



FEED MY SHEEP

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David Dying but Sons Fight Each Other

We are approaching the end of our studies of the character of Saul and David. But even as King David's life force is gradually diminishing and death approaches, the palace intrigues and squabbles within the family of David continue unabated. Recall that this had been prophesied as the curse upon David's family resulting from David's great sins in the whole Bathsheba-Uriah the Hittite affair.

1 Kings 1:1 Now king David was old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

David is 70 years old, getting very close to death. He had difficulty staying warm. Even when they threw some extra blankets on David, it still did not warm him up. Now the king's servants—whom Josephus says were physicians in this case—they had another idea.

2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin; and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.

One 19th century commentator noted that “in modern Palestine and Egypt, the people, owing to the heat of the climate, sleep each in a separate bed. They only depart from this practice for medical reasons.”

Ecclesiastes 4:11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*?

The phrase “lie in thy bosom” has the possible meaning in Hebrew of referring to sexual relations. Ob-

viously, they assumed that such excitement and activity would get David's blood circulating up to speed again. The LXX translation makes it quite clear what was intended. It reads: “let her excite him and lie with him.”

3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite and brought her to the king.

4 And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

Well, it turns out that David is simply too weak to do just about anything anymore. So Abishag cherished the king. The Hebrew word means she “served” the king. She acted as a nurse to him. She tended to his needs, but this did not include sexual needs, but only because David had no ability for that anymore. It says the “king knew her not.” The scribe of 1 Kings lets us know that even though the servants brought the woman in for that purpose, that David did not have sexual relations with her. It is the same Hebrew word used in Genesis where it says that Adam *knew* Eve and she had a son.

The Hebrew word translated “knew” is ya-daw'. But you may be more familiar with it being pronounced as *yada*, as in *yada, yada, yada*. This phrase has become part of the vocabulary of many American Christians. It originated from the comedian Jerry Seinfeld as he repeated it on his TV sitcom program after program (so I am told; I never watched it). Now millions of professing Christians are using it in their everyday conversation. Do you understand what Seinfeld

and his writers and producers are doing? When you say those words, you may as well be raising your middle finger and using another four letter word that starts with “f.” We have been tricked into it, but it’s not a habit too difficult to break. Let’s quit saying it, okay?

This Israelite maiden, Abishag, was brought to David with the intent that she would become another of his wives or concubines. In fact, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* flatly states that “she became his wife.” However, this idea of David’s medical advisors to provide him another beautiful young concubine and thereby “stoke his fires” might have been counterproductive, even had David had the capability of engaging in sexual activity. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says this:

“More and more David became enfeebled in mind and body. The hardships and privations of his early years and the self-indulgence of his polygamous life in maturer manhood had weakened his constitution, and he slowly sank into his grave.”

So while David is growing weaker and more feeble, his son Adonijah takes the opportunity to try to seize the throne, just as his half-brother, Absalom, had done.

5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king; and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

Here are two new characters in the family of David whom we have not seen before: Adonijah and his mother, Haggith. Twice before, we have given you genealogy charts of David’s family. The one included in this issue will be the final chart in this very lengthy FMS series of Bible studies. Due to its inclusion in this FMS, we will not get very far in the story, but we will at least get the major players introduced. (Keep this chart handy for reference while reading the next few issues.)

We have added many names and other data to this final copy. The double-dashed lines indicate a concubine relationship and we have placed Abishag there. I don’t think she became an actual wife, but she was technically part of the official harem. The solid double lines indicate a husband-wife relationship. Therefore, just below and to the right of David, you see Michal, the daughter of King Saul. She was

David’s first wife, but she had no children. And there is Haggith on the left side of the page, plus two other wives who are not mentioned anywhere in the story, but they and their sons are listed in the family tree in 1 Chronicles 3.

Most significantly, I want to call your attention to Bathsheba in the upper right quadrant and notice that she had five sons. We assume Solomon was her youngest, and probably David’s tenth-born son. About a millennium later there was born a descendant of Solomon whose name was Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. Just to the left of Solomon’s name is another son of David and Bathsheba named Nathan. And I’d wager a nickel to a doughnut that they named him after the gutsy prophet, who was confidante to David. About a millennium later, through this line of David and Bathsheba and Nathan are born Mary and Jesus the Christ, the Greater David, the King of kings.

