

David's Last Words

The Life of David

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Bible Text: 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Matthew 13:1-17

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Well, that brings us this evening to the last sermon in our series on the life of David, in a sense, a brief series, I think it has extended now to 18 sermons, it's gone short of 50 and probably better men than I have preached lengthy series of that and captivated interest, held your interest throughout. Well, I don't think quite I can match that so we've settled instead for just dwelling upon some of the major events, major experiences, drawn lessons where we can and applied them to ourselves, who we are, not kings, are we, we haven't got the responsibilities of a David nor do we have the unique promises that he was given and the remarkable way in which God used him. Perhaps we're just thinking this morning that type there in so many ways of the believer but, of course, a type of Christ and that more particularly we'll be dwelling on some of those thoughts in a moment.

But tonight the title is this, "David's Last Words." David's last words. 2 Samuel 23, there in verse 1, "Now these are the last words of David." For this we, well, we might imagine he's on his deathbed, perhaps he was or at least nearing it so he was aware that there was not much further that God would have him to say that would be inspired and that will be necessary to be written here in Scripture. But whatever the circumstances were, these are his last reported words and as we were thinking last time about his legacy, well, this is something more of his legacy and what for future generations we are to take away and find out, well, what was it, right at the end what he said. That's sort of significant, isn't it? What are people's last words, what is it that they want to impart as time, as it were, recedes and is now perhaps just compressed into a few moments and loved ones around the bedside and wanting to hear what's to be said.

Well, sometimes we have to admit the things that are said are not worth hearing, but here the choicest of saints, they are and we take away from this much that is profitable, and while David here will be speaking to us of, well, a kingdom, a great king that is going to assume the responsibility for that kingdom, he acknowledges that there in verse 5 whatever was promised, whatever his own dynasty, perhaps family of kings that were to descend from him, well, they may not be what they, themselves, would fulfill all of the hopes and everything that's expressed in what we read here, what the king should be, "my house is not so with God." Before it said, well, these would be the people who rule, "He who rules over men must be just," verse 3, "Ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be

like the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, Like the tender grass springing out of the earth, By clear shining after rain."

David looked at himself and he couldn't quite say, "I have been that entirely. I have failed." And he looked at his children and they had failed; those coming behind him, he knew that they, too, would fail. And inasmuch as some of his descendants there were a part of what we see in verse 6, "sons of rebellion," who would "be as thorns thrust away," and that they will indeed be possibly "burned with fire in their place." Of course, the kingdom, the southern kingdom which would end one day in ignominy, at least the way in which it had the kings occupying thrones in Jerusalem, and after the exile settle into something more modest than that though still with the blessing of God upon it. But we can see that David is having to acknowledge that he is not fulfilling all of the perfect mandate of what a king should be and his own sons, some of whom had already failed like Absalom and Adonijah, within his own family you see the very seeds of corruption, difficulty, his own house was not so as to match completely what we read here.

But that isn't what he dwells upon, it's not the sort of sad, gloomy kind of monologue, it's not as though here he's burdened with great sorrows but it's those sorrows that characterize his last words but, in fact, his great hope that characterizes his last words because he's actually looking beyond his own family, his own house which is not so with God, and he is clearly seeing the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. David, himself, in a way is preparing for the coming of a greater king, that king who will fulfill all that is expected of a king appointed of God. And David as he dies, dies here surrounded by light, dies here surrounded by hope because he's looking beyond his own family because he knew that this covenant, this everlasting covenant that has been established, that God had established with him, with David, came to his family, Solomon, others who would come after the flesh, be literal kings in Jerusalem but the bigger promise that was contained in that promise was of a Messiah, from his family of looking for the greatest ruler.

