

King Solomon Purges Opposition to him as the Rightful King

1 Kings 2:13-46

1 Kings 2:13-46 - *“Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, “Do you come peaceably?” And he said, “Peaceably.” Moreover he said, “I have something to say to you.” And she said, “Say it.” Then he said, “You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should rein. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother’s; for it was his from the LORD. Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me.” And she said to him, “Say it.” Then he said, “Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife.” So Bathsheba said, “Very well, I will speak for you to the king.”*

Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king’s mother; so she sat at his right hand. Then she said, “I desire one small petition of you; do not refuse me.” And the king said to her, “Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you.” So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife.” 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.”

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! 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!” So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

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.” So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of the LORD that He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.

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. 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.” 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.’ Then the king said to him, “Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed. So the LORD will return his blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword—Abner the son of

Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah—though my father David did not know it. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his descendants forever. But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the LORD.” So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and struck and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar.

Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head.” And Shimei said to the king, “The saying is good. As my lord the king has said, so your servant will do.” So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, “Look, your slaves are in Gath!” 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. And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back.

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.’ Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?” 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. But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever.” 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.”

Background Notes

Obviously, the execution of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei is not the most pleasant or comforting passage of Scripture. But Solomon’s purge of all opposition to the throne was justified, because it was righteous judgment. Everyone that Solomon executed was guilty of a crime that was punishable by death, and Solomon brought them to justice.

Wickedness and evil must be dealt with in righteous judgment. Guilty people must be brought to justice. For example, terrorists are guilty of violent crimes, and they must be brought to justice. The civil authorities must bring evil doers to justice.

That’s exactly what King Solomon, as head of state, was doing in this chapter. Listen to the good counsel of Proverbs 20:26: “A wise king sifts out the wicked and brings the thrashing wheel over them.” In other words, evildoers must be brought to justice, even if it means the death penalty. This truth is backed up in the New Testament, in Romans 13:4: “For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for

no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." So Solomon was doing the right thing in bringing these wrongdoers to justice.

In the case of Adonijah (v13-25): Solomon perceived the real reason for Adonijah's request to marry Abishag. Adonijah was actually making another move to take over the throne. Abishag had been David's concubine, even though he had no sexual relationship with her (1 Kings 1:4). In that culture, the women in a king's harem were considered the personal property of the king, and the harem was passed on to the next king. If Abishag became his wife, Adonijah would have two claims to the throne. First, he was Solomon's older brother, and second, he would be married to one of the wives in King David's harem. But Solomon saw through Adonijah's ruse and brought this traitor to justice.

In the case of Abiathar the priest (v26-27): Abiathar had sided with Adonijah in his illegal bid to seize the throne, so Solomon replaced him with Zadok. Zadok was in the line of Aaron, and thus he rightly qualified to be high priest. Furthermore, Abiathar's removal was a fulfillment of the prophecy pronounced in 1 Samuel 2:27-36, of the judgment against the high priest Eli for his sins and the sins of his wicked sons.

In the case of Joab (v28-35), Solomon properly exercised the death penalty, because Joab had not only committed treason by supporting Adonijah, but he had also had murdered two military generals in cold blood.

In the case of Shimei (v36-46): Solomon gave him an opportunity to prove his loyalty and live. Shimei had maliciously cursed King David, the Lord's anointed, at the time of Absalom's rebellion. David had shown mercy to Shimei, but had not pardoned him. Solomon continued to show mercy to Shimei by letting him enjoy full privileges within the kingdom, but said he must stay within the city limits of Jerusalem to prove his loyalty. If he disobeyed this royal edict, he would forfeit his life. Shimei obeyed for three years, but when he thought he had good reason to disobey, it cost him his life.

Thus all potential threats to Solomon's reign were removed, and Solomon's throne and kingdom were firmly established.

Doctrinal Points

1. The kingdom of Christ will be established with righteous judgment.

In our Talks from 1 Kings, we've already mentioned that King Solomon is a "type." He pictures Jesus Christ, especially Christ in His glory as King. Of the glory of Solomon's reign, the Queen of Sheba said that not even half of his glory had been told (1 Kings 10:7). In a coming day believers will say the same about the glory of Christ's kingdom!

And the glorious kingdom of Christ on this earth will be established in righteous judgment. The book of Revelation, our Lord's Olivet Discourse, and many Old Testament prophecies indicate that the Lord will come back with righteous judgment when He returns to this earth to set up His kingdom. Just as Solomon's glorious kingdom began and was

established in righteous judgment, so the earthly kingdom of our Lord will be established in righteous judgment when He returns.

2. The kingdom of Christ will be established in peace.

The end of this chapter says, *“the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.”* Solomon’s reign was firmly established, and it was characterized by peace. Before Solomon’s time there were frequent wars in Israel, primarily with the Philistines, and after Solomon’s there were wars with various enemies. But Solomon’s reign was a time of peace.

I believe this adds to our spiritual picture. We know that when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on this earth, there will be a great time of peace on this earth - peace like there’s never been before! There will even be peace in the animal kingdom, when the wolf will lie down with the lamb (Isaiah 11).

What a great time that will be! As the kingdom of Solomon was established in peace, so the kingdom of Christ will be established in peace.

Practical Application

You can’t experience peace in your heart if there is opposition to Christ in your life.

Since Solomon is a picture of Jesus Christ as our glorious king, I think we can make this spiritual application. As Solomon, in righteous judgment, removed all opposition so that there would be peace, so we must allow the Lord to deal with us, and remove from our lives whatever opposes Him. Only then can we really know the peace of God in our lives.

For example, 2 Corinthians 10:5 says that our every thought should be “brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Let me ask you: how is your thought life? Have you taken all your thoughts captive, and brought them under the obedience of Christ?

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