

Lesson 8 | July 23, 2023

Solomon's Coronation

Study Text: 1 Kings 1:1 through 2:53; 1 Chronicles 29:1–30

Central Truth: Christian leaders must value and pursue the succession of godly leadership.

Key Verse: Reference

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 (KJV).

“Your son Solomon will be the next king and will sit on my throne this very day, just as I vowed to you before the Lord, the God of Israel” (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will analyze Solomon's rise to the throne, noting God's assistance with challenges.
- Students will recognize the value of following godly leaders rather than being drawn by mere charisma and outward success.
- Students will acknowledge the value of prayer and godliness in experiencing God's blessings upon His people.

Introducing the Study

Say: Success in life isn't always easy. Sometimes as we try to move forward in our careers, families, and even relationships, we face opposition from well-meaning people who don't understand our situation. Other times, people with selfish intentions oppose us in pursuit of their own motives. Either way, doing right in the face of opposition can be difficult.

Opening Activity—Opposition

Ask. Have you ever faced opposition as you tried to move forward in some area of your life? Allow students to share their experiences, noting that examples could include opposition to job advancement by a self-serving colleague or a friend who seeks to influence their life choices in an inappropriate way.

Say: Opposition from others—whether it is well-intentioned or not—can make life complicated and even cause conflict. Today's lesson looks at the transfer of power between King David and King Solomon. This transfer opposed by another of David's sons, who had evil, selfish motives. The events we study today remind us that God's sovereign plans cannot be set aside by human ambition. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As this lesson begins, David was nearing the end of his earthly life. Thus, he desired to pass the monarchy down to his son Solomon. Not only was this David's wish, but it was also God's plan. Yet Adonijah, David's oldest surviving son, had designs on this powerful position for himself. Despite Adonijah's vain ambition, God's will would be accomplished.

Part 1—Adonijah Vies for the Throne

Adonijah Declares Himself King

1 Kings 1:1–27

Say: When we hear the name Solomon, words like wisdom and prosperity come to mind. Our thoughts likely go to the blessings of God on His people during King Solomon's reign, a theme that is evident in coming lessons. Yet in the beginning, Solomon's rise to power was met with difficulty and conflict. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Resource Packet Item 1: Solomon

Distribute the information sheet titled "Solomon." Share the information as an introduction to Solomon's life and a guide to the great significance of his reign. This will help set the stage for the events of this lesson and foreshadow the events and writings covered in the remainder of this unit.

Solomon reigned for forty years (970–930 bc; see 1 Kings 11:41–43), and his reign marked the most prosperous and unified time in all of the six hundred years that God's people lived as an independent nation in the Old Testament. He alone was able to govern a nation of twelve unified tribes, which even David had struggled to do so (see 2 Samuel 2–4). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Solomon's transition to power was anything but smooth.

As we begin this study of the life of Solomon, the end of David's reign was near. While David had done great things for God and established himself as a man of great faith and courage, we see indications that he had not governed his family well. Despite the fact David had declared his son Solomon to be his replacement (see 1 Chronicles 22:2–13), Adonijah rebelled against his father by attempting to assert himself as king (1 Kings 1:5–10). In this endeavor, Adonijah had the assistance of Joab, the head of David's military, as well as Abiathar the priest (verse 7).

The rivalry for the throne seen in 1 Kings 1 was common in ancient times. Adonijah was older than Solomon (2 Samuel 3:4), so he may have felt justified in his claim to his father's throne despite God's clear choice (1 Kings 1:13; see 1 Chronicles 22:8–10). Perhaps if he established his superiority first, he could prevent Solomon's rise. Adonijah's tactics were typical of those trying to usurp any throne, assembling people of power around him for support. As with any coup, he excluded those loyal to his opposition (1 Kings 1:9–10).

Feasts like the one in verses 9–10 often accompanied a king’s coronation. Adonijah chose a place outside Jerusalem but close enough so that those inside the city could hear what was happening. Perhaps he thought he could draw more people into his attempt to overthrow the throne.

As these events unfolded, Nathan the prophet took notice and initiated a twofold plan to thwart Adonijah. First, he approached Bathsheba about reminding the elderly and frail David about God’s plans for Solomon. Then he assured Bathsheba that he would confirm this to David (verses 11–14).

Bathsheba approached David, reminding him of his pledge that Solomon was to be king (verse 17). Then she followed with four key statements to stir him to action. Note also how Bathsheba’s wisdom and discernment can be seen: First, she noted that David was losing touch with the events of the kingdom (verse 18); second, she identified Adonijah’s coconspirators (verse 19); third, she reminded David that the entire nation waited with anticipation to find out his successor (verse 20); and fourth, she noted that she and Solomon would face horrible, even lethal, consequences after David’s death if he did not act (verse 21).

Shortly thereafter, Nathan arrived, pressing the urgency of the situation by asking if David intended Adonijah to be king (verse 24). Clearly, this was a crisis moment as Bathsheba and Nathan confronted the great king with some harsh realities. Yet doing so was necessary in order to avoid further conflict and violence as God’s plan for His people unfolded.

