



73 Twenty Ministries
BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE ENTHUSIAST

ADONIJAH: A PRINCE'S AMBITION AND A KING'S JUSTICE

Why Solomon Ordered the Execution of His Brother (1 Kings 1–2)

73 TWENTY MINISTRIES

A TEACHING MINISTRY OF DR. ROBERT C CROWDER

73TWENTY MINISTRIES: CHARTING THE WORD, NAVIGATING FAITH

Rooted in a lifelong passion for teaching and guiding others in Biblical truth, 73Twenty Ministries is devoted to helping believers navigate the depths of Scripture with both clarity and conviction.

The name 73Twenty holds deep personal significance: it comes from my childhood home at 7320 Greenwood Boulevard in Denver, Colorado. It was here that the foundations of my faith, study, and service were first laid. With the majestic Rocky Mountains ever-present on my horizons, God's Word has been a constant guide and presence throughout my life. The logo of 73Twenty Ministries, with its three mountain peaks in gray, blue, and orange, symbolizes not only the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but also the unwavering foundation of Biblical truth upon which our faith is built.

For more than twenty years, I've served as a pastor, teacher, mentor, and author, committed to making Biblical truths accessible and applicable. Through sermons, Bible studies, books, articles, and other teaching resources, 73Twenty Ministries exists to equip believers, strengthen churches, and proclaim the Gospel. Our mission is both simple and profound: to chart the Word, guiding faith, and helping others anchor their lives in Scripture.

At 73Twenty Ministries, we believe that faithful Biblical study should engage the mind, transform the heart, and shape daily life. Whether through exegetical teaching, character studies, theological exploration, or practical application, every resource is crafted to deepen understanding, strengthen conviction, and encourage obedience to God's Word.

As a ministry grounded in a conservative Baptist, dispensationalist approach, we focus on Biblical exposition, doctrinal clarity, and practical discipleship. We uphold the belief that Scripture is the authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God, and it's our privilege to help others navigate its timeless truths.

I invite you to explore the resources at 73TwentyMinistries.com and join us on this journey of discovery, growth, and unwavering faith. Together, let's stand on the mountain of God's truths and proclaim His name to every generation.

For His glory alone,

Dr. Robert C. Crowder, Th.D.

Founder, 73Twenty Ministries

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Prepared by Dr. Robert C. Crowder

THE BACKGROUND: WHO WAS ADONIJAH?

Adonijah was the fourth son of King David, born to Haggith (2 Samuel 3:4). Though not as prominent in earlier narratives as his brothers Absalom or Amnon, Adonijah emerges late in David's reign as a man filled with ambition. With David now old and frail, confined to his chambers and unable to rule as he once did, a political vacuum formed. Sensing the opportunity, Adonijah made a bold and dangerous move: he declared himself king.

Scripture tells us, "*Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king*" (1 Kings 1:5). He didn't make a verbal claim. He orchestrated a royal procession, assembling chariots, horsemen, and fifty men to run before him, parading his authority in the streets. He gathered influential supporters, including Joab, David's long-serving military commander, and Abiathar the priest. Absent from this coalition were Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada—key figures loyal to David and to Solomon, David's appointed successor (1 Kings 1:8).

To solidify his claim, Adonijah threw a grand feast near En-rogel, inviting his allies and royal brothers, but pointedly excluding those aligned with Solomon. The coronation, lacking David's blessing, constituted a ceremonial coup (1 Kings 1:9-10). But the word of this rebellion reached Nathan and Bathsheba, who immediately informed the aging king. David, though weak in body, acted decisively in spirit. He immediately ordered Solomon's anointing as king, parading him on David's own mule and proclaiming his reign with trumpets and rejoicing (1 Kings 1:32-40).

The noise of Solomon's official anointing rang louder than Adonijah's feast, turning the hearts of the people. Adonijah's supporters melted away in fear, and the usurper himself fled to the altar, grasping the horns for sanctuary (1 Kings 1:50). Solomon, showing mercy, spared Adonijah's life—on one condition: "*If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die*" (1 Kings 1:52).

Adonijah had been warned. His future lay in his own hands. But sadly, ambition still stirred in his heart.

THE FATAL REQUEST: WHY WAS HE EXECUTED?

In the days following David's death and Solomon's secure rise to the throne, Adonijah approached Bathsheba with what appeared to be a simple, even harmless, request. He asked her to speak to King Solomon on his behalf and petition the king for permission to marry Abishag the Shunammite (1 Kings 2:13-17).

At first glance, this request may seem innocent, perhaps even romantic. Abishag had served as David's nurse in his final days, keeping him warm and tending to his needs (1 Kings 1:1-4). David had no intimate relations with her, yet by virtue of her position in the royal household, she was regarded as part of the king's harem.

In the culture of the ancient Near East, possession of a former king's wife or concubine was no mere private affair—it was a public assertion of royal rights. To claim the king's concubine was to symbolically claim the king's throne. Absalom's rebellion demonstrated this practice when he publicly took David's concubines to solidify his defiance (2 Samuel 16:21-22).

Thus, Adonijah's request was no innocent proposal; it was a veiled attempt to bolster his political claim. Bathsheba, unaware of the deeper implications, brought the request to Solomon. But Solomon, discerning the underlying ambition, immediately recognized the danger. His response was swift and cutting:

"And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also..." (1 Kings 2:22).

In that moment, Solomon saw through the guise of brotherly affection and interpreted the request as an act of treason. Adonijah was not content with the mercy he had received; he was once again reaching for the throne. Solomon could not allow a rival to threaten the stability of God's appointed kingdom. Acting decisively, he ordered Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, to carry out the execution (1 Kings 2:25).

KEY REASONS SOLOMON HAD ADONIJAH KILLED:

Adonijah had already attempted a coup. His earlier self-coronation (1 Kings 1) revealed his willingness to defy his father's will and God's plan.

His request for Abishag carried political weight. In the culture of the day, such a union symbolized a claim to royal authority (1 Kings 2:13-22).

Solomon needed to secure the throne early in his reign. David had charged Solomon to deal wisely with those who posed threats to his kingdom (1 Kings 2:5-9).

The law and custom regarded such a move as treasonous. By ancient standards, Adonijah's request was a challenge to Solomon's divine appointment as king.

THEOLOGICAL AND LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS:

Solomon's decision, though harsh by modern standards, reflects the weighty responsibility of leadership in ancient Israel. The king was not merely a political figure, but a guardian of God's covenant and an instrument of divine order. Any threat to that order risked not only the stability of the kingdom, but the unfolding plan of God through the line of David.

Adonijah's downfall serves as a solemn warning about unchecked ambition. Though spared once by Solomon's mercy, his refusal to submit cost him his life. Leadership requires both mercy and justice—and Solomon exemplified both. He extended grace until grace was no longer appropriate.

In the end, Solomon acted to preserve the kingdom God had entrusted to him. His actions secured the throne, fulfilling his father David's instructions and God's sovereign plan. Adonijah's story reminds us that rebellion, however cloaked in civility, leads to ruin when it stands against God's ordained authority.

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