

## **I KINGS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Kings as we begin this book and continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that as we begin the book of I Kings that this is just a continuation of I and II Samuel, as God continues to tell us the history of the nation of Israel. Remember that we said the book of I Samuel was a transition book, as the nation of Israel moved from a theocracy, under the Judges, to a monarchy, under Saul, the first king in Israel. And as we saw the book of I Samuel open up with an introduction of Samuel, the last Judge in Israel, and then it closed with the death of the first king in Israel, Saul.

As we moved into II Samuel we focused on Israel's second king, David. We saw David rise to the zenith of power and as we came to the end of the book, we saw the culmination of a 40-year reign by David, 7 of those years in Hebron, and 33 in Jerusalem.

And as we pick up in I Kings we will recap the end of David's life and then focus on Israel's next king, David's son Solomon. And after Solomon, under the reign of his son Rehoboam, the kingdom is divided. There is the Northern Kingdom of Israel that has its capitol in Samaria. And the Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.

Then there was the Southern Kingdom of Judah that had Jerusalem as its capitol. And the Southern Kingdom of Judah was captured and its city destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.

Now the books of I and II Kings cover a period of some 400 to 500 years, beginning around 971 B.C. with the ascension of Solomon to the throne in Israel. Wiseman gives a good summary of the books of I and II Kings as he tells us: “The narrative covers almost five hundred years from the initiation to the eclipse of their kingship. It is the story of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of high promise and abject failure, of tragedy and yet of hope.”

Also keep in mind that I and II Kings were originally one book in the Hebrew canon, as were the Books of Samuel. The translators of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament of about 250 B. C., joined Samuel and Kings together and divided the resulting book into four parts. When Samuel and Kings were separated later, these four parts became I and II Samuel and I and II Kings.

Traditionally the authorship of these books has been given to Jeremiah because it had to be someone who was around that not only knew the history of the kings but also was there when the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity. Others feel that it was Ezra or Ezekiel who wrote I and II Kings, but again, we are not sure. But the one thing we can be sure of is that these words are inspired by God, He is the Author of these books and thus, we need to look at the lessons He is showing us so we can grow in our relationship with Him!

So with that as our background, let's begin reading in I Kings chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

## I KINGS 1

### VERSES 1-4

1. At this point in David's life his body is failing. Years before he was growing faint in battle and now he can't keep himself warm. He is around 70 years old at this time and yes, his mind was working well, but this mighty warrior's body was failing him and it was getting ready to go back to the dust from which it came. And folks, 70 years old in that period of time was old because life was hard and it took its toll on the body.

2. Because David's body could not produce enough heat to keep him warm, the servants of David found a young virgin who would care for David, keep him warm with her body heat. And please understand there was nothing sexual about this, there were no heating blankets in those days and the nights in the Middle East can get cold! In fact, this was a common practice back then for Josephus (Antiquities viii 19:3) tells us that these young women would help to keep these older men warm and care for them, kind of like a nurse. And if you still doubt that and believe that there was some sexual activity going on here, the text tells us otherwise, it says, "**but the king did not know her.**"

Also, this woman, Abishag was not married to David but I believe she became part of his harem even though she did not know David sexually. Just keep that in mind for this will be important as we continue on in our study of I Kings. And Abishag came from the village of Shuham, which was about 6 miles from Nazareth and Shuham was the son of Dan.

VERSE 5

1. David's life is coming to a close and yet there is still rebellion in his family. David's fourth son, Adonijah exalts himself and notice what he says, "**I will be king.**" There is nothing about the Lord raising him up or even his father David, but he wants to be the king and that is that, he will be the king! Maybe he felt that he was next in line for David's firstborn son, Amnon, was killed by Absalom for raping his sister. Then Absalom was David's third born son and he was killed as he tried to usurp the throne away from his father David. We don't know what happened to David's second son, Chileab, maybe he died, we just are not sure, but he is not around. That leaves Adonijah and again, "**I will be king.**"

And notice that he gets chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him, why? He was trying to present himself as a king and maybe the people would go along with his scheme and make him king and I also think that Wiseman correctly tells us that this was also to protect himself from Solomon rising up against him. He wrote, "In effect this was a personal military force designed to anticipate Solomon's claim by a *coup d'état*. (Out) runners were part of a close royal bodyguard." And keep in mind that Adonijah was the brother of Absalom and just like his brother who tried to usurp the throne from his father David, so too we see Adonijah trying to usurp the throne from his brother Solomon, negating what David the acting king wanted!

