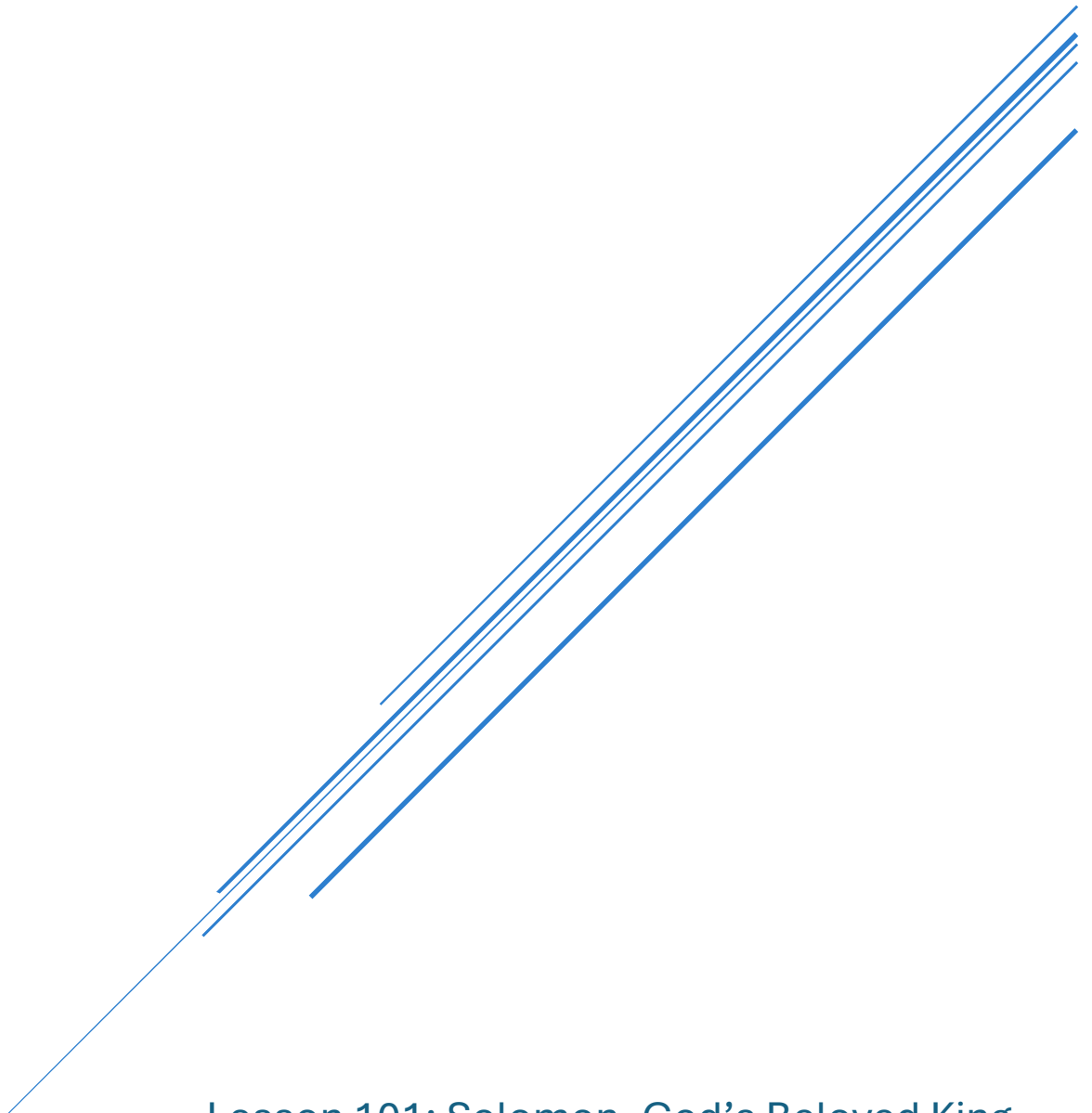


THE KINGDOM, THE BIBLE, & US

Understanding the Bible's story, Jesus' importance, & our place in God's kingdom plan



Lesson 101: Solomon, God's Beloved King
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Introduction

Our last lesson concluded the book of 2 Samuel. In our next series of lessons we will explore the major ups and downs of Israel's (and later Judah's) kings. We will particularly focus on the key milestone events when Israel has a civil war that splits the kingdom and the captivity events that carried the Jews to other lands. To do this we will not focus on one book. Rather we will pull from both the Kings and Chronicles as we go.

