FIRST KINGS

Chapter 2

***David’s Charge to Solomon***

**When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. 2 “I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man, 3 and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, 4 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 man on the throne of Israel.’ 5 “Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah 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 stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. 6 Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace. 7 “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. 8 “And remember, you have with you Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim. 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.’ 9 But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood.” 10 Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. 11 He had reigned forty years over Israel—seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 12 So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.**

**2:1** *he gave a charge.* Moses (Dt 31:1–8), Joshua (Jos 23:1–16) and Samuel (1Sa 12:1–25), as representatives of the Lord’s rule, had all given final instructions and admonitions shortly before their deaths. (CSB)

**2:2** *the way of all the earth.* To the grave (see Jos 23:14). (CSB)

 *be strong.* See Dt 31:7, 23; Jos 1:6–7, 9, 18. (CSB)

**2:3** *observe what the Lord your God requires.* See Ge 26:5; Lev 18:30; Dt 11:1. (CSB)

 *Walk in his ways.* A characteristic expression of Deuteronomy for obedience to covenant obligations (Dt 5:33; 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16). (CSB)

 *his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements.* Four generally synonymous terms for covenant obligations (see 6:12; 8:58; 2Ki 17:37; Dt 8:11; 11:1; 26:17; 28:15, 45; 30:10, 16). (CSB)

 *that you may prosper.* See Dt 29:9. (CSB)

**2:4** *that the Lord may keep his promise to me.* David here alludes to the covenanted promise of an everlasting dynasty given to him by God through Nathan the prophet (see notes on 2Sa 7:11–16). Although the covenant promise to David was unconditional, individual participation in its blessing on the part of David’s royal descendants was conditioned on obedience to the obligations of the Mosaic covenant (see 2Ch 7:17–22). (CSB)

 *with all their heart and soul.* See Dt 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 30:6. (CSB)

 *you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.* Both Solomon and his descendants fell short of their covenant obligations. This led to the division of the kingdom and eventually to the exile of both the northern and southern kingdoms. It was only in the coming of Christ that the fallen tent of David would be restored (see notes on Am 9:11–15; Ac 15:16) and the promise of David’s eternal dynasty ultimately fulfilled. When the nation and its king turned away from the requirements of the Sinai covenant, they experienced the covenant curses rather than blessings; but in all this God remained faithful to his covenant promises to Abraham and to David (see Lev 26:42–45; Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–16; 16:5; 55:3; Jer 23:5–6; 30:9; 33:17, 20–22, 25–26; Eze 34:23–24; 37:24–28). (CSB)

**2:5** *Joab son of Zeruiah.* See note on 1:7. (CSB)

 *Abner son of Ner.* See notes on 2Sa 3:25–32. (CSB)

 *Amasa son of Jether.* See 2Sa 20:10. (CSB)

 *shedding their blood in peacetime.* Joab’s actions were unlawful assassinations (see Dt 19:1–13; 21:1–9) and only served his own self-interest. (CSB)

**2:7** *sons of Barzillai.* See note on 2Sa 17:27. (CSB)

 *eat at your table.* A position of honor that brought with it other benefits (see 18:19; 2Ki 25:29; 2Sa 9:7; 19:28; Ne 5:17). (CSB)

**2:8** See 2Sa 16:5–13. *Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite.* Gera was probably the ancestor of Shimei’s particular line of descent rather than his immediate father (see Ge 46:21; Jdg 3:15). See NIV text notes on Ge 10:2; Da 5:22. (CSB)

**2:9** *do not consider him innocent.* The Mosaic law prohibited cursing a ruler (21:10; Ex 22:28). (CSB)

**2:10** *rested with his fathers.* See note on 1:21. (CSB)

 *City of David.* See 2Sa 5:7 and note. Peter implies that David’s tomb is still known in his day (Ac 2:29). (CSB)

**2:11** *forty years.* See 2Sa 5:4–5. David ruled c. 1010–970 b.c. (see Introduction to 1 Samuel: Chronology). (CSB)

***Solomon’s Throne Established***

**13 Now Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother. Bathsheba asked him, “Do you come peacefully?” He answered, “Yes, peacefully.” 14 Then he added, “I have something to say to you.” “You may say it,” she replied. 15 “As you know,” he said, “the kingdom was mine. All Israel looked to me as their king. But things changed, and the kingdom has gone to my brother; for it has come to him from the Lord. 16 Now I have one request to make of you. Do not refuse me.” “You may make it,” she said. 17 So he continued, “Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife.” 18 “Very well,” Bathsheba replied, “I will speak to the king for you.” 19 When Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, the king stood up to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for the king’s mother, and she sat down at his right hand. 20 “I have one small request to make of you,” she said. “Do not refuse me.” The king replied, “Make it, my mother; I will not refuse you.” 21 So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah.” 22 King Solomon answered his mother, “Why do you request Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? 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 Zeruiah!” 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! 24 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!” 25 So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died. 26 To Abiathar the priest the king said, “Go back to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not put you to death now, because you carried the ark of the Sovereign Lord before my father David and shared all my father’s hardships.” 27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the Lord, fulfilling the word the Lord had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli. 28 When the news reached Joab, who had conspired with Adonijah though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the Lord and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29 King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the Lord and was beside the altar. Then Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada, “Go, strike him down!” 30 So Benaiah entered the tent of the Lord and said to Joab, “The king says, ‘Come out!’ ”But he answered, “No, I will die here.” Benaiah reported to the king, “This is how Joab answered me.” 31 Then the king commanded Benaiah, “Do as he says. Strike him down and bury him, and so clear me and my father’s house of the guilt of the innocent blood that Joab shed. 32 The Lord will repay him for the blood he shed, because without the knowledge of my father David he attacked two men and killed them with the sword. Both of them—Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel’s army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah’s army—were better men and more upright than he. 33 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.” 34 So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and struck down Joab and killed him, and he was buried on his own land in the desert. 35 The king put Benaiah son of Jehoiada over the army in Joab’s position and replaced Abiathar with Zadok the priest. 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. 37 The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, you can be sure you will die; your blood will be on your own head.” 38 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. 39 But three years later, two of Shimei’s slaves ran off to Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath, and Shimei was told, “Your slaves are in Gath.” 40 At this, he saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath in search of his slaves. So Shimei went away and brought the slaves back from Gath. 41 When Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned, 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’? At that time you said to me, ‘What you say is good. I will obey.’ 43 Why then did you not keep your oath to the Lord and obey the command I gave you?” 44 The king also said to Shimei, “You know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David. Now the Lord will repay you for your wrongdoing. 45 But King Solomon will be blessed, and David’s throne will remain secure before the Lord forever.” 46 Then the king gave the order to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down and killed him. The kingdom was now firmly established in Solomon’s hands.**

