

JUNE 4

2 Samuel 22:21-23:23

2 Samuel 22:21-51

It is good to keep in mind that David wrote this when his days of running from Saul had ended. He had been made king of Israel, and now, no nations threatened Israel. These were still his "pre-Bathsheba" days.

Vs. 21-25 Notice the times that David mentions his righteousness. We might feel uneasy reading that, but there is a reward for keeping our way pure before the Lord. That's no joke. David dealt very righteously with Saul, sparing his life twice.

Vs. 26-27 God repays in kind.

Vs. 28-31 David learned through his suffering to have great confidence in the Lord.

Vs. 32-43 This is the catalog of skills and abilities God gave David to save him from Saul.

Vs. 44-46 Not only did God save David from his own people, but after the civil war when David had to face other nations, God protected David and made the nations come to him. This is mentioned in Isaiah 55.

Vs. 47-49 God was David's rock.

Vs. 50-51 Note that v. 50 is quoted by Paul in Romans 15:8-9, *For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."* I'm impressed that Paul even knew this verse.

This is not only a great song, but it sounds like a lot of The Psalms rolled into one. As disciples, following Christ in the harvest and keeping our hearts clean before Him, regardless of what happens to us in this life, our song entering heaven will sound pretty much just like this.

2 Samuel 23:1-23

Vs. 1-7 These verse are thought to have been written at the end of David's life as a sort of preface to introducing his mighty men. David was, if you will, scrapbooking; and when he came to this page, he wrote a poem.

One thing that David understood after the fiasco with Absalom was that God was holding true to His covenant with David. Verse 5 points to this.

Unfortunately, David did have some thorny people around him, but as a blessing from God, David was given great loyal friends who not only supported him emotionally and spiritually, but when it came to battle, these guys knew how to kick it.

Vs. 8-11 This is the only list where you get all the names of *THE THREE*.

V. 8 With a name like that you had to be a ferocious guy. So, in one battle, with only a spear (and no automatic weapons or grenades) he killed 800 guys.

Notice that the other two took a stand by themselves as Israel's troops were retreating and they turned the battle. We see ninja movies and laugh, and rightfully so. These guys would have made ninjas cry.

Vs. 13-17 This is one of their famous exploits, done out of love and loyalty for David.

V. 16 Nowhere does it say it was evening and they snuck in. I think they fought their way in and out of Bethlehem in broad daylight. They were just three guys, just walking down the road with a bucket, right through enemy territory. They probably whistled as they walked.

V. 17 This is the spiritually perceptive David. What a thoughtful act, both praising their loyalty and offering something precious before the Lord. No wonder his men loved him.

Vs. 18-23 This will be continued tomorrow, but for now, we meet the leaders of *THE THIRTY*.

Vs. 18-19 We have met Abishai, standing with David over the sleeping Saul, wanting to kill him. As Joab's brother he fought various battles with Joab, as second in command. He was also the guy who wanted to cut off the head of Shimei, the ranting, cursing Benjaminite. To think, this guy killed 300 men in a battle, but he still wasn't on par with *THE THREE*.

Vs. 20-23 Benaiah is around a lot, but we don't hear much about him. We will hear more about him in a couple of days, because he will remain loyal to David during the final test of David's life and he will serve Solomon.

He killed the two giants of Moab, a lion (he must have had "cat-like reflexes"), and, unarmed, he killed this big, good-looking Egyptian.

Both of these guys were the head men of *THE THIRTY*.

Wouldn't it be great to work in the harvest with a group of people like this, reaching the lost, making disciples, loving one another and following our Lord? That's supposed to be the church.

Acts 2

V. 1 It is no accident that the church was born on Pentecost, or rather, on the Feast of the Harvest. *You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field.* (Exodus 23:16)

Notice also that they were believers in Jesus. If the rushing sound had been a 747 crashing into their building, instead of the Spirit, they would have gone to heaven. I say this only to say, that what God is doing here is special and for effect. Some people say that what happened in Acts is normative for today. For me, that idea sounds noble, but is not being honest with the text. If you bring that idea to your reading of Acts you will misunderstand what God is doing here. Honestly, God is doing some stuff here to fulfill different purposes in the inception of the church. It is not normative to have believers in Jesus who are not given the Spirit at the moment of conversion. We will see this again in Acts, and not just here. The honest thing to do is to observe and ask why and try to understand what God is doing. To make blanket statements might sound like big faith, but if it isn't true to the text, it's just not true.

Vs. 2-4 This is a very important and emotionally memorable sound and light show that God is putting on. God could have done this silently, but you won't understand the importance of this visual and emotional event until we get to chapter 11 where it will be utterly crucial.

Notice too, that in the OT when the Spirit came upon Samson or on David, He rushed upon them. He still rushes.

Vs. 5-13 At this time, Jerusalem was filled with thousands of men (women and children, too). It was a holy day where all Jewish men were required to be in Jerusalem. It is said that because this feast and the Passover were so close together that more people came for the Feast of the Harvest than for the Passover. Also, all of the people who were in Jerusalem for the crucifixion would have been here. It is said that the small city would have had 25,000 men or more there for Pentecost. Also, the area surrounding Jerusalem would have looked like a tent city for miles.

Notice that the gift of tongues was actual languages. In 1 Corinthians 14:22 Paul says that tongues was a sign for unbelievers, as it is used here. This same sign will be used for another kind of "unbelief" in a few chapters. It was always "only" a sign for the Jews (1 Corinthians 14:21, Isaiah 28:11).

