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## Israel and Judah: 16. David Dies, Solomon Reigns

by David Sielaff, March 2016

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for March 2016](#)

Israel and Judah: 16

David Dies,  
 Solomon  
 Reigns

**THE SITUATION:** We begin with 1 Chronicles 29 verse 10. In verses 1–9 David tells the leaders and people of Israel that God chose Solomon to be his successor as King of Israel. One of the first major tasks for him as king was to build the Temple of God that David was not allowed to construct. David collected all that was needed for that construction. First Chronicles and the early chapters of First Kings now give differing (but compatible) narratives regarding King David of Israel and the approach of his death. Let us look at the final prayer and blessing by David.

David's prayer and statement continues the narrative beginning 1 Chronicles 28:1.<sup>a</sup> The leaders and people of Israel gathered and David explained to them,

- the background of his desire to build the Temple to YHWH,
- God's response and refusal,
- God's gift to David of the pattern of the Temple in YHWH's own handwriting (1 Chronicles 28:11–19), and
- details of David's gathering vast quantities of supplies in preparation for the Temple that Solomon, David's successor, would build.

In 1 Chronicles 29:1–9, David told the assembled leaders and people that God chose Solomon to be his successor as King of Israel, and he gave details of the financial preparations he made for the Temple's construction: the gold, silver, precious stones, wood, and building stones, etc. The people requested (or did they demand?) that they be allowed to participate generously toward God's great Temple. Their request was granted and they give generously.

David is overwhelmed and begins his prayer by praising YHWH. It is his last public statement as far as we know. It begins with what appears to be a song.

<sup>a</sup> See the last article in this series, "[Israel and Judah: 15. "David Organizes for Solomon.](#)"

**TEXT: *David's Last Public Prayer before his Death***

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**1 Chronicles 29:10–25**

<sup>10</sup> Then David blessed Yahweh before the eyes of the entire assembly. David said:

**“Blessed be You, O Yahweh,  
Elohim of our father Israel,  
from the eon and until the eon.**

<sup>11</sup> **Yours, O Yahweh, are greatness, mastery,  
beauty, permanence and splendor, indeed,  
everything in the heavens and on the earth.**

**Yours, O Yahweh, is the kingship,  
lifting Yourself up as Head over all.**

<sup>12</sup> **Riches and glory come from before You,  
and You are ruling over all;**

**in Your hand is vigor and mastery; and  
it is in Your hand to magnify and  
to fortify [give strength to] everyone.**

<sup>13</sup> **And now, our Elohim, we are acclaiming You  
and are praising Your beautiful Name.**

<sup>14</sup> **But who am I, and who is my people that we should retain the vigor to give willingly like this?  
For everything comes from You; and it is the gift from Your hand that we have given to You.**

<sup>15</sup> **For we are sojourners before You, and settlers, like all our fathers. Our days on the earth are  
like a shadow, and there is no expectation.**

<sup>16</sup> **O Yahweh our Elohim, all this superabundance that we have laid in stores to build You a  
House for Your holy Name, it is a gift from Your hand, and it is all Yours.**

<sup>17</sup> **I know, O my Elohim, that You are testing the heart and are pleased with uprightness. As for  
me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly given all these things. And now Your people  
who have converged here, I have seen them with joy making voluntary offerings to You.**

<sup>18</sup> **O Yahweh, Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, do keep this for the eon as a form  
of devising [imagination of the thoughts] in the heart of Your people, and establish their heart  
toward You. <sup>19</sup> **And to Solomon my son give wholeheartedness to observe Your instructions,  
Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do all, and to build the House for which I have laid in  
these stores.”****

<sup>20</sup> Then David said to the entire assembly, **“Now bless Yahweh your Elohim.”** So the entire assembly  
blessed Yahweh Elohim of their fathers; they bowed their heads low and prostrated themselves before  
Yahweh and the king.

<sup>21</sup> They sacrificed sacrifices to Yahweh and offered up ascent approaches to Yahweh on the morrow of  
that day: 1,000 young bulls, 1,000 rams, 1,000 he-lambs and their libations, and sacrifices in abundance for  
all Israel. <sup>22</sup> They ate and drank before Yahweh on that day with great rejoicing. Then they proclaimed  
David's son Solomon king a second time and anointed him before Yahweh as governor, and Zadok as priest.

<sup>23</sup> So Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh as king instead of his father David and prospered; and all  
Israel hearkened to him. <sup>24</sup> All the chief officials, the masters of war and all the sons of king David as well  
gave their hand in support of Solomon the king. <sup>25</sup> Yahweh magnified Solomon so highly in the eyes of all  
Israel and bestowed on him royal splendor such as had not come on any king over Israel before him.

[end text]

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**Verse 10.** David begins his prayer by blessing YHWH. Why? YHWH certainly does not need David's  
blessing, or the blessing of any other human being. David blesses YHWH because he knows that his

requests that follow will fulfill God's will regarding Solomon and the Temple, as God prophesied to David in 2 Samuel chapter 7 and 1 Chronicles chapter 17. David is acknowledging that God's plan is moving forward. Remember, David is called a prophet of God in Acts 2:29–30.

