



December 16, 2018

2 Samuel 19-23

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The Return of the King

Hi Everyone. My name is Larry Adams and I want to take a moment to thank you for reading this message. At Golden Hills we are committed to exalting Jesus and preaching the Word. Your downloading of this message is a great encouragement to us, as we know that our ministry is going out to spread God's Word all over the world.

We want you to know, too, that in no way do we intend these messages to be a replacement for your involvement in a good local church, where, sitting under the authority of pastors and other teachers, you can learn to worship, grow and serve and be engaged with a body of believers where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We realize also, that some of you may be in areas of the world where there is no local church. Therefore, we hope these messages you are using, to gather with your family or other believers, or people from the community that it will be a great encouragement to you, as you hear God speak into your life, helping you to become disciples who are true, reproducing followers of Jesus Christ.

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We're continuing our series, Regalia: The Rise of the Kingdom, today, beginning in 2 Samuel 19:1 –

¹ 19 Joab [leader of the king's army] was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom."
² ² And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son."
³ ³ The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle.
⁴ ⁴ The king covered his face and cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁵ ⁵ Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines.
⁶ ⁶ You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead.
⁷ ⁷ Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the LORD that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come on you from your youth till now."

⁸ ⁸ So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him. Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled to their homes.

We pick up the story of David's return in verse 9. He is met at the Jordan River on his return. Remember, he went out toward the East, as Jesus headed East. He is going to be coming back from the East. David is crossing the Jordan. He is met at the Jordan by three interesting people: Shimea,

son of Gera, Mephibosheth (Saul's grandson), and then by a man named Barzillai, who was instrumental in serving the king while he was away. We'll come back and read about those things.

But there was a dispute that broke out between the northern tribes of Israel, and the southern tribe of Judah as to who would bring the king back. There was a dilemma. The northern tribes had rebelled against David. Now, Absalom, whom they had followed, is dead – so now what do we do? David is the king again. So they are going back and forth on who should be a part in bringing the king back. Well, basically Judah led the way. Israel in the north was upset about that, feeling they had no part with David.

So when you get to chapter 20, a guy by the name of Sheba leads a rebellion. (20:1-2) –

20 Now a troublemaker named Sheba son of Bikri, a Benjamite, happened to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted,

“We have no share in David,
no part in Jesse's son!
Every man to his tent, Israel!”

² So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bikri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

We're going to see how that rebellion plays out and how it is quelled. When you get to chapter 21, we find out there is a famine in the land, for three years. God uses that to cause David to seek God's face. He finds out that there is a famine in the land because Saul had decimated a group of people called the Gibeonites. There had been no atonement made for that sin. David makes that atonement. Saul's relatives are sacrificed. (We'll learn the significance of that.)

Then we find that David takes the bones of Saul, Jonathan and the men who were killed. He buries them in Gibeon of Saul (Saul's home town), so peace is restored to the land. God now answers prayer on behalf of the land.

More wars break out against the Philistines. Chapter 22 is David's song of praise for defeat over all of his enemies. We won't have time to get into that today. When you get into chapter 23, you learn of the mighty feats of David's warriors. And we'll see how God brings all of these things together in David's return, foreshadowing the return of the Lord.

Let's pray for a moment and we'll get into it.

Father, thank You for Your word that is deeper than we know. It is endless in depth. We can come back to this same word a thousand times, and You keep revealing more of who You are. We see You in the things that were happening in David's life. I'm praying today, God, that as David returned to Jerusalem, it foreshadows the great day when one day You will return, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We'll thank You for all that You will show us today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Returns are a very important part of our lives. For example, we're coming into a season, where many of us are paying more careful attention to the return policies of the places we go. Investors put out hard-earned money, or we place deposits in a bank hoping to get a good – what? Return. If you are a Star Wars fan, you'll remember in that series, that just when it looked like the Jedi were destroyed, you get the movie called *The Return of the Jedi*. Moms and dads, boys and girls rejoice when a parent returns

from a business trip, when a veteran returns from a deployment (our family has been through both). People give cards and expressions, declaring their desire for “Best Wishes and Many Happy ... Returns!” You see, returns are a big part of our lives. But of all the returns we’ll ever hope for in life, none will be greater than the blessed hope and the glorious return of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ. That return is foreshadowed in the events of David, coming back from exile into Jerusalem.