And that is what's on David's mind as here maybe very close to his death, maybe just on the verge of passing into eternity and leaving behind his parting words, words of hope to sustain a people who would have to wait, would have to wait hundreds of years before the fulfillment actually comes. But it will come, surely, surely come, and David, as it were, lay hold of any who were there and point them on for that and center their affections there, not look to David, his day is done, not even look to his sons, some of them are going to be a huge disappointment of his descendants. No, look beyond all of that to what is really contained within this covenant, that is the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So my first heading: the covenant is everything. The covenant is everything. These promises that God made to him which we looked at a few months ago now, that were brought by Nathan the prophet, David wanting to build a house for the Lord, a dwelling place, the temple which eventually emerged out of that desire, that Solomon was the man to build it. There's something more important that God had to say to David that God had not required a house, he lived in tents and dwelt there, and that was not a matter of

disgrace to him, but that there was something that God would do for David, and more importantly for us all, that after David's line would come that great descendant who would occupy David's throne, rule over the house of Jacob in a much deeper, much more successful, in a perfect way, and that this David carried with him, carried it to his deathbed.

"And that covenant, that everlasting covenant that God has made with me, ordered in all things and secure, there's nothing missing in it, it's all of it so arranged of God." And David says, "For this is all my salvation and all my desire. It's my hope. This is what I'm resting my all in, that this coming Savior, this Lord of glory, this Messiah, He is all my salvation and He is all my desire." Well, he's the man after God's own heart, isn't he, and his own heart here is actually stretching beyond, in a sense, that prophetically he could see the day of Christ, and we'll come to that again in a minute, but he hadn't seen the detail worked out, didn't know of the cross, he hadn't got all the clarity on that, and yet nevertheless his desire was there. He was awaiting that day, that resolution to his own spiritual need, to his own feeling of deficits though surrounded by the worship of the tabernacle at that time, the temple one day, but knowing that this was not enough, that this blood, the blood of animals, not enough, needed something more to make this to happen. But that was all provided for in the covenant, ordered in all things and secure, "Will He not make it increase?" Not add to that hope and expectation of all the saints. Well, of course, he surely, surely will and progressive revelation through the old covenant time and then bursting into full gaze until all, all can see him, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

So that is all David's salvation and all his desire, the longing of all the Old Testament saints, some with greater light, some with lesser light, but nevertheless that hope is there. And when Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost and he actually references a Psalm of David, Psalm 16, resurrection Psalm that is and it's quoted by Peter in Acts 2:25-28, and from that Peter then preaches and speaks contrasting that it's not David that this was speaking about, this resurrection, leaving my soul in the grave and raising me up, but it is the Lord Jesus Christ. And Peter says this of David, "Therefore being a prophet," in verse 30 of Acts 2, "and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

David had all that, saw all that, and that's here in 2 Samuel 23 at the end of his life. It's there in Psalm 16 whenever moment it was in which he wrote that and Psalm 22. They reflect at the beginning on the sufferings of Christ but then finishes on a note of triumph when all the families of the earth being blessed through him and how God heard his prayers, as it were, and raised him up from the dead. David had all of that, the day of Christ, his sufferings, and his resurrection.

And we had as our second reading the parable of the sower and all the conversation that followed from it, and the question of the disciples why speak in parables to them? And the Lord said he's making a distinction here, that what they are hearing, what they are

seeing as his disciples, separating them out from everybody else, this wonderful work of grace, of sovereignty here. And mysterious it is and deep it is, much upon that there is, but he says to them that they're his disciples, their ears are blessed, and their eyes are blessed, they are seeing and they are hearing things here which were the longing of, well, who? He says, doesn't he, here in Matthew 13:17, "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." Foresaw it, longed for it as is David here.

He foresaw it very clearly, foresaw the resurrection very, very clearly. He wasn't able to actually see it, these men were going to be, and he wasn't there to actually witness the very person of Christ preaching, speaking in parables, bringing truth to those who have an ear to hear. Why, that would have delighted David to have been amongst that company but that was denied him. This was now for the apostles. They were to see things beyond David and hear things that David had longed to. He died in hope but didn't actually see the promise fulfilled. That awaited another time and different people who would be the eyewitnesses to that. But that was what David longed for, that was what he wanted to hear, that's what he wanted to see, the day of Christ and it was filling his horizon as he came to that point of leaving the earth.

