

A Secure Place to Be - 1 Kings 2:1-46

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[0 : 00] Starting at verse 1. Good man, thanks.

Okay, well let's read 1 Kings chapter 2 starting at verse 1. We'll just wait.

Good lad. Pens and Bibles at the ready. Here we go.

1 Kings chapter 2. When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon, his son. I'm about to go the way of all the earth, he said.

So be strong. Act like a man. And observe what the Lord your God requires. Walk in obedience to him. Keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations as written in the law of Moses.

[1 : 40] Do this, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go. And that the Lord may keep his promise to me. If your descendants watch how they live and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.

Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zerah did to me. What he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies. Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether.

He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle. And with that blood he stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet.

Deal with him according to your wisdom. But do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace. But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead.

And let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom. And remember, you have with you Shimei son of Gerah, the Benjamite from Bahuram.

[2 : 55] Who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Manaheim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the Lord, I will not put you to death by the sword.

But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom. You will know what to do to him. Bring his grey head down to the grave in blood.

Then David rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David. He had reigned for 40 years over Israel, 7 years in Hebron and 33 in Jerusalem.

So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established. We are going to be looking at the whole of chapter 2, and we are going to pray and ask for God's help.

Amen. Father, we thank you that you are Lord over all, and we can pray about all things.

[4 : 08] We pray for Marie's sister Kate, who has an operation tomorrow, that you would be with her and bring her through that successfully.

Pray that in this time, she might call out to you, and find your love and your comfort.

We pray for the start of the rock, and also rooted, coming up on Friday. We pray your help to all the leaders, as they share the good news that Jesus is King.

And Father, just as we can pray for these things, we pray for us now, as we look at your word, that just as you draw near to us, you would come close by your Holy Spirit.

Give us understanding and help that we might worship you as we should. We pray this in your name. Amen. Well, just over a year ago, Leo Varadkar was appointed as our new Taoiseach, our country's leader.

[5 : 30] replacing Enda Kenny. You might remember at his first announcement, he was accompanied by all the members of his party, all of them behind him, smiling and showing support for their new leader.

But not all of them were very happy. A few days later, Leo announced his new cabinet. The old guard were swiftly removed, and the new brought in.

You see, to secure your position of power, sometimes you must be ruthless and root out any rebels. Well, in our account of 1 Kings chapter 2, a change of kingship is about to take place. Look at verse 1 of chapter 2.

When the time drew near for David to die, he gave the charge to Solomon his son. So David is passing over the kingship to his son Solomon.

[6 : 37] But there's still this problem. There's a problem of a few disgruntled enemies within the kingdom. And it seems to be that if you are going to bring security in God's kingdom, then the king must be ruthless and root out any rebels.

How can you have a kingdom of safety when there are enemies in your ranks? So as we look at chapter 2, we're going to see that God raises up his king to crush his enemies so that his kingdom is secure.

That's the big theme. God raises up his king to crush his enemies so that his kingdom is secure. First, God's means of establishing a secure kingdom. God will secure his kingdom by raising up a king.

But not just any king. A king who obeys God's words. Look at verse 2. David says, I'm about to go the way of all the earth.

[7 : 52] In other words, I'm about to die. So be strong and act like a man. And here's how a man should be. Observe what the Lord your God requires.

Walk in obedience to him. Keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as were written in the law of Moses.

Now David's command or his passing on of the kingship, yes, obey God's word, but he's only doing what God had commanded and recorded in the law of Moses.

This is what was said there. God said to Moses, when the king takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll of this law.

It is to be with him and he is to read it all the days of his life and that he may revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and do not consider himself better and turn from the law to the right or to the left.

[9 : 06] You see, obeying God's word ensured that everything was done God's way. Because as soon as we start ignoring God's word, well, that's when chaos and disorder happen.

We only need to think back to the Garden of Eden. Disobeying God's word led to broken relationships and a broken world, the effects we're seeing today and experiencing in our own lives. So obedience was crucial and it will ensure a secure kingdom. Look at the rest of verse 3. David continues, Do this, that is, obey, follow the word of the Lord so that you may prosper in all that you do wherever you go and that the Lord may keep his promise to me.

If your descendants watch how they live and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.

Very simple, if the king obeys God's word, then the people, the king, and the kingdom will enjoy peace and prosperity, a kingdom of joy and happiness.

