

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 2, 1 Kings 1:1-27

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 2, 1 Kings 1:1-27, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture explores the complexities of succession in 1 Kings, specifically focusing on Solomon's rise to the throne. The analysis examines the characters of David, Adonijah, Nathan, and Bathsheba, highlighting their motivations and actions within the narrative. **The lecture addresses the moral ambiguities present in the text and how the writer forces the reader to make their own decisions about what they're reading. He emphasizes that Solomon was chosen by God, even though he was the 10th son of David, from an adulterous relationship. Oswalt examines the tension between human ambition and divine will and closes with a prayer about remaining true to God's path.** The lecture encourages critical engagement with the text and emphasizes the importance of discerning God's purposes amidst complex human relationships.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →
Historical Books → Kings).**



**Oswalt_Kings_Sessi
on02.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 2, 1 Kings 1:1-27

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's session on 1 Kings 1:1-27.

Briefing Document: Oswalt on 1 Kings 1:1-27

Source: Excerpts from "Oswalt_Kings_EN_Session02.pdf" (Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 2)

Main Themes:

- **Moral Decision-Making & Reader Engagement:** Oswalt emphasizes that the author of Kings, like the author of Judges, doesn't dictate what readers should think but rather presents the material in a way that forces them to grapple with moral decisions. He states, "A good writer doesn't tell the reader what they should think. A good writer is able to present the material and the readers will know what to think. And so it is here."
- **The Complexity of Solomon's Reign:** The session sets up the idea that Solomon's reign, while blessed and prosperous, contains seeds of future tragedy. A "foolish decision" early in his reign will have consequences later. Oswalt stresses, "There's a sense in which Solomon chose his rut early. God blessed him marvelously. But there's a sense in which a path has been chosen that is going to lead to tragedy at the end of the story."
- **God's Sovereignty and Human Weakness:** Oswalt highlights the Bible's honest portrayal of its heroes, acknowledging both their strengths and weaknesses. He points to David's aging and apparent dementia as an example of human fallibility. However, he emphasizes that "God is at work... accomplishing his good purposes in spite of our failings."
- **Succession and God's Choice:** The session explores the tension between hereditary succession (the norm in the Near East) and God's choice of Solomon. Oswalt notes, "Now remember, all over the Near East, the normal, normal succession is hereditary...But not in this case." He delves into the reasons behind God's choice of Solomon, despite being the tenth son and the son of David's union with Bathsheba.

- **The Significance of Nathan's Role:** Nathan's character and his role in securing Solomon's kingship are examined closely. Oswalt praises Nathan's faithfulness and his willingness to deliver both good and bad news. The question of whether Nathan and Bathsheba's actions constituted manipulation is discussed, with Oswalt ultimately arguing that their actions were driven by godly wisdom and a desire to honor God's will.
- **Discernment Between Wisdom and Manipulation:** A key theme revolves around distinguishing between wise action and manipulation, emphasizing that the difference lies in the *motive*. Is the action driven by a desire to be right and get one's own way, or is it driven by a desire to follow God's will and honor His character? Oswalt states, "One of the differences between wisdom and manipulation is motive. Why am I doing this?"
- **God's Redemption:** Oswalt points out that God often chooses unlikely people to fulfill His purposes and that He can redeem even the worst situations. He highlights that God takes "the worst messes we can produce and redeems them, uses them for his glory."

Important Ideas and Facts:

- **Outline of 1 Kings 1-11 (Oswalt's perspective):** Chapters 1-2: Securing the throne (Solomon's accession)
- Chapter 3: Two decisions (foolish and wise)
- Chapters 4-10: Solomon's kingdom (administration, building projects, temple dedication, glory)
- Chapter 11: The final reckoning (Solomon's failures)
- **David's Condition:** David is portrayed as old, frail, and possibly suffering from dementia in 1 Kings 1.
- **Adonijah's Claim:** Adonijah, as the oldest surviving son, believes he has a right to the throne. He garners support from Joab and Abiathar, but notably *not* from Zadok, Benaiah, or Nathan.
- **Reasons for Adonijah's Lack of Support:** Some remembered David's earlier designation of Solomon as his successor.
- Joab and Abiathar may have been motivated by resentment towards David and/or Bathsheba.

- **God's Choice of Solomon:** Despite Solomon being the tenth son and the son of David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, God chose him because He looks at the heart, not the outward appearance.
- **Nathan's Strategy:** Nathan involves Bathsheba in informing David of Adonijah's actions, possibly because she is more likely to get through to the aging king than Nathan would on his own.
- **Joab's motivations** Joab may have sided with Adonijah because he was aware David had never forgiven him for killing Absalom.