Well, that was a promise to David and its specific parts to it, and for us, well, actually, yes, covenant that God makes with the believer. Very similar fashion, just as the parables here work in similar fashion to distinguish and to sift and to search out people. Well, so this covenant that the Lord has established with us, it found us, this which has an eternal basis which comes beyond our world, it comes outside of what we probably would call time and it finds us creatures of time, finds us in the right place, at the right time, and God makes with us that covenant that he will be our God, and that we will be his people to serve him and to love him, and the basis upon which he will be our God and that we can be his people is that he will atone for our sin entirely and perfectly, leaving nothing unaddressed, leaving nothing uncertain because, of course, now the blood that's going to be shed is the blood of his own Son, God-man bringing with him everything that is there within what divinity is, the glory of it, the majesty of it, but also the full and perfect humanity that the two natures of our Lord Jesus Christ securing for us this absolute perfect, sure salvation.

This is ordered and secure, dear friends, isn't it? It was all ordered and secure, nothing was going to go wrong in it and even though there are many hundreds of years that had to pass between when David uttered these words and that they would come the day that righteous men and prophets like David had longed to see and longed to hear. But it surely came and it came not withstanding exiles, not withstanding kings that were a disgrace, not withstanding very low ebb in the spiritual fortunes of Judah. The low ebb, the city of Jerusalem, conquests by Greeks and Persians, Babylonians and, of course, then the Romans. Nothing was going to stop what God would do through his Son to them make that promise to us through the blood of his Son there establishing this covenant. "There are your sins atoned for. You can now have fellowship with Me, I with you. I will be your God and you will be My people."

And we have that today and God makes that promise to each and every one of us who he has met with by the way of repentance and faith, and we come into the experience of that sonship, deliverance from sin, deliverance from its guilt and all of our culpability before God, we are declared now righteous on account of Christ's righteousness, and we begin to experience victories over sin, the power of sin that begins to wane. There is now a whole new nature within empowered by the Holy Spirit within and we begin to think differently, speak differently, act differently, be different, and that is all the work of his grace in our hearts. Not so with us, we might say. Well, indeed it's not so with us. Oh, that we were as described above here and we'll come to that again in a minute, sort of just and upright and refreshing other people. Oh, we don't always do that by a long shot.

Well, of us, well, it is as David here, "'Although my house is not so with God, Yet," yet, despite all, despite all that I am and he knew I would be, despite all that God knew that you and I would be, well, that covenant does not get revoked, it doesn't get withdrawn, it doesn't get changed. The promise kind of gets torn up with agreements governments make over various things, well, quite a few of those get torn up but this one does not. And even when we as Christians are at our worst and when we are not functioning at all well, then still that covenant is made, there may be hardships and rebukes and chastenings to come, and there will be if we're truly children of God, but they will do us good and will prove again that we belong to him and that he has established fellowship with us, holding us, not letting us go. This is ordered and sure, every part of it secure to the end, reserving us as his people, everything that may yet come, whatever. He's smiling as a new pandemic may arise, whatever new crisis, world crisis, national crisis, personal crisis may come, temptations, hardships, illnesses, we could go on with the list and still this will stand that he's made an everlasting covenant. Everlasting, underline the word, everlasting covenant with you and with me and it's ordered in all things and secure, even thought we might have to say, "'Although my house is not so with God," the "Yet" is all the power in that. Yet, despite all, despite our failings, the covenant remains firm, be encouraged.

