



FEED MY SHEEP

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Issue #120

November 2008

God's Sovereignty Operates Through Man

We begin with Nathan the prophet speaking to David's wife, Bathsheba, as David nears death. David's son, Adonijah, in a manner similar to Absalom, is trying to usurp the throne of his dying father.

1 Kings 1:12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign?

14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

Let us leave the action recorded here for a moment. There is a lesson here which I have drawn out of other passages in previous lectures but I want to reiterate it. It is a lesson which concerns the sovereignty of God. When I say that God is sovereign, that means *He* rules, not man. Man does not overrule God with his allegedly *free* will. God is all-knowing and all-powerful and He has written the script of all history in advance.

Critics and opponents of God's sovereignty sometimes like to charge us with being "do-nothings." The idea is that since we believe that God has predestinated everything, then *we* don't have to do *anything*, because no matter what we do, God's Plan will come to pass *anyhow*. Therefore, we can sit around and do nothing. If there is anyone who claims to believe in God's sovereignty and who actually does follow that do-nothing philosophy, then that person truly does not understand

God's sovereignty at all, or he is simply using it as an *excuse* for doing nothing.

Here in this story we have an outstanding example in the struggle concerning who would succeed David as king. Tell me: Did God have a Plan regarding who David's successor would be? Of course, He did. So then who was it, according to God's Plan, who was to be the next king of Israel? Solomon, right? So then we can agree that God had predestinated *Solomon*, not Adonijah, to be king, right?

Meanwhile Adonijah is the eldest surviving son of David, and so naturally, he along with many of the people believe that Israel as a nation will be like all the other nations which customarily give the throne to the oldest son. Hence, Adonijah is preparing for his installation ceremony. Nathan the prophet has not been invited, but he soon gets wind of Adonijah's nominating and *anointing* convention. I say "anointing" because remember that Abiathar, one of the two high priests, was part of the list of high dignitaries at Adonijah's coronation. He would be like the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who administers the oath of office when we elect a new president.

So when Nathan hears of the inaugural parade with the chariots and horses and 50 men running before Adonijah, Nathan thinks to himself: "Oh, good heavens! What does Adonijah think he's doing? I was present *years* ago when David promised the throne to Solomon."

Furthermore, Nathan knew that it was God's will that Solomon be the next king. Do you think *Nathan*

believed in the sovereignty of God? Quite so. But if Nathan were to act as the critics charge, then he would have said to himself:

“Ah, no big deal. So what if Adonijah thinks he’s going to be king. I know that God has planned to put Solomon on the throne, and I’m sure He’ll find a way to do it. It’s a-a-a-all predestinated, [*stretching, yawning*] so I think I’ll get me a beer and go out and sit by the pool, maybe take a dip later. Benaiah, go grab us a couple of cold brewskis.”

The point is: Was Nathan a do-nothing? Absolutely not! Nathan knew that God *seldom* uses supernatural means to accomplish His Plan. And even when He does, like the parting of the Red Sea, there are almost always *people* involved.

It was God’s Plan that the Red Sea be miraculously parted. But God used Moses with Aaron’s rod to do it. So here, God’s Plan was to install Solomon as the next king, but we can see by hindsight that His Plan also included the actions of Nathan to stop the plot of Adonijah. So we draw the conclusion that there is no excuse for a believer to be a do-nothing. Such a philosophy is pure sloth and laziness. Are you a believer? Then remember James the apostle’s admonition that “Faith without works is dead.”

We also see that Nathan did not act out of ignorance. He *knew* the will of God. In our lives, that also is a necessary prerequisite before we get involved. Is the will of God clear? ...in whatever the case may be? Now, someone might wonder, even if we *know* the will of God, does that mean we are *always* to get involved? No, not necessarily. But I cannot give you direction on whether to act or not act in a given situation. Sometimes, it might be God’s Plan that we *not* be involved. At other times, we *are* to act. How do we know the difference? In every case, we must ask God in prayer for His guidance and then we must be able to hear His voice when He answers. Jesus told a parable, recorded which applies here.

Luke 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

I wish our critics would understand that believing in God’s predestinating all things provides no excuse for sloth and laziness. On second thought, I am

beginning to believe that in the case of many critics, it is not so much that they think we are do-nothings. Perhaps that is merely the objection they raise so they can justify their own beliefs in their own minds; namely, so they do not have to face the fact that *God’s Plan* is sovereign and their so-called *free will* is not. For the full treatment, obtain our book, *Sacred Secrets of the Sovereignty of God* [\$24 ppd.]. Back to the palace intrigue, we find Nathan instructing Bathsheba on what to do.

