

1 Kings Chapter 2 Continued

Verses 26-27

“Abiathar” had participated in Adonijah’s plot to seize the throne (1:7).

Because he had previously supported “David” (2 Sam. 15:24-29, 35), his life was spared.

His banishment from the active priesthood fulfilled the prophecy concerning the “house of Eli” (1 Sam. 2:30-35).

1 Kings 2:26 "And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou [art] worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted."

“Anathoth”:

A priestly town, 3 miles northeast of Jerusalem (Jer. 1:1).

There Abiathar, the disloyal High-Priest (1:7), lived in banishment.

Abiathar was in confederacy with Adonijah against Solomon.

The only reason that Solomon does not kill him at this time is because he is a priest who had handled the ark.

Solomon has respect for the office of priest.

It seemed he conspired with Adonijah to try to take the office of king from Solomon.

He deserves to die, but the death is deferred because of his work as priest.

He sends him to his family's farm to work.

1 Kings 2:27 "So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh."

“Fulfil the word of the LORD”:

Solomon’s removal of Abiathar from the office of priest fulfilled God’s prophecy that Eli’s line of priests would be cut off (1 Sam. 2:30-35).

This reestablished the line of Eleazar/Phinehas in Zadok (2:35), as promised by God (Num. 25:10-13).

1 Samuel 3:12-13 "In that day I will perform against Eli all [things] which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end." "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

It seems Abiathar was of the personality of Eli's sons who sinned.

Abiathar was the fourth generation from Eli.

It is Abiathar's sin that was judged here.

Verses 28-34

Joab's guilt could not secure protection for him at "the horns of the altar" (see the note on 1:49-53).

David had urged Solomon to punish "Joab" (2:5-6), but he too took hold of the horns of the altar to avoid execution (see 1:51).

However, as a murderer, even the "altar" could not protect him (Exodus 21:14; 2 Sam. 3:27; 18:14).

1 Kings 2:28 "Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar."

"Joab fled unto the tabernacle" (compare 1:50).

He knew he would have been killed already if he had not been so popular with the army.

The altar provided no real sanctuary to the rebel and murderer (Exodus 21:14).

David had told Solomon to kill Joab for his sins.

Joab knows he deserves to die for turning against Solomon, and scheming for his overthrow.

He had been faithful to Adonijah, when he desired to be king.

The tidings, spoken of above, are of Adonijah's death and Abiathar being sent away.

Joab knows he is to be next, so he flees to the tabernacle, and takes hold of the horns of the altar for mercy.

1 Kings 2:29 "And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, [he is] by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him."

This account was brought him very probably by some of his courtiers.

"And, behold, he is by the altar":

To which he took himself for refuge, laying hold on the horns of it.

"Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him":

Slay him; Josephus says, the orders were to cut off his head; but perhaps it might be only to lay hold on him, and take him thence, and bring him to Solomon to have judgment passed upon him.

For the Targum is "exercise your power over him, take him into custody"; and certain it is that the first orders were not to slay him, at least upon the spot where he was.

Benaiah had killed Adonijah for Solomon, and now he sends him to kill Joab.

Just the fact that Joab fled to the tabernacle, admits his guilt.

1 Kings 2:30 "And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me."

That the king gave him this command, though it was not mentioned before, is evident, both from the nature of the thing; for Solomon would not pollute the altar without necessity.

And from Benaiah's affirmation of it; for why should he tell a lie without a cause?

And from his return to the king for new orders upon Joab's resolution not to come thence.

"I will die here":

For he supposed either that Solomon would not defile that place with his blood; or that he would spare him for his respect to it, as he had done Adonijah; or he had a superstitious conceit that his dying there might give his guilty and miserable soul some advantage.

Benaiah did not want to kill Joab while he was hanging on to the horns of the altar.

He came back and told Solomon where he was and what he had said.

Joab was probably, convinced they would not kill him at the altar.

1 Kings 2:31 "And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father."

"Fall upon him":

Like Adonijah (1:50), Joab sought asylum at the altar (2:28).

The protection of the LORD at the altar applied only to accidental crimes, not premeditated murder (Exodus 21:14), so Solomon ordered Benaiah to administer the violent death sought by David (2:26).

This latest attempt to take the kingdom away from Solomon was not really what Solomon wanted him killed for.

He had brutally killed others.

He had disobeyed David, and killed Absalom as well.

1 Kings 2:32 "And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing [thereof, to wit], Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah."

By way of retaliation, blood for blood.

"Who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he":

Later named; for though they had been in open rebellion against David, yet had submitted, and were reconciled and received into favor.

And even their open crimes were not so bad, Solomon judged, as his secret treacherous murders of innocent persons in cold blood.

They were men of more honor and integrity than he was, not so cruel and barbarous, though guilty in other respects.

"And slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof":

This is observed to remove all suspicion, and which doubtless had been entertained by some, that David had a hand in their death.

And that Joab did what he did with his knowledge and consent, and by his advice and order.

