

November 27

Scriptures: Read 1 Kings 2

Key Verse: “Keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep... His commandments... that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn”.
(1 Kings 2:3)

Overview

Before David died, he charged his son Solomon: “be strong... and prove yourself a man” (2:2). David went on to describe the way in which Solomon’s manhood could be proven. He was to be not only the king, but the spiritual leader as well. He was to be a good example to all the people by keeping the Lord’s charge: namely by walking righteously in the ways of the Lord and obeying His commandments and statutes as laid down in the Law of Moses (2:3). David knew the key to the success of his own kingdom was obedience to the Lord and the commandments in His Holy Word. If Solomon and his sons did this, they would also be blessed by God and would continue upon the throne of Israel (2:4). Solomon, therefore, was responsible as a king under God to be a reader, learner, and doer of the Word of God (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). These are also required of all God’s children, and this passage especially speaks to men, the spiritual leaders of their homes. Notice that David did not charge Solomon with proving his manhood by being a brave warrior; it was rather by being a strong, faithful, and obedient servant of the Lord. This is by far the more difficult and demanding requirement.

David also instructed Solomon about being wise in dealing with certain men in the kingdom. He was to be wary of those that would pose a threat to him as king. Among these were Joab and Shimei, who deserved punishment. Joab was not only a co-conspirator with Adonijah against Solomon’s kingship, but also the murderer of his two rivals, Abner and Amasa (2 Samuel 3:30; 20:9-10), and had killed Absalom against David’s orders.

Shimei, of the family of Saul, was also to be punished for his wickedness. He had defiantly cursed David, but David had shown him mercy, vowing not to harm him (2 Samuel 16:5; 19:20-23). Just as Shimei and Joab’s wickedness was not to be forgotten but to be dealt with, so the kindness of Barzillai to David was not to be forgotten but rewarded by honouring his sons (2:7; 2 Samuel 17:27).

With these final words of instruction to his son, David died, leaving Solomon the undisputed king of Israel. David had a long successful reign, but his task was now completed, and the torch was passed on to his son. David, the man after God’s own heart, was buried on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the city of David.

After David’s death, Adonijah unwisely asked for Abishag to be his wife, but Abishag was considered as one of David’s concubines (although she actually was not one in the truest sense of the word, 1:4). In those days, to take a concubine of the former king was like assuming the throne. Solomon had warned him once before, but now he felt he had to put an end to this threat by having Adonijah killed. Joab also could find no mercy, not even while holding on to the horns of the altar, for a murderer was not afforded protection there (Exodus 21:14). It is sad to see Joab

come to such an end, for he had been a mighty and brave warrior who helped establish the kingdom under David. Yet, because he was a man of influence, strong character, and treachery, and because he had supported Adonijah, he could not be trusted. Because Joab had the people's respect, he was given an honourable burial in his hometown.

Shimei, the last political threat to Solomon, was put to death when he disobeyed the orders of his confinement by leaving Jerusalem. By separating him from his tribe of Benjamin, he could pose no threat of ever rallying that tribe (Saul's tribe) in an attempt to take the throne away from the tribe of Judah. We may not fully understand why there had to be these executions, but from the text we come to understand that because of them Solomon's kingdom was firmly established (2:46), and we see that God gave him a peaceful reign.

Prayer

Lord make us readers, learners, and doers of Your Word. We praise You for the great privilege You have given us to have Your Word in our hands today.