

**1 Kings 1**  
**October 6, 2024**

**Share PC with Jeannie Paxton**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: When it comes to leading or serving other people, how do you discern between persons who have a rightful ambition vs the person who pursues power for its own sake? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** The book of 1 Kings provides an account of the death of David, the reign of his son Solomon, and the decline and division of the Kingdom of Israel after Solomon and many of his successors turned to idols. We'll also recount the ministry of the prophet Elijah among the northern ten tribes of Israel. But for this morning, our focus will be on the relationship between David and his son Adonijah. Adonijah is an illustration of a person who had a selfish ambition to gain power without a real heart to serve the people of Israel. Fortunately, his effort to try to succeed his father David failed. Let's begin.

**BOOK:**

***Adonijah Sets Himself Up as King***

**1** When King David was old and well advanced in years, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. **2** So his servants said to him, "Let us look for a young virgin to attend the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm."

**3** Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful girl and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. **4** The girl was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no intimate relations with her.

**5** Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. **6** (His father had never interfered with him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?") He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.)

**7** Adonijah conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. **8** But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei (and his friends) and David's special guard did not join Adonijah.

**9** Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Stone of Zohelath near En Rogel. He invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah who were royal officials, **10** but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon.

**11** Then Nathan asked Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king without our lord David's knowing it?" **12** Now then, let me advise you how you can save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. **13** Go in to King David and say to him, "My lord the king, did you not swear to me your servant: "Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become

king?’<sup>14</sup> While you are still there talking to the king, I will come in and confirm what you have said.”

<sup>15</sup> So Bathsheba went to see the aged king in his room, where Abishag the Shunammite was attending him. <sup>16</sup> Bathsheba bowed low and knelt before the king.

“What is it you want?” the king asked.

<sup>17</sup> She said to him, “My lord, you yourself swore to me your servant by the LORD your God: ‘Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne.’<sup>18</sup> But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, do not know about it. <sup>19</sup> He has sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and has invited all the king’s sons, Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited Solomon your servant. <sup>20</sup> My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. <sup>21</sup> Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals.”

<sup>22</sup> While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived. <sup>23</sup> And they told the king, “Nathan the prophet is here.” So he went before the king and bowed with his face to the ground.

<sup>24</sup> Nathan said, “Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? <sup>25</sup> Today he has gone down and sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep. He has invited all the king’s sons, the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. Right now they are eating and drinking with him and saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’<sup>26</sup> But me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he did not invite. <sup>27</sup> Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

### *David Makes Solomon King*

<sup>28</sup> Then King David said, “Call in Bathsheba.” So she came into the king’s presence and stood before him.

<sup>29</sup> The king then took an oath: “As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, <sup>30</sup> I will surely carry out today what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place.”

<sup>31</sup> Then Bathsheba bowed low with her face to the ground and, kneeling before the king, said, “May my lord King David live forever!”

<sup>32</sup> King David said, “Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.” When they came before the king, <sup>33</sup> he said to them: “Take your lord’s servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup> There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’<sup>35</sup> Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

<sup>36</sup> Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, “Amen! May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, so declare it. <sup>37</sup> As the LORD was with my lord the king, so may he be with Solomon to make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord King David!”

<sup>38</sup> So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites went down and put Solomon on King David’s mule and escorted him to Gihon. <sup>39</sup> Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!”<sup>40</sup> And all the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound.

<sup>41</sup> Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they were finishing their feast. On hearing the sound of the trumpet, Joab asked, “What’s the meaning of all the noise in the city?”

<sup>42</sup> Even as he was speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. Adonijah said, “Come in. A worthy man like you must be bringing good news.”

<sup>43</sup> “Not at all!” Jonathan answered. “Our lord King David has made Solomon king. <sup>44</sup> The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the king’s mule, <sup>45</sup> and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon. From there they have gone up cheering, and the city resounds with it. That’s the noise you hear. <sup>46</sup> Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. <sup>47</sup> Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make Solomon’s name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!’ And the king bowed in worship on his bed <sup>48</sup> and said, ‘Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.’ ”

<sup>49</sup> At this, all Adonijah’s guests rose in alarm and dispersed. <sup>50</sup> But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. <sup>51</sup> Then Solomon was told, “Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’ ”

<sup>52</sup> Solomon replied, “If he shows himself to be a worthy man, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die.” <sup>53</sup> Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, “Go to your home.”

