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1KINGS 1: 1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he couldn't keep warm.

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In the most correct and ancient editions of the Hebrew Bible, the two books of Kings make but one, with sometimes a little break, the first book beginning with 1 Samuel 22:40. Some of the ancient fathers seem to have begun the First Book of Kings at the death of David, 1Kgs 2:12. The more modern copies of the Hebrew Bible have the same division as ours; but in the time of the Masoretes they certainly made but one book; as both, like the books of Samuel, are included under one enumeration of sections, verses, etc., in the Masora.

The titles to these books have been various, though it appears from Origen that they had their name from their first words, דוד והמלך דוד vehammelech David, "and King David;" as Genesis had its name from בראשית bereshith, "in the beginning." The Septuagint simply term it βασιλειων, of reigns, or kingdoms; of which it calls Samuel the first and second, and these two the third and fourth. The Vulgate has Liber Regum tertius; secundum Hebraeos, Liber Malachim: "The Third Book of Kings; but, according to the Hebrews, the First Book of Malachim." The Syriac has, "Here follows the Book of the Kings who flourished among this ancient people; and in this is also exhibited the history of the prophets who flourished in their times." The Arabic has the following title: "In the name of the most merciful and compassionate God; the Book of Solomon, the son of David the prophet, whose benedictions be upon us. - Amen."

The author of these books is unknown: that they are a compilation out of public and private records, as the books of Samuel are, there is little doubt; but by whom this compilation was made nowhere appears. Some have attributed it to Isaiah and to Jeremiah, because there are several chapters in both these prophets which are similar to some found in the first and second books of Kings; compare 2 Kings 18, 19, and 20, with Isaiah 36, 37, 38, and Isa 39:1-8; and 2Kgs 24:18; 2Kgs 25:1, etc., with Jer 52:1, etc.

But rather than allow those prophets to be the authors or compilers of these books, some very learned men have judged that the chapters in question have been taken from the books of Kings in after times, and inserted in those prophets. It is worthy of remark that the fifty-second chapter found in Jeremiah is marked so as to intimate that it is not the composition of that prophet; for at the end of Jeremiah 51 we find these words, Thus far are the words of Jeremiah; intimating that the following chapter is not his.

But the most common opinion is, that Ezra was the author, or rather the compiler of the history found in these books. Allowing only the existence of ancient documents from which it was compiled, it appears,

1. That it is the work of one person; as is sufficiently evident from the uniformity of the style, and the connection of events.
2. That this person had ancient documents from which he compiled, and which he often only abridged, is evident from his own words, The rest of the acts of such and such a prince, are they not written in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, or of Israel, which occur frequently.

3. These books were written during or after the Babylonish captivity, as at the end of the second book that event is particularly described. The author states also, 2Kgs 17:23, that Israel was, in his time, in captivity in Assyria, according to the declaration of God by his prophets.

4. That the writer was not contemporary with the facts which he relates, is evident from the reflections he makes on the facts that he found in the memoirs which he consulted. See 2 Kings 17:6-24.

5. There is every reason to believe that the author was a priest or a prophet; he studies less to describe acts of heroism, successful battles, conquests, political address, etc., than what regards the temple, religion, religious ceremonies, festivals, the worship of God, the piety of princes, the fidelity of the prophets, the punishment of crimes, the manifestation of God's anger against the wicked, and his kindness to the righteous. He appears everywhere strongly attached to the house of David; he treats of the kings of Israel only accidentally; his principal object seems to be the kingdom of Judah, and the matters which concern it.

Now, all this agrees well with the supposition that Ezra was the compiler of these books. He was not only a priest, a zealous servant of God, and a reformer of the corruptions which had crept into the Divine worship, but is universally allowed by the Jews to have been the collector and compiler of the whole sacred code, and author of the arrangement of the different books which constitute the Old Testament. If some things be found in these books of Kings which do not agree to his time, they may be easily accounted for on his often taking the facts as he found them in the documents which he consults, without any kind of alteration; and this is so far a proof of his great sincerity and scrupulous exactness.

