

1 Kings 1:8–10

A Ministry in the Word

Scripture Reading

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. And Adonijah slew sheep, and oxen, and fat cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants. But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

Three Against Two — Zadok, Benaiah, Nathan

Verse 7 gave us two men Adonijah drew to himself: Joab the general and Abiathar the priest. Verse 8 gives us the three who were not with him: Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet. The contrast is deliberate and significant. Zadok — the true priest, the line of Phinehas, in whom God's covenant of the everlasting priesthood would be fulfilled. Benaiah — the devoted servant of David, head of the Cherethites and Pelethites, David's executioner and loyal instrument of royal judgment. Nathan — the prophet, the voice of God to David, who had rebuked David in his sin and would now crown his son. The priest, the servant, and the prophet stand in contrast to the two whom Adonijah chose. He knew his men, and he knew exactly which ones would not fit into his scheme.

Benaiah — The Triple Overcomer

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada is described in 2 Samuel 23 with three particular exploits: he slew two lion-like men of Moab — Moab being the figure of the flesh; he slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day — the great adversary; and he slew an Egyptian — Egypt the figure of the world. The flesh, the devil, and the world — all three overcome by this man. It is not a coincidence that the Spirit of God records it this way. God was preparing this man to stand at the head of the army under Solomon, replacing the blood-guilty Joab. A man of such character was not suited to Adonijah's feast. No wonder he was not invited.

The One Not Invited — Solomon

Among the king's sons, Adonijah invited all but one. The feast was meant to demonstrate popular support for his claim. Every son of David was there — except Solomon. The one exclusion was not accidental. Adonijah knew, or at least sensed, that Solomon was the divine choice. His later words — *the kingdom was mine, but it was his from the Lord* — suggest he knew it. And yet he proceeded. The flesh takes advantage of any moment of apparent weakness to press its false claim. The occasion was David's condition. The claim had no foundation but the assertion of the flesh: I will be king.

The Feast — And God Left Out

Verse 9 is the great celebration of the flesh. Oxen, fat cattle, sheep in abundance. All the sons of the king. All the men of Judah, the king's servants. But in all of this — David's name is there, but his presence is absent. He is not consulted. He is not told. He has been left out of the calculations altogether. And God has been left out entirely. That is the consistent character of fleshly schemes among the people of God: God is the last one thought of, if He is thought of at all.

We learn from verse 33 that David still had servants in Jerusalem who did not go to Adonijah's feast — because when the time came, the king could say, *take with*

you the servants of your lord. The word lord implies allegiance. Those who accepted the invitation showed where their hearts were. Those who were still in Jerusalem were the servants of David's lord. Not all the men of Judah went, even though all were invited.

Adonijah had invited all but deliberately excluded Nathan, Benaiah, and Solomon. If it had been a genuine movement for the unity of the nation, there would have been some way found to include them. Instead, these were the very men whose character most answered to the throne of God's anointed. Adonijah wanted the forms without the substance — the military, the priesthood, the dynastic legitimacy — but not the prophet, not the true servant, not the chosen king. It was right to the end: wrong king, wrong general, wrong priest. Everything wrong about it.

— *Study ends* —