

1 Kings 1:11–27

A Ministry in the Word

Scripture Reading

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? 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. 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? Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words. And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king... And Nathan the prophet also came in... and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

Psalm 2 and the Present World — The First Man's False Claim

The rage of the nations in Psalm 2 — the desire to break the bands and cast away the cords — has its answering type here in Adonijah. The first man always gets his opportunity to press his false claim before God establishes His elect on the throne. Here there is a delay in David's passing of the kingdom to Solomon, and God uses that delay to bring the character of this flesh into bold relief, so that when Solomon comes to the throne, everything that is contrary to the righteousness of that throne can be brought under judgment. God's answer to Adonijah's I will be king is the same as His answer in Psalm 2: *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*

Nathan — A Different Kind of Action

When Nathan heard what Adonijah was doing, his response was entirely different from Adonijah's method. He did not drum up support. He did not hire a venue. He did not begin recruiting. He said: go to David. Tell the king. God was using His prophet to bring the matter before the one who had the authority to act. That is the character of a true prophetic voice — it directs men back to the one who has the right to decide, not to the one who has the largest crowd.

The difference between the kings and Chronicles is brought out in this very detail: verse 11 and verse 18 both stress that David did not know. It is in the books of Kings because Kings traces man's failure. But God is over all, and the very instruments of the flesh's ambition become the occasion for God to hasten the establishment of His choice.

Bathsheba — Two Witnesses, One Submission

Nathan instructs Bathsheba to go in first; he will follow and confirm her words. This is not merely strategy — it establishes two witnesses. The matter is proved by the testimony of two who knew. Bathsheba was not a bystander hearing it for the first time from Nathan. God had told David even before Solomon was born (1 Chronicles 22:9) that Solomon was to take the throne. This was known to David, and to Bathsheba. She had not stepped forward to act on it herself — she waited until God raised up His prophet to take the matter in hand, and then she followed the prophet's instruction. Like Hannah, who put her son in the care of the Lord and trusted God for the answer to what was wrong at Shiloh, Bathsheba did not try to correct the situation by her own doing.

And what she did when she came before the king is worth noticing: she bowed and did obeisance. The flesh looks for weakness and takes advantage. Here was every opportunity — Abishag was there, David was old, the circumstance was charged. Bathsheba made no remark about any of it. She submitted herself to the

king as God's king. And it was a very good starting point. The king then said to her: *what wouldst thou?* — as close to a blank check as one could receive.

He Entered Not by the Door — John 10:1

The Lord's words in John 10:1 apply exactly here: *he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber*. Nowhere is Adonijah anointed. Nowhere does David appoint him. The feast, the chariots, the invited guests, the declaration *God save king Adonijah* — none of these constituted entry by the door. Solomon waited. He was not invited. He said nothing. He did nothing to press his claim. But when David acted, Solomon entered by the door — anointed by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, riding on the king's own mule, coming up from Gihon to sit on David's throne.

Two Testimonies — Nathan's Addition

Nathan's testimony before the king confirms Bathsheba's, and the testimonies agree. But Nathan adds one detail that Bathsheba had not stated, and it was decisive: *they eat and drink before him and say, God save king Adonijah*. That closed the door on any defence. Without that, a clever advocate might have described it as merely a private dinner among friends. But the public acclamation of another king — while David was alive and had made no such appointment — that was the act that made the whole thing treason. Adonijah had every opportunity to say, David is king. He chose not to. And that is what these words of Nathan make plain before the king.