

Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 3, 1 Kings 1:28-52

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Let me walk through the background here that is on tonight's sheet. In the Old Testament, you have regularly the idea of swearing in God's name. And typically, in the actual Hebrew text, you don't have the full oath.

But it went something like, may Yahweh strike me dead if I don't do so and so. That's to swear in God's name, to take an oath in God's name, or to make a vow in God's name. En-Rogel, which is where Adonijah was putting on his own installation, is about half a mile southeast of Jerusalem, down the Kidron Valley.

And just to get a sense of that, I'll try not to tangle myself up too much in the cord here; the city of David is there, and the Kidron Valley is here. Eventually, the temple was going to be built up there. This was called the Tyropean Valley, and then this was the Hinnom Valley, which is hell.

This is where the dump was. En-Rogel was down here, about, as I say, about a half mile south of what was the city of David. The Gihon Spring was located here, and we'll be talking about that later.

Eventually, Hezekiah dug a tunnel under the city—it's fascinating how they must have done it—and built a pool down here, which eventually became the Pool of Siloam.

But the idea was to get the water inside the city walls. As it stood, there was evidently sort of a jog in the walls there to try to get that in, but it was still rather risky when you had a besieging army around there. So, that's the Gihon Spring.

Literally tens of thousands of gallons an hour coming out of that spring. They probably think En-Rogel is part of the same underwater aquifer, but it doesn't produce anything in the same amount. So, that's what we're talking about with the two springs.

Now, it appears that there were competing priestly families in Israel. One of them was from one of Aaron's sons, and the other son. He had four sons originally.

The first two, you remember, died because they offered strange fire. And so, Eleazar and Ithamar were left. In Joshua, Eleazar is the high priest, and he was succeeded by his son, Phinehas.

That's the last we hear of them. When we get to Samuel, the tabernacle is up at Shiloh, about halfway between Jerusalem and Shechem, and the priest is Eli, who is the son of Ithamar. So, we don't know exactly what was going on.

Were there two competing priestly families? But, after Eli's sons were killed, when the ark was taken by the Philistines, one of his grandsons escaped, and he continued to be David's priest, and his son was Abiathar. So, that's where we have the two priests, Zadok, who is a descendant of Eleazar, and Abiathar, who is a descendant of Ithamar. And that's, again, part of what's going on here in this whole struggle.

So, the Cherethites and the Pelethites, more ites to go with the termites, were David's personal bodyguard. And, very possibly, Pelethite, Philistine, very possibly, these are people that sort of came to him while he was a Philistine mercenary. So, it's very interesting to think.

But these are guys who have a personal loyalty to David, come what may—finally, the horns on the altar. We have discovered an altar at Beersheba that gives us a sense of what these things looked like.

So, there are two more on the other side. So, those are the horns on the altar. We're never told what purpose they served.

But probably, the best guess is that they're just on there to keep the sacrifices from falling off. And, because they were particularly sprinkled with blood, that seems to have given rise to the idea that you could cling to the altar, the horns of the altar, if you had committed an unintentional sin, and be delivered. Again, there's a good bit of conjecture there as to exactly what's going on.

But those are the horns of the altar. Okay, that's background. Questions or comments there? Yes? Well, you know, I did study on the horns once.

And what I came to was the horns kind of represent power. So, the four horns are the power of God, and the blood on it kind of goes forward to Jesus. And so, when you hold on to it, it's kind of like, you know... Okay, hang on to that.

We'll get there in a little bit. Good. Okay, anything else? Yes? The question for those of you who are watching is, one of the four rivers in Genesis that flows out of the Garden of Eden is Gihon.

Is that somehow connected to this one? And the answer is, I don't know. I like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. Do you want to know why we do this? I'll tell you.

I don't know. But it's certainly suggestive to think that somehow there's a connection here. But what? Nobody knows.

All right. So, Bathsheba has come in and said, David, have you told Adonijah to do this and not told the rest of us? And then Nathan comes in after her. Evidently, Bathsheba had been sent out while David talked with Nathan.

And now in verse 28 he says, Call in Bathsheba. So, she's called back in. So, she came into the king's presence and stood before him.

The king then took an oath as surely as the Lord lives. And again, this is part of the total oath.

As I live, as the Lord lives, may the Lord, etc. Who has delivered me out of every trouble. I will surely carry out this very day what I swore to you by the Lord, the king of Israel.

Solomon, your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in his place. I think, without any question, David is remembering in his foggy brain. Yes, yes, I sort of remember those days back there, five, six, ten years ago, when we had a big celebration, and I announced that Solomon would be my successor and told about all the materials that I'd gathered for the temple.