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

We learn from David and his son Adonijah that discipline is the means of protecting our children from the sin of selfish ambition. If Adonijah never learns self-control and is never told what something he is doing is wrong, then it is not hard to see why he is trying to exalt himself and seize the throne.

### **Close in Prayer**

## **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

***Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Kings 1). Victor Books.***

We now begin the study of the life and reign of Solomon, David's son and successor to the throne of Israel. In David we have a type of Christ in His humiliation, exile, and rejection; but in Solomon we see the "Prince of Peace" (the name Solomon means "peaceable") reigning in glory and splendor over His people. David made the conquests that enabled Solomon to live and reign in peace and magnificent prosperity.

### **I. Solomon Fulfills God's Word (1)**

David was now unable to carry on his royal duties, so his son Adonijah took advantage of the situation and proclaimed himself king of Israel. "I will be king!" he announced, all the while realizing that God had appointed Solomon to succeed David (1:17; and see 2:13–15). Adonijah was deliberately rebelling against the will of God. Sad to say, some of David's confidential advisors fell in with the wicked plot, including Joab (whom David once tried to replace; see 2 Sam. 19:11–15 and 20:4–13) and Abiathar the priest. The treacherous prince followed the example of Absalom by preparing chariots and seeking to impress the people (see 2 Sam. 15:1ff).

However, three loyal servants took matters into their own hands and informed Bathsheba. She, in turn, took the message to King David, knowing that he would not break his oath that Solomon, her son, be crowned the next king. The entire plan worked smoothly, and David made it very clear that he wanted Solomon to take the throne immediately. Zadok, Nathan, and Bathsheba lost no time in putting Solomon on the royal mule and proclaiming him the new king of Israel. Verse 40 suggests that the news was received with great joy by the people of the land. However, when Adonijah and his unsuspecting crowd of admirers heard the news, it threw them into panic, for now their treachery was known. The rebellious prince ran to God's altar for protection and Solomon promised not to kill him. Too often wicked people flee to God for help without really repenting in their hearts.

***Constable, T. L. (1985). 1 Kings. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 486–490). Victor Books.***

#### *A. The preparations for a new king (1:1–2:12)*

This section records the final events of David's rule that led to Solomon's becoming the next king.

##### **1. DAVID'S OLD AGE (1:1–4)**

1:1–2. **King David** died at or near the age of 70 (2 Sam. 5:4). From what is said of him in 1 Kings 1:1–4 it is obvious that he was in poor health and quite weak shortly before he died. His inability to retain body heat led his attendants to search for a way to keep David **warm**. Their decision to provide a **young** woman who could keep him warm by lying next to him in bed and also serve as his nurse was in harmony with medical customs of that day. Josephus (A.D. 37-ca

100), a Jewish historian, and Galen (ca. A.D. 130–200), a Greek physician, refer to this therapeutic practice which continued into the Middle Ages.

The **covers** that David's **servants** placed **over him** to keep him warm were like sheets and blankets, not articles of clothing. That a **virgin** should be sought was reasonable since an unmarried young woman would likely be in vigorous health, free from domestic responsibilities, and able to wait on David continually as his needs might demand.

1:3. Since David was **the king** a woman who combined beauty with the other qualities needed in a nurse was sought. An attractive young woman was **found** in the town of Shunem, seven miles northwest of Nazareth, near the foot of Mount Tabor in the tribal territory of Issachar. Abishag's beauty is attested to by the attraction of Adonijah, David's son, to her (2:17). And if Abishag were the Shulammite (an alternate spelling of **Shunammite**) who captivated Solomon's heart (Song 6:13) her beauty apparently attracted many men. However, there is no definite way to link **Abishag** with the Shulammite of the Song of Songs.

1:4. The fact that David **had no intimate** (i.e., sexual) **relations with** his nurse Abishag shows that this was not her function and that David was very weak. The king's inability to withstand sexual temptation while in good health resulted in his committing adultery with Bathsheba. He also had had a harem. But now, due to poor health and advanced age, his vigor was gone.

