



FEED MY SHEEP

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Did David Tell Solomon To Murder?

David is near death. His son, Adonijah, seizing the moment of his father's weakness, attempts to usurp the throne. Bathsheba, realizing that both she and her son, Solomon, will be executed after David's death, hastens to inform David of what Adonijah has done. David gathers all his remaining strength and instructs his loyal courtiers to place Solomon on his royal mule and parade him through the city. No one rode on the king's mule without his permission under pain of death.

Meanwhile, Adonijah and his supporters, even in the midst of their celebration, get news of something else happening in the city. The spy, Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, continues his report to Adonijah.

1 Kings 15:45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard.

We mentioned the sacred anointing oil in last month's issue. Not all kings are recorded as having been anointed. Apparently, the only time the sacred anointing oil was used on kings was when there was either a change of dynasty or a dispute over succession, as is the case here. Jonathan continues with the bad news for Adonijah.

46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

47 And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king

bowed himself upon the bed.

48 And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD [YHWH] God of Israel, which hath given *one* to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

49 And all the guests that *were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

Uh-oh. You can just picture that scene, can't you? Every man and woman was slinking away as though they had never attended in the first place. "Me, there? No, I wasn't at Adonijah's inaugural bash. Shucks, I knew Solomon was going to be the next king." And with a nervous laugh, they chanted: "Heh, heh, heh, Long live King Solomon!"

50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

Those horns were the horns of the altar of burnt offering. (We have discussed the altar in great detail in our CD or tape lectures # 331 & 332; \$10 ppd., part of our Tabernacle in the Wilderness series of lectures.) Essentially, since this was the place where the blood sacrifices were made, it symbolized grace and mercy and salvation to the sinner. It therefore came to be associated as a place of sanctuary. Nonetheless, it was not a sanctuary for heinous sinners such as mur-

derers or rebels and traitors. Consequently, since Adonijah fled there for safety, he has admitted his guilt as a rebel. This confirms our earlier statement that Adonijah knew very well that the throne was not to be his. Now the only question is, will Solomon show mercy and spare his life?

52 And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

Solomon now has a co-regency with David, since it appears that Solomon unilaterally made the decision to have mercy on his half-brother. This was quite magnanimous since, as we've mentioned previously, it was Standard Operating Procedure to execute any family members who might be a rival for the throne. Here Adonijah has already gone so far as to attempt to usurp the throne. But Solomon is a man of peace, and follows in his father's footsteps in granting mercy to men who have attempted violence against him.

53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

That concludes chapter 1 of First Kings. Chapter 2 of First Kings begins with David's death and his deathbed instructions to Solomon. We are of the opinion that the events of chapters 28 and 29 of First Chronicles occurred *between* chapters 1 & 2 of First Kings. We will not take space to expound on these chapters. They include: David's farewell address to the nation, his public charge to Solomon, including handing over all the plans and specifications for the construction of the temple. David concludes with a prayer. On the next day comes a second anointing and a grand celebration of Solomon as king. I call your attention to only one thing in these chapters.

1 Chronicles 29:21 And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel:

If you recall in the previous FMS, we read of Adonijah's attempted inaugural party and how they

butchered animals for the feast, but the account gives us no numbers. The only number associated with Adonijah that I recall is the 50 men running before him, thus associating him with the imperfection of Pentecost.

The number 1,000 symbolizes glory and thus represents Tabernacles. The age of Tabernacles is the millennial kingdom age, the age when the overcomers will be awarded their glorified bodies. Hence, Solomon, the king of peace, who is also a type of Christ is associated with the number 1,000 and we have a triple witness in that verse: 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams and 1,000 lambs. Now that's a Texas-size barbecue party!

1 Kings 2:1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man;

Solomon was a fairly young man when he ascended to the throne. In 1 Chronicles 29:1, David refers to Solomon as still young and tender. Just how old was he? No one knows for sure. Some legends in the Greek church put him as young as 12 years. Some Western commentators put him at about 15, some 19. I would guess he was anywhere from 20 to 25 or so. Here's why.

1 Kings 11:42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.

1 Kings 14:21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

Since Rehoboam was 41 when he began to reign, and Solomon had reigned for 40 years, that means Rehoboam was born one year before Solomon was crowned king. Therefore, Solomon was married sometime before—we don't know exactly how long—but he was married some time *before* he became king.

Therefore I think the ages of 12 and 15 are out of the question. Furthermore, we know that David reigned 40 years and that during the first 7½ years of

that 40 years, Solomon had not yet been born. If you will review the genealogy chart I included with the October FMS, you will see that I marked Solomon as either the 7th-born or the 10th-born son of David. Here is a verse which tends to make us believe that he was the 7th-born and born very soon after the baby died which had been conceived in David and Bathsheba's fornication.