Yeah, I sort of remember that. But the key thing is he remembers he has made a promise. He has made a vow.

And now he doubles it. He takes a vow on top of a vow. Yes, this is what is going to happen.

Now, again, I think I mentioned this last week, but let me say it again. I think it's quite clear that Adonijah remembers this. Otherwise, he wouldn't be trying to pull off this thing down half a mile south of the city with some of the key power brokers in the kingdom.

He knows that Solomon has been in fact promised, but it's been a long time. The old man is pretty foggy in the brain and maybe we can pull this off. But no, it's not going to happen because of Bathsheba and Nathan.

Now, what about vows? Here are the passages that I ask you to look up. Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and perform your vows to the Most High. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I'll deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

I must perform my vows to you, O God. I will render thank offerings to you, for you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life. Praise is due you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed.

Now, why is it necessary to keep one's vows? I mean, yeah, we make promises, we say we're going to do things, but situations change. Why this emphasis on, I will perform my vows, I must perform my vows? What do you think? What's going on there? If God is self-existent, if He is the only authority, then that makes me responsible, yes? The idea of a covenant. Yes, here we are again with the character of God.

God is a covenant-keeping God. The remarkable thing about Him is that, in contrast to us, He keeps His promises. The gods, you can't rely on them at all, because the gods are just humans written large.

So, excuse the bad grammar, they're gooder than we are, but they're also badder than we are. Sometimes, they keep more promises than we do, but a lot of times, they keep fewer promises than we do. And the remarkable thing about this God is, no, He's not a human being written large.

He keeps His promises. He is true. Numbers 30 has a verse where Moses has written it.

It said Moses spoke to them; this is what the Lord has commanded; if a man vows a vow to the Lord or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word. He shall do all according to what proceeds out of his mouth. Okay, a commandment from God.

You must keep this. Why? To receive His blessing, yes? Because we are His representatives. This is why adultery is forbidden.

You call yourself a follower of Yahweh, and yet you don't keep your word? You call yourself a follower of Yahweh, and you make promises that you won't keep? Oh, oh, well, our God is like that too. Our God does the same kinds of things. But no, no, this God keeps His promises, and therefore His people must keep their promises.

Again, some of you have heard me talk a lot of times, so you know everything I know. But I've never forgotten a man who told me when I was a young father that if you're not going to do it, don't say you are. If you say to the child, if you do that one more time, this is going to happen, and you're unwilling to do this when the child does it one more time, you have just taught that child there is no law of cause and effect.

I've been very grateful for that. If you're not going to be willing to do it, then for pity's sake, don't say it. Again and again, I see young parents who say, now, honey, if you do that again, I'm going to slap your hand.

Oh, now, honey, you've done it again. Now, don't do that. Please, buddy, let's not.

Well, I'd better stop. So, as God's representatives, we are called upon to demonstrate His faithfulness, to demonstrate that there is truth in the world. This is called the post-truth generation.

It fascinates me a great deal that the Bible doesn't really talk about truth as objective reality. It talks about being true. And you see, if He's the only creator of the universe, and He is absolutely true, then we can expect that in His universe, there are things that are true.

Why are we losing the concept of truth today? Because we're losing that book. Okay, push on. Bathsheba bowed her face to the ground, prostrating herself before the king, and said, May my lord, King David, live forever.

King David said, call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. Remember, Joab, the general, is down there at En-Rogel with Adonijah. Benaiah is second in command.

So here we have a priest, a prophet, and the man of force, the civil power, as it were. What do we call Jesus? King? Prophet? Priest? The entire focus of authority, the religious authority in sacrifice, the prophetic authority in the word of God, and the civil authority in the power of the state. All power resides in Jesus, more so than all of his earlier representatives, and that sense is there.

When they came before the king, he said to them, Take your lord's servants with you and have Solomon, my son, mount my own mule. Take him down to Gihon. Well, Adonijah is at a spring being crowned king.

Solomon is at the larger spring being crowned king. What's the deal with kings and water? Source of life. Source of life.

Here is this person who, by his own personal force, he is keeping order, and order is the key to life. That's why we're so terrified of disorder. And it is in the gushing water that we see it.

So, as a people, we cannot live without order, and God has provided it. This is why Paul is so careful to say, Don't, as a Christian, sponsor anarchy because I, God, have made order. On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me for a drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now, he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet, the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been

glorified. Do you remember another time when Jesus spoke about water coming out of him? The Samaritan woman.

