

**A PERSONAL
VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY
1 KINGS
by
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I liked Guzik's concise introduction to the study of Kings: "The books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally joined in one book. We don't know who the human author of this book was; Jewish traditions say it was Jeremiah and it may very well be so. Wiseman gives a good summary of the books of 1 and 2 Kings: "The narrative 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."

1Kings 1:1 ¶ Now king David was old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

1Kings 1:2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.

1Kings 1:3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

1Kings 1:4 And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

As the record of 1Kings opens, David is a very old man that is near the end of his life. His body temperature is such that he cannot get warm despite his clothing and blankets. His servants decided that they would find a young virgin to come and minister to the king and sleep next to him to share her body heat.

Commentators note that this was an accepted medical treatment in those days. The girl chosen was Abishag, a Shunammite, a beautiful girl that was willing to serve the king basically as his nurse. It is emphasized that David did not become sexually intimate with her.

We know from information provided in Samuel that David was about 70 years old at the time.

2 Samuel 5:4 "David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years."

1Kings 1:5 ¶ Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

1Kings 1:6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was* a very goodly *man*; and *his mother* bare him after Absalom.

1Kings 1:7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped *him*.

Realizing that his father was very weak and near death, Adonijah, son of Haggith, decided that it was the opportune time to seize the throne.

Adonijah prepared a group of chariots and horsemen accompanied by 50 men to run before him in a display of wealth and great influence. This is exactly how his brother Absalom had first set out to win the hearts of the people.

2 Samuel 15:1–2 “And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate....”

Verse 6 seems to indicate that David was aware of his actions but never questioned what he was up to. It is noted that Adonijah was a very handsome man, as had been his brother Absalom.

Eventually Adonijah met with Joab, David’s nephew and military commander, and Abiathar the priest, to recruit their support. Even though both men had been faithful in their service to David, they decided it would be to their benefit to transfer their loyalty to Adonijah. I wasn’t so surprised at Joab since he had been insubordinate to David many times. I was surprised at Abiathar’s defection however; you would think a priest would be fixed on obedience to God’s will.

It should be noted that David had already made known publicly that Solomon was the one God had chosen to be Israel’s next king. (Note: Chronicles provides much information that supplements the books of Samuel and Kings.)

1 Chronicles 28:1–5 “And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people....And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.”

Adonijah, Joab and Abiathar all knew that they were acting in disobedience to the will of God.

1Kings 1:8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah.

1Kings 1:9 And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which is by Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants:

1Kings 1:10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

Zadok the priest, Benaiah (the captain of David’s personal bodyguards), Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei and the rest of the mighty men stayed faithful to David.

Adonijah prepared a great feast of celebration by the stone of Zohemoth by Enrogel and invited all of his brothers except Solomon. He also excluded Nathan the prophet, Benaiah and David’s mighty men.

The IVP Commentary offers this note on the location: “This spring is only about 650 yards south of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley and only about a half

mile from David's palace."

Clarke offers this opinion on the feast: "As he had Abiathar the priest with him, no doubt these animals were offered sacrificially, and then the guests fed on the flesh of the victims. He had not only a splendid feast, but a great sacrifice; and he gave by this a popular color to his pretensions, by affecting to receive his authority from God."

1Kings 1:11 ¶ Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth *it* not?

1Kings 1:12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

1Kings 1:13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign?

1Kings 1:14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

Once Nathan was aware of Adonijah's actions, he went to inform Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and advise her as to how they should intervene. He knew that David had declared that God had chosen Solomon as David's successor.

First, Nathan told Bathsheba what Adonijah had done without David's knowledge. He urged her to follow his counsel in order to save her life as well as Solomon's. There was no doubt in his mind that Adonijah would have them both killed to secure his throne.

Nathan told Bathsheba to go to David and get him to affirm that he had promised that Solomon would reign after him. She was then to question him as to why he was allowing Adonijah to assume the throne. Nathan would make it a point to come in to see the king even while she was still talking to him and confirm her assertion.

1Kings 1:15 And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.

1Kings 1:16 And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou?

1Kings 1:17 And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

1Kings 1:18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not:

1Kings 1:19 And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

1Kings 1:20 And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after

him.

1Kings 1:21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

Bathsheba did as Nathan had instructed her. When she went to see David, Abishag was there ministering to the king. Bathsheba bowed before the king, and he asked her what she wanted. She proceeded to remind David that he had promised her that Solomon would succeed him as king. Without his knowledge, however, Adonijah had become king. She proceeded to tell him about the feast of celebration that he was enjoying with all of the king's sons along with Joab and Abiathar. Solomon, however, had not been invited. She pointed out that the people of Israel expected David to announce his successor. If he did not, she knew that both she and Solomon would be considered enemies and be in great danger after David's death.

