

2Samuel 23:1 ¶ Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2Samuel 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

2Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God.

2Samuel 23:4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

This chapter opens with a section of verses identified as being the last words of David, the son of Jesse, the sweet psalmist of Israel, the man raised up (from a lowly shepherd) and anointed by the God of Jacob to be the King of Israel. The implication seems to be that David is declaring his songs to be inspired by God, that he was the messenger chosen to share God's word with the people of Israel through song. I think most people would admit that music provides one of the best mediums for memorizing and retaining such truths.

These are obviously not David's very last words. Because of the context, I think the writer is probably declaring verses 2-7 to be David's last psalm. I liked the following quote from Trapp in summary of this psalm: "Wherein he doth, in few words but full of matter, acknowledge God's benefits, confess his sins, profess his faith, comfort himself in the covenant, and denounce destruction to unbelievers . . . How much in a little!"

David declared that the Spirit of the LORD spoke through him as a messenger of God's truth. David identified the LORD as "the God of Israel," the supreme authority over Israel, and "the Rock of Israel," the strong refuge (from the Hebrew for *Rock*) of Israel.

God told David that the man who rules over other men must rule justly and righteously; he must rule in the fear of God. To rule in the fear of God is to rule in accordance with God's revealed will in obedience to His commands. Such a man will shine before God and his people as brightly as the rising sun on a clear day that promotes the growth of the grass sparkling with water after a pleasant rain. I think the psalmist is painting a picture of a man leading a nation that is prospering and experiencing God's blessing.

If only America were ruled by men who ruled justly and righteously in the fear of the LORD! I liked this quote from Guzik: "When leaders rule in the fear of God they recognize that a God of justice reviews their work and will require an accounting of how the ruler has led."

2Samuel 23:5 Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.

This is a verse that is at odds with most of the other translations. Most of the

translations express the first part of the verse as a statement basically declaring David's house or family to be in right standing with God. I know the difference must be in the foundational text. Frankly, either way would make sense to me.

The KJV indicates that God chose David and made a covenant with him despite the fact that his house as a whole was not in right standing with God. We know from what we have learned in the study of this book that David's family was certainly dysfunctional and filled with strife. In that covenant He promised David that His seed would rule on the throne of God's kingdom forever.

1 Chronicles 17:4&11–14 “Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD....And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.”

The key truth is that God chose to make an everlasting covenant, an irrevocable promise to David that he would effect his salvation and fulfill his desires. We know that fulfillment will culminate in the Messiah, Jesus, the Son of God, when He establishes His kingdom on earth.

Again, the wording of the last phrase is confusing and differs in most translations. Maybe it is a reference to the fact that that kingdom is yet to spring up (from the Hebrew for *grow*).

**2Samuel 23:6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:
2Samuel 23:7 But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.**

In contrast, the sons of Belial, those that reject the God of Israel as LORD, are like thorn bushes that one avoids touching with the hands. The only reason you would want to touch them is to pile them up and burn them up, and this would require the use of tools to protect your hands. Implied—and this is what God will do to them.

2Samuel 23:8 ¶ These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.

The rest of this chapter is a listing of David's mighty men, a total of 37. It begins by singling out the chief among them for their exploits. We know that Joab was the chief military commander, but he is not singled out for his service. That is not surprising considering the dislike that David had for him. There appear to be three top generals under him and three more commanders under them that were appointed to leadership over the remaining 30.

The first man identified is Adino the Eznite, a Tachmonite that was a chief among the captains. This seems to indicate that he was the next in command under Joab. He is remembered for killing 800 men with his spear in one battle. It is noted that the record in Chronicles calls him Jashobeam and records the number killed as 300.

*1 Chronicles 11:11 "And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear **against three hundred** slain by him at one time."*

John Gill offers this explanation: "...others observe, that he engaged with eight hundred, and slew three hundred of them, when the rest fled, and were pursued and killed by his men; and he routing them, and being the occasion of their being slain, the slaying of them all is ascribed to him; or he first slew three hundred, and five hundred more coming upon him, he slew them also: but what Kimchi offers seems to be best, that there were two battles, in which this officer was engaged; at one of them he slew eight hundred, and at the other three hundred; for so what is omitted in the books of Samuel, and of the Kings, is frequently supplied in the books of Chronicles, as what one evangelist in the New Testament omits, another records."

2Samuel 23:9 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: 2Samuel 23:10 He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.