**Verse 11.** David acknowledges his subordination to YHWH and, as his life slows and comes near its end, he shows his willingness to do God's will.

**Verse 12.** **“Riches and glory come from before You.”** YHWH is the source of all such things and he gives to whosoever He will: good people or evil people. Likewise, if you do not have riches and glory, that also is God's will for you, yet YHWH can change that situation any moment He pleases. In the sum of our existence, such things will matter little once we are resurrected.

**Verses 14–15.** David again asks of YHWH, **“Who am I?”** to deserve such notice. This question is found also in 2 Samuel 7:18; 1 Chronicles 17:16 when God makes His covenant with David.<sup>b</sup> YHWH is the source of everything, Israel with David as their King, returns some of what YHWH has given back to Him in thanksgiving.

**Verse 16.** David is happy that Israel will be allowed to build YHWH a Temple, even though he will not be around to see it completed.

**Verse 18–19.** David's prayer that God would grant Israel to **“establish their heart toward You.”** This is a wonderful sentiment, as is David's wish for Solomon to have **“wholeheartedness to observe Your instructions, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do all.”** This did not occur with Solomon or the later kings. This sentiment was negated by their sinful acts toward YHWH. Those sentiments will occur in our future when David's greater Son, Jesus Christ, begins His rule.

**Verse 21.** The feast begins. It will be compared to a later feast when the Temple is dedicated.

**Verse 22.** Notice that David anoints Solomon again in front of all the people.

**Verse 25.** This likely refers to the three kings who ruled before Solomon:

- (1) Saul, King of Israel and Judah,
- (2) Ishbosheth (Saul's son), King of the northern 10 tribes of Israel for 7 years, and
- (3) David, King of Judah for 7 years, and later king of all tribes of Israel for 33 years.

I do not think the rebellious kingship of Absalom is referred to here. He was not a legitimate king, nor did he reign for long. In Luke 11:31 Christ refers to Himself when he says, **“a greater than Solomon is here.”**

### ***Outline: Solomon's Accession as King (1 Kings chapters 1 and 2)***

The following outlines comes from David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 135. [Quoting Dorsey]

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- a **Adonijah plots to become king (1 Kings 1:1–11)**
  - b **Adonijah's plot foiled: Solomon spares Adonijah (1:12–53)**
  - c **David's charge to Solomon, including instruction to kill Joab and Shimei (2:1–9)**
  - d **CENTER: David's death (2:10–12)**
  - a' **Adonijah plots again to become king (2:13–22)**
  - b' **Adonijah's plot fails: Solomon puts Adonijah to death (2:23–25)**
  - c' **Solomon puts Joab and Shimei to death and banishes Abiathar (26–46)**
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<sup>b</sup> J.A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, vol. 9, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 197.

The shaded portions of the above outline were discussed in an earlier article in this series, “[Israel and Judah: 14. David’s Life Nears its End](#).” In the outline “c” above, an earlier narrative of a “last words” statement by David is given in 1 Kings 2:1–9, when David suggested Solomon make a reckoning against David’s enemies. David seems to have spoken these words privately, although they were recorded. Then David’s death is told briefly in 1 Kings 2:10, presented below. It is not possible to do a continuous chronology of the end of David’s life because the textual continuity of Kings and Chronicles do not allow it.

This present article focuses on how Solomon acts on his father’s “last words” advice to move against those who caused injury to David in the past, people who might threaten Solomon in his reign. With the outline in mind, let us read how a’, b’, and c’ play out in the biblical narrative of 1 Kings 2:13–46.

### **TEXT: *David’s Death; Solomon Begins his Sole Reign***

#### **1 Kings 2:10–12**

<sup>10</sup> Then David lay down with his fathers; and he was entombed in the city of David.

<sup>11</sup> The days *which David had* reigned over Israel were forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years.

<sup>12</sup> *As for Solomon, he sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingship was firmly established.*

#### **1 Chronicles 29:26–30**

<sup>26</sup> As for David son of Jesse, he had reigned over all Israel, <sup>27</sup> and

the days *he* reigned over Israel were forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years.

<sup>28</sup> He died in a good and greyhaired age, satisfied with days, riches and glory; and Solomon *his son became king in his stead.*

<sup>29</sup> The affairs of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in

[1] the annals of Samuel the seer, in

[2] the records of Nathan the prophet and in

[3] the records of Gad the vision seer,

<sup>30</sup> together with all his reign and his masterful deeds and the times that had passed over him and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the lands.

[end text]

**Verses 11 and 27.** The length of David’s reign is reported and this standard retrospective on the reign of Israelite and Judean kings is repeated as long as the kingdoms last.

**Verse 28.** This also becomes a standard phrasing for future kings, although often moral judgments are attached as well, particularly in Chronicles.

**Verses 29–30.** The information written down about King David was significant. It was written to inform later generations about the founding king of the dynasty. Some of those records are in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles and are the source material for the compiled information. The writer of these two verses thought it important to indicate the three Israelite authors who compiled information about King David.

The annals and records went even further. They gave details of personal information about David’s reign (important events in his 40 years as king); his personal deeds of brilliance, skill, and heroism; and not only of David, but details are in those writings about Israel and all the “**kingdoms of the lands.**”<sup>c</sup> This phrase may mean the kingdoms within David’s empire, or it may mean the entire earth. After all, the Hebrew word for

<sup>c</sup> See my article, “[The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb](#)” for speculation as to why these writings may be found in King David’s Tomb.

