

II Samuel – Part 10

Living with Purpose – II Samuel 23:1-7; II Kings 1-2

Every person has a purpose for living. Every one of us has a plan from God that He wants us to fulfill. God's plan for David went far and above any plan David could have ever conceived. The prophet Nathan told him, "Now, therefore, so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, 'I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou went, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth'" (II Sam. 7:8-9).

It is now the end of David's life. Had he fulfilled God's purpose? He had gotten a great victory for Israel when he killed Goliath, and had overcome many of the enemies of Israel with God's help, but what of his failures? His family had literally fallen apart in perversion, murder, and mutiny over the crown. He had tried to walk with God all his life, but had it been enough?

I. God's Plan for David

David's heart had some outstanding character traits. Even in the face of his failures, when he struggled to understand Saul's obsession with killing him, when his son with Bathsheba died, or when he suffered the consequences of his sin, David never lost his faith in God. He continued to honor God and trust that God's judgments were appropriate, while rejoicing that his sin did not separate him from God. He learned that, through repentance, God would forgive his sin. Through God's forgiveness of him, David learned to forgive those who sinned against him.

He was a man of courage. There must have been many times he was greatly afraid of Saul, and when he fought against enemies who had far greater armies than his own. But he took comfort in knowing that God went before him, and he fought courageously.

David had a heart to serve God. He brought the ark to Jerusalem and set it up as a place of worship. While he desired to build a temple for God, that desire was not allowed to be fulfilled. Instead of being upset, he set about collecting the necessary items needed for its construction.

Even though God had promised that David would become king, he did not try to speed the process along and sin by killing Saul, the Lord's anointed, who was already in that position. He waited ten years to become king, refusing to walk ahead of God's timing.

II. Last Inspired Words

In II Samuel 22, David composed a psalm that celebrated how God had delivered him from all his troubles. Through those deliverances, David's rule was established. Now, in II Samuel 23:1, we come to the turning point of the chiasm that began in II Samuel 21. "Now these be the last words of David." The ancients regarded the last words of any person as significant, but their great leaders and prophets were even more so. (cf. Gen. 49; Deut. 33; Acts 20:17-38; et al.). They often communicated vital lessons that

they had learned from walking with God for many years. So, what can we learn from David's last inspired words?

Whether you are retiring, turning your job over to a new leader, or on your deathbed, you might want to say something inspiring or give some last-minute instructions to those replacing you or being left behind. David will give Solomon some last instructions before he takes his position as the next king, but in II Samuel 23:1-7, he is addressing his people. This speech has probably been dictated to a scribe, so someone else might read it to them if David is unable to do so, or maybe it will be sent throughout the kingdom to be read in various locations.

David's words describe what is necessary for Israel's future leadership to continue to remain supreme and prosperous. Since human kings won't be able to live up to the obedience God requires, these words are messianic and describe the ideal King, Jesus. They do, however, anticipate David's successors.

The address begins by identifying the author: "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..." Since this is an important message for the people of Israel, he wants them to be completely sure they know who is making the statement.

David identifies himself as just a common Israelite, a man of humble birth, whom God had chosen and anointed to be king of Israel. He had done nothing to obtain his position. It was God who had given him his authority. It also reminds them of his gift of poetry. These four descriptions picture his leadership in relation to his family, his political administration, his military forces, and his spiritual influence.

The words that are about to be proclaimed are words given directly to David by the **Spirit** of the Lord. He gave **God** the credit for his inspiration. Here, too, David gives a second name to God. He is not just "the God of Israel," but describes Him as the "Rock of Israel." The "Rock" is not a human leader but a symbol of God's authority and guidance. It is also a foretelling of **Jesus**, the Rock of our Salvation. (Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:19-22). The ideal king "that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (v. 3).

As we approach our study of I Kings, we will see the rise and fall of many kings. Some were obedient; others were not. The kings rise and fall based on whether they follow God's commands. Disobedience brings judgment—sometimes immediately, sometimes delayed—but always clearly. True wisdom is not intellect, but loyalty to God, "ruling in the fear of God."

David's rule was marked by justice and the fear of God. While it is true that he made his share of mistakes, he was also aware of his accountability to God. He was quick to repent. Every leader, every ruler, every parent needs to be keenly aware of their accountability to God...because someday we will answer to Him! (Rom. 14:12).

A God-fearing king brings blessings to his people, a pleasantness that could be likened to that of a morning without clouds. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (vs. 4). His words should be delivered with a freshness like would be felt at the beginning of a new and beautiful day. As the sun

benefits the grass after rain, bringing with it the promise of renewal and growth. A godly king benefits his people with light and life.

Ruling this way would lead his people to God and away from the punishment of sin that comes with it. David had done that as they conquered enemy after enemy and expanded Israel's territory. This is how David viewed his dynasty.

An interesting sentence structure occurs when comparing verse 5 with the various translations. The KJV translates it as a statement, as if David is acknowledging that his house has sin: "Although my house be not so [not living correctly] with God..." other translations ask it as a question: "Is not my house right with God?" (NASB, LSB, CSB, etc.). The NIV reads yet a little differently, "If my house were not right with God, surely He would not have made with me an everlasting covenant..." Since there was no punctuation in the original language, we must determine how God meant us to understand it.

