

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon 1pm.

Date 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymns Ps 100, 614, 1, 6, Read: 1 Sam 20:1-9 or 1-3, Text: 1 Sam 20:3 Title –The Death of HM Queen Elizabeth II

The words in **1 Samuel 20:3** “**there is but a step between me and death**,” were spoken by David to his friend Jonathan.

From the time God used David in giving him victory over the giant Goliath, Israel's enemy, David stood out among the people.

In **1 Sam 18:7**, the woman came to sing their praise, acknowledging “**Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.**” “**And Saul eyed David from that day forward.**” **1 Sam 18:28** states “... **and Saul became David's enemy continually.**”

Saul envied David, and due to his jealous rage and troubled mind Saul in **1 Sam 18:11** tried to slay David by throwing his Javelin at him, but “**David avoided out of his presence twice.**”

Furthermore, in **1 Sam 20:1** David having fled from Saul, asked Jonathon, “**what have I done?**”... “**that thy father seeketh my life.**” Saul pursued David, hunting to end his life.

David was of course, fully aware of Saul's intent, for that reason he spoke openly about his danger to Jonathan, Saul's son, and expressed his situation to Jonathan by these words “**there is but a step between me and death.**”

David's words apply to all without exception, whether saved by grace or strangers to grace, prepared or unprepared for death, “**there is but a step between me and death,**”

The events of this past week, regarding the death of Queen Elizabeth II, are a reminder that David's words are still true today, “**there is but a step between me and death.**”

In Balmoral in Scotland, on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022, Queen Elizabeth the II unknown to us all carried out her last public duty on earth, by officially welcoming the new prime minister of UK.

Less than 48 hours after, doctors were concerned for the Queen's health, and then the news was confirmed by Buckingham Palace, on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2022**, "*the Queen died peacefully at Balmoral this afternoon...*"

The Queen's passing has left many in shock and surprise, though at 96 years old and the longest reigning monarch in Britain and the second longest reigning monarch in the world, people still did not expect the Queen's death anytime soon.

In looking at the pictures of the Queen meeting the new prime minister on Tuesday, the Queen is standing, smiling and shaking hands.

But it seems the Queen's health went down suddenly, and Queen Elizabeth II took her last step on earth, to be present with the Lord.

Today we want to look at King David's word and apply them to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II and learn vital lessons.

## **I FIRST, THE REASON FOR THIS STEP BETWEEN DAVID AND DEATH**

David spoke such words, "***there is but a step between me and death***," because death exists as the result of the entrance of sin into the world. **1 Cor 15:26** teaches us that death is an 'enemy'.

mankind was created made to live, therefore death for humanity as all of God's creation is unnatural, for death was not part of God's original creation. Death was brought in, inflicting itself upon everything and impacting every part of it.

**Death is the result of sin as Romans 5:12** tells of the time when Adam the first man brought the enemy called death into the

world, “**as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned**”.

Adam wilfully disobeyed God’s law, bringing sin and its penalty into the entire world, impacting all of God’s creation.

The penalty for breaking God’s law is death as stated in **Gen 2:17** “**thou shalt surely die**”, “**Romans 6:23** teaches “**For the wages of sin is death...**” **Ezk 18:4** “**the soul that sinneth, it shall die.**”

The penalty inflicted on the entire human race for Adam’s sin comprised of three forms of death, such as **physical death**, though Adam did not physically die straight away, but he began to die, through time his body weakened, and at some point in time he died.

Likewise, the longer we live our body weakens and one day we will die. Every grave, and memorial site, yea, the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, testifies of death.

There is also, **spiritual death** **the immediate loss** of fellowship with God, cut off from God, unacceptable and unpleasing to God. This our natural position and the condition of anyone still without faith alone in Christ lone.

Then there is the greatest tragedy of death which is **eternal death**, that is when a spiritually dead sinner, continually refuses and rejects Christ as Saviour, and then physically dies in that state. Eternal death is to suffer eternal torments in the lake of fire for rejecting Christ as Saviour.

Death is the equalizer among mankind, Young or old, rich or poor, Royal nor not, live a Palace or on the streets, all will physically die.

But the step of death for the Christian is another matter altogether.

Child of God, though we will physically die, yet because the Holy Spirit has given spiritual life, to sinners who trust in Christ, then **He that hath the Son hath life**, we have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life, which is in itself eternal life.

Queen Elizabeth II said on the **3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022**, “*throughout my life, the message and teachings of Christ have been my guide and in them I find hope.*”

In **2014** the Queen described the Lord Jesus Christ as “*the anchor in my life*”. The Queen died grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love.

However, unbeliever you are dead spiritually, there is no fellowship with Christ, you too, will die physically, only then to be ushered into eternal death.

Death, is a terror for you, for it is the day of your punishment, when you will say, as the tormented man in **Luke 16:24** “*I am tormented in this flame.*” Because you, know not God as Salvation, and have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh learn, Believer and unbeliever, “***there is but a step between me and death,***”

## **II SECOND, THE REALITY OF THIS STEP BETWEEN DAVID AND DEATH.**

To David the danger of death and death itself was a reality. He had good reasons to believe that his death was only a step away.

His words refer to the situation that had developed out of Saul’s hatred for him. David felt his danger.

David was alert to the situation. The reality of death was before him. David understood at some point he would die.

David's conclusion was confirmed as, sometime after, Jonathan learned from his own Father Saul, of his murderous plans for David.