Key Quotes:

- "A good writer doesn't tell the reader what they should think. A good writer is able to present the material and the readers will know what to think."
- "There's a sense in which Solomon chose his rut early. God blessed him marvelously. But there's a sense in which a path has been chosen that is going to lead to tragedy at the end of the story."
- "God is at work... accomplishing his good purposes in spite of our failings."
- "Now remember, all over the Near East, the normal, normal succession is hereditary...But not in this case."
- "One of the differences between wisdom and manipulation is motive. Why am I doing this?"
- "The sword is not going to depart from my house for the rest of my days. Oh, God says, if you'll let me, I can redeem that. I can use a child of that relationship."
- "All 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."
- "Because I'm right. My cause is right. And therefore, any means is justified."

Overall Impression:

This session provides a nuanced and insightful look at the beginning of 1 Kings, emphasizing the complexities of human character, the interplay of human actions and divine will, and the importance of discerning one's motives in the pursuit of God's purposes. It sets the stage for a deeper exploration of Solomon's reign and its consequences.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 2, 1 Kings 1:1-27

The Succession of Solomon: A Study Guide to 1 Kings 1-11

I. Review Questions

Answer the following questions based on the provided source material. Keep your answers concise (2-3 sentences).

1. According to Oswalt, what is the writer of Kings trying to force the reader to do, similar to the book of Judges?
2. How does Oswalt describe the initial verses of 1 Kings chapter 3 in relation to Solomon's wisdom?
3. What, according to Oswalt, was Solomon particularly wise in?
4. What contrast does Oswalt draw regarding the temple and Yahweh in 1 Kings 9:1-9?
5. What does 1 Chronicles 28:1-7 reveal about Solomon's selection as king compared to typical Near Eastern succession?
6. How does Oswalt interpret David's condition in 1 Kings 1:1-4?
7. According to Oswalt, what social context might have prompted polygamy, although it is not depicted positively in the Bible?
8. What does Oswalt suggest about David's decisiveness in matters of state versus family?
9. Why does Oswalt think Adonijah holds a sacrifice outside the city?
10. What does Oswalt say is the difference between wisdom and manipulation?

II. Answer Key

1. The writer of Kings, like the writer of Judges, is trying to force the reader to make moral decisions. The writer wants to present the material in such a way that the reader will understand what to think without being explicitly told.
2. Oswalt suggests that the initial verses of 1 Kings 3 present a foolish decision made at the beginning of Solomon's reign that would eventually influence the outcome 40 years later, despite God's blessing of Solomon's reign.

3. Solomon was especially wise in the area of administration. He was able to organize the state and manage the people working for him.
4. Oswalt emphasizes that Yahweh is independent of the temple, and the temple is not Yahweh. Yahweh is not controlled by the temple, showing the temple is not more important than God.
5. 1 Chronicles 28:1-7 states that Solomon was chosen by God to succeed David, which deviates from the typical hereditary succession practices common in the Near East at that time.
6. Oswalt interprets David's condition as indicative of dementia and general old age, highlighting the physical and mental decline David experienced toward the end of his life.
7. Oswalt posits that polygamy may have been a social necessity in ancient times due to high mortality rates among men, leading to a surplus of women; however, he argues that the Bible never portrays polygamy as a good thing.
8. Oswalt contrasts David's decisiveness in matters of state with his indecisiveness regarding his family affairs. He suggests that David's personal sins may have contributed to his inability to act decisively within his family.
9. Adonijah holds the sacrifice outside the city because he does not have the widespread support of the people. He hopes to present his father with a fait accompli.
10. Oswalt states that wisdom has truth and godly motive, while manipulation may involve lies or a self-centered motivation. Wisdom aims to honor God and benefit all parties, whereas manipulation seeks to achieve a personal agenda regardless of the consequences.

III. Essay Questions

Consider the following essay questions and develop well-supported arguments based on the source material.

