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MID-ATLANTIC BIBLE SCHOOL - 2005

WHEN DAVID WAS OLD AND FULL OF DAYS

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Exhortation: The Mind of Messiah in David's Final Psalms

Reading: Psalm 40

Well, thank you brother chairman, and good afternoon my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Will you all please turn to the 1st Chronicles 17. 1 Chronicles 17 isn't David as an old man, for this is when he received the covenant promise of Almighty God; but nevertheless, we discover an interesting attitude of mind that David portrayed on this occasion, when the covenant promise was given to him. We're told in the record of 1 Chronicles 17, it says there in verse 16, 'And David the king came and sat before Yahweh and said, who am I, O Yahweh Elohim and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in Thine eyes, O God; for Thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Yahweh Elohim'. David was overcome by the honour that to him and to his family was vouchsafed this marvellous promise, that one day Messiah would come and build an house for the name of God and David was cognisant of the honour done to him by the goodness of God on this occasion.

As he said in verse 18, 'What can David speak more to Thee for the honour of thy servant? for Thou knowest thy servant'. So brethren and sisters, one of the most marvellous things about the spirit of David and always was there, was this, despite the single moment of honour in his own life, his real focus was not on himself, but on the greatness of God.

Verse 19 says, 'O Yahweh, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast Thou done all this greatness, in making known all these great things' (or as the margin says, 'all these greatnesses). O Yahweh there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be His own people, to make Thee a name of greatness', and you see, this becomes the key word in David's meditations here. Verse 19, 'Thou hast done all this **greatness**, Thou hast made known all these **greatnesses**, as the margin says. Thou hast made for Thyself, verse 21, a name of **greatness**'. David isn't focussed on his own greatness, b&s, but on

the greatness of God, and in the midst of all that, he says this in verse 24, 'Let this promise then, even be established that thy name be magnified forever, Yahweh of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel: and let the house of David thy servant be established before Thee'. Now you see the word 'magnified' in verse 24, that word 'gadal' in the Hebrew means 'to make great' (1431) and it's associated with the word 'greatness' in verse 19, and the word 'greatness' in verse 21. 'O that God's name may be magnified' is David's desire that God's name might be made great; so the question is, how would the fulfilment of the promise to David magnify God's name? The answer is because the house that would be the place where God would choose for His name to dwell there, built by the Messiah promised in this particular covenant, would be the place of the Shekinah presence of God which would fill the house with His glory, a visible token of His presence among His people. That house to come, to be built by the man of the covenant, would become the centre of the whole system of worship that would perpetuate the greatness of God in the hearts and in the minds of His people. Oh, says David, 'Thy name be magnified, and therefore, let this promise be fulfilled'. That was David's heart that God should be made great in this process!

Now that was 1 Chronicles 17, but if you come to 1 Chronicles 22, and not a lot further in the record or so it would seem, but between 1 Chronicles 17 and 1 Chronicles 22, there lies a gap of 30 years - 30 years in between chapters 17 and 22. You know, b&s, 30 years is a long time to change our minds; 30 years is a long time for the initial, early fervent passion of our spirit in the truth to deteriorate ever so gradually, of course, but to change nevertheless. 30 years is a long time and yet the remarkable and lovely thing about David is that his spirit never changed, his fundamental principles, his spirit was always the same. Do you remember what it said in chapter 22 verse 1, 'This is the house of Yahweh Elohim, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel'. And David commanded all sorts of things to be done for the building of that house, the place that had been revealed to him on mount Moriah. This is what he says, verse 5, 'And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender and the house that is to be builded for Yahweh must be exceeding magnificent'. Ah, that's an interesting word because if we were to think of a better English word for that, we probably imagine that it should be 'magnificent'; the word here, I don't believe means 'magnificent'; this is the word 'gadal' (1431), 'O that God's name might be magnified'; it's not that the house itself is to be magnificent, b&s, but that the house was to magnify God, that was David's desire. Rotherham translates verse 5, 'And the house to be built for Yahweh must be great, able to magnify and lofty and famous and beautiful for all lands'; and then David says, 'O let me then prepare for it', says Rotherham, and he pleaded for the honour of doing what he could. He was never allowed to build the house but he could at least prepare, and this house, says David, must be able to magnify the God of Israel. You see, this is his first and greatest priority, he had never changed one hair's breadth over 30 years of his life in the truth, he still had the same burning desire for the house of the name to be built, so his God might be magnified!

