

Solomon Becomes King (1 Kings 1-3)

By the end of David's life, David had made arrangements for Solomon to build the temple. Solomon was clearly God's choice to succeed David as king. Yet David's fourth son, Adonijah (2 Sam. 3:2-4), also desired to be king. He, like Absalom, was a handsome man who took the initiative to control the kingdom. As loyal as Joab and Abiathar had been to David, Adonijah was able to gain their help in this attempt. By all normal thinking of the time, Adonijah was next in line. However, this was not a kingship based on normal ideals of dynasties. This was a kingship determined by God. While Adonijah gathered a following, many stayed true to David, including Nathan the prophet and several of David's mighty men (1 Kings 1:8).

Nathan was well aware of what Adonijah was doing, so he spoke to Bathsheba because her and Solomon's lives were in danger. Bathsheba and Nathan went to David and explained the situation concerning Adonijah's attempt to be king. David vowed that Solomon would indeed be king (1 Kings 1:29-30). David called Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the commander and had them bring Solomon out on David's mule (think about that a moment relative to Jesus) down to Gihon where they would proclaim Solomon as king. Then he would be brought to sit on David's throne to



become the king in David's place (1 Kings 1:33-35).

Solomon was then anointed as king and "all the people went up after him," rejoicing and making great noise (1 Kings 1:40).

Adonijah and Joab heard the uproar, and Adonijah was told that Solomon was just made king and took his seat on David's throne. Everyone with Adonijah became terrified over this, and Adonijah was afraid of Solomon. He went out and took hold of the horns of the altar. Solomon was told about this and, for the time being, he let Adonijah go home.

As David was about to die, he called Solomon in and charged him to be faithful to God. In words similar to what Joshua was told (Josh. 1), Solomon would find success if he stayed true to what the Law taught, and God's promise that David would not lack a man to sit on the throne would be realized (1 Kings 2:1-4). David encouraged Solomon to show kindness and wisdom, while also warning him about enemies that posed threats.

David died after having reigned forty years. After David's death, Solomon's kingdom was firmly established (1 Kings 2:12). Soon after, Adonijah approached Bathsheba asking her to ask Solomon if he could have Abishag, a woman who took care of David in his old age, as a wife. This

request did not settle well with Solomon, as it appeared to him that Adonijah was trying to find a way to take the kingdom. Adonijah was shortly put to death by Benaiah. Abiathar was dismissed as priest and Joab was also executed for his part in Adonijah's rebellion. Shimei, a descendant of Saul who had cursed David, was also put to death. The kingdom was secure.

While Solomon loved the Lord (1 Kings 3:3), he began making marriage alliances with foreign nations, starting with Egypt. Yet initially Solomon was trying to please the Lord. God appeared to Solomon and asked what he wanted, and Solomon's famous prayer was uttered (1 Kings 3:6-9). Solomon praised God's lovingkindness and recognized that he was on the throne based on God's promise to David. His humility shows as he expresses his ignorance about how to proceed, so his request was based on this humility: "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" God was pleased with Solomon's request and told him that because he asked for wisdom rather than riches, he would be given both.

Solomon's wisdom would soon be tested (1 Kings 3:16-28). Two harlots came before him with a difficult problem. Both had given birth and one of the sons died. The accusation was that the mother who lost her child stole the other one's child and put her dead child in the arms of this other mother. They argued about the truth of this and Solomon came up with a brilliant solution. "Get me a sword," he said. Solomon's solution was to divide the living baby in half so that each mother could have half. When he said this, the mother

of the living child begged that the child be given to the mother of the dead child. At this, Solomon recognized who the true mother was and she was given the baby.

The wisdom of Solomon became well known throughout the land: "When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice" (1 Kings 3:28).

Solomon's fame grew, and he started his kingship in the right way, loving and pleasing God. His wisdom was unparalleled, and he would soon grow the kingdom without going to war. For now, Solomon's efforts are good and the kingdom is established.

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