

JUNE 7

1 Kings 2:1-3:3

1 Kings 2

Vs. 1-4 While I think it's good for David to tell Solomon to follow the Lord and His Word (v. 3), I think that in v. 4, David is too focused on his lineage and keeping the throne in the family. It is really hard to say how much of God's plan of redemption was grasped by David and others. In observing David, it seems that he became a little dysfunctional regarding his sons, first thinking it would be Amnon, then Absalom, etc. I would feel better if I saw something about the glory of God and the testimony of Israel to the nations. When we see Solomon dedicate the temple, many of his words will have to do with himself.

As disciples, it is only by God's grace that we can see God's plan so clearly. *For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.* (Matthew 13:17)

We are living on the cutting edge of God's plan. We have all this Old Testament history to observe, so we need to observe and learn. Then, we have the record of the lives of these men and women who played a part in God's plan without knowing or grasping the things that we take for granted. For us then, our work as disciples can't have anything to do with a name we leave behind in a church or a group. Our heritage and joy is in the name of Christ and sharing what He has done. As His servants, we work in the harvest, reaching out and making disciples for His name, not ours.

Vs. 5-9 I've alluded to David's final instructions to Solomon. You might have thought, with his closeness to God and the benefit of the Urim and Thummim, David would have figured out what to have done with Joab during the time Joab committed these crimes. Somehow I don't think this speaks well of David. To me, David allowed too much injustice and deception in those close to him, probably to build a kingdom, and possibly because it reminded him too much of his own sins. As disciples, I would say it is better to be honest at all times and trust God for the results even if it means confessing our sins or not allowing others to "get away with murder," even if they are key players in a church or organization.

This isn't the full story on David's final instructions to Solomon. On a better note, in 1 Chronicles, we'll see David pass on instructions, materials and blueprints to Solomon for the building of the temple.

Vs. 13-25 This is really Solomon cleaning up after David. David, unlike Ahithophel, didn't set his house in order when he died. He allowed this situation with Adonijah to grow out of his neglect.

The issue here was that Adonijah wanted Abishag so he could marry her and use this as a way to claim the right to the throne. Legally, according to the law, he couldn't marry his father's wife; but because David had had no sexual relationship with her, it might not have been considered a full marriage. Whether it was legal or not is not the point. Solomon saw through the plan and knew who the planners were.

V. 24 It seems to me that there is a whole lot of *me* going on in this statement.

V. 25 This is one of David's mighty men who became David's bodyguard. Now he is Solomon's hatchet man.

Vs. 26-27 Solomon didn't kill Abiathar because he was a priest. No one from this lineage would ever serve as priest again. Note that Jeremiah was from Anathoth, and was a really good guy. It is interesting to see that this is the fulfillment of God's judgment on Eli back in 1 Samuel. God is very patient in judgment.

Vs. 28-35 Now it is Joab's turn. Joab might have thought that grasping the horns of the altar would save him and that Solomon wouldn't have the nerve to do this. Joab should have died long ago. He had brought poison into David's court.

V. 33 For me, this seems a little too focused on himself and the line of David. God should receive glory and the truth of His Word should be lifted high.

Vs. 36-46 The final loose end was Shimei. Solomon knew something would happen to make him leave Jerusalem.

In both situations, God was sovereign and removed two potential threats to Solomon. If Adonijah, Abiathar and Joab hadn't tried this idea with Abishag, they might have gone to the grave in peace and spread more poison. If Shimei had stayed in Jerusalem and let someone else find his slaves, nothing would have happened. Solomon didn't have to press the issue with these men. He needed only to wait on the Lord.

1 Kings 3:1-3

There is all sorts of foreboding here. In Deuteronomy 17:16-19, among other things, God commands a king to make his own copy of the law (probably the first 5 books of the Bible) by hand and under the supervision of the Levites, and then to read from it every day of his life. Solomon was a busy man and I doubt he ever did that.

Why did Solomon make an alliance with Egypt, especially through marriage? Israel had been warned that if they allowed their sons to marry women who worshiped other gods, these women would eventually turn their hearts. What was he thinking? Why didn't Solomon depend on a sovereign God for peace? Why does God seem so silent here? Did Solomon consult the Lord? Did he ask a priest to roll the Urim and Thummim? I doubt it. I guess there is a liability for being too smart and too "wise."

V. 3 You will see this *only* often among the kings. I think Josiah is the only one who put an end to worshiping on *the high places*. Again, later, Solomon will, himself, sacrifice to foreign gods on these and other high places. It was forbidden in the law to offer anywhere besides the tabernacle. A wise king, blessed by God, could have put an end to that kind of worship and drawn the people to worship as God had intended. God's silence doesn't mean His approval.