Another reason Abishag is introduced by name in the narrative (v. 3) is because she figured significantly in Adonijah's attempt to capture the throne.

## 2. ADONIJAH'S PLOT (1:5–53)

David's domestic troubles followed him to his deathbed. In his hour of weakness another of his sons (Absalom; cf. 2 Sam. 15) rose up to snatch the kingdom from his grasp.

### a. *Adonijah's preparations (1:5–10)*

1:5–6. **Adonijah** was the fourth son of David (2 Sam. 3:4) and probably the eldest of his brothers living at that time (see the chart "David's Family," near 2 Sam. 3:2–5). The description of Adonijah's decision to seek the throne strongly suggests a selfish motive: he **put himself forward and said** determinedly, **I will be king**.

Adonijah's preparation of **chariots ... horses**, and **50 men to run ahead of him** was probably intended to give him prestige in the people's eyes. It also helped ready his coup d'état against his father.

The author threw more light on Adonijah by recording that he was a spoiled, undisciplined young man who had apparently received much admiration for his good looks (**he was ... very handsome**) more than for the quality of his character. Evidently Adonijah expected that his plot would succeed more because he was a popular figure than because he was a capable person championing a worthy cause.

1:7. Among David's staff **Joab** and **Abiathar** forsook the king and sided with Adonijah. Joab was David's nephew, a **son of** his half sister, **Zeruiah** (1 Chron. 2:16). (See the chart "David's Family," near 2 Sam. 3:2–5.) He had served the king faithfully for many years—since David was pursued by Saul. David made Joab the commander-in-chief of his army, a position in which Joab distinguished himself as a brave warrior and intelligent strategist. However, Joab was brutal and used his position to murder at least two important men: Abner (2 Sam. 3:22–30), Saul's commander-in-chief, and Amasa (2 Sam. 20:8–10), who had slain Joab's brother fairly in

battle. Joab had not remained completely loyal to David. When Absalom led a coup against David, Joab executed Absalom contrary to the king's orders (2 Sam. 18:5–15).

Abiathar **the priest** had joined David after Saul had Doeg kill all the other priests at Nob (1 Sam. 22:18–20). Because of his commitment to David, Abiathar became an adviser and friend of the king. This incident with Adonijah was Abiathar's first recorded act of disloyalty.

1:8. **Zadok the priest** had joined David after Saul was killed in battle (1 Chron. 12:28). He had supported David and had served as his spy during Absalom's rebellion. **Benaiah** (cf. 1 Kings 1:10) was one of David's mightiest warriors and commanders (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23; 23:20–23). **Nathan the prophet** (cf. 1 Kings 1:10) brought the word of the Lord to the king on at least two occasions (2 Sam. 7:4–17; 12:1–14). If **Shimei** is the same man who cursed David (2 Sam. 16:5–13) and was later forgiven by David (2 Sam. 19:16–23), then Shimei's loyalty now to the king is understandable. However, he may have had his own sinister plot in mind (cf. comments on 1 Kings 2:36–38). Or this may have been another Shimei.

1:9–10. **Adonijah** held a feast for his supporters and tried to persuade others to join his cause. His sacrifice was evidently a feast rather than a religious offering. **The Stone of Zoheleth** has been identified on the steep rocky corner that overlooks the plain where the Valley of Hinnom joins the Kidron Valley just south of Mount Zion where the City of David was situated. **En Rogel** is one of the two main springs in the Kidron Valley that supplied water for Jerusalem (see the map "Jerusalem in the Time of the Kings," near 9:15).

Adonijah **invited** to his feast **all** the important people in the government who were not firmly allied with his father **or his brother Solomon**, who was David's and God's chosen prince. Adonijah's actions have been duplicated by aspiring politicians for centuries. In that culture, if Nathan and David's other supporters had been invited and eaten with Adonijah, he would have been bound to protect them, having extended them the fellowship of such a meal.

