

1Kings 2:1 ¶ Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,
1Kings 2:2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;
1Kings 2:3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:
1Kings 2:4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

It soon became evident to David that he was near death. He called Solomon to impart his final words of wisdom. He urged him to stand strong as a worthy, mighty man (from the Hebrew for *man*). He urged him to obey the LORD “thy” God as commanded in the law of Moses. If he did this, he would prosper and be successful.

Deuteronomy 29:9 “Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.”

David told Solomon that this would ensure that the LORD kept his promise for the seed of David to continue to inherit the throne of Israel. The wording here makes it sound like God’s covenant with David was conditional. As you can see from the scripture below, that covenant was unconditional.

2 Samuel 7:12–16 “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

Did David do this on purpose thinking that it would provide stronger motivation for Solomon? I think it is true, however, that because David’s descendants did not remain faithful and obedient to the LORD, the succession of his line was suspended until the time that Jesus returns to reestablish that throne in the ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenant with David.

*Luke 1:30–33 “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”*

1Kings 2:5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to

me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet.

1Kings 2:6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

In these verse and those that follow David gives some specific directions to Solomon concerning men that had proven unfaithful to him. I think it is interesting that David asked his son to exact judgments that he should have done. Maybe he was more concerned about protecting Solomon and his kingdom than he had been about his own. Sometimes I think his hesitancy in exacting justice against those close to him was rooted in the guilt of his own sin against Uriah.

First, he reminded Solomon about how Joab, his cousin, had murdered two captains in Israel's army—Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether. Notice that David considered what Joab had done to be against him because in both instances he had acted in defiance of David. David had made a treaty with Abner and sent him away in peace, but Joab took matters into his own hands and killed him while Abner was on his way home. David had appointed Amasa as his military commander in a bid to promote unity in the kingdom after Absalom's death. Again, Joab didn't agree with David's decision and killed Amasa at the first opportunity. Both men were murdered; neither death was a justified casualty of war. Though I am sure that David was still thinking of the death of Absalom and how Joab had gone against his express orders, Absalom's death did occur in conjunction with battle in which Absalom was the enemy. I think that is the only reason he didn't mention it.

David instructed Solomon to act wisely in dealing with Joab. Though he was very popular among the fighting troops, Joab had supported Adonijah's bid for the throne; and his loyalty to Solomon was suspect. David urged his son to make sure that Joab wasn't allowed to die the natural death of old age.

1Kings 2:7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

David then reminded Solomon that Barzillai the Gileadite had provided for David and his people when they were in exile because of Absalom's bid for the throne. Because of his kindness, David asked Solomon to show the same kindness to the sons of Barzillai and provide for them at his own table.

Guzik quotes Wiseman in providing further insight: "To *eat at the king's table* was the equivalent of having a pension, the beneficiary receiving a regular royal allowance of food and clothing, with a house and land to support him and his family."

1Kings 2:8 And, behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when

I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.
1Kings 2:9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

Next, David brings up Shimei the son of Gera of Benjamin. He was the man that had cursed David when he was fleeing Jerusalem to escape Absalom. When David returned to reestablish his throne, however, Shimei had met him at the Jordan seeking mercy and professing his loyalty to David. At that time David had promised to spare his life. However, he warned Solomon not to trust him. He again encouraged Solomon to be wise in dealing with him. However, in light of David's promise to him, he asked Solomon to be just and not vengeful when he killed him.

“thou art a wise man” – This phrase is especially interesting in light of what we read in the next chapter. David recognized his son as a wise man, yet Solomon evidently doesn't feel wise enough to be a good king; in fact, he refers to himself as a little child. I think the wisest people often feel wanting in that respect, just as the smartest people are those quickest to admit what they don't know.

It should be noted that many sources (including Jewish tradition and Josephus) conclude that Solomon was 12-14 years old when he became king. I think he was more likely at least 20. In chapter 11 of 1Kings we will learn that Solomon ruled for 40 years. We are told in Chronicles that Solomon's son Rehoboam was 41 years old when he began to reign after his father's death, so he already had a son before becoming king. David referenced his son as a man and credited him with already being wise enough to deal with Joab, Abiathar and Shimei. And it would be natural for a man barely out of his teens to consider himself a child and not wise enough to rule the kingdom. Obviously, since the scripture does not tell us, we cannot know for sure.

1Kings 2:10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

1Kings 2:11 And the days that David reigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

1Kings 2:12 ¶ Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

David died and was buried in the city that bore his name. He had reigned 40 years as king—seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. Solomon was firmly established as his father's successor as king.

1Kings 2:13 And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

1Kings 2:14 He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

1Kings 2:15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and *that*

all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD.

1Kings 2:16 And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.

1Kings 2:17 And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

1Kings 2:18 And Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

Once again Adonijah enters the picture. He came to see Bathsheba, and she immediately asked him if he came in peace. He affirmed that he came in peace to ask her a favor. He reminded her that the kingdom should have been his (as the oldest son), but he realized that it was the LORD's will that Solomon become king. He wanted Bathsheba to present his request to Solomon since he knew he would not likely refuse his mom. He wanted her to ask Solomon to give him Abishag the Shunammite as his wife. Bathsheba agreed to do so. It seems she did not suspect him of anything except interest in a beautiful woman.

1Kings 2:19 Bathsheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

1Kings 2:20 Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.

1Kings 2:21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

When Bathsheba went to Solomon, he greeted her with great respect as his mother and had a seat for her put next to his throne on the right side, the place of honor. She told her son that she had one small request to make of him. Solomon assured her that he would do as she wished. The small request—Please give Abishag to Adonijah to wife.

1Kings 2:22 And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.

1Kings 2:23 Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.

