



Reading: Read 1 Kings chapter 2

Key Thought: Walk in God's ways and both you and God's Kingdom will prosper.
Hebrews 12 verse 1: ***Throw off everything that hinders ... and fix your eyes on Jesus.***

Context: David knew his end was near. Having made Solomon his successor, he gave him final words of advice before he died: "If you obey God, you will prosper in all your endeavours to serve him, and the kingdom will be blessed." (Paraphrased) He also advised Solomon to deal with the opposition and to mete out punishment where necessary. And Solomon was also urged to show kindness to those who had shown support for the Kingdom and the Line of David. To use a metaphor, David did not want the 'dead wood' to start a troublesome fire. Solomon was to make a clean break with all opposition right from the start.

Content:

The opposition came from 4 people – Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab and Shimei - each of whom can teach us a lesson.

- **Adonijah (verses 21-23):** He was Solomon's brother – the one who tried to usurp the throne. His reprieve depended on his doing no evil, but his request for Abishag (one of David's concubines) was interpreted as making another claim to the throne. Solomon justly imposed the death penalty. From this we learn the consequences of imposing our will on God.
- **Abiathar (verses 26-27):** Although a priest, he was a traitor and had to be dealt with. This seems to be the end of the Levitical priesthood and the establishment of a new one – that of Zadok (see 1 Samuel 2 verses 30-33). Sadly, Abiathar lost the blessing of priesthood – a sober reminder to us to stay in the place of blessing, or to get back to it.
- **Joab (verse 5):** Joab was the leader of the army. He sought asylum at the altar, but that was only relevant for accidental death – he had murdered Abner in a time of peace to deter the rest of the tribes from coming under David's rule. Under the Law his sin had to be punished. The altar should have been the place of repentance where his sin could have been forgiven.
- **Shimei (verses 8 and 9):** He belonged to Saul's clan and had cursed David, but he was spared on the condition that he stayed in Jerusalem, so that they could keep an eye on him. But he secretly left the city, breaking his oath. At first he seemed to be repentant, but it didn't last. Mercy is there for those who repent – but they must be genuine.

Lastly, we read of how kindness was shown to those who had helped David, and the example is given in the story of **Barzillai** (which you can read in 2 Samuel 17 verses 27-29) where Barzillai organised his people to bring food for David and his troops in battle. God sees when we respond to a person or situation with kindness and will reward us.

Challenges:

Hebrews 12 verse 1: ***Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back (in our Christian life), and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up ... and keep your eyes on Jesus our leader and instructor.*** (Living Bible). Is there 'dead wood' in your life? If Solomon had not obeyed David's charge to 'get rid of the enemy' he would not have had a successful reign of forty years of peace. Obedience brought Solomon blessing and prosperity, and it brought peace after years of war. By disobeying God's ways, we can bring hardship on ourselves and lose the blessing of God on our lives. And then we lose our peace. The good news is that if we are truly repentant and put "those things that entangle us" behind us, then we can be in that place of blessing again and know God using us for the sake of his kingdom. Not all things are wrong, but they might be wrong for us and take our focus away from God's best for our lives.

Communicate:

Feel free to let us know if you have questions or comments about this study. Perhaps you have a testimony or word of encouragement that might help others. Or maybe you would like prayer as you begin a new thing for God in your life. We will gladly get back to you.