We are nearing the end of our study on 2 Samuel. We’ve seen how God has sovereignly worked to give rise to King David, and the promise that, through David’s line, would come one who would reign on David’s throne forever and ever. But when you get to 2 Samuel 15, the promise appears to be in jeopardy. David’s son Absalom leads a conspiracy to oust his dad and to take over leadership of the kingdom. David and his family, and many of his leading officials, flee out of Jerusalem to spare their lives.

They settle in a town called Mahanaim. By the time you get to chapter 19, David is in exile. His troops are out fighting his rebellious son, Absalom and the Israelites who followed him. David gets word that Absalom is dead, and his great victory becomes a time of mourning as David grieves the loss of his son. So his troops are slinking into Mahanaim, as they feel betrayed by David’s emotion response to the loss of his son. Joab, the leader of David’s forces, sees the danger in this. In Chapter 19, he goes to David and says, David – it’s obvious that the troops and I mean nothing to you. We just won a great victory for you. You’d wish we were all dead and Absalom was still alive! You love those who hate you, and you hate those who love you! If you don’t get out there and face those troops, you won’t have a man left! You’ll lose your whole army!

In 19:8, we see that the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. The men were told the king was sitting there, and they all came before him.

Meanwhile the northerners, the Israelites, are fleeing to their homes. There is confusion and division among the tribes of Israel as to what they should do now. Remember, the whole kingdom was once aligned with David, but when Absalom went on the rise, David fled and Israel aligned with Absalom. Now, Absalom is dead. So now, with whom do they stand?

The argument came up between Israel and Judah – who is going to bring the king back? Why aren’t we talking about this? We have to work this out. David calls the men of Judah, his native tribe, to lead him back. He appoints Amasa to be commander of his troops now, instead of Joab (maybe partly because of Joab’s rebuke).

As King David is returning with the people of Judah, with half the tribes of Israel, he is met at the Jordan River by those three significant people. The first is Shimei, son of Gera, the Benjamite. Remember? He was the guy, a relative of Saul, who, when David was leaving, was throwing rocks and casting dust on him, and calling curses on him, and saying David was a murderer. Some of the troops wanted to kill him, but David said no, maybe God sent him to do this. Now, Shimei is going to be the first one to meet him, as the king returns.

Next is Mephibosheth, Saul’s grandson, who is lame in his feet. He shows up in mourning: his beard isn’t trimmed, his clothes are dirty. He has been in mourning while the king was away. David asked him – Mephibosheth, why didn’t you go with us? He said, “I wanted to go, but I’m lame and my servant, Ziba, deceived me. He took my donkey and went out to you. He lied to you about me. He slandered me so you thought I was against you, but I wasn’t.” So David has a dilemma. Now Ziba, the servant says, “Mephibosheth was the problem.” And now Mephibosheth says Ziba is the problem. David has to figure out who is telling the truth.

Then we also meet a guy named Barzillai, a stunning character in this narrative. He is an 80-year-old man from Rogelim, who was very wealthy. He had provided for David and had served him and taken care of him and been faithful to him while David was away. Now, David invites Barzillai to go with him to Jerusalem. "Come and live in my house and I'll take care of you." Barzillai says, "I can't go. I'm too old. The journey is too long. I can't enjoy the pleasures of your household anyway. But I want to accept your offer, so take my servant (maybe his son), Kimham. Let him go in my place, to go and live in your house." So Kimham goes across.

Soon the Israelites are coming to the king, and they are upset that the men of Judah brought David across the Jordan before they were there to help. The men of Judah responded, "We are the king's own tribe." The Israelites said, "Well, we have ten tribes!" Judah prevails. The Israelites feel disenfranchised. So Sheba leads the rebellion in chapter 20.

David gets to Jerusalem. He summons Amasa, the new head of his troops, to meet him with the men in three days. He has a mission for them to go after Sheba. Amasa doesn't show up, so David wonders if he has maybe bolted too. So he goes to Abishai, Joab's older brother, and says, "I want you to take Joab's troops and go out after this guy, Sheba. He is leading a rebellion. It's going to be a mess. We have to deal with it. Justice needs to be served."

Amasa shows up at Gibeon while Abishai and Joab show up there. Amasa, the new leader of the troops, who was late in coming to the assignment, doesn't realize he is now an outcast or suspect. Joab, apparently a bit jealous over Amasa's new role, pulls him aside and murders him. It's a cold-blooded murder. Joab now takes over leadership of the troops again. They go after the rebel, Sheba and catch him. He is walled inside a city. The people inside, wanting to spare themselves, kill Sheba. They throw his head over the wall. Joab goes back to Jerusalem.

