

1 Kings 1:1-8 + 30-31

Haftarah

The story of finding a young virgin to keep the dying King David warm becomes a sort of an antitype to the story of Eleazar's search for a wife for Isaac. This incident is framed by a crisis in the succession, with Adonijah attempting to usurp Solomon's rightful place as King after David.

The enemies here are among David's own house, and, like in Genesis 24, the quality of the lineage of the Messiah is at stake - this case, who will succeed David?

It also has similarities to the story of Esther, since King Ahasuerus was seeking a bride (Esther 2:2)

David is about 70 years old at this point. He is too feeble to rise from his bed. He was thirty years old when he was made king in Hebron, and ruled for about 40 years.

The expedient recommended by David's physicians is the regimen still prescribed in similar cases in the East, particularly among the Arab population, not simply to give heat, but "to cherish," as they are aware that the inhalation of young breath will give new life and vigor to the worn-out frame. The fact of the health of the young and healthier person being, as it were, stolen to support that of the more aged and sickly is well established among ancient medical authorities, including Galen (Method. medic. viii. 7).

Probably the whole notice of Abishag is only introduced on account of her subsequent connection with the fate of Adonijah, David's fourth son but now the oldest still living. It is evident that Abishag was made a concubine or secondary wife to David (see on 1Ki 2:22) It appears from this phrase of lying in his bosom, "which is everywhere in Scripture mentioned as the privilege of a wife." This made Adonijah's crime, in desiring her to wife, so heinous in Solomon's account, because he saw, that by marrying the king's wife, he designed to revive his pretense to the throne - ridiculous, if she had been only the king's handmaid.

1 Kings 1:4 - "...but the king knew her not." Although presumably she was his wife or concubine, they didn't have sex, which is stated to express how feeble or near death David was.

On the other hand - For Adonijah to want to take his own father's wife as his wife would be contrary to the law (**Leviticus 18:8**). Adonijah could never have presumed to seek her in marriage, and Bathsheba would never have promised her help in his suit. So, some dispute whether she really was made a wife to David, and instead merely a handmaid.

Still, Absalom had earlier done just that (**2 Samuel 16:21-22**), sleeping publicly with David's 10 concubines in a tent on top of the palace, as a symbol that he was now in

charge, and possibly as a “no turning back” kind of act that would empower his followers to finish the rebellion he started.

1 Kings 1:5 - “Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king”

Contrast this with the humility of Eleazar, Abraham’s servant.

1 Kings 1:6-7 - Adonijah was spoiled by David.

“And his father had not displeased him at any time,”.... Always humored him in everything, let him have his own way and will, and granted him what he desired, and never corrected him for his faults, or made him ashamed, as the Targum says, by telling him of them, and chastising him for them.

Recall that Abraham was given a charge by God :

“For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice...” (**Genesis 18:19**)

David’s failure in this area brought on another rebellion.

The last verses look to Messiah, with Solomon as the type. And maybe this is the real reason the passage was chosen for haftarah:

David says:

1 Kings 1:30-32 - “Even as I swear unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.”