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Israel and Judah: 14. David's Life Nears its End

by David Sielaff, December 2015

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for December 2015](#)

Israel and Judah: 14

David's Life
Nears its
End

THE SITUATION: King David is frail and nearing the end of his life. Those around him begin to position themselves to keep or improve their political power with a new king after the great King of Israel is unable to rule or dies. As usual, David is underestimated even in his infirmity. Advocates of Solomon as the heir to the throne appeal to David. He gives orders that crush all opposition. David advises Solomon, prepares for the Temple construction, and designates officers for the administration of the kingdom and religious affairs.

The outline by David Dorsey presented in the last two articles is still useful. As we (slowly) approach David's death, we focus on the part of the outline shaded in **yellow** below. Surprisingly, we read David's "**last words**" earlier in 2 Samuel 23:1–7 in the center of the outline, a while before he died. David's life has been eventful and full of danger. It was no less so in his period of decline before his death. Were David's last words originally the end of Second Samuel? We do not know. Later editors made changes to the order of the narratives we have today. Yet, there is a symmetry in the current order of information presented at the end of Second Samuel and the beginning of First Kings. Look at the outline and note we have arrived at the last item which is "**d Conclusion.**"

This article goes from 1 Kings 1:1 to 2:9, then the narratives moves to 2 Chronicles chapter 22. It transitions from the story of David to that of Solomon, David's chosen successor as King of Israel. A new level of greatness of God's Kingdom of Israel begins. Note this comment about Kings:

"In spite of its length Kings is a highly selective narrative. Generally the kings about whom most is said are those who stand at turning-points in the narrative: Solomon; Ahab and Jehu of Israel; Hezekiah, Manasseh and Josiah of Judah."

• **Satterthwaite & McConville, Exploring the Old Testament: pp. 147–148**^a

^a Philip Satterthwaite and Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament: The Histories*, vol. 2 (London: 2012).

Outline of the End of David's Reign^b
(2 Samuel chapter 21 to 1 Kings chapter 2)

a famine caused by Saul's war against Gibeonites (2 Samuel 21:1–14)

- **Ends:** when YHWH answered prayer in behalf of the land (21:14)

| **b David's heroes** (21:15–22)

- How they defeated great Philistine warriors

| **c David's song of praise** (22:1–51 and Psalm 18)

| **c' David's last words** (23:1–7)

| **b' David's heroes** (23:8–39)

- Including how they defeated Philistines in battle

a' plague caused by David's census (preparing for wrongful war?) (24:1–25)

- **Ends:** when YHWH answered prayer in behalf of the land (24:25)

d Conclusion: David's death and Solomon's succession (1 Kings 1:1–2:46)

We begin with David toward the end of his life. Events begin by stating that David had a chronic condition that left him feeling cold all the time.

TEXT: *King David's Old Age Condition*

1 Kings 1:1–4

¹ King David was now old and had come into his last days; though they covered him with cloaks, it was not warm enough for him. ² So his servants said to him,

**“Let them seek a maiden for my lord the king, a virgin; and
let her stand before the king.**

**Let her come to care for him, and
let her lie down in your bosom,**

so that my lord the king will feel warm.”

³ When they sought for a lovely maiden throughout the entire territory of Israel, they found Abishag the Shunammite and brought her to the king. ⁴ The maiden was exceedingly lovely; she came to care for the king and ministered to him. As for the king, he did not know her. **[end text]**

Verses 1–2. David's servants suggested a young virgin woman assist him and be David's caretaker, which may have meant she cared for his personal hygiene as well. One wonders, of course, why did not one of his several wives take care of those functions? Abishag was David's live-in nurse. It was also her role to keep him warm by human contact. David agreed to that therapy. Abishag appears later in the story.

Verse 3. A wide search was made for the right young woman. The situation of the search and selection was likely public knowledge.^c Everything David did seemed to be known to everyone.

Verse 4. In biblical parlance, **“he did not know her”** meant they did not have sexual intercourse, or so say all the commentators. However, real affection between David and Abishag seems to have developed.

^b In [“Israel and Judah: 12. David's Special Song.”](#) This outline is in David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 134.

^c A later kingdom-wide search for a proper young maiden is told in Esther 2:1–20.

TEXT: *David's Son Adonijah Attempts to Seize the Throne*

1 Kings 1:5–10

⁵ Now Adonijah son of Haggith was lifting himself, saying, **“I myself shall be king.”** He provided for himself a chariot with horsemen and fifty men running before him.

⁶ Yet his father had not restrained him in his days, saying, **“For what reason have you done thus?”** Moreover, he was good-looking and very handsome; she had borne him after Absalom.