2. What lessons can we learn from this? Simply, we are not to exalt ourselves or try to place ourselves into positions that God has not given to us. It is the Lord who will lift us up and He will lift us up higher than we could ever imagine if we allow Him to. If we try to do it on our own, it will be a mess and we will fail! Remember what we are told in James 4:10, “**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant].**” And in Psalm 75:6-7 we are told, “**For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.**” In other words, God is in control and don’t take away what is His, the right to lift up and the right to bring down. Just humble yourself before the Lord and let Him lift you up!

3. Why did Adonijah act like this? Let’s look at the next verse and I think you will see the reason.

VERSE 6

1. Here was the problem for Adonijah, David did not discipline him and it seems he did not discipline his children. We are not sure why, maybe he felt that he did not want to cause them any physical harm or emotional harm, but because of that lack of discipline, he caused them more harm. Maybe he felt because of his own sin that he could not discipline his children. In either case he was wrong. No man is perfect, we all struggle and yet, if we refuse to discipline our children, they will be out of control. Just go to the store and watch parents with their children and see who is in control! The kids tend to dictate what is going on and the parents, frustrated yes, but they go along just not to cause a problem. I know if I acted up in the store, my parents knew how to get my attention and the same was true with my children. It is not time to rationalize with a child who is having a temper tantrum, sorry! Discipline is needed and they need to understand that it is wrong. When I discipline my grandson, he knows he did something wrong and it bothers him, and that is good. They should not feel good about doing bad and neither should we!

Not only that but he was handsome, very good looking and thus, he attracted the people by his looks. Now, for David, we see internal problems within his family and David was now reaping what he had sown and as a nation, we too are reaping what we have sown with our children.

VERSES 7-10

1. This had to be hard for David to swallow, at the end of his life some of his trusted associates turn against him. We see Joab, who was David's military commander at one time turn against David, and maybe that is why he did this. David demoted him, he was no longer the top military leader and we saw this first with Amasa and now with Benaiah. Then there was Abiathar and he joined forces with David after Saul had Doeg kill the 85 priests at Nob, plus women and children and he alone escaped! Why did he turn against David? Maybe Abiathar wanted to be elevated in his position as priest. You see, Zadok was the high priest and jealousy can do evil things as we see here with both Joab and Abiathar joining forces with Adonijah.

2. And here we see Adonijah throw a big sacrifice and feast to show that God is in on this and by having this feast he is blessing the people. But also note that there are some that he invites and there are others he leaves out. Those that would not support what he is doing were left out! And this is interesting because this stone of Zohelath is the "stone of a serpent", where they had their sacrifices. You think the Holy Spirit is trying to expose their hearts by telling us where their sacrifice was being held? And En Rogel was a spring that was located to the south of Jerusalem, in the Kidron valley.

VERSES 11-14

1. Nathan recognizes what is going on here. He knows what would happen if Adonijah was king, that both Bathsheba and Solomon would be put to death, thus crushing any resistance to his position as king. And so Nathan is going to give Bathsheba counsel in what to do. This also tells me how far removed David was from being king and knowing what was going on. He was very sick, very weak and he counted on others to let him know. And Nathan the prophet talks with Bathsheba and comes up with a plan to make David aware of this rebellion that is going on. You see, David has said that Solomon would be king and yet he has not made that announcement publicly yet. Why did both Nathan and Bathsheba have to go in to tell David about this rebellion by Adonijah? Because David might not believe it and thus, by the mouth of two witnesses the matter will be established. Nathan was not doing anything wrong, in fact he was just trying to protect the life of the next king in Israel, Solomon!



VERSES 15-27

1. When you look at the events here you can see that David waited far too long to make his proclamation who the next king would be. Because of that he left the door wide open for any opportunist to take advantage of that situation and Adonijah was more than willing to do that. And yes, he was very old and very sick and that may have played a role in this, but being in that condition you would think you would pick a successor to the throne quickly! But he didn't. So as Bathsheba comes in she tells David that all of Israel is waiting to hear his words and to show them who will be the next king in Israel. Her closing appeal to David is that if nothing is done, Solomon her son, and her own life will be destroyed by Adonijah who is proclaiming himself as king. And as Bathsheba leaves we see Nathan the prophet, enter. And Nathan makes it clear to David what Adonijah has done, and inquires of David if that is what he wanted to take place. And Nathan almost acts confused, but he is not, and he asks David if Adonijah is to be king, and if you ordained it, why were we not invited to the celebration? And as they finish David is going to respond to what Bathsheba and Nathan have said.

