

## 2 Samuel 23

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Date: 08 January 2023

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[ 0 : 00 ] So 2 Samuel 23, I promise we'll finish 2 Samuel next week.! God willing. 2 Samuel 23. It's David's last words. People's last words are always significant, aren't they?

! Oscar Wilde, isn't it? Either this wallpaper goes or I do. You've heard them all kind of thing. But last words are always significant. And David looks back, doesn't he?

These are the last words of David. Chapter 23, verse 1. He looks back on God's promises. In anticipation of what lies ahead for him.

And at the end of his life, he's looking back to God's promises in order to look forward. And so you can divide the section into two uneven parts. You've got 1 to 7, which is the king's hope.

And then you've got 8 to 39, you've got the king's men. So first of all, 1 to 7, the king's hope. David's final words. And they're fascinating really on two levels.

[ 1 : 03 ] The first level is this, that they bring into sharper focus David's pivotal role within the history of redemption. On a secondary level, I think they're also instructive because they teach us something about how big sinners die well.

And there's something about looking at the life of David like we have, and what seems like forever, and seeing how he finished. If you want to learn how to live well, you look at those who died well, and you follow in their footsteps.

And as David reflects on his life, we learn that his greatest contribution is that he fulfilled two roles. So let's look at his role within the kind of story of the Bible redemption.

He served, first of all, as God's chosen vessel, God's chosen instrument to bring God's word to God's people. David was God's chosen instrument to bring the word of God to the people of God. But we also know, don't we, secondly, that David is important because he served as a prototype as God's chosen king. He becomes the paradigm for the Messiah.

[ 2 : 18 ] We know, don't we, from 2 Samuel 7, one from the line of David is going to come and rescue God's people. And so when we think about David, we think, well, why is David great?

Why do we still love the story of great King David? Why is David so important? Number one, because he is God's vessel and he's important because he's God's king.

And in those two senses, David is very, very unique, isn't he? He's a man not like us. Nobody in this room, believe it or not, is God's chosen instrument to bring God's word to God's people in the sense that they are inspired to bring scripture to the people of God.

And none of us in this room plays a significant role as King David. None of us are God's chosen king. And so let's look just quickly at this role of David as God's chosen vessel.

Look at verse one. These are the last words of David. The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel.

[ 3 : 26 ] The spirit of the Lord speaks by me. His word is on my tongue. He is the shepherd laureate of God's people. He is the warrior poet.

Do you remember Braveheart, the film, it ends, doesn't it? With the warrior poet. And as it states in verse one, God anointed David, God set David apart for the purpose of him serving as the sweet psalmist of Israel.

In other words, in the psalms, were not simply David's words. David's words in the psalms were not simply his words. They ultimately were God's words.

When David wrote the psalms, he was not simply writing what he thought would be good to write. He was writing God's words. Think about how greatly impoverished we would be without the psalms.

And David is important for us, but he's important in the history of God's redemption, God's salvation plan. Because he's God's chosen vessel to bring the psalms to the people of God.

[ 4 : 37 ] Simply because David's words were God's words. So for example, you come to the New Testament, in Acts 1, verse 16, Peter says this, he says, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas.

And so there is Peter reflecting on the prophecies about Judas' betrayal in Psalm 69, in Psalm 109. And as Peter is reflecting back on the sweet psalmist of Israel, he states to the disciples, he says, the Holy Spirit spoke through David.

Likewise, in Hebrews chapter 3 and 4, the author there quotes Psalm 95. In order to warn us against hardening our hearts, we read it for the call to worship.

And he quotes Psalm 95, the writer of the Hebrews, and he says, don't be like Israel in the wilderness. Don't harden your heart. And as the writer quotes Psalm 95, he alternates between what the Holy Spirit said, and what David said, and what God says.

So in quoting Psalm 95, in one sentence he says, this is what the Holy Spirit says. And then in the next sentence he says, this is what David said. And then he follows it up with, this is what God said.

[ 5 : 58 ] And so David, as the sweet psalmist of Israel, when he speaks, God speaks. Or more importantly, God speaks through David's words. As David states, in verse 2, the Spirit of the Lord speaks by me.

His word is on my tongue. I think that's one of the clearest statements of the inspiration of the Bible in the whole of the Bible, that it is God breathed.

We understand that one of the chief functions of the Holy Spirit was to inspire men to set them apart for the purpose of speaking or writing God's word.

It's exactly what the Apostle Peter says in 2 Peter 1.21. He says this, for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. It was not as though David had the innate ability to say, do you know what? I'm just going to write Psalm 23. It wasn't as though he was some innate genius writer.