⁷ His planning was with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest; they helped as followers of Adonijah.

⁸ Yet Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and his associates, the masters of war whom David had, they were not with Adonijah.

⁹ Then Adonijah sacrificed of the flock, oxen and fatlings at the stone of Zoheleth which is beside En-rogel. He had invited all his brothers, the king's sons and all the men of Judah who were officials of the king.¹⁰ As for Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the masters of war and his brother Solomon, he had not invited them. [end text]

Verse 5. With David displaying physical and perhaps mental weakness, one of David's sons by his wife Haggith, considers seizing the throne. Adonijah's name means “YHWH is Lord” or “YHWH is Master.” As the saying goes, “It's good to be king.” Adonijah thought to himself, “I am next in line to the throne by birth, I should be king now.”

“Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess: The third, Absalom the son of Maachah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur: the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith: ...”

• **1 Chronicles 3:1–2**

Each son had a different mother. (1) Amnon was murdered by Absalom. (2) Daniel's fate is never given. (3) Absalom rebelled against David and Joab killed/assassinated him in battle. (4) Now, Adonijah is supported by Joab as the next in line to rule after David. Perhaps Joab felt that a strong vigorous leader was needed to maintain the “empire” God created through David, now that God's anointed king is showing weakness. (Solomon acknowledges to Bathsheba in 1 Kings 2:22 that Adonijah as his “**elder brother**” was next in line for the throne, but a ruling by David is almost absolute in an important matter as succession.)

Adonijah began acting like a sovereign ruler, parading in a chariot with a retinue of 50 men running ahead of him. It was their job to move people out of the path of the prince's chariot (for their own safety, of course). That is exactly what David's beloved third son Absalom did before his rebellion, **“And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.”** (2 Samuel 15:1). Indeed, another rebellion is to come in the near future.

Verse 6. David is blamed by the author for indulging his son's provocative actions, which is reasonable considering Absalom's rebellion. How much time has passed since Absalom's death is not known.

Verse 7. In this instance, Adonijah has support of the second most powerful and dangerous man in David's kingdom, Joab, the head of the army. He also has support from one of the powerful Levitical high priests, Abiathar.^d So, Adonijah moves forward with powerful allies of the military and priesthood on his side. Both Joab and Abiathar effectively supported David against the rebellion by Absalom.

Verse 8. Opposition to Adonijah and his allies was also powerful. Loyal to David were Zadok the other high priest, Benaiah commander of David's bodyguard and friend of David, Nathan the prophet, Shimei a

^d Abiathar was raised to the Levitical high priesthood after David ascended the throne. Abiathar's father was murdered by King Saul (1 Samuel 22:20–23; 23:6, 9; 30:7–8).

military man (not Shimei the Benjamite who slandered and threw stones at David), and the unspecified **“masters of war”** who were commanders of various military contingents which included foreign mercenaries.

Verses 9–10. Adonijah’s sacrifice took place at En-rogel, a well outside and south of the city of David (where the Kidron Valley meets with the Valley of Hinnom) off the main road to Bethlehem. While only a spring, it occasionally overflows but only after intense rainfall. Its water today is brackish and putrid and no longer qualifies as “living water.” The stone of Zoheleth is near En-rogel.

“Evidently this was a sacred stone — probably a Heb: *matstsbhah* such as marked a Canaanite sanctuary. A source of ‘living water’ has always in the Semitic world been a sacred place; even today at most such places.”

• **“Zoheleth,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

“Here too was a most appropriate place for Adonijah’s plot (1 Kings 1:9). He and his confederates dared not go to Gihon, the original sacred spring, but had to content themselves with a spot more secluded, though doubtless still sacred.”

• **“En-Rogel,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

Adonijah had no compunction about making these sacrifices, presumably to YHWH. There is no mention that the priest Abiathar objected. Why not? It likely was (in my opinion) because Adonijah, by making this sacrifice was declaring himself to be “King of Salem” just as Melchizedek and David were. By this act Adonijah declared that he was now King of Salem, actively usurping the throne. Remember, David’s sons were declared to be “priests” in 2 Samuel 8:18 where “Royal Stewards” or “chief ministers” (KJV) is actually in Hebrew (*kohanim* or “priests,” plural).^e

The presence of all David’s brothers except Solomon, and all the officials of Judah except those opposed to the overthrow, seems to be a substantial group in favor of Adonijah’s move. Note that the text says **“the officials of Judah”** and not “the officials of Israel.” The leaders of the ten tribes of Israel were not considered or consulted, perhaps because of time considerations, perhaps because of their presumed opposition. It was the tribes of Israel, after all, who supported Absalom’s seizure of the throne. Whatever the case, the plot continues.

