

1 Kings 1:1-53

Adonijah's rebellion

There's some confusion about the timeline here, but I think this incident comes next, before the events in **1 Chronicles 28-29**.

King David's advanced age and frailty embolden's a challenge to his reign by Adonijah, his fourth son.

First, David's ill health is described. He was 70 years old at this time.

1 Kings 1:1 - "Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat."

Rashi - As David saw the angel of death standing in Jerusalem and his sword in his hand, his blood became cold from fear of him (and he never quite recovered).

1 Kings 1:2 - "Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not."

The rabbis are certain this means David would take her legally as a wife or a concubine. But the king was not able to have sexual relations with her.

Because of David's impaired health and diminishing control over events in the kingdom, his fourth son Adonijah decided to make a play for succeeding him before his death. He was the oldest remaining son, and according to tradition would be expected to succeed David.

1 Kings 1:5 - "Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him."

Adonijah's rebellion, like the previous ones we've seen, is a picture of our own rebellion against Christ within us. We exalt ourselves and say, "I will be king."

Like Absalom previously, he gathered an entourage and travelled around the city in a fancy chariot accompanied by a contingent of horsemen.

1 Kings 1:6 - "And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom."

Rashi says this means his father neglected to discipline him. This episode teaches you

that "he who refrains from rebuking his child brings him to his death."

1 Kings 1:7-8 - "And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him. But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah."

Adonijah knew that David had a grudge against Joab for his murders of Abner, Amasa, and Absalom. And Abiathar had been dismissed by David as High Priest during Absalom's rebellion.

Adonijah's Feast

To shore up support among the city's elites, Adonijah prepares a feast just outside the Jerusalem. He is planning to use the event to have Abiathar anoint him as king.

The prophet Nathan tells Bathsheba that Adonijah is planning to usurp the throne, for which Nathan had already prophesied would go to Solomon. He urges her to go speak to the bed-ridden David and then he will come in and support her.

Once they present the situation to David, the king replies to Bathsheba:

1 Kings 1:29-30 - "And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, Even as I sware 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.

He directs Zadok the High Priest and Nathan to get Solomon and bring him to the Gihon Spring (later it would contain the pool of Siloam or Shiloh) riding on David's own royal mule.

1 Kings 1:34-35 - "And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah."

They do this and bring along a great crowd of supporters of David and Solomon, who begin to shout and celebrate Solomon's anointing, the sound of pipes and rejoicing with the continual sounding of the shofar.

Party Pooper

1 Kings 1:41 - "And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?"

A messenger tells them Solomon has united most of the city around him, and is already sitting on David's throne.

This puts a wet blanket on Adonijah's party.

1 Kings 1:49 - "And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way."

A panicked Adonijah races back to the altar that was set up at the threshing floor of Araunah and grabs the horns for sanctuary from Solomon's anger.

1 Kings 1:51-53 - "And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.' And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house."

By tradition, if you fed to the altar, no one would dare defile the place with your blood.

Solomon wisely decides to begin his reign without shedding the blood of his older brother.

But later, Adonijah asks a "small petition" - could he marry David's still virgin widow Abishag the Shunammite. To take the wife of a king was to try to usurp the throne - recall Absalom's public sex acts with David's concubines.

The gall of the guy! Solomon interprets this as wickedness and sedition, and has him killed. (**1 Kings 2:25**)

Summary -

Our rebellion against our King Jesus can take many forms:

Adonijah's pride reminds us of Lucifer's:

- **Isaiah 14:13** - "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

Or the ruler of Tyre who is sometimes seen as a stand-in for Satan:

- **Ezekiel 28:2** - "Son of man, tell the ruler of Tyre that this is what the Lord GOD says: Your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god; I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the sea.' Yet you are a man and not a god, though you have regarded your heart as

that of a god."

And Saul's disobedience - **1 Samuel 15:23** - "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Israel as a people were constantly rebellious:

- **Deuteronomy 28:47-48** - "Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."

- **Isaiah 30:1-2** - "Woe to the rebellious children," declares the LORD, "to those who carry out a plan that is not Mine, who form an alliance, but against My will, heaping up sin upon sin. They set out to go down to Egypt without asking My advice, to seek shelter under Pharaoh's protection and take refuge in Egypt's shade."

- **Isaiah 63:9-10** - "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."

It should disturb us that even making a plan or alliance that is not God's or not rejoicing for the abundance of all things is rebellion.

The flesh is always in rebellion:

- **Galatians 5:17** - "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

What's the answer then?

- **Galatians 5:16** - "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

That only happens when we go to the cross and embrace the finished work of Christ.