

**SBC – Sept. 25, 2022**

**Psalm 31 (NKJV) - “The Messiah’s Dying Prayer”**

We are currently looking at what are called the Messianic Psalms. A Messianic Psalm is one that is clearly tied prophetically to the coming Messiah.

Some of the Psalms are more clearly Messianic than others meaning some have a definite prophetic tie, in that the NT plainly references them while others are not so clear.

For example, some would put Psalm 27 in the Messianic category but others would not. And the reason is that while there clearly are applications that can be made to the Messiah a direct connection is not as clear.

**Slide # 1**

**Psalm 27:12 (NKJV)**

**12** Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For **false witnesses have risen against me**, And such as breathe out violence.

Certainly, this applies to David, but does it directly have prophetic implications for the greater David – the Messiah? Some think so.

**Slide # 2**

**Psalm 27:12 (NKJV)**

**12** Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For **false witnesses have risen against me**, And such as breathe out violence.

**Matthew 26:60 (NKJV)**

**60** but found none. Even though **many false witnesses came forward**, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward

Certainly there is application to the Messiah as He too did experience this, but is it intended to be taken prophetically? This is questionable because the NT does not directly or specifically reference it. Again, some of the Messianic Psalms are more clear in Messianic intent than others.

And with that in mind let us come to Psalm 31 where we have a direct quote from Jesus on the cross which everyone agrees is a clear and indisputable Messianic tie.

The superscription of Psalm 31 reads...

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

In the NT Peter called David a prophet (Acts 2:30). It is said that David said more prophetically about the Messiah than any other prophetic subject he addressed. It has also been said that David's life in many ways was largely a sort of acted out parable on the sufferings and glory of Christ.

Let's read the Psalm together – Psalm 31.

**1 In You, O Lord, I put my trust;** Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness.

2 Bow down Your ear to me, Deliver me speedily; Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me.

**3 For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, Lead me and guide me.**

4 Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength.

**5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.**

6 I have hated those who regard useless idols; But I trust in the Lord.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities,

8 And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a wide place.

9 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body!

10 For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away.

11 I am a reproach among all my enemies, But especially among my neighbors, And am repulsive to my acquaintances; Those who see me outside flee from me.

12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel.

13 For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life.

14 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God."

15 **My times are in Your hand;** Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me.

16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant; Save me for Your mercies' sake.

17 Do not let me be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon You; Let the wicked be ashamed; Let them be silent in the grave.

18 Let the lying lips be put to silence, Which speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

19 **Oh, how great is Your goodness,** Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men!

20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be the Lord, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!

22 **For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes";** Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You.

23 Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! For the Lord **preserves** the faithful, And fully repays the proud person.

24 Be of good courage, **And He shall strengthen your heart,** All you who hope in the Lord.

In Psalm 31 we have David moving from anguish to assurance, but in the midst of it all we see a consistent emphasis on TRUST.

We could title Psalm 31 "David's Testimony of Trust and Praise".

**Slide # 3*****Psalm 31 “David’s Testimony of Trust and Praise”***

v. 1-18 – Lament and Faith

v. 19-24 – Praise for God’s Preservation

Let’s pick out a few of the highlights in the Psalm with special emphasis on verse 5 which directly connects with Christ the Messiah in the NT.

David begins with an affirmation of TRUST and then building on that asks for God’s intervention.

**Psalm 31:1–4 (NKJV)**

**1 In You, O LORD, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness.**

**2 Bow down Your ear to me, Deliver me speedily; Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me.**

**3 For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name’s sake, Lead me and guide me.**

**4 Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength.**

David is asking God for deliverance from his enemies. And it is in that context that we have verse 5.

**Psalm 31:5 (NKJV)**

**5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.**

David is committing himself to God in the face of extreme peril that is life threatening; but in the NT Christ quotes this as His final words in death.

**Slide # 4****Luke 23:46 (NKJV)**

**46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” Having said this, He breathed His last.**

This is a statement of complete TRUST – of completely entrusting one’s self into the care of God. Jesus was fully God and yet fully human. As a human being He experienced everything we go through as humans including dying, only He didn’t sin and He died for our sin.

The word “commit” is sometimes translated as “trust”. It means “to deposit” like one would deposit money in a bank. It is translated as “stored” in Jeremiah 36:20.

To commit here means to completely entrust oneself into the care of God. A person’s spirit stands for their very being. As I say this was the climactic expression of trust as quoted by the Lord in His dying breath. It is to commit all that a person is into the eternal care of God.

The only other place the sense of Psalm 31:5 is quoted from in the NT comes from the lips of Stephen – the first martyr of the Church as he was being martyred.

**Slide # 5**

**Acts 7:59 (NKJV)**

**59** And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”**

Down through the Church Age many martyrs have said something like this as they were dying. Peter exhorts suffering saints to have this attitude in their time of affliction.

**Slide # 6**

**1 Peter 4:19 (NKJV)**

**19** Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God **commit their souls to Him** in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Not only in death but also in life we should constantly be committing our souls to God in doing good as we rely upon Him as our faithful Creator.

David committed himself to God, referring to Him at the end of verse 5 as “LORD God of truth”. Because He is a God of TRUTH we can depend upon Him and we commit all that we are to Him for time and eternity.

**Slide # 7**

**Revelation 19:11 (NKJV)**

**11** Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called **Faithful and True**, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

This is Who our LORD is! He is Faithful and True and therefore we can trust everything into His care. Life is funny. Little by little we accumulate more and more things and often grow in stature in terms of what this life has to offer. But then as we get older little by little it is taken from us. Our health begins to deteriorate. Our funds that we saved start to dwindle. Our abilities and assets little by little go by the wayside. And then we come to the end where we can't even take care of ourselves. And what are we left with then?

