

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 1:32-53

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1 Kings 1:32-53

Verses 32-35

³² King David said, “Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.” When they came before the king, ³³ he said to them: “Take your lord’s servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. ³⁴ There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ ³⁵ Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

- (See 1 Kings 1:1-31 and the notes prepared for that passage.) David’s household and the kingdom of Israel was in uproar because David’s son, Adonijah, had declared himself heir to David’s throne. He had taken steps to establish his claim and was supported by many powerful men. Even though David was old, he had not declared which of his sons would reign after him. Adonijah was David’s oldest living son, and it would have seemed logical to assume that he would be David’s heir. However, Adonijah had acted without his father’s knowledge or approval. Bathsheba, one of David’s wives and the mother of his son Solomon, told David what Adonijah had done and reminded him that he had promised her that Solomon would be his heir. Nathan, the prophet, also informed the king of what was happening. David then declared his intention that Solomon would be his heir and took steps to invalidate Adonijah’s claim to the throne.
- David ordered Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah one of David’s mighty men, to take Solomon to Gihon. Solomon was to go there riding on David’s own mule. This was a sign of David’s support for Solomon. In Gihon, the priest and the prophet, the representatives of God, were to anoint Solomon king over all Israel. They were instructed to blow the trumpet and announce to the people that Solomon was king. They were

then to bring Solomon back to Jerusalem and sit him on David's throne according to David's will.

Verses 36-37

³⁶ Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, "Amen! May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, so declare it. ³⁷ As the Lord was with my lord the king, so may he be with Solomon to make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord King David!"

- Benaiah endorsed the King's plan and prayed God's blessing on Solomon.

Verses 38-40

³⁸ So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon mount King David's mule, and they escorted him to Gihon. ³⁹ Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" ⁴⁰ And all the people went up after him, playing pipes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound.

- It was done as David ordered. Solomon was crowned king.
- But now, Israel had three kings. David was still alive. Solomon was crowned as David's successor. Adonijah had proclaimed himself king.

Verses 41-48

⁴¹ Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they were finishing their feast. On hearing the sound of the trumpet, Joab asked, "What's the meaning of all the noise in the city?"

⁴² Even as he was speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived.

Adonijah said, "Come in. A worthy man like you must be bringing good news."

⁴³ "Not at all!" Jonathan answered. "Our lord King David has made Solomon king. ⁴⁴ The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the king's mule, ⁴⁵ and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon. From there they have gone up cheering, and the city resounds with it. That's the noise you hear. ⁴⁶ Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. ⁴⁷ Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!' And the king bowed in worship

on his bed ⁴⁸ and said, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.’”

- Adonijah and his guests heard the noise of celebration in the city and wondered what was happening. Then, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest, came and informed them of Solomon’s anointing as Israel’s king with David’s approval. He told them that Solomon was already seated on the throne and that David had acknowledged him from his sick bed as Israel’s new king.

Verses 49-51

⁴⁹ At this, all Adonijah’s guests rose in alarm and dispersed. ⁵⁰ But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. ⁵¹ Then Solomon was told, “Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’”

- At the news of Solomon’s anointing those who had supported Adonijah’s claim to Israel’s throne deserted him. He went to the tabernacle and took hold of the horns of the altar, begging Solomon to spare his life.

Verses 52-53

⁵² Solomon replied, “If he shows himself to be worthy, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die.” ⁵³ Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, “Go to your home.”

- Solomon declared that he would not harm Adonijah if he proved to be loyal to Solomon as Israel’s king. But if he did not, he would die.
- Adonijah was brought to Solomon and declared his loyalty to Solomon. Solomon told him to return to his home in peace.

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