

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 2:36-46

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1 Kings 2:36-46

Verses 36-38

³⁶ Then the king sent for Shimei and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there, but do not go anywhere else. ³⁷ The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, you can be sure you will die; your blood will be on your own head.”

³⁸ Shimei answered the king, “What you say is good. Your servant will do as my lord the king has said.” And Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time.

- Shimei had thrown rocks at David and cursed David as David fled from Absalom (see 2 Samuel 16: 5-14). Shimei was of King Saul’s family. Abishai, Joab’s brother, wanted to cut off Shimei’s head, but David would not allow it. So, Shimei had not been punished in any way for cursing the king, the Lord’s anointed.
- After dealing with his political enemies, Adonijah, Abiathar, and Joab, King Solomon called Shimei to him. He commanded Shimei to build himself a house in Jerusalem and to live in that house and to never leave Jerusalem. Solomon told Shimei that the day he left Jerusalem would be the day he died. The command indicated that Solomon did not trust Shimei. Solomon was keeping his eye on Shimei.
- Shimei agreed to do as the king had commanded and he was compliant with the king’s command for a long time.

Verses 39-40

³⁹ But three years later, two of Shimei’s slaves ran off to Achish son of Maakah, king of Gath, and Shimei was told, “Your slaves are in Gath.” ⁴⁰ At this, he saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath in search of his slaves. So Shimei went away and brought the slaves back from Gath.

- After three years, two of Shimei’s slaves ran away. They fled to Gath. Shimei left Jerusalem and went to Gath to retrieve his runaway slaves. But he did not ask Solomon for permission to go to Gath. So, Shimei left

Jerusalem in violation of his agreement with the king. Shimei found the slaves and brought them back to Jerusalem.

Verses 41-46

⁴¹ When Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned, ⁴² the king summoned Shimei and said to him, “Did I not make you swear by the Lord and warn you, ‘On the day you leave to go anywhere else, you can be sure you will die’? At that time you said to me, ‘What you say is good. I will obey.’ ⁴³ Why then did you not keep your oath to the Lord and obey the command I gave you?”

⁴⁴ The king also said to Shimei, “You know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David. Now the Lord will repay you for your wrongdoing. ⁴⁵ But King Solomon will be blessed, and David’s throne will remain secure before the Lord forever.”

⁴⁶ Then the king gave the order to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down and he died.

The kingdom was now established in Solomon’s hands.

- When Solomon learned that Shimei had broken their agreement, he confronted Shimei with that fact. The king ordered Benaiah, the commander of the army, to execute Shimei for not keeping his agreement with Solomon.
- Solomon acted decisively in dealing with those who had rebelled against him and his father. His action demonstrated that he would not tolerate rebellion. In so doing, all Israel was united under his rule.

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