

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 2:13-25

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1 Kings 2:13-25

Verses 13-18

¹³ Now Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother.

Bathsheba asked him, "Do you come peacefully?"

He answered, "Yes, peacefully."¹⁴ Then he added, "I have something to say to you."

"You may say it," she replied.

¹⁵ "As you know," he said, "the kingdom was mine. All Israel looked to me as their king. But things changed, and the kingdom has gone to my brother; for it has come to him from the Lord.¹⁶ Now I have one request to make of you. Do not refuse me."

"You may make it," she said.

¹⁷ So he continued, "Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife."

¹⁸ "Very well," Bathsheba replied, "I will speak to the king for you."

- Adonijah was King David's oldest living son. He had tried to make himself David's successor without David's permission. But Adonijah's plan to become king failed and Solomon was placed on the throne by David's action. Solomon allowed Adonijah to live provided that Adonijah proved to be loyal to him as king (see 1 Kings 1).
- One day, Adonijah went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, in peace with what appeared to be a simple request. He asked her to ask Solomon to give him Abishag, the young woman chosen to keep David warm in his old age (see 1 Kings 1:1-6) as his wife.
- Seeing no harm in Adonijah's request, Bathsheba agreed to take Adonijah's request to Solomon.

Verses 19-21

¹⁹ When Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, the king stood up to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for the king's mother, and she sat down at his right hand.

**²⁰ “I have one small request to make of you,” she said. “Do not refuse me.”
The king replied, “Make it, my mother; I will not refuse you.”**

²¹ So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah.”

- So, Bathsheba took Adonijah’s request to King Solomon. The King greeted her with great respect and she asked him to give Abishag to Adonijah as his wife.

Verse 22

²² King Solomon answered his mother, “Why do you request Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? You might as well request the kingdom for him—after all, he is my older brother—yes, for him and for Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah!”

- Solomon told his mother that if he granted her request he might as well hand the kingdom over to Adonijah and those who supported his claim to be Israel’s rightful king.
- He pointed out to her that Adonijah was David’s oldest living son and, to some, appeared to be the rightful heir to David’s throne. If Adonijah possessed David’s women as his own, it would appear that he was David’s legitimate heir, for in those days whoever possessed the harem of the previous king was the new king.

Verses 23-25

²³ Then King Solomon swore by the Lord: “May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request! ²⁴ And now, as surely as the Lord lives—he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised—Adonijah shall be put to death today!” ²⁵ So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died.

- Solomon saw Adonijah’s request as an act of rebellion against his rule and proof that Adonijah could not be trusted. He ordered that Adonijah be executed immediately and sent Benaiah, the commander of his body guard to execute him.

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