

1 Kings 1:45–53

A Ministry in the Word

Scripture Reading

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. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. 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. And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it. And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

The Throne of the Kingdom — and the Throne of Jehovah

Verse 46 names it the throne of the kingdom. 1 Chronicles 29:23 names it the throne of Jehovah. The difference between the two phrasings may reflect the difference between Kings and Chronicles: Kings traces the responsibility of men; Chronicles lifts the vision to the grace and purpose of God. The throne of the kingdom is true — it was the kingdom's throne. But the throne of Jehovah tells us what it ultimately was: the visible expression of Jehovah's reign on earth, held in trust by the sons of David, and to be occupied in fullness by the son of David who is also the Son of God.

God Make the Name of Solomon Better — John 5:22-23

When the king's servants blessed David, they said: *God make the name of Solomon better than thy name.* The blessing of the son was the blessing of the father. To honour Solomon's name was to honour David, because it was David's expressed will that Solomon be his successor. The Lord Jesus makes the same point in John 5:22-23: *the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent him.* To refuse to honour Solomon was to express dissatisfaction with David's judgment. Adonijah had done that from the beginning by inviting all the sons except the one.

The King Bowed — Blessed Be the Lord

In verse 47, David bowed himself upon the bed. Before God's government, even the king bows. This is the happy bowing of one who is in agreement with the will of God, not the forced bowing of one overcome against his will. And out of that bowing came the king's word: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.* There were blessings going this way and that way, and at the right moment David himself sent the blessing upward. It is the right way for a kingdom to begin — with thanksgiving going where it ought to go.

David was a man acquainted with the government of God. He had experienced it repeatedly, including in his own house. The four that Nathan had spoken of — the fourfold restitution — had played out. And yet none of this burdened him in this moment. He was free to bow and to bless. What he had been told before Solomon was born had come to pass. He had lived to see it. That is a rare and happy privilege.

Every Man His Way — Gathered to an Office, Not a Person

At Adonijah's table, they ate together. But when the news came, *all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way*. There was no unity among them. Each had come for his own advantage — Joab to maintain his generalship, Abiathar to maintain his priestly position, the others for whatever place they hoped to secure in the new regime. They were gathered not to Adonijah the man but to the office to which Adonijah aspired. When the office was gone, there was nothing to hold them together. Contrast David's men, who were drawn to David himself: when he fled from Absalom, those whose hearts God touched went with him — not every man his way, but together with their lord.

The Horns of the Altar — Pretension Without Repentance

Adonijah caught hold of the horns of the altar. In Exodus, even a murderer who fled to the altar was to be taken off its horns and put to death — for the altar was not a refuge for presumptuous sin. Adonijah had not yet shed blood overtly, but the altar pretension was in character with the whole man. He had not repented. His demand — *let King Solomon swear unto me that he will not slay me* — was a dictation of terms from a rebel. He took the form of a servant (*his servant*) without any inward reality of it.

Solomon's response was measured: *if he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die*. He did not say go to your house in peace. He gave the man space to manifest the true state of his heart. This is not vindictiveness — Solomon's character was righteous, not vengeful. He was acting in the righteousness that befitted the throne of Jehovah, not in personal malice. The type is excellent: we could not attribute vindictiveness to the Lord Jesus in any of His judgments either. He acts for God and for righteousness.

Adonijah came down from the altar and bowed himself to Solomon. Solomon said: go to your house. Chapter 2 will show that Adonijah never judged himself — and the asking for Abishag would be the final proof of it. What is reserved for chapter 2 is the clearing of the kingdom from every outstanding wrong: Joab for blood shed in time of peace, Abiathar thrust from the priesthood to fulfil the word spoken to Eli, Shimei for the cursing of the Lord's anointed. Everything brought into adjustment with the righteousness of the throne of Jehovah — a type of what Christ will do when He takes His throne and clears the earth of iniquity.

— *Study ends* —