

The Last Words of David

2 Samuel 23

Lesson Outline

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David's Message

2 Samuel 23:1-7

The Conclusion: 2 Samuel 23:1-2

Last Words

These final words of David were likely the last he spoke as an inspired man of God. As he was nearing the end of his life David reflected upon the LORD'S blessings. He remembered his beginning as a lowly shepherd from the tribe of Judah, the son of Jesse. It was a humble life but one David was never ashamed of. Everything changed drastically when he was exalted above others, including his enemies. To David it was clearly the work of the LORD in his life (Psalm 78:70-71). He was anointed of the God of Jacob, meaning he was chosen to be the king of Israel and given the abilities needed to lead the nation. But that was not all, he was also the sweet Psalmist who wrote many psalms and organized music for Israel (Psalm 98:4). David was a tough leader with a tender heart after the LORD (Psalm 27:4).

Led by the Spirit

The Spirit of the LORD spoke to David inspiring him to proclaim divine messages. Since He is God, the Spirit is able to speak and direct as He chooses (Acts 13:1-3). David understood this, so he knew the words that came from him belonged to the LORD. The Psalms he penned were not products of his imagination but songs from God. David was not the only one to be moved by the Spirit to proclaim the LORD'S message (2 Peter 1:20-21). Like the others he understood it was God's word and not his. This reminds us that the Scriptures are the very word of God, so they should be read with great care.

The Challenge: 2 Samuel 23:3-7**Purpose**

In David's last message we find a subtle reference to the Trinity. This is not surprising seeing we find all three at work throughout the Old Testament.

1. *The Spirit of the LORD* – Holy Spirit (Judges 3:10; 1 Samuel 16:13; Ezekiel 11:5).
2. *The God of Israel* – God the Father (Exodus 5:1; Joshua 8:30; Psalm 41:13).
3. *The Rock of Israel* – Jesus Christ (Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Corinthians 10:4).

The message said nothing concerning David's abilities or achievements but focused on responsibility. Leaders of men are to be just and rule in the fear of God. This will be helpful as they make decisions concerning others. For they will remember that they lead people, made in God's image, and not animals. It is evident rulers are no better than the people they lead; all are sinners before God (Romans 3:10, 23). Often with power comes pride, as a result of this, many rulers live as if their actions are above reproach.

1. *Rulers are not the final authority, the LORD is* – the fear of God will restrain them from terrible deeds and guide them to correct decisions for the people.
2. *Rulers will be accountable to the LORD* – they must not do wrong nor allow it to be done. It is their responsibility to rule according to God's law, to be just.

The wicked and rebellious leaders refuse to consider God (Proverbs 15:9, 26). Because of this they lead according to their selfish desires believing themselves to be the ultimate authority. When allowed to continue, they become burdensome tyrants. A nation will be blessed if they have just leaders that rule in the fear of the LORD.

Prosperity

David understood the importance of the leader looking to the LORD (Proverbs 3:5-6). He knew firsthand the blessings that follow those that honor God.

1. *They will be as light in the morning* – illuminating; like a clear morning. Their leadership will provide correct instruction and information. Israel was led to look to the LORD when David was king.
2. *They will be as the grass after the rain* – refreshing and replenishing. This refers to great growth. Under David's leadership the nation flourished.

David also recognized the difficulties he faced in his personal life. He did not plan on having great troubles within his home, nobody does. Others would not have believed his family would fall apart in such a manner, but it did. David's only consolation was the LORD'S word. He was grateful for the

everlasting covenant God made with him. It was promised that his family and the nation would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:15-16). This of course included the Messiah Jesus Christ who was of the house of David and who will establish an everlasting kingdom (Luke 1:68-69; Psalm 72:11, 17; Revelation 19:11-21). Knowing the LORD would keep His word David's heart was consoled. His difficulties would not eliminate the promise of prosperity because the covenant depended upon God and not men. One can never go wrong when they place their faith in God's word (Psalm 18:30; Proverbs 30:5).

David was well aware of the troubles that come from wicked men, the sons of Belial. This refers to those that oppose God and His leadership. During his reign David dealt with many evil people. Knowing how dangerous they are, he compared them to thorns, which produce pain and damage. One must be prepared to deal with this kind (Ephesians 6:10-11). This passage implies fighting is involved when dealing with the wicked. Remember, David was a man of war and understood the necessity of battle. Like thorns, the wicked will be thrust away, forsaken, and burned with fire (Hebrews 6:8). David clearly believed the LORD would establish His covenant despite the ungodly people in this world.

David's Mighty Men 2 Samuel 23:8-39

First Class: 2 Samuel 23:8-12

Honored Men

The men in this chapter were singled out for their valiant efforts. Many of them joined David when he was an outcast (1 Samuel 22:1-2). These men assisted David in ascending to the throne then helped him extend the borders of the nation. David could not have done what he did, had God not surrounded him with these mighty men (Proverbs 17:17).