You see, David had always been centred on the greatness of God, but now, at the end of his life, worldly ambition dimmed and fleshly pride purged, David's whole being

yearned to magnify God and to make Him great in the hearts and minds of His people. The house, the house of Yahweh was the embodiment of all his desire for this enlarging of his God. At this time in his life, 1 Chronicles 22 verse 5, as he says at the end of the verse, 'I will make preparation for it; so David prepared abundantly before his death'. At this very time in his life, when he had the strong desire to magnify the name of his God in such a way, this tremendous cascade of trials and problems and difficulties came upon David, and all at the worst possible moment of his life, struck down in old age. Yet his spirit never changed despite these trials that came upon him, and we're going to review just a handful of those trials, such as David felt in this difficult moment of the last 12 months of his life. Come to the 70 and 71st Psalm, we looked at these in one of our studies, and I believe that each of these psalms of David's last time, reflects perhaps a particular affliction, a special problem that lay upon him at this time. If we were to ask what is the primary burden of Psalm 70 and 71, I think the answer is, that this is the frustration of weakness, it was a real trial in David's life, the frustration of physical weakness at this time.

Do you see what it says in Psalm 71? verse 7 says, 'I am a wonder unto many; but Thou art my strong refuge'. You see, many knew of the physical infirmity of the king, and took it as a sign against him. Verse 9 says, 'Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth', and old age and failing strength were David's principle lament in this psalm when he wept concerning a body bereft of its powers. In Psalm 71 verse 18 he says, 'Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to every one that is to come'. The strength and power that David desired were God's because he truly felt that his own powers were gone! In this psalm is the cry of one who felt his physical powers rapidly disappearing and so debilitating was the experience, and we know from the historical record that he laid prostrate upon his bed as a dead man, totally unable to accomplish anything when he yearned to achieve so much. Oh yes, he felt the frustration of physical weakness. Have we ever felt that, b&s, in our lives? So what was the spirit of the king at this time?

Well, Psalm 70 says in verse 4, that this was David's mind, 'Let all those that seek Thee, rejoice and be glad in Thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified'. You see, David was utterly centred on the Father and not himself in spite of this trial of physical weakness that came upon him. It wasn't just weakness, physical weakness, that beset the king at this time, because if you come to Psalm 35 (you might like to hold your hand in Psalms 70 & 71) and with your left hand come back to Psalm 35, which I believe, was written at this same time, it's another Psalm of David's old age, yet the focus of the psalm is different. The focus of this psalm is on the bitterness of civil revolt, but from first to last it is linked with the same time and the same circumstances as Psalms 70 and 71. Do you notice what it says in Psalm 35 verse 4, 'Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul; let them be turned back and brought to confusion that device my hurt'. But that's Psalm 71 verse 13, isn't it? 'Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt', it's the same

language, the same words, and I believe, the same experience of David's life; and do you notice that at the very end, Psalm 35 and the last verse, verse 28, 'And my tongue shall speak of Thy righteousness of Thy praise all the day long', but that's Psalm 71 verse 4, 'My tongue shall also talk of Thy righteousness all the day long'. Ah, yes, we're in the same time period of David's life, but in this psalm David contemplates the bitterness, b&s, of civil rebellion; so unjust, unkind, so ungrateful, so unfair, that threatened to engulf both the kingdom and himself. This is a psalm of a nation at variance with their king. As Psalm 35 verse 1 says, 'Plead my cause, O Yahweh, with them that strive with me'; again, verse 4, 'Let them be confounded and put to shame'; verse 7, 'For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, without cause they have digged for my soul'; verse 15, 'But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not; With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth'. The whole nation had turned against the king at this time!

