

# The Shepherd King Returns

Text: II Samuel 19 and 20

The rebellion has been squelched; Absalom was dead. Absalom was more like a hireling than a shepherd. John 10:13b says, "...he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." Absalom ended up doing what Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 23:1: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD." When there is no true shepherd, there is chaos. Matthew 26:31: "Then saith Jesus unto them, 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." Matthew 9:36: "But when He saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

Whether it is Israel of old or America today, we need shepherding. Psalm 100:3: "Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of his pasture." I would not be surprised if David was reflecting back to his days as a shepherd boy, remembering his diligent care for the sheep. Now he looks over his scattered flock and knows that they need "...to lie down in green pastures... and be led beside the still waters." He knows also that the sheep need to have a restored soul and to be led in "...paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Psalm 23:2, 3).

The Shepherd King returns to his throne and re-establishes his kingdom. When I read those words "So the king returned..." (II Samuel 19:15a), I cannot help but think that we, too, in this topsy-turvy world, are in need of the return of the King of Kings. Toward the end of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, specifically, in *The Return of the King*, Samwise Gamgee asks a most poignant question after the ring is destroyed at Mount Doom, and he is surprised to see that he is still alive and asks, "Is everything sad going to come untrue?" Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." With that in mind, we could certainly pray Revelation 22:20b: "....Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## 1. THE SHEPHERD KING GATHERS THE FLOCK

II Samuel 19:9-15

The tribes of Israel did remember that King David did deliver them out of the hands of the Philistines. They should have remembered that what David did once, he could do again. Thank God our King is the same and can do the same! Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

David longs to make all things new. David received the news of the ten tribes of Israel were longing to have him back on the throne. So David got the word back to Judah, his home tribe; he was ready to come home. The Bible says that David "...bowed the heart of all the men of Judah..." (II Samuel 19:14a). In other words, he won their hearts and they wanted the king back in his rightful place. There is an interesting turn of events--David has now granted Amasa the high position of Captain of the Hosts, comparable to our General of the Army, thus taking the command from Joab. This does two things; it is an attempt to bring Amasa, his kinsman, back from his disloyalty in being Absalom's captain and it shows David's displeasure with Joab for usurping his authority and taking the life of his son when the clear command was to let him live.

## 2. THE SHEPHERD KING IS MINDFUL OF THE GOATS IN THE MIDST

II Samuel 19:16-23

Shimei and Ziba were Benjamites appearing like sheep of King David's pasture, but actually, they were feigning loyalty only for self-aggrandizement. We have people that could be defined as professors, but not possessors of the saving faith of the Gospel.

We see this truth in the parable of the tares among the wheat in Matthew 13:24-30. The day of reckoning is coming as foretold by the Lord Jesus. Matthew 25:33: "And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." Jesus explained this in Matthew 7:21-23. Notice especially, Matthew 7:23: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

### 3. THE SHEPHERD KING KNOWS HIS SHEEP

II Samuel 19:24-40

The lame prince, Mephibosheth, whom David had showed kindness to for Jonathan's sake (II Samuel 9:1) had been wickedly lied against and left behind by Ziba. Mephibosheth was so grieved that he went barefooted, unwashed and ungroomed, in a state of mourning and no doubt praying and fasting for David's return. This brings to mind the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:15: "And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." In Mephibosheth's humility, he confesses that he does not have the right for any of the king's kindnesses. No one knows the definition of grace better than Prince Mephibosheth!

It was no doubt a moment of curiosity in David's part in wondering who was telling the truth--Ziba or Mephibosheth. So David puts forth a test. David too quickly revoked the land from Mephibosheth and gave it to Ziba after Ziba had convinced David of Mephibosheth's disloyalty. Now David, after hearing Mephibosheth's side of the story, says the two of them may split the land. Rather than demand all of the land originally given to him, Mephibosheth's response is touching. II Samuel 19:30 tells us, "And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." How precious! Mephibosheth was saying, in essence, "Let Ziba have all the 'stuff.' As long as I have you, the king, I have quite enough! These are the words of a true disciple. John 10:14: "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."

Then there is another precious, older sheep of David's pasture: Barzillai, of whom the Bible says in II Samuel 19:32, "Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man." Barzillai was magnanimous in his loyalty to David, as seen in II Samuel 17:27-29. David desired Barzillai to come live under his shadow and loving care. How kind was Barzillai, the eighty-year old man, who only requested to let his son, Chimham take his place in David's gracious offer. Even on David's deathbed he said to Solomon in I Kings 2:7: "But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother." John 10:27, 28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

### 4. THE SHEPHERD KING DISCERNS THE DANGER OF DIVISION

II Samuel 19:41-43

David saw the strength of unity as Judah came together (II Samuel 19:14). Now he sees the ten tribes laying the seed down for future rebellion, as Israel and Judah begin to separate. Benjamin Franklin said, "We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

### 5. THE SHEPHERD KING MUST EVENTUALLY DEAL WITH THE WOLVES

II Samuel 20

In this chapter Joab takes the life of the man who had just replaced him as the Captain of the Hosts. Then we observe that Sheba, a heathen idolator takes advantage of the dissension among God's people and starts off another rebellion. The only way to deal with a

wolf, according to shepherds, is to kill it. And that was the outcome of Sheba's brief rebellion--he died.

Alas, Joab himself was a wolf and eventually, he, too, must be dealt with. In David's dying words, he says in I Kings 2:6, "Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his [Joab's] hoar head go down to the grave in peace." In II Samuel 2:28-34 Joab, the wolf is dealt with.

Conclusion:

Our King is coming soon! We need to welcome Him back by being his witnesses: Matthew 28:18-20. We also need to welcome Him back by praying for the harvest: Luke 10:2, 3. We need to welcome our Lord back by living a holy life: "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (I John 3:3).

-Pastor Pope-