

Through the Bible - 1 Kings 1-4 & 2 Chronicles 1 & Psalm 119

Abishag the Shunammite

- David was now 70 years old, which was pretty old for a man in the ancient world. The average lifespan for any person was about 35, but that includes infant and childhood deaths, which were more common than they are today. Taking those out of the calculation, the average lifespan was about 56 years old.
- She was from a small town called Shunem in the tribal allotment of Issachar
- The text is explicit that David did not have sex with her, he just needed someone to keep him warm.
- There was a well-attested idea in the ancient world that the health and vitality of a younger person can extend and even increase the health and vitality of the elderly.

Adonijah's Usurpation

- He was the next in line after Absalom
- his father had never rebuked him at any time
- Joab the son of Zeruiah and Abiathar the priest backed his plan to become king
 - Joab was David's cousin, and had been with him, fighting alongside him for 40+ years.
 - Abiathar had fled from King Saul when David was on the run and joined with David at that time, so he was also someone who had been with David for 40+ years.
 - Why? Again, we have to question the motives of Joab. Why was he so intent on defying David?
 - Look at **1 Kings 2:5-6** — David and Joab had had a falling out over Joab killing Abner and Amasa. David allowed his cousin to live, but held those deaths against him.
- Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet are named as men who stayed faithful to David.
- Note how similar this situation is to what Absalom did: chariots, horsemen, 50 men to run in front of him, went outside the city of Jerusalem to announce his kingship, invited his brothers and key political leaders.
- **[PPT]** Adonijah went outside the city walls, to a special rock outcropping called the stone of Zohemoth, or the Serpent Stone, next to En Rogel.
- He set up a feast, offered sacrifices, and was preparing to have Joab and Abiathar crown him king.

Solomon Anointed King

- However, Solomon was not invited. He was the heir apparent. David had explicitly promised Bathsheba that Solomon would be crowned king, and God's covenant with David explicitly declared that a son who would be born later would be David's heir:

- 2 Samuel 7:12 — When your days are finished and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who **will come** from you, and I will establish his kingdom.
- The implication here is that David wanted to stay the king as long as he could, but his deteriorating health created an environment that encouraged Adonijah to step up.
- Bathsheba and Nathan worked out a plan to ensure Solomon was legitimately anointed king by David, overriding Adonijah’s claim to the throne.
- 1 Kings 1:32 — Riding the King’s mule was a sign of great honor.
 - compare Esther 6:7-8 — For the man whom the king desires to honor, have them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal turban has been placed...
 - Side note: Why a mule and not a horse?
- [PPT] Gihon Spring Location, the spring Tower, built by the Canaanites to protect...
- [PPT] ... the pool where the waters of the Gihon collected. Solomon was anointed in this place, a place of purity, of living water, a place of life.
- Then they took Solomon back into the city and set him on David’s throne in the palace.

Adonijah Runs

- Adonijah was just finishing up his feast, and was about to assume his place as king, when the sound of rejoicing in the city reached them.
- 1 Kings 1:49 — Then all the guests of Adonijah trembled and got up, and each went on his way.
 - [PPT] This part of the story always reminds me of this scene in the movie *Dave*, when Bob Alexander is listening to the state of the union address and is about to announce his candidacy for the president, but Dave announces that he has incriminating evidence on Bob, and all of Bob’s supporters get up and leave. [PPT - Blank]
- 1 Kings 1:50 — Adonijah also was afraid of Solomon, and he got up, and went, and took hold of the horns of the altar.
- Solomon shows his wisdom and his compassion immediately by not putting the usurper to death. He did not want to start off his reign with blood, especially since he was actually co-ruling with his father.

David’s Commands

- “be strong, and prove yourself a man” - literally, “become a man”
 - how was Solomon supposed to “become a man”? the next verse tells us how:
- “Do your duty to the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses.”
- This is a direct reference to Deuteronomy 30:15–16, and to other places in the Torah where the people of Israel are told to keep the commandments of God:

- See, I have placed before you today life and happiness, and death and adversity, in that I am commanding you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, so that you may live and become numerous, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to take possession of it.
- Walk in His ways = this means to follow the road or the path of God, which is the narrow road Messiah talks about.
- keep = literally “to guard” — David instructed Solomon to guard the commandments of God, not just to follow them.
- [PPT] commandments — מצוות *mitzvah/mitzvot* = good deeds
- [PPT] statutes = חוקים *choq/chukkim* = decrees, prescribed commands
- [PPT] ordinances — משפטים *mishpat/mishpatim* = judgements
- [PPT] testimonies — עדות *eidut/eidot*
- These four words have specific meanings. Generally speaking, the commandments (*mitzvot*) are divided into two categories: *mishpatim* ("laws" or "judgements") and *chukkim* ("decrees").
 - The *mishpatim* are *mitzvot* such as the commandment to give charity or the prohibitions against theft and murder, whose reason and utility are obvious to us, and which we would arguably have instituted on our own if God had not commanded them.
 - The *chukkim* are those *mitzvot*, such as the dietary laws or the laws of family purity, which we accept as divine decrees, despite their incomprehensibility and even their apparent irrationality.
 - A third category, the *eidot* ("testimonials"), occupies the middle ground between the decrees and the laws. A testimonial is a *mitzvah* which commemorates or represents something — for example, the commandments to put on tefillin, rest on Shabbat, or eat matzah on Passover. These are laws which we would not have devised on our own, certainly not in the exact manner in which the Torah commands; nevertheless, they are rational acts. Once their significance is explained to us, we can appreciate their importance and value.
- Why did David tell Solomon to follow the commandments? Why use his final words to encourage following the Torah?
 - First, because David LOVED the Torah. **[Read Psalm 119:1–8]**
 - David’s love for the Torah of God is expressed in detail in the longest Psalm in the Bible.
 - Note that throughout Psalm 119 he uses all of these words.
 - As you read the rest of the scriptures, I encourage you to remember David’s love for the Torah, his desire to follow the commandments of God, to walk in his statutes, to keep the *mishpatim* and the *chukkim*.
 - That same love for the Torah is evident in Jesus’ words and in the words of Paul. If we misunderstand the value and the beauty of the Torah, we will miss one of the most precious elements of our walk with God.

- Another reason David encouraged Solomon to walk in the commandments is because that's what God set up as a stipulation for His blessing.
 - 1 Kings 2:4 — “If your sons are careful about their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and all their soul, you shall not be deprived of a man to occupy the throne of Israel.”
- David then set up some other stipulations for Solomon
 - Political moves had to be made to ensure Solomon was not ousted as king after David's death.
 - Also, while David had put up with some of the evil deeds of men like Joab, he did not want those deeds to go unpunished.

David's Death

- [PPT] 1 Kings 2:10 — Then David lay down with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David.
- There is a location on Mount Zion, the Western, newer part of the city of Jerusalem, that is called the Tomb of David. The building's foundation is actually a 2nd century synagogue used by Messianic Jews (Jews who believed in Jesus) called the Hagia Zion. In the 9th century that part of the building was incorrectly associated with the tomb of David, and it became a traditional location. It now serves as a synagogue.
- [PPT] The Jewish believers who built the synagogue there in the second century constructed it there because that was the traditional location of the Upper Room, where Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover Seder before his death, and where he appeared to the disciples after his resurrection. The upper level of the building, constructed by the Crusaders and later converted into a mosque, is now where pilgrims go to remember the Upper Room (it did not look like this in the time of Jesus).
- [PPT] In 1913, Raymond Weill found eight elaborate tombs at the south end of the City of David, which some archaeologists have subsequently interpreted as strong candidates for the burial locations of the former kings of the city.
- [PPT] However, the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology has [an interesting article](#) that uses the Biblical record and extra-Biblical sources to pinpoint the location of the tomb of David underneath his palace in the northern end of the City of David, under the Stepped Stone Structure. [PPT - Blank]

Solomon's Rule Solidified

- We don't need to go into great detail here, but Solomon did what his father instructed him to do, and took care of the men who would cause problems with his reign as king.
- Adonijah asked to be allowed to take the king's servant Abishag as his wife, a sign that he still had designs on the throne. While she was not David's concubine, she had similar position in the eyes of the people, and taking the former king's concubines as your own was a sign of your authority as the new king (remember Absalom?).
- 1 Kings 2:27 — Solomon dismissed Abiathar from being priest. He had been serving as co-high priest with Zadok, watching over the Tabernacle in Gibeon while Zadok watched over the Ark in Jerusalem.

- 1 Kings 2:28 — Joab heard what was going down, and he fled to the Tabernacle in Gibeon and sat down next to the altar, a place where he thought he would be safe. He wasn't.
- Who was Shimei? 2 Samuel 16:5 — “When King David came to Bahurim, behold, a man was coming out from there from the family of the house of Saul, and his name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he was coming out, cursing as he came.”
 - Solomon gave him a chance to live in peace, but he had to stay in his own city. Three years later he thought things might have blown over. He left the city to track down some wayward servants, and he was caught.
- 1 Kings 2:46 — “And the kingdom was established in the hands of Solomon”

