

## 1 Kings 2 - The Kingdom Established in the Hand of Solomon

Surveying 1 Kings chapter 2 we see David giving final instruction to his son Solomon; the death of David; and Solomon beginning to establish his kingdom.

As King David aged he let certain issues continue for one reason or another that now required a resolution.

In many ways this speaks to our current state as well.

We live in an age where Christ has established His kingdom by the cross, and He IS ESTABLISHING His kingdom by His word and the Holy Spirit - the church on earth represents part of that advancing kingdom. And we see that by the Word and the Spirit, through the church, citizens are constantly being added to Christ's kingdom.

The creation we live in is not yet perfected even though sin and death have been conquered. We live in the intermediate phase of the establishment of Christ's kingdom; wherein His grace is

actively extended to all mankind - giving each person an opportunity to repent before He finally sets all things right.

In 1 Kings we see a valiant attempt by Solomon to set things right, to punish the guilty, and to establish the kingdom.

What we know about his father David's reign is that even though it was ordained by God it was fraught with highs and lows - sin and repentance, wrath and grace.

Solomon's reign, also ordained by God, will be no different.

This is because they were both imperfect men who were subject to [1Jo 2:16 NKJV] "...all that [is] in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..."

So - if these men who were chosen by God were imperfect and incapable of keeping God's Law, incapable of living righteously, and incapable of shepherding God's people in righteousness we might very well despair of our own condition.

BUT, we take heart, knowing that a better King, a perfect King, sits on the throne - Jesus the Messiah, the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22:16)

So let us examine Solomon's kingdom, how it is established; and let us view the nature of man before God's holiness and by it let us hear what God is saying to us now in our present age about His own Kingdom and His own King, Jesus.

V.1-12 David's parting words to his son Solomon.

It is believed that Solomon was probably in his late teens at this time - imagine! - and now he is the ruler over God's people. God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

Solomon certainly needed some counsel on what to expect and what comes next.

David had left a few loose ends for this young man to tend to. That would be Solomon's first hurdle of leadership along with the routine administration of the kingdom.

Some of the things Solomon receives counsel on are hard to hear too as they involve executing high-ranking officials and even members of his own family - Joab and Adonijah.

While Solomon's name means "peaceable," or "peaceful," the establishment of his kingdom comes with bloodshed - the blood of enemies within his own government.

Note that the establishment of the Lord's kingdom, the new covenant, by the one true Prince of Peace, comes by blood as well - but not the blood of His enemies.

We were all enemies of God. If our blood were required we would all be wiped out. BUT, Jesus Christ shed His own blood for our sakes - and by that blood He brought those who were His enemies into His eternal Kingdom and to His peace.

David goes on to "charge" Solomon to follow close after the LORD - all caps.

When we see this rendered in all capital letters in our Bibles this is referring to the Hebrew name for God which we anglicize as

Yahweh or Jehovah. This term is considered to be a close approximation of God's proper name and is best defined as "the existing one."

This command to follow Jehovah's ways will prove problematic for Solomon. He will prove on more than one occasion that he cannot walk completely in God's ways, nor keep His statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies. He cannot be holy as Jehovah is holy.

Don't we identify with Solomon's humanity!? Take heart loved one - a perfect King, the existing one - in the flesh - who dwelt among us fulfilled all the statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies for us.

When we examine these Old Testament figures we kind of go on this emotional roller coaster with them.

We see commands like this to follow hard after God and we see their affirmations and good starts and we get excited and joyful and we like to apply those passages to our lives and then we see

their failures, unfaithfulness, and fatigue - and we identify with that too.

But all of that serves to point us to the perfect King, the perfect law keeper - the one who reigns forevermore and has called us to His kingdom.

David here also gives instruction on dealing with three different men within the kingdom - these are the loose ends that David needs to tie up.

And in some regards they represent the age that we live in as well.

There are the “Joabs” of the world who have aligned themselves in name with the King but have done much to undermine His cause - just as Joab did with David. They shall receive their just punishment at the appointed time.

There are the “Barzillais” of the kingdom who have shown faithfulness and will eat at the King’s table forevermore.

There are the “Shimeis” who have opposed the King and were very happy to mock the King and throw stones, insults and curses at the King. They shall receive their just punishment as well.

Now, this isn't about a works based theology - it's not a message on “how to be a Barzillai, how to support the King,” but rather it is a message on how the King relates to humanity.

As Solomon receives instruction on setting things right, on carrying out justice, this foreshadows that day when the Lord Jesus will once and for all carry out His perfect justice.

In our text we see that David eventually dies as all men die. No matter how much affinity we have for King David he passes the way of all mankind.

[Isa 40:7-8 NKJV] 7 The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people [are] grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

This is true for us as well - we are not the be all end all of the faith. God's word stands forever and He will be glorified.

This is why the gospel is so important in our lifetime. This is why we are to beg people to be reconciled to the King, Jesus, knowing that we are so frail and our lives so brief and as we pass from this life we will stand before the Judge, Jesus, to experience justice.

Jesus relays that thought to us in John 5:

[Jhn 5:26-30 NKJV] 26 "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 28 "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. 30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Justice is coming and it is certain, righteous, and complete.

V.13-25 Solomon deals with Adonijah - his brother and rival.

