

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

Solomon Secures His Kingship

Readings: *1 Kings 2:13-46; 3:1; 9:16; 3:2-28; 2 Chronicles 1:2-6*

Reflections:

- The reader quickly sees that Solomon does not have David's weakness. David, although possessing an incredible heart for God, was soft and let people run all over him. Solomon very quickly establishes that he will not be made a fool by those who would seek to undermine his leadership. For Israel and those reading this story, they quickly would think, here is a wise and prudent leader who is definitely going to keep everyone in line.
- Solomon's first act is to take out Adonijah. Adonijah appears to want a better public standing by marrying David's caregiver and thus, position himself at another run at being hailed king by the people. Now, he approaches Bathsheba. Possibly because she may not be fond of this young beautiful woman who was keeping David warm at night. Maybe Bathsheba sees through this and figures that Adonijah's blood will be on his own head. In any case, she plays along and Solomon has Adonijah put to death for asking such a thing.
- We see a previous prophetic word fulfilled as Solomon removes Abiathar as priest. Joab is executed as well as he attempts to gain mercy by hiding in the tabernacle and clinging to the altar. This time Solomon is relentless and has him executed. It would appear that he saw that giving mercy in this way to Adonijah didn't result in a changed heart and so when Joab tries the same thing, Solomon gives the command for him to be killed.
- Shimei is the last to go. He is given a chance to stay confined but he disregards this as he goes looking for two runaway slaves. This is all Solomon needs and Shimei is put to death.
- The final note in this account is concerns Solomon's alliance with a daughter of the Pharaoh and the wedding gift of more territory coming to Solomon as a part of this alliance. By now we can see the stark contrast between David and Solomon. He is a strong, decisive leader. He doesn't waste any time establishing his rule and complete command of all Israel. The stage is set. The reader is positioned to think, "Now here is a real leader! Solomon is going to be that king that is going to make Israel secure and bring God's salvation to the people!"

- It only gets better for Solomon. It is recorded here how he walked according to the statutes of God and sacrificed generously at the tabernacle. In this section affirming Solomon's faithfulness to God, there is one footnote we should catch. It slips in this one statement: "except he offered sacrifices and burnt offerings on the high places." This notes that although Solomon honored and worshiped God and followed in the footsteps of this father, he also had on the side a habit of also worshipping the Baals. This needs to be noted as we will see that in the future, his many foreign wives will lead him back to this same place of worshipping the Baals and foreign gods.
- Solomon is now offered a great gift from God in a dream. God offers him whatever he would ask. Solomon reveals a true desire to serve God and serve God's people by asking for wisdom and insight on how to rule. This other-centeredness and desire for true justice honors God and God responds by making him the wisest person to live as well as to bless him with wealth, honor, success and long life.
- This wisdom is quickly put to use. Two prostitutes come in with dispute over a baby. Solomon in his wisdom reveals the heart of the true mother and restores the baby to her. Here the prostitutes are not judged (they should have been put to death) but rather true justice takes higher precedence.
- We are left as readers in awe of Solomon and with the highest hopes and expectations that here now is the king that Israel has always wanted!