

Bi235 Old Testament 2

Lesson Bi235-22 Solomon Follows David as King of Israel

Doesn't every father want a son who will follow in his footsteps? King David had several wives and many sons. God had promised David that a son would become king after he died. The question was, "Which son?" Powerful leaders preferred his son Adonijah to become king, but David and Bathsheba preferred their son, Solomon.

In his later years as king, David suffered personal and political struggles. His wives and children were jealous of each other. David's son Amnon raped his sister Tamar, and was later killed in revenge by his half brother, Absalom. David was too lenient with Amnon, and later was too strict with Absalom. Absalom had to flee the country to escape David's anger.

David's general, Joab, encouraged David to allow Absalom to return to Jerusalem. Absalom returned, and began to gather support for his leadership. He became popular and had himself proclaimed as king at Hebron. He and his supporters marched northward to Jerusalem, and King David and his followers had to abandon the city. They fled eastward across the Jordan River. David's own tribe, Judah, turned against him and followed Absalom.

Absalom and his army pursued David. Finally, David's army, led by Joab, defeated Absalom. Against David's orders to spare Absalom, he was caught and killed. David was heartbroken, because he loved Absalom. In the third psalm, David expressed his grief and his hope. "O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him.' But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cry aloud to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy hill" (Ps 3:1-4).

Absalom's rebellion was followed by another rebellion. Later, three years of famine struck the country. In addition, the Philistines continued to threaten Israel.

As David's life grew to a close, he decided to hand over to Solomon the building materials he had gathered for a temple. Years earlier God had announced through Nathan the prophet that David would not be the temple-builder. David also gave Solomon the plans that had been drawn up for the temple. In this way David was announcing his choice of Solomon to succeed him as king.

David's son Adonijah expected to become the next king. He was older than Solomon and was supported by Joab and an important religious leader. Other leaders, including the prophet Nathan, Zadok the priest, and members of David's special guard, did not support him.

Bathsheba came before the king and reported, "My lord, you told me that Solomon would be king, but now Adonijah has become king, and you are not aware of it. My lord, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne after you" (1Kings 1:17-20).

Nathan the prophet came before David as well. "Have you declared Adonijah shall be king after you, and sit on your throne? He is declaring himself to be king with a ceremony and a feast right now! The crowd is chanting, 'Long live King Adonijah!'"

When he heard this, David began to give orders. He called for Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the captain of his bodyguards. He said to them, "Take my servants with you and have Solomon mount my own mule and take him down to the Gihon spring east of the city.

There have Zadok and Nathan anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ Then come back to the palace where he will sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

They did as David had commanded. After they anointed Solomon, the people shouted, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ Then they all marched up the hill to the palace, rejoicing and playing music as they went.

Adonijah and Joab heard the noise. Joab asked, “What’s the meaning of all the noise in the city?”

A messenger arrived and exclaimed, “Our lord King David has made Solomon king. Zadok and Nathan anointed him at the Gihon spring. From there they have climbed up toward the palace cheering, and the city echoes with their shouts. That’s the noise you hear.”

When Adonijah’s supporters heard this, they ran away. They knew they could now be accused of treason. Adonijah would not be the next king, as they had hoped. Adonijah sent a message to his brother, the new king, pleading for mercy. Solomon let him live. “Go to your home in peace,” Solomon told him (1Kings 1:24-53).

As he neared the end of his life, David gave a message to Solomon, the new king. “Be strong, act like a man, and follow Yahweh your God. Walk in obedience to him. Keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go. Yahweh promised me years ago, ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel’” (1Kings 2:2-4).

David was 70 years old when he died. He was buried in Jerusalem. So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.

Jesus was known as the “son of David.” David was a distant ancestor of Jesus, and some of his characteristics reappeared in Jesus. Both were kings of God’s people, both suffered opposition, and both were intense lovers of God the Father.

This story is **important** because it shows us the struggles and triumphs that David had publicly and privately in the later years of his reign. No parent is perfect and no parent can control the choices their children make, once they are grown. God gives each person free will, the power to choose. Repentance of sin, following God with a humble heart, and teaching children about God—these are the best ways to influence them.

The **main truth** of this lesson is God continued to work in David’s personal life and in his kingly leadership. True to his promise, God was pleased with David’s choice of his son Solomon to succeed him as ruler of Israel.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. Why did David have problems in his family? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “His several wives and many children were jealous of one another,” you are correct.

2. Why did his son Absalom lead a rebellion against David? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “He was angry that David didn’t discipline Amnon for the rape of Tamar, and then was too harsh in expelling Absalom from his presence and favor,” you are right.
3. Why was there doubt as to who would succeed David as king of Israel? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered, “David had several sons, and Adonijah was older than Solomon and expected to become king,” you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine the events in your own mind. Then tell the story in your own words as you remember it. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning the story. Gather some Christian parents together and tell them the story of David and Solomon. Pray with them for their children. Help them to know that God is mindful of their struggles.