So our only hope then, well, it is that covenant, only like with David facing death whenever that day might come for you, for me, if the Lord hasn't returned, well, that is your hope there. Not your works or my works. Not anybody's ministry. Not anything that has been accomplished through us, through our children, our grandchildren. No, it will solely be this, that Christ died for me, a sinner, that he was willing to lay down his life that I might live and that I might not see that final corruption, that I might be delivered from death and all of its pains and all that sin has invested death with. So we press on trusting, that's what David was doing, believing. He had hope and reason for hope. Dear friends, we have reason for hope not only facing death but facing life and all its challenges and there are challenges enough in life, aren't there just? And this holds good for us that that covenant is ordered in all things and secure.

It contains so many provisions. It has written into it far more than we know. Why, the small print in it, we wouldn't have know the most of it at the beginning. God will do this for us, answer our prayers in that way. He will deliver us there, that he would reveal that helpful insight, that his word would speak to us at that critical time. Dear friends, it was

all in the small print of the covenant and there's more small print, enough to cover every day of our lives until we're done with this cruel sad earth.

My second heading: the reign of Christ. The reign of Christ. Not only seeing the day of Christ but seeing what that day will be like, what the nature of the rule would be. And in a sense, he has both the first and the second comings of our Lord in view here. And the rule of our Lord, well, how would it be? It's going to be, isn't it, there as befits one who is God. It's going to have all of the character of God because he is God and thus the rule that he exerts, what he showed in his life and what exhibits now from the right hand of God and impresses upon us, well, it's contained here, isn't it, "He who rules over men must be just," it says in verse 3. The God of Israel, the rock of Israel spoke to David, the prophet, the Spirit is speaking to him, "He who rules over men must be just, Ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, Like the tender grass springing out of the earth, By clear shining after rain."

Well, that is a beautiful picture, very appealing kind of rule that this is, that's a rule that we would wish for. It's the ruler we have and it is the character and the nature of the reign of Christ. Yes, it has judgments for the wicked and that's where David finishes very soberly, really, isn't it, verses 6 and 7. The wicked may seem to be beyond seizure, they may seem to be getting away with things but God's going to come with superior power against them and they'll be seized and then utterly be burned with fire in their place. Well, there is justice there, the rebellious will be destroyed.

But in all his dealings, this justice, this uprightness, there is equity, fairness, everything that he does is right, well-considered, totally thought through, very mature. Wisdom that has looked at everything, every perspective has been applied and the right outcome has been decreed, well, that is the work of God to do that. Not to be corrupted. Not to be bribed. Not to be influenced by something else, someone else leaning on him that he might not rule justly and in the fear of God. Impossible and our Lord Jesus Christ couldn't be swayed from his mission, could he? Though people threatened him, though they tried to flatter him, even tried to enlist him perhaps and be our spokesman, "Why didn't you speak what we tell you to speak?" There were perhaps various offers on the table but he turned them all down. Some wanted to come and seize him as king after feeding the 5,000. He withdrew to a mountain to pray. None of that. And when Peter was offering to be his bodyguard, "This will not happen to You. You're not going to be handed over there to the Gentiles and will be mocked by the chief priest and elders and crucified. That will not happen to You!" Well, our Lord heard none of that but identified the source of that as actually being the devil. Peter was his instrument there and there was none of that for him to follow that his path of duty, the way in which he would carry forward the commission given to him by his Father would be absolutely totally devoted, absolutely committed.

And in life, the decisions that he rendered which left people marveling, all of the arguments that they came to try to begin with him in the temple in the days leading up to his crucifixion, whatever question they had he could answer it and do it in such a

measured, proportionate, scriptural way that even if they hated the answers they gave, they had to concede, incredible, that the wisdom was incredible. So in every decision that he made, the woman caught in adultery, how he with clarity of this murky situation and was able to reveal the hypocrisy of the Pharisees while in no way excusing the sin of the woman. Yet the words were so balanced and so measured that everything was just in its right proportion. This is one, isn't it, who rules over men and is just and is ruling in the fear of God. Even his enemies conceded that he didn't seek, as it were, the favor of men but you speak according to the truth, and in that the Pharisees never spoke a truer word. They then tried to flatter him and dissuade him from that course.