[10 : 29] But not just a king who obeys, but a king who acts justly. You see, David may be on his deathbed, but he knows a thing or two about security and about bringing peace to the kingdom.

He gives orders about what to do with the kingdom's enemies and there seems to be a few of them. Look at verse 5. His final orders before he dies.

Now you yourself know what Joab, son of Zariah, did to me. What he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies. Well, he had murdered them, hadn't he? What should he do in response?

Verse 6. Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace. Make him pay.

Well, Joab wasn't the only one that he had to watch out for. Verse 8. And remember, you have with you Shimei, son of Gerah, the Benjamite, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Manaheim.

[11 : 39] And that was an occasion when David, although king, was being pushed out of the kingship. What should happen to him? Well, look at the end of verse 9.

Bring his grey head down to the grave in blood. No mercy. Now, it's not everybody who's going to be treated like this.

those who are faithful to the king and loyal to the kingdom. Well, look at verse 7. Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and let them be among those who eat at your table.

Welcome them, in other words, because they stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom. Now, we must remember that the kings like David and Solomon are only God's representatives.

It's not their kingdom to do as they please. They are to obey God's word and act justly. You see, we can't have a kingdom without rules.

[12:48] Rules is what keeps the peace. Rules of the king is what brings order. and keeps everything together so people can live in harmony and joy.

You might know the story Lord of the Flies. It's a fictional story about a group of well-educated English boys who get marooned on an island.

They're there without any adult supervision, no leadership, and then disorder and chaos begin to reign. The children who are all there together begin to bully each other.

They start fighting. Little gangs are formed as they attack each other. And one of the children, one of the main characters, his nickname is Piggy, kept on insisting on the need for rules.

This is what he said to the group. He said, we've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. Which is better? To have rules and agree?

[13:54] Or go hunting and break things up? Well, a little while later, he got his answer. Not long after, Piggy was violently killed and murdered by the other children.

The story is a social comment on what happens when we remove authority from society. Anarchy. All hell breaks loose.

And so David, as he passes on the kingdom to Solomon, is saying, if we are to establish a kingdom of security, then we need a king who obeys God's word and acts justly.

A king who will bring about peace and order, joy and happiness. And that's what we begin to see happening through Solomon.

Look at verse 12. So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David and his rule was firmly established.

[14:59] That's the kind of kingdom we all long for. So first, God's means of establishing a secure kingdom. Second, God's response to the enemies of the kingdom.

Now the author wants us to know very clearly that Solomon is king and that his rule was firmly established. But it seems he wants us to know how it was done.

Enemies must be dealt with. You might remember the three rebels of chapter 1. You can go back and have a look. Chapter 1, verse 7.

Adonijah, he was the one who wanted to be king. Adonijah, verse 7, conferred with Joab, son of Zariah, and with Abiathar, the priest, and they gave him their support.

Three rebels, and it seems they are still trouble in the kingdom. first, rebellion will not be tolerated.

[16:14] Adonijah has this great plan. Although Solomon is king, he's got a plan. He goes to the king's mother, in verse 13, we read this, to Bathsheba, and he's got this request.

Look at verse 17 of chapter 2. Chapter 2, verse 17. He goes to the king's mother, Bathsheba.

Please ask king Solomon, he will not refuse you, to give me Abishag, the Shunammite, as my wife. Remember Abishag from chapter 1? That was the home help, as we described her, for David in his old age. It seems innocent enough, doesn't it?

Maybe he doesn't have a wife. Maybe his toes are also cold. So Bathsheba goes off to the king with the request, but Solomon sees it for what it is.

Verse 22. King Solomon answered his mother, Why do you request Abishag, the Shunammite, for Adonijah?

[17:26] You might as well request the kingdom for him. After all, he is my older brother. Yes, for him and for Abiathar, the priest, and Joab, son of Zariah.

Now, we're not given all the political details of what it would mean if Abiathar took over David's carer as a wife, but it seems to be a scheme to take over the kingdom.

He still wants to be the king. look back at verse 15 of chapter 2. As he talks to Bathsheba, he says, As you know, the kingdom was mine.

It was my kingdom. All Israel looked to me as their king. I was the king. But things have changed and the kingdom has gone to my brother for it has come to him from the Lord.