1 Kings 1:15 And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.

16 And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou?

17 And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

The Bible does not record where David swore this to Bathsheba. For that reason, some of the more liberal Bible scholars and commentators postulate that David did no such thing and that Nathan and Bathsheba invented the story and thus conspired to take advantage of David’s feebleness in order to put Solomon on the throne. That, of course, is pure fantasy and nonsense. Even though we have no record of David promising this to Bathsheba, that does not mean it did not happen. Rather than imply that God’s prophet Nathan became a conspiring liar, we shall see that there is much evidence to suggest the oath had been made.

First of all, back in 2 Samuel 7, God gave a word for David through Nathan. To refresh our memories on the time frame, this was after David had become king over all Israel. This means he no longer lived in Hebron. The Bible tells us specifically in the verse I have put in the box on the genealogy sheet in last month’s FMS [i.e., 1 Chronicles 3:1-4], that David’s first six sons were born in Hebron. That would include Absalom and Adonijah, and it would also include David’s sons Shephatiah and Ithream, also listed on our chart. Now listen to this promise from God in...

NKJ 2 Samuel 7:12 “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

God said that He will establish the kingdom for a son of David who was *not yet born* when that word was given, so that excludes Adonijah and the others. You will notice on the chart that under Solomon I labeled him as the 7th or 10th son. If he were the 7th, then he is clearly the first in line by the primogeniture method of most nations. But God was not bound by that rule. After all, David was the 8th and youngest son of Jesse, wasn't he? So we don't know for sure where Solomon stood in the lineup. We will come back to that later. Add to this, though, the further evidence found in David's words in...

1 Chronicles 28:5 And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

1 Chronicles 29:1 Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God.

To believe that Nathan and Bathsheba engaged in a conspiracy would mean that David was so mentally feeble that the entire chapters 28 & 29 were based on concoctions supplied by Nathan and Bathsheba and were not David's own recollections of events. A thorough read of those two chapters will persuade you that such is not the case. David had sworn an oath to Bathsheba. It is simply not recorded. Bathsheba continues her report to her husband and king.

18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not:

19 And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

Since Adonijah had invited all the other sons of David except Solomon, it does not make sense that he would ignore Solomon *unless* Adonijah very well *knew* that Solomon had been designated as the heir to the throne. So actually, it is not simply a case of Adonijah presuming that as the oldest surviving son, he would be king. That would be an honest error. The evidence implied here is that he—just like Absalom—knew very well that he was attempting to usurp the throne. Bathsheba continues:

20 And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

"Counted offenders" means that Bathsheba and Solomon would be executed as potential rivals and troublemakers. Standard Operating Procedure in many nations in many eras.

22 And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

23 And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

25 For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.

26 But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.

27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

28 Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

Obviously, when Nathan had come in, Bathsheba had gone out, and now she is summoned back in. We can tell from this how formal the protocols were in the palace of David way back in 1000 B. C.

29 And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

30 Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

The report by Bathsheba and Nathan's report confirming Adonijah's attempted usurpation stirred David to immediate action. We have seen this character quality of *decisiveness* in David many times before. He had to be aware that he was close to death and that no matter how weak he felt, he must summon the strength to see Solomon placed on the throne that very day. Tomorrow might be too late.

31 Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

32 And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon:

34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*.

37 As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

The reference to "an horn of oil" should be THE horn of oil. It was a mixture of olive oil and a number of what we today call *essential* oils. This was a blend of the oils of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus and cassia. They were very expensive and very sacred. The recipe was given to Moses in Exodus 30. It was stored in the tabernacle and was used for anointing the holy things of the tabernacle. No *person* could be anointed with

this holy anointing oil except for priests and kings.

40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

41 And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it* as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this* noise of the city being in an uproar?

42 And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came:

Remember this is the same Jonathan who, along with the son of Zadok, had been intelligence agents for David when Absalom took over Jerusalem. They were the ones who were hidden in the dry well and covered with barley, remember that from an earlier FMS? Apparently, Jonathan is still in the spy business and he had been assigned to keep an eye on things in the city while Adonijah attempted to have himself installed as king.

42b and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou *art* a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.

44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:

No one rode on the king's mule without his permission under pain of death. This is very bad news for the would-be usurper, Adonijah, and we don't have space to conclude the story here, so we will continue next month.

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