“lands,” *erets*, usually means the ground or earth. Connecting “kingdoms” with “earth” **may** mean kingdoms outside of Israel or literally all the kingdoms on earth. This is possible because the influence of David’s kingdom was worldwide in influence, but not direct rule.

He was known, in effect, as “David the Great.” In 2 Samuel 7:9 and 1 Chronicles 17:8, 21, YHWH said he would make David’s name great among the nations, even like the great men of the nations. YHWH fulfilled what He said, in spite of David’s sins. Remember, God did not choose David because he was special. David was special because God chose him to perform particular tasks that He wanted done. It is the same with each of us who are called today. Isaiah 55:8–9 (compare with the King James Version):

**“For My designs are not your designs, And your ways are not My ways, averring is [declares] Yahweh. For as the heavens are loftier than the earth, So are My ways loftier than your ways, And My designs than your designs.”**

Until the two parallel statements above, the bulk of the history has been from First Chronicles in the last several articles in this series. Now the semi-chronological narrative changes to a long section of text from First Kings alone, then comes a section of parallel Kings/Chronicles narrative.

A former rival to the throne of David and Solomon, Adonijah (1 Kings chapter 1), seeks again to improve his position. He unknowingly threatens Solomon, who we will come to know later as the wisest man alive because God grants him that wisdom. Solomon now begins to take action as king.

**TEXT: *Adonijah Seeks a Favor from Solomon*** (see the outline above)

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### 1 Kings 2:13–25

<sup>13</sup> But Adonijah son of Haggith came to Solomon’s mother Bathsheba. And she asked, **“Do you come in peace?”**

He replied, **“In peace.”** <sup>14</sup> And he said, **“I would like to have a word with you.”** So she replied, **“Speak.”**

<sup>15</sup> Now he said,

**“You know that [1] the kingship belonged to me and [2] that all of Israel had set their faces on me to become king. But the kingship was turned about and came to be my brother’s; for from Yahweh came it to him. <sup>16</sup> Now I am asking one request from you. You must not discountenance me.”**

She replied to him, **“Speak.”**

<sup>17</sup> Then he said, **“I pray, speak to king Solomon, for he shall not discountenance you, that he should give to me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife.”**

<sup>18</sup> Bathsheba replied, **“Very well, I myself shall speak for you to the king.”**

<sup>19</sup> When Bathsheba came to king Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, the king arose to meet her; and he bowed down to her. Then he sat down on his throne and had a throne set up for the king’s mother so that she might sit at his right. <sup>20</sup> Now she said, **“I am asking one small request from you. You must not discountenance me.”**

The king replied to her, **“Ask, my mother, for I shall not discountenance you.”**

<sup>21</sup> So she said, **“Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to your brother Adonijah as a wife.”**

<sup>22</sup> King Solomon answered and said to his mother,

**“Why are you requesting Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Request also the kingship for him since he is my brother and older than I am. Request it for him, for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab son of Zeruiah.”**

<sup>23</sup> Then king Solomon swore by Yahweh, saying,

**“Thus may Elohim do to me, and thus may He add, for against his own soul spoke Adonijah this word! <sup>24</sup> And now, as Yahweh lives, Who has established me and seated me on the throne**

of my father David, Who has made a house for me just as He had promised, today Adonijah shall be put to death!”

<sup>25</sup> So king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he came upon him, and he died. [end text]

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If you are like me reading the words in this section, you ask yourself, “what was Adonijah thinking?” To us readers, Adonijah’s request seems to be a foolish move on his part. Adonijah was David’s fourth son and Solomon’s older brother. In his own mind he likely felt himself to be the rightful heir, as he says, **“You know that the kingship belonged to me and that all of Israel had set their faces on me to become king.”** Really? Was he blind to the approbation of the crowds when Solomon was anointed, and just before his death, again acclaimed that YHWH chose Solomon to be the heir to the throne? Apparently Adonijah missed the part where YHWH overruled the “right” of him to inherit the throne, having chosen Solomon to succeed David as king of Israel.

So ... Adonijah sought Bathsheba to throw him a bone to satisfy him. There was an implied threat in Adonijah’s statement and request to Bathsheba that he could cause trouble for Solomon. He was speaking himself to death, particularly after Solomon gave him a pardon and a warning (1 Kings 1:5–10, 40–53).

Perhaps what seems obvious to us in reading this account, may have seemed clever to Adonijah.

**Verse 13.** Bathsheba’s question indicates she was on guard against Adonijah. She did not trust him.

**Verses 15.** Adonijah directly mentions his right to rule. He does this to the mother of the current king, who would herself be killed along with her son if Adonijah ever became king.

**Verses 16–17, 20.** To **“discountenance”** someone means literally, “to turn the face.” It indicates a refusal, a figurative expression for turning your back on someone.

