

1 Kings

1. Introduction and chapter 1 & 2

December 6, 2007

A. INTRODUCTION OF 1 KINGS

The Books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally just one book in the Hebrew Bible, as were the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel. They were collectively called 'The Book of Samuel' and 'The Book of Kings'. In the Septuagint - the Greek translation of the Old Testament, written around 150 B.C., the two books were joined together as the The Books of Kings, but later it was divided into four books.

Jewish traditions say the author was Jeremiah. The Books of 1 and 2 Kings is the narrative that covers almost five hundred years from the initiation to the eclipse of their kingship. It is the story of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of high promise and abject failure, of tragedy and yet of hope.

B. ADONIYAH THE OPPORTUNIST

1 Kings 1:1-4 Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm. 2 Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin, be sought for our lord the king, and let her stand before the king, and let her care for him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our lord the king may be warm." 3 So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4 The young woman was very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her.

David was really old. He couldn't even keep himself warm, let alone ruling the nation. Note this young woman Abishag for chapter 2, please.

1 Kings 1:5-10 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6 (And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He was also very good-looking. His mother had borne him after Absalom.) 7 Then he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they followed and helped Adonijah. 8 But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the mighty men who belonged to David were not with Adonijah. 9 And Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En Rogel; he also invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants. 10 But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or Solomon his brother.

King David was not even dead yet, but his oldest son Adonijah is declaring himself as a new king with a handful of supporters.

When a crisis happens, a true leader rises up and asks, "What can I do to help the people?" But an opportunist show up uninvited and asks, "How can I use this situation to promote myself and get what I want?" Adonijah was an opportunist.

Adonijah was David's oldest living son. David's firstborn, Amnon, was killed by Absalom. His second son, Kileab must have died young because there's no record of his life. And the third son, Absalom, was killed by Joab during his rebellion against king David. As David's oldest son, Adonijah felt that he deserved the throne. In addition to that, Adonijah had a good marketing campaign going on to get his support from others.

Sadly, David did not do a very good job raising his own sons. This was a reoccurring event. When Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, father didn't say anything. He was angry. When Absalom killed Amnon in revenge, against the father said nothing. David was very passive when it comes to disciplining his children.

It sometimes feels like you are being cruel in handing out consequences for your children's and grandchildren's wrong behavior. But the real cruelty is to neglect disciplining children. The consequences are horrendous not only in the present, but also in the future.

Adonijah violated a basic principle in the Scriptures. We should let God exalt us and not exalt ourselves.

Psalm 75:6-7 For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

C. SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE

1 Kings 1:11-14 So Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it? 12 Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. 13 Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' 14 Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

Nathan and Bathsheba knew that David had promised that Solomon would be the next king because Solomon was God's choice. And they both knew that if Adonijah became king he would immediately kill every potential rival to his throne, including Bathsheba and Solomon.

I believe that this is a remarkable display of the grace of God. The son of the woman David took through adultery and then murdered her husband in the most infamous scandal of his life should become his heir. There is not a sin that our merciful God cannot forgive.

D. PROCLAIMING SOLOMON KING

1 Kings 1:28-36 Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. 29 And the king took an oath and said, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress, 30 just as I swore to you by the Lord God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day." 31 Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, "Let my

lord King David live forever!" 32 And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king. 33 The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. 34 There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!' 35 Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah." 36 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, "Amen! May the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

The mule was the animal that kings rode upon, while the horse was the animal of warfare. You will find in the Book of Revelation that the riding of the four horses speaks of turmoil and warfare. Also the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to his earth riding on a white horse, which speaks of warfare. He will come to put down rebellion on the earth and before Him every knee shall bow. When the Lord came to earth the first time, He did not come to make war. He came to offer Himself as Israel's Messiah, and that is why He rode a little donkey into Jerusalem.

E. NOT GOOD NEWS FOR ADONIJAH

1 Kings 1:41-43 Now Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the horn, he said, "Why is the city in such a noisy uproar?" 42 While he was still speaking, there came Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest. And Adonijah said to him, "Come in, for you are a prominent man, and bring good news." 43 Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, "No! Our lord King David has made Solomon king.

1 Kings 1:49-53 So all the guests who were with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way. 50 Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51 And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'" 52 Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." 53 So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

I bet it was quite a sight at that feast. After a good meal, they were about to celebrate inauguration of the new king Adonijah. But the whole thing went real bad from there. When they heard, "Solomon is the new king," I am sure that they all scurry away like cocker roaches.

The tabernacle with the other furnishings was at Gibeon at that time. There was an altar there and Adonijah the cocker roach took hold of the horns of the altar, which is what people in danger did before the establishment of the six cities of refuge. A place of asylum at least delayed judgment and gave the accused an opportunity for a hearing.

