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David's Last Charge to Solomon

First Kings 2:1-9

David's last charge to Solomon DIG: What kind of king does David want Solomon to be? What does this say about David? When was David given the promise referred to in verse 4 (Second Samuel 7:12-13 and 16)? Why does he want it fulfilled? What kind of advice does David give in verses 5-9? What divisions always plagued him (see Second Samuel 2:4, 10-17, 5:3-5, 15:13-14)? Why did Joab kill Abner (see Second Samuel 17:24-26, 19:10-13)? Is David really against vengeance? Why did Shim'i curse David (Second Samuel 16:5-8)? How will David set aside Shim'i's curse?

REFLECT: When you face tough situations in your life, where do you turn? Only one person at a time can sit on the throne of your heart? Who's on your throne? You? Or Jesus? Do you find it hard to "forgive and forget?" Do you hold grudges? How does the desire for vengeance, even if justified, affect your life? What factions do you find at your place of worship? Are political games played? Does unity mean conformity?

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David served God's purpose in his own generation (Acts 13:36), but he was also concerned about **Solomon** and the next generation. **David** had **his** enemies, some of whom were in **his** own household and inner circle, and **he** wanted to be certain that **the** new **king** didn't inherit old problems. During **his** long reign of forty years, **David** had unified the nation, defeated their enemies, successfully organized kingdom affairs, and made more than adequate preparation for the building of the Temple.⁵⁴⁷

There can be no doubt that much of **Solomon's** early spiritual vitality and dedication to **YHVH** may be attributed to **David's** deep personal relationship with **ADONAI** and a desire to honor **Him**. So **David's** legacy to **Solomon** was therefore much more than a great kingdom with secure borders, tributary nations, and considerable wealth and prestige. Far more importantly, **he** installed in **Solomon** a love for **God** and **His Word**.



David's last, private, instructions to **Solomon** came in **two parts**. The first had to do with **Solomon's spiritual life** in **verses 2-4**, where **the king** summarized the message of **Deuteronomy** and reminded **his son** of **God's** promise and exhortation: **When your days come to an end and you sleep with your ancestors, I will establish one of your descendants to succeed you, one of your own flesh and blood; and I will set up his rulership. He will build a house for My name, and I will establish his royal throne forever. I will be a father for him, and he will be a son for Me. If he gets punished: nevertheless, my grace will not leave him, as I took it away from Sha'ul, whom I removed before you. (2 Sam 7:12-16 CJB)**. The second gives instruction concerning the nature of **unfinished business** pertaining to **Joab**, to **Shim'i**, and to **the sons of Barzillai** in **verses 5-9**.⁵⁴⁸

When the time drew near for **David** to die, he gave his last charge to **Solomon** his son (**First Kings 2:1**). The TaNaKh records the last words of **Jacob** (**Genesis 49**); **Moses** (**Deuteronomy 33**); **Joshua** (**Joshua 23:1-24:27**) and **David**.

Solomon's spiritual life: The old king was on his deathbed, and he knew it, saying: **I am about to go the way of all the earth**. Then he proceeds to give his last will and testament. **Solomon** was a young man who had lived a sheltered life, so **David** knew he needed this instruction, **"Be strong, and act like a godly man. Observe the charge of ADONAI your God to go in His ways and keep His regulations, mitzvot, rulings and instructions in accordance with what is written in the Torah of Moshe"** (**First Kings 2:2-3a CJB**). In his famous last words, **David** used seven different terms to describe the **Word of God** (**charge, ways, regulations, mitzvot, rulings, instructions, and the Torah**). Each of these terms comes from the **Word of God** itself (**Deut. 4:29, 6:1-2, 8:6, 11:1 and 29:9**). Each term has a slightly different emphasis. But **David's** main point in using all these different words is that **his son** should live by every word that comes from the mouth of **ADONAI**.

There was not one situation **Solomon** would face in **his** life as a man or the ruler of **his** kingdom that **the Bible** would not address in some practical way. The same is true for us. **God's Word** teaches us how to think, how to speak, and how to live. **It** tells us what to love and what to hate. It shows us how to glorify **God** forever. When we use **the Bible** as our "owner's manual," it will help make us the godly men and godly women were created to be.

If **Solomon** kept **God's charge, ways, regulations, mitzvot, rulings, instructions** and **Torah, God** promised that **he** would **succeed** spiritually **in all he did, wherever he went**. **David** knew what he was talking about. If we want to have **God's** blessing, we must walk in **God's** ways. The same principle holds true for us, especially if we define success in biblical terms. This doesn't mean then we won't ever suffer, or that every difficulty we face in life is the direct result of our own personal sin. But it does mean that obedience has **God's** blessing. We may experience this blessing in our relationships, as **the Word of God** teaches us how to love. We may experience this blessing in our homes as **the Word of God** teaches us how to take care of our family. We may experience **His** blessing in our daily lives, as **the Word of God** teaches us how to work hard and pursue excellence. But whether we have success in the workplace or not, we will certainly be successful spiritually. Obeying **the Word of God** will keep us close to **the Holy Spirit**; it will help us bring more people to **Messiah**, and it will show us more of the glory of **God**.⁵⁴⁹