The First Book of Kings contains the history of one hundred and nineteen years, from A.M. 2989 to A.M. 3108. It contains a great variety of interesting particulars, the chief of which are the following: The death of David; the reign of Solomon; the building and dedication of the temple; the building of Solomon's palace; an account of his great wisdom; his magnificence, and his fall; the division of Israel and Judah under Rehoboam; the idolatry of the ten tribes over whom Jeroboam became king. It states how Judah, Benjamin, and Levi attached themselves to the house of David; how Rehoboam was attacked by Shishak, king of Egypt, who pillaged the temple; how Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam, and seized on the government of Israel; how Jehu predicted the ruin of Baasha; how Ahab married the impious Jezebel, and persecuted the prophets of the Lord. It relates the acts of Elijah; the destruction of the prophets of Baal; the cruel death of Naboth; the death of Ahab; the good reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; and the wicked reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel, etc. See Calmet's preface to the first and second books of Kings.

David, grown old, is, by the advice of his physicians, cherished by Abishag the Shunammite, 1Kgs 1:1-4. Adonijah conspires with Joab and Abiathar to seize on the government, 1Kgs 1:5-10. Nathan and Bathsheba communicate these tidings to the aged king, vv. 11-27. David immediately pronounces Solomon his successor, and causes Zadok and Nathan to proclaim and anoint him king, 1Kgs 1:28-40. Adonijah and his friends hear of it, are afraid, and flee away, Adonijah laying hold on the horns of the altar, from which he refuses to go till Solomon shall promise him his life; this he does, and banishes him to his own house, 1Kgs 1:41-53.

#### Verse 1

Now King David was old - He was probably now about sixty-nine years of age. He was thirty years old when he began to reign, reigned forty, and died in the seventieth year of his age, 2Sam 5:4, and

1Kgs 2:11; and the transactions mentioned here are supposed to have taken place about a year before his death.

But he gat no heat - Sixty-nine was not an advanced age; but David had been exhausted with various fatigues, and especially by family afflictions, so that he was much older in constitution than he was in years. Besides he seems to have labored under some wasting maladies, to which there is frequent reference in the Psalms.

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1KINGS 1: 2 Therefore his servants said to him, "Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin. Let her stand before the king, and cherish him; and let her lie in your bosom, that my lord the king may keep warm."

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#### Verse 2

Let there be sought - a young virgin - This was the best remedy which in his state could be prescribed. His nearly exhausted frame would infallibly absorb from her young and healthy body an additional portion of animal heat, and consequently trim and revive the flame of animal life. This is properly, as I have elsewhere expressed it, Friar Bacon's secret for the cure of old age.

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1KINGS 1: 3 So they sought for a beautiful young lady throughout all the borders of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

1KINGS 1: 4 The young lady was very beautiful; and she cherished the king, and ministered to him; but the king didn't know her intimately.

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#### Verse 4

The king knew her not - The maxim of Bacon in his enigmatical cure is, "Take all you can from the medicine, but give nothing to it; if you give any thing, it increases the disease and hastens death." I have seen this abundantly verified; but it is a subject on which it would be improper to dilate except in a medical work. An extract from Friar Bacon's Cure of Old Age may be found at the end of the chapter.

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1KINGS 1: 5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." Then he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

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#### Verse 5

Adonijah the son of Haggith - Who this woman was we know not; Adonijah was evidently David's eldest son now living, and one of whom his father was particularly fond; see 1Kgs 1:6.

Prepared him chariots and horsemen - He copied the conduct of his brother Absalom in every respect. See 2Sam 15:1.

1KINGS 1: 6 His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, "Why have you done so?" and he was also a very handsome man; and he was born after Absalom.

1KINGS 1: 7 He conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him.

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Verse 7

And he conferred with Joab - Joab well knew, if he made the new king, he would necessarily be continued in the command of the army, and so govern him.

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1KINGS 1: 8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men who belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.

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Verse 8

And Nathan - Some suppose that he was the preceptor of Solomon.

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1KINGS 1: 9 Adonijah killed sheep and cattle and fatlings by the stone of Zohelath, which is beside En Rogel; and he called all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants:

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Verse 9

Slew sheep and oven - Making a royal feast, in reference to his inauguration. As he had Abiathar the priest with him, no doubt these animals were offered sacrificially, and then the guests fed on the flesh of the victims. He had not only a splendid feast, but a great sacrifice; and he gave by this a popular color to his pretensions, by affecting to receive his authority from God.