After Adino/Jashobeam was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite. He was one of the three that were with David when they defied the Philistines despite the fact that the troops of Israel deserted them. He fought so long and so hard that it was like his hand was glued to his sword. It is noted that the LORD achieved a great victory through David and these three men, and the people profited from the great spoil from this battle.

The Chronicler provides a bit more information about this battle.

1 Chronicles 11:13 "He was with David at Pasdammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines."

2Samuel 23:11 And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. 2Samuel 23:12 But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.

After Eleazar was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. He is noted for

defending a crop of lentils from the Philistines when most of the people who should have been helping him fled. Again it is noted that it was the LORD that achieved a great victory through this man. As mighty as all of these men were, they could have achieved none these exploits except through the LORD's enablement.

I liked this application from Spurgeon: "Solitary prowess is expected of believers. I hope we may breed in this place a race of men and women who know the truth, and know also what the Lord claims at their hands, and are resolved, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to war a good warfare for their Lord whether others will stand at their side or no."

2Samuel 23:13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

2Samuel 23:14 And David *was* then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Bethlehem.

2Samuel 23:15 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!

2Samuel 23:16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

2Samuel 23:17 And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

This section details a time when three of the chiefs of the thirty (not specifically identified, but most likely were the three just named) went to David at the cave of Adullam where he was in hiding from the Philistines that were encamped in the valley of Raphaim. There was also a garrison of the Philistines stationed in Bethlehem.

David remarked that he longed for a drink from the well by the gate to the city of Bethlehem. This was David's hometown, and I am sure he had drunk water from that well many times. Three of his mighty men managed to get through the Philistine troops to get David that drink of water and bring it to him. David's reaction must have surprised them when he dumped the water out before the LORD. He felt guilty that the men had jeopardized their lives just to satisfy his desire for a drink. To him, that water represented their blood; and he was not worthy to drink it.

2Samuel 23:18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and slew them*, and had the name among three.

2Samuel 23:19 Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three.

We come now to two of the three men under the three generals—Abishai and

Benaiah.

It appears Abishai, Joab's brother and son of David's sister Zeruah, was fourth in command under his brother. He is noted for personally killing 300 men in battle. He is recognized as chief among the commanders under the generals, but definitely not worthy of being ranked with the top three generals.

Though not recorded here, scripture records that Abishai had shown his bravery in many other instances.

- He was the one that volunteered to go with David to take Saul's spear and cruse of water while Saul's army slept.
- He saved David's life when threatened by the Philistine giant Ishbibenob the last time that David went to battle.
- The Chronicler credits him for killing 18,000 in the valley of salt. I would assume that means he led the troops that did so.

2Samuel 23:20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

2Samuel 23:21 And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

2Samuel 23:22 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

2Samuel 23:23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

Next of note was Benaiah the son of Jehoida, the son of a valiant man of Kabeel. Among his many exploits he is noted for killing two heroic men of Moab as well as a lion one snowy day. He also killed an Egyptian with a spear that confronted him while equipped with only a staff; he actually took the man's spear from him and killed him with that same spear. The Chronicler informs us that this man was very tall, five cubits, or about eight feet all.

As mighty as he was, Benaiah was still not worthy of ranking with the top three generals. He was, however, placed in charge of David's personal bodyguards.

The following verses comprise a listing of the rest of David's mighty men. Since the previous leaders have been noted in order of leadership, it would seem that Asahel, Joab's other brother, was the final commander in the company of Abishai and Benaiah.

It should also be noted that the list includes Uriah the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba that David had killed. We also learned previously that Abner killed Asahel. I think this indicates that this list commemorates the men most noted for helping David establish his kingdom whether or not they were still alive.

Note that verse 34 identifies Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite.

Ahithophel was David's personal counselor that defected to help Absalom. It is believed that Ahithophel was the Bathsheba's grandfather since Eliam is identified as her father.

2 Samuel 11:3 "And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

**2Samuel 23:24 Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,
2Samuel 23:25 Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite,
2Samuel 23:26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
2Samuel 23:27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
2Samuel 23:28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,
2Samuel 23:29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,
2Samuel 23:30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,
2Samuel 23:31 Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,
2Samuel 23:32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,
2Samuel 23:33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite,
2Samuel 23:34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
2Samuel 23:35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,
2Samuel 23:36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,
2Samuel 23:37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,
2Samuel 23:38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,
2Samuel 23:39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.**