F. DAVID'S LAST INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

1 Kings 2:1-4 Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 3 And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judg-

ments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4 that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

This aged king David was looking back his life and reminding his son new king Solomon to follow the Lord with everything he has.

If there is one thing we can leave to our children before our death, that is not a lot of money which they would waste. It is not fame which would fade away faster than a winter sunset. It is not anything the world can offer, rather it is an intimate relationship with the Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. We can not make them to be Christians. But we can introduce them to the Lord and let them see God in us. His goodness brings them to repentance, and the love of God makes them desire an intimate relationship with Him.

God promised David that as long as his sons walked in obedience, they would keep the throne of Israel. The Lord kept His promise by giving them Jesus from the royal lineage of David.

From v5-9, it seems that David is revealing what seems like a vengeful spirit, but it actually is not. Joab and Shimei needed to be taken care of, otherwise they would become worse problems during the reign of Solomon.

G. SOME WEASELS NEVER LEARN

1 Kings 2:13-18 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably." 14 Moreover he said, "I have something to say to you." And she said, "Say it." 15 Then he said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for it was his from the Lord. 16 Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me." And she said to him, "Say it." 17 Then he said, "Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife." 18 So Bathsheba said, "Very well, I will speak for you to the king."

1 Kings 2:22-25 And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, "Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also--for he is my older brother--for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah." 23 Then King Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, "May God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life! 24 Now therefore, as the Lord lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has established a house for me, as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today!" 25 So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

The self-appointed king wannabe had a great delusion that the kingdom was his and the people wanted him to be their king even though he himself admitted that God gave the kingdom to Solomon. Did this joker actually believe that he could override God's will with his?

It is not unusual for us to desire our own will so much that we want to ignore what God wants in our lives. God's timing is another one we often get frustrated with.

Here is something we must remember regarding God's will and timing: If our request is wrong, God says, "No"; if our timing is wrong, God says, "Slow"; if we are wrong, God says, "Grow"; but if our request is right and the timing is right, God says, "Go."

Abishag the Shunammite was David's concubine technically. Among the ancient kingdoms, the new king took the harem of the previous king. Now Adonijah wanted to take the "concubine widow" Abishag as wife.

We can guess that Adonijah wanted more than Abishag beauty. In 2 Samuel 16:20-23, Absalom, his late brother tried to make his rebellious claim on David's throne by taking David's concubines unto himself. Adonijah wants to declare or build a claim to Solomon's throne by taking David's widowed concubine as his wife.

H. ANOTHER PROPHECY FULFILLED

1 Kings 2:26-27 And to Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you are deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord God before my father David, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted." 27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, that he might fulfill the word of the Lord which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.

In deposing Abiathar, Solomon fulfilled the prophecy given to Eli that his family would not continue in the priesthood in 1 Sam. 2:27-36. That prophecy was given to Eli some 100 years before Solomon took the throne.

I. JOAB GOT HIS WISH

1 Kings 2:28-30 Then news came to Joab, for Joab had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the Lord, and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29 And King Solomon was told, "Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the Lord; there he is, by the altar." Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, "Go, strike him down." 30 So Benaiah went to the tabernacle of the Lord, and said to him, "Thus says the king, 'Come out!' " And he said, "No, but I will die here." And Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, "Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me."

Joab is one of the more complex characters of the Old Testament. He was fiercely loyal to David, yet not strongly obedient. He was cunning and ruthless in furthering his own position.

The person who can really be benefited from holding the horn of the altar would be a person who killed someone accidentally, not premeditated like Joab did in killing Abner and Amasa.

Joab got his wish dying in the tabernacle.

J. SHIMEI HAD IT COMING

1 Kings 2:40-44 So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. 41 And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back. 42 Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the Lord, and warn you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die'?"

And you said to me, 'The word I have heard is good.' 43 Why then have you not kept the oath of the Lord and the commandment that I gave you?" 44 The king said moreover to Shimei, "You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the Lord will return your wickedness on your own head.

Since Shimei was related to Saul, he was a potential troublemaker who might arouse the tribe of Benjamin against the new king, and perhaps even stir up the ten northern tribes of Israel.

Shimei agreed to live within the city limit of the Jerusalem, yet he defiantly left Jerusalem to get his slaves back from Gath. He was deliberately defying Solomon and pushing the limits just to see what he would do. He found out.

K. SOLOMON'S REIGN

1 Kings 2:46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

With Solomon, there began, in some senses, the most splendid period in Israel's history. The splendor, however, was largely mental and material. The spiritual is noticeably absent.

L. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Crisis doesn't make a character, it merely displays the character within that person.
- 2) If our request is wrong, God says, "No"; if our timing is wrong, God says, "Slow"; if we are wrong, God says, "Grow"; but if our request is right and the timing is right, God says, "Go."
- 3) The richest inheritance we can give to our children is introducing Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord with our lives.