[ 7 : 10 ] No, the Spirit of God inspired him, carried him along so that he would pen those sacred words. So that David's words were God's words. That's what we mean when we say that the Bible was verbally inspired.

We mean the entire Bible that you've got in your lap right now is God's word spoken either through man's lips or man's pen. And when we say that the Bible is verbally inspired, that is what we mean. God is speaking either through the lips of the preacher or the pen. And David is so important in the history of God's work because he was God's chosen vessel to bring the word of God to the people of God.

Without him, we would not have the Psalms. We wouldn't have Psalm 23. We wouldn't have Psalm 19. We wouldn't have Psalm 139. We thank God for raising up King David and the prophets to bring God's word to God's people.

Now not only was David God's chosen vessel, can you see verses 3 to 7, he's God's chosen king. And here at the end of his life, David reflects back on 2 Samuel 7 and God's promised him it's really important when we read the Bible not only that we focus on what is being said, but we look at what's being done.

[ 8 : 30 ] And so think about this. Right at the end of David's life, David finds comfort in God's promise to him in 2 Samuel 7. It's much like the Lord Jesus in the wilderness.

Jesus is the incarnate word of God. He is the word of God made flesh. Everything he says is Bible. Everything Jesus says is scripture.

And yet when you look at the temptation narrative, you see Jesus himself quotes scripture. It is wrung out of him. You not only look at what Jesus says, you look at what he does.

How the Lord Jesus relies on the word of God to understand who he is and to wield off the evil one. And similarly here, look not only what David says, but look at what David does. He's at the end of his life. He's penning his last words and where does he go for comfort? He goes to God's promise to him in 2 Samuel 7 in establishing that great covenant that God made with David.

[ 9 : 34 ] God promised that from that point on there would be one from his line, one of his descendants who would rule over the people of God. And David takes great comfort, doesn't he?

That there will be one who rules justly over men who fears God. He understands that it's ultimately not him.

He's not God's Messiah, but there will be one in his line who will rule over the people of God. So you see that certainly in chapter 22 and verse 51 where David writes this. He says, great salvation he brings to his king and he shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever. And so can you see David right at the end of his life on his deathbed draws comfort by looking back. Looking back on God's word to look forward to the fulfillment of it.

Looking back in order to look forward to the fulfillment that is to come at the end of his life. David, who was inspired by God to write Holy Scripture, relied on Scripture to be his only comfort in life and in death.

[10:43] He looks back on the promise of God in anticipation of what is ahead. He looks forward to the one who will come, the redeemer of God's kingdom. And we know that when we come to the New Testament, don't we, that God's redeemer, the one who will rule over the kingdom of God is none other than Jesus Christ.

The one who will state in the last chapter of the Bible, I am the descendant of David who rules over all. And so what is so encouraging to you and I about this text is we see at the end of David's life, we see how big, big sinners die well.

You can look at the life of David and you can say, well, I'm not God's chosen vessel, I'm not God's chosen king. What encouragement is left for me in the life of David? Well, I think this is one of them. Here you see hope for frail and fallen people. You see how big sinners end well not by relying upon themselves but by trusting in God.

I'm broken. I failed. David could say that. We've seen that with David, isn't it? He failed in many ways but his hope in death is the promise of God unto eternity.

[12:07] Can you see how our hope is grounded in this book? Our hope is grounded in this book. It's exactly how Moses ended his life.

The last words of Moses. Deuteronomy 32. He looked at the people of God as they were about to enter the promised land and he says, take heart, take heart of the word of God for it is your life. And so even in anticipation of death, David is trusting in the promise of God, looking back in anticipation of what lies ahead. And so you and I need to understand that as Christians the best years are ahead.

The best years ahead are ahead. The best years of eternity. As your world caves in.

As your body shrinks and gives way. As you move towards the end, where do we find comfort?

[13:18] We find comfort in the promises of God. You die well by trusting in the sovereign provision of God's word. Do not give up on trusting in the word of God.

Looking back to his promises in anticipation of what lies ahead. many of you know my father is 87. He's pretty unwell really.

It's a bit of a sorry state of affairs. But his best years lie ahead. And those of you who are approaching the end of life, my prayer for you is that you would grow in your love and your dependence on the word of God.

that you don't give up trusting in the scriptures. But until the end you rely on God's promises to you in his word.

So can you see here the king's hope? And what is the king's hope? Well the king's hope is the word of God. It is the bedrock of God's people. And that's where I was going to finish my sermon.