Oh, you look at the words in verse 17, where do these come from? 'Yahweh, how long wilt Thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions. I will give Thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise Thee among much people' - that's Psalm 72, b&s. Verse 19 of Psalm 35, 'Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; neither let them wink the eye without cause' and finally, verse 25, 'Let them not say in their hearts, We have swallowed them up', and David felt this rebellion of the nation that they did not understand his spirit and his mind.

So what was David's attitude to all of that swirling around him? Psalm 35 verse 27, 'Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, Let Yahweh be **magnified** which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant'. So in the midst of that rebellion that must have cruelly torn at David's soul, he cries aloud again, 'that Yahweh might be magnified'. He said that, b&s, because he truly believed it and it truly was his spirit. You see, sometimes we believe some aspect of the truth only for a trial to cause doubt in the matter; we subscribe intellectually to divine principles until they come upon us experientially and we ask, 'why now, why us?' But you see, the marvellous thing about David was that he was never shaken from his fundamental focus on elevating God above himself, so here when David's enemies were numerous and powerful, David's spirit in Psalm 35 verse 27 was to exhort others to concentrate on the greatness of God and to learn to magnify Him in their lives.

It wasn't just civil rebellion that came upon David, because if you come to Psalm 69, there was something perhaps more piercing than that! Psalm 69 is about the trial of the anguish of national reproach; the psalm of the trial of the anguish of national reproach, it's the psalm that matches the circumstances of Psalm 71 and Psalm 35 and Psalm 22. It is born, I believe, out of the same experience of life. In verse 4 he talks about those who hated him without cause, which is Psalm 35 verse 7 and verse 19. In verse 10, he says that when he wept and chastened his soul with fasting, and made sackcloth his garment, that's Psalm 35 verse 13. In verse 32 of this psalm, he says later on that the

humble shall see and be glad; and they shall live that seek God, and that's Psalm 22 and verse 26. Yes, we're going to be brought into this moment of David's last days, and there's obvious a crisis going on in this psalm, and let me show you what the crisis was, it's the crisis of verse 7, 'For thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face'. But it wasn't just his own reproach because at the end of verse 9 it says, 'and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee, are fallen upon me'. He bore the reproach of his God in this calamity whatever it was; and you know, b&s, that probably makes reference to the plague that occurred as a result of the census; I'm sure there were some in Israel who blamed David for the deaths of 70,000 people. They said, 'it's all the king's fault you know, the plague should never have occurred, if he hadn't numbered us and asked us to pay the ½ shekel of the sanctuary; if David hadn't asked us, these people would not have died'; and the king bore the reproach of God Himself in this matter.

So when do you think this crisis occurred in David's life? Well, verse 8 says, 'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children', and when was this? Verse 9, 'For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up'. You know, that's 1 Chronicles 22 verse 5, the house that must be built for God must be exceeding magnificent; I shall prepare abundantly before my death, and the zeal of God's house consumed him, did it not? in the very last of his life, I think this is the very moment of this psalm. Even his own family didn't understand what he was about! How hurtful it is, b&s, to be reproached for one's passion and zeal and love for the Father. This is the special anguish of this psalm! There's a key word, did you notice that? Psalm 69 verse 7, 'For thy sake I have borne reproach'; verse 9, 'the reproaches of them that reproach Thee are fallen upon me'; verse 10, 'when I wept and chastened my soul with fasting that was to my reproach'; verse 19, 'Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour'; verse 20, 'reproach hath broken my heart', says David, this is the special anguish of this psalm, the trial of national reproach!

What was David's thoughts at this time? verse 29, 'I am poor and sorrowful, but let Thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify (gadal), I will magnify Him with thanksgiving'. As David came through this particular crisis and experienced the blessing of God's hand upon him, he promised to sing that song by which God would be magnified in his life. Throughout all this trial, he never changed, his spirit was always the same. And God did deliver him from all of that, b&s, and when the trial was all over and the revolt was ended and the new king was crowned and the nation had rallied around David again, he wrote a special psalm of thanksgiving to the Father, for having delivered him.