1. Analyze the character of David as presented in the text. How do his strengths and weaknesses influence the events surrounding the succession of Solomon?
2. Discuss the role of divine choice in the selection of Solomon as king. How does this differ from the typical succession practices of the time, and what theological implications does this have?
3. Examine the motivations and actions of Nathan and Bathsheba in securing the throne for Solomon. To what extent are their actions justified, and what ethical considerations arise?
4. Evaluate the significance of Solomon's early reign and the decisions he makes in the first few chapters of 1 Kings. How do these decisions shape the trajectory of his rule and the future of Israel?
5. Explore the depiction of Solomon's kingdom in 1 Kings 4-10. What does this section reveal about Solomon's wisdom, accomplishments, and the overall state of Israel under his rule?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Accession:** The act of attaining or succeeding to a throne, dignity, or office.
- **Adonijah:** One of David's sons who attempted to claim the throne before Solomon.
- **Abiathar:** The chief priest who supported Adonijah's claim to the throne.
- **Bathsheba:** The wife of Uriah, with whom David committed adultery; later became one of David's wives and the mother of Solomon.
- **Dementia:** A general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life.
- **Hereditary Succession:** The passing of a title, office, or property to the heir, typically the eldest son.
- **Joab:** The commander of David's army who played a significant role in the events surrounding the succession.
- **Nathan:** A prophet who advised David and played a key role in ensuring Solomon's succession to the throne.
- **Polygamy:** The practice of having more than one wife or husband at the same time.
- **Solomon:** The son of David and Bathsheba who succeeded David as king of Israel; known for his wisdom and the construction of the temple.
- **Usurper:** Someone who seizes power or position illegally or by force.
- **Yahweh:** The name of God in the Hebrew Bible.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 2, 1 Kings 1:1-27, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on 1 Kings 1-11:

1. What is a primary theme of the book of 1 Kings, and how does the author convey it?

The book of 1 Kings, much like the book of Judges, aims to force readers to make moral decisions by presenting events and characters without explicitly dictating interpretations. The author allows the text to speak for itself, encouraging readers to engage critically and form their own judgments based on the narratives provided. This approach is evident in the complexities of Solomon's reign, highlighting both his wisdom and his failings.

2. What is the significance of Solomon's early decisions in the grand scheme of his reign?

While Solomon's reign is marked by both foolish and wise decisions, his early choices are particularly significant because they establish a trajectory that impacts the entire course of his rule. Similar to the analogy of choosing a rut carefully because you'll be in it for the next 40 miles, Solomon's initial actions, despite being blessed by God, set a path that ultimately leads to tragedy later in his life. This highlights the lasting impact of decisions, especially for young people.

3. How is Solomon portrayed in 1 Kings, and what does this reveal about the nature of biblical heroes?

Solomon is portrayed in 1 Kings in a complex and realistic manner, acknowledging both his strengths and weaknesses. While his wisdom and administrative skills are highlighted, the text also does not shy away from presenting his flaws, such as his marriages to many women. This balanced portrayal is a mark of the Bible's inspiration, as it tells the truth about its heroes without glorifying their failings or whitewashing their imperfections.

4. What is the importance of the David's choice of Solomon as his successor?

David choosing Solomon as his successor breaks with the traditional Near Eastern custom of hereditary succession, where the oldest surviving son automatically inherits the throne. In 1 Chronicles, it is emphasized that God specifically chose Solomon.

5. What challenges did Adonijah face in trying to claim the throne, and why did some influential figures support him?

Adonijah's attempt to claim the throne was challenged by the fact that David, guided by God, had already chosen Solomon as his successor. While Adonijah may have believed he was the rightful heir as the oldest surviving son, others, such as Joab and Abiathar, supported him out of tradition or personal motivations, such as distrust of Bathsheba and fear that they would face retribution for their actions in the death of Absalom. These individuals may have thought that Adonijah would be a better choice from a worldly perspective, or that they were atoning for their actions earlier in their lives.

6. How did Nathan and Bathsheba intervene in the succession crisis, and what does this demonstrate about acting wisely versus being manipulative?

Nathan and Bathsheba intervened in the succession crisis by reminding David of his previous oath to make Solomon king. Nathan wisely involved Bathsheba because of her influence over David. This intervention demonstrates the difference between acting wisely and being manipulative. Wisdom involves pursuing God's will and using methods consistent with His character, while manipulation is driven by self-interest and justifies any means to achieve a desired outcome. The key difference lies in the motive: wisdom seeks to honor God, while manipulation seeks to fulfill personal desires.

7. What are the potential dangers of righteous indignation or self-righteousness?

There is potential danger when those who are self-righteous attempt to use any means to win, including cutting corners or using people, because they have confused their way with God's way.

8. Why did God choose Solomon, despite his circumstances?

God chose Solomon, despite being the tenth son and born from an adulterous relationship, to demonstrate His ability to redeem even the worst situations and use unlikely individuals for His glory. God doesn't look on the outward appearance but at the heart, similar to how he often chooses the second-born over the first, or childless women to be mothers of the kingdom. This showcases God's redemptive power and His ability to work through flawed individuals to accomplish His purposes.