Let's look at it from both perspectives. If we use the KJV, David is saying that he knows his own house is not as perfect as he could wish for, not so good, not so happy. It had not been perfect in the past, so he didn't foresee that it would change once he was gone. He was assured of blessings because of the covenant God had made with him, but his family had not been as prosperous or as godly as he might expect or hope. (v. 5; II Sam. 7:16). So, even though his family is diminished, distressed, disgraced, and weakened by errors and corruptions, David rests in the promise that God will preserve to him a Seed, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his house. (Isa. 55:3). God's promises will never fail.

If we ask it as a question, David is acknowledging that his house has been doing what God wanted. Because of that, God gave him and his seed this covenant. (II Sam. 7:1-16). The NIV translation reads as if God wouldn't have rewarded them with the covenant if they hadn't been right with God.

So, which interpretation is correct? All have merit. The covenant God made with David is considered "unconditional" in its core promise of an everlasting dynasty and kingdom, although some elements have conditionality in their fulfillment. First, let's remind ourselves of the difference between a "conditional" covenant and an "unconditional" covenant. The conditional covenant is tied to man and God; both must fulfill their requirement for it to be binding. An unconditional covenant is one where God does all the work. Man has no part that he must fulfill.

The Davidic Covenant's central promise, that God will establish David's "house" (dynasty), "kingdom," and "throne" forever (II Sam. 7:14-16) is unconditional. Its promise is not tied to David's personal obedience; it rests solely on God's faithfulness. However, its continuation and fulfillment depend on obedience. The relationship was of the utmost importance.

David and his family continued to be bound by the Mosaic Covenant for obedience and loyalty (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 28) even though the Davidic covenant made a special connection specifically to David and his offspring. If you remember, God promised Israel that they would be His treasured possession among all the nations, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation which would be set apart to represent Him to the world. Blessings would be given for obedience and curses for disobedience.

In I Kings 2:2-4, David will instruct Solomon in the ways in which he is to rule Israel as the next king. The Lord would continue His word that He had spoken to David, "...If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said He) a man on the throne of Israel." We will see in I Kings that they were not obedient. Before Solomon's reign was complete, he had sinned, the throne was lost, and the kingdom divided.

The covenant's physical fulfillment, that of David's descendants would rule, was conditional on their obedience, but the spiritual promise of the Messiah was eternal and unconditional. The "forever" promise was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, the eternal Son of David (Matt. 21:9), whose reign is eternal.

Those who sin without repentance must be punished. God called those who rejected Him, "Sons of Belial." (vs. 6-7). "But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: 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." Neither will this promise of God fail; God will judge those who refuse Him.

Conclusion:

The tragedy of all tragedies is that we should live and die and never find that purpose, that special God-ordained purpose, that God desires for each of us. He has provided a covenant for us, a covenant of grace, that God has made for us through Jesus. He has given us a choice to accept it or reject it. If we reject it, we will be like the Sons of Belial and face eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire, Hell, for all eternity.

For those who accept His free gift of salvation, God promises eternal life to those who accept Him as their Lord and Savior. No matter the circumstances, the sins we have previously committed, what our family is like, God promises to forgive us and wipe our sins away as far as the east is from the west. (Ps. 103:12). Like David's family, not only we ourselves, but also our children, have a fleshly spirit that must constantly be kept under control. It is easy to give ourselves over to the ways of the world, the lust of our eyes, the lust of our flesh, and our pride. (I Jn. 2:16). God says that these things are not of Him, but are of the world, and they make up the sin that separates us from Him. However, God remains in control, and His promise of eternal life will never fail.

God has given us a choice, and He has given us purpose—to live for Him. Don't reject Him. God said that the ultimate ruler would bring blessing. He is that ruler. When we accept Him, He brings the Light of His truth to us, and new life in Him. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

If we already know Him as Savior, how are you using the life He has given you? Are you allowing it to wither or bringing out new shoots of tender grass that will bring others to Him? What choice have you made?

The King is Dead (I Kings Part 1)

- 1)** Read I Kings 1-2. What do you notice about how it fits in with II Samuel?
- 2)** Highlight these key verses in the same manner as you have in the previous books. I Kings 1:30; 9:3; 12:16; 12:28; 17:1. What do you notice about them?
- 3)** What problem does David have in his old age? What solution is suggested?
- 4)** How you feel if you were in Abishag's position?
- 5)** Describe Adonijah. What gave him the right to think he should be king?
- 6)** Search back through II Samuel and describe the men who sided with Adonijah. Who did not follow him? What does this tell you about each group of men?
- 7)** How did Bathsheba approach David about Adonijah's behavior?
- 8)** How did David solve the problem?

Conclusion:

Envy can control our lives. Adonijah felt that he should rightly be the next king because he was the oldest of the living sons of David. Since David had not yet named his successor, Adonijah decided to put things in position himself. He did it not just once but tried a second time as well. Things didn't quite work out as he had planned.

How human of us to want what's not rightfully ours! No matter how hard we pursue power, prestige, or possessions, it's never quite enough. We always want something more. David had unselfishly refrained from killing Saul at various times to speed up the process of gaining the throne, even though he had been promised by God and anointed to be the next king. Ironically, selfishly pursuing our own ambitions never brings us our truest, deepest longings. Leaving the outcome to God is the only path to peace and joy.

What stands in the way of your deepest longing? Are you leaving it to God to deal with or are you taking matters into your own hands?

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).