

A Song of Hope and A Summary of Honor

(2 Samuel 23)

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Introduction

As World War 2 was drawing to an end, Adolf Hitler was not going to surrender...

So on April 30, 1945, Hitler and his wife committed suicide in an underground bunker in Berlin Germany.

In the days leading up to his suicide, Hitler sat down and wrote a last will and then a final letter to the world...

His final address had two parts, the first part of his letter was to tell the soldiers of Germany and the world to continue their fight against the Jews...

And the second part of the letter was to fire two of his top advisers because of their disloyalty to him and appoint their successors..

Once that order to fire and appoint new successors was written, Hitler's final words to the world were this...

“I charge all leaders of the nation and those under them to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all people, the Jewish nation.”

Now, the great irony of that is this...

The death of Hitler and the end of World War 2 not only didn't wipe out the Jews, it made it possible for a Jewish nation to be established in 1948...

Only 3 years after Hitler's death.

Instead of wiping the Jews off the map as he had hoped, Hitler had made it possible for a Jewish nation to be born after 1000s of years of not being a nation...

Now, obviously the Jewish nation is living in disobedience to the God they claim to love because they oppose His Son, Jesus Christ...

And no nation who rejects Christ is going to be blessed...

Yet, the creation of a Jewish nation is another sign that God's kingdom marches forth in the world...

Because the simple truth is this...

The Jews need to be in their land before God sends his Son back to them to call them to repentance and faith in Him for a final time...

My great point is this...

Some men give their lives to oppose the plans of God...

They work against God's will....

As Hitler ended his life, his final words were simply desire of his heart to oppose God's plans in the world...

And though the Jews he fought against were actually on his side because they opposed the plans of God as well, it was God's plan to wipe out the Jews from the face of the earth..

And so Hitler died, and the plans and kingdom of God marched on...

Tonight, we come to 2 Samuel 23....

And in the first 7 verses of this chapter, we find David's final address to the nation...

And unlike Hitler's end of life speech, David is looking to God's kingdom marching forward...

David is overwhelmed with the idea and promoting the idea that God's kingdom and especially God's king will prevail in the world....

At the end of Hitler's life, he is telling the world to fight against God....

At the end of David's life, we are going to be encouraged to fight for the Lord and his purposes...

And chapter 23 is going to encourage us to look ahead to God's kingdom....

By first letting us hear from David who was filled with hope of a coming King in verse 1-7...

And then letting us hear from the writer of 2 Samuel was shows us that God has always gone to great lengths to protect his plans in the past in verses 8-39...

Let's begin with David's final address in verses 1-8 as he gives us...

I. The Preview of the Kingdom (1-7)

Let's read the first 3 verses of chapter 23...

*1 Now these are the last words of David.
David the son of Jesse declares,
The man who was raised on high declares,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel,*

2

*“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me,
And His word was on my tongue.*

3

*“The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spoke to me,*

Couple notes to make here....

First, these are the last words of poetry or song that David is delivering to Israel...

He will deliver a speech in 1 Kings 2, but this is his final song to the nation...

And you see how David was described in these verses...

Raised on high...

Anointed...

Sweet psalmist..

David was powerful but gentle...

He was called but he never rose above the people..

Great men know God, but they never forget the people around them...

This was David..

And then you see in verse 2, a very important truth...

David teaches that God is the author of this song and many other that he wrote...

Notice....

God's Spirit spoke by me...

God's Word was on my tongue...

When someone asks you who wrote the psalms, what is your answer?

Well, David wrote most of the psalms, and you would be exactly right...

But you could also say that God wrote the psalms, and you would be right...

Here is the bottom line in how the Bible came to be...

God carried men along in the Spirit to inspire every word, but he never overcame their personalities and gifting to do it..

When David cries to God, those are his words, yet they were inspired by God...

In effect, God uses David to show us how to call out to Him...

In this chapter, David is looking forward to one of his descendants becoming the long awaited king of the kingdom, yet God gave him every word to say...

So, what did David have to say, or we could say, what did God have to say about the One who was coming....

Look at the second part of verse 3....

This is a preview of the king who is coming...

Verse 3...

3
“The God of Israel said,

*The Rock of Israel spoke to me,
 'He who rules over men righteously,
 Who rules in the fear of God,*

4

*Is as the light of the morning when the sun rises,
 A morning without clouds,
 When the tender grass springs out of the earth,
 Through sunshine after rain.'*

In other words, there is coming a King who will rule righteously over men...

There is coming a King who will rule in fear of God..

And the blessing of having a King like that is this...

He will be like the first rays of sunlight on a cloudless morning...

He will be like green grass shooting up after a fresh rain...

Can you see that?

This king will be a light to the world...

A new day will break when this king comes...

This king will be like well watered growing grass...

Growth will occur the this king comes...

What is this a clear picture of?

It is a picture and preview of the world when Jesus comes to rule it...

He will be a new sunrise on the earth and like fresh growing grass....

Man, that is hard to imagine in our world of politics and culture in the world...