The list is broken down into three classes with the first two receiving the highest honors. Not all were recognized the same and there was no award for participation. Only those that showed themselves capable of serving with honor had their name mentioned. Joab is not listed, probably because he oversaw the entire army as captain of the host (2 Samuel 8:16, 20:23).

Heroic Men

The first group includes three men that achieved incredible, if not miraculous, victories in battle. Because of their heroic achievements they stood above the rest. It was evident their success was because of the LORD.

1. *Adino the Eznite* – the chief of captains. Evidently, he was the leader of the top three men, perhaps the chief military adviser. He defeated 800 men in one battle with his spear.
2. *Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite* – one of David's mighty men. After defying the Philistines he stood his ground, with David, when the men of Israel were away. He fought with all of his might, never quitting, refusing to run, and gaining the victory. When the battle

was finished his hand was glued to his sword, perhaps his muscles were unable to release it after being clenched for such a long duration.

3. *Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite* – a brave man from the mountainous country of Judea.¹ He confronted the Philistines while they were foraging for food and defended the ground while others fled.

Second Class: 2 Samuel 23:13-23

Daring Men

The next three men, though honored above the others, did not attain to the level of the first three. They did prove to be brave when they joined David in the cave of Adullam. This might have been when Saul pursued him or on a separate occasion after David became king (1 Samuel 22:1). With the hot weather arousing his thirst David craved water from the well of Bethlehem. The city of Bethlehem was located about six miles from Jerusalem and the well was about a mile from the gate of the city.² David was from this area so the well may have held sentimental value, but he would have to do without because of the Philistines garrison at the city.

Apparently, David's earnest desire encouraged these men to break through the Philistine lines, retrieve the water, and return to him in the cave. This was done without David's knowledge but for his benefit, their love for their king was evident. David was grateful but he refused to drink the water the men risked their lives for. Not wanting to enjoy pleasure while his men sacrificed, he selflessly went without, like the others. Instead he poured the water out unto the LORD. David was blessed with valiant men willing to risk their lives for their leader. Let us serve the LORD with that much dedication (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Dedicated Men

These men distinguished themselves with bravery. Their conduct was remembered and recognized.

1. *Abishai the son of Zeruiah* – chief among the three. This brave man defeated 300 Philistines in one battle. He went with David into Saul's camp, and took away Saul's spear and cruse, which were at his bolster (1 Samuel 26:6-12). He also beat the Edomites in the valley of salt and relieved David when in danger from Ishbibenob the giant (1 Chronicles 8:12; 2 Samuel 21:16,17).
2. *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada a valiant man* – a proven warrior. He defeated two lion-like men in Moab and an Egyptian giant (1 Chronicles 11:23). He took the Egyptian's spear away and conquered him. He also slew a lion in a pit during wintertime, either in self-defense or to protect others. He was placed over David's guard, perhaps a special unit (1 Chronicles 11:25).

¹ John Gill, "Gill's Commentary on the Bible: 2 Samuel," (Bible Truth Forum: E-book, 2005) p. 292

² Ibid, p. 294

3. *Unknown man* – perhaps Asahel the brother of Joab. He is listed next and separated from the thirty that follow. His death occurred early in David's reign but his place of honor remained (2 Samuel 2:20-23). If Asahel is the third man of the group, the total number of 37 men included Joab as leader.

Third Class: 2 Samuel 23:24-39

Notable Men

Little is known concerning the men David recognized at the end of this chapter. For the most part, all we have is a name and place of residence, however there are a few whom we can elaborate on.

1. *Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem* – brother of Eleazar the great warrior. It is a blessing to serve the LORD with family.
2. *Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite* – his father was David's counselor until he aligned with Absalom (2 Samuel 15:12). Ahithophel's poor decision did not undo his son's great exploits, which placed him in this list of honor. Some believe Eliam was the father of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:3).
3. *Uriah the Hittite* – though he was slain in a treacherous way, he was remembered for his dedication. David was forgiven but lived with the constant reminder of his sin.

Noble Men

This list did not accidentally make its way into the scriptures. It is here because God wanted it to be, so we can learn from it (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). These men were to be remembered for their brave actions and their dedication was to be emulated by those that followed. Not all were given the same abilities but all were diligent with what they had. Believers should be content with the abilities God has given (1 Corinthians 7:7, 12:11). They all had different positions and responsibilities, yet they were all able to serve with honor. Like these men, believers should be faithful where God has placed them (1 Corinthians 10:31). Remember the LORD knows our actions. He is paying attention to how we live and He will reward the faithful (2 Timothy 4:7-8; Galatians 6:7-8).