

1 Kings 2:1-46

Justice Isn't Pretty And To Be Understood It Must Be Seen in Context

The End of King David's Reign 2:1-12

Even David...ages/dies!?! (The death rate is 100% Romans 3:23/6:23; Hebrews 9:27)

David encourages Solomon (as the God-commissioned King of the Theocratic Nation which was to function under the "Constitution" of the Mosaic Covenant): to walk/live in the ways of the LORD...according to what is written in the Law of Moses

The Mosaic Covenant/Law given to OT Israel Is Summed Up in Deuteronomy 28:1-68

28:1-14 Obedience to the LORD: lead to social, economic and geopolitical blessing

28:15-68 Disobedience to the LORD: lead to social, economic and geopolitical discipline

Verses 5-6

King David prescribes Capital Punishment for Joab who was a war criminal and in recent days had actively given aid/consent to Adonijah in his attempt (Ch 1) to hijack the nation

The 6th Commandment

"Thou shalt not kill." (King James Version 1611); is more accurately translated "You shall not murder!" IOWs: Capital Punishment, Just Warfare and Legitimate Self-Defense vs violent attack is NOT murder. These are NEVER pretty, but in this fallen world, they are often necessary, to prevent even uglier things from happening

Verse 8-9

David is stretching things a bit (as in 100 miles) here in suggesting Solomon should execute Shimei, although cursing the King was a capital offense under the Mosaic Law (Exodus 22:28). BTW: Matthew 5:39 is dealing with social/personal insults/slights and not the kind of crime Shimei was clearly guilty of (2 Samuel 16).

For the rest of this story, see 2:36-44

The End of the Beginning of King Solomon's Reign 2:12-46

Verse 12 both concludes the unit about the end of David's reign and initiates the unit about the end of the beginning of Solomon's reign. This is called "chain link literary structure." A good NT example is found in Revelation 1:9-11, which ends the unit of thought which runs from 1:1-9 and begins the unit of thought that runs from 1:9-20.

He's Baaaack?!?!

Adonijah the oldest son of David and Solomon's big brother, who in Chapter 1 was "this far away" from murdering Bathsheba, Solomon and probably Zadok, Nathan and Benaiah too among others) now comes to Bathsheba to ask for a "little" favor.

Adonijah's Request: People Who Think They're "Smarter Than Everybody Else" Often Assume 1: "The Rules" Apply to Everybody But Them and 2: Nobody Will Notice the "Games" They Play to Get Their Way and to Enhance Their Power/Prestige

Abishag (Ch 1) was David's "nurse" and his concubine. In the Ancient Near East, for a man to marry a woman who had been a member of a King's harem, was an act claiming possession of that King's powers/prerogatives. This seemingly minor request to our ears was in fact an outrageous first step in Adonijah's Plan B to take the throne away from Solomon. He must have thought Solomon would be too distracted to notice this or too intimidated to say no to it and/or too passive to respond to it.

Verse 20

Many commentators assume Bathsheba was incredibly naïve here; I am convinced she is exactly the opposite...extremely wise yet very subtle/respectful to the new King!

Verse 21-25

Solomon sees Adonijah's request for exactly what it was. As the divinely commissioned King of the Theocratic Nation, Solomon reacted NOT just personally to this insult/mortal threat, he primarily (verse 24) was acting as God's representative...Adonijah was a terminal political cancer that had to be cut out of the body politic. Read verse 25 in light of all of this and in light of Solomon's gracious interaction with him in 1:52-53.

Solomon Further Establishes His Reign/the Nation Israel vs Other Domestic Enemies Verses 26-27

Solomon shows grace to Abiathar, due to his past loyalty to King David and the fact that he did not pose a threat to Solomon/the nation at large.

Verses 28-34

The execution of Joab carries out the prescription of King David just before his death

Verse 36-46a

Solomon shows grace to Shimei, but several years later he directly violates the terms of Solomon's clemency and reaps the consequences. In this situation we see Solomon's self-control/desire to be fair on the one hand and his willingness to use his powers as King to execute justice by the book.

Verse 46b

The end of the beginning of Solomon's reign

As Winston Churchill said in World War II: "This is not the end, nor the beginning of the end, but it is the end of the beginning."

With a desire to honor God, with immediate mortal threats removed and capable people in positions of authority under him "The kingdom was (further) established in the hands of Solomon."

Take This To Heart

Justice Isn't (Can't Be and Shouldn't Be) "Pretty" and To Be Probably Understood It Must Be "Seen" in Context

While not everything that is described in narrative Scripture is prescribed, most of the "ugly" events of 1 Kings 2 are legitimate in their context. Living in a hard/fallen world, wise believers must make hard decisions and do hard things. Things some people will "see" as ugly/even evil...but remember our Lord Jesus was "seen" as ugly/evil by His enemies in the Gospels, most of whom were extremely "religious."

Moving From Human Justice to God's Justice

God's Justice is Never Pretty, But God's Justice Is Always Preceded by His Grace.

The Gospel is Exhibit A in the Biblical Testimony of That Principle
Because Jesus Died FOR Our Sins...We Don't Have to Die IN Our Sins!

A Broad Overarching Principle for Us and THE Major Key To Being a Good Bible Reader

Reading any text detached from its context can lead to being "conned" by the text!
This is because reading any text apart from the context is only a pretext.