**Verse 21.** Bathsheba makes a short statement full of significance to Solomon.

**Verse 22.** Solomon understands instantly. Reading this verse you almost expect Solomon to say, “Mother, what are you thinking?” Of course, she knew the purpose of the bold request by Adonijah would be obvious to Solomon. Her son replies in effect, “You might as well ask that I give the throne of Israel to him, and promote Abiathar the priest and Joab, the leader of the army of Israel.”

**Verses 24–25.** God fulfilled the promises He made to David about Solomon ascending David’s throne. To protect what YHWH has promised, Solomon acts decisively and puts Adonijah to death.

**TEXT: *Solomon Exacts Justice upon Abiathar the Priest*** (see the outline above)

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### 1 Kings 2:26–27

<sup>26</sup> Then the king said to Abiathar the priest,

**“Go back to Anathoth to your fields, for a man worthy of death are you. Yet on this day I shall not put you to death, for you carried the coffer [the ark] of the Lord Yahweh before my father David, and you humbled yourself in all that my father had to humble himself.”**

<sup>27</sup> So Solomon drove out Abiathar from being a priest for Yahweh, to fulfill the word of Yahweh that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh. [end text]

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Abiathar, who was near David’s age,<sup>d</sup> was not killed for supporting Adonijah as king in the rebellion against King David (1 Kings 1:7, 19, 25, 42), although Solomon says he deserves death for anointing Solomon’s rival Adonijah as king. Was Abiathar conspiring with Adonijah this time also? Solomon takes no chances and removes Abiathar from the important position as a Chief Priest serving before the altar.

Abiathar supported David before he became king, in his reign for 7 years in Hebron, as King of Israel in

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<sup>d</sup> He helped David before he became king, probably more than 40 years before this meeting with Solomon.

Jerusalem for 33 years, and during Absalom's rebellion. Abiathar supported Adonijah for reasons we do not know. See verse 35 below where Solomon appoints a replacement for Abiathar as one of the Chief Priests for YHWH. It is now Joab's turn to receive delayed "justice" from Solomon.

**TEXT: *Solomon Exacts Justice upon Joab*** (see the outline above)

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### 1 Kings 2:28–35

<sup>28</sup> When the report came to Joab (for Joab himself had turned aside following Adonijah, yet he had not turned aside following Absalom), then Joab fled to the tent of Yahweh and held fast the horns of the altar.

<sup>29</sup> Now king Solomon was told: Joab has fled to the tent of Yahweh; and behold, he is beside the altar. Then Solomon sent for Benaiah son of Jehoiada, saying, "**Go, come upon him.**"

<sup>30</sup> So Benaiah came to the tent of Yahweh; he said to him, "**Thus says the king, Come forth!**" But he replied, "**No, for here I shall die.**" Benaiah brought this word back to the king, saying, "**Thus spoke Joab, and thus he answered me.**"

<sup>31</sup> The king said to him,

**"Do just as he spoke, and come upon him. You will entomb him and take away from me and from my father's house the guilt for the blood which Joab had gratuitously shed.**

<sup>32</sup> **Thus Yahweh will bring back on his [Joab's] head his bloodguilt because he came upon two men more righteous and better than he was, and he killed them with the sword when my father David had no knowledge about it: Abner son of Ner, chief of the military host of Israel, and Amasa son of Jether, chief of the military host of Judah.**

<sup>33</sup> **May the guilt for their blood return on the head of Joab and on the head of his seed for the eon. Yet for David and his seed, for his house and his throne, may there be peace unto the eon from Yahweh."**

<sup>34</sup> So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and came upon him; he put him to death, and he was entombed at his own house in the wilderness. <sup>35</sup> In his stead, the king put Benaiah son of Jehoiada over the military host; and the king put Zadok the priest in Abiathar's place. [end text]

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**Verse 28–29.** Joab, chief of Israel's army, heard about Adonijah's death. He acts immediately, seeking protection at the altar of YHWH down at the Gihon Spring, just as Adonijah did earlier (1 Kings 1:50–53).<sup>e</sup>

**Verses 31–32.** The reason Joab was sentenced to death is stated. It was because of Joab's impetuous and unjustified murders which threatened David's rule.

**Verse 33.** Here was David's original curse upon Joab.

**"Then the king said to his servants, 'Do you not know that a chief, a great man in Israel [Abner, murdered by Joab], has fallen this day? And today I am timid, even though anointed king; as for those men, the sons of Zeruah [Joab and his brother Abashai], they are too obstinate for me. May Yahweh repay the one doing evil according to his evil.'"**

• 2 Samuel 3:37–39

David cursed Joab to die in the same way he committed murder, by the sword. He reminded Solomon of Joab's misdeeds in 1 Kings 2:5–6 and recommended Joab be put to death. Solomon orders death for Joab as suggested, but only pronounces a curse on his family. There is no indication that he harmed Joab's family in any way. The names of Joab's seed are not given in the Bible.

The mention of Joab's guilt applying to Joab's "seed" is disturbing to us. Why curse Joab's family? It

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<sup>e</sup> This is similar to what happened some 800+ years later when Roman civilians sought protection at the altars of pagan temples during the mass murder by Mithradates VI. It did them no good and massacre was the result. See "[Sudden Mass Murder](#)."

could be that by requesting God to curse Joab, Solomon can be held innocent, while Joab and his seed were guilty of past crimes. This reduces the threat to Solomon and his rule from a “blood feud” attack from Joab’s family in the future.

