

A Dying King's Warning: 1 Kings 2:1-12 Explained **Scriptures for Today: 1 Kings 2:1-12**

1 Kings 2:1-12

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; 3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: 4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. 5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. 6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. 7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. 8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. 9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood. 10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. 11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. 12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

INTRODUCTION

Imagine you knew you only had a few days left to live. Not years. Not months. Days. Just a few days. And you knew you would die in a few days. What would you talk about? Would you talk about sports? Would you talk about money? Would you talk about hobbies?

Probably not. Most people would talk about what matters most. Now imagine you're not just any man. You're David. The shepherd boy. The giant killer. The sweet psalmist of Israel. The king. You've fought battles. You've buried friends. You've made mistakes. You've seen victories. You've walked with God. And now you're dying.

Your son Solomon is standing beside your bed. The kingdom will soon belong to him. This is your last opportunity to speak. What do you say to your son, the next king of Israel? What's the most important things to tell him? Let's find out what happened.

I. DAVID KNOWS HE IS DYING

1 Kings 2:1-2

Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

David isn't in denial. David isn't pretending. David knows the end is near. Imagine the room. The king's strength is fading. The mighty warrior is now an old man. The man who killed Goliath is lying in a bed. The battles are over. The sword is laid down. The end is near.

In verse 2, David says: "I go the way of all the earth." David says: I'm dying, son. Just as everyone else died, I am dying my son. I'm just like everybody else.

Think about that. What do Goliath. Saul, David, Solomon, and you all have in common? We're all going the way of all the earth. Hebrews 9:27 says "it is appointed unto men once to die." Ecclesiastes 3:2 says "and a time to die." Death is the great equalizer.

Many people, especially church people, think they are better than others but death is the great equalizer. Kings die. Presidents die. Pastors die. Millionaires die. Close to his death, Joshua says: "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth." Joshua died.

Again, I wanted you to imagine that you are David at the very end of your life and your son is standing there beside you as you are close to death. What are you going to say? **A dying man doesn't waste words.**

But then notice something there at the end of verse 2. David doesn't stay on death. He immediately turns to life. Look at what he says next: "be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;" Now put yourself in the room. David knows these may be his final words.

What is the first instruction he gives Solomon? Not: Make money. Not: Build bigger houses. Not: Become famous. Not: Make everybody like you. David says: Be strong. Show yourself a man. Is that what you would tell your son who will be ruling a huge nation?

Why does David tell him to be strong and show himself a man. Because Solomon is about to carry enormous responsibility. The kingdom is about to become his. The crown is about to become his. The decisions are about to become his. And David knows weak men destroy nations. Weak men destroy homes. Weak men destroy churches.

If you knew you only had a few days left to live, and your son was standing beside your bed, what would you tell him? What would be your first instruction? David's was: Be strong. Show yourself a man. A dying man doesn't waste words.

Now, let's see what David means. He's going to continue with his last words here to Solomon.

II. DAVID'S FIRST PRIORITY IS GOD

1 Kings 2:3

And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

This is fascinating. David doesn't start talking about money. He doesn't start talking about military strategy. He doesn't start talking about politics.

He starts with God. "Keep the charge of the LORD thy God. Walk in His ways. Keep his statutes. Keep his commandments. Keep his judgements. Keep his testimonies. It is written my son. If you'll do that, you will prosper in all that thou doest. No matter where you go, you will do well."

I want my last words to my children to be the same thing. As my children grow up and leave me, I want them to know that those are my words to them. Follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't follow anyone or anything else. If you'll follow Jesus, you'll be okay. You'll be safe. If you don't do that, you won't be safe and you'll get hurt. And I don't want to see you get hurt.

A dying man doesn't waste words. King David is a man who had seen great victories. He had seen great defeats. He had seen what happened when he didn't follow the Lord. He had seen what happened when others didn't follow the Lord. I've been there myself. I've seen it. I've felt it.

David has learned something. This man has wisdom and knowledge above any of us. Listen to his words. See his words right there. They need to become REAL to you. These aren't just words that we skip over and don't even notice. This is a man who knows far more than you and I. These are his last words to his son that he loves with all his heart, soul, and mind.

David knows that kingdoms rise and fall. David knows that people come and go. David knows that through everything God is the only one who remains. In the tough times, when no one else is there, God remains right there by your side. He's there.

Imagine a father on his deathbed. His children gather around. What's he going to say? The things that mattered most during his life. He's going to tell you about God. He's going to tell you who will keep you safe and successful. That's David right here.

What was David's greatest victory? Was it Goliath? That's the one everybody remembers. One stone. One giant. One head. One incredible moment. But was that really David's greatest victory? Was it becoming king? Was it conquering Jerusalem? Was it defeating the Philistines? Was it expanding the kingdom? No. Because all of those victories happened on the outside.

David's greatest victory happened on the inside. David learned to walk with God. He did it better than you and I. He knows. Think about it. Lots of men have won battles. Lots of men have defeated enemies. Lots of men have gained power. Lots of men have built kingdoms. But very few men learn to truly walk with God.