Well, we can commit ourselves to God. This is what it comes down to TRUSTING in God when we have nothing else to lean on. And in that position we find that God is TRUE – His promises are TRUE. He is worthy of our TRUST!

It is worth noting that while David was looking to God at this point to deliver him from death, that Jesus was looking for the Father to deliver Him from this life and into His eternal plan.

God's BEST does not always mean immediate deliverance from physical distress, persecution, or death. Sometimes God delivers us from what we are going through by means of death in which death is ultimately swallowed up in victory (cf. 1 Cor. 15:54-55).

I have a friend and he was telling me that he was in Hawaii on Jan 13, 2018 when there was a missile scare that told people they had 17 minutes. It came by way of twitter and then was put on TV.

**Slide # 8**

My friend told me people were hiding in manholes and running crazy scared. His kids were calling him and they were all telling each other they loved each other truly thinking this might be the end. Then after 17 minutes they were told it was a false alarm.

But my friend asked me, “How would you respond if you knew you had a very short time to live?”

I told him about what D.L. Moody said when someone asked him if he had dying grace, he wisely answered: “No. Why should I? I am not dying yet.”  
D. L. Moody said...

I find that many Christians are in trouble about the future; they think they will not have grace enough to die by. It is much more important that we should have grace enough to live by. It seems to me that death is of very little importance in the meantime. When the dying hour comes, there will be dying grace; but you do not require dying grace to live by.

And how did it go when it came time for D.L. Moody to die. His dying words were: “Earth recedes, Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet! There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go.”

Indeed, God gives living grace for living and He gives dying grace for dying.

### **Slide # 9**

#### **John 1:16 (ESV)**

**16** For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

As David continues on in Psalm 31 he again affirms his trust in the LORD as seen in verse 6. He pours out his heart to God saying, “I am in trouble” (v. 9); “my life is spent with grief” (v. 10); “Fear is on every side” (v. 13). And then yet again he affirms his TRUST in the LORD.

### **Slide # 10**

#### **Psalm 31:14 (NKJV)**

**14** But as for me, **I trust in You, O LORD**; I say, “You are my God.”

When everything seems against you and life doesn't seem to really have a sweet spot – where do you go? Well, David went to the LORD and over and over affirmed his TRUST was in Him. And following that great statement of TRUST in verse 14 he says this...

**Slide # 11****Psalm 31:15 (NKJV)**

**15 My times are in Your hand**; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me.

This too is one of the great statements of TRUST in the Bible. David here recognizes that the LORD is in control of every aspect of his life. He recognizes that God is the One Who ultimately controls his time on earth.

**Job 14:5 (NKJV)**

**5** Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.

**Psalm 139:16 (NKJV)**

**16** Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

All of life, the events and circumstances, and the very number of our days is in God's hands. He is sovereign over the whole of life. What a great statement: "**My times are in Your hand**". Indeed, they are so we can TRUST this God Who is our rock, our fortress, and our strength (v. 3).

**Isaiah 26:4 (NKJV)**

**4** Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.

Starting with verse 19 the mood turns largely to PRAISE as David in anticipation of answered prayer says, "Oh, how great is Your goodness...".

**Slide # 12****Psalm 31:22 (NKJV)**

**22** For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You.

Sometimes when things are really looking bleak it is easy to think the worst and think "It is over". But with God it's not over till He says it's over. It is good to remember that our times are in His hand – and He answers prayer according to His good will and pleasure for His glory.



And so David concludes this Psalm with these words.

**Slide # 13**

**Psalm 31:23–24 (NKJV)**

**23** Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD **preserves** the faithful, And fully repays the proud person.

**24** Be of good courage, And **He shall strengthen your heart**, All you who hope in the LORD.

Sometimes He preserves us in terms of this life (David) and sometimes He preserves us through death as He transitions us to the glory land (the Greater David).

But whatever the case we can TRUST Him because He is a faithful God.

John Huss (1369-1415) was a Czech reformer who lived as a predecessor to the Protestant movement of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He was condemned as a heretic by the Roman Catholic Church. As he was sentenced to death the Catholic authorities said to him, “And now we commit thy soul to the devil.” John Huss very calmly responded, “I commit my spirit into Thy hands, Lord Jesus Christ.”

After His resurrection Jesus said this to Peter...

**Slide # 14**

**John 21:18–19 (NKJV)**

**18** Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.”

**19** This He spoke, **signifying by what death he would glorify God**. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

John adds the commentary that Christ in saying this was indicating by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. God uses our lives as well as our deaths to bring glory to Himself.

Our times are in His hand, and when our time comes in absolute TRUST we can commit our spirit into His care.

Happy is the man who can look around the table and say, “No matter what happens we will all be together again.”

And BLESSED is the man who at the end of his life can say in full assurance,  
**“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit”.**

Charles Wesley said to his brother John Wesley, **“Brother, our people die well!”**

Indeed, God’s people die with dying grace. We follow our LORD the most perfect example of living and dying faith ever seen.

Indeed, God’s people die well, especially if they have lived well to the glory of God.

The dominant theme of Psalm 31 is TRUST (4 times). We can live TRUSTING our LORD knowing our times are in His hand. And we can die TRUSTING our spirit into His hand.

This is the example of David...

v. 1 In You O LORD, I put my trust...

v. 6 But I trust in the LORD...

v. 14 But as for me, I trust in You O LORD...

v. 19 Oh how great is your goodness... you have prepared for those who trust in You...

And the ultimate example is that of Lord Jesus Christ Who died with, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” on His lips.

**Psalm 31:24 (NKJV)**

**24** Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD.

Amen!