TEXT: Nathan and Bathsheba Plan to Approach David

1 Kings 1:11–14

¹¹ Then Nathan spoke to Solomon’s mother Bathsheba, saying,

“Have you not heard that Haggith’s son Adonijah became king, and our lord David does not know it? ¹² Now come, let me counsel you, I pray, with my counsel: Escape with your own soul and the soul of your son Solomon. ¹³ Go and enter to king David; and you will say to him,

‘Was it not you, my lord the king? Did you not swear to your maidservant, saying that your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? Then for what reason has Adonijah become king?’

¹⁴ **And behold, while you will be speaking there with the king, I also shall enter after you; and I will fully confirm your words.”**

[end text]

^e For a discussion of David’s sons as priests and David as prophet, priest, and king, see my article [“Christ as High Priest,”](#) particularly the section “Was King David a Priest?” If David were dead, then what Adonijah did would have been perfectly proper. However, David was not dead, and he still had the right to choose a successor. In ancient times the eldest was usually considered to be the crown prince, unless the king designated someone else to succeed him. This often resulted in power struggles in all ancient kingdoms.

Verse 11. Opponents of Adonijah take action, not just in support of David, but also in support of a different successor. Bathsheba was the mother of Solomon, the second son of his parents. The first died as God's punishment because of David's many sins regarding the murder of Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12). Nathan informs Bathsheba about Adonijah's actions.

Verse 12. He advises they work together, otherwise she and Solomon's souls would be at risk. In other words they will be killed by Adonijah.

Verse 13. Nathan tells her she must approach David and tell him precisely the words that Nathan tells her to say, reminding David of his promise to her that Solomon would succeed David. She asks David **“for what reason has Adonijah become king.”**

Verse 14. Nathan says he will enter at that moment, support her statement, and **“fully confirm your words.”** They plan carefully and with precision. Bathsheba has little choice; she must trust Nathan.

TEXT: Nathan and Bathsheba Intervene on Solomon's Behalf

1 Kings 1:15–27

¹⁵ So Bathsheba came to the king into the chamber. As for the king, he was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king. ¹⁶ Bathsheba bowed her head and prostrated herself before the king. Then the king asked, **“What have you to say?”**

¹⁷ She replied to him,

“My lord, you yourself swore by Yahweh your Elohim to your maidservant that your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne. ¹⁸ Yet now, behold, it is Adonijah who became king; and you, my lord the king, you do not know of it. ¹⁹ He sacrificed bulls and fatlings and of the flock in abundance. He invited all the king's sons, Abiathar the priest and Joab the chief of the military host; but Solomon your servant he has not invited.

²⁰ On you, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. ²¹ **Otherwise it will come to be, when my lord the king lies down with his fathers, I myself and my son Solomon will be counted sinners.”**

²² And behold, while she was speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet entered. ²³ So they told the king, saying, **“Behold, Nathan the prophet.”** Then he came before the king; and he prostrated himself before the king, with his nostrils to the earth. ²⁴ Now Nathan asked,

“My lord the king, have you said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? ²⁵ For he went down today and sacrificed bulls and fatlings and of the flock in abundance. He invited all the king's sons and the chiefs of the military host and Abiathar the priest. And there they are eating and drinking before him; and they are shouting, ‘May king Adonijah live!’

²⁶ **Yet me, your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and Solomon your servant, he has not invited. ²⁷ Does this matter come from my lord the king, that you have not made known to your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”** [end text]

Verses 15–16. Bathsheba approaches David, perhaps wondering if he is in control of his faculties. Abishag is present. Bathsheba pays full respect to David, both bowing and prostrating herself to her husband and her king. David acknowledges her.

Verse 17. Bathsheba makes her statement as coached by Nathan. She reminds him of a promise he made to her. There is no prior evidence in Scripture of any such statement by David.

Verses 18–19. Bathsheba states that Adonijah became king, and David is ignorant of it. Then she lists the co-conspirators and the acts of sacrifice Adonijah did. She mentions Joab (the person who, besides David, did nothing to protect his subordinate, her former husband, Uriah). David knew the importance of all that she says.

Verses 20–21. She carefully encourages David to act with a public announcement. Bathsheba and Solomon being **“counted sinners”** against Adonijah, means they will be considered a threat to the newly-throned king and very likely killed. **“All Israel”** waits for David’s decision about his successor.

Verses 22–23. In the middle of her discourse Nathan enters the presence of King David, as he and Bathsheba planned. **“So they told the king, saying, ‘Behold, Nathan the prophet,’”** means that David’s retainers and bodyguards announced Nathan’s presence and his desire to speak with David.

