

Bringing Back the King

by J. Wilbur Chapman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Jesus Christ's future kingship and the role of the church in hastening His return.

Scripture: John 14:1

Topics: "Christ's Return", "Evangelism"

Description

J. Wilbur Chapman preaches on the story of Absalom and David, drawing parallels between David's rejection and Christ's rejection, highlighting the journey of both figures and their betrayers. He emphasizes the need to bring Christ back as King, expressing longing for His return for the sake of the world, the Jewish people, and out of love for Christ Himself. Chapman urges believers to work towards hastening Christ's return by sharing the Gospel and completing the body of Christ, the House of God, and the Bride of Christ.

Transcript

"Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" --2 Samuel 19:10.

This is a part of the story of the Prodigal Son of the Old Testament, excepting that in this Old Testament story the father was driven forth instead of the son, and in this story the son was a thief of the worst character. He had not stolen either silver or gold; his sin was worse than that, for we are told that he had stolen the hearts of the men of Israel from his father. Absalom was the prodigal, and David is the father of whom I speak. A mighty man in many ways, but a perfect illustration of the law that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Absalom did it in this way. "Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said, moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

I.

Did it ever occur to you that David in his rejection was a perfect type of Christ in His rejection? If any reader should be afraid of the word "type," I will change it and say he is a perfect "illustration." When David knew that Absalom was in rebellion, he left Jerusalem and all his friends with him. And we read:

"David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword."

This was like an experience through which Jesus passed also. When He had spoken those words which we find in John's Gospel from the fourteenth chapter through the seventeenth chapter, we read that when they had sung a hymn they went out, along the streets of the city, through the gates of the same, and Joseph Parker well says, "There never was such a going out before; there never has been such a going out since."

But the illustration is even more perfect, for when David went out he turned to Ittai. "Then said the king to Ittai, the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

This was like our Savior, too, for we read that when He had gone a certain distance He turned and said to His disciples these words: "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." But there is still more of the illustration. David in his flight from Absalom passed over the brook Kidron, and went toward the wilderness. "And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness."

This was exactly the same journey that was made by the Son of God. He too went over the Kidron toward the wilderness, which we know as the Garden of Gethsemane, and there never has been a wilderness in all the world where the shadows were so dense or the darkness so deep as in that same garden. I have heard of a wilderness where the solitude was so intense that men lost their reason as they wandered in it, but it is all as nothing when compared with this Gethsemane experience through which the Son of God passed.

But we are not yet at the end of the illustration. We read again: "And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."

Jesus did the same thing. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

David had his betrayer, too, and he was found in the company of those who were called his friends, for Ahithophel was one of David's counselors. "And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." And his end was like the end of the New Testament betrayer: "When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

How very similar was the experience through which Jesus passed, as we find it recorded in the Gospel of Mark!

"And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, Is it I? and another, Is it I? And He answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with Me in the dish." And the end of His betrayer was like that of Ahithophel. "Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

But there is still more to add. When they were going forth to battle, David the king suddenly hastened after them and calling them back he spoke to them most significant words. "And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom."

This was very much like the Son of God, for when it was getting dark about the Cross, and His heart-strings were snapping with agony, we read that He said:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

There is much more that could be said, but this is enough for the illustration. Now the battle is over and Absalom is dead. Israel and Judah begin to confer as to their future plans. They finally decide to bring the king back. as we find recorded in the verse which I have chosen for my text:

"Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?"

The line of march is begun toward the palace and throne, and as they reached the river's brink, we read: "There went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good." And so the king and his household stepped in. The nation was waiting on the other side to receive them. But of all the persons that saluted him there, the king's eyes rested on Mephibosheth. All the time David had been gone, he had been inconsolable. "And Mephibosheth the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace. And it came to pass when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace into his own house."

It is a most significant thing to me that when David offered to give this poor lame man an inheritance he utterly refused to receive any of it, because for him it was enough to know that the king had come back;

and to my mind this is the way out of all difficulties at the present time. If we could only bring our King back, if we could only put Him upon His rightful throne, if we could only place in His hands the reins of government, we should be of all men most happy.

II.

Is Jesus Christ a King? I have an idea that very frequently we must grieve the Spirit, and possibly grieve Him of whom the Spirit speaks, by our failure to appreciate His position. Jesus is not yet a King, and if we would know what He is, it is only necessary that we should compare scripture with scripture.

This leads me to say that He was first of all a prophet.

Now, a prophet is one who gives revelations of things to come. In this respect He perfectly fulfilled His commission.

If you read the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, and put together the parables of the kingdom, you will find a perfect map or chart of what the church is to be until the end of the age. And if you will add to this the closing chapters of the Gospel of Matthew you will have a perfect account of all that is yet to be.

I find in the second place that He is a priest, and as a priest He is now performing His priestly service.

"Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17,18).

We know exactly where Jesus Christ is now. It is true He is here in spirit, but it is also true that in His glorified body He is standing at this moment at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. In olden times when the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies, he wore a robe which was most beautiful. It was so perfectly wrought that it seemed as if it must have been the work of angels' fingers. The most remarkable thing about it was the adornment on the hem. It was very curious, being made of pomegranates and golden bells. There was first a pomegranate and then a golden bell, and you will notice that there was just as much fruit as there was sound; and when the high priest entered the holy of Holies, and the children of Israel heard the clashing of the bells, they knew that the high priest was still alive, and the blessing of his intercession was to fall upon them. And we are sure that our high priest ever liveth from the fact that upon us day by day are falling mercies and blessings, the direct result of His incessant intercession. But it is not to be forgotten that He is not only there speaking for us. This would be like the chiming of the golden bells. He is qualified to speak because of what He did for us in this world upon the Cross; and this is like the pomegranates, for it is on the ground of His finished work that He has a right to speak and to intercede.

