the Throne**

Adonijah was the fourth-born son of David and heir apparent to the throne. Those ahead of him in birth order are dead: Amnon, Chileab/Daniel<sup>4</sup>, and Absalom. He seems to have grown impatient for his father's death, and perhaps fearing another brother might end up on the throne, he so makes his claim now.

It is interesting to note that this is the first time Israel has had to deal with a succession crisis. After Saul's death, there was a chaotic period where Judah made David their king and the northern tribes made Ishbosheth theirs at the instigation of Abner. The manner of Saul's death and the loss of his other sons, especially Jonathan, made it difficult to know who should be the next king from that line. Carroll writes:

"It was not according to the law of primogeniture, i.e., the oldest son does not by law succeed his father. Indeed, we find that it is not according to heredity in a still larger sense. God changed the dynasty from Saul to David. Saul's sons did not succeed him, but he created a new dynasty in David. When we come to study the divided kingdom we will notice quite a number of dynastic changes. But all the time in Judah the king is at least a descendant of David. The dynasty does not change in that kingdom. We have already seen the law of primogeniture set aside in God's dealing with families. For instance, Isaac and not Ishmael becomes the head of the family, and Jacob and

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<sup>1</sup> Reese's Chronological Bible, p. 508

<sup>2</sup> Easton's Bible Dictionary. Slightly reworded to prevent formatting issues.

<sup>3</sup> Bible History: Old Testament by Alfred Edersheim. Book 5, p. 52

<sup>4</sup> "He seems to have died when young." – Easton's Bible Dictionary

not Esau, and we see it extending even to the tribes. Not Reuben, who is unstable, but Judah, became the head of the tribes.”<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from God had already chosen Solomon to be David’s successor on the throne (II Samuel 7:12-16, 12:24-25; I Chronicles 22:8-10). David knew this. Bathsheba knew this. Nathan knew this. Solomon must have known. Adonijah likely was aware of this.<sup>6</sup> How many others knew this, we cannot say. It is obvious that many either did not know or did not support the choice of Solomon.

There are echoes of Absalom’s plot here. This was not a thing done in secret and much negotiating has been taking place. He has convinced Abiathar, one of the co-high priests, and Joab, general of the army, to support his claim. But others were not swayed or not courted: Zadok, the other co-high priest; Benaiah, head of David’s bodyguards; Nathan the prophet; the mighty men; and Solomon.

### vs. 11-31 – Nathan and Bathsheba Intervene

Nathan and Bathsheba work swiftly. They know that Solomon was the heir and also that failure meant their deaths. David seems to be confined to his bedchamber because of his frailty. Bathsheba enters and makes her urgent but respectful case. Then, likely by arrangement, Nathan enters and does the same. David acknowledges that Solomon is to succeed him and takes swift action.

### vs. 32-40 – Solomon is Anointed

While Adonijah has his party at Enrogel (south of Jerusalem in the Kidron Valley), Solomon is anointed king at Gihon (northeast of Jerusalem in the Kidron Valley). There a procession with Zadok, Nathan, and the royal bodyguard goes with Solomon riding on the king’s own mule. When Solomon is proclaimed king, the shofar is blown, a shout is raised, and the music of celebration begins. The sound is loud enough that it drowns out Adonijah’s party that was perhaps a half-mile away.

### vs. 41-53 – Adonijah Submits

When word reaches the party at Enrogel, the attendees scatter. It is evident that David, along with most of the government and people, have backed Solomon. Adonijah’s plot has failed.

On the subject of which altar Adonijah fled to and the significance of him grasping the horns of the altar, Matthew Poole comments:

“Either that which was at Gibeon, as appears from 1 Chronicles 16:39 2 Chronicles 1:3; and was made with four horns, Exodus 38:2; to which the sacrifices were bound Psalm 118:27. Or rather, that which set David had lately up in the threshing-floor of Araunah, which doubtless was made

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<sup>5</sup> An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Hebrew Monarchy, by B.H. Carroll. p. 263

<sup>6</sup> Why else would he not invite Solomon to the party in I Kings 1:10?

