GOD SAID IT --- THAT SETTLES IT

2 SAMUEL CHAPTERS 22-23

Do you all remember that saying which was popular years ago – “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it”? Buttons, billboards, bumper stickers, song titles…Well really I hate to burst your bubble but that is terrible theology. The fact is that if God said it that settles it whether you or I or anybody else believes it or not! In a real sense whenever we hear or read the words from the Bible we are not just hearing words about God but we are hearing from God. And that includes the O.T., which we have been in the last few months. Specifically we have been in the historical book of Second Samuel, which we’ll try to wrap up today and next week.

The last 4 chapters of Second Samuel, Chaps 21 to 24 tell us the lasting legacy of King David. Six specific themes are presented to us, though not necessarily in chronological order. Rather, in a typically Hebrew literary style we have first a narrative (last week’s lesson). It was the account of how King David recompensed the Gibeonites, appeased them, for the terrible sin that his predecessor King Saul had committed against them years before. We noted that in this story we see an O.T. picture of propitiation. We think of propitiation as a N.T. concept but clearly we can see it in the O.T. as well. So first there is a narrative. Second, there is a list (again last week’s lesson). We looked at 4 Philistine giants, God’s enemies and then 4 heroes, Israel’s giant killers. Yes, there are still giants in the land but they are no match for the one true and living God, the God of Israel, the God of King David. A narrative, a list, and then third, a poem. Then reverse the order… Fourth, a poem. Fifth a list. Sixth a narrative. So we’ve looked at the narrative and the list. Today we’re going to focus our attention on the two poems in the middle. We will look at 2 Sam Ch 22, David’s song of deliverance in poetic form. And then we will look at the first several verses of Ch 23, which is the last “official” words of David. We know that just before he dies David gives some final instructions to his son Solomon (1 Kings 2) but these are his final words to the nation as a whole. Next week we’ll wrap up our study of 2 Samuel with a second list, the list of David’s mighty men and a second narrative, David’s ill-advised census and a positive result that came from that.

Each of these six themes in various literary forms draws our attention to David’s legacy as Israel’s greatest king – at least their greatest king to date. Israel’s greatest king has yet to reign and we will discuss Him quite a bit in today’s lesson. David points forward to this great King in both of his poems. Of course we’re talking about our King, King Jesus, the Messiah, our Lord and Savior, the Son of God, the One whose return you and I eagerly anticipate this morning.

The first poem we’re going to look at, which takes up all of Chapter 22, is actually a song. The heading in my Bible says this is “David’s song of deliverance.” The first thing I want you to note about this song is that it is basically identical to Psalm 18. So these words of David here in 2 Sam Ch 22 were later incorporated into the Psalms, the hymn book of the Jews if you will, and it was set to music and became a part of their worship. From the heading of Psalm 18 and v 1 we’re told… READ 2 Samuel 22:1.

Most Bible scholars believe David wrote these words after he became king. He is looking back at how God intervened in his life and delivered him from his enemies. This song reveals David’s heart. This is an outpouring of David’s emotions. His words are directed toward God – God is the recipient of this song. David’s words here are deeply personal. We won’t have time this morning to read all 51 verses but we will read and discuss several of the verses. Notice all of the personal pronouns...

READ 2 Samuel 22:2-4

David then expounds eloquently on all the things God has done for him – how He saved him from his enemies, rescued him from death, lighted his path, empowered him, protected him, secured him, trained him, bestowed salvation on him. David not only has an acute sense of God, but he has a personal relationship with God. Here David acknowledges to God with his mouth that he would not be where he is was it not for God’s hand on his life. That’s something that stands out about David’s legacy – it was never about David or about his abilities as a leader. It was all about God. God is the real hero in David’s life. And David even as he sits on the throne of Israel has not forgotten this. It is always at the forefront of his mind.

I’ll come back to the text in a minute. I want to point out a couple of significant things about this song. I found it interesting the literary parallels between the end of David’s life and the end of Moses’ life. Here in Ch 22 you have David’s song of deliverance followed in Ch 23 by his last words to the nation. Back in Deuteronomy Ch 32 you have the song of Moses which highlights God’s dealing in the life of His covenant people under Moses’ leadership. That is followed in Ch 33 by the last words of Moses to the nation. So very similar.

But there is something else quite significant about David’s song here toward the end of the Book of Samuel that closely links it to Hannah’s song, her prayer, near the beginning of the Book of Samuel (recall that originally 1 and 2 Samuel were one book, the Book of Samuel).

Hannah looks forward to God’s salvation, to His righteous judgment, to how He will bless the future anointed king. David, now many years later, is looking back at God’s salvation and how He is the righteous judge and how He truly has blessed him, the Lord’s anointed king. In both Hannah’s and David’s songs the Lord’s ultimate anointed king, the Messiah will rule over the nations of the earth. The two songs mention: “horn,” “rock,” “salvation or deliverer,” “Sheol,” “thunder,” “king,” and “anointed.” So the writer using the words of Hannah and David shows God as the righteous head of Israel who will raise up His anointed kings and ultimately save the world thru His Messiah. Then in between the writer gives us the narrative of Samuel’s, Saul’s and David’s lives and shows God at work in the nation of Israel. God richly blesses those who are faithful to Him, but He harshly judges those who are not faithful.