**Verses 34–35.** Benaiah did as ordered. Did he kill Joab as he held on to the horns of the altar? We do not know. As Benaiah rose in the ranks, there is no indication that he sought Joab’s position as leader of Israel’s armed forces or had any animosity toward Joab. He obeyed David and Solomon’s orders precisely and did not act until he had a command to do so. He did not presume to act outside his king’s orders, unlike Joab. He was totally Solomon’s servant in this and in all other matters.

**Verse 35.** Benaiah replaced Joab. Zadok replaced Abiathar.

**TEXT: *Solomon Exacts Justice upon Shimei*** (see the outline above)

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### 1 Kings 2:36–46a

<sup>36</sup> Then the king sent and called Shimei. He said to him,

**“Build yourself a house in Jerusalem; you will dwell there, yet you shall not go forth from there whither or thither. <sup>37</sup> It will come to be, on the day you go forth and you cross Wadi Kidron, you should know and realize that you shall die, yea die; your blood shall be on your own head.”**

<sup>38</sup> Shimei replied to the king, **“The word is good. Just as my lord the king has spoken, so shall your servant do.”** And Shimei dwelt many days in Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> But it came to be at the end of three years that two of Shimei’s servants ran away to Achish son of Maacah king of Gath. When they told Shimei, saying, **“Behold, your servants are in Gath,”** <sup>40</sup> Shimei was rising and saddling his donkey and going toward Gath to Achish to seek his servants. So Shimei went and brought his servants back from Gath.

<sup>41</sup> When Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned, <sup>42</sup> the king sent and called Shimei. He said to him,

**“Did I not adjure you by Yahweh and testify to you, saying, On the day you go forth and you go whither or thither, you should know and realize that you shall die, yea die? And you said to me, The word is good; I will hearken. <sup>43</sup> Now for what reason did you not keep the oath to Yahweh and the instruction that I enjoined on you?”**

<sup>44</sup> Then the king said to Shimei,

**“You yourself know all the evil, which your heart well knows, that you did to my father David; now Yahweh will bring back your evil on your own head. <sup>45</sup> But king Solomon will be blessed, and the throne of David shall become established before Yahweh unto the eon.”**

<sup>46</sup> Then the king instructed Benaiah son of Jehoiada who went forth and came upon him [Shimei], so that he died. [end text]

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**Verse 36.** Shimei, of the tribe of Benjamin, was an enemy of King David. In this section of Scripture, a small story arc comes to an end (2 Samuel chapters 16, 19; and 1 Kings 2:8). Solomon gives Shimei a means to stay alive, but he is severely restricted in his movements to the small city of Jerusalem, the hilltop of the City of David. If he leaves Jerusalem he would die, and would have himself to blame.

**Verse 38.** Shimei agrees and pledges to obey. It is not recorded that he thanked Solomon for this mercy.

**Verses 39–43.** Shimei disobeys, his travel is discovered. He is summoned before the king.

**Verse 44–45.** Solomon tells Shimei he is blameless for Shimei’s coming death, because he had given him reprieve from death and Shimei disregarded that instruction. Therefore, by disobeying his king’s command, Shimei had a hand in killing himself. It was YHWH who brought evil upon Shimei.

The statement **“the throne of David shall become established before Yahweh unto the eon”** is somewhat surprising here. What relationship to this incident with Shimei have with establishing **“the throne of David”**?

It may be that Shimei's death was another warning to supporters of the family of Saul that their cause is forever lost.

**Verse 46.** Again Benaiah followed Solomon's order and killed Shimei.

### *Solomon's Dealings with Adonijah, Joab, Abiathar, and Shimei*

In our modern moral structure of the western world, we may think Solomon's judgments at the beginning of his reign were overly harsh. We need to recognize that each of these four men were direct threats to Solomon and to the stability of the start of his reign. Strength of will and purpose had to be established for Solomon to be recognized as an effective ruler. Each of the four held a position of power in the community.

- Adonijah was a direct heir to the Davidic throne, contrary to God's desire, even though he may have had a valid claim according to human reckoning.
- Joab, leader of Israel's army, supported Adonijah in a coup not long before David died.
- Abiathar was a Chief Priest and a powerful religious leader who backed Adonijah's aborted coup.
- Shimei was more than a loud public nuisance twice in David's reign. He seemed to be wealthy. He was also a direct threat as a rallying figure for the descendants of Saul against David's dynasty.

Individually each one of them could cause problems for the new King of Israel. Together they could pose a deadly threat. Each of the four was a wicked man. Remember also that it was years before Solomon took action against these enemies of his throne and kingdom. Solomon acted as he should have done:

**"Remove away the wicked one from before the king, And his throne shall be established in righteousness."**

• *Proverbs 25:5*

### *TEXT: Solomon and the Tent of Appointment*

#### **1 Kings 2:46b–3:4**

<sup>46b</sup> Thus the kingship was firmly established under the hand of Solomon.