If you knew who you were talking to, you would ask him, and he would give you living water. So again, what we see over and over again in the Bible are these pictures of what is to come. Is Solomon the source of life? No.

But in this act of being crowned there at that great spring, he represents the one who is indeed the source of life. Again, if you didn't know better, you would think the book was inspired. But the pieces fit together so very, very well.

And what you see then is, again, not only the King and Jesus, you also see the way in which the feasts work. This is the Feast of Tabernacles. There were three feasts when every male was expected to come to the temple.

There is Passover in April. There are about first fruits, which is Pentecost, about the first of June, and Tabernacles. Passover is at the very beginning of harvest.

Tabernacles is at the end. Tabernacles was about September 15. Well, no, it's actually about September 30.

Again, the calendar is lunar for the Hebrew's travels. And every three years, you've got to add a month. So, some years are 13 months to get the thing sort of back in sequence again.

So, you never can quite tell exactly when it's going to be. But this is when they go out and live in shacks. Feast of Tabernacles sounds a lot better than Feast of Shacks.

But that's what it is. Reminding them how God cared for them in the desert. 40 years we lived in shacks.

And God cared for us. All the way through, remember, remember. Now, live in the light of what you remember.

And it's not quite clear. Some of the descriptions of the Feast of Tabernacles in the late New Testament period seem to suggest that every day for seven days, they went down to the pool of Siloam and got water, brought it back up, and poured it out in the temple. But it seems for sure that on the last day, the great day, that's what they did.

So, you can see them. Here they come, singing, dancing, carrying buckets of water. And this crazy guy from Nazareth.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Bonkers. He's crazy.

What has all this been pointing to? What have all these festivals been pointing to? They've been pointing to Jesus. I'm the one that this is all about. It's no wonder they tried to kill him.

The guy's crazy. And, he's going to get the Romans down on our necks. He's going to produce disorder.

How little they understood. I've often been glad that I wasn't alive then. I'm afraid I might have been on the wrong side.

Because this is, this is revolutionary stuff he's saying. What? I'll give you water? Who are you? God? Okay. Yes.

Yes. Okay. Now notice that David says, in verse 35.

You are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah. Now, that is very significant.

Really, Judah and the other tribes were never really integrated. All the way back in Joshua, you can see the phrase Judah and all Israel. Wait a minute.

Judah's part of all Israel, aren't they? Or are they? The part of it is geographic. It's fascinating how much of world history is just the outplay of geography. But right about, there is a break.

You've got this ridge that runs from Beersheba down in the south all the way up to Mount Carmel. You've got the Jezreel Valley there that sort of breaks it, and then it goes on. You've got another break up here between Lower Galilee and Upper Galilee.

But between Beersheba and Jerusalem, you basically got an unbroken ridgeline. So, the highway goes right along between those two points. But from here on, the ridgeline is broken.

Six miles north of Jerusalem. In a real sense, then, here's Judah down here, united by this geography. And then here's the rest of the tribes.

So, here's Judah and here is all Israel. Now if you looked up, and I realize you didn't have the handout for this week, but let's look at, this first one is 2 Samuel 2, 4, and 8 and 9. After this, David inquired of the Lord, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? Now he's down here. He's down in Philistine country.

But Saul is dead. And David says to God, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And God says, Yes, go up to Hebron. Does anybody know why Hebron's important? Abraham's buried there.

Rachel's buried there. That's my home country. Shall I? Yes, go up to Hebron.

And David went up there with his two wives. He brought up his men who were with him, everyone in his household. And they lived in the towns of Hebron.

Now, here's verse 4. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. What about the rest of them? But Abner, the son of Nair, commander of Saul's army, took Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim. And made him king over Gilead.

That's this area. And the Asherites, farther down here. And Jezreel.

And Ephraim. And Benjamin. And Benjamin is right in there.

And all of Israel. So here it is. David is the king of Judah.

Ish-bosheth is king of all the rest. So here is the trouble already in front of us. David, by his own personal magnetism, was able to unite them all.

But notice that when he says what Solomon is to be king of, king of Judah and all Israel. Well, that also came out of... Trouble. Where was Absalom crowned? This is not an exam.

Hebron! Hebron! Judah made Absalom king. And David fled from Jerusalem over this direction. And Absalom is killed over here.

And the Israelites take David back toward Jerusalem. And all of a sudden, the Judeans say, Wait a minute! What's happening here? The king crossed over to Gilgal. That's crossing over here.

Crossing over to Jordan. Half the troops of Israel escorted all the troops of Judah. And half the troops of Israel escorted the king on his way.