#### *b. Nathan's plan (1:11–14)*

1:11–12. The fact that **Nathan** took the initiative in countering Adonijah's rebellion suggests that God may have moved His prophet to this action as He had done previously (2 Sam. 12:1). **Bathsheba** enjoyed David's favor from the first moment he saw her on to the end of his life. **Adonijah** had **become king** in the sense that for all practical purposes he was the popular choice, though he had not been anointed or crowned. Nathan's choice of words seems designed to shock Bathsheba into realizing the seriousness of the situation. Apparently David was ignorant of the plot until now (cf. 1 Kings 1:18). Nathan was probably not overstating the danger to Bathsheba and **Solomon** by telling her that she needed to take steps to **save her own life and Solomon's**. Adonijah's not inviting them to share food at his feast freed him from the duty of an oriental host to protect their lives.

1:13–14. David's promise to Bathsheba that he would make **Solomon ... king after** him, to which Nathan referred, is not recorded in Scripture. But in view of what Nathan told Bathsheba to say here, obviously David had made such a promise (cf. 1 Chron. 22:8–10).

Nathan made sure that David's promise would be heard by two witnesses, Bathsheba and himself. Under Mosaic Law at least two witnesses were required to make a charge stick. If **David** was becoming forgetful in his old age a second witness (in this case Nathan) would also confirm that **the king** had indeed made such a pledge.

#### *c. Bathsheba's report (1:15–21)*

1:15–16. Evidently David was confined to his bed (vv. 15, 47). **Bathsheba** treated David like **the king** he was by bowing and kneeling **before** him. She intended to call on him to act as he must in view of the situation. David invited her to explain what she wanted.

1:17–21. Bathsheba stated the facts about Adonijah’s uprising without exaggeration or embellishment. She called on David to announce publicly who his successor would be by appealing to his sense of duty (v. 20), and his love for her and **Solomon** (v. 21). She pointed out that she and **Solomon** would **be treated as political criminals** by **Adonijah**. Customarily in the ancient Near East a new monarch would purge his political enemies when he came to power, as Solomon did later (2:13–46).

*d. Nathan’s report (1:22–27)*

1:22–26. **Nathan** sought an audience with **the king** while Bathsheba was talking with David. He was admitted and reported the same facts Bathsheba had announced, with a bit more detail as would have been appropriate for a man in his position. Nathan’s statement that Adonijah’s feast was taking place at that very moment would have encouraged David to act at once. Nathan knew David had promised Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him (v. 13), but apparently the prophet had learned this from others, not from David.

1:27. Rather than reminding David of his promise regarding Solomon which might have annoyed **the king** who may not have wanted many people to know of his choice, Nathan diplomatically asked David if he had planned the present circumstances. The prophet left the initiative with David rather than putting him on the defensive.

*e. David’s promise (1:28–31)*

1:28. **Bathsheba** had evidently left the room when Nathan entered as was customary in that culture. **David** called her to return, which she did.

1:29–30. **The king** invoked the sacred name of Yahweh, the living God **who had delivered** him from **every** one of his troubles. **As surely as the LORD lives** meant that David’s intended action was as certain to take place as God’s very existence. Those words occur frequently in the Old Testament including 14 times in 1 and 2 Kings (1 Kings 1:29; 2:24; 17:1, 12; 18:10, 15; 22:14; 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6; 3:14; 4:30; 5:16, 20). David could not more forcefully have guaranteed that he would indeed do what he now said he would do. The God who had delivered David would now, through David, “deliver” Bathsheba and her son. David repeated his promise that **Solomon**, Bathsheba’s son, would succeed him as **king** and **sit on the throne** that God had promised to bless.

1:31. With gratitude for his granting her request **Bathsheba bowed** before her **king**. The expression, **May my lord the king ... live forever** (cf. v. 34), is a common expression found often in Scripture signifying a desire that God would bless a monarch by granting him long life. It is a complimentary wish; God had promised to bless the righteous with length of days. These words therefore implied that the king had acted righteously and was worthy of God’s blessing.

*f. David’s instructions (1:32–37)*

1:32. David’s plans skillfully defused the rebellion which was building just south of Jerusalem at the spring of En Rogel (cf. v. 9). **Zadok ... Nathan**, and **Benaiah** were the ranking priest, prophet, and soldier respectively (cf. v. 8), who had remained unallied with Adonijah.

Their leadership in the events to follow would demonstrate to the general population that they were acting as the king's representatives.