Adonijah sought to steal the throne by deceit and clever political maneuvering. He even aligned himself with David's most powerful advisors - Joab the commander of the Army, and Abiathar one of the priests.

Now Adonijah has one trick left up his sleeve. He is essentially seeking to subvert Solomon's authority through a demonstration of dominance by attempting to inherit one of David's women - Abishag the Shunamite.

When we read this it may seem like it's not a big deal, even a little confusing, but it was a big deal in the era that we are considering.

There are two examples of this type of behavior being used to demonstrate one's own political power over a rival.

It was believed that if a man were king then he inherited all of the concubines of the former king. Both Abner and Absalom made

moves on the king's concubines in an attempt to demonstrate their power.

[2Sa 3:6-7 NKJV] 6 Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening [his hold] on the house of Saul. 7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name [was] Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. So [Ishbosheth] said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

[2Sa 16:21-22 NKJV] 21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

While the text does not explicitly say that Abishag was a concubine, many Bible teachers adopt the position that this must have been the case since Solomon pronounced the sentence of death upon Adonijah.

The reason behind such a harsh sentence is found in Solomon's response as he understands that Adonijah is, in fact, attempting to pull off a clever plot to move into the spotlight much like Abner and Absalom had done - "[1Ki 2:22 NKJV] 22 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..."

So on top of the things that David has charged him with, Solomon is compelled to take action against his half brother as well - not a very peaceful start - but so necessary in order to preserve peace for the kingdom.

V.26-35 Solomon puts away Adonijah's allies and fulfills one of David's imperatives.

Abiathar is an interesting person in the text. He receives mercy from Solomon because of his shared hardship with David in the past.

Abiathar had been the only priest to escape being murdered by King Saul in 1 Samuel 22 - at which point he fled to David who was on the run from Saul as Saul was seeking to kill him.

In former times Abiathar was a close counselor to David, he even carried the ark of the covenant - but times had changed and Abiathar found himself to be an opportunist for one reason or the other.

Abiathar really demonstrates the fickle nature of people. Our opinions change, our allegiances change, in one season we are fully committed to enduring suffering for the King, in another we are seeking to establish our own kingdom. May God have mercy on us as well.

The removal of Abiathar from the priesthood tipped Joab off that something was going on in the kingdom. That people were meeting the king's justice and being held accountable for their deeds.

So Joab is finally held accountable for his works - his treachery, his murder, his subversion of the kingdom, his disobedience, his rebellious heart.

These were all these things Joab carried with him while professing to support the king. But at the end his true nature was exposed and he bore the punishment for his crimes.

[Mat 7:21-23 NKJV] 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

V.36-46 Shimei is held accountable for his crimes.

Shimei was of the tribe of Benjamin, the same tribe as King Saul, and he saw the Davidic line of kings as illegitimate since David - even though it was God who chose and anointed David.

As David fled from Absalom during the civil war in Israel this man, Shimei, met David on the way and cursed him, threw stones at him, mocked him for everything he was worth.

When the rebellion was put down and David returned to Jerusalem there was a reckoning but David was so tired of the bloodshed that he let Shimei live, and as we see here, so did Solomon for a time.

But Solomon desired to keep this man close to home, he had already demonstrated his true heart and spirit of rebellion.

It was granted to him to keep his life as long as he stayed in Jerusalem - the problem was that he didn't take the king's words seriously.

He didn't have any respect for the command of the king so he did what he pleased, he left the city in direct violation of the king's command and he paid for it with his life.

This may seem extreme - but the darkness of this man's heart, his deceit, his disregard for the law were on full display. So he met with the king's justice. Those who violate the law must pay for it.

This partially reflects how people relate to Christ. We who are His, love Him; we are glad to live in His kingdom, to obey His word, to

know Him, and to be close to Him. But we also rightfully fear Him with holy awe and wonder.

He is the creator of the universe, who holds all creation together, we are in His hands. To disobey Him is unwise and those who have walked that road of disobedience, disrespect, and disdain have paid and/or will pay heavily for their transgressions.

**BUT - WE ARE ALL DISOBEDIENT, PRONE TO WANDER, PRONE TO DO OUR OWN THING, TO LEAN ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING - EVEN WHEN WE KNOW THE COST IS OUR LIVES, MARRIAGES, RELATIONSHIPS, ETC!**

But Christ's kingdom is marked by Grace! In our disobedience the Grace of God comes to us and draws us to Him.

Christ has paid the price for those who are His even when we go out of bounds. He was willingly wounded in His body, executed for our sakes, so that we might have freedom to live in His kingdom forevermore.

This is grace - he paid a debt that we owed. This is mercy - the punishment we deserved for our violation of God's Word was poured out on Christ so that by His death we might be reconciled to God and counted as righteous, and by His resurrection we shall live in His kingdom forever.

Finally (v.46) we see that Solomon's kingdom is established but we must understand that it is far from perfect, and even his version of justice and goodness will not last.

In our age we live in arguably the greatest most privileged nation to ever exist and yet - there is a kingdom coming that far surpasses this one.

The Kingdom of God is at hand! The King of all Kings is coming. The Prince of Peace will return to rule and reign righteously. And our hearts cry, "even so, come quickly Lord Jesus." (Rev 22:20)

[Heb 12:28 NKJV] 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.