2 Samuel 12:24 And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

How long after becoming king over all Israel did David commit this transgression? We don't know for sure, but my guess is that it was within a few years, say three to five. Now if we subtract the 7 ½, call it 8, from the 40, that leaves 32 and then subtract 5 years from that and another year for her to bear Solomon, that leaves 26. —Meaning that Solomon would be 26 years old when he ascended the throne. If he were only 20 that would mean the David and Bathsheba's fornication did not occur until David had been king over all Israel for about 11 years, or about 19 years into his reign altogether. As I said, I find that unlikely. So I'm estimating Solomon was 20 at the youngest, but more likely, he was closer to 25 or 26. In any event, David is close to death, and so he continues now with his final instructions to Solomon.

1 Kings 2:3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

And now David gets very specific with Solomon, instructing him on tying up some loose ends. Is David here commanding Solomon to commit murder?

1 Kings 2:5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of

Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.

6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

As we have noted previously, David was no match for General Joab. If you saw the movie, *Patton*, think of Joab as General Patton—only in terms of personality and not to imply that Patton was a murderer. But he was a very forceful man, who commanded the respect and even fear of all who served under him or who had dealings with him in any way.

In our view, David is essentially instructing his son in verse 6 to find the first legal opportunity to put Joab to death, not because he was part of Adonijah's treasonous conspiracy but because of his cold-blooded murder of Abner and Amasa. You see, David felt that this blood guiltiness was still upon his own shoulders and therefore upon his royal house, and that until the murderer was executed, the innocent blood would cry out from the land. In contradistinction to his orders to execute Joab, David commanded Solomon to honor the family of Barzillai.

7 But show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

The final loose end was Shimei.

8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

Again, in our opinion, David is instructing Solomon to find a legitimate way to see to it that Shimei is executed. Some critics cast stones at David here and with a cynical sneer, they charge David with hypocrisy and seeking murderous revenge.

"Ha!" they say, "David was trapped by his own

vow not to put Shimei to death, but he still harbored resentment and unforgiveness in his heart, and so he schemes to have Solomon execute Shimei after David passes on. What a sneaky hypocrite!”

Let's examine that idea. It *does* seem plausible, but there are some other aspects of this case which need to be factored in. First, to refresh our memories, remember the scene as Absalom was approaching Jerusalem. David and his followers fled and were headed down to Jordan. While in a ravine, this Shimei (who was probably still a partisan of King Saul) was on top of the ridge and he began vehemently and violently cursing and throwing stones at David. Remember then how David's chief "Delta forces commando," which was his nephew, Abishai, pleaded with David to let him "go take him out."

But David said no, let him curse me, this is of the Lord. You see, David realized that all this trouble with Absalom and Shimei was part of the bitter fruit which he had sown on the day he lusted after Bathsheba. God had forgiven him for that transgression, but the law of sowing and reaping still applied. So after Absalom had been defeated, and murdered by Abishai's brother, Joab, David and company are on their way back to Jerusalem. Shimei pleads for mercy and David grants him mercy, saying *he* will not execute him. But now David commands Solomon to execute him. The reason is that David himself could *and did personally* forgive Shimei. David bore him no *personal* malice. He had no personal desire for revenge.

But David was also head of state and the civil representative of Yahweh. Shimei's curses had sprung from a treasonous motive and he was cursing the Lord's anointed leader. This, David had no right to forgive, because cursing the Lord's anointed is tantamount to cursing God. Thus David, as king and head of state, had an affirmative responsibility to punish this sedition. His personal mercy allowed Shimei to even go home to his brethren in Benjamin and live, but we will see in a later FMS how subsequent events demonstrated that this explanation is correct.

10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of

David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

But sometime, probably not long after the death of David, the palace plot springs anew. Adonijah has a new plan to seize the throne. This must have occurred soon after David's death because the longer Solomon is on the throne, the less chance Adonijah has of taking it from him. Here is how it played out.

13 And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

14 He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and *that all* Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign:

Do you think Adonijah still is possessed of a spirit of lust for power and a spirit of self-exaltation? As he is making these statements, what do you think Bathsheba is thinking? You know that the kingdom was mine, he says. She just smiles at him, probably nodding in agreement, but she is thinking: You liar; you knew very well that Yahweh had chosen my son to succeed David.

The cunning Adonijah continues: and *that all* Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign. She continues nodding and smiling, but she is thinking: You lie like a rug. You had Joab and Abiathar con a number of leading officials into thinking you would be king, but certainly *all* Israel did not desire your rule, anymore than they did your treacherous half-brother Absalom.

So David has passed away and Solomon is on the throne, but the threat from his power-hungry half-brother still remains. We will continue the story next month.

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