David also reminded **his son** of the special covenant **Ha'Shem** had made with **his** family (to see link click [Ct - The LORD's Covenant with David](#)). **ADONAI** would **fulfill what He promised to David when He** said: **If your children pay attention to how they live** (Wow, did **David** ever learn that lesson the hard way.), **conducting themselves before me honestly with all their heart and being, you will never lack a man on the throne of Isra'el (First Kings 2:3b-4 CJB)**. The covenant was unconditional with respect to its ultimate goal of bringing **the Messiah** from the line of **David**, but each individual **king** needed to live in obedience to **God's Word** in order to experience the blessing of **ADONAI**.⁵⁵⁰ In other words, **the king** would be disciplined if **he** lived in disobedience to **the Torah**, but would always be loved. The subsequent history of the nation then seems to confirm the promise. By the end of **Kings** the monarchy is no more, and both the northern kingdom of **Isra'el** and the southern kingdom of **Judah** were in exile (as **Deuteronomy 4:25-28** had foretold).

So what kind of promise did **Ha'Shem** really give to **David**? Was it conditional or unconditional? Did the establishment of **David's** throne depend on **Solomon** keeping the covenant or not? These questions are answered for us in the gospel of **Yeshua Messiah**, who is the final **Son** (descendant) of **David**. The sad truth about **Solomon** is that, like **his**

father **David**, he did not fully obey **God's Word**. **Solomon** started well, but he declined into idolatry, greed and immorality. And to one degree or another, the same was true of every last king in **Isra'el**. They all failed to walk in **God's ways** and to keep **God's Torah**.

All except **Jesus**, that is. **Jesus of Nazareth** was the only **Son** (descendant) of **David** who was faithful to **God's** covenant, keeping all 613 of **His charges, ways, regulations, mitzvot, rulings, instructions** and **Torah** (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Dg - The Completion of the Torah](#)). This is why **God's** promises to **David** were both conditional and unconditional. They were conditional because **the king** was required to be obedient to **God's Word**; but they were unconditional because **YHVH** knew that one day a **King** would come and fulfill **His rulings** perfectly. The dynasty would be established on the basis of the full and perfect obedience of **Yeshua**, and thus **God's** absolute promise would not fail.

At the end of **His** perfect, promise-fulfilling life, **Jesus** had some famous last words of **His** own - words that offered forgiveness to **His** enemies and promised paradise to anyone who trusted in **Him**. Then **Messiah** finished his saving work by dying on the cross, suffering the violence and death that we deserve for our sins. This was not the end, however, because **Yeshua** rose from the dead to take **His** eternal throne.⁵⁵¹

Unfinished Business: **David** knew that there was danger lurking in the shadows of the kingdom, and he warned **Solomon** to act immediately and deal with two dangerous men. **Men like Joab and Shim'i would continue to be a menace to the young king and to the peace of the country.** **Joab**, the commander of **David's** army was the first to be named. Now you yourself know what **Joab** did to me (see [Dz - Joab Kills Absalom](#)), and what he did to the two commanders of **Isra'el's** armies, **Abner** (see [Ck - Joab Murders Abner](#)) and **Amasa** (see [Ee - Sheba Rebels Against David: The Murder of Amasa](#)). He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle, and with that blood he stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. **The murders were committed when peace reigned in the Land; or by treachery under the mask of friendship.** And all that might have been forgiven, but when **Joab** supported **Adonijah** in his quest for the throne (see [En - Adonijah Sets Himself Up as King](#)), that could not be forgiven. **David** knew that **Joab** would be a threat to **Solomon**. So he advised: **Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his grey head go down to Sh'ol** or die a natural death (**First Kings 2:5-6**).

The second dangerous man was **Shim'i**. He was a **Benjamite**, a relative of **Sha'ul** who wanted **Sha'ul's** line restored to the throne. **And remember Shim'i who called down**

bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim (see [Ds - Shim'i Curses David](#)).

Later, when **David** returned to power, **Shim'i** humbled **himself** before **the king** and **David** forgave **him**. **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."** The threat of **Shim'i** to **Solomon** was twofold. First, **David** doubtless made this promise in a moment of profound relief that the kingdom had been restored to him. But must have later realized that **Shim'i's** "repentance" was not sincere and that **he** could a potential threat to **the young king**. **But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him.** But more importantly, **Shim'i** embodied the continuing threat of **Benjamin** and the ten northern tribes **Isra'el** that **David** was never quite sure how deep their loyalty was. **Shim'i's** seemingly out-of-control act was a gesture that had powerful political forces behind it. Therefore, **David** counseled **his son**, "**Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood** " (**First Kings 2:8-9**).⁵⁵²

David not only remembered dangerous men like **Joab** and **Shim'i**, but **he** also remembered faithful men like **Barzillai**. **Barzillai**, a wealthy landowner, who **stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom** (see [Ed - David Returns to Yerushalayim: Barzillai the Gileadite](#)). **Solomon** was obligated to continue to pay what the royal family owed this man who intervened on **David's** behalf at a poignant and dangerous moment. **David** had wanted to reward **Barzillai** with a place at **his table**, but **the old man** preferred to die in **his** own hometown. **Barzillai** asked **David** to give the honor to **his son Khimham**, but now **David** instructed **Solomon** to care for **Khimham's sons**. **But show kindness to the grandchildren of Barzillai and let them be among those who eat at your table** (**First Kings 2:7**).