VERSES 28-30

1. Even though David's body was fragile and weak, his mind was still clear and strong. David knows exactly what needs to be done and so he just gives out the orders like any good king would do. David would settle this issue this very day and he would abdicate or resign the throne and give it to his son Solomon just as he promised.

VERSES 31-37

1. Remember that before the day is over David said that Solomon will be king and thus, David calls for the priest, Zadok; the prophet, Nathan; and Benaiah, who would become the commander of Solomon's army to come before him and he will tell them what needs to be done. And the instructions for these men are simple. He wants Solomon to ride on his mule, he wants Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to anoint him, he wants the horn to be blown and for them to shout "Long live king Solomon!" and then he shall sit on David's throne as king.

This was to take place at the spring of Gihon and there be anointed king over Israel. Thus, all will know that this is the one whom David has chosen to succeed him as king. The spring of Gihon was one of two springs that supplied water to the city of Jerusalem. It was located just south of the east gate, and the other spring, En Rogel, was farther down the Kidron valley to the south. You may recall that Hezekiah, later in Israel's history, built a tunnel, some 1770 feet from the spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam, within the walls of Jerusalem. Having the water supply come into the city was a way to ensure fresh water even when the city was under attack.

2. And so Benaiah is ready to do all that David has commanded and is ready to have Solomon become the next king in Israel. And notice his prayer, that Solomon's kingdom would be greater than David's. Was David angry with this prayer? Absolutely not, for David wanted to see the kingdom of God grow! And, this prayer will come to pass, for the nation of Israel will grow larger under the reign of Solomon than at any other time. But, keep in mind that it may have been larger and wealthier than David's on the human or physical level, but on the spiritual level, it was not!

#### VERSES 38-40

1. Why was Solomon to ride a mule? One write put it like this, "Since Hebraic law forbade crossbreeding (Leviticus 19:19), mules had to be imported and were therefore very expensive. So while the common people rode donkeys, the mule was reserved for royalty." (Dilday) Also, no one could take anything that belonged to the king, and if you did it would cost you your life. But David gave to Solomon his mule to ride showing that Solomon was the successor to the throne!

2. As Solomon is anointed king over Israel, Zadok pours oil over Solomon's head, which symbolizes the outpouring of God's spirit upon Solomon. God was going to empower him for the work of ruling a nation. And as all Israel rejoiced in David's decision, that is to make Solomon king, the earth shook below their feet as they danced and shouted for joy. A new chapter was about to begin in their lives. Think of it like this. Those that were under the age of 40 never saw the ascension of a king, the anointing of a king, they only knew of David!

VERSES 41-49

1. So as Adonijah is having this party, this feast for him being the king, things take a downward trend very quickly. As they are finishing eating they hear all this noise coming from the city of Jerusalem and Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest comes in and tells Adonijah that the noise you hear is the anointing of Solomon as the king in Israel! And as news gets out of what has happened, the supporters of Adonijah flee from him, they don't want to side with a loser. It is amazing how fickle people can be. Think about this, one minute they are having a party with him and a short time later they are deserting him! I guess it is as Trapp wrote, "Adonijah's feast, as all wicked men's, endeth in horror; for the last dish, is served up astonishment and fearful expectation of just revenge."

VERSES 50-53

1. What Adonijah did was not uncommon. In the tabernacle area stood the altar of sacrifice, which was made of bronze. On the four corners of this altar were horns so that the animal sacrifice could be tied down before it was killed. The whole idea was that the animal was dying in your place and you were receiving mercy from God. Many who were in trouble ran to this altar of sacrifice, holding on to those horns, with the hope that the king would extend to them mercy for their actions instead of putting them to death. That is what Adonijah was doing, for he recognized he was in trouble for his rebellion, and could be put to death for his actions.

And Solomon gives him a limited reprieve. As long as there is no wickedness found in him, he will live. But if there is wickedness found in him then he will be put to death. He gives his brother another chance to live but as we will see, that chance is wasted. As the chapter ends, Solomon tells Adonijah to get out of his sight, go home!

## I KINGS 2

### VERSES 1-4

1. David is dying and before he dies he wants to encourage his son Solomon, the new king in Israel. He wants Solomon to be strong, to be a man, to follow the ways of the Lord and not depart from them. Think about the advice that could have been given to Solomon; “Invest your money wisely” or “Invest in a house, you will get a good return from it.” Or “Make sure you are getting paid for what you are worth.” And the list can go on but the focus here is the Lord and obeying Him. Not to let the things of this world overpower him. Why is that? Because, it is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**” If he would put God first, then God will take care of the rest. That is an important lesson for us to learn. Don’t put other things ahead of your relationship with the Lord or you will never be satisfied. If you doubt that, then read Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon and he did everything you could think of under the sun and it was empty, it never satisfied. You see, only when you do things in the Son of God will you be full, will you be satisfied! And, what are you passing on to your children? May it be the Lord!