As disciples, we see that some of the little tendencies of these men of God became huge failures later and led them, and others, into ruin. Organizationally, everyone has an opinion about things, but where the Word is crystal clear, we need to stay with the Word. No compromise. Personally, we need to look at ourselves too. Do we allow ourselves the luxury of committing little sins? We are no better than these men. It is better that we lay things aside now and focus on the harvest. Once our work is done and we're in heaven, we'll enjoy true vivid joy and enjoyment; and we won't miss the "joys of life" we thought we would miss here on earth, if we focused too steadily on following the Lord into the harvest.

Acts 5

Vs. 1-11 The church was young, only weeks old. During this crucial beginning period of the church, God did something here, to protect the church, that, thankfully(?), He doesn't do today.

Ananias and Sapphira had seen the reaction of the church leaders to Barnabas' selfless sale of his property and his giving of the entire sum to the apostles. They wanted that kind of "fame" for themselves, to be known among the apostles and in the church. Their sin was not that they didn't give all the money, but that they *said* they gave all the money. They really sold it for more than they said and kept a good part of the proceeds for themselves. Their sin was their claim that they were super-sacrificial, having given it all, in order to gain fame and importance in the church.

V. 3 This verse is used to show the personhood and deity of the Spirit. You cannot lie to a "force;" you can only lie to a person. In v. 4 it says that lying to the Spirit is lying to God. The Holy Spirit is a Person, the third member of the Trinity.

V. 10 What would you think if your service for the Lord was burying disobedient Christians? You'd definitely have job security. Frankly, I hate digging holes, but today we use backhoes.

V. 11 Fear in the church was the intended result. For now there was fear. That wouldn't last, and God wouldn't keep striking down disobedient Christians. This was a special time.

Vs. 12-16 Notice that the church keeps growing and that all of the apostles are doing *signs and wonders*. So I'm guessing the church was now at least a third of the population of Jerusalem. Many of the people who came to Christ who were there for Pentecost would eventually return to their homes in the Gentile world. The gospel was going out.

Vs. 17-26 Isn't it interesting to think that God let the apostles get arrested so He could break them out? God was doing big things in a big way. And then God broke them loose from prison, not for them to escape, but to send them back into harm's way.

Vs. 27-32 This is supernatural boldness in the face of these frustrated leaders. Notice that Peter referred to the *God of our fathers*. This is a great little message.

Vs. 33-42 Now the leaders wanted to imitate their "father" by killing the apostles. We haven't heard this yet, but Gamaliel's star pupil was the Pharisee Saul, soon to become the Apostle Paul. Gamaliel was a Pharisee speaking to Sadducees. He must have been well respected for them to listen to him.

Vs. 38-39 This shows that Gamaliel was perceptive enough to see that something strange was going on. I think his sincerity, even in error, is reflected in his star pupil. Saul of Tarsus was deadly sincere.

V. 40 I find it cute that, to feel good about themselves, the leaders had to rough up the apostles.

Vs. 41-42 But the word around town was that the council wouldn't do anything to them; therefore, they must be OK. Again, this is another example of Luke showing Theophilus and all of his readers, that the Jewish authorities had no real or legal complaint against the disciples or Christianity. In a sense, the church was declared "not guilty."

As disciples we don't always want to put ourselves completely in God's hands, but we have the words of Jesus and stories like these to tell us it's OK. God will glorify Himself and help us if we trust Him, even if the way looks tedious or hard. God allowed the apostles to be arrested in order to break them out, have them preach and confuse the leaders and get Gamaliel to say what he said. God will do the same with us if we wait and follow.

Psalm 125

In going to Jerusalem to worship, the direction is not given as north, south, east, or west. It is simply "up." As the worshipers approached the rocky, defensible heights of the city surrounded by mountains, they thought of the Lord being the one on high, who protects and surrounds His people.

Vs. 1-2 The people singing this knew that Zion had experienced its share of affliction. Yet, God still protected the city as He had promised. Even after the exile, He brought them back to Zion. And in the future, the Lord will rule from Zion.

V. 3 God would not allow foreign powers to completely dominate the city or the land, or there would have been a loss of hope.

Vs. 4-5 Rather than closing with a prayer for the city, there is a call to the Lord for justice. Those who were righteous would be the ones who the Lord would use in leading Zion to blessing. The presence of evildoers brought God's judgment. The judgment of the wicked would bring the peace Israel and Zion needed.

Proverbs 16:25

This is a very famous verse that I've used a lot in witnessing. The older people get, the more they either think they have it figured out or they figure it doesn't matter if you figure it out. Without Jesus, the end is death.