To start our next section of lessons, we will begin with events that 1 Kings records. This lesson covers key events that take place towards the end of David's earthly life. Specifically, we will look at how Solomon came to take the throne after David.

David's Failing Health

1 Kings 1:1-4

1 Kings opens with an explanation that David finds himself in poor health. He is nearing the end of his earthly life. He is unable to keep warm and comfortable, suggesting his strength is leaving his body drawing him closer to the end. They found a young virgin woman who could personally tend to David as his nurse. They thought this might help lift David's spirits. Furthermore, the author points out David was never intimate with her, she was just his nurse.

Adonijah Presumes the Throne

1 Kings 1:5-10

One of David's sons, Adonijah knows his father's time is near the end. Due to this, he expects that he will soon be king. According to 2 Samuel 3:2-4, Adonijah is the fourth born son to David. Amnon was David's firstborn, but he was killed by his half-brother Absalom for sexually assaulting his sister Tamar. Chileab was the second born son of David, but scholars theorize that he must have either been killed early in life or was not considered eligible for the throne since he was the son of David by way of Abigail. Abigail was the widow of the wicked man Nabal. Perhaps Chileab was raised up in the name of Nabal as a type of kinsman redeemer act since Nabal had no children before he died.

This meant the rights to the throne would go to the third born, Absalom. However, Absalom threw a rebellion against David and in the process of the coup, he was killed by David's nephew Joab. This meant Adonijah was technically next in line.

Adonijah Travels as if he is the King

Verse five says he “exalted himself saying, ‘I will be king.’” This shows us the attitude behind Adonijah’s actions shows he presumes that he will have the throne. Rather than show himself an honorable, humble man, he proves to be an arrogant and self-serving man who cannot wait to be the king.

To make matters worse, verse five goes on to say he prepared for himself chariots, horsemen, and fifty men who went out ahead of him. This was his way of purposefully conveying the image that he is already being lauded as the king. This was a type of public relations campaign where Adonijah hoped to go ahead and convince the populous that he was essentially the king.

The author of 1 Kings clearly thinks Adonijah’s actions were wrong because of verse six. He implies they were wrong since he points out David never rebuked Adonijah, when he should have all along.

David’s Men Choose Sides

Verse seven says Adonijah was somehow able to win over Joab, the commander of David’s armed forces. He also won the loyalty of Abiathar, one of the main priests. We are not told how he did it, but somehow, he did. These two men are very important allies to have. If Adonijah took the throne, he would presumably have the armed forces and much of the priesthood on his side.

However, not all of David’s cabinet members supported Adonijah’s presumptuous rise to the throne. Verse eight says the other chief priest, Zadok, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and other valiant men of David’s did not ally with Adonijah. These are also formidable men to have on one’s side. If Adonijah takes the throne, there will probably be a split in the government at first.

Adonijah’s Exclusive Feast

Verse nine shows us that Adonijah threw a type of kingly festival where he sacrificed animals for a massive meal. The guest list was exclusive. He invited his other brothers, the sons of David. He invited the leading servants of David’s administration from Judah. Who he did not invite is more important to note. Verse ten says he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah (one of David’s top warriors), many of David’s valiant inner circle of men, and most importantly he did not invite Solomon his half-brother.

Why do you think Adonijah did not invite Nathan and Solomon?

Nathan's Plan

1 Kings 1:11-27

Nathan the prophet is not going to sit back and watch Adonijah take the throne of David. He goes to Bathsheba, mother of Solomon, and informs her that for all practical purposes, Adonijah has become the king, and David is not even aware. He encourages her to act or else her and Solomon will most likely be put to death by Adonijah.

Nathan's plan is for Bathsheba to seek an audience with the king and ask him a rhetorical question: "Have you not, my lord the king, sworn to your servant, saying, 'Solomon your son certainly shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne?'" The implied answer is, "yes." Then she is to press David saying, "Why then has Adonijah become king?" As she informs David of Adonijah's actions, Nathan will come in and independently confirm to David the news Bathsheba delivered to him.