2. One more point here. Moses, at the end of his life, said in Deuteronomy 30:19, “**I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.**” God has also placed that before each of us; life or death. Life is found in Christ, and death is found out of Christ. Blessings are found as we are in Christ, and there are curses that are found outside of Christ. It does remain our choice, we do have a free will, but tragically many chose death!

#### VERSES 5-9

1. David is tying up loose ends you might say, putting things in order for Solomon, as he is now the king. He wants Solomon’s reign to begin in justice and thus, the first order of business is to deal with Joab who killed two innocent men, Abner and Amasa. And he also killed David’s son Absalom, although it was Absalom who was coming to put David to death. But David wants Solomon to put Joab to death for his actions.

2. Barzillai was kind to David, cared for him when Absalom was revolting and trying to usurp the kingdom from David and thus, David wants Solomon to provide for him.

3. And then there is Shimei who belittled David when he was fleeing Jerusalem from his son Absalom. And Shimei threw stones at David and told him that he was only getting what he deserved. When Absalom was killed and David was king again, Shimei saw the writing on the wall and basically said to David about his actions, his harsh words, “Just kidding!” David took a vow he would not put him to death but now David charges his son Solomon to put this man to death.

#### VERSES 10-12

1. The life of a godly man has come to an end. And what a man of God he was. Not perfect, but he loved the Lord with all his heart and he had a passion to worship the Lord. Redpath makes these comments on the life of David, “He was a shepherd, a soldier, an outlaw, a king, a fugitive, a sinner, a saint, a poet . . . His experiences were the writing of God on his life, making him into a man after God’s own heart.” And yet, in saying all that, we are told, “**So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David.**” That is it? Yes, for a servant of God there is no fanfare. Why? Because it is the Lord who enabled Him to do the things that he did and the same is true in our own lives, we are just servants of God, bondslaves of Christ!

2. We are also told that, “**Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.**” I think this happened because of the way that David handed the kingdom over to him, there was no mistaking who was the king. Also, Solomon’s kingdom prospered, but, like I said, it prospered materialistically but spiritually it was dry and it was weak. It did not start out that way, but in the middle it truly was dry and weak and it will not be until the end of his life that Solomon sees the folly of material things over spiritual things, over having a walk with God!

### VERSES 13-18

1. Remember that Solomon told his rebellious brother Adonijah that as long as he did well he would live but if he did wickedly, if he tried to lead another rebellion, he would be put to death, guess what, he is trying to lead a rebellion once again!

2. Here we see Adonijah approach Bathsheba and she is worried that he might do her harm. Why did she feel that way? Because she was the one that brought Adonijah’s rebellion to David, causing him to respond and make Solomon king. Thus, there is some bad blood you might say here. But he tells Bathsheba that he has come in peace.

Then thing I want you to notice is what he tells her. He said that the kingdom was his, and Israel was backing him, they were ready to make him king. But instead Solomon has been made king, not by the people, but by the Lord. Small point! Why even mention that the kingdom was his, even though it wasn’t, if he saw the hand of God upon Solomon? I believe that Adonijah still wanted to be king, and as we shall see, his words speak loud and clear to his intentions.



Adonijah's request is simple, or so it seemed, he wants Abishag to be his wife. What's the big deal about this request, it is a simple request, right? Wrong! You see, Adonijah is still trying to conspire to take back the kingdom from Solomon. You see, Abishag was David's concubine, part of his harem. And even though they did not have sexual relations, she was the king's and thus, to take this woman would be showing that Adonijah was really the king or at the least it would bring confusion to the nation. It is as C. F. Keil tells us, "Among the Israelites, just as with the ancient Persians, taking possession of the harem of a deceased king was equivalent to an establishment of the claim to the throne." He thought he would usurp the kingdom in this underhanded way!

3. Now Bathsheba had no power to do this and thus, she will bring his request to the king, to Solomon. Let's look at how this is played out.

#### VERSES 19-21

1. Why in the world would Bathsheba bring this outrageous request to Solomon? She knew very well what this meant and yet she still did it! I think she did this for one simple reason. To let the king, to let Solomon know, that the rebellion of Adonijah had not ended. He needed to be aware so that he could take care of it before it gained any momentum.