When you get to chapter 21, David's reign is restored. He is facing a three-year famine. He finds out it's because of Saul's sin against the Gibeonites. Atonement has to be made. So seven descendants of Saul are killed. Later, David brings their bones and the bones of Saul and Jonathan, back to be buried and peace is restored. God answers prayer again.

War breaks out again in chapter 21, between the Philistines – you see all the victories of David.

Chapter 22 is the words of David's song that he sang in praise to God when all of his enemies were defeated.

Chapter 23, it is called the last words of David. Not in the sense that these were the last words he ever spoke, but like his last will and testament, as he affirms the covenant with God, that there will be someone who sits on his throne forever and ever.

Chapter 23 ends with a list of all David's mighty warriors and some of the amazing battles and victories they won against overwhelming odds, demonstrating the power of God that was with those who were faithful to the king.

So – when you get to this section of 2 Samuel, David is back in Jerusalem. His enemies are defeated. He is seated on his throne and has begun to reign. One king and one kingdom. The king has returned. We can be confident that, just like David, Jesus will return to reign as well. There will be one king over one kingdom.

How will Jesus return? It will be a lot like David. **Jesus will return to reign in grace and truth. Like David, he will return to reign with justice and righteousness.**

Like David, Jesus will one day return to reign in grace and truth.

When you pick up the story in chapter 19, it says this in v 14-23:

¹⁴ He won over the hearts of the men of Judah so that they were all of one mind. They sent word to the king, "Return, you and all your men." ¹⁵ Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan.

Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. ¹⁶ Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. ¹⁷ With him were a thousand Benjamites, along with Ziba, the steward of Saul's household, and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was. ¹⁸ They crossed at the ford to take the king's household over and to do whatever he wished.

When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell prostrate before the king ¹⁹ and said to him, "May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. ²⁰ For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first from the tribes of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king."

²¹ Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the LORD's anointed."

²² David replied, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? What right do you have to interfere? Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don't I know that today I am king over Israel?" ²³ So the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king promised him on oath.

I was reading a very interesting article the other day, which is taking on new meaning for me. It was about how to get twenty-something medical students to understand what it is like to be old. This article said,

Enter the Age Man Suit. Now if you are over 50, you'll appreciate this.

This suit consists of ear protectors that stifle hearing, a yellow visor that burs eyesight and makes it hard to distinguish colors, knee and elbow pads which stiffen the joints, a Kevlar-jacket style vest which presses uncomfortably against your chest, making it harder to breathe, and padded gloves. The Age Man Suit, which weighs around 22 ½ pounds has been custom-made to simulate the physical consequences of old age. (Are you looking forward to this?)

Dr. Rahel Eckhardt from Berlin, Germany helps strap the suit onto the med students as she tells them, "Welcome to old age." She says, "My aim is to turn young energetic people into slow, creaking beings, temporarily at least. That way they will, I hope, develop a feeling for what it's like to be old." Eckardt argues that there is a huge disconnect between large sections of the medical profession and their elderly patients, as well as a desperate lack of doctors willing to go into geriatric medicine.

“Rather than a Power Point presentation,” she said, “this is the best way of giving them a real idea of what it’s like to be old. And only once we have their empathy can we really begin to win students around to becoming interested in old people as patients.”

I didn’t realize we were so tough!

How do you get a group of twenty-somethings to see what old age is like? You apparently put on this age suit. They have to experience it. They have to see it demonstrated. They have to know what it is like.

How do you get a fractured nation, used to betrayal and intrigue, to see that a kingdom could be united under a king who is full of grace and truth? How do you convince them that is possible? You bring them a king who operates in grace and truth. You let them see it. You let them experience it. You let them see what it looks like.

This is what God demonstrated in David through the return of the king. It is demonstrated through the people who met him at the Jordan. The first was Shimei, son of Gera. Remember what Shimei did when David left Jerusalem? Listen to this (2 Samuel 16:5-8) –

⁵ As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul’s family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. ⁶ He pelted David and all the king’s officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David’s right and left. ⁷ As he cursed, Shimei said, “Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! ⁸ The LORD has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The LORD has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer!”

He is throwing dirt and pelting him with rocks! Abishai, one of David’s mighty men, says (v 9), “Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head!”