Lord. Well, the kingdom never was his and kingship was not his to take. And Solomon could see through his plan.

[18:35] Opposition to God's king will not be tolerated. Verse 23, Then King Solomon swore by the Lord, May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request.

And now as surely as the Lord lives, he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today. So King Solomon gave orders to Benaniah, son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died. Rebellion will not be tolerated.

And second, promised justice will be done. So Adonijah has been dealt with. Then there was Abi Arthur, the priest.

We read about him in verse 26. He was all part of the scheme to take over the kingdom. Now Solomon spares his life but he is removed from his position of service and influence.

[19 : 49] But notice why he's been removed. Have a look at verse 27. Solomon removed Abi Arthur from the priesthood of the Lord, fulfilling the word the Lord had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli.

Now you might remember old Eli. We can read about him back in 1st Samuel. He had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They were priests but they were rebellious.

Rather than serving God and serving the people, they served themselves. They were a terrible pair. And at that time, it was about 100 years before the events we're looking at here in 1 Kings, God had made a promise at that time that the disobedient priests would be dealt with and all those priests coming from the house of Eli or from the line of Eli would be punished.

100 years have passed. Verse 27. So Solomon removed Abi Arthur from the priesthood of the Lord, fulfilling the word of the Lord had spoken at Shiloh, even though it was 100 years ago.

about the house of Eli. God's justice may be delayed, but don't ever think that God has forgotten.

[21 : 16] He knows and he sees. Justice will be done. Enemies will be removed. And third, fake religion will not save you.

So Adonijah has been put to death. Abi Arthur, the priest, has been removed. But what about the other one, the third rebel, Joab, the one who had murdered the king's commanders under David?

Well, look at verse 28. When news reached Joab, obviously the news of what happened to Abi Arthur and Adonijah, Joab, who had conspired with them, well, he fled to the tent of the Lord.

The tent of the Lord was the meeting place where people went to meet with God. And he took hold of the horns of the altar. This is the place where the sacrifices took place.

So he went running to the tent of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar. It seems that Joab has all of a sudden got very religious. He begins to say his prayers.

[22 : 35] Somehow he thinks as if, well, if I go to church, that'll be enough. That's going to keep me safe. Verse 29. King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the Lord and was beside the altar.

Then Solomon ordered Benaniah, son of Jehoiada, go and strike him down. So Benaniah entered the tent of the Lord and said to Joab.

The king says, come out. But he answered, no, I will die here. Benaniah reported to the king, this is how Joab answered me.

You see, he thinks that if he stays in the meeting place of God, well, he's going to be safe. Nobody's going to come in here. My new religion is going to save me.

Well, God sees through the sham. He sees the heart of Joab. God longs for submission, not fake religion. Joab's church going is not going to save him, verse 33.

[23 : 42] May the guilt of their blood rest on the head of Joab and his descendants forever. But on David and his descendants, his house and his throne, may there be the Lord's peace forever.

So Ben and I, a son of Jehoiada, went up and struck down Joab and killed him. And he was buried at his home out in the country.

You see, to secure the kingdom, the king must be ruthless and root out rebels. You can't have peace and security with constant threats from your enemies.

Enemies of the kingdom can't be tolerated, so the king deals with his enemies. Now it's vital that we don't just keep this as a story in the past.

This is something yet to come. You see, what Solomon did to his enemies nationally is what God's true king will do universally.

[24 : 55] remember what Jesus said, speaking about the kingdom of God? You can follow on the screen. So it will be at the end of the age.

The Son of Man, that is Jesus, will send out his angels and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

they will throw them into the blazing furnace and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father.

You see, rebellion against God's king, Jesus Christ, will not be tolerated. He is the true king and we must submit to him.

God is patient. His justice may be delayed, but what he has promised, yes, it will come to pass.

[26 : 02] And there's no hiding from the king. Fake religion is not going to work. He sees the heart and he will crush his enemies so that his kingdom is secure.

God's means of establishing a secure kingdom, his response to enemies of the kingdom, and then third, God's demands for people who live in the kingdom.

You see, if we are going to live in God's kingdom, if we are going to experience and enjoy his security, there must be loyalty and devotion.

There's one other character that we have to deal with that we haven't looked at. He comes at the end of chapter 2, Shimei. David didn't trust him, always had a question mark over his head, and Solomon is unsure about his allegiance.