I have never voted and thought that I was voting for a breath of fresh air or a new day dawning....

Now every political promises that since I became of voting age...

But none have delivered it in my memory...

And this year, the choice is between who will make our night less dark...

It is incredible how much our current state of affairs is opposite to the coming of the true King...

He will bring a new morning and a fresh start and it won't be empty promises...

Then in verse 5, David realizes that it will be one from his line who will be this future ruler...

Verse 5...

5

***“Truly is not my house so with God?
For He has made an everlasting covenant with me,
Ordered in all things, and secured;
For all my salvation and all my desire,
Will He not indeed make it grow?”***

David is overwhelmed but confident that God will deliver a King like this from his descendants....

Simply because God has promised to do it..

David knows that God never breaks his word, and therefore, a ruler like what he described in verses 3-4 is coming...

Now guess what?

We sit here 3000 years after David wrote this and what do we know?

Well, we know that Jesus came to earth, but we also know that Jesus didn't rule the earth like this in his 30+ years here...

He never took a throne and ruled the world, so what we should expect?

WE should expect Him to come back and fulfill what was spoken of him here and in 100s of other OT verses...

And what do we know?

Jesus promise do that...

I see that promise to first appear to rapture his church, and then return 7 years later to establish his rule for 1000 years and then into eternity....

But even if you don't see that, every believer looks for the return of the Lord to rule righteously over the globe...

And the incredible is this....

As much as David believed that 3000 years ago, I believe it just as strongly 3000 years later....

I look forward to that king and kingdom as well..

David then finished his final song with a warning...

Verse 6....

“But the worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns,

Because they cannot be taken in hand;

7

But the man who touches them

Must be [a]rmed with iron and the shaft of a spear,

And they will be completely burned with fire in their [b]place.”

If we truly believe that Jesus will rule righteously, then we must also believe that He will have to deal with the unrighteous...

If someone tells you, I want to come over and clean up your house, you would naturally assume that some things would have to be thrown out...

You can't clean by rearranging, you clean by tossing things out...

This world cannot be ruled righteously with unrighteous people...

And when Jesus begins his 1000 year rule of this world, everyone who goes into it will be a believer...

There unrighteous will be dead and will wait 1000 years for a final judgment....

The new heavens and the new earth cannot be filled with sinful people...

Sin must be tossed for righteousness to go on forever...

Some think that Jesus will come back to make all things new, and that includes evil people....

The Bible makes no such claim...

There is a lake of fire that is created for Satan, his demons, and all who have rejected Jesus Christ....

And it will burn forever and ever....

And even David knew that 3000 years ago....

That closes the preview of the king and the coming kingdom....

But then we are faced with 32 verses of war stories and some real difficult names to pronounce in verses 8-39...

We are going to read these verses, but before we do, let me give you the purpose of why they are here...

It is going to be easy to get lost in the details of names and bravery and courage....

But let's think about this in relation to the first 7 verses, we just read...

David knows that his kingdom is not the kingdom that he just wrote about...

He didn't always rule righteously, and he didn't always rule with a fear of God....

Therefore, his kingdom often met opposition...

There were Philistines to fight; there were even members of his own house to fight...

And yet, David always prevailed because God had promised to preserve his line so that he could one day bring forth this perfect ruler...

Yet, how had God accomplished that protection?

Through the courage and bravery of men who fought for Israel and specifically to protect David...

Now, when we read lists like this....

It is important to keep a couple of things in mind....

Number one, the worship is not of the men themselves but of the God who gave them great courage...

There is a hall of faith in Hebrews 11, yet for all the faith of people that you read about there, the bottom line is that their faith came from God...

Ephesians 2... Faith is a gift of God, lest any man should boast....

And so, when the Bible or even we recognize people, we ultimately recognize the God who used these people...

But two, it is important to remember that is fine to recognize human accomplishments for the kingdom of God.

God loves his people and He even honors them....

In fact, he preserves their stories of faith in the Bible so that their names live on forever...

So, as we read these verses...

Keep God at the top of our worship, but recognize that God's people work to keep His kingdom protected...

With that said, let's read verses 8-12 of 2 Samuel 23 as we see the second part of this chapter...

II. The Protection of the Kingdom (8-39)

Verse 8....

8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the [c]captains, he was called Adino the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time; 9 and after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they [d]defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had [e]withdrawn. 10 He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and [f]clung to the sword, and the Lord brought about a great [g]victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip the slain.

11 Now after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered [h]into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the Lord brought about a great [i]victory.

The men around David are going to fall into 3 categories in these verses...

At the top of the stack are 3 Mighty Men that we meet here...

First is Josheb-Basshebeth, who killed 800 men in a single battle..

Second of the 3 Mighty Men is Eleazar, who stayed behind when the rest of Israel retreated and he fought until he was worn out but his sword wouldn't come off the sword...

And Israel ended up winning...

Then the final of the Three Mighty Men was Shammah, who stood in a crop of lentils and fought off the Philistines and led Israel to victory....

He is a favorite of farmers because he saved the nation and the crop in the field....

