

King David's Final Charge to Solomon

1 Kings 2:1-12

1 Kings 2:1-12 – *“Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: “I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, 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; 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.’*

Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist, and on his sandals that were on his feet. Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace. But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother.

And see, you have with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, ‘I will not put you to death with the sword.’ Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood.”

So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. The period that David reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.”

Background Notes

During the 120-year time span of the United Kingdom of Israel, there were three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon. Each of them reigned for 40 years. *“The period that David reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years.”*

David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his capital city. Why did he do that? Why didn't he stay in Hebron? Jerusalem was more central to the nation than Hebron, and Jerusalem was more easily defended in time of war than Hebron. It was a diplomatic move. It was wise to move from Hebron to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 5:4 says, *“David was thirty years old when he began to reign and he reigned forty years.”* So David was 70 years old when he died: *“So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David” (v10).* You can visit the traditional tomb of David today in the ancient city of Jerusalem.

Before David died, he gave Solomon, the new king of Israel, some sound advice. *“Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son...”* The charge is filled with wise counsel from father to son.

Doctrinal Points

1. Good parents give wise counsel to their children.

As we mentioned back in chapter 1, David was not always the greatest father. He should have disciplined his son Absalom, and he should have disciplined his son Adonijah. 1 Kings 1:6: *“And his father David had not rebuked him, His father had not rebuked or disciplined him [Adonijah] at any time by saying, “Why have you done so?”*

So David was not always a good father. But at the time of his death, David was a good father when he gave wise counsel to his son, Solomon. First, David first gave Solomon counsel about his own personal walk before the Lord (v2-4). Then he gave Solomon wise counsel about certain individuals who could cause problems for Solomon and the nation in the future (v5-9).

David gave wise counsel to Solomon about his personal walk before the Lord. There’s no better counsel a father can give to his son - then or today. Look again at verses 2-3: *“Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies.”*

Parents who are listening to me right now: have you given this wise counsel to your children yet? Good parents give wise counsel to their children. My father gave me this same wise counsel. In fact, my father always backed up his wise counsel by giving me another book or commentary on Scripture! Even before I was out of high school, I had a small biblical library, thanks to the wise counsel of my father.

David told Solomon that if he put the Lord first, all the promised blessings of the Davidic Covenant would be his (v4). In the same way, if our children follow our wise counsel about putting the Lord first in their lives, then they will enjoy all the promised spiritual blessings that Heaven has to offer!

In verses 5-9, David gave Solomon sound counsel about certain individuals who could possibly cause trouble for him in the future. This, too, is wise counsel from a father. There are many potential pitfalls in life, and many of them are caused by certain people - people who have proven themselves to cause trouble. David warned Solomon about Joab in verses 5-6: *“Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist, and on his sandals that were on his feet.”*

Joab had served as David’s military commander and had done some valiant deeds to help David, but Joab did cause problems. Joab had hastily executed Absalom, David’s son. Joab had killed Abner and Amasa during a time of peace. Further, Joab had not been loyal to David when Abonijah tried to make himself king. David told Solomon, ‘Watch out for Joab! Use wisdom. Joab must be brought to justice!’ Verse 6: *“Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace.”*

And then there was Shimei (v8). He cursed David when David had to flee from Absalom, when Absalom tried to usurp the throne. David had shown mercy to Shimei, but he told Solomon to watch out for Shimei. Be wise! Shimei is also a potential problem waiting to happen. He too must be handled with righteous judgment.

David was not out to get Joab or Shimei for personal revenge. No! But David knew he had to warn Solomon about potential future problems with these men.

There’s a lesson here for us. Parents must warn children about untrustworthy people, and that certain kinds of people should be avoided. This is wise counsel. Parents, have you warned children about staying away from certain people, or certain kinds of people?

My folks gave me this kind of wise counsel. Hopefully I’ve passed it on to my own children, and they’re passing it on to their children. Counsel about priorities and counsel about potential problems is wise counsel. Good parents give good counsel to their children.

2. David was “a man after God’s own heart.”

As we come to the end of David’s life, this doctrinal point is certainly a fitting conclusion. In 1 Samuel 13:14, Samuel said to King Saul, *“But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart.”*

Notice that Samuel made this statement about David before David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and before he plotted the death of Uriah. However, the apostle Paul quoted the Scripture in Acts 13:22: *“And when He had removed him*

[Saul], He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'"

This should be encouraging to all of us. David had committed terrible sins, and yet, in His grace, God looked at his overall life, and He saw David as a man with a heart for God. David repented of his sins and got his life right with God. Although David had to reap the disastrous results of what he had sown, God saw the repentant attitude of his heart. Read the psalms of David to see his heart of faith revealed.

There's a lesson here for us. Because of God's grace, we too can be men and women after God's own heart - even though we too have sinned. David was "a man after God's own heart." This is certainly a great lesson from the overall life of David!

Practical Application

Let's not forget to reward kindness!

In verse 7 David said to Solomon, *"But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother."* When David had to flee from Absalom, he crossed the Jordan River to the land of Gilead for safety. There a man named Barzillai showed David great kindness. He and others brought food and supplies - even beds! - to David and David's weary people! Read about this in 2 Samuel 17.

Apparently Barzillai had died by this time, and David reminded Solomon to show kindness to Barzillai's son. Solomon was not to forget the kindness that Barzillai had shown David. Even though there was now a new generation, Solomon was to remember.

We, too, should remember to reward kindness. Have you ever visited or written to your former Sunday school teachers, or others who were kind and helpful to you when you were young? Maybe they could use **your** kindness now!

Has someone been kind to you recently, when you were in a time of need? Don't take it for granted. And don't forget it! Let's not forget to reward kindness!