

Solomon is King

Notes for 21 Jun

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Read: [1 Kings 2](#), [1 Chronicles 28-29](#)

The Succession

1 Kings 2 is the story about the succession from one monarchy to another.

It is not healthy for any country to go through a period of instability. However, if you read Susan Wise Bauer's book, "[The History Of The Ancient World](#)", you will realise that when there was a change of king, not just in the Middle East, but across the ancient world, it frequently created a crisis, with resulting instability, because of the ambitions of potential successors. These potential successors were frequently either relatives, or close comrades-in-arms, who would stop at nothing to gain what they thought rightfully belonged to them.

The narrative, particularly in 1 Kings 2 is set in a 'succession' context. The various steps that the ageing David and his young intended successor Solomon take, to ensure a smooth transition, is because of these competing ambitions. Sometimes these steps were brutal and bypassed due process.

The threats and context are quite authentic, which lends to the credibility of this narrative. However, it leaves us with a major dilemma!

In a conflict between political priorities and personal values, does the former take precedent over the latter?

Having read through 1 Kings 2, this tension comes very much to the fore.

Also, as we read through this chapter, we are faced by fear, betrayal, ruthlessness, ambition, hate and assassination. When I read through this initially, I certainly didn't feel uplifted or enlightened. When I read through some of the commentator's interpretation of some of the events and statements, it occurred to me that they were going through interpretative contortions to arrive at positive spiritual lessons. To the contemporary mind, their interpretations are hard to swallow.

When I was studying English literature during my school days in Glasgow, my learned English teacher often said, it is sometimes more useful to read the last chapter of a novel first. The book then makes much more sense as you can track how the narrative arrives at a conclusion of which you are already aware. I am inclined to apply this lesson to biblical writings. When I read the gospels and the likes of the wonderful epistles which we have [just studied](#), it helps me to understand where the human activities that we read in these books will lead. The revelation of a loving God through inspired biblical writings is only enhanced because the scriptures include such stories as found in Samuel and Kings. They inform us that His chosen nation was made up of those who betrayed His values, and broke His covenant. These stories don't need to be sanitised to project the thought that the 'heroes' were carrying out some special judicial commission on behalf of our Lord.

The inspiration of the biblical story is magnified because God reached the desired end, in spite of the flawed nature of those who played their part in assisting the Divine mission.

1. Does verse 3 give a sufficient template for living out a Christian experience?
2. Does verse 4 explain why the land of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BCE?
3. Concerning Joab, in verse 6 it states that Solomon should deal with him according to his wisdom, but do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace. Should we be critical of David's advice?
4. Concerning Shimei, in verses 8 and 9: "I will not put you to death by the sword. But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do with him. Bring his grey head down to the grave in blood." So at the point of death, are we absolved from our oaths to the Lord?
5. Adonijah wanted Abishag the Shunammite as his wife. What was he up to? Do verses 22-25 illustrate the wisdom of Solomon?
6. Verses 26 and 27. Did Solomon deal in an appropriate way with Abiathar the priest?
7. Joab was struck down in a sacred place of Sanctuary. Does this illustrate the foolishness, through impulsiveness, of Solomon?
8. Shimei was also executed. Verse 44 indicates it was not for breaking his promise but because of all the wrong he had done to David. "Now the Lord will repay you for your wrongdoing". Was it the Lord or was it Solomon?
9. "The kingdom was now firmly established in Solomon's hands". Does that justify the killings?
10. After reading 1 Chronicles 28 and 29, how important was the building of the temple to the Jewish people as a nation, and as part of their religious mission?