Vs. 14-36 This is one of the most famous sermons of all time. I wonder if in the middle of this sermon, as Peter is talking, he was also thinking, "What in the world is coming out of my mouth?"

Notice that it was 9 a.m. when this happened.

Vs. 17-21 These verses give us an interesting lesson in understanding how prophecy can have a partial fulfillment. It is obvious that some part of this prophecy from Joel applies here, but just a portion. The focus here is the pouring out of the Spirit before *the day of the Lord*. Yet, that day of the Lord is obviously the seven-year Tribulation. This could give you the idea that something similar to this will happen at the beginning of the Tribulation that will empower the Jews to come to God and missionize the world during those first 3.5 years.

Notice that David is both referred to and quoted in this sermon. It's hard to get away from David. Because of Jesus, David is an important person throughout the New Testament. Among all the other things that Jesus fulfilled, He fulfilled the covenant God made with David.

V. 36 This apparently was Peter's application, because here, he stopped talking. Many of these people were present during the Passover and had been in the mob shouting for Jesus' crucifixion. The Spirit led Peter to put the OT Scriptures together in such a way, that with the Spirit's help, the crowd was moved to repentance.

Vs. 37-39 This is pretty amazing because they basically ask, "What must we do to be saved?" Notice that they addressed all of the apostles.

So why was this baptism important here? We are not saved through baptism. Here, it was a test of sincerity and a sign of devotion to Jesus. No one who hated the name of Jesus, and there were many of those, would stomach being baptized in that name. It showed genuine repentance on their parts, having been part of that mob that demanded Jesus' death. The formula, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit," might have been used as prescribed in the Great Commission; but here, because of their previous stand *against* Jesus, they were being baptized with an emphasis on His name. This showed that they had turned to Him and it revealed the truth of their faith.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was important for the Jews and was, apparently, how they understood God's promise of a new heart. In the prophets, the promise of redemption is often promised as receiving a new heart and having a heart of flesh and having the law written on their hearts. When they understood that God was now giving His Spirit to those who belonged to Jesus, they understood Jesus as fulfilling this promise.

V. 40 While the portions of the sermon we've read were written verbatim, here Luke tells us that there was more that was said.

V. 41 So, now what? What do you do with 3000 people? Jesus didn't equip them to handle this. Or did He? When you see Jesus teach His men, most often, they were with Him, observing Him do what they would be doing in the future. Jesus fed the 5000 and the 4000 and told the disciples to set the people in groups. So the disciples knew how to handle a crowd. You break them down into groups of hundreds and fifties, like the feeding of the people. And because of the synagogue system, they also had a model of how to meet, create order and assign leadership.

Vs. 42-47 I've heard people lament that the church today is removed from this genuine oneness, but these conditions were very unique. We see something similar to this when a town is hit by a tornado, or if there is some other kind of pressing event. That is all to say that the Spirit brought about the circumstances and there was a mission. To try to bring about the oneness that only comes about by a common mission or rescue, without a common mission or rescue embraced by everyone, is utterly futile; and that is what a lot of Christians and churches are experiencing - futility. The harvest is where you find Christ and His fellowship.

It is interesting that they *devoted* themselves to the apostles' teaching. Notice that there are a couple of mentions of breaking bread, which I understand as communion.

V. 45 was not communism, but open-hearted sharing. It is interesting that this giving will set up one of the first cases of status seeking in the church.

V. 47 In contrast to the day Jesus was crucified, Jerusalem is a happy place now, kind of festive, like a spiritual Feast of the Harvest. All the people were cool with those who had claimed Christ as their Savior and Lord, and each day, people were being saved.

If Jerusalem proper had 25,000 people in it because of the feast, and if 3000 of them trusted Christ on that first day of the feast, then one-eighth of Jerusalem now believed. This must have been a noticeable thing, especially the baptisms. They must have had to have used all the public fountains and pools in and around Jerusalem. Of course, all of the apostles knew how to baptize. Everyone in Jerusalem would have been exposed to this. It was a Feast of the Harvest to remember.

Remember the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and the elders? The only feast these guys were having was on Maalox and Roluids.

Psalm 122

This song, to be sung as the pilgrims came to Jerusalem for the feasts, was written by David. It seems to be a prayer of peace for Jerusalem, for what the city means.

Vs. 1-2 The thing that stands out to me is that *the house of the Lord* (in David's day it would have been the tabernacle) is in the first verse and in the last verse. David's desire while he was running was to be in God's presence. Even during those years in the wilderness, God fixed David's heart on Jerusalem; and one of the first things David did as king of the nation was to bring the ark, the presence of God, into the city. David was used by God to make Jerusalem the center of the nation's devotion to God and the place to seek Him.

Vs. 3-5 When you read of the *thrones for judgment*, you begin to get the sense that this psalm has a prophetic sense of the future of Jerusalem during the Millennium. The disciples will sit on 12 thrones, judging (governing) the 12 tribes of Israel, and the Messiah will judge the nations there at the beginning of His earthly reign.

Vs. 6-9 Notice the seeking of peace. Peace is to be prayed for Jerusalem, because that is where the tabernacle is, and that is where people seek peace with God. That peace is found in God's presence. The prayer for the peace of Jerusalem was that God's presence would always dwell there. It didn't dwell there because of sin and the city was destroyed a couple of times. In the future, Jerusalem will be a city of peace because the eternal Son of Man, the Son of David, will dwell there.

Proverbs 16:19-20

Amen, and it is the poor in spirit who seek the Word, whereas it is hard for God to share His treasure with the proud.