They having been both concerned in rebellion against him, the one under Ish-bosheth, and the other under Absalom.

"To wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah":

The reason of the two hosts, of which they were captains or generals, being thus distinguished, is, because the tribes of Israel were on the side of Ish-bosheth.

Whose general Abner was, in opposition to Judah who made David their king.

And, on the other hand, they were the men of Judah that were first and chiefly in the rebellion of Absalom, whose general Amasa was.

Of the murder of these two men by Joab (see 2 Sam.3:27).

Joab had killed these other two, Abner and Amasa without any warning.

He was not acting on orders from David when he had done this.

These were murders.

He tricked them and then killed them for self-gain.

He was greedy for power and killed them.

These murders are his alone to pay for

David did not tell him to do this.

1 Kings 2:33 "Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD."

"Peace for ever":

This pledge is ultimately to be fulfilled in the Messiah's kingdom (see Isa. 2:2-4; 9:6-7).

The killing of Joab would not be murder.

His killing is in punishment for the sins he had committed.

This killing is justified in the sight of the LORD.

There would be no curse coming from this.

1 Kings 2:34 "So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness."

“Wilderness”:

The tomb of Joab’s father was near Bethlehem (2 Sam. 2:32).

Joab’s house was probably on the edge of the Judean wilderness, east of Bethlehem.

Benaiah was the executioner.

He killed Joab as Solomon had instructed him to do.

They buried him in the garden of his own house.

1 Kings 2:35 "And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar."

Benaiah succeeds to Joab’s command over the host: but it is notable that in the Hebrew text (of 1 Kings 4:2-6), there is no mention of any successor to his command over the bodyguard.

Joab had been commander of the army.

Since it was Benaiah who killed Joab, Solomon made him commander of the army.

Zadok had been the priest for his father, David.

We had already remarked how unusual it was to have two High Priests.

This same Zadok will now be High Priest, in the place of Abiathar.

Verses 36-46

“Shimei was the only one left alive who belonged to the opposing party.

David had spared Shimei’s life years earlier (2 Sam. 16:5-14; 19:16-23), and Solomon proposed to do the same.

But when he violated the terms of his freedom, Shimei was executed (“struck ... down”).

There is a limit to longsuffering where mercy is ignored and sinful people persist.

1 Kings 2:36 "And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither."

“Go not forth”:

Shimei had not provoked Solomon directly as Adonijah had.

Therefore, Solomon determined to keep Shimei under close watch by confining him to Jerusalem.

This order for Shimei to build a home in Jerusalem is so Solomon and his men can keep an eye on him.

He is one who would stir up trouble, if he could.

It would be better for him to be close under constant surveillance.

He was not to travel to other towns.

Solomon is suddenly being more careful since Adonijah tried to take the kingdom by trickery.

1 Kings 2:37 "For it shall be, [that] on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head."

Out of the city of Jerusalem: "and passest over the brook Kidron":

Which is particularly mentioned, because this lay in his way to Bahurim, his native place.

He must cross that to go to it (see 2 Sam. 15:23).

And where it might reasonably be supposed he would some time or another be inclined to go, through business, or a desire to see it again.

"Thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die":

It may be depended on as what will be most certainly the case; that neither reprieve nor pardon will be granted.

"Thy blood shall be upon thine own head":

Fair warning being given, he could blame none but himself, should he be guilty and suffer.

Shimei is really under house arrest.

He is not to leave Jerusalem and go back toward his old land on threat of death.

It was across the Kidron where he had spoken the curses on David.

Solomon does not want him to have a chance to cause an uprising.

1 Kings 2:38 "And Shimei said unto the king, The saying [is] good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days."

It was an act of goodness in the king, and what was good, grateful, and acceptable to him.

For being sent for by him, and knowing how he had used his father, and hearing of several traitors being put to death, he expected this would have been his case.

Wherefore, instead of being put to death, was only obliged to leave his habitation in the country, and come and live at Jerusalem, a pleasant and delightful city, and the metropolis of the nation.

It was very agreeable to him.

"As my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do":

And he not only promised, but swore to it, which Solomon obliged him to (1 Kings 2:42).

"And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days"

He accordingly built or purchased a house in Jerusalem, and removed from Bahurim to it, where he lived for the space of three years, as follows.

Shimei had agreed to the terms.

He was possibly, just thankful that David did not kill him before.

1 Kings 2:39 "And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants [be] in Gath."

He had dwelt at Jerusalem.

"That two of the servants of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah king of Gath; and they told Shimei, saying, behold, thy servant be in Gath":

He being a churlish, ill-natured man, always cursing or beating them, or imposing too hard service upon them, or not allowing them the necessaries of life.

Wherefore they broke away from him, and fled to Gath, and put themselves under the protection of the king of that place, who was now at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them.

If this Achish was the same that was David's friend, who sheltered him when persecuted by Saul, he must be an old man.