I think that was Psalm 40 which we took as our reading today. For Psalm 40 says in verse 1, 'I waited patiently for Yahweh, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. He put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in Yahweh'. The new song, of course, that David sings in verse 3 is the song of deliverance but sung now with experiential

knowledge for God; for the God that he desired to make great in his own life and in the life of others; that God had lifted him out of controversy, out of trial, out of danger, out of weakness, and revived his mind for one last wondrous effort in the truth. That man says in verse 6, 'sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire' ..... for the rest of his life, that brief period that God has now granted to him, to the very best of his ability, verse 8, 'I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: I have not refrained my lips, O Yahweh, Thou knowest'. Here David gives his final vow of dedication that to his dying breath now, he'll live according to the principles of the book, as he always wanted to and had always striven to.

At the end of that psalm, he says this in verse 16, does he not? Psalm 40, 'Let all those who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; let such as love thy salvation say continually, Yahweh be magnified.' Yahweh be magnified, he never changed, did he? b&s, never changed in his spirit on this matter. I think what is especially lovely about this, that out of the anguish and weakness of David in the infirmity of his old age, Yahweh fashioned the story of the crucified Christ. The greatest psalms of Messiah, Psalm 22, Psalm 35, Psalm 40, Psalm 69 are all woven into the chapters of the Lord upon the cross, and those psalms of Messiah which we read that way, b&s, we read them as the psalms of Christ, but they're based upon David in the last 12 months of his life; and David's plea to Yahweh for help, became the cry of Christ in His hour of desperate need. On one occasion our Lord said this, and you can almost feel or hear the spirit of these words that we've considered; the Lord said this, 'now is my soul troubled, said Christ, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour! Father, He says, glorify thy name', John 12 verse 28. 'Father, glorify thy name!' which is really the same as saying, 'let Yahweh be magnified', it's exactly the same thing. You see, the spirit of David was in Christ, b&s, or was it that the spirit of Christ was in David? and when we read these psalms of David's old age, we truly enter into the mind, not just of David, but of the Messiah we come to remember this day!

In the bread and wine, we see the man who truly magnified God, to every fibre of His being, for in every moment of His life, He made God great in a way that even David would have been amazed; and this man shared the same spirit, as His godly predecessor, and therefore, used those psalms to comfort Himself upon the cross that we remember this day. So how do we magnify God in our lives then, b&s, apart from singing hymns? We magnify God by centring our lives around the truth and not the truth around our lives. We magnify God by devoting ourselves to the building of the ecclesial house; we magnify God by giving ourselves to the power and influence of the daily readings to remind us of the greatness of His purpose. We magnify God by committing ourselves to daily prayer, to remind ourselves of the greatness of His care. We magnify God by never forgetting the divine sequence and order and hierarchy of our responsibilities, **God, spouse, family, ecclesia, workplace, others** and by working according to that priority in our lives. We magnify God by taking up every task no matter how small in the truth and performing it to the very best of our ability - David collected

nails for the house! We magnify God by being guided at all times by the spirit of what will be best for the truth, in terms of what we might say or might do, in any circumstance of life. It's such a comforting thing, isn't it? b&s, to think that when David was finally old that his focus was utterly spiritual, that then, even in the last 12 months of his life, he was the greatest type of Messiah at that moment, the very embodiment of the spirit of the crucified Christ. So that we might capture that spirit of our Lord and of David in seeking to magnify God, for if we shall, we can, b&s, and we shall partake of the emblems acceptably this day.

In the words of a hymn:

Praise the Lord, for He is glorious  
Never shall His promise fail  
God will make His saints victorious  
Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation  
Hosts on high His power proclaim  
Heaven and earth and all creation  
Laud and magnify His name.

(Hymn # 115 -2002 book)