So we read of the nature of such a ruler. Psalm 15 can supply us some words in that direction, verses 1 to 3, "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend." He carries on, "In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change." That kind of person can abide with God in his tabernacle. Well, if there's one candidate who meets all of those expectations, it's our Lord Jesus Christ. You can turn to Psalm 24 for further validation of that, the character of such a person. That's him there, walks uprightly, works righteousness, speaks the truth in his heart.

We could turn to other portions of Scripture. Isaiah 11:1-5, "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist." Clearly prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, and the nature of his rule, delighting in the fear of the Lord, having all a spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord including the judgments that we read there that is also in 2 Samuel 23 in David's reflections in verses 6 and 7.

Final illustration, Isaiah 42, again foreseeing here again this prophet Isaiah and the coming of Christ, chapter 42, verses 1 to 4, "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law." Again, that nature of his rule, justice, bringing that to the Gentiles, establishing justice in the earth, bringing forth justice for truth. There is in all that he is doing there a holding fast to the truth. That's where his loyalty will be.

That's him, dear friends, that's him, that's our Savior, our God, our Lord Jesus Christ. David could see and prophesied of these things in 2 Samuel 23 and there we have further indications in the prophets about who he is and what he's to do. We notice, as well, the beautiful descriptions of what his rule will be. Justice and uprightness, they are a tonic, aren't they? They bring good things in their train and the beautiful descriptions here in verse 4, very appealing, "he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds." At this time of the year we can appreciate that here. Then, "Like the tender grass springing out of the earth, By clear shining after rain." It's fertile. When he touches there's blessing, there is increase, there is progress, there is growth and development. There is light that has no cloud obscuring it or in some way detracting from it, a blemish here or some imperfection there. No, this is clarity all the way.

In similar language, turning here, aren't I, to Psalm 72:5-7, similar language here, "They shall fear You," and who is this? Well, this is a prophecy about the Messiah. "They shall fear You As long as the sun and moon endure, Throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, Like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, And abundance of peace, Until the moon is no more." That's what he's bringing, that's what he's bringing into the hearts of all his people when he establishes his rule.

That's what he'd have us bring, that we're to be people as well who actually where we go, we take his rule with us, the rule of Christ within the heart, the nature of his reign that is reflective of indeed the character of God. And we are to carry that same desire into the world where we go, to be ourselves upright people, speaking the truth, being people there that have got their neighbor's interests at heart, bringing refreshment, that what we do, what we say, how we say it, the kinds of people we are refreshes others, causes them to grow not wither, makes them to flourish not to kind of die away, brings encouragements not discouragement, and where we help to bear their burdens for their benefit.

And finally, of course, all of that finds its most wonderful fruition, the consummation in heaven itself, that with all of that and the tree of life and all that water, supplies there, all of this is the fulfillment then of the reign of Christ. It has begun now in this fallen world that we're thinking about this morning, that we, isn't always with us that our house is so with God, we're not always just and upright, we're not always filled with desire for righteousness. We can be pretty murky people at times ourselves, and yet here all gone. Heaven, all brightness. None of that remains, not our fallen world to look at but heaven, all of its beauty. But ourselves not capable anymore of some of the things that have befallen us. But no, our house will be so with God, our eyes will now be beautifully harmonized to the very life of Christ and expressing it ourselves without hindrance, diffidence, hesitation and being part there of the adornment of heaven, the trophies of grace that our Lord Jesus Christ brought safely through this world.