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1KINGS 1: 10 but Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he didn't call.

1KINGS 1: 11 Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Haven't you heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith reigns, and David our lord doesn't know it?"

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Verse 11

Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign - He was now considered as being legally appointed to the regal office, and no doubt was about to begin to perform its functions.

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1KINGS 1: 12 Now therefore come, please let me give you counsel, that you may save your own life, and the life of your son Solomon.

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Verse 12

Save thine own life, and the life of thy son - Nathan took for granted that Adonijah would put both Bath-sheba and Solomon to death as state criminals, if he got established on the throne. O cursed lust of rule! a father will destroy his son, a son depose his father, and a brother murder a brother, in order to obtain a crown! At this time the monarchy of Israel was unsettled; no man knew who was to succeed to the crown, and the minds of the people were as unsettled as the succession. I have examined both systems, and find that, with all its alleged disadvantages, hereditary monarchy has a high balance of evidence in its favor beyond that which is elective, and is every way more safe for the state and more secure for the subject.

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1KINGS 1: 13 Go in to king David, and tell him, 'Didn't you, my lord, king, swear to your handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? Why then does Adonijah reign?'

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Verse 13

Go and get thee in unto King David - He knew that this woman had a sovereign influence over the king. If Bath-sheba was a source of pleasure to David, must she not also have been a source of pain to him? For could he ever forget the guilty manner in which he acquired her?

Didst not thou - swear - It is very likely that David made such an oath, and that was known only to Bath-sheba and Nathan. It is nowhere else mentioned.

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1KINGS 1: 14 Behold, while you yet talk there with the king, I also will come in after you, and confirm your words."

1KINGS 1: 15 Bathsheba went in to the king into the room. The king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king.

1KINGS 1: 16 Bathsheba bowed, and showed respect to the king. The king said, "What would you like?"

1KINGS 1: 17 She said to him, "My lord, you swore by the LORD your God to your handmaid, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.'

1KINGS 1: 18 Now, behold, Adonijah reigns; and you, my lord the king, don't know it.

1KINGS 1: 19 He has slain cattle and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the army; but he hasn't called Solomon your servant.

1KINGS 1: 20 You, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, that you should tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

Verse 20

That thou shouldest tell - who shall sit on the throne - This was a monarchy neither hereditary nor elective; the king simply named his successor. This obtained less or more, anciently, in most countries.

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1KINGS 1: 21 Otherwise it will happen, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.”

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Verse 21

Shall be counted offenders - When Adonijah and his party shall find that I and my son have had this promise from thee by oath, he will slay us both.

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1KINGS 1: 22 Behold, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet came in.

1KINGS 1: 23 They told the king, saying, “Behold, Nathan the prophet!” When he had come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

1KINGS 1: 24 Nathan said, “My lord, king, have you said, ‘Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?’

1KINGS 1: 25 For he is gone down this day, and has slain cattle and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has called all the king’s sons, and the captains of the army, and Abiathar the priest. Behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and say, ‘Long live king Adonijah!’

1KINGS 1: 26 But he hasn’t called me, even me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon.

1KINGS 1: 27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and you haven’t shown to your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

1KINGS 1: 28 Then king David answered, “Call to me Bathsheba.” She came into the king’s presence, and stood before the king.

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Verse 28

Call me Bath-sheba - She had gone out when Nathan came in, and he retired when she was re-admitted. Each had a separate audience, but to Nathan the king did not express any will.

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1KINGS 1: 29 The king swore, and said, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

1KINGS 1: 30 most certainly as I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place;' most certainly so will I do this day."

1KINGS 1: 31 Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and showed respect to the king, and said, "Let my lord king David live forever!"

1KINGS 1: 32 King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." They came before the king.

1KINGS 1: 33 The king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

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#### Verse 33

Take with you the servants of your lord - By these we may understand the kings guards, the guards of the city, the Cherethites and Pelethites, who were under the command of Benaiah; and in short, all the disposable force that was at hand.

Solomon - to ride upon mine own mule - No subject could use any thing that belonged to the prince, without forfeiting his life. As David offered Solomon to ride on his own mule, this was full evidence that he had appointed him his successor.