<sup>1</sup> Then Solomon became a son-in-law to Pharaoh king of Egypt when he took a daughter of Pharaoh. He brought her to the city of David until he finished building his own house and the House of Yahweh and the wall around Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> But the people were sacrificing on the high-places because unto those days no house had been built for the Name of Yahweh.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon was loving Yahweh so as to walk in the statutes of his father David; but he was also sacrificing and fuming incense on the high-places.

#### **2 Chronicles 1:1–6**

<sup>1</sup> Solomon son of David showed himself steadfast over his kingdom, and Yahweh his Elohim was with him and magnified him surpassingly.

<sup>2</sup> Solomon summoned all Israel, the chiefs [commanders] of thousands and of hundreds, the judges and every prince of all Israel, the heads of the fathers' houses.

<sup>4</sup> So the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the greatest high-place.

Solomon offered up a thousand ascent offerings *on that altar*.

<sup>3</sup> Then Solomon and the entire assembly with him went to the high-place at Gibeon,

for there was the tent of appointment of the One, Elohim, that Moses the servant of Yahweh had made in the wilderness.

<sup>4</sup> However, the coffer [Ark] of the One, Elohim, David had brought up from Kiriath-jearim to the place David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> And the copper altar that Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur had made was there before the tabernacle of Yahweh; so Solomon and the assembly sought after it.

<sup>6</sup> There Solomon ascended to the copper altar before Yahweh at the tent of appointment and offered up *on it* a thousand ascent *approaches*.

[end text]

Each narrative in Kings and Chronicles gives us information that the other does not provide. Together we have a more complete understanding of the message each writer wants to convey, what is important for them to communicate to their audience.

**Verse 1 Kings 3:1.** Solomon secured his western border through a marriage to Pharaoh's daughter which sealed an alliance with Egypt, Israel's most powerful neighbor. Pharaoh probably sought the alliance as much if not more than Solomon did. Israel's rise to power might have seemed threatening to Egyptian interests. With Egypt as an ally, Israel was more secure.

**Verses, 2 Chronicles 1:3–4.** The account in 1 Kings 3:4 just mentions that Solomon was in Gibeon there and that his dream (later, verses 1 Kings 3:5 and 2 Chronicles 1:7) was of great importance. A great crowd gathered with Solomon and the leaders of Israel in Jerusalem and they walked north to Gibeon. The Chronicles account tells us details about the Ark and God's "**tent of appointment**" which is known as the "**Tent of Meeting**" in the King James Version. This was the tabernacle of Moses from which David brought the Ark and moved it to Jerusalem. Solomon went to Gibeon to pray to YHWH to connect the Tabernacle and the Mosaic sacrificial system with the soon to be constructed Temple under his reign as King of Israel. The tent David pitched (the "Tabernacle of David,") for the Ark was not the Mosaic tabernacle.

**Verses 1 Kings 3:4 and 2 Chronicles 1:6.** One thousand animals were sacrificed as burnt offerings to YHWH. The people participated in a massive barbeque.

### ***The Ark and the Two Tabernacles***

To avoid confusion, the Ark, the Tabernacle of Moses, and the Tabernacle of David must be properly distinguished from each other. A portion of the article "Tabernacle" below does this nicely.

***6. Nob and Gibeon.*** We next hear of the tabernacle at Nob ... ***This Nob was 4 miles to the North of Jerusalem and was more-over a high place, 30 ft. higher than Zion. ... Here it remained a few years, till after the massacre by Saul of all the priests at Nob save one, Abiathar (1 Sam 22:11ff). Subsequently, possibly by Saul himself, it was removed to Gibeon (1 Ch 16:39; 21:29). Gibeon was 6 miles from Jerusalem, and 7 from Beth-el, and may have been chosen for its strategic advantage as well as for the fact that it was already inhabited by priests, and was Saul's ancestral city.***

***7. Restoration of the Ark:*** ... On his capturing the fortress of Jebus (later Jerusalem), and building himself a 'house' there, David prepared a place for the ark of God, and ***pitched a tent***

on Zion in imitation of the tabernacle at Gibeon (2 Sam 6:17 ff; 1 Ch 16:1). He must also have provided an altar, for we read of burnt offerings and peace offerings being made there. Meanwhile the ark had been brought from Kiriath-jearim, where it had lain so long; it was restored in the presence of a concourse of people representing the whole nation, the soldiery and civilians delivering it to the priests (2 Sam 6:1 ff). On this journey Uzzah was smitten for touching the ark. Arrived near Jerusalem, the ark was carried into the house of Obed-edom, a Levite, and remained there for 3 months. At the end of this time it was carried into David's tabernacle with all fitting solemnity and honor.

8. *The Two Tabernacles*: Hence, it was that there were now two tabernacles, the original one with its altar at Gibeon, and the new one [the Tabernacle of David] with the original ark in Jerusalem, both under the protection of the king. Both, however, were soon to be superseded by the building of a temple. The altar at Gibeon continued in use till the time of Solomon. Of all the actual material of the tabernacle, the ark alone remained unchanged in the temple. The tabernacle itself, with its sacred vessels, was brought up to Jerusalem, and was preserved, apparently, as a sacred relic in the temple (1 Ki 8:4). Thus, after a history of more than 200 years, the tabernacle ceases to appear in history.”

