

Message #3

I Kings 1:5-10

Whenever you have someone who has been greatly used by God, starting to wind down, there will always be limelight power-crazed weasels in the shadows. These are the kind of people who are egotistical and they crave power and they want prestige and they want prominence of having people honor them. These kinds of people lack integrity and honesty. They sneak around behind the backs of people and make political moves to get people to support them.

I have seen this in the business world. I have seen this in the academic world. I have seen this in the church. I saw it years ago on a board of a church. The pastor was leaving and a guy rose up to want dominant power. He wanted people to think he was in charge and he was now the top dog. He saw the moment as his moment to be the leader and run things.

These kinds of people are not led of God. They are not men who pray and seek God's will. Their prayer is never "Thy will be done"; it is "My will be done."

I saw it when Mr. Miles retired at GRSBM. There were sneaky power-crazed, deceitful people who waited in the wings like vultures to take over. They had their own agenda and ultimately they led the school into oblivion.

This kind of thing almost happened to Israel when David was about to die. A self-appointed, arrogant son surfaced who thought he should be the next king. It did not matter what David thought or what God thought, he thought he should be king and he was about to do everything within his power to make that happen. What we see here is this:

WHEN WORD SPREADS THAT A KEY LEADER OF GOD IS NEARING THE END OF HIS MINISTRY, THERE ARE SELF-EXALTING PEOPLE WHO WILL TRY TO MANIPULATE THINGS SO THEY MAY GAIN THE POWER AND POSITION.

When God is in it, you don't need to promote yourself. When God is in it, you don't need to manipulate anything. God is perfectly capable of sovereignly working and moving people where He wants them to be.

Think of David's story. David was watching sheep and wasn't even invited to the initial meeting with Samuel as Samuel was searching for the God-ordained King to replace Saul. Jesse didn't even have David at the meeting with his sons. He paraded all of his sons before Samuel and God said "no" that is not My choice. God just intervened and said, "I'll go get My choice and bring him to you. He is out watching sheep." You know the story, they went and got David and he was anointed King. That is the way God works. He doesn't need manipulation.

I had a very famous Pastor tell me one time that he would refuse to consider a church that asked for his resume. He said if they can't see or sense what God has done with me in His grace, then I don't want to go to that church. This isn't about a business deal. This is about a calling of God.

As I Kings opens, we learn that David is slowing down and is having a hard time physically. He is old and his health is failing. We are introduced to Abishag, who is brought in as a nurse and servant for David to help keep him comfortable. She will become an important part of what happens.

As we move into these verses, the plot thickens. Obviously word is spreading that King David is not doing well. Just the search for Abishag would have communicated that point. So behind the scenes there is a presumptuous son of David who will see this as his moment to become the next King.

Now we want to make nine key observations as this saga begins:

OBSERVATION #1 – Adonijah was the fourth son of King David. **1:5a**

Notice the first word “now.” After news spread about David’s health and need for a nurse, Adonijah decides to make a move. He does not appear to be too sorry that his father David is dying because what we find him doing is plotting as to how he can prosper and get power.

Adonijah is a son of King David through Haggith. Haggith gave birth to the fourth son of King David (II Sam. 3:2-4).

David’s first born son was Amnon by Ahinoam (Amnon was killed by Absalom because he raped Tamar - II Sam. 13:28-29).

His second born son was Chileab by Abigail, and we don’t know what happened to him.

His third born son was Absalom of Maacah (Absalom was killed for trying to usurp the power of King David (II Sam. 18:15).

His fourth son was Adonijah by Haggith.

It is very possible that Adonijah was the oldest living son at this time, so he just made the automatic assumption that I am the next king.

As we said, Amnon was killed by Absalom because he raped Tamar (II Sam. 13:28-29). We don’t know what happened to Chileab. Most believe he died young. Absalom was killed for trying to usurp the power of King David (II Sam. 18:15).

So Adonijah is probably thinking I am next in line.