[14:38] But that's not the end. I thought when you say the word of God is the bedrock of God's people you can't really avoid the rest of the chapter. So the king's hope and then we see the king's men verses 8 to 13.

Part of me was very tempted to stop at verse 7. But the more I thought about it you can't do that because the first part of the chapter is saying listen this man was inspired by God to write the living word of God.

He's the sweet psalmist of Israel. And then you can't just disregard the rest of the chapter. Can you? If what I've said in the first half of the sermon is true every word is inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit inspired David to pen these words so David's words are God's word. And so every unpronounceable name here in this list is the result of God inspiring David to write these words for our encouragement.

That's why I wanted to read it to you. Some of you will never read this passage again. Others of you will get to it and read the Bible in a year plan probably in about May and you'll have completely

forgotten the sermon.

[15:46] But I hope that you'll remember that we read these words and you'll slow down. And when you come to a passage like this you say to yourself well I remember this is God's word and this is for my encouragement and this is for my edification and this is written down so I will die well.

I need this. I need these names. You don't have the option of throwing these words out of getting rid of these names.

Thomas Jefferson was the president of the US decided he didn't like bits of the Bible so he just came and cut bits out of the Bible and produced his own. Much like many evangelicals do today. Take what we want leave what we don't. No this is God's word for us and so we need these names. But why? And why are these names recorded in this book?

They don't matter to me to be honest with you. I suspect they don't matter to you do they? Why are these names in this book? They don't matter to me, they don't matter to you but let me tell you they matter to David.

[16:56] They matter to David. David. And these men are recorded in this book because they love the king. And the single reason why these names are recorded is because they love the king.

And your greatest contribution in the kingdom of God is your love for the king. You see these names they don't mean anything to you, they don't mean anything to me but they matter to David. is.

And even more important than that they matter to God. These are those who loved God's chosen king. These are the representatives of the kingdom of God here in the visible manifestation of the Davidic covenant.

Here are those who love the king. And don't you see that the kingdom of God is comprised, is made up of those who love the king and give their lives to the king. There's tremendous encouragement in that isn't it?

Why are these names in this text? They matter to David and they matter to God. You know you go to those memorials, some scattered around Ealing, some in churches, memorials of people that died in the war.

[18:10] You've seen them on the lists of names of people that gave their lives in the war. Maybe you don't stop and look at the names, sometimes I do. You see those lists of names and names and names and names of young men who gave their lives in the war and I suspect it doesn't matter to you.

Most of them wouldn't matter to me. But they matter to this country, don't they? They really matter to this country. They matter to this country because they represent the freedom that this country fought for. And in the list of those names we have hope.

we understand that those names on those boards are representatives of an earthly kingdom. But here we have representatives of the Davidic kingdom, kingdom of David.

And greatness in the kingdom comes from loving the king. You see this list is like that list we know nothing about those people on those boards.

And this list is like another list. The list of the Lamb's Book of Life. This passage reminds us I think of those lists that Paul talks of in his letters.

[19:34] He talks about those who labored with him. Names of people we don't know. Philippians 4 verses 2 and 3. Paul says I entreat you Odeia and I entreat Syntyche do you agree in the Lord? Yes, I also ask you true companion help those women who labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow's workers whose names are in the book of life.

These are my colleagues he says these are my co-laborers in ministry and together we are in this book of life. Do you see tonight if we're in the kingdom we are in the kingdom because we love the king.

none of us can hack into the hard drive of heaven to determine whether our names are written down in the Lamb's book of life. We don't know that. We don't know who's in or who isn't.

You can't read the list of those names in that kingdom like you can't hear. So you ask well whose name is written down in the book of life? And the answer is this those who love the king.

what does the Bible end? Revelation 21. The book of life is comprised of those who love the lamb and worship the king.

[ 20 : 51 ] The king who is the descendant of David. The king who is the lamb of God slain for his people. The king who is Jesus Christ. And so I hope you understand that membership in the kingdom consists of loving the king.

And that is how we know that our name is written down in the lamb's work of life. If I love the king. If I love the king as he's shown to me in his word.

And his word is in so many ways is a reflection of those who love the king. So let me ask you tonight are you loving God's word?

God's God's king. And are you loving God's king? Because those in the kingdom find their greatest contribution in life in loving the king. Those who love the king die well.

And we die well by looking back at God's past promises in anticipation of life with David's greatest son.

[ 21 : 59 ] Life with the king. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.