Verse 24. Nathan makes no statement; he asks a question about Adonijah’s succeeding David to the throne. Did David permit this? Did David even know about this?

Verse 25–26. Nathan gives a similar report to what Bathsheba said, but he gives every detail we already know from the narrator.

Verse 27. Again, Nathan asks David a question. He seems to want to “get it on the record” so everyone present at court heard David’s answer.

TEXT: *David Takes Action and Gives Orders*

1 Kings 1:28–40

²⁸ King David answered and said, **“Call Bathsheba to me.”** So she came before the king and stood before the king. ²⁹ Now the king swore, saying,

“As Yahweh lives Who has ransomed my soul from all distress, ³⁰ indeed, just as I swore to you by Yahweh Elohim of Israel, saying that your son Solomon shall reign after me and that he shall sit on my throne in my stead, so indeed shall I do this day.”

³¹ Then Bathsheba bowed her head with her nostrils to the earth. She prostrated herself before the king and said, **“May my lord king David live for the eon!”**

³² King David ordered, **“Call to me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.”** When they came before the king, ³³ the king said to them,

“Take with you the servants of your lord; you will have my son Solomon ride on the mule that is mine; and you will go down with him to Gihon. ³⁴ Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet will anoint him there as king over Israel. You will blow the trumpet, and you will shout, ‘May king Solomon live!’

³⁵ **Then you will come up following him; and he will come and will sit on my throne.^f It is he who shall reign in my stead. I commission him to become governor over Israel and over Judah.”**

³⁶ Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king and said,

“Amen! May Yahweh Elohim of my lord the king do so! ³⁷ Just as Yahweh came to be with my lord the king, so let Him be with Solomon. May He make his throne greater than the throne of my lord the king David.”

³⁸ So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet went down, also Benaiah son of Jehoiada with the Kerethite and the Pelethite. They had Solomon ride on the mule of king David, and they conducted him to Gihon.

^f There is an interesting passage in Psalm 122:

“Jerusalem, being built like a city that is joined to itself together, Where the tribes ascend, The tribes of Yah, a testimony for Israel, To acclaim the Name of Yahweh. For there are located thrones of judgment, The thrones for the house of David.”

Note two things. First, Jerusalem, the City of David, is compact and **“joined to itself together.”** There are not many open spaces at the summit of the city. Second, in Jerusalem the thrones (plural) of judgment are **“for the house of David.”** The **“house of David”** means the tombs of David which were made by God for David’s burial. See my article, [“The House of David.”](#)

³⁹ There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet; and all the people shouted, **“May king Solomon live!”**

⁴⁰ All the people went up after him; the people were fluting with flutes and rejoicing with great rejoicing, so that the earth was split open with the sound of them. [end text]

Verses 28–29. David brings forward Bathsheba and praises YHWH.

Verses 30–31. David restates and renews his promise that Solomon would inherit the throne after David died. He did so publicly. By so doing, he declared war on Adonijah as a rebel. Bathsheba gratefully acknowledges David’s words.

Verse 32. In spite of David’s weakened condition, he effectively and forcefully gives direction. These orders are not from a man who has lost his faculties, in spite of his physical weaknesses. The orders are given to Benaiah, the head of David’s bodyguard, to be carried out, and presumably protect Solomon during the process.

Verses 33–34. David’s orders are concise, easy to follow, and specifically counter Adonijah’s actions, both in the place where David says the action is to take place, at the Gihon, and by publicly announcing their actions by the trumpet and a shout of acclamation. What Adonijah did in secret David commands his supporters to do with celebration and noise.

Verse 35. After Solomon’s anointing as king, David commands his son be directly installed on David’s own throne to rule as governor over all Israel and Judah for as long as David lives. Thereafter he shall be sole sovereign king.

Verses 36–37. Benaiah heartily agreed with everything David said.

Verse 38. **“With the Kerethite and the Pelethite,”** meant the two troops of foreign mercenaries were to guard Solomon and the procession.

Verses 39–40. When the trumpet was blown, announcing the completion of Solomon’s anointing, the people shouted, played instruments, were very happy, boisterous, and loud. Were they so happy because they no longer wanted David to be king after 37 years as king of Israel and Judah? Or because they wanted a younger, more vigorous king? Or, was it because they did not like David because of his sins? Who knows?