In verse 5, we had read that Adonijah “exalted himself.” He gathered an entourage and started a royal procession with chariots and horses and 50 men running before him. Recall that Absalom also had the 50 men running before him. It was a sign in those days that the king was coming in procession. The number 50 could be symbolic of either Pentecost or jubilee, but certainly in the life of Saul and Absalom, it manifested a very Pentecostal spirit. It now appears in Adonijah. Is Pentecost bad? Heavens, no. It is a necessary step in our progression to spiritual perfection.

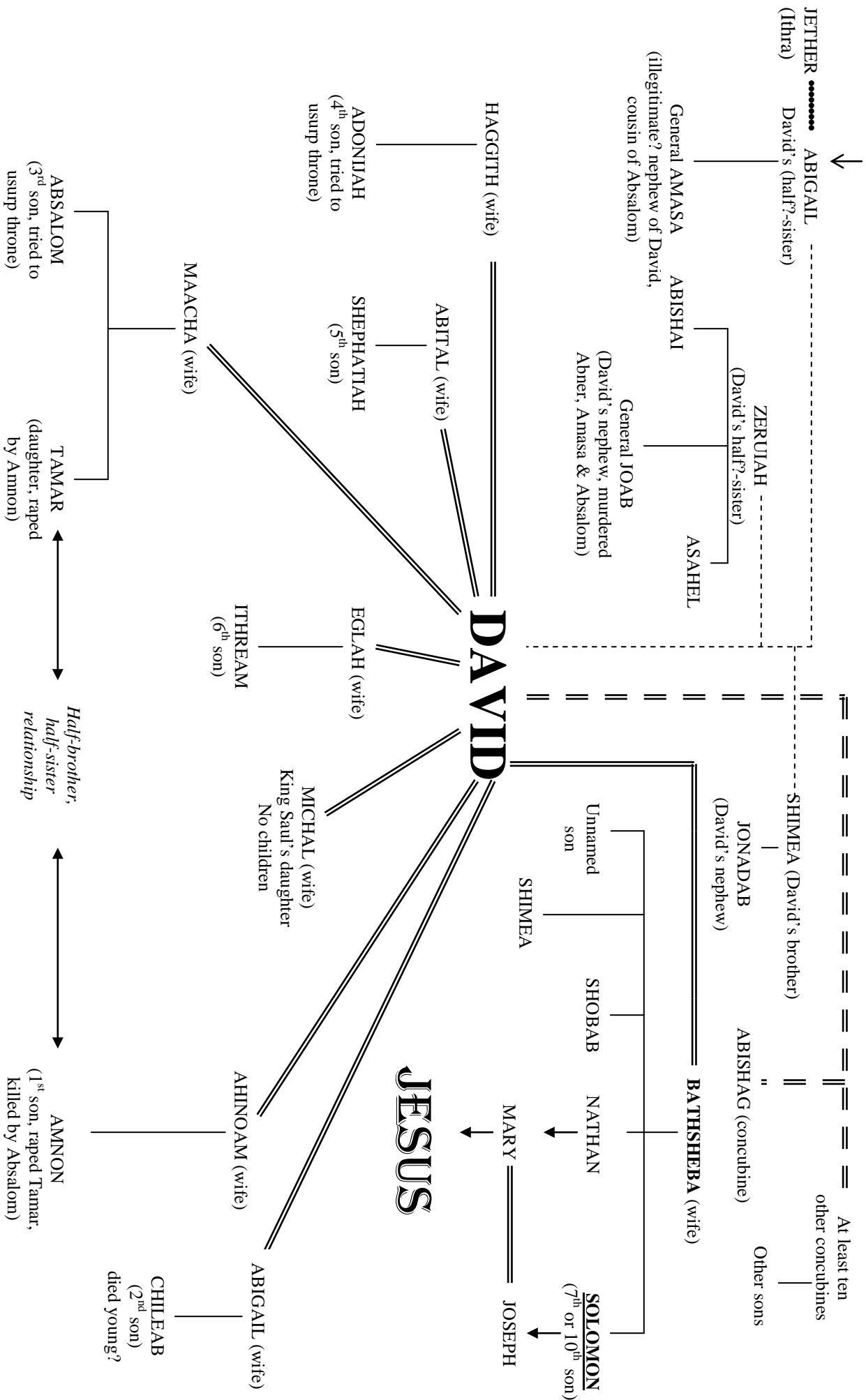
But remember, it is a mixed bag. It was a feast celebrated with two loaves. This bread was made of wheat flour mixed with leaven. King Saul had a couple of good qualities, but his entire 40-year reign was characterized chiefly by his many failings. That’s why the Pentecostal movement today is also such a mixed bag. It comprises a lot of falsehood, phoniness, flim-flam and con artistry, all mixed together with a much smaller percentage of bona fide manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Historically, the age of Pentecost has seen the church rule like Saul for the past 2,000 years. Pentecost is imperfect. It is better in comparison to Passover, but it is not so good in comparison to Tabernacles. We long to go on to the age of Tabernacles and to possess our own personal perfect tabernacle, the glorified, immortal body. So Adonijah, like King Saul, like Absalom, was a Pentecostal, wheat company, non-overcomer type.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OF KING DAVID