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1KINGS 1: 34 Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel. Blow the trumpet, and say, 'Long live king Solomon!'

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#### Verse 34

Blow ye with the trumpet - After he has been anointed, make proclamation that he is king.

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1KINGS 1: 35 Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne; for he shall be king in my place. I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah."

1KINGS 1: 36 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, "Amen. May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say so.

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#### Verse 36

Sit upon my throne - The matter of conducting a business of this kind seems to have been this:

1. The king elect was placed on the mule of his predecessor, and caused to ride abroad to one of the public wells, or to a river where there was the greatest concourse of people, that they might see who he was that was appointed. Solomon was here taken to the river Gihon, in order to be anointed; the continual stream or constantly running fountain, denoting the perpetuity of the kingdom.

2. The priest and the prophet anointed him in the name of the Lord; and thereby signified that he should be endued with all the kingly virtues; that he should reign by, under, and for the Lord.

3. The trumpet was then to be blown, and solemn proclamation made, that he was anointed king.

4. He was then brought and solemnly placed on the throne, to signify that he had now assumed the reins of government, and was about to administer justice and judgement to the people.

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1KINGS 1: 37 As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David."

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Verse 37

Make his throne greater than the throne of - David - A wish of this kind a king will suffer in behalf of his son, but it is never in ordinary cases considered a compliment to say, "I hope this child will make a better man than his father," because it seems to insinuate some reflections on his father's conduct or character. Many foolish people deal in such compliments, and they may rest assured, for the reasons given above, that they are far from being either welcome or agreeable.

Claudian, in his panegyric De Quarto Consulatu Honorii Augusti, ver. 428, has words something similar to those of Benaiah, when he describes a father, worn out with toils and difficulties, committing the reins of government to the hands of his son: -

Adspice, completur votum: jam natus adaequat

Te meritis; et, quod magis est optabile, vincit. "Behold, thy desire is accomplished.

Even now thy son equals thee in worth; and what is still more desirable, surpasses thee.

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1KINGS 1: 38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride on king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

1KINGS 1: 39 Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the Tent, and anointed Solomon. They blew the trumpet; and all the people said, "Long live king Solomon!"

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Verse 39

Zadok - took a horn of oil - Pottery and glass were little in use in those times; and horns were frequently used to hold oil and wine. The oil used here was the holy anointing oil, which was laid up in the tabernacle, and which was used for the anointing of both priests and kings.

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1KINGS 1: 40 All the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth shook with their sound.

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## Verse 40

The people piped with pipes - They danced, sang, and played on what instruments of music they possessed.

The earth rent - We use a similar expression in precisely the same sense: They rent the air with their cries.

1KINGS 1: 41 Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, "Why is this noise of the city being in an uproar?"

1KINGS 1: 42 While he yet spoke, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said, "Come in; for you are a worthy man, and bring good news."

1KINGS 1: 43 Jonathan answered Adonijah, "Most certainly our lord king David has made Solomon king.

## Verse 43

Jonathan answered - He was properly a messenger about the court; we have met with him and Ahimaaz before, 2Sam 15:36. He had now been an observer, if not a spy, on all that was doing, and relates the transactions to Adonijah, in the very order in which they took place.

1. David has nominated Solomon his successor.
2. Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, have been appointed to set him on the king's mule.
3. They have taken him to Gihon, and anointed him there.
4. They have brought him up to Jerusalem and placed him on the throne of the kingdom.

1KINGS 1: 44 The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and they have caused him to ride on the king's mule.

1KINGS 1: 45 Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon. They have come up from there rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that you have heard.

1KINGS 1: 46 Also, Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom.

1KINGS 1: 47 Moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, 'May your God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and make his throne greater than your throne;' and the king bowed himself on the bed.

## Verse 47

Moreover, the king's servants came - The king himself was at this time confined to his own house, and probably to his bed, and could not possibly see these ceremonies; therefore his confidential

servants came and told him. We know not how Jonathan, in so short a time, possessed himself of so much information.

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1KINGS 1: 48 Also thus said the king, 'Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has given one to sit on my throne this day, my eyes even seeing it.'

1KINGS 1: 49 All the guests of Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and each man went his way.