Discuss

? What are some reasons a person might challenge leadership, even in spiritual circles?

? What can Christians today learn from Bathsheba and Nathan about delivering hard news in critical situations?

King David Declares Solomon King

1 Kings 1:28–53

Say: Clearly, King David had become frail in his old age. Yet as we continue in the story, we see that his zeal for and commitment to God’s plans had not waned. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As noted earlier, David had been weak in governing his family, including disciplining his sons (1 Kings 1:6). His failures as a father were evidenced especially in Amnon and Absalom (2 Samuel 13:1–33; 15:1 through 18:33). At this point he could not change the past. However, despite his feeble condition, David took action to deal with the problem of the present and the needs of the future (1 Kings 1:28–53).

Note that Nathan had been subtle yet clear in informing David of Adonijah's rebellion and urging him to make a decision. David responded by summoning Bathsheba to assure her that Solomon would indeed be king (verses 28–31).

Then David immediately called for the coronation of Solomon (verses 32–40). This coronation would involve the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and the military leader Benaiah. The coronation was performed with all the accompanying fanfare. Solomon was carried on the king's donkey to Gihon Spring, the water source of Jerusalem near the place where the ark of the covenant rested. There, the sounding of the ram's horn marked the coronation that would begin the transfer of power. This also began the fulfillment of God's promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:7–17, which would ultimately culminate in Christ, the everlasting King of kings.

Not surprisingly, fear filled Adonijah's heart as the trumpet blast reverberated through the city and he learned what was happening (1 Kings 1:41–51). It was "every man for himself" in that moment, so he fled to the one place that might offer safety: the altar of the Lord. Adonijah knew the same fate he planned for Solomon could now befall him. But Solomon would not allow this festive occasion to be marred by death. Solomon spared Adonijah's life—for the time being (verses 52–53).

God planned for Solomon to be king of Israel. Even though Adonijah tried to usurp the throne, God's plans for His people were accomplished. No human conspiracy could change that. This is good news for Christians today. We can trust God to take care of us in times of crisis when the future seems uncertain.

Resource Packet Item 2: Encountering Opposition

Distribute the case study "Encountering Opposition." Have students answer the questions in small groups, then discuss their responses as a class.

Discuss

? How can we prepare now for the opposition we will inevitably face as we follow God's plan for our lives?

? How can we know the right course to take when encountering opposition?

Part 2—David Relinquishes the Throne

David Offers a Prayer

1 Chronicles 29:1–20

Say: Scripture gives many examples of the prayers of God's people. The content of their prayers can teach us a great deal about what God values in the lives of His servants. This includes how they believe as well as how they live. (Share your highlights from the following text.) √ (***Play the video available at RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult.***)

The Books of Chronicles play a unique role in this account of Solomon's coronation. They were written very late in the Old Testament, after the Babylonian exile. While 1 and 2 Chronicles recount many of the same events as the Books of Samuel and Kings, these books are more than history. They convey the larger theological meaning of the events, which were of great comfort to the returning exiles. These books showed that God had a great purpose for His people and that His purpose endured.

Against that backdrop, note David's admonition to the people at Solomon's coronation (1 Chronicles 29:1–9). Just as the people had united around David, they would now need to rally around Solomon, who was young and inexperienced. Yet Solomon was also the one "whom God has clearly chosen as the next king of Israel" (verse 1, NLT). David was especially concerned about the building of the temple (see 1 Chronicles 28) and had provided many materials for its construction.

David then offered a profound, heartfelt prayer in the presence of the whole assembly of people (29:10–19). Note the key themes of this prayer. The God they served was, and is, eternally sovereign. He is unsurpassed in greatness, power, and splendor. All of creation is His. Every blessing His people receive comes from Him, and all honor and praise are therefore due Him, in worship of His holy name.

This prayer included an appeal that God would continue through Solomon all the great things He had already done. David also prayed that God's people would continue to love Him (verse 18). All believers can pray this prayer (see Hebrews 11:6). Such prayers are founded upon faith, as seen in believers in both the Old and New Testaments.

Resource Packet Item 3: Influence

Distribute the worksheet. Complete it as a class, referring to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 to identify specific ways believers can influence others.

Discuss

? Think about how you would pray for your church, as well as your nation. How might your prayer be similar to David's?

? What are some ways you might influence someone else to be strong in faith and obedience to the Lord?

Solomon Is Recognized as King

1 Chronicles 29:21–25

Say: The coronation of Solomon was more than just a historic description of transferred power. It signaled God's mighty hand at work in blessing His people and honoring His promises—a reality that continues today. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Commentators have described 1 Chronicles 29:21–25 as a kind of "sequel" to the description of Solomon's coronation in 1 Kings 1:28–40. It may be that this was a

second ceremony focusing on Solomon's anointing as king in addition to the public declaration of his elevation to the position of king. (Scholars base this theory on the fact that the thousands mentioned in 1 Chronicles 29 could not have assembled in the small area around the Gihon Spring, the location of the events in 1 Kings 1. Thus, 1 Chronicles 29 more likely describes a massive public worship gathering, perhaps following the events at the spring.)