TEXT: Adonijah’s Hears, Reacts, and Begs for Mercy

1 Kings 1:41–54

⁴¹ Adonijah heard it and all those who had been invited by him, as they themselves had finished eating. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, **“For what reason is there the sound of clamor in the town?”** ⁴² While he was speaking, behold, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest came. And Adonijah said, **“Enter, for you are an able man and are bearing good tidings.”**

⁴³ But Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah,

“Nevertheless, our lord king David, he has made Solomon king! ⁴⁴ The king sent with him Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, also Benaiah son of Jehoiada with the Kerethite and the Pelethite; and they had him ride on the mule of the king. ⁴⁵ Then Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed him as king at Gihon. From there they came up rejoicing; and the town is clamoring. That is the sound which you have heard. ⁴⁶ Moreover, Solomon is seated on the royal throne.

⁴⁷ Besides, the king’s servants have come to bless our lord king David, saying, **‘May your Elohim make the name of Solomon more famous than your name; and may He make his throne greater than your throne.’ The king bowed in worship on his bed.**

⁴⁸ Moreover the king said this: **‘Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Israel Who today has given one of my seed to sit on my throne, with my own eyes seeing it.’”**

⁴⁹ Now all those who had been invited by Adonijah were trembling; they arose and each went his own way. ⁵⁰ As for Adonijah, he feared to face Solomon; so he arose; he went and held fast the horns of the altar.

⁵¹ When Solomon was told, saying,

“Behold Adonijah, he fears king Solomon; and behold, he has taken hold on the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let king Solomon swear to me today, assuredly not shall he put his servant to death by the sword.’”

⁵² Solomon replied, **“If he should prove a son of valor, not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth. Yet should evil be found in him, then he will die.”** ⁵³ So king Solomon sent for him, and they brought him down from the altar. When he entered he prostrated himself before king Solomon. And Solomon said to him, **“Go to your house.”** [end text]

Verse 41. All those with Adonijah heard the tumult of the procession from the Gihon Spring up to the summit of the City of David, to seat Solomon on the throne of David. Joab asks to know why the noise was coming from the city.

Verses 42–46. Adonijah’s son Jonathan answers with words that chill everyone present. He accurately tells what happened with Solomon.

Verse 47. Then Jonathan presents new information, that David has given his full support to Solomon, including David’s bowing assent to the acclamation for Solomon to be more famous than David. It is interesting that Jonathan mention one small fact not mentioned before: that David was **“on his bed”** when he proclaimed Solomon to be the rightful successor as King of Israel and Judah.

Verse 48. David gives his blessing and states his pleasure that God’s Covenant promise to David given in 2 Samuel chapter 7 has come to pass:

“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a House for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for the eon.”

• 2 Samuel 7:12–13

The phrase regarding David’s **“internal parts”** means that his successor will not be appointed or adopted, but from David’s own seed. The promise to David in verse 7:12 does not specifically say whether David would be alive when his successor takes the throne. David is happy that his own eyes have seen this event come to pass.

Verse 49. After Jonathan’s report, all those present at En-rogel began to fear the wrath of David and Solomon’s new authority. They scattered, probably in different directions from their recent celebration over Adonijah.

Verse 50. Adonijah goes to the altar at the threshing floor of Araunah, the future location of the Temple.

Verse 51. Solomon received news of what Adonijah had done to save himself, including the statement begging Solomon not to kill his older brother. Adonijah makes no promises, but brazenly gives conditions to Solomon, although Adonijah addresses him as “King Solomon.”

Verse 52. Solomon seems to ignore the treasonous actions of his older brother, Adonijah, and sends a message that if he behaves himself in the future, he would be safe. In other words, any hint of conspiracy against Solomon, and Adonijah’s life would be forfeit. Solomon swears no oath regarding Adonijah’s safety.

Verse 53. Sending for Adonijah, who prostrates himself before his new ruler, Solomon dismisses his brother and tells him “go home” as if Adonijah has no power. Notice that David has no part in the decision, and Solomon is allowed to use power against these enemies any time he wishes.

So what happened in the narrative of Adonijah’s fast rise to rebellion and his quick fall to being dismissed as a powerless nonentity? Was Adonijah a puppet of others such as Joab and Abiathar? That may be the case, but the text does not tell us. Adonijah certainly did not have a forceful personality.

Solomon should be credited for not killing his brother, even though that would have been the usual result of such rebellious activity by a close relative. Solomon's inaction seems strange. In fact, until David dies, no one is punished for this rebellion. Such inaction actually lulls guilty people into a false sense of security. And this is what David advises Solomon to do.

TEXT: *David Advises His Heir, Solomon, and Settles Future Scores*

1 Kings 2:1–9

¹ When the days for David to die were approaching, he enjoined on his son Solomon, saying,

² **"I am going in the way of all the earth. So you will be steadfast and become manly.**

³ **You will keep the charge of Yahweh your Elohim to walk in His ways, to observe His statutes and His instructions, His ordinances and His testimonies as written in the law of Moses, so that you may act intelligently in all that you do and everywhere that you turn around,⁴ so that Yahweh may confirm His word that He spoke concerning me, saying,**

'If your sons keep their way so as to walk faithfully before Me with all their heart and with all their soul, saying, There shall not be cut off a man of yours from sitting on the throne of Israel.'

