

“I Will be King”
1 Kings 1:1-11
(Preached at Trinity, June 21, 2020)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. 1 Kings opens with a description of King David. He is old and frail and weak. Of itself this may not be dangerous. Surrounding himself with wise and able people would offset some of the personal weaknesses of his advanced years.
But the text makes us very aware that the Kingdom is in a precarious condition. Before the king's life has ended there is a battle for the throne.
2. In **Verse 5** Adonijah declares boldly, “I will be king.”
 - A. With his human sinful flaws, David was also a godly man. He was God's king, and yet he waited upon God.
 - a. He never promoted himself. As a shepherd boy it was God who sent Samuel to anoint him.
 - b. When it was time for David to be king he was careful to enquire of God.
2 Samuel 2:1 NAU - "David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." So David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron."
 - c. After the defeat of Absalom, David waited to be invited back to Jerusalem.
 - B. Unlike his father, Adonijah is full of pride and ambition, not unlike his older half-brother, Absalom.
Following the lead of his half-brother he sets a course that will enable him to seize the throne.
1 Kings 1:5 NAU - "he exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him."
The pronoun “I” makes it emphatic. I and none other will be king. There is a great air of boasting in his words. “I am the one!”
 - C. We also read that, like Absalom, he had all of the physical qualities of a king:
1 Kings 1:6 NAU - "And he was also a very handsome man"
You can bet he was very much aware of his good looks – it only attributed to his pride and sense of self-worth.
 - D. And like Absalom, he was cunning and shrewd. He quickly formed a team of influential allies—powerful political and religious leaders who would support his plan.
1 Kings 1:7 NAU - "He had conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah and with Abiathar the priest; and following Adonijah they helped him."
And as with Absalom, David is oblivious to what is taking place under his nose.
 - E. Since he was the oldest living son, he appears to be the most logical successor to the throne of David.

3. But Adonijah was also self-willed. Everyone knew that David was God's anointed king. Seeking to ascend to the throne without the blessing of David was a treasonous act.
- A. Although Adonijah was the oldest living son he still needed the approval of David. And his covert scheming only adds to his unsavory self-serving motives.
- B. We also cannot doubt that Adonijah knew that Solomon was David's choice to succeed him. This can be the only explanation why Solomon or Nathan or Benaiah were not on his guest list.
- a. We also cannot doubt Solomon was God's choice.
1 Chronicles 22:9-10 NAU - "Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. ¹⁰ 'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever."
- b. If that wasn't enough the Law specified the king would be of God's choosing. There is no indication Adonijah was that man.
Deuteronomy 17:15 NAU - "you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses"
- c. Adonijah knew Solomon was God's choice. He later tells Bathsheba:
1 Kings 2:15 NAU - "You know that the kingdom was mine and that all Israel expected me to be king; however, the kingdom has turned about and become my brother's, for it was his from the LORD."
- C. Adonijah had proudly decided he would be king and nothing was to stand in his way. This is the root of all sin. We decide what we will have, what we will do, and nothing will stand in our way.
 The amazing thing is this is the character trait that most would admire today. Adonijah would be seen as self-confident and assertive, a man who knows what he wants and sets out to get it.
 God sees it as sinful pride.
4. Adonijah reminds us of the words of the prophet Isaiah describing God's denouncement of Babylon.
- Isaiah 14:13-15 NAU** - "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' ¹⁵ "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit."
- A. It was a statement of condemnation against the arrogant pride of the king of Babylon – perhaps Nebuchadnezzar who ruled when Babylon was at its height, or Belshazzar who was ruling when Babylon was captured by the Persians, or perhaps referring to the Babylonian dynasty in general.
- B. In **Verse 12** Isaiah calls him "O star of the morning."
Isaiah 14:12 NAU - "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!"
 The KJV translates it "Lucifer," the name that for centuries has been one of the names applied to Satan because it personifies his pride.
- C. Now Adonijah proudly announces, "I will be king."