But the men of Israel complained to the king. The men of Judah stole the king. The Israelite guys were the first to start back.

And then the Judeans jumped on the bandwagon. The men of Judah stole the king and didn't give us the honor of helping take you, your household, and all your men across to Jordan. The men of Judah replied that the king was one of our own kinsmen.

Why would this make you angry? We haven't eaten any of the king's food or received any special flavors. But there are ten tribes in Israel, the other replied. So we have ten times as much right to the king as you do.

Etc. You are the king of Judah and all of Israel. Okay, Solomon.

By my own personal magnetism, by my own careful treatment of these opposing groups, I have welded it together into a kingdom. What are you going to do? 36. Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, answered the king, Amen.

May Yahweh, the God of my lord the king, so declare it. As Yahweh was with my lord the King, so may he be with Solomon to make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord king David. How would Saul have responded to that? Make his throne greater than my throne? What are you talking about? Now the question is, why does David not respond in that way? 2 Samuel 22, 28-34.

Which is repeated, by the way, as in Psalm 18. They're identical. You rescue the humble, but your eyes watch the proud and humiliate them.

This is David. O Lord, you are my lamp. The Lord lights up my darkness.

In your strength, I can crush an army. With my God, I can scale any wall. God's way is perfect.

All the Lord's promises prove true. He's a shield for all who look to him for protection. For who is God except the Lord? Who but our God is a solid rock?

Now, look at this next verse. God is my strong fortress, and he makes my way perfect. God's way is perfect, verse 31.

And he makes my way perfect, verse 33. Now, the NIV can't stand that. They choked.

Anybody got an NIV here? What does verse 33 say? It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. It keeps my way secure. Give me a break.

It's the same word. God's way is perfect, and he makes my way perfect. Wow.

Wow. Now, that doesn't mean flawless. It means whole, complete, total.

God isn't two-faced. God isn't two-sided. God's all-in, and he makes it possible, David says, for me to be all-in.

So, I want to ask you, looking at these verses, how is David able to hear something like this? Your son is going to have a lot bigger throne than you'll ever have. And not be burned up. Why not? In the light of these verses.

Where does he start in verse 28? Humility. Humility. I know who is the king.

I don't have to be the king of the universe because I know who he is. Yes. Verse 29.

What is God to David? My lamp, my light. Yes, yes. You're the one who shows me how to walk, how to go.

I don't. I don't produce the light. You do.

In your, what, verse 30? Strength. You're my strength—verse 31.

God is not two-faced. God is not duplicitous. What about his promises? They prove true.

What you see here is that David knows who God is. And because he knows who God is, he doesn't have to prove anything. He doesn't have to grab it.

He doesn't have to clutch. God, give me that kind of vision. Give us that kind of vision.

Where we can live generously. Where we can rejoice in the victories of others. I don't usually think of Lord Byron as much of a theologian, but he said something that is very, very true.

He said, it is one thing to mourn with those who have lost. It's quite another thing to rejoice with those who have won. Yeah.

Yeah. So, verse 38, Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Cherehites and the Pelethites, went down and had Solomon mount King David's mule, and they escorted him to Gihon. Zadok, the priest, took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon.

Then they sounded the trumpet, and all the people shouted, Long live King Solomon. Well, you can imagine what an impact this had on the Adonijah party half a mile down the road. And again, you just have to enjoy the skill of the writer here.

What's all that noise going on up there? Oh, here comes Jonathan. Well, Jonathan will have good news. No, I don't have good news at all.

They've made Solomon king. And 48 is David's response to that. May his throne be greater than yours.

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today. Not a scrap of jealousy. Not a scrap of damaged pride.

Oh, isn't God good? Isn't God good? He's given me a successor. Yeah. The difference between David and Saul in death is really amazing.

Saul is trying to pull up somebody from the dead who can give him some guidance. Frantic. Thank the Lord he's given me a successor, and he's good.

I want to die that way. All Adonijah's guests, this is verse 49. All Adonijah's guests rose in alarm and dispersed, but Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar.

Solomon was told that Adonijah was afraid of King Solomon and was clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword. I want you to take an oath that whatever I do, I won't have to pay for it.

Solomon's smarter than that. If he shows himself to be worthy, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground. But if evil is found in him, he'll die.

Again, as I think I said last week, the norm is when somebody comes to the throne, especially if there's any question of their position on the throne, the first thing they do is wipe out all of the other party. It's very significant Solomon does not do that. He sent men; they brought him down from the altar; Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon; Solomon said, go to your home.