David failed at times. David sinned. David made terrible mistakes. But he kept coming back to God. WE CAN DO BETTER. David repented. He prayed. He sought the Lord. He loved the Word of God. And now, at the end of his life, notice what matters most to him.

He's not talking about Goliath. He's not talking about military victories. He's not talking about how great of a man he was. He's not talking about wealth. He's not talking about fame. David slayed his ten thousands. That's not what David talks about here. That's not important enough for his final words.

The first thing he talks about is God. Why is that? Because after all these years, David learned something. A man can defeat giants and still lose his life. A man can build a kingdom and still ruin his family. A man can become famous and still be miserable. But if a man learns to walk with God, he has found the greatest treasure in this life.

That's why David's greatest victory wasn't Goliath. His greatest victory was learning to walk with God. And please hear this today. We must learn to walk with God. A dying man doesn't waste words. And king David didn't waste his last words.

III. DAVID CARES ABOUT THE FUTURE

1 Kings 2:4

That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

Even though David is dying, he cares about the future. David isn't just thinking about himself. He's thinking about generations. He's thinking about Solomon. He's thinking about the future kingdom.

One of the marks of maturity is caring about what happens after you're gone. Immature people think only about themselves. Mature people think about the next generation. Think about planting a tree. The person planting it may never sit under its shade. They will probably never get to see the full glory of that tree and enjoy that tree.

Yet they plant that tree anyway. Why? Because they're thinking about the future. That's David right here. Next, we're going to see this dying king's warning to his son. He's going to give him some specific warnings here to watch out for as king.

IV. DAVID REMEMBERS OLD ENEMIES

1 Kings 2:5-9

Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that

was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. 6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. 7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. 8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. 9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

Now the chapter takes a surprising turn. David starts talking about Joab. Then Abner. Then Amasa. Then Barzillai. Then Shimei. And if you're listening carefully, you might be wondering: Why? Why bring these people up now? Why not just talk about God? Why not just talk about heaven? Why not just talk about the future kingdom?

Because David understands something that many people never learn. Problems don't disappear just because you ignore them. Unfinished business doesn't magically fix itself. Unresolved problems get handed to the next generation.

Put yourself in David's shoes. He's lying on his deathbed. He knows he's about to leave. Solomon is about to inherit the throne. And David knows exactly what Solomon is inheriting. Not just a kingdom. Not just a palace. Not just a crown. He's inheriting enemies too. He's inheriting problems too. He's inheriting decisions that still need to be made.

David is basically saying: "Son, there are some things you need to know before I'm gone." Imagine a father leaving a house to his children. He walks them through the property one final time. Then he points to a crack in the foundation. He says: "Don't ignore that. That small crack will become a big problem. Deal with it now." That's David right here.

He's not being bitter. He's not settling scores. He's preparing Solomon for reality. Because a dying man doesn't waste words. And one of the greatest gifts you can give the next generation is not more money. Not a bigger house. Not a larger inheritance. One of the greatest gifts you can give the next generation is fewer problems to inherit.

David knows he can't stay. But he can prepare Solomon. And that's exactly what he's doing. Get rid of Joab. "Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." Be kind to the sons of Barzillai. They are your friends, son. Get rid of Shimei. "But his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood."

V. THE KINGDOM MOVES ON

1 Kings 2:10-12

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. 11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three

years reigned he in Jerusalem. 12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

Verse 10. Look closely there. That's the saddest verse today. The words of David are ended. A man who wrote much of the Bible. A man after the Lord's own heart. A man that has taught us many lessons. David dies. The giant killer is gone. The shepherd king is gone. The songwriter is gone. The warrior is gone.

Think about all David experienced. Imagine all the work that David did. The sheep fields. Samuel's anointing. Goliath. Saul's persecution. Bathsheba. Nathan. The caves. Hebron. Jerusalem. The throne. The victories. The failures. And now it's all over. The same will happen to each one of us. It will all be over one day.

What's the lesson here? Even great men die. Even kings die. Even David dies. But notice something in verse 12. "Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father." David dies. God's plan doesn't. Another man, his son whom he loved, continued on. When I'm gone, I hope my daughters carry on with this right here. I hope all of you carry on with this right here.

Don't ever stop learning God's words and following the Lord God Almighty. Continue on. Men come and go. You and I. We came. We're here now. But one day we will go. But God's plan continues. And it won't stop. And His plan will one day bring us all back together. And there's no doubt about that. Never doubt that.

CONCLUSION

Imagine standing beside David's bed. The greatest king Israel had ever known is speaking. One of the greatest kings throughout all of eternity. Every word matters. Every sentence matters. Treat the word of God this way. Treat David's last words this way.

Because a dying man doesn't waste words. And what does David talk about? God first. Character. Faithfulness. The future. Obedience. The next generation. Not wealth. Not pleasure. Not entertainment. Not popularity. The things that matter most become clearest at the end.

So let me ask you one question. If you knew you only had one conversation left, what would you talk about? And you might know the right answer, but what you talk about is what's truly important to you. And don't fake it. Make it truth.

Because whatever your answer is, that's what matters most to you. Will it be God? David's answer was clear: God comes first. Because that dying king's warning is God's warning to us today. And don't ever forget king David's last words.

Let's pray.