- I. This is the problem of all humanity – “I will be king”
- A. Fallen man is laboring to reign – to be in dominion
1. The whole world has risen up in a grand plot to overthrow the rule of God
 2. **Psalm 2** describes it well
Psalm 2:1 NAU - "Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ 'Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!'"
 - a. In other words, all the nations are seeking to escape God’s dominion. There is an almost universal denial of the rightful throne of Christ.
 - b. The Psalmist refers to it as “a vain thing.” The word for “vain” describes something that is futile, hopeless, empty, senseless. While they think their course makes sense, it is actually madness. It is self-destructive. It was self-destructive for Absalom and we will see that it was also self-destructive for Adonijah.
 3. All of fallen humanity is in this state of rebellion. All sin is treason. It is insurrection. It is seeking to remove God from His throne and to establish our own throne – “I will be king.”
 4. It is madness. Why would anyone in their right mind plan an attack against a force that is infinitely more powerful where the chances of prevailing are zero?
- B. The Gospel demands surrendering our throne
1. **Psalm 2** describes it:
Psalm 2:12 NAU - "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!"
 - a. The word for “homage” is the word for kiss. It is an expression of love and adoration.
 - b. The Gospel demands abandoning all of our selfish idols and following Christ. It demands embracing Him in love and total obedience.
 2. Serve the Lord with fear. Dethrone yourselves and serve your King.
- II. Christians are not immune to the danger of self-exaltation – “I will be king”
- A. We can find it in the church
1. The domineering pastor or deacon thirsty for authority – “I will be king”
 John described him well:
3 John 1:9-10 NAU - "I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. ¹⁰ For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire *to do so* and puts *them* out of the church."
 2. It may be a church member or a domineering family – “I will be king.”

3. Church leaders must be chosen carefully. The simple declaration, “I will be king” is not sufficient.
1 Timothy 3:10 NAU - "These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach."
- B. We may find it in our own heart—the difficulty of abandoning our throne.
 The work of sanctification is the progressive work of dethroning
1. John Owen referred to it as mortification, following the words of the KJV
Romans 8:13 KJV - "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
Colossians 3:5-6 KJV - "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"
 2. The word for mortify is νεκρόω which means “to put to death” or “to make dead.”
 It is in the imperative. God is telling us to come off our throne and die.
 John Owen: “Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? You must be always at it while you live; do not take a day off from this work; always be killing sin or it will be killing you. Your position in Christ, and the new life that you have in Him does not excuse you from this work.”¹
- C. It may be selfishness that still reigns in your heart
1. Do you desire recognition from others? Do you give great attention to what others think? Are you always telling people about yourself? Are you like Adonijah in exalting yourself.
 2. Too many husbands and fathers give their greatest energy on satisfying their own desires. Little attention is given to training their children in righteousness or giving their wives the love and attention they need. They declare in their hearts, “I will be king?” After all, a man’s home is his castle. The modern concept of a “Man-Cave” describes it well. I’ve seen Godly wives seeking to follow their husbands but filled with sorrow because he continually puts himself first.
 3. Too many mothers give little attention to the spirituality of their home but are consumed with satisfying their own agenda?
 4. When we put ourselves on the throne God can no longer be King.

¹ John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin*, (Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), 5.

III. The exaltation of humility

- A. The sad truth for this world is that self-exaltation only serves to bring us down
1. David was exalted by God
2 Samuel 5:12 NAU - "And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel."
 2. Notice Adonijah is exalting himself
1 Kings 1:5 NAU - "Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself"
 3. Already, we know where this is going to lead. Adonijah's brief party comes to a crashing end.
1 Kings 1:49-50 NAU - "Then all the guests of Adonijah were terrified; and they arose and each went on his way. ⁵⁰ And Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, and he arose, went and took hold of the horns of the altar."
- B. This is a universal axiom. Those who seek to exalt themselves will always be brought down.
Proverbs 16:18 ESV - "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."
1. This was the consistent teaching of Christ
Mark 9:34-35 NAU - "But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which *of them* was the greatest. ³⁵ Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."
Matthew 20:25-27 NAU - "Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave"
 2. It is the humble person that God exalts
1 Peter 5:5-6 NAS - "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,"
- C. Is God upon the throne of your life?
1. How do you make the decisions of your life? Do you seek the will of the King of kings or do you display that you rule yourself?
 2. Do you seek wise counsel – parents, spouses, teachers, pastors. Are you willing to follow their counsel even if it isn't what you wanted to hear, or do you seek to maintain your own dominion?
 "I will be king."
 3. Notice Adonijah did not seek the counsel of the prophet Nathan, nor the priest, Zadok, nor God's anointed king, David.

Conclusion:

1. The way of the Christian is not to exalt himself. It is to exalt Christ. Our desire must be for Him to reign.
2. The Christian heart must be that of serving others, not desiring them to serve him. Adonijah wanted to be a king like the kings of the nations.
1 Samuel 8:10-20 NAU - "So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. ¹¹ He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place *them* for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. ¹² "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and *some* to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give *them* to his servants. ¹⁵ "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶ "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use *them* for his work. ¹⁷ "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. ¹⁸ "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day." ¹⁹ Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, ²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."
3. Pray that God will be pleased to humble you. It can be difficult to receive it, but to see Christ enthroned is the greater glory. May the first question in the catechism ring in our ears.
 What is the chief end of man?
 Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.