Saul said to Jonathan in **1 Sam 20:31** ***"Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die."***

Jonathan then asked his Father the same question David asked, **v32** ***"wherefore, shall he be slain? What hath he done?"*** Due to Jonathan's friendship with David, ***"Saul cast a javelin as him (Jonathon) to smite him, whereby Jonathon knew that it was determined of his father to slay David."***

Jonathan now understood what David meant ***"there is but a step between me and death,"***.

(Jonathon, Saul's son and David's closest friend – thought it incredible that David had come to the conclusion that his life was in danger. He was especially amazed at the idea that David's threat of death came from his father Saul.

While David understood the reality of death, so now did Jonathan.)

***God in His sovereignty is pleased to use situations, to alarm, alert and awaken men and woman of the reality of death. The hearts and mind have become anxious, and troubled, that death is a reality.***

In this case God has been pleased to use the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II to serve as a reminder of the reality of death.

Such words from David and the Queen's death, remind us, as far as our earthly existence, that no person is here forever, there will be a time, a day, a year, when we as King Solomon wrote, in **Ecc**

**3:20** “All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

Life is short, and uncertain. How unexpectedly it ends! **Job 14:2** “man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not...”

**James 4:4** James says our life is like “a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

On other occasions such as **Psa. 89:47** David prayed that God would help him to “Remember how short my time is,”

( In **Psalm 102:3** David said “For my days are consumed like smoke.” **Isa 40:6** and **1 Pet 1:24**, our days are as “the grass,” which “withereth and the flower thereof falleth away.”)

**Prov 27:1** “Boast not thyself of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

(**Ps 90:12** “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”)

Paul said in **Hebrews 9:27** “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” The word **appointed** denotes that which is **reserved or laid up**.

So there is reserved for all of us a particular time for death, it is certain, it is appointed.

The reality for everyone of us, is that the day of our death is appointed by God. And we are all closer to that day than we have ever been.

In the eternal counsels of a triune, omnipotent, all knowing God, the timing, the circumstances of our death have all been laid down and appointed. The manner, the means and moment of that final step between us and death has been appointed by God.

The same word **appointed** is translated **laid up** in **Col 1:5** to **encourage believers** “*For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.*”

For God’s people that last step at death will be the first step into eternal blessing, but for the unsaved the last step at death will be into eternal punishment.

I rejoice to read articles taken from the Queen’s words during her life. The Queen knew the reality of death, because she said in her speech “*I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short...*”

Of course, over a year ago the Queen experienced the sorrow of death, as her husband Prince Philip died.

This caused her to speak on TV “*Christmas can be hard for those who have lost loved ones, this year, I especially understand why* – then the Queen acknowledges the reality of death, *...for me, in the months since the death of my beloved Philip...*”

The Queen recognised the reality of death, there is a step between her and death. **When the Queen died on Thursday, it was her appointed time of death, she took that last step, known to God.**

Therefore, unsaved take David words and be concerned about the reality of death. It is dangerous unsaved one to be in a lost position and ignore that there is but a step between you and death.

There is no escaping, no hiding, on a particular year, that month, on that very day day, at a certain time, your soul will be required of you, take heed, every step you take, “***is a step between you and death,***” .

### III THIRD, THE READINESS FOR THIS STEP BETWEEN DAVID AND DEATH.

While David knew and said “**there is but a step between me and death.**” yet he did not know when that last step would be taken. Though unknown to David at the time, God spared him another 40 years. **1 Chron 29:28** says “**he died in a good old age full of days, riches and honour.**”

When David spoke these words he could not have said that he would survive another hour. To David he was near his end, but even it was his appointed at that stage of life, David was ready for that last step between him and death.

David was a Sinner saved by God’s grace. David testifies through the Psalms, that God is my light and salvation. My Rock. My Refuge.

Romans 4 teaches, David was justified, that is pardoned by faith in the person and sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. His iniquities were forgiven and His is sins covered, by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

Certain questions are often asked, just as in **2 Sam 19:34** when Barzillai, asked the King, **how long have I to live?** Isaac said to his son in **Gen 27:2** “**I am old, I know not the day of my death.**”

While we do not know the answers to these questions, what we do know is this, “**there is but a step between me and death.**”

Our Queen on earth did not know how long she would live, but God gave her 96 years.

The Queen did not know the day of her death, as does any person, but HM Queen Elizabeth II was ready for death, The Queen was prepared to meet her Sovereign, the KING of Kings.



Notice, the Queen's words speak of readiness and preparation. In the Queen's Christmas TV Broadcast, **25<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021** the Queen said "***Jesus whose teachings have been handed down from generation to generation and have been the bedrock of my faith. His birth marked a new beginning.***

***As the Carol says "the hopes and fears of all the years and met in thee tonight."***

For all who have Christ as the anchor of their soul, at Death Christ's prayers are answered for His people to be with Him.

Through the victory of Christ's death and Resurrection, **what was meant to be man's ruin became the means of his carriage into heaven.**

Death takes the Christian to heaven to be with Christ, as Christ prayed in **John 17:24** "**...whom thou hast given me be with me where I am...**"

Therefore, through death Christ's purpose to have His people with Him is actually accomplished. He takes death, which is sin, and conquers it, making it His own instrument in the accomplishing of His purpose for His people.

Unbeliever there is a step between you and death, Are you ready for that last step David was, Our Queen was!

Take Christ as your Saviour and you will be ready when you take that last step for it will be your first into heaven.