The immense number of sacrifices foreshadowed the marvelous ministry of worship in the temple that would soon be built. It also indicated the great devotion to God held by David, Solomon, and the people.

Note verse 23: "So Solomon took the throne of the Lord in place of his father, David, and he succeeded in everything, and all Israel obeyed him" (NLT). This is noteworthy in light of the fact that Solomon departed from obedience to the Lord later in his life. But these words served to emphasize that all of the marvelous prosperity during Solomon's reign came by God's gracious hand. Solomon's success, like David's, could only be attributed to God—specifically His divine anointing upon His chosen king. The chronicler was not ignoring Solomon's later failings but was focusing on the successes that came as Solomon and the people honored God. And indeed, we will see verse 25 come to life: "The Lord exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel, and he gave Solomon greater royal splendor than any king in Israel before him" (NLT). These were great words of promise to the returning exiles—and believers today—that God can bless His people in ways we could never comprehend.

Discuss

? What are some ways God has blessed your life in the past?

? How has the passage of time helped you better understand the value and meaning of those blessings?

Part 3—Solomon Assumes the Throne Adonijah Conspires Again

1 Kings 2:13–25

Say: Solomon's story teaches us about the value of wisdom versus the power of foolishness. This contrast is on display at the beginning of Solomon's reign, as Adonijah again enters the scene. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Adonijah's request in 1 Kings 2:13–18 tells us much about this man. With bitterness in his words, he lamented to Bathsheba, "The tables were turned, and the kingdom went to my brother instead [of me]; for that is the way the Lord wanted it" (1 Kings 2:15, NLT). This reflected Adonijah's negative feelings toward the now-deceased David—and toward the Lord who decreed Solomon's reign. Adonijah also made a ridiculous and foolish request: He asked to marry Abishag, who was David's last concubine. Such a

marriage would put Adonijah forth as a threat to the king (see 2 Samuel 16:21–22, where this principle of succession is described amid treachery).

Bathsheba granted Adonijah’s plea to ask Solomon for this favor. Not surprisingly, Solomon saw through Adonijah’s plan and called for his execution. While there was political justification for this—as a way to protect the kingdom—Solomon specifically cited his anointing from God to be the king of His people: “The Lord has confirmed me and placed me on the throne of my father, David; he has established my dynasty as he promised” (1 Kings 2:24, NLT). Decades earlier, God confirmed His promise would continue through the line of David. God had now made it clear that His promise would pass through Solomon.

While we will never be elevated to monarchy or face the treachery of a coup, we certainly will experience challenges as we follow God’s plan. In such moments, it is wise to look at the big picture: We are only a small part of God’s larger plans, and those plans cannot be thwarted by any human plot.

Discuss

? Why do you think Adonijah was foolish enough to make the request he did?

? How would you describe God’s plan for humanity and your part in His plan?

Solomon Overcomes His Conspirators

1 Kings 2:26–46

Say: Sin has consequences. Rebellion against God and rejection of His will bring disaster. The final chapter in the story of Solomon’s coronation confirms this. In the closing verses of 1 Kings 2, we are reminded that following God’s plan is always the best course. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Accountability is the theme in 1 Kings 2:26–46, and that meant tragic consequences. The newly crowned King Solomon dealt with those who had conspired against him and against the will of God to elevate him to the throne as the next king in the Davidic line. First, Abiathar the priest was banished to Anathoth (one of the cities of the Levites; see Joshua 21:13–18). His life was spared despite his support for Adonijah because of his previous association with David (1 Kings 2:26–27), thereby fulfilling the prophecy found in 1 Samuel 2:24–36.

The conspirator Joab was executed despite fleeing to the altar of the Lord. Shimei, a conniving man who had undermined David, was eventually killed as well (1 Kings 2:30–46; see also 2 Samuel 16:5–13). While these are certainly brutal descriptions, they reflect the serious consequences of opposing God’s plans.

Discuss

? What can we learn from the brutal, warring accounts included in Scripture?

? How can Christians best respond to opposition today, since we are members of the spiritual body of Christ rather than a physical, theocratic nation?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Every Christian, no matter his or her place in the church, needs strong, godly spiritual leadership. We would do well to pray that God will provide godly leaders and then continue to work in their lives as they lead people forward in the ways of the Lord.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Find a leader or mentor who has influenced your life of faith and express your gratitude for their ministry.
- Watch for fellow Christians who are going through great challenges. Take time to encourage them and pray for them.
- Review David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29. Note ways you can pray for your church based on David's prayer, then implement those items into your prayer life.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Israel Rejects God as King.
1 Samuel 8:1–9

Tuesday:

God Grants a King.
1 Samuel 8:10–22

Wednesday:

God Chooses Saul.
1 Samuel 9:15 through 10:1

Thursday:

Saul Takes the Throne.
1 Samuel 11:12–15

Friday:

Saul Rejected; David Chosen.
1 Samuel 16:1–13

Saturday:

David Assumes the Throne.
2 Samuel 5:1–5