VERSES 22-25

1. Solomon smelled a rat in Adonijah and he knew exactly what he was trying to do, take the kingdom. That is why he said to his mother, Bathsheba, “**Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also — for he is my older brother — for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruah.**” I Kings 2:22. In other words, “Why not ask for the kingdom!” because his request for Abishag amounts to that very thing!

2. Now don’t think that Solomon is being harsh or unfair here. Back in I Kings 1:52 Solomon told Adonijah, “**If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.**” But wickedness was found in him, he was rebelling again, trying to usurp the kingdom from Solomon and thus, he is put to death!

VERSES 26-27

1. We now see Solomon deal with Abiathar the priest. The reason being is that Abiathar sided with Adonijah in his rebellion to be king and thus, Solomon was going to punish him for his rebellion. Thus, he is banished to Anathoth, a town in the tribe of Benjamin, and removed from service.

2. We are also told that this fulfills a promise that God made in regards to the house of Eli the priest in Shiloh. This promise was made in I Samuel 2:31-35 some 100 years before Solomon became king. We are told, **“Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. But any of your men whom I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.”**

In other words, the descendants of Eli would no longer function as priests. Eli’s sons, they were priests, were wicked and because of their actions they made people detest giving to God. They were also having sex with some of the women who came to serve God outside of the tabernacle, causing them to sin. And their father Eli did nothing and God tells him that his descendants would no longer function as priests. And we see that come to pass, and now the family of Zadok will perform this function. Zadok was of the house of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. (I Chronicles 24:3).

VERSES 28-35

1. As Joab finds out that Solomon is tying up the loose ends and that he is one of those loose ends, he flees to the horns of the altar, thinking he can find refuge there. But Solomon does not let Joab get away with this and he instructs Benaiah to go and strike him down, which he did. You see, Joab was guilty of shedding innocent blood, there was no remorse or repentance and we see him rebel against the Lord and thus, there at the altar he is struck down. I think Spurgeon sums this up for us as he wrote; “He did not know where to fly except he fled to the horns of an altar, which he had very seldom approached before. As far as we can judge, he had shown little respect to religion during his lifetime. He was a rough man of war, and cared little enough about God, or the tabernacle, or the priests, or the altar; but when he was in danger, he fled to that which he had avoided, and sought to make a refuge of that which he had neglected.”

2. How does this even relate to us? Think about what people hold onto for safety; like going to church, carrying a Bible, doing the sacraments, being religious and none of those things will help you. Spurgeon once again wrote, “The laying hold upon the literal horns of an altar, which can be handled, availed not Joab. There are many - oh, how many still! - That are hoping to be saved, because they lay hold, as they think, upon the home of the altar *by sacraments*.” You see, it is not holding onto the altar of sacrifice but holding onto the sacrifice, Jesus Christ, for He alone saves! It is as Peter said, “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**” Acts 4:12.

3. Benaiah is now placed as the commander of Solomon's army and Zadok is the priest.

#### VERSES 36-46

1. Again, Solomon is tying up some loose ends and he now deals with this character named Shimei. He puts him in a kind of house arrest within the city of Jerusalem. He was cut off from his home in Bahurim and thus he could not conspire against Solomon with his fellow Benjamites. The restriction that Solomon puts on Shimei is that if he leaves the city he will be put to death, otherwise he could live in peace within the city of Jerusalem. And Shimei agrees to those terms. It sounds fair but again, man's heart is evil and thus, he will not be able to keep this promise he made to Solomon.

You see, after 3 years of this house arrest, Shimei finds out that two of his slaves have escaped to Gath, about 30 miles away. Obviously he was not doing too badly if he had two slaves. But he is more concerned about his two slaves and he thus, leaves Jerusalem, retrieves his slaves in Gath, and returns home. The only problem is that Solomon finds out what he did and thus he has Benaiah kill Shimei for his breaking of the terms that were set by Solomon the king.

2. It seems that Solomon was pretty strict, how come? Solomon is establishing his kingdom and to let rebels continue to rebel against his authority would weaken the kingdom. I like what Clarke said regarding this, “He seems to think that, while such bad men remained unpunished the nation could not prosper; that it was an act of justice which God required him to perform, in order to the establishment and perpetuity of his throne.” So Solomon’s kingdom is firmly established and we will continue looking at the reign of Solomon next time in our study of I Kings.

3. As I close this evening, let me leave you with this to think about. Trapp wrote, “Oh that we would be as quick in slaying our arch-rebels, those predominant sins that threaten our precious souls!” Do you look at the rebellion in your heart like that? Don’t you think that needs to be dealt with, put to death? Absolutely! Paul said in Hebrews 3:12-15, **“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”**” May we keep our hearts open and sensitive to the Lord!