OBSERVATION #2 – Adonijah exalted himself by saying he would be the next king. **1:5b**

Adonijah does not seek God or even seem to care what God’s will is on this. He just starts telling people that he will be the next king. God has not told him that. David has not told him that. But he is telling people that.

Adonijah's motive is self-promoting and self-exalting. He is not seeking God's will; he is promoting his will. He was self-confident and he started telling people "I will be the next king."

I literally saw this personally happen in my world. Years ago, I was working in the shipping department of Kregel. I was in school and I was stocking shelves and pricing books and mailing out orders. The shipping manager got promoted so that left a job opening for a new shipping manager. Well, a guy who had been there longer than me started going around telling everyone that he was going to be the next shipping manager. He came to me and told me that I would still have the job I was doing and that there would be no changes. I just kept doing my job. One day, Bob Kregel called me into his office and said, "I want you to be the next shipping manager." He said, "I'll take care of informing the others." So he called the guy into his office who had been telling others he would be the next shipping manager and when he came out of the office, he was very quiet and very humbled and the color was gone out of his face.

That is the way it was with Adonijah. He was telling any who would listen that he would be the next king.

OBSERVATION #3 – Adonijah made king preparations with chariots and horsemen. **1:5c**

This is exactly what Absalom had done years before this when he arrogantly thought he would take over the Kingdom from David (II Sam. 15:1). He got chariots and runners to go before the chariots and it was quite a spectacle. Had Adonijah thought about this, he may have said, you my brother ended up dead. Maybe I should rethink this. But he didn't.

People who are egotistically driven don't think through the motives or consequences of their manipulative moves, but there will be consequences.

This guy was living in a delusional kingly la-la land. He actually prepared some chariots for himself with horsemen to ride and he had fifty men run before him as a show that he would be the next king.

People who would see this would be impressed and would logically think that he must be the next king.

There is an important hidden thing to see here— people who promote themselves before others are not God's choice of a leader. People who do things for public show are not people in private who are right with God. People right with God are humble people, not limelighters. Unfortunately at times, these people temporarily get into positions of power, for a short time.

Now this public show was probably designed in part to force his dad, King David, to make a move to promote him. But King David is not the kind of guy who falls for this malarkey.

OBSERVATION #4 – Adonijah was never questioned by his father. **1:6a**

Adonijah must have been somewhat of a spoiled kid. As one commentator said, he was a “spoiled brat.” His dad never questioned him about what he was doing. His fleshly indulgences had apparently been tolerated by his father for quite a while.

We know David’s mind was still good because as we will see, he will think things through in regard to Solomon. But he let this kid get away with too much.

Parents make a big mistake when they let their children get away with their self-centered indulgences and never say you are wrong. There are children who think they automatically are entitled to what their parents have and don’t care about their parents.

OBSERVATION #5 – Adonijah was a very handsome man. **1:6b**

Just as David had a beautiful nurse, so he had a handsome son. Adonijah was good-looking. He had physical qualities that were impressive. He certainly would make a good-looking King. **He had good looks, but he did not have a good, godly heart.**

All of this physical stuff, his looks and his chariots and his 50 runners, were designed to physically impress people. But none of that impressed God.

Politicians love the pomp. They love the limousines and lines of people. Most could care less if their hearts are right with the God of the Bible. They are Adonijah types.

OBSERVATION #6 – Adonijah was born after Absalom. **1:6c**

David had six sons born to him in Hebron, during his 7 year and 6 month reign (I Chron. 3:1-4). They were Amnon, Daniel, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream. Since he was born after Absalom, we may assume he was born in the final days of his Hebron reign, which would make Adonijah about 33-35 years old. So he considered himself to be the next in line because Absalom was dead.

OBSERVATION #7 – Adonijah had the support of Joab and Abiathar. **1:7**

Joab was David’s nephew. He was a son of David’s sister Zeruah (I Chron. 2:16). Joab had been a trusted leader for David. He had been promoted to being the commander of David’s army. He was a brave fighter and a great military strategist.