⁵ **Moreover, you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me: what he did to two chief officers of Israel's military hosts, to Abner son of Ner and to Amasa son of Jether, when he killed them and avenged their blood in peacetime as if in battle and put innocent blood on his girdle that was on his waist, and on his sandals that were on his feet.⁶ So you will act according to your wisdom, and not let his grey hairs go down in peace to the unseen.**

⁷ **Yet you shall show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite; they will be among those eating at your table; for so they came near to me when I fled away from before your brother Absalom.**

⁸ **And behold, with you is Shimei son of Gera the Benjamite from Bahurim. He maledicted me with a painful malediction on the day when I was going to Mahanaim. When he himself came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by Yahweh, saying, 'Assuredly not shall I put you to death with the sword.'⁹ But now you must not hold him innocent; for you are a wise man, and you will know what you should do to him and let his grey hairs go down to the unseen in blood."**

[end text]

Verse 1–2. David continues to decline, but encourages Solomon to be steadfast and manly even after he dies. This seems to indicate that David and Solomon were close to each other, even though other texts do not seem to indicate any affection.

Verse 3. Solomon has been given a calling with specific actions required by YHWH. Things will go easier for Solomon if he obeys God and the Law of Moses. David is reiterating the good things that will result from Solomon doing what Deuteronomy 17:18 says, for Solomon to write out a personal copy of the Law of Moses. The benefits for doing so are given:

"And it will be with him, and he will read in it all the days of his life that he may learn: to fear Yahweh his Elohim, to observe all the words of this law and these statutes to obey them, by no means to exalt his heart above his brothers and by no means to withdraw from the instruction, either to the right or left, so that he may prolong his days on the throne of his kingdom, he and his sons among Israel."

• **Deuteronomy 17:19–20**

David's advice follows these benefits.

Verse 4. Solomon receives advice of information David received from God, and he recommends his son should follow that advice. We will read later in First Kings that Solomon does fulfill his father's wishes. David's advice of revenge is for the good of the Solomon's Kingdom, not simply revenge for David.

Verses 5–9. David’s entire narrative shifts to recompense three people for past deeds to David, good or evil. David recommends Solomon should act toward these three after he dies:

1. Joab, general of Israel’s army should be punished for his evil, murderous acts against both innocent (and guilty) people. There is no mention that David replaced Joab as general of the army of Israel. He left that for Solomon to do. I wonder why he did not remove him immediately. There is no more mention of Joab until 1 Chronicles 27:34 when he is said to still be in command of the army.
2. Kindness should be shown to the sons of Barzillai, who provided for David’s people during Absalom’s rebellion.
3. David promised not to kill Shimei when he berated and ineffectually attacked his king when David fled Absalom. He asks Solomon to have Shimei die with bloodshed and that he know why he is dying.

The next verse, 1 Kings 2:10 and following, deal with David’s death. We shall cover that event and the retrospective on David’s life in the article next time.

For now, our focus shifts chronologically from First Kings to 1 Chronicles chapter 22 where David tells Solomon about the preparations he made for his son’s future construction of the Temple. In 1 Kings 2:1–9 David gave Solomon advice of a personal nature; below in 1 Chronicles 22:1–19 David gives advice for his son to fulfill an important function of a ruler in ancient times: a great king must be a great builder. While both passages tell of advice for Solomon, the information given is not parallel so they cannot be put side-by-side.

This semi-private coronation of Solomon was the first of two. A second coronation takes place as we are told in 1 Chronicles 28:1–29:30. The first was semi-private and political. The second will be public and all the nation will be involved.

David’s death takes place in the next two verses, 1 Kings 2:10–11, and the transition from David to Solomon will be complete and secure. David’s death will introduce Solomon’s sole reign in the next article in this series.

TEXT: David’s Preparations for the Temple

1 Chronicles 22:1–19

¹ So David said: **“This it is to be the House of Yahweh, the One, Elohim; and this is to be an altar for ascent offerings for Israel.”** ² Then David ordered to collect together all the sojourners who were in the land of Israel, whom he recruited as stone hewers to hew trimmed stones for building the House of the One, Elohim.

³ David laid in great stores of iron for nails for the doors of the gateways and for clamps, and copper in such abundance there was no weighing it; ⁴ and of cedar timbers there was no numbering, for the Sidonians and the Tyrians brought cedar timbers in abundance to David. ⁵ For David had said,

“Solomon my son is youthful and tender, and the House to be built for Yahweh must become surpassingly magnificent, to win renown and beautiful distinction throughout all the lands. Do let me now lay in stores for it.”