after the same form as that at Gibeon; for, first, This was next at hand. Secondly, The altar only is mentioned here, whereas in Joab's case there is mention of the tabernacle and altar both, 1 Kings 2:28,29, which seems to be noted to distinguish the two altars; for Adonijah being the king's son, he might safely go to Araunah's altar, and the people would not be forward to seize upon him, or bring him to justice: but Joab truly thought it was not safe for him to venture himself there, and therefore he fleeth to Gibeon, as a place more remote from Jerusalem. Hither he fled, either to implore God's mercy; or rather, to avoid Solomon's rage; supposing that his reverence to that sacred place would not permit him to pollute it with his brother's blood; or that the consideration of God's grace and mercy, which himself needed and begged of God, in pardoning his offences, and accepting the sacrifices which he should offer there, would engage and dispose him to show mercy to his offending and now penitent brother; or that his piety would not allow him violently to pluck him as it were out of the arms of God, into which he had put himself. And for these or such-like reasons the altar was esteemed a kind of sanctuary or place of refuge, not only among the Gentiles, but also among the Hebrews, though it be not called by that name, as may be gathered from Exodus 21:14 1 Kings 2:28.<sup>7</sup>

Solomon grants his brother request for mercy. Adonijah is warned to behave himself and he is dismissed from the court.<sup>8</sup>

## **Chapter 2 – Death of David**

### **vs. 1-9 – David's Charge to Solomon**

The first part of David's charge is personal. In verses 2-4 he exhorts his son to be strong and walk in God's truth.

The second part is practical. Three individuals are marked by David. First is Joab, whose murderous ways deserved judgment. Second is Barzillai, whose support during Absalom's rebellion deserved recognition. Third is Shimei, who cursed David as he ran from Jerusalem but begged peace when he returned. That man is also marked for judgment.

♪ Psalms 37, 138

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<sup>7</sup> [https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1\\_kings/1-50.htm](https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_kings/1-50.htm) - accessed 10-7-22

<sup>8</sup> I think this is the meaning of Solomon telling him to "Go to thine house". He is no longer welcome to participate in the affairs of state or have a presence in the court.

### vs. 10-11 – Death of David

☪ I Chronicles 29:26-30

So David, the king chosen from the sheepfold to unite Israel and establish a dynasty, passes into eternity. He was 70 years of age with a body worn out by many trials and battles.

### vs. 12 – Solomon, the King

☪ I Chronicles 29:22-25

Solomon, age 20, is now the sole king over Israel. For about the past year, he and David were officially co-rulers. Though with David's declining health it is almost certain that Solomon was by far the more active of the two.

### vs. 13-25 – Death of Adonijah

The conniving Adonijah has not fully given up on his designs for the throne. Reading between the lines of the account, there is a coup in the works with Joab and Abiathar the priest involved. But they must first find some claim that Adonijah can use to strengthen his case to be king.

Adonijah will not go before Solomon himself with the request, but instead convinces Bathsheba to do bear his petition to Solomon. That request was that Abishag, David's young wife/caretaker be given to him for a wife. It may seem a small consolation to give someone that could not have the throne, but Solomon saw the plot at once. Such a claim upon one of David's wives was a claim upon David's house and throne. The unique situation of Abishag does not dismiss that.

Benaiah, the head of the royal bodyguard, finds and executes Adonijah.

### vs. 26-27 – Abiathar Deposed

Because of Abiathar's past faithfulness to David and his position as priest, he is spared from execution. Instead, he is put into retirement. This removes the final person from the line of Ithamar and Eli from the high priesthood.

vs. 28-34 – Death of Joab

Joab attempts to find mercy by going to the Tabernacle and grasping the horns of the Altar. Yet Solomon chooses to ignore his plea because he was not innocent, having murdered two men in cold blood. Benaiah kills him in the Tabernacle.

vs. 35-46 – Death of Shimei

Note in vs. 35 that Solomon is putting the people he trusts in charge: Benaiah over the army and Zadok over the priesthood.

Shimei was allowed to live in house arrest in Jerusalem but warned that if he ever left the city he would be killed. After three years he did so in tracking down some fugitive servants. Solomon finds out and Benaiah kills Shimei.