**2:13** *Adonijah, the son of Haggith.* See note on 1:5. (CSB)

 *Do you come peacefully?* The question (see 1Sa 16:4; 2Ki 9:22) reveals Bathsheba’s apprehension concerning Adonijah’s intention (see 1:5). (CSB)

**2:15** *the kingdom was mine.* See 1:11. (CSB)

 *All Israel looked to me as their king.* A gross exaggeration (see 1:7–8). (CSB)

 *it has come to him from the Lord*. Adonijah professes to view Solomon’s kingship as God’s will and to have no further intentions of seeking the position for himself. (CSB)

**2:17** *give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife.* Adonijah’s request has the appearance of being innocent (but see note on v. 22) since Abishag had remained a virgin throughout the period of her care for David (see 1:1–4; Dt 22:30). (CSB)

**2:19** *right hand.* The position of honor (see Ps 110:1; Mt 20:21). (CSB)

**2:20** *one small request.* Bathsheba does not seem to have attached any great significance to Adonijah’s request. (CSB)

**2:22** *You might as well request the kingdom for him.* Solomon immediately understood Adonijah’s request as another attempt to gain the throne. Possession of the royal harem was widely regarded as signifying the right of succession to the throne (see notes on 2Sa 3:7; 12:8; 16:21). Although Abishag was a virgin, she would be regarded by the people as belonging to David’s harem; so marriage to Abishag would greatly strengthen Adonijah’s claim to the throne. (CSB)

 *for Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah.* See note on 1:7. Solomon assumes that Abiathar and Joab continue to be involved in Adonijah’s treacherous schemes. (CSB)

**2:23** *May God deal with me, be it ever so severely.* A curse formula (see note on 1Sa 3:17). (CSB)

**2:24** *has founded a dynasty for me.* Solomon’s son and successor, Rehoboam, was born shortly before Solomon became king (cf. 11:42; 14:21). (CSB)

 *as he promised.* See 1Ch 22:9–10. (CSB)

**2:25** *Benaiah son of Jehoiada.* See notes on 1:7; 2Sa 23:20. (CSB)

**2:26** *you carried the ark.* See 2Sa 15:24–25, 29; 1Ch 15:11–12. (CSB)

 *shared all my father’s hardships.* See 1Sa 22:20–23; 23:6–9; 30:7; 2Sa 17:15; 19:11. (CSB)

**2:27** *fulfilling the word the Lord had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli.* See notes on 1Sa 2:30–35. (CSB)

**2:28** *news.* Of Adonijah’s death and Abiathar’s banishment. *conspired with Adonijah.* See 1:7. (CSB)

 *tent of the Lord*. See note on 1:39. (CSB)

 *took hold of the horns of the altar.* See note on 1:50. (CSB)

**2:29** *strike him down!* The right of asylum was extended only to those who accidentally caused someone’s death (see Ex 21:14). Solomon was completely justified in denying this right to Joab, not only for his complicity in Adonijah’s conspiracy, but also for his murder of Abner and Amasa (see vv. 31–33). In this incident Solomon finds a suitable occasion for carrying out his father’s instruction (see vv. 5–6). (CSB)

**2:32** *he attacked two men and killed them.* See 2Sa 3:27; 20:9–10. (CSB)

 *Israel’s army.* See 2Sa 2:8–9. (CSB)

 *Judah’s army.* See 2Sa 20:4. (CSB)

**2:34** *on his own land.* See NIV text note. The tomb of Joab’s father was located near Bethlehem (see 2Sa 2:32). (CSB)

 *desert.* Of Judah, east of Bethlehem.

**2:35** *Benaiah son of Jehoiada.* See note on 2Sa 23:20. (CSB)

 *Zadok the priest.* See notes on 1Sa 2:35; 2Sa 8:17. (CSB)

**2:36** *do not go anywhere else.* Confinement to Jerusalem would greatly reduce the possibility of Shimei’s (see v. 8) conspiring with any remaining followers of Saul against Solomon’s rule. (CSB)

**2:39** *Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath.* Gath was a major Philistine city (see Jos 13:3; 1Sa 6:16–17). It is likely that Gath was ruled successively by Maoch, Achish the elder (1Sa 27:2), Maacah and Achish the younger (here). (CSB)

**2:46** *struck Shimei down and killed him.* The third execution carried out by Benaiah (see vv. 25, 34). It brought to completion the tasks assigned to Solomon by David just before his death (vv. 6, 9). (CSB)