So may it be that when our days are done and our earthly pilgrimage finishes, whatever may be the cause that brings it to its close, it is the return to the Lord, but if not, that we will be like David, that it's actually Christ who is filling our horizon, that our thoughts are with him and in him, and our hope and our trust is there whatever else. And David had

plenty of life to look back on, plenty of things and earlier in 2 Samuel 22 the fairest of his Psalms come in, the great victories and different experiences that he'd had, but then at the end of it, it's all about the Lord Jesus Christ, for him foreseeing of the day, longing to see it. He didn't see it. He died before the hand but we, we want to have his same perspective ourselves in life and in death for David's last words may, by God's grace, be our last words too if we are given the time and the place to utter them for ourselves.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: 2 Samuel 23:1-7.

These are among the last words of the sweet psalmist of Israel (v1). In them he does not conceal the fact that all has not gone well with his own family (v5). We can think of Absalom and Adonijah in this respect. But David has a very clear vision as he ends his days on earth. He shows us, in many ways, how we should want to finish our days. These words are again something of his legacy to us all. In fact, his thoughts go beyond his life and look to the Lord Jesus Christ, His coming and His rule.

1. The covenant is everything.

David reflects on the covenant that the Lord has made with him (v5). The covenant is everlasting and is in every particular ordered and sure. It contains the promise of Solomon reigning after him, as well as further members of his family who will continue to occupy the throne in Jerusalem. It is a dynasty but the best fulfillment of the promise to David, awaits the coming of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is all David's hope and salvation (v5). His is the longing of all the saints of the Old Testament who looked forward to the coming of the Day of Christ (Matthew 13:16-17). The Spirit of God had revealed these things to David (v2). Peter reflects on this when preaching on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:30-31) when he quotes Psalm 16, itself a Psalm of David. The fulfillment of the Lord's promise of a Saviour for His people was everything to David.

That same promise, written in the covenant, is the promise that sustains us to this day as believers. God's promises to us are in all things ordered and sure. This is the New Covenant which is made with us based on the blood of Christ, our atoning sacrifice. We trust in the Son of God for salvation and favour in the eyes of God, and then live with credible obedience before Him. We have to admit with, David, that things are not always so with us and that we fail, despite having the great promises of God. We have many faults and failings but the Lord brings us through all these and has already accounted for them in His covenant promise. It is the bedrock to our life that Christ has died for us. It is nothing to do with our works, our families, or our ministries. It is all to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done. If we are afraid of death, then David is a lesson to us. He is able to die remembering and believing the promises that the Lord has made to him. We can die with same promises to sustain us.

David trusted the Lord, despite his own disobedience and the disobedience of members of his family. Like him, we can know that we will inherit eternal life at the end of our days on earth.

2. The reign of Christ.

David has the First and Second Coming of Christ in view. That coming will be very visible. David reflects here on the nature and effect of that reign. It will reflect the character of God, which is then to be reflected in us after conversion and then finally in heaven.

Our Lord's rule is just and in the fear of the Lord (v3). He will bring judgments to bear on the rebellious (vv6-7). His rule will be upright, fair, and balanced. He will not be open to corruption or bribery so that He will not be swayed by rich or powerful people. He will follow the truth without swerving and will be resolute (Psalm 15: 1-3; Isaiah 11:1-5; and Isaiah 42: 1-4). The wisdom of His judgments is seen, for example, in how He dealt with the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) and in all His dealings with the Pharisees.

We, in turn, are to reflect Him in our behaviour and attitudes. We are to be just and upright, following high standards and loving the laws of God. We are to have a love of the truth and act also in accordance with mercy. Such a rule, as we see it perfectly revealed in the Lord, is refreshing (Psalm 72:5-7) and will lead to rejoicing (Proverbs 29:2). The environment in heaven is far above the murky world of human affairs. Instead it is full of the fresh air of holiness, justice and truth. Everything that does not confirm to it is outside (Revelation 21:8; and Revelation 22: 14-15).

So David, in his last words, looked beyond himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how we should live our days now and look to finish them when our day to leave the earth finally comes. And as we live now, we seek to live as befits those who are under the yoke of Christ, being fair, upright, truthful and just.