For that was between forty or fifty years ago; and as he seems to be, since he is called the son of Maoch (1 Sam. 27:2); which may be thought to be the same with Maachah here.

“Gath”:

A major Philistine city about 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

He kept to Jerusalem for three years without leaving.

He possibly, had set up the escape of the servants to have an excuse to cross the Kidron.

We do not know this to be true however.

He might have just been excited by the news of his servants getting away.

1 Kings 2:40 "And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath."

And demand them; through the passion he was in with his servants, and his hurry to get them home.

And the covetous disposition which prevailed on him, he might forget, or be tempted to neglect, the prohibition he was under not to go out of Jerusalem.

Or he might think Solomon had forgot it; or that he could come and go secretly without his knowledge; or if he should know of it, he might hope he would never punish him with death for so small a fault.

However, so it was ordered by the providence of God leaving him to his own lust, and the temptations of Satan, that he might suffer just punishment for cursing David.

"And Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath":

For the king being at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them also, did not choose to detain them, but delivered them up lest it should be resented, and bring him into trouble.

He did return home with his servants after he had found them.

1 Kings 2:41 "And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again."

He was probably residing at Bahurim, his native place.

But, as he was a suspicious character, Solomon condemned him henceforth to live in Jerusalem, on the penalty of death, for going without the gates.

He submitted to this confinement for three years, and then when, violating his oath, he was arrested and put to death by Solomon for perjury, aggravated by his former crime of high treason against David (1 Kings 2:42-44).

We remember that Solomon had told him, if he did this, he would kill him.

He has done what Solomon warned him not to do.

Worse than that, someone saw him and reported it to Solomon.

1 Kings 2:42 "And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word [that] I have heard [is] good."

The Septuagint add to (1 Kings 2:37), a clause stating that Solomon "made Shimei swear" on the day when he commanded him to reside at Jerusalem.

1 Kings 2:43 "Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?"

Which was made by him, and in his presence, and in which he was appealed to, and so by not keeping it was guilty of perjury.

"And the commandment that I have charged thee with?"

And so he was guilty of disobedience to him as his sovereign; for which two reasons he ought to die.

Shimei had used very poor judgment in promising to do one thing and doing something else entirely.

He should have realized that Solomon had spared his life, when he killed Adonijah.

Solomon inquires why he would go across the Kidron, knowing he would be killed for it.

1 Kings 2:44 "The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;"

Not as another reason for his putting him to death, but to remind him of his former sins, and to observe to him the providence of God in suffering him to fall into others, that justice might take place upon him for them also.

"Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father":

Which conscience must bear witness to, and accuse him of, not only of the words and actions themselves uttered and done by him, but of the malice and wickedness from whence they sprung.

"Therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head":

The punishment of it; which though not directly inflicted for that, yet in providence was brought about as a just retaliation for it.

It seems that Shimei was plotting privately against Solomon, as he had against his father.

Solomon explains to him that he must kill him, because he is evil.

1 Kings 2:45 "And king Solomon [shall be] blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever."

"Throne of David":

In contrast to Shimei's curse (2 Sam. 16:5-8), the LORD's blessing was to come through the ruler of David's, not Saul's, line (2 Sam. 7:12-13, 16).

Solomon is getting rid of all of those his father had warned him of.

He is setting up his kingdom for a peaceful kingdom.

1 Kings 2:46 "So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon."

Shimei's action violated the king's explicit command, which was designed to keep Shimei from gaining a base of possible support for an insurrection (verse 37).

Therefore, for this and his long-standing offenses, he was executed.

With the death of Shimei, all the rival factions were eliminated.

Solomon sends Benaiah, his commander, to execute judgment on Shimei.

He kills him with the sword.

The uprising against Solomon is over.

Solomon's promise to David is done as well.

1 Kings Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. Where did Solomon send Abiathar?
2. Why did David not put him to death?

3. Who had Abiathar been in confederacy with?
4. Where in First Samuel, do we read of the judgment of Eli and his descendants?
5. What is Abiathar to Eli?
6. David had told Solomon to _____ Joab.
7. Where did Joab run for safety?
8. What caused him to go there at this time?
9. Who did Solomon send to kill Joab?
10. What did he try to get Joab to do?
11. What had Joab said, when Benaiah tried to get him outside of the tabernacle?
12. What did Solomon say was the reason for killing Joab?
13. Who will be guilty for Joab's death?
14. Who had he killed, that Solomon said were better men than he was?
15. Why had Joab killed them?
16. Why would the killing of Joab not be murder?
17. Where did they bury Joab?
18. Who took Joab's place as the commander of the army?
19. Who became high priest in the place of Abiathar?
20. What did Solomon tell Shimei to do, to save his life?
21. Why did Solomon tell him to do this?
22. How long did Shimei do what Solomon had ordered him to do?
23. What caused him to break the ordinance?
24. What happened, when Solomon found out what he had done?
25. Where did Solomon say, that Shimei's wickedness was?
26. Who killed Shimei?