

2 Samuel 23 Introduction

Chapter 23 is the *third* chapter of an appendix that concludes the book of 2 Samuel (i.e., the last 4 chapters of 2 Samuel (chs. 21 – 24) form the appendix: (21) the Gibeonite Injustice; (22) David's song of the Rock; (23) David's 'Last Words' and his 'Mighty Men'; (24) David's Census: Another Great Failure).

The first 7 verses of chapter 23 preserve an oracle of David bannered with this super-scription: "*Now these are the last words of David.*" Evidently these verses are a literary work composed very late in the life of David as a grand summarizing work of David's life.

23:1-7, (v.1) "*The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man*" David's opening words are notably similar to the opening words of Numbers 24:3,15. In the book of Numbers similar words are placed in the mouth of Balaam by God Himself; in fact, they begin two of Balaam's prophetic visions. David pens these words in verse 1 with a very significant purpose. They clearly label David as a *genuine* prophet of God; and, are a very meaningful part of his "*last words!*" Indeed, these opening words, plus David's words in v.2 ("*The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me ...*"), certify David as a true prophetic spokesman for God. David was both chosen and used by the LORD to prophetically envision in *greatest* detail the distant coming of the LORD's Messiah (Cf. Matt. 22:42-45; Acts 1:16; 2:25-30; 4:25-27; Heb. 4:7-10). Understandably to David this privilege fell as the recipient of God's covenant promise. For it would be through David's seed, God promised Messiah would come (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Matthew 1:1; 12:23).

Verse 3 then starts a prophetic utterance from God through David, saying, "*The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me.*" David's oracle begins with two basic principles of God-pleasing, orderly rule that bring both *light* and 'showers of *blessing*' to the people. Likely verses 3-4 summarize, *in part*, the rule of David; but more fully these words describe the ideal ruler. In this sense, these words ultimately describe and picture the rule of Messiah, the promised son of David!

Verse 5 recounts God's everlasting covenant with David. These verses are a reassuring reminder of God's promise to David with the certainty of its fulfillment. All the hope of history, back to Adam, hinges on the veracity of this promise made by God. Thankfully Scripture repeats and reaffirms it time and time again! And just as foretold, Messiah came the first time; and according to His promise, He will surely come again! (Jn 14:3)

Verses 6 -7 describe God's sure and coming judgment on the "seed of the serpent." Here the twin themes of *salvation and judgment* reappear as they do in all of Scripture. One glorious day King Jesus will rule in righteousness on David's throne (Isa. 2, 9), and His perfect justice will consume all who have lifted a "high hand" to God. This oracle of David rehearses the grand plan of God, one that centers on His Messiah, celebrates His righteous and just rule, and ends with sin's devastating effects forever removed.

22:8-39, David's Mighty Men: "*The Three*" (vv.8-17), "*Two highly honored*" (vv.18-23), "*The Thirty*" (24-39; note: as listed 32, but all were *known as "The Thirty"*).