OK, so I just wanted to point that out. Back to 2 Samuel Ch 22 and David’s song to the Lord. David is recounting how he, the king, was saved, was rescued by God…

READ 2 Samuel 22:17-20 *[highlight last part of v 20]*

Why then does God delight in him? We know David was far from perfect. We know all about his sins. Yet listen to David’s words…

READ 2 Samuel 22:21-25

Blameless before God? Did not turn aside? Kept the ways? Righteous? How does this apply to David? Here’s the answer – David is not talking about himself here. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” “There is none righteous, no not one.” So don’t pick on David. He’s not alone. We’re right there with him. We’re sinners too. So who is David talking about? Well you need to understand something. N.T. theology is helpful here. Thank you, Paul. Our standing before a holy God is not based on our own righteousness. We are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, THE King. Romans 13:14 says, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” Galatians 3:27 says that as believers we “put on Christ.” The only one who could say these words here in 2 Samuel that we just read, “I was blameless before Him, I kept myself from guilt” is Jesus Himself. David understands that nothing that happened to him, his deliverance from enemies, his military victories, his blessings, his very own salvation – none of this is his own doing, it is the work of God in his life.

Remember in last week’s lesson when David’s men referred to him as “the lamp of Israel?” He was their spiritual leader. Well in this song, v 29 David says, “For you are my lamp, O Lord, and my God lightens my darkness.” David’s not the light of Israel. The true light is God. So in this song David is giving God all the glory and looking forward to His Messiah.

READ 2 Samuel 22:32-36

David recognizes that it’s all about God. In the words of Psalm 115: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness.”

God is a covenant keeping God and here David rests on God’s promises, on His character.

For the sake of time I want us to skip ahead and look at a couple of verses at the very end of David’s song which are exciting for us Gentiles. In the O.T. we non-Jews are often referred to simply as “the nations.”

READ 2 Samuel 22:50

The Apostle Paul quotes this in Romans Ch 15. It was part of God’s plan from way back in O.T. times to include the Gentiles in God’s merciful plan of redemption. And Paul quotes from this passage as an example of that. Although Christianity has its roots in Judaism, the gospel was more widely embraced by Gentiles than by Jews. And the end result is that the Lord’s name is praised by the nations, by US!

READ 2 Samuel 22:51

This hearkens back to the Davidic covenant that God made with David back in Ch 7. God told David, “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom.” This, of course, refers to the Messiah, THE future king, King Jesus. So here David is looking back at the end of his life in faith at God’s promises to him and forward to the Messiah. And we today also look forward by faith to the return of Jesus one day when He will reign on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

Well now we come to David’s last words to his people. Chapter 23 v 1-7. What I want you to understand about these words is that they are not merely words from a great man, but they are prophetic words from God. These last words of David are described as “the oracle of David.” In other words, this is a divine message.

READ 2 Samuel 23:1

David is the Lord’s anointed king. He was raised on high. He was raised to a lofty position, that of being the king of Israel. He was anointed by the God of Jacob. This speaks of God the Father.

READ 2 Samuel 23:2

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. We know from 1 Samuel 16:13 that David was filled with the Holy Spirit after he was anointed as king. Peter quotes this verse in 2 Peter 1:21 to show that the Holy Spirit is the source of inspiration – just as He inspired David here.

READ 2 Samuel 23:3

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4, speaking of Moses and the people of Israel in the wilderness: “All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.” So the Rock of Israel is a name for Jesus, the Son of God.

So in v 1 you have the Father, in v 2 you have the Holy Spirit and in v 3 you have the Son. Here is the Trinity mentioned in the O.T. Jesus, the Rock of Israel will rule justly one day over men and He will rule in the fear, the reverence of God. We know David is not talking about the earthly kings of Israel. Read 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. For the most part they were NOT just. They had NO fear of God. Well maybe to some degree David, Solomon and Hezekiah did. But David is speaking here of another king, that is, the ultimate King, the Lord’s Messiah, King Jesus. These are prophetic words by David.

He continues speaking about the Messiah in v 4…

READ 2 Samuel 23:4

Here David, the poet at his best, emphasizes that our KING is the source of life to His people. He brings light, beauty, energy and warmth. Here we have a picture of Jesus the King in all His splendor and glory.

READ 2 Samuel 23:5

David understands that in spite of his own failures, he stands secure and that his throne, his house will stand forever based on God’s covenant promise to him. God speaking in Psalm 89:34-36 says this: “I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me.”

God said it – that settles it. David’s throne WILL endure forever. And it will be Jesus, the Son of David, yes, the very Son of God who will sit on it.

But not everyone will recognize God’s King, will they? There will be some who don’t believe God.

READ 2 Samuel 23:6-7

This conjures up the image of Revelation Ch 20, the judgment of God on a world who rejects Christ. “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

In the words of David from our passage in 2 Samuel 23 “they are utterly consumed with fire.” And why? Why does God do this? Because of what they did. Specifically they rejected the Lord’s anointed, the Messiah, the Prince of peace, the Son of God. People will go to an eternal hell for one reason and one reason only – because their names are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. What we do with Jesus determines our eternal destiny, nothing else. *[poem by John Newton]*

So how about you? Are you saved? Do you believe God? Is your name written in the Book of Life? Yes? Then you, my brothers and sisters, have a wonderful Savior and His name is Jesus. HE is worth singing about! And just like David we are going to sing a song of praise to our Savior for His great love and for the mercy He has shown to us.