• “*Tabernacle*” in *ISBE*<sup>f</sup>

Six miles distance from Jerusalem was a short trip for people who walked everywhere every day. Perhaps David did not think the original tabernacle was significant, but Solomon did, so he brought it to Jerusalem.

### *TEXT: Solomon's Dream*

#### 1 Kings 3:5–3:15

<sup>5</sup> At Gibeon

Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; Elohim said, “**Ask what I shall give to you.**”

<sup>6</sup> Solomon replied,

“**You have shown great benignity** [loving-kindness] **to Your servant, my father David, just as he walked before You in faithfulness and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart with You. You kept toward him this great benignity, so that You gave him a son to sit on his throne as on this day.**

<sup>7</sup> **And now, O Yahweh my Elohim, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David; yet I am a young lad, and I do not know how to go forth or to come in.**

<sup>8</sup> **Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen,**

**a people so numerous that it can neither be counted nor numbered for multitude.**

<sup>9</sup> **Will You give to Your servant a hearkening heart**

#### 2 Chronicles 1:7–13

<sup>7</sup> In that night Elohim appeared to Solomon and said to him, “**Ask what I shall give to you.**”

<sup>8</sup> At that Solomon said to Elohim,

“**You have shown great benignity** [loving-kindness] **to my father David, and**

**You have made me king in place of him.**

<sup>9</sup> **Now, O Yahweh Elohim, let Your promise to my father David prove faithful, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the soil grains of the earth.**

<sup>10</sup> **Now grant me wisdom and knowledge, and so I shall go forth and come in**

<sup>f</sup> Article “Tabernacle” in *ISBE – The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1st Edition, 1914.

*to judge Your people,  
to discern between good and evil;  
for who can judge this **burdensome** people of  
Yours?"*

<sup>10</sup> The word was well pleasing in the eyes of Yahweh because Solomon had requested this matter.

<sup>11</sup> So Elohim replied to him,

**"Because**  
*you requested this matter and have  
neither asked for yourself many days,  
nor asked for yourself riches,  
nor asked for the soul of your enemies,  
yet you have asked  
for yourself **understanding to make out right  
judgment,*** <sup>12</sup> behold, I will do according to your word.

**Behold, I will give you a wise and discerning heart,  
so that no one like you has been before you;  
and after you no one shall rise like you.**

<sup>13</sup> **Moreover, what you have not asked,  
I will give you: both riches and glory all your  
days, so that there will be no man like you  
among kings.**

<sup>14</sup> **Should you be walking in My ways so as to  
keep My statutes and My instructions, just as  
your father David walked, then I will prolong  
your days."**

<sup>15</sup> When Solomon awoke, behold, it had been a dream.

He came back to Jerusalem  
and stood before the coffer [ark] of the covenant of Yahweh. And he offered up ascent offerings, made peace offerings and made a feast for all his servants.

*before this people;*

*for who can judge this **great** people of  
Yours?"*

<sup>11</sup> Then Elohim said to Solomon,

**"Because**  
*this has been in your heart, and you have  
not asked for riches, substance and honor,  
or the soul of those hating you, and  
also you have not asked for many days,  
yet you are asking for wisdom and knowledge  
for yourself that you may  
judge My people over whom I have made you  
king,*

<sup>12</sup> **the wisdom and knowledge are being  
granted to you,  
and**

**also riches, *substance and honor* I shall give  
to you, such as none of the kings before you  
has come to have, nor shall there be any after  
you."**

<sup>13</sup> So from before the tent of appointment at the high-place at Gibeon,  
Solomon came to Jerusalem,

and he reigned over Israel.

[\[end text\]](#)

**Verses 1 Kings 3:5, 15.** The indication that Solomon's experience was a dream is mentioned before (verse 5) and after (verse 15) the event. His experience was so vivid that Solomon knew it was more than an ordinary dream. He immediately (so it seems) went back to Jerusalem and made personal sacrifices (plural) to YHWH for himself and peace offerings on behalf of the people of Israel. Then he treated "**all his servants**" to a feast. They probably worked hard in Gibeon.

Remember that Solomon is still in Gibeon when he has the dream encounter with YHWH. It is a fascinating narrative. Jesus makes a similar offer to each of us, as when He offered to Israel the following:

**"Request and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who is requesting is obtaining, and who is seeking is finding, and to him who is knocking it shall be opened."**

• *Matthew 7:7-8 (and Luke 11:9-10)*

Of course, the request must be in accord with God's will, as Solomon's was. J.A. Thompson comments:

“... every believer receives a favorable hearing. Solomon’s prayer is important not because he had an opportunity that was spectacularly better than what God offers the rest of us but because his response is a model for all of us. He did not ask for external things that would make his job easier ... but for wisdom that would make him a person better equipped to do a hard job. We too have freedom to ask whatever we wish, but often we surrender to the temptation to ask for things or for an easy life rather than seeking for the gifts of wisdom, perseverance, faith, and virtue, whereby we might overcome the trials of life. Finally, Solomon’s prayer shows great humility (v. 10), a quality that God never despises.”

• *J.A. Thompson, 1, 2 Chronicles, 204–205*

Following the sequence of Samuel-Kings as our basic format, we continue with 1 Kings chapter 3, with no corresponding text in Chronicles.