I have read the story of a soldier who lost both arms in battle, and of course was maimed for life. It is said that his brother was arrested for some misdemeanor, and was sentenced to die. Every effort was made to secure his release, but to no effect. Finally the maimed soldier went before the king, and without saying a word that was eloquent, secured the offender's pardon. All he did was just to lift his maimed arms, and say:

"My brother, my brother, release him for the sake of these!"

I think it is thus that Christ stands at the right hand of God, lifting the hands that were pierced by the nails, baring the side that was thrust through with the spear, and saying:

"My Father, my Father, for the sake of these, pass over their sins."

He will be a King. Satan once offered Him a kingdom of this world. He took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said unto Him:

"All these things will I give Thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Then said Jesus unto him: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

He put it all behind Him, and I am sure it was for this reason: He did not come into this world to become a king at once, but He came that He might die, and thus provide an expiation for your sins and mine. I am absolutely certain that the day will come when He shall be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

If this be not true, then I do not understand how any other prophecy concerning Him can be of value.

III.

How, then, may we bring Him back again?

First of all, we must want Him. There are very many reasons why I long for Him to come back. I should like Him to come, first, for the sake of the poor Jew, who has gone wandering up and down this world without a king, without a sacrifice, without a prince. The people that have given to the world a Mozart, a Disraeli and a Mendelssohn. But there is a glad time coming for them, according to the word of the Lord, by the prophet Zechariah: "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them."

I would like Him to come for the sake of the world. Isaiah said: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Paul tells us that the whole world feels the touch of the power of sin. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

His coming shall be in deliverance. Another has said "the day is coming when not only the wants of one family shall be supplied, but all families; and when not only one land shall be redeemed, but all shall be glowing with the glory of God; when not only one nation shall own Him as King, but all nations shall take their place in the kingdom of God. The day is coming when the whole world shall do the will of God. For Him the cables shall flash their messages under the seas, for Him the ships shall sail the ocean on voyages of peace, for Him the manufacturers shall give forth their goods, for Him the mines shall uncover their treasures, for Him steam and electricity shall drive the trains across the land, for Him the schools shall train the minds of millions, for Him the banners of all people shall fly aloft, and for Him the kings of earth shall bow themselves." "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the

hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

But I want Him, in the third place, for the sake of Himself. There must have been something very charming about a man who made little children love Him; who charmed the woman's heart until she poured out upon Him the box of precious ointment; who held the disciples by the power of His words until their hearts burned within them. I want Him to come that I may see Him face to face. He has been shedding forth precious gifts upon us, His riches of grace purchased on the Cross, and His riches of glory now poured out upon Him in the skies, but we long to see Him.

I have heard of a man who won his fortune in California, and kept sending to his family precious gifts. Each year the gifts grew in value, but at last his wife wrote him saying: "We are pleased to have your offerings, but oh, my husband, we long to see you." And it is thus with Christ.

I feel like saying: "Oh, Thou blessed Christ of God, we want to behold Thee in all Thy beauty, and if a word will bring Thee back, we will speak it to-day. Come, come, come quickly!" We must not only long for Him to come, but we must work for Him if we would hasten His appearing. In one place in the Scripture the church is called the body of Christ. This must be in its relation to the Spirit of God, for He is the animation of it, and if the Lord would come we must complete this body. Adam had dominion only when the woman was formed, and the Lord will have dominion when the church is completed.

In another place the church is called the House of God. This must be in its relation to the Father as a matter of testimony. The house must be builded if He is to come. And in still another place the church is called the Bride. This must be in its relation to the Son of God, for it is a love relation. But the Bride must be made ready if He is to return. What then remains for us to do? Come with me through the streets of the city until we reach the lowest hovel. Stoop down beside the poor lost wretch, sunken in sin, and whisper in his ear: "My friend, will you accept Jesus Christ?"

Come with me to the house of the richest man in all the city, salute him in his palace, and say: "My friend, will you yield to Christ?"

Then set sail with me until we reach the shores of Africa, and say to those poor souls sitting in darkness: "Will you receive the Son of God?"

And if the man in the hovel or in the palace or in the dark continent answers, "Yes," that may be the word that shall bring the King back, for it may be the last man to complete the church. I rejoice to say to you that the day will come when Jesus Christ shall reign!

I shall never forget an experience in Cincinnati, listening to the rendering of the Oratorio of the Messiah, with Patti as soprano, Whitney as bass, Theodore Toedt as tenor, and Carey as alto, each supported by hundreds of trained musicians. Just before the "Hallelujah Chorus" there was a death-like stillness over all the throng, and then suddenly the bass singers sang: "For He shall reign forever and ever"; and the alto lifted it a little higher: "For He shall reign forever and ever"; and the tenors, raising it almost to the sky, sang, "For He shall reign forever and ever"; and then the sopranos, as if they were inspired, sang, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!" And then as if the angels were there, questioning "How long shall He reign?" with one accord they made one reply, "Forever and ever, forever and ever." And then, as if inspired, the whole choir shouted as with the voice of one man, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

I think it must be a prophecy of that day when from the dark continent the people shall announce: "He shall be King of Kings"; and the voice of Europe shall be added to it, and the shout of America shall give it power, and the deep undertone from Asia shall break out all together, "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

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