1:33. **Your lord's servants** were the Kerethites and the Pelethites (v. 38; cf. 2 Sam. 8:18), David's special military guards under Benaiah (2 Sam. 23:22–23). They were responsible to protect **the king**, his family, and his city. David told them to place **Solomon** on a **mule** and lead **him** through Jerusalem to the place of anointing. Kings rode on mules in the ancient Near East, symbolizing their role as the people's servants. The people would understand that Solomon's riding on a mule implied his kingship. The mule specified by David was to be his **own** personal animal. Perhaps the people would have recognized that mule by its trappings and concluded that David had given Solomon permission to ride it as his designated successor.

The officials were to lead Solomon **down to** the spring of **Gihon**. Two springs provided most of the water for Jerusalem: the En Rogel spring southeast of Jerusalem not far from the city wall where Adonijah was feasting his guests (cf. v. 9), and the Gihon spring about one-half mile north and directly east of Jerusalem also outside the city wall. On that day two processions, one by rebels and one by the king's men, were going to two neighboring springs.

1:34–35. At the Gihon spring both **Zadok the priest** and **Nathan the prophet** were to **anoint** Solomon. There was no prophet in Adonijah's camp. Nathan's presence symbolized the divine choice of Solomon as **king** in a way that Zadok's presence alone could not. Blowing **the trumpet** signaled the official nature of the anointing. Every king of Israel was anointed. The ceremony symbolized the coming of the Spirit of God on His chosen leader through pouring oil on his head.

The **shout, Long live King Solomon!** expressed the people's desire and prayer that the new king's reign would be long and prosperous. The leaders had been instructed to return **up** Mount Zion to the city of David and place Solomon **on** David's **throne**. This would be the ultimate proof of his election. Solomon was to commence his rule at that moment; the official seating on the throne was to be perceived not as simply a symbolic act. David clearly explained that he himself by the authority of his kingly office had **appointed** Solomon **ruler over Israel and Judah** effective immediately. Israel and Judah were distinguished (cf. 4:20, 25) because 1 Kings was written after the kingdom was divided in 931 B.C. and/or because a rift was already evident between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. 19:41–20:2).

1:36–37. As military commander and the man responsible to execute these orders **Benaiah** responded to his commander in chief. His response, **Amen! May the LORD ... so declare it**, means, "May what the king has said be what Yahweh has declared." Benaiah then requested that **God would be with Solomon** and bless his reign **even** more than He had blessed David's reign.

*g. Solomon's anointing (1:38–40)*

1:38–40. **The Kerethites and the Pelethites** were the royal bodyguard troops under Benaiah's personal, veteran command (cf. the "lord's [David's] servants," v. 33; 2 Sam. 8:18). **Gihon**, located east of the City of David in the Valley of Kidron just outside the city wall, was the main source of water for Jerusalem at this time (cf. comments on "Gihon," 1 Kings 1:33). **Zadok ... took the horn** (perhaps an animal's horn used as a container) **of oil** that was used to anoint kings and priests **from the sacred tent** in Jerusalem and carried it to Gihon. Perhaps this tent, set up by David (1 Chron. 15:1), was similar to the Mosaic tabernacle. The olive oil symbolized the presence and power of God. A great throng of **people** followed the procession and witnessed the anointing. This was a glorious day in the history of Israel and the people celebrated enthusiastically, so much **so that the ground shook**.



*h. The report of Solomon's anointing (1:41–48)*

1:41–48. Adonijah's party was feasting only a half mile south of Gihon. They **heard** the celebration easily. But it was the blowing **of the trumpet**, the sign that an official function was taking place, that roused **Joab** to inquire about **all the noise in the city**.

Abiathar's son **Jonathan** had been in the city, and arriving at the feast just then, reported what was going on. Adonijah's optimism and complete ignorance of the plot to undercut his rebellion can be seen in his greeting of **Jonathan** (v. 42). Along with relaying the other events already recorded (vv. 43–46) Jonathan added that **the royal officials** had gone **to congratulate ... David** and wish God's blessing on **Solomon** (v. 47). Evidently David was confined to **his bed** and did not personally witness the anointing of Solomon.

Jonathan had apparently penetrated the palace or at least obtained information from within it since he reported to Adonijah what David had said in his bedroom (v. 48). Characteristically David praised **God** for one more blessing: allowing him to live long enough to **see his successor on his throne**.