Adonijah didn't have to die. He's going to, but he didn't have to. So again, it seems to me that we see Solomon here in a pretty good light.

He hasn't, and he hasn't made this thing happen. And that's, somehow or other, the last question in the study didn't get there. But what does this tell us about God accomplishing his purposes? This whole story, you're Solomon.

The kingdom was promised to you by your father. Now, your eldest brother is grabbing the reins. Thinks there's a chance.

The old man's forgotten what he said. The people have forgotten. And those who remember are trying to play the power game.

Who's the most likely to put me in the high spot? What do you do, Solomon? You wait for God to make his move. In the Old Testament, wait and trust are synonyms. Wait for the Lord.

We all, I think, remember Isaiah 40, 31. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Man, I have to do something here.

What am I going to do to forestall Adonijah? What am I going to do here? Man, he's got Joab with him, and he's got Abinijah. Wow, what are we going to do here? No. No trace of it.

And when you come to the throne, here's the elder brother, the guy who, from one perspective, has the right to the throne. He has put himself in the wrong by trying to take it for himself. Just kill him.

Get him out of the way. No. As I said, again, probably now two weeks ago, the story of Solomon is a very tangled one.

But here, I think we see Solomon in the very best light. I don't have to make God's promises come true. I think God is big enough to make his own promises come true.

David. Do you think that Solomon learned some of this just from his father's story in dealing with Saul? Yeah, I think very possibly. And you see it with David again and again.

I mean, in the Saul story, when Saul is given into David's hands when he comes into the cave to relieve himself and is squatted down with his robe out behind him, and his men are saying, David, David, this is it. God has given him into your hands. Go kill him.

Kill him. I'm not going to touch the Lord's anointed. I'm not going to remove the anointed king before the Lord removes the anointed king.

Wow. So yes, I think very possibly he has heard the story and learned some lessons. What else can we say about God accomplishing his purposes in a tangled situation like this? What? Suppose, suppose Solomon had become king without any of this happening.

What is he going to be facing? He's going to be facing a fifth column in his court. He's going to be facing a disgruntled brother. He's going to be facing a general and a high priest who is not at all happy with him being king.

As we'll see in the next chapter, this is all going to be dealt with. Perhaps precisely because Adonijah jumped the gun and tried to make himself king. There would have been a fifth column festering in the court.

And that's not going to be the case now. Now, again, that's not to say that God engineered that. But it's to say the very same thing that the book of Genesis ends with.

You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. The glorious creativity of God that he can take the worst stuff and use it for good. Well, we've got lots of it for you now, don't we? Sure we do.

Yeah, what are you going to accomplish? What are you accomplishing through this? Yeah, yeah. But there it is, there it is—a David who can accept being surpassed with equanimity.

A Solomon who doesn't have to grab the first chance to kill your opponent. And in all of it, God is establishing Solomon on the throne in ways that might not have happened otherwise. He's at work.

Yes? Do you think if David hadn't been so passive with his family, that maybe some of this would... Absolutely. Yes, the question was, if David had not been so passive with his family, would some of this not happen? Yes, I think that's exactly the point when it says David had never said to Adonijah, why are you doing this? So, I think that's absolutely right. And I think, in one sense, this is why the sword did not depart from David's house.

Because David, having sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah, now pretty clearly can't bring himself to discipline his own family. And yes, I think unquestionably, the Bible is saying this didn't have to happen this way. Yeah.

Okay, any other questions or comments? I was just thinking, David himself was chosen out of order. Yes. And the Israelites have a history of God not choosing man's order.

Yeah. Man looks on the outward appearance, and God looks on the heart. Yes.

I think that maybe they were able to accept it more because God really intervened, and they saw it, and they knew their history. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Many commentators will look at these, especially chapters one and two, as examples of court intrigue, such as Bathsheba and Nathan pulling off something.

I don't think that can possibly be true, both in light of Chronicles but also because clearly Adonijah knows he's doing something that he's got to do undercover. Well,

why? Unless, indeed, he remembered that God had chosen Solomon. Jerry? So, who will be our next president in 2025? Let me say this.

God will have his way. And God may give us, someone said, a people get the kind of government they deserve. Oops.

But thank God, thank God, we are servants of the living God, and whatever may come, he is going to accomplish for his good purposes. He says he raises up kingdoms, and he bears them down. Yep, yep, yep.

We have assumed for 200 years that this orderly democracy was the norm. Well, as a matter of fact, in the history of the world, this is one of the oddest things that ever happened. So, yeah.

But God is the Lord. God is the Lord. Okay.

Next week, chapter two. We'll do a whole chapter.