Chart to go with Stone Kingdom Ministries CDs/Tapes #435 & 436:
Jesus, the Serpent and the Stone Kingdom July 2003

See 1 Chronicles 3:1-9



NAHASH
 (Ammonite,
 father of)

JETHER ABIGAIL
 (Ithra) David's (half?-sister)

General AMASA
 (illegitimate? nephew of David,
 cousin of Absalom)

ZERUIAH
 (David's half?-sister)

ASAHIEL

General JOAB
 (David's nephew, murdered
 Abner, Amasa & Absalom)

DAVID

JESUS

ABSALOM
 (3rd son, tried to
 usurp throne)

TAMAR
 (daughter, raped
 by Amnon)

Half-brother,
 half-sister
 relationship

AMNON
 (1st son, raped Tamar,
 killed by Absalom)

CHI'LEAB
 (2nd son)
 died young'?

MARY

JOSEPH

SOLOMON
 (7th or 10th son)

BATHSHEBA (wife)

SHIMEA (David's brother)

JONADAB
 (David's nephew)

ABISHAG (concubine)

Unnamed son

SHOBAB

NATHAN

HAGGITH (wife)

ABITAL (wife)

SHEPHATI'AH
 (5th son)

EGLAH (wife)

ITHRE'AM
 (6th son)

MAACHA (wife)

MICHAL (wife)
 King Saul's daughter
 No children

AHINOAM (wife)

ABIGAIL (wife)

What is one of the characteristics of these types? They exalt themselves. True, Saul did not do so initially, but it later permeated his character. A Saul-type has the attitude that “it’s my way or the highway.” For example, remember when Saul would not wait for Samuel and so he offered the sacrifice himself? Absalom exalted himself. Adonijah exalted himself. David did not exalt himself. He was almost always humble. As we will see later, Solomon did not exalt himself. He waited for his father to exalt him. All these and more provide the case histories from which Jesus drew the general principle that he who humbles himself shall be exalted and he who exalts himself shall be brought down. In God’s kingdom, humility wins the day. Next, in verse 6, we are given a thumbnail description of Adonijah. The continuing similarities to Absalom are striking.

6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?

That word *displeased* could have been better translated. What it means is that David never crossed him, never rebuked him. David had *spoiled* him. It implies that David doted over him, indulged him, and seldom if ever, disciplined him. This was a weakness of David’s character, seemingly with all his children.

6b ...and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom.

As with Absalom, Adonijah had movie-star good looks, which while it contributes to gaining the adulation of the crowds, is sometimes a curse, rather than a blessing—all depending upon the character of the individual. And in Adonijah’s case, just as with Absalom, he used his good looks to make himself popular with the people and hence, to exalt himself.

7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped *him*.

Being no fool when it comes to politics, Adonijah enlists the aid of some heavy hitters: General Joab, whom David has never been able to control; and Abiathar one of the co-high priests.

8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah.

9 And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants:

Adonijah’s feast was purely a political event. Remember how Absalom had gone back to his hometown of Hebron and invited hundreds of likely supporters to a feast? Well, this is Adonijah’s version of Absalom’s big, Texas-style barbecue campaign fundraiser and nominating convention. Except here, there is only one political party and no opposition—no opposition yet—because the true heir to the throne, Solomon, is unaware of these shenanigans. Somehow, Solomon had been omitted from the invitation list. I’m sure it was just an unintentional oversight.

10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

11 Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth *it* not?

Notice how the brilliant prophet Nathan has subtly played upon the probability of rivalry among the wives to get her attention. It’s not like Bathsheba did not know who Adonijah was. But Nathan phrased it probably to emphasize Haggith.

12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign?

14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words. (to be continued)

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