Joab had been very loyal to David. He killed Abner, Saul’s commander in chief (II Sam. 3:22-30) and he killed Amasa, who had killed his brother in battle (II Sam. 20:8-10). In fact, Joab kept quiet when King David sent Uriah to the front lines to be killed because he wanted Bathsheba. Joab stayed loyal to David (II Sam. 11:14-25). When Absalom raised up against David, Joab executed him (II Sam. 18:5-15).

So for Adonijah to have the help and support of Joab was a major political feather in his cap.

Abiathar the priest joined with David after King Saul had killed all the other priests at Nob (I Sam. 22:18-20). He became a very close adviser and friend to King David.

Now both of these men had apparently joined in approving Adonijah, apparently thinking he would be the next king. They consulted with him and helped him in his political ambitions.

They had not checked with David on this which is a major mistake. This is all behind David's back and this is a real act of disloyalty against David. In fact, when Solomon becomes king he will kill Adonijah (I Kings 2:25) and Joab (I Kings 2:34) and he will almost kill but replace Abiathar (I Kings 2:35).

Just because David was older and weak, does not mean it was right for these guys to go behind his back on a major decision like this. David should have been consulted.

OBSERVATION #8 – Adonijah did not have the support of many key leaders. **1:8**

There were key leaders who did not support Adonijah and they took a right stand on things.

The list of men who did not support Adonijah is impressive:

- 1) Zadok the priest - he joined David after Saul was killed (I Chron. 12:28) and actually served as a spy for David when Absalom rebelled against David. Solomon will promote him over Abiathar (I Kings 2:35).
- 2) Benaiah was a mighty commander for David (I Kings 1:10; II Sam. 23:20-22). Benaiah will be promoted by Solomon over all the military (I Kings 2:35).
- 3) Nathan the prophet who had confronted David with his sin (I Kings 1:10; II Sam. 7:4-17; 12:1-14).
- 4) Shimei is the man who cursed David and was forgiven and became loyal to him (II Sam. 16:5-13; 19:16-23).
- 5) Rei was a close friend and loyalist to David.
- 6) David's mighty men—great warriors.

None of these supported what Adonijah was doing.

OBSERVATION #9 – Adonijah held a huge public feast to gain the support to be next king.

1:9-10

This is a big time show with religious overtones. He wants the people to think God is in this. He wants people to think he has the blessing and backing of the religious leaders and God. It is all a smokescreen.

This was a big time spectacle and meal. This was heady stuff.

(Fact #1) - The feast included the sacrifice of sheep, oxen and fatlings. **1:9a**

This would certainly be the kind of sacrifices and offerings that would appear to be right before God. None of this was right before God.

(Fact #2) - The sacrifice took place at the “stone of Zoheleth.” **1:9b**

This stone was located beside the “En-rogel” which was one of two main springs of water located in the Kidron valley. These springs provided water for Jerusalem.

By holding the feast here, the people would think this will be a wonderful time of provisions and blessings.

(Fact #3) - The feast included specific impressive guests. **1:9c**

Adonijah invited all of his brothers, except one. He invited all of the king’s sons and all the men of Judah and all of the king’s servants. He has all of the influential people gathered here and he thinks this will secure everything. One problem is that God is not in this political move.

(Fact #4) - The feast excluded specific guests. **1:10**

Those who were not invited were Nathan, the prophet of God; Benaiah the mighty military commander; the mighty men and Solomon his brother.

Just as when David had not been invited to the dinner with Samuel to select the next King, so Solomon had not been invited to this dinner put on by Adonijah.

It is a major mistake to choose a leader based on looks, charisma or show. True leaders of God don’t go around promoting themselves. They are not after power; they are not after prominence and they are not after position. True leaders of God are humble, faithful men who are committed to God and His word, not some political cause.