Bathsheba before David

1 Kings 1:15-21

Bathsheba goes before David, who is very old at this point. Notice Bathsheba's words in verse 17. "My lord, you yourself swore to your servant by the Lord your God, saying, 'Your son Solomon certainly shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne.'" She then informs David that Adonijah is the king now but that David is out of touch and does not know it. But Israel looks to David to announce who will truly be king, but David has not done anything yet. She warns David that if he dies before making Solomon king, Adonijah will kill Bathsheba and Solomon.

Nathan Confirms Bathsheba

1 Kings 1:22-27

Nathan comes in as Bathsheba was speaking. He asks David a question, "have you yourself said Adonijah shall be king after me?" He goes on to explain because Adonijah has thrown himself a king's feast and invited David's top inner circle but not invited Nathan, Zadok, Benaiah, nor Solomon. He then asks, "Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not let your servants know who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

Did Nathan & Bathsheba Lie to David?

Some Bible commentators speculate that Nathan essentially made up the idea that Solomon is supposed to be the next king. Furthermore, they say Bathsheba was in on it and that she lied to David when she told him in verse 17 that David had previously

sworn Solomon would be king. The speculation is that Adonijah technically was next in line to be king and that perhaps Bathsheba and Solomon were in fear because they knew Adonijah would expel them from the kingdom since Bathsheba was only a wife of David's through David's affair with her.

This is pure speculation. It is my personal conviction that Nathan and Bathsheba did not lie to David. I believe we can piece together other verses that paint a different picture. It seems to me that God had chosen for Solomon to be the next king and communicated this to David. David then in turn had previously conveyed this to Bathsheba. So, I believe what Nathan and Bathsheba said about Solomon's future role as king was not made up by them to protect their own lives. I think the opposite is true. They were trying to protect Solomon whom they knew God had chosen to be the next king. But David had grown too old and was too unaware of what was happening in the kingdom around him.

I believe this explains why Adonijah did not invite Nathan and Solomon to the feasts. I think Adonijah and others knew that it was prophesied, by Nathan probably, that Solomon was to be the next king. Rather than submit to God's will, Adonijah decided to act for his own selfish gain. This may be why he wanted nothing to do with Nathan and Solomon.

In 2 Samuel 7:8-17 God made the everlasting covenant with David. He said David would not build the temple, but that his son who would reign after him would. David was promised to always have a son on the throne. To be fair, this portion of scripture in 2 Samuel does not call out that Solomon is the one to be king next. But, there is more to the story.

After the sin of David with Bathsheba, we remember that the son born to them unfortunately died because of the sin. The next son born to David and Bathsheba after they married was Solomon. 2 Samuel 11:24-25 is very helpful for our topic. It says after Solomon was born "Now the Lord loved him" (2 Sam 11:24b). There is no further explanation given as to the significance of God showing special love towards Solomon. But the implication is that God has something special intended for Solomon since He has set His special affections on him even from infancy. I think this sets up the case that God had intended for Solomon to be the next king.

2 Samuel 11:25 is also interesting. It says Nathan gave Solomon a different name, Jedidiah. This was because Nathan perceived that the Lord had especially set His favor on Solomon. Jedidiah may mean in Hebrew, 'beloved or lovely to God.'

Furthermore, in 1 Chronicles 22 we get more evidence. Shortly before David died, he commanded Solomon to build the Temple per God's instructions. David gives a

speech publicly to Solomon, a type of charge. In this charge David says in 1 Chronicles 22:8 that the word of God came to David saying he would not be the one to build God's house. Then, in 1 Chronicles 22:9 David continues to speak the words God told him. In that verse it is said that a son will be born to David whom God will give rest in the kingdom all his days. In fact, the wording here is that God is the one who told David to name this baby Solomon because of the peace God would bring during his kingdom. His name "shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days." The name Solomon contains within it the famous Hebrew word for peace *shaloam*. His name in Hebrew was Shalō-mōh.

Some Bible commentators think that David only said what he did in 1 Chronicles 1 22:9 because he was old, senile, and had become convinced of the lie Nathan and Bathsheba fabricated about Solomon. I believe if this were true, God would not have stood by and let this happen. There would have been some repercussion on Nathan and Bathsheba for trying to usurp God's plans. There is no mention that there was deception involved.

