

The Books of 1 and 2 Kings

Lesson 1: David's Last Days and Solomon Secured -- 1 Kings 1:1-2:46

Picture the scene. Jerusalem is cold, and the great King David lies in his bed, old and frail, unable to get warm. The man who slew Goliath with a sling, who outran armies and out-trusted every enemy, is now wrapped in blankets while attendants hover over him. The shepherd-king who shaped the psalms and shook the ancient world cannot keep his own body warm. That image alone should stop us in our tracks. No matter how large our life has been, our strength eventually runs out. But this passage is not ultimately about the fading of a great man. It is about the faithfulness of a great God.

Into that atmosphere of uncertainty, a power struggle erupts. David's son Adonijah decides the throne is his for the taking. He is handsome, he is older, and his father has never once told him no. So he throws a banquet, invites the right generals and priests, and declares himself king, all without a word from David, and all without a word from God. He does what ambitious, self-focused people have always done: he promotes himself because he can, and because he wants to. The contrast with what God is about to do through Nathan, Bathsheba, and a quiet ceremony by the spring of Gihon is striking.

What unfolds in these two chapters is not political drama dressed up in religious language. It is God quietly, decisively, and sovereignly securing a covenant He made with David years before. Through the urgency of a prophet, the courage of a mother, and the will of an aging king, Solomon is anointed, and the throne is established. And in that establishing, the line through which the promised Seed would come is protected. Everything that happens in these chapters matters not just for Israel, but for the whole world.

As we study this passage together, we will see that self-exaltation always collides with God's purposes. We will feel the weight of faithful succession, of passing truth and responsibility to the next generation. And we will trace the line of God's covenant faithfulness from a cold room in Jerusalem all the way to a throne at the right hand of the Father. The God who secured Solomon's throne did not stop there. He is the same God who is building His kingdom today through His Son, and through you.

Group Discussion: When you look at your own life, where have you been tempted to take matters into your own hands the way Adonijah did, rather than waiting on God's timing and appointment?

Personal Reflection: Is there an area of your life right now where you are striving for a position, outcome, or recognition that God has not given you, and what would it look like to release that to Him this week?

Read 1 Kings 1:1-2:46

Study Questions

1. Read 1 Kings 1:5–10. What does Adonijah's self-promotion reveal about his character, and how does the narrator signal that his bid for the throne is illegitimate from the start?
2. Adonijah's father David had never restrained him or asked him 'Why have you done so?' (verse 6). In what ways does a lack of loving correction in our own lives, whether from parents, teachers, elders, or other Christians, leave us vulnerable to the kind of self-deception Adonijah fell into?
3. Read 1 Kings 1:11–40. How do Nathan and Bathsheba's actions in securing Solomon's coronation illustrate the relationship between human initiative and divine providence?
4. Bathsheba risked everything to approach the king on Solomon's behalf. Think of a time when someone interceded urgently for you at personal cost. How did that intercession change your situation, and how did it shape your understanding of prayer?
5. Read 1 Kings 2:1–9. What does David's charge to Solomon reveal about the two foundations of a God-honoring life, and why does David link obedience to the covenant with the prospering of Solomon's throne?

6. David tells Solomon to 'be strong, and show yourself a man' by keeping God's statutes (2:2-3). How does that vision of strength, rooted in faithfulness to God's word rather than personal power, challenge the way strength is defined in your own world?
7. Read 1 Kings 2:13-46. How do the fates of Adonijah, Joab, Shimei, and Abiathar together illustrate the principle that actions have consequences and that God's justice, though sometimes delayed, is certain?
8. Shimei swore an oath, broke it when it became inconvenient, and paid for it with his life. In what area of your own commitments, whether to God, to your spouse, to the church, or to another person, are you most tempted to redefine the terms when keeping them becomes costly?
9. Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16 alongside 1 Kings 2:45. God promised David that his throne would be established forever. How does the establishing of Solomon's kingdom in 1 Kings 2:46 point forward to a fulfillment far greater than Solomon himself, and where does that promise ultimately land?
10. Looking back across 1 Kings 1-2, what is the single most important thing Jesus is forming in you through this passage, and what is one specific, concrete step you will take this week to cooperate with that work?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: 2 Samuel 7:12–16, God’s covenant with David promising an everlasting throne; Psalm 89:3–4, 27–29, the psalmist’s reflection on the Davidic covenant and its certainty; Acts 2:29–36, Peter’s Pentecost sermon showing David’s throne fulfilled in Christ’s resurrection and exaltation; Luke 1:32–33, the angel’s announcement that Jesus will sit on the throne of His father David forever; Hebrews 1:3–4, Christ seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high

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