Next is shown another aspect of Solomon’s reign, that of keen discernment of truth and motive that follows this saying in Proverbs:

“**Benignity** [lovingkindness] **and faithfulness, they preserve the king, And by benignity** [loving-kindness] **his throne is braced.**”

• *Proverbs 20:28*

“**If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne shall be established for the future.**”

• *Proverbs 29:14*

### **TEXT: *Solomon Provides Justice to the Harlots***

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#### **1 Kings 3:16–28**

<sup>16</sup> Then two women, prostitutes, came to the king and stood before him. <sup>17</sup> The one woman said,

“**O, my lord, I and this woman are dwelling in the same house. And I gave birth while she was in the house. <sup>18</sup> Now it was on the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. We were together; there was no stranger with us in the house; except us two, no one was in the house.**

<sup>19</sup> Then the son of this woman died at night, when she lay on him. <sup>20</sup> Yet she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your maidservant was asleep. She laid him in her bosom, and she laid her dead son in my bosom. <sup>21</sup> When I arose in the morning to nurse my son, behold, he was dead. So I examined him closely in the morning, and behold, he was not my son whom I had borne.”

<sup>22</sup> Now the other woman said, “**No, for my son is the living one, and your son is the dead one.**”

But this first woman was affirming, “**No, for your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one. Thus they argued before the king.**”

<sup>23</sup> Then the king said to them, “**This one is saying, This is my son, the living one, and your son is the dead one, while that one is saying, No, for your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.**” <sup>24</sup> So the king ordered, “**Procure a sword for me.**” And they brought the sword before the king. <sup>25</sup> Now the king said, “**Sever the living boy into two, and give half to one and half to the other.**”

<sup>26</sup> But the woman whose son was the living one, said to the king (for her compassions were fervid over her son so that she said), “**O, my lord, Give her the living boy; you must not put him to death, yea death.**”

Yet that one was saying, “**He shall not become mine or even yours; sever him!**”

<sup>27</sup> Now the king answered and said, “**Give the living boy to her. You shall not put him to death, yea death; she is his mother.**”

<sup>28</sup> When all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had judged, they stood in fear before the face of the king, for they saw that the wisdom of Elohim was within him to execute right judgment. **[end text]**

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**Verses 1 Kings 3:16–28.** One theory is that this account is placed here to show that Solomon received

the wisdom that he prayed for, as God promised him.<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note there were no other witnesses except the two mothers. Solomon needed to trick them into revealing the truth.

## **TEXT: Solomon's Officials**

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### **1 Kings 4:1–19**

<sup>1</sup> So king Solomon was king over all Israel. <sup>2</sup> These were the chief officials that he had:

**Azariah** son of Zadok the priest,

<sup>3</sup> **Elihoreph** and **Ahijah** sons of Shisha, scribes, **Jehoshaphat** son of Ahilud, recorder;

<sup>4</sup> **Benaiah** son of Jehoiada was over the military host; **Zadok and Abiathar** were priests;

<sup>5</sup> **Azariah** son of Nathan was over the deputies; **Zabud** son of Nathan, a priest, was an associate of the king;

<sup>6</sup> **Ahishar** was over the household, and **Adoniram** son of Abda over the tributary service.

<sup>7</sup> Solomon had twelve deputies [officers] over all of Israel. They provided for the king and his household; it rested on each one to provide them with food for one month in the year. <sup>8</sup> These were their names:

**Ben-hur**, in the hill country of Ephraim;

<sup>9</sup> **Ben-deker**, in Makaz and in Shaalvim, Beth-shemesh and Elon-beth-hanan;

<sup>10</sup> **Ben-hesed**, in Arubboth (he had Socoh and all the land of Hopher);

<sup>11</sup> **Ben-abinadab**, in all of Naphtoth-dor (Solomon's daughter Taphath became his wife);

<sup>12</sup> **Baana** son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo and all Beth-shean, that is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah as far as the other side of Jokmeam;

<sup>13</sup> **Ben-geber**, in Ramoth-gilead (he had the settlements of Jair son of Manasseh which are in Gilead; he had the district of Argob in Bashan and sixty large cities with wall and bronze bar);

<sup>14</sup> **Ahinadab** son of Iddo, in Mahanaim;

<sup>15</sup> **Ahimaaz**, in Naphtali (he too took a daughter of Solomon — Basemath — as a wife);

<sup>16</sup> **Baana** son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;

<sup>17</sup> **Jehoshaphat** son of Paruah, in Issachar;

<sup>18</sup> **Shimei** son of Ela, in Benjamin;

<sup>19</sup> **Geber** son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorite and Og king of Bashan; only one deputy in the land of Judah. [end text]

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**Verses 2–6.** First come the chief officials, some of whom we have read about before. Then Solomon's deputies in the next section.

**Verse 4.** Abiathar may still have been on the “official roll” of officials, even though he was removed from service.

**Verses 8–19.** Some of these geographical locations are known specifically, some are unknown, and some are general locations. They were likely meaningful to the original audience, although they have less significance to us now. Some of these individuals may be verified by future archaeological finds.

Solomon's rule was consolidated and secure for 40 years.

David Sielaff, March 2016

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<sup>8</sup> John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 1 Kings* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 42.