When we combine 2 Samuel 7, 11, and 1 Chronicles 22 I think we get an answer. Nathan delivered the prophecy from God that David would not build the Temple but his son after him would. Within that prophecy, God must have specifically said it would be Solomon. 2 Samuel 11 does not record this, but that does not mean it was not spoken then. We know that God showed special favor to Solomon when he was born. Next, his name means peace and in 1 Chronicles 22 David says it was God who told him that his name was to be Solomon due to the peace God would give Israel under his reign.

Therefore, I think Adonijah, and others may have known the prophecy and that Solomon was supposed to reign. However, Adonijah cannot abide this since he is chronologically the next son in line to be king. Solomon is the chosen king by God, but Adonijah has chosen himself to be king. Nathan and Bathsheba did not lie, rather I think they acted responsibly to get David to act and secure God's plan for Solomon.

What is your opinion about whether Nathan and Bathsheba made up the Solomon vow story or not?

David's Counter-Plan

1 Kings 1:28-37

David's response was positive. He swore to Bathsheba that he would honor the vow he made to her concerning Solomon. David called for Zadok the priest, Nathan the

prophet, and Benaiah to come before David. David charged them to take Solomon and have him ride on David's personal mule. They are to take him to Gihon where Zadok as priest and Nathan as prophet will anoint Solomon as king over Israel. Then, they are to blow the trumpet throughout Israel signifying Solomon has been made king. They are to cry out in the cities "Long live King Solomon!"

Then, they are to bring Solomon back to the palace where he will sit on David's throne. David will then officially transfer power to Solomon. This was not uncommon in ancient times. Sometimes a king who was ailing would transfer rights as king to his son rather than wait until after the father's death. This tactic was called coregency. It meant that for a temporary time two kings were alive and both reigned. It was a way for the father to mentor the son before his death, but the son already had the power to begin taking actions on behalf of the kingdom. It would be like a father who owns a business and wishes to give it to his son as an inheritance, but he goes ahead and transfers the business to his son and stays around to show the son how to run it properly.

Solomon Anointed King

1 Kings 1:38-53

Zadok and Nathan did just as David ordered. Solomon was anointed king over Israel. They blew the trumpets and shouted for Solomon. The people of Israel rallied and went up after Solomon with great joy playing music to such a degree it says the earth shook at their noise (v.40).

Adonijah and his party guests heard the sound. Joab investigates what the sound of the trumpets might be. At that time a messenger comes to them and Adonijah calls for him because he anticipates he brings good news. Adonijah probably thinks David has officially declared him king and told all the people. However, the messenger says he brings bad news for Adonijah. He reports what David has done, that he has made Solomon king by his authority, through the priesthood of Zadok, and the prophetic office of Nathan. The city has gone wild with rejoicing over Solomon.

Furthermore, he reports in verses 47 and 48 how David has personally bowed from his bed before Solomon and declared that God has blessed Israel for letting him see the next king with his own eyes. When Adonijah's party people hear this news, they were afraid and scattered.

Why do you think the people with Adonijah were afraid?

Adonijah is worried Solomon will kill him for his actions. He seeks shelter by going to the altar David erected and holding on to its corners. Adonijah wanted Solomon to swear he would not kill him. Solomon had men forcibly bring Adonijah before him. After looking at him, Solomon decided to show mercy and said he would not kill him. Solomon simply told him to “go to your house.”

Conclusion

We see in this lesson how God’s plans are ultimately carried out, even despite the wicked selfishness of others. God intended for Solomon to be king, not Adonijah and that’s exactly what happened. David is transitioning power to Solomon, and the next phases of God’s plans will come about through Solomon, most importantly the Temple is to be built.

This lesson marks a transition in our study of the Bible. Solomon will reign over the glory days of Israel, but unfortunately, he will succumb to sin. After Solomon’s reign, Israel will never have peace like it had known under him. They will long for a king to be their true deliverer because all the kings that come after Solomon do not prove to be lasting godly kings.

This leads to Israel longing for the true Son of David, who we know is Jesus the Messiah.