1Kings 1:22 And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

1Kings 1:23 And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

1Kings 1:24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

1Kings 1:25 For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.

1Kings 1:26 But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.

1Kings 1:27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

Just as they had planned, Nathan came in to see the king before Bathsheba had finished speaking. She evidently excused herself to allow Nathan to speak to the king. He too bowed before the king before asking David if he had determined that Adonijah should be the next king. He explained that the reason he was asking was because Adonijah was celebrating with a big feast with the king's sons, the captains of the host and Abiathar. They were all eating and drinking and calling for God to save king Adonijah. He also pointed out that he, Benaiah and Solomon had not been invited. He then asked David again if he had decided to make Adonijah king without telling him.

1Kings 1:28 Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

1Kings 1:29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

1Kings 1:30 Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

1Kings 1:31 Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did

reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

David answered by telling him to call for Bathsheba to come back. When she stood before him, David swore by the living LORD that was his redeemer, the LORD God of Israel, that Solomon would reign on his throne after him. In fact, he would see to it this day. Bathsheba then bowed again before David and honored him with her words.

1Kings 1:32 ¶ And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

1Kings 1:33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:

1Kings 1:34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

1Kings 1:35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

King David then summoned Zadok, Nathan and Benaiah. When they stood before him, he told them to take his faithful servants and have Solomon to ride upon his own mule to Gihon. This was a mule that the people would recognize as the king's mule. Zadok and Nathan were then to anoint him as king over Israel and blow the trumpet with the declaration, "God save king Solomon." They were then to follow him as he took his place on David's throne as king. He emphasized that Solomon was his choice to succeed him as ruler over Israel and Judah.

The NIV Commentary has this note concerning Gihon: "Gihon, the site of the anointing, was just outside the city in the Kidron Valley, on the east bank of Ophel. It was at that time Jerusalem's major source of water and was therefore a natural gathering place of the populace."

1Kings 1:36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*.

1Kings 1:37 As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

Benaiah seemed to affirm that he knew this was according to God's will. He then promised to be as faithful to Solomon as he had been to David while declaring the hope that Solomon's kingdom would become even greater than David's.

1Kings 1:38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

1Kings 1:39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

1Kings 1:40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the Cherethites and Pelethites (David's bodyguard contingent) put Solomon on David's mule and took him to Gihon. Zadok the priest anointed Solomon with oil from the tabernacle, and all the people said, "God save king Solomon." The people then followed him rejoicing loudly with shouting and music.

1Kings 1:41 ¶ And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this* noise of the city being in an uproar? **1Kings 1:42** And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou *art* a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

Adonijah and all his guests heard the noise as they finished their feast. Joab asked the reason for the great noise they heard. While he was speaking, Jonathan the son of Abiathar, came with news. Adonijah invited him forward with the hope that he brought good news.

1Kings 1:43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

1Kings 1:44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:

1Kings 1:45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This *is* the noise that ye have heard.

1Kings 1:46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

Jonathan bluntly told them that David had made Solomon king. He told them how Zadok and company had presented him on the king's mule and anointed him as king in Gihon. The noise they heard was that of the people of Jerusalem rejoicing. Solomon was in fact sitting on the throne as he spoke.

1Kings 1:47 And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

1Kings 1:48 And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which hath given *one* to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing *it*.

He continued by relating how the king's servants pronounced a blessing on David calling for God to make the name of Solomon and his kingdom even greater than his own. The king had responded with his own praise to the LORD God of Israel for allowing him to see His chosen one enthroned.

1Kings 1:49 And all the guests that *were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

1Kings 1:50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

1Kings 1:51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

1Kings 1:52 And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

1Kings 1:53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

Suddenly, all of Adonijah's guest arose and fled in fear. Adonijah feared for his life and ran to the grab hold of the horns on the altar of God. JFB notes: "The horns or projections at the four corners of the altar, to which the sacrifices were bound, and which were tipped with the blood of the victim, were symbols of grace and salvation to the sinner."

Evidently, Adonijah had a message delivered to Solomon asking for his promise not to kill him. He knew that had he become king he would have killed Solomon to eliminate the possibility of a coup. Solomon told the messenger that he had nothing to fear unless he was found trying to cause trouble. If he proved a threat to Solomon or his kingdom in any way, he would be killed.

Adonijah subsequently appeared before the king, bowing before him in recognition that he was king. Solomon then told him to go home. Commentators indicate that this command was significant in that it signified to Adonijah that he would not be allowed to serve in any capacity.