So David was laying in great stores before his death. ⁶ Moreover he called Solomon his son and enjoined him to build a House for Yahweh Elohim of Israel. ⁷ David said to Solomon,

“My son, as for myself, it was in my heart to build a House for the Name of Yahweh my Elohim.

⁸ **But the word of Yahweh came against me, saying:**

‘Much blood have you shed, and great wars have you waged. Not you shall build the House for My Name, for much blood have you shed on the earth before Me.

⁹ Behold, a son is being born to you; he shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about. Indeed, **Solomon shall be his name**, and peace and quiet shall I grant to Israel in his days.

¹⁰ It is he who shall build the House for My Name, and he shall be to Me like a son, and I for him like a father. I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for the eon.'

¹¹ Now, my son, may Yahweh be with you, that you may prosper and build the House of Yahweh your Elohim, just as He has spoken concerning you. ¹² Only may Yahweh give you intelligence and understanding when He commissions you over Israel that you may keep the law of Yahweh your Elohim. ¹³ Then you shall prosper if you observe to keep the statutes and the ordinances that Yahweh enjoined on Moses for Israel. Be courageous and resolute. Do not be fearful, and do not be dismayed!

¹⁴ Behold, in my humiliation I have laid in stores for the House of Yahweh: A hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver; as for copper and iron, there was no weighing it, for it was in abundance. I have also laid in stores of timber and stones; and you shall add to them.

¹⁵ With you in abundance are those doing the work of stone hewers, masons, carpenters and everyone wise in any kind of work. ¹⁶ As for the gold, the silver and the copper and the iron, there is no numbering. Rise and act, and may Yahweh be with you."

¹⁷ Then David enjoined on all chief officials of Israel to help Solomon his son:

¹⁸ "Is not Yahweh your Elohim with you, and has He not granted you rest round about? For He has given into my hand the dwellers of the land, so that the land is subdued before Yahweh and before His people.

¹⁹ Now set your heart and your soul to seek after Yahweh your Elohim, and rise and build the Sanctuary of Yahweh, the One, Elohim, to bring the coffer of the covenant of Yahweh and the holy vessels of the One, Elohim, to the House that is to be built for the Name of Yahweh."

[end text]

Verse 1. David is at the location of the future Temple. This verse is a conclusion to the foregoing narrative about David's purchase of Ornan's threshing floor (the place God wanted the Temple to be put). It also introduces the following narrative regarding David's complete preparations for the Temple construction.

Verse 2–5. A third person narrative begins about things David did to prepare for the construction of the Temple. It is not about what David thought, and not about what he said.

Verse 2. David "enlisted" (or "drafted," perhaps with force) "**all the sojourners who were in the land of Israel.**" This was likely thousands of people. It specifies the functions they performed, cutting the stones under supervision of professional stone cutters and stonemasons.

Verses 3–4. Here begins a partial list of commodities David gathered to build the Temple. Iron for nails and cedar for the interior were needed for the buildings in the Temple, particularly for the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

Verse 5. David speaks about Solomon, and apparently YHWH approves of what David is doing by accumulating supplies for the Temple construction. He gives the reasons he is making all these preparations: (1) Solomon's youth and inexperience, and (2) the tremendous scale of the project which needs all the support and preparation that can be done. God permitted David to take these actions, so David moves ahead with his plans.

Apparently the gathering of materials has been going on for some time, particularly after Absalom's rebellion. The rebellion of Adonijah was a minor event that barely disrupted the tranquility of David's reign.

It does indicate, however, that weaknesses in David's kingdom were apparent, and would manifest in the future, which they did after Solomon's death, some 45 years or so in the future.

Verses 6–10. David then calls Solomon to come before him and David speaks to his son of how this great project came about, how God reacted to David's request, and how the situation currently stood. Solomon must have been aware of the preparations being made because they were public and large-scale.

Verse 8. The House for My Name is mentioned several times in Scripture.^g

Verses 8–10. We have here David's retrospective account of what God told him as to the reason David would not be allowed to build the Temple, but that his son, **"a man of rest,"** perhaps a metaphor for "a man of peace."^h This is the first time Solomon is specifically named by God (according to David) to be the son that would inherit the throne and build the Temple. One wonders, why was this information not presented to David in 1 Kings 1:11-40? This is another example how the Chronicles texts inform and interact with the Samuel-Kings texts.

Verse 10. David says God will have a special Father–son relationship with Solomon (said before in 2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 17:13). This is a significant honor. God considers Israel to be His son (Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1). Again, this is a significant honor.