Solomon's Wisdom

- Let's switch over to 2 Chronicles 1.
- We see that the first thing Solomon did was to go to the Tabernacle at Gibeon and worship God. This was in keeping with his father's instructions that we talked about before.
- We are told that the Ark of the Covenant was still in Jerusalem, but the Tabernacle had the other implements Moses had constructed, including the bronze altar.
- They had a great celebration, and sacrificed 1,000 animals as burnt offerings to God.
- That night God appeared to Solomon in a vision and asked him what he desired.
- Solomon asked for wisdom. God responded, “Because this was in your heart, and you did not ask for riches, wealth, or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor did you even ask for long life, but you asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge so that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. I will also give you riches, wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed, nor will those who will come after you.” (2 Chronicles 1:11–12)
- This wisdom is immediately exemplified in the story of the two prostitutes. (1 Kings 3:16–28)
- You may have heard of a book called Wisdom of Solomon. Wisdom of Solomon is part of what we call the Apocrypha, Jewish holy books composed in Greek during the period between the writing of the Hebrew Bible and the time of Jesus. These books are included in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the “Old Testament”) that was translated about 70 years before Jesus, and are considered to be part of the canon by the Catholic Church.
- While the writer of Wisdom of Solomon was not actually Solomon, he imagined what it must have been like to be King Solomon when he asked God for wisdom.
- As Daniel Lancaster says, “The New Testament writers sometimes quoted the book and often alluded to its ideas. Wisdom of Solomon played a big part in shaping the theological assumptions behind the New Testament's worldview. That makes it a significant and worthwhile book for us to study, even if we don't consider it part of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures.”
- What's so important about wisdom? Why would Solomon ask for it? Wisdom of Solomon has some thoughts:
 - **[PPT]** “With you is wisdom, who knows your works and was present when you made the world” (9:9). “She is an initiate in the knowledge of God and an associate in His

works” (8:4). “She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well” (8:1). “For wisdom is more mobile than any motion: because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things” (7:24). “She is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of His goodness” (7:26). “She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light, she is found to be superior” (7:29).

- **[Read 1 Kings 4:29–34]**
- *Targum Sheni to Esther* says that “Solomon ruled over the wild beasts, over the birds of the heaven, and over the creeping beasts of the earth, as well as over the devils, the spirits of the night; and he understood the language of all these according as it is written, ‘And he talked with the trees.’”
- One of my teachers, Daniel Lancaster, says:
 - By the time the Gospels were written, Solomon had a reputation as a powerful exorcist with deep insights into the spiritual world.... To the first-century Jewish mind, Yeshua’s miraculous and seemingly effortless command over the spiritual identified Him as the legitimate Son of David, operating in the authority of the kingdom. Yeshua’s authority over the demons forced comparison with King Solomon: “Behold, something greater than Solomon is here!” (Matthew 12:42). (*Beginning of Wisdom*, Shoftim, page 21))

Solomon’s Administration and Wealth

- Solomon chose wise and upstanding men to help him rule the kingdom.
- **[PPT]** He also set up regional districts throughout the land, providing structure and administrative leadership over the nation. This structure helped him tremendously as he engaged in massive construction projects during his rule.
 - 1 Kings 4:21 — Now Solomon was ruling over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.
- Note that in addition to the land owned by the nation of Israel, Solomon had treaties and collected tribute from other kings all around him.
 - 1 Kings 4:24 — “over all the kings west of the [Euphrates] River”
 - Remember that at this time, around 970-930 BCE the other great powers you have heard about or will hear about were not powerful The Assyrians and Babylonians were still small kingdoms in Eastern Mesopotamia. The Hittites had declined with the destruction and disarray of the Bronze Age Collapse 200 years before, and the Egyptian power declined after the reign of Ramesses III around 1155.
 - God gave Solomon the perfect geopolitical situation within which to build a powerful, successful kingdom.
- **[PPT]** Something else to note is that the tribal allotments did not change, just the regional administrative structure.
- **[PPT]** In order to rule this kingdom, Solomon needed a powerful army. The scriptures say that he had just that:
 - 1 Kings 4:26 — Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

- 2 Chronicles 1:14 — Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.
- What you are seeing here are two of those stables, uncovered at Megiddo in northern Israel, on the edge of the Jezreel Valley. This is the northern stable...
- **[PPT]** And this is the southern stable. Archaeologists say that they could have held at least 150 horses here within the city walls, and who knows how many more in less auspicious stables outside the city.
- Solomon was also very wealthy.
 - 2 Chronicles 1:15 — The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the lowland.
 - 1 Kings 4:22–23 — Solomon’s provision for one day was thirty kors (6,900 liters/1,500 Gallons) of fine flour and sixty kors of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty pasture-fed oxen, and a hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened geese.
- **[PPT]** The effect of all of this power and security was that the nation of Israel thrived.
 - 1 Kings 4:25 — So Judah and Israel lived securely, everyone under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.
- This description of the kingdom of Solomon is directly connected to the future Messianic Kingdom, when Yeshua, the Messianic King, will rule and reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years.
 - **[Read Micah 4:1–4]**
 - **[Read Zechariah 3:8–10]**
 - Daniel Lancaster says: When the prophets described the future coming kingdom of Messiah, they described it in terms reminiscent of Solomon’s kingdom. His kingdom came close to fulfilling the vision Moses sketched out for Israel. Solomon took his throne as the anointed son of David, and he conducted his kingdom according to the Torah’s statutes and judgments. God gave him wisdom, understanding, and knowledge exceeding all men. Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem and asked God to answer the prayers offered there. The LORD consented. His presence took up residence in the Temple, dwelling in the midst of the people. The LORD answered their prayers and bestowed prosperity, success, and abundance upon the entire nation. (*Beginning of Wisdom, Va’etchanan, page 8*)

May He come soon and in our days!