1Kings 2:24 Now therefore, *as* the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

1Kings 2:25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

Solomon immediately understood what Adonijah was about; he knew that this request had to have come from him. Solomon told his mom that she might as well have asked for him to give Adonijah the kingdom. After all he was the elder brother and had the support of Abiathar the priest and Joab.

We have learned previously that a succeeding king inherited the wives and concubines of his predecessor. Though Abishag had never been sexually intimate with David, she was recognized as belonging to him. The fact that Adonijah had to ask Solomon to give her to him shows that he knew she had belonged to David. To have given her to Adonijah would have emboldened him to continue to pursue his desire to take the throne from Solomon.

Solomon knew that Adonijah had hoped to trick Solomon by going through Bathsheba. Maybe he thought his younger brother wouldn't be smart enough to understand how the people would interpret such a union. He was sadly mistaken; Solomon completely understood the motives behind that request. He immediately declared that Adonijah had forfeited his life by making such a request. He swore by the living LORD that had put him on the throne that Adonijah would die that very day and sent Benaiah to execute his sentence, which he did.

1Kings 2:26 ¶ And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou *art* worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

1Kings 2:27 So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

I don't know who Solomon thought had come up with the idea, but he was determined to eliminate any further threat from the three principals that had initially tried to seize the throne from him.

Solomon was more merciful in dealing with Abiathar the priest; he banished him to Anathoth, his hometown, while declaring that he deserved to die. He recognized, however, that Abiathar had been faithful to David and suffered through many trials with him until he joined with Joab to help make Adonijah king. He also acknowledged him as one who had carried the ark of the LORD before David. Solomon forbade Abiathar from serving as priest any longer. It is noted that Abiathar was a descendant of Eli and that Solomon's action fulfilled a prophecy against the house of Eli.

1 Samuel 3:11–14 “And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.”

Adam Clarke adds this note: “...Abiathar was the last of the descendants of Ithamar, of which family was Eli the high priest.”

It should be noted that Solomon declared that he would not put Abiathar to death “at this time.” Implied—But if you do anything further to provoke me, you will die.

1Kings 2:28 Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

1Kings 2:29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

1Kings 2:30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.

1Kings 2:31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

1Kings 2:32 And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing *thereof, to wit*, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah.

1Kings 2:33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

1Kings 2:34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

With all his military connections, it is not surprising to find that Joab soon learned what had happened to Adonijah and Abiathar. He determined his best bet was to flee to the tabernacle and take hold of the horns on the altar in hopes of being shown mercy. Solomon found out where Joab was and sent Benaiah to execute him. When Benaiah got to the temple and called for Joab to come out, he refused; he declared he would die first. Benaiah did not want to kill Joab at the altar, so he went back and informed Solomon of the circumstances. Solomon didn't hesitate with his decision. He told Benaiah to kill him and bury him to absolve the house of David of guilt for not exacting justice for the innocent blood that Joab had shed.

Solomon considered Joab's execution as satisfying God's command regarding one who had transgressed His law and murdered innocent men—Abner and Amasa, both of whom Solomon described as men “more righteous and better than he.” Joab had done this in defiance of David's will and without his knowledge. His execution was just and the blood of those men deserved justice. At the king's command, Benaiah went back to the tabernacle and killed Joab; he then saw to it that the body was taken to the man's home in the wilderness and buried.

1Kings 2:35 ¶ And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

Solomon made Benaiah his military commander in chief and installed him in the room previously occupied by Joab. He also installed Zadok the priest in the room formerly occupied by Abiathar.

1Kings 2:36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

1Kings 2:37 For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

1Kings 2:38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying *is* good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

I guess Solomon determined that he might as well go ahead and deal with Shimei as well in accordance with his father's wishes. He decided to bring Shimei to Jerusalem to live. He made him give up his home and build a house in Jerusalem and confined him to the city so that he could not easily stir up trouble among the Benjamites. He warned Shimei that if he ever left Jerusalem or crossed the brook Kidron, he would surely die; it would be his own fault. Shimei quickly agreed to abide by Solomon's decision.

1Kings 2:39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* in Gath.

1Kings 2:40 And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath.

1Kings 2:41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

1Kings 2:42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard *is* good.

1Kings 2:43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

1Kings 2:44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

1Kings 2:45 And king Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

1Kings 2:46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

After living in Jerusalem for three years, Shimei found out that two of his servants had run away to Achish, the son of the king of Gath. Without giving it a second thought, Shimei went to bring his servants back. Solomon found out what he had done and sent for Shimei. The king reminded Shimei about the ultimatum that had been established between them if he ever left the city and that he had agreed to abide by as Solomon asked. In light of that agreement, Solomon questioned why Shimei had broken that agreement. He stated that he knew he didn't have to remind Shimei of the wicked things he had done to David, and now the LORD was going to see to that he faced judgment for his actions. The king went on to declare that he knew the LORD would establish the throne of David forever, despite Shimei's hope to the contrary. He then commanded Benaiah to execute Shimei, and he did.

It seems that getting rid of those who had been most active in trying to unlawfully gain control of the throne and the one who had been most vocal in declaring that David should never have had the throne in the first place was significant in firmly establishing the kingdom under Solomon's rule.

I liked this observation from the NIV Commentary: "Shimei had taken grace lightly and demonstrated his unrepentant heart. For this he would die in strict accord with the terms of their agreement. He was unworthy of another pardon."

That statement made me think about how lightly I am afraid many of us respond to the grace God has shown us. No matter how we might try, I don't think we will truly understand this side of heaven the tremendous sacrifice that was made to allow us to become part of God's family. How many decisions that we make each and every day would be different if we truly understood how precious that gift was and continues to be to us every day. How blessed we are not to be under the law but under grace!