Now, let's move to verses 13-17, and there is some confusion here...

Because we are going to read about an incredible act of bravery on behalf of David here...

And the question is this...

Is this the act of the 3 Mighty Men we just met or the act of 3 of David's 30 men that we will meet at the end....

I think that this is the act of the 3 we just met, but some disagree...

It doesn't matter to what happened, so let's look at it...

Verse 13...

13 Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. 14 David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 15 David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" 16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord; 17 and he said, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

In this scene of incredible courage is also a bit of humor I would suggest...

In the scene, David is hiding out in a cave...

It may have been the time he hang out to escape the death threats of Saul, or it may have been when David was hiding from the Philistines in his early days as king of all of Israel...

We simply dont know, but we do this...

David probably just made a passing comment in the cave....

Man, I wish I had some water from home....

In every crowd, there are always people who take you literally...

And so these 3 men in verse 13-17 head for Bethlehem...

They dont go around the Philistines; they go through them and they make it the 20 or so miles to Bethlehem and they get back through the Philistines and bring Bethlehem bottled water back to the cave...

And what does David do?

He pours out the water as a sacrifice to the Lord..

Simply because God had protected these men and their lives to bring back some silly water for David....

Then in verses 18-23, we meet two more men that stood out like the 3 mighty men, but were a notch below them....

Verse 18...

18 Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief of the [j]thirty. And he swung his spear against three hundred [k]and killed them, and had a name as well as the three. 19 He was most honored of the thirty, therefore he became their commander; however, he did not attain to the three.

20 Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, [l]killed the [m]two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day. 21 He [n]killed an Egyptian, [o]an impressive man. Now the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. 22 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men. 23 He was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David appointed him over his guard.

Abishai and Benaiah were two more protectors of David and God's kingdom...

Abishai was a leader of David's 30.

He had killed 300 men in battle, and then we meet Benaiah, who had had killed Moabites, killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day, and took a sword from an Egyptian and killed him with it...

And then to finish off this chapter, we get a list of 30 men who stood out in their protection of David and God's kingdom...

The list actually contains 32 men, but the point is the same...

These men were recognized for their bravery in God's kingdom...

Verse 24...

24 Asahel the brother of Joab was among the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, 27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, 29 Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin, 30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hid-

dai of the brooks of Gaash, 31 Abi-albon the Ar-bathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite, 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahas-bai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, 35 Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armor bearers of Joab the son of Zeruiah, 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 39 Uriah the Hittite; thirty-seven in all.

What you have here are 32 more names plus their two leaders, Abishai and Benaiah, mentioned in verses 18-23....

Plus the 3 might men who started this section and so, we end up with 37 all together from verses 8-39...

So, what are to make of this section of chapter 23 and this entire chapter all together...

Conclusion

#1 - God is sovereign, but in His control, He still uses people to accomplish his purposes..

We are not here to put our name in lights and make it well known to the world, we are here to make God's name big in the world...

However, let us work for the Lord in such a way that the world will remember what we did for His kingdom...

If that means, we preach or go out into the mission field, so be it...

But if that also means, we simply live quiet lives, serve the church, and share the gospel with our neighbors, so be it...

God is honored with either one...

#2 - Do what God sets before you, and do it with all your might to protect his Kingdom..

None of these men did what they did to get their name in the Bible...

I doubt any of them realized that their bravery would live beyond their lifetimes, yet it does on the pages of Scripture...

May we be just as faithful in our daily living...

Do the little things well, and God will give you more...

Do the little things poorly, and you will not be trusted with much else...

Our task each day is to simply be obedient and have eyes to see what we can do to please the Lord...

And then do it..

When you live obediently to the Lord, you are protecting the Kingdom because you are protecting the name of your King....

One final thing to see here and really the most important,....

#3 - Look forward to a day when the kingdom won't need human protection...

We know that God has always protected his kingdom, sometimes through the sacrifice of brave people...

Yet there is coming a day when the kingdom on earth will be in perfect hands because it will be in the hands of a perfect king....

There is coming a day of rest for the people of God to serve as protectors of the kingdom...

If we take our minds to the Second Coming of Christ, we see an important truth about the coming kingdom and the coming king...

In Revelation 19, the world has collected all its forces to wage war against God....

All of its military strength and firepower will be in the valley of Meggido, better known as Armageddon and their purpose will be to defeat God and His people once and for all...

Yet, guess what happens?

Does God sends his people into battle like we see in 2 Samuel, where they risk their lives and endure the pain of war....

No, God simply tells his Son to mount his horse and head back, and when he gets there, not one of his people lift a finger to fight for their king....

Instead, our King simply speaks and the armies of the world are defeated...

Jesus will then take his throne and become the king described in 2 Sam 23 verses 3-4....

He will rule righteously and he will rule in the fear
of God....

And the whole world will see a sunrise and a breath
of fresh air like the rays of a new morning and like
the blades of fresh grass....

In that day, the Kingdom won't have to be protected
by the blood of God's people, it will be securely in
His grasp forever more...

Amen and amen.