Verse 36, Then the king sent for Shimei and said to him, Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there, but do not go anywhere else.

[27 : 23] The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, so if you leave the city, you can be sure you will die. Your blood will be on your own head.

Shimei answered the king, What you say is good. Your servant will do as my lord the king has said. And Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time.

It's a test of loyalty. Serve the king, obey the king, live for the king, and you will enjoy the kingdom.

But, verse 39, three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran off to Achish, son of Macca, king of Gath, and Shimei was told, your slaves are in Gath.

At this, he saddled his donkey, left the city, and went to Achish in Gath in search of his slaves. So Shimei went away and brought the slaves back from Gath.

[28 : 31] Now, it seems okay, doesn't it? Reasonable. He's lost some of his workers, he's out of pocket.

That means going outside the city to go and get them, but in such circumstances, Shimei reasons that loyalty to the kingdom in this case is optional.

It seems he was more interested in, well, not obeying what the king said, but securing his own little kingdom. Because when something else comes along that's more important, like securing a career, finding our husband or wife, securing our retirement fund, well, then it's okay just to put the kingdom on hold and put it on the back seat.

So often, loyalty to the king is optional. But disobedience to the king's word is treason. It's saying no to the king of the world.

Verse 42, the king summoned Shimei and said to him, did I not make you swear by the Lord and warn you? On the day you leave to go anywhere else, you can be sure you will die.

[29 : 56] At that time you said to me, what you say is good, I will obey. Why then did you not keep your oath to your Lord and obey the command I gave you?

Verse 46, then the king gave the order to Ben and I, son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down, and he died.

The kingdom was now established in Solomon's hands. Now we might read that and think the king's orders were a bit restrictive and a bit harsh, and we can gripe and complain and say, I don't like this bit of the story.

But the king's word, no matter how difficult it is, no matter what our reasoning may be, is always right and best for us.

It seems that Shimei has something to teach us. And here it is. Don't sacrifice the kingdom of God for the sake of security today.

[31 : 09] Don't sacrifice the kingdom of God for the sake of a comfortable life today. You see, the same message would be echoed years later as Jesus spoke to his disciples.

Remember what he said? What good is it for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory and with the holy angels.

you see, the king demands total allegiance and absolute loyalty. So, we can say the kingdom of God is secure, but it is not safe.

We can't say I'm living in the kingdom and at the same time living as I please. God will raise up his king who will crush his enemies so that his kingdom is secure.

So, how can I be secure in God's kingdom? Because as I read through chapter 2, I realise that, well, I'm just like Shimei.

[32 : 43] So often I'm more interested in my own kingdom. I rebel against the true king Jesus Christ just like Abiathar and Joab. How can we live in God's kingdom in confidence and without fear of the king's justice?

Well, the answer is simple. We bow in submission to God's true king, Jesus Christ. Christ. We bow to the one who has defeated and destroyed our greatest enemy, the greatest enemy of the kingdom, Satan himself, who destroyed him, disarming him through the cross, rising again from the grave, defeating death itself.

Here is the true king who defeats our one true enemy. And as we bow in surrender, as we give up the fight, well, we find from this king grace and mercy and forgiveness.

A loving king who no longer treats us as enemies, but now welcomes and treasures us as children of the kingdom for all eternity. Submission is not a one-off event.

It is a daily act of repentance for all his disciples, as we daily surrender our will to his will and seek his priorities over ours, who seek first his kingdom above our own.

[34 : 34] bow in submission to the king and enjoy the treasures of the kingdom.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray.

Lord God, once again you remind us through your word of who you are, that you are king.

So right now we confess we are sorry for the times we have rebelled against you. We bow in submission.

We surrender our wills to you. We ask that you would give us your Holy Spirit that we might prioritize and seek first your kingdom.

[35 : 49] Thank you for Jesus. Thank you that he has defeated the true and great enemy, Satan himself. So that we might enter into your kingdom and know peace and joy and security with you.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, in a moment we are going to share the Lord's Supper around what we can call the King's Table, the King's invitation to all his followers, to all those who love him and obey him, to share in the meal with the King.

And in preparation we're going to sing, which reminds us that God is our servant king, the one who gives his life for us and calls us now to follow him, to bow in submission, to bring our lives as a daily offering of worship to the servant king.

Let's stand as we sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.