1KINGS 1: 50 Adonijah feared because of Solomon; and he arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

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#### Verse 50

Adonijah feared - He knew he had usurped the kingdom, and had not his father's consent; and, as he finds now that Solomon is appointed by David, he knows well that the people will immediately respect that appointment, and that his case is hopeless; he therefore took sanctuary, and, fleeing to the tabernacle, laid hold on one of the horns of the altar, as if appealing to the protection of God against the violence of men. The altar was a privileged place, and it was deemed sacrilege to molest a man who had taken refuge there. See 1Kgs 2:28.

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1KINGS 1: 51 It was told Solomon, saying, "Behold, Adonijah fears king Solomon; for, behold, he has laid hold on the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let king Solomon swear to me first that he will not kill his servant with the sword.'"

1KINGS 1: 52 Solomon said, "If he shows himself a worthy man, not a hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die."

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#### Verse 52

If he will show himself a worthy man - If, from henceforth, he behave well, show himself to be contented, and not endeavor to make partisans, or stir up insurrections among the people, he shall be safe; but if wickedness be found in him - if he act at all contrary to this - he shall die; his blood shall be upon him.

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1KINGS 1: 53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. He came and bowed down to king Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

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#### Verse 53

Go to thine house - Intimating that he should have no place about the king's person, nor under the government. Adonijah must have seen that he stood continually on his good behavior.

Friar Bacon's method of restoring and strengthening the Natural Heat "I have read many volumes of the wise: I find few things in physic which restore the natural heat, weakened by dissolution of the

innate moisture, or increase of a foreign one. "But certain wise men have tacitly made mention of some medicine, which is likened to that which goes out of the mine of the noble animal. They affirm that in it there is a force and virtue which restores and increases the natural heat. As to its disposition, they say it is like youth itself, and contains an equal and temperate complexion. "And the signs of a temperate complexion in men are when their color is made up of white and red, when the hair is yellow, inclined to redness and curling. "This medicine indeed is like to such a complexion, for it is of a temperate heat: its flame is temperate and sweet, and grateful to the smell. When it departs from this temperature, it departs so far from its virtue and goodness. "This medicine therefore temperately heats, because it is temperately hot; it therefore heals because it is whole. When it is sick, it makes a man sick; when it is distempered, it breeds distempers, and changes the body to its own disposition, because of the similitude it has with the body. "For the infirmity of a brute animal rarely passes into a man, but into another animal of the same kind; but the infirmity of man passes into man; and so does health, because of likeness. "This thing is seldom found; and although sometimes it be found, yet it cannot commodiously be had of all men. "Now, when this thing is like to youth, that is, of temperate complexion, it has good operations; if its temperature be better, it produces better effects: sometimes it is even in the highest degree of its perfection, and then it operates best; and then there is that property whereof we have spoken before. "This differs from other medicines and nutriments, which heat and moisten after a certain temperate manner, and are good for old men. For other medicines principally heat and moisten the body; and, secondarily, they strengthen the native heat, and after that refresh the body, by moistening and heating it. For it brings back this heat in old men, who have it but weakly and deficient, to a certain stronger and more vehement power. "If a plaster be made hereof, and applied to the stomach, it will help very much, for it will refresh the stomach itself, and excite an appetite; it will very much recreate an old man, and change him to a kind of youth; and will make complexions, by what means soever depraved or corrupted, better. But it is to be observed, that Venus doth weaken and diminish the power and virtue of this thing! "And it is very likely that the son of the prince, in his second canon of the Operations of Simple Medicines spoke of this thing, where he saith, that there is a certain medicine, concealed by wise men, lest the incontinent should offend their Creator. There is such a heat in this thing, as is in young men of sound complexion; and if I durst declare the properties of this heat, this most hidden secret should presently be revealed. For this heat doth help the palsical, it restores and preserves the wasted strength of the native heat, and causeth it to flourish in all the members, and gently revives the aged. "But the simple medicine which restores the native heat, when wasted and weakened, is that which is likened to the complexion of a healthy young man."

All this covered and enigmatical description is intended simply to point out that very medicine recommended by the Jewish physicians to restore and invigorate the dying king. I could show the bearing of every sentence, but I must leave something to the good sense of my readers. By attending to the words in italics, the sense will be more easily discovered. See my note on Rut 4:16 (note).