*i. Adonijah's fear (1:49–53)*

1:49–51. **Adonijah's guests** scattered as far from the traitor and as fast as they could so they would not be linked with him and dealt with as they felt surely he would be. In the ancient Near East traitors could expect to be purged by a new king. Terror at this prospect drove **Adonijah** to the tabernacle where he claimed refuge by grasping **the horns on the brazen altar** in the tabernacle courtyard. Such a practice was common in Israel and in other neighboring nations (cf., e.g., Ex. 21:13–14). The symbolism of taking hold of the altar's horns seems to have meant that as God had been gracious to man, as seen in accepting man's offerings to atone for his sins, so one man should be gracious to another man who had offended him.

1:52–53. **Solomon** could have had Adonijah removed from the tabernacle and executed, but instead showed mercy. Solomon followed this pattern of graciousness throughout his reign. The new **king** simply asked for a promise from his half-brother that he would not rebel again but would show **himself to be a worthy**, loyal subject. **Adonijah** promised and Solomon sent him **home**. But soon Adonijah conspired again and lost his life as a result (2:13–25).

**Mathews, K. A. (1998). *The Historical Books*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 135). Broadman & Holman Publishers.**

***Solomon Becomes King (1:1–53)***. In his old age David needed the warmth and nursing of a servant girl named Abishag. The imminent death of the king explained the struggle that ensued between David's strongest allies. Adonijah, who was David's oldest living son (2 Sam. 3:4), led a conspiracy to make himself king. He was joined by Joab and the priest Abiathar at En Rogel, where they celebrated his impending enthronement. However, Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, Benaiah the captain of the king's bodyguard, and Solomon his brother were excluded.

Nathan knew that this meant banishment or death if Adonijah succeeded. Nathan encouraged Bathsheba to ask the king to fulfill his prior commitment to make Solomon king. Perhaps David had interpreted the special naming of Solomon (Jedidiah) by God as indicative of the Lord's choice (see 2 Sam. 12:24–25 and Deut. 17:15).

David ordered the anointing of Solomon at the spring Gihon. When Adonijah heard the people shout, "Long live King Solomon," he fled for safety in the tabernacle, where he grasped

the horns of the altar. The “horns” were the four projectiles at the corners of the altar where the blood of the sacrifice was smeared. Solomon spared Adonijah but placed him under house arrest.

***Tatum, S. L. (1972). 1 Kings. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (p. 124). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.***

### **David Chooses Solomon over Adonijah (1 Kings 1:1–53)**

*The passage*—David had two remaining sons who might have succeeded him, Adonijah and Solomon. Adonijah was the older, and Solomon, son of Bathsheba was the younger. This chapter tells of David’s increasing infirmity, Adonijah’s attempt to seize the throne, and David’s choice of Solomon.

The aged King David was so weak that they attempted to revive him by giving him a beautiful young nurse as a companion. She could not stir his interest.

Adonijah made himself the king. He did something like Absalom had done (2 Sam. 15). He, like Absalom, had not been properly disciplined. He was handsome. He enlisted the aid of Joab, the military power in Israel, and Abiathar, the priest. He made a great feast to proclaim the beginning of his reign. Obviously, Solomon was not invited. Nathan was not invited either.

Nathan and Bathsheba made plans to make Solomon the king. Bathsheba reminded David he had promised to let Solomon succeed him. Nathan came in to confirm the idea. They asked David to settle the matter since Adonijah had already laid his claim. David admitted his promise and pronounced that Solomon would succeed him.

Upon David’s instructions Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and other leaders of Israel placed Solomon on the king’s mule and brought him to Gihon. There they anointed him king.

When Adonijah’s heard of it he was afraid of Solomon and went to hold on to the horns of the altar as a symbol of safety. Solomon promised not to kill him as the custom of kings was to slay their rivals. His promise was conditioned on his unquestioned loyalty.

*Special points*—Up to this time there had been no particular plan established for the orderly succession to the throne of Israel. Both Absalom and Adonijah had sought unsuccessfully for it themselves. This whole section of history deals with the struggle for succession. For a brief while David and Solomon were co-regents. After the death of David the power was consolidated under Solomon, and Israel had her most glorious era of peace and prosperity.

***The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Kings 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.***