The throne of David and Solomon will not be established "forever" as the King James Version says, but it will last **"for the eon."**

Verse 11. David tells Solomon that YHWH Himself has taken note of Solomon, and that **"He has spoken concerning you"**! Imagine that. God not only notices Solomon (as we are all noticed throughout our lives), but God actually spoke about him by name. Who of us would not desire such an honor?

Well, each of us are more than kings. We are children of the living God (Romans 9:26), engraved with His Spirit upon the fleshly portions of our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3), having the seal of the Living God (Revelation 7:2), and as such we are part of His living Temple (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Verse 12. Note that according to David, Solomon has a commission to rule God's people with the Law of YHWH.

Verse 13. If Solomon does as David advises, he will prosper.

Verse 14. First note that David has suffered **"humiliation."** Other translations render this term "affliction," "trouble," or "pains," perhaps referring to David's physical condition. Or, he could be referring to his humiliation at not being allowed to build the Temple, which is the context of this passage. It is also possible that this is a metaphor for saying "I endured much to gather everything for the Temple."

Whatever the case, the amount of gold and silver he accumulated for the Temple decoration, inside and out is given to us. Scholars have various measures for the weight of a talent, but 48 pounds for 1 talent is usually the lowest figure.ⁱ

The Jewish historian Josephus said that David **"also left behind him greater wealth than any other king, either of the Hebrews or of other nations, ever did"** (*Antiquities of the Jews* 7:391), which certainly made Solomon's rule more prosperous at its very beginning. In addition, David **"had great and immense wealth buried with him, the vastness of which may be easily conjectured at"** (*Antiquities of the Jews* 7:392). While Chronicles 2:14 has 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, the numbers of Josephus differ by a factor of ten. The numbers of Josephus are as follows.

^g See my article "[A Name for the Temple of God](#)." In that article are listed all the important passages that clearly show that the Temple of God will indeed be known as "the house of the name."

^h **"A man of rest"** could rest because he was not constantly preparing for war. In Solomon's case, he would be able to construct the Temple without being diverted with challenges to his kingdom.

ⁱ Do the math yourself for the number of pounds or ounces of gold and silver David collected. Then multiply that by the cost per ounce of gold and silver at today's rate of exchange. The number in today's value is staggering.

Commodity	1 Chronicles 22:14	Josephus
Gold	100,000 talents	10,000 talents
Silver	1,000,000 talents	100,000 talents

For the baser metals, neither the Bible or Josephus give a number. Solomon will need to acquire still more timber and stones than David has accumulated.

Verses 15–16. I believe what David is saying in this verse is that there are probably enough workers, but it is unknown how much of the accumulated gold and silver will be needed. Then he says, in effect, “Get to work.”

Verse 17. David meets with his officials instructing them to help Solomon in any way possible to complete the Temple. The kingdom is at peace and her enemies are defeated and quiet. There is no reason they should not help their future young king.

David encourages them to use this opportunity to look to God and honor Him for the peace they are enjoying, a peace that can continue if they obey God and complete the house for the name of YHWH (see note “g” above).

Administrative Affairs and David’s Death

David’s death has been long in coming, but finally Solomon will be the sole ruler of Israel and Judah, without anyone disputing his right to rule.

Solomon will follow the advice of David in every respect in his early days. God shall bless him greatly, especially with wisdom. Only later does Solomon deviate from the path of God due to influences that will not seduce him, but he will be seduced by his own wisdom. He will believe he can successfully “negotiate” around sin and evil and his wisdom will prevent him from sinning. The wisdom given to Solomon by God will actually cloud his judgment. Later he recognizes this fact when he writes the Book of Ecclesiastes, and advises his readers that the use of wisdom is only valuable when it is used for good and righteous purposes.

Having all the wisdom of physical things is not enough to live a righteous life. Just as with Job, having all the piety one can possibly have, it is still not enough to satisfy God. Attitude is all important.

David’s Wisdom

David had wisdom, just read Psalm 1 to 72 to see the depth of David’s understanding of God, his love of his God, and his love for the life of the people God put in his care. Yet David sinned in ways that had an effect upon thousands of those under his care. God punished Israel and Judah and Jerusalem because of David’s sins. Yet God knew that David cared greatly for His people.

Only Christ, David’s greater Son, was ever righteous. Only Christ was ever wise enough to avoid sin completely, and this was because Jesus Christ had God’s Holy Spirit without measure.

“For He Whom God commissions is speaking God’s declarations, for God is not giving the spirit by measure. The Father is loving the Son and has given all into His hand.”

• *John 3:34–35*

David Sielaff, December 2015