Look how David responds (2 Samuel 16:10-12)

¹⁰ But the king said, “What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruah? If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who can ask, ‘Why do you do this?’”

¹¹ David then said to Abishai and all his officials, “My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. ¹² It may be that the LORD will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today.”

He sees the hand of God in it. He doesn’t retaliate. Though he was wrongly accused, though he was falsely treated, though he was persecuted – he doesn’t retaliate. He doesn’t curse. He doesn’t offend. He entrusts himself. He said, “God is doing this. It’s the will of God today.”

There are so many parallels in the books of Samuel, and Kings and the Chronicles, about Jesus’ ministry on earth. So many that Phil and I can’t possibly cover them all. But I want you to just see one, and the details of why I love to read the scriptures and see Christ on every page of the Old Testament. David is falsely accused. He is persecuted. He is cursed. Yet he doesn’t retaliate.

Do you remember what Peter said about Jesus, when He was betrayed? When He was cursed? When He was reviled falsely? 1 Peter 2:22-23

²² “He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

The parallels in the Old Testament between David and Jesus are amazing.

Now the king is returning and Shimei is one of the first to greet him. It tells us (2 Samuel 19:18b-23)

¹⁸ ...When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell prostrate before the king ¹⁹ and said to him, “May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. ²⁰ For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first from the tribes of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king.”

Look at Abishai again. Remember, on the way out, he wanted to cut off his head. Now again:

²¹ Then Abishai son of Zeruah said, “Shouldn’t Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the LORD’s anointed.”

²² David replied, “What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruah? What right do you have to interfere? Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don’t I know that today I am king over Israel?” ²³ So the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king promised him on oath.

The sinner confessing his sin, deserving of death and appealing to the king’s grace.

This is what it is like for sinners today (for you and me), who are just as guilty as Shimei of sinning against the king. All of us have sinned and fall short of His glory. You and I are as guilty of sin as anything Shimei had done. But King Jesus is full of grace for those who confess their sin and who humble themselves before Him and appeal to His grace.

Remember what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:1-9? These verses take on new meaning because this was me. Shimei was dead in his sin.

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Shimei followed the wrong ruler. I used to follow the wrong ruler too.

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Shimei deserved that wrath and so did I.

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

They asked David – how are you going to show a nation what grace looks like? We're going to take this guy, whom everyone saw cursing you and reviling you and accusing you, and you are going to extend, on his confession, grace. And the people are going to see that grace.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

By the way, speaking of grace – David was a recipient of that grace, because he was a sinner too. He had sinned against God. He had appealed to God for that grace. He had been extended that grace.

I'm a sinner and so are you. But you who have trusted Christ have appealed to God for His grace, and He has granted it to you. Now, He is looking to you and me to pass that grace on to others, helping them to see the God of all grace.

Jesus knew no sin, but He has been tempted in every way like we are, and He can sympathize with our weaknesses. He knows what it's like to be human. That's why I love Hebrews 4:14-16 –

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

If you confessed your sin and appealed to God's grace for your forgiveness, you'll find that Jesus is full of grace. He is a king, full of grace. That's the grace you'll see face-to-face when He returns.

He came also, full not just of grace, but also full of truth. Mephibosheth shows up (Saul's grandson). 2 Samuel 19:24-28 –

²⁴ Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. ²⁵ When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?"

²⁶ He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me. ²⁷ And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever you wish. ²⁸ All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?"

Mephibosheth said – my servant Ziba took my donkeys, loaded up my supplies and went to you. He told you I was in rebellion against you. He said I wasn't coming because I saw a chance, with you leaving, of getting the leadership of my grandson's kingdom. But it was all a lie. Ziba betrayed me. Now Ziba has come back and slandered me again.

So David has a dilemma. Who do I believe? Who is telling the truth? Because, when Mephibosheth didn't show up on the exit, he gave all the property to Ziba. Now Ziba comes back and Mephibosheth said he didn't deserve it. He betrayed Mephibosheth. So now David is stuck. What does he do? He says to Mephibosheth, "You go and divide the land with Ziba."

How does Mephibosheth respond? He says, (v 30) "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has returned home safely."

Remember when Solomon was faced with a similar dilemma? Two prostitutes, each having a child. During the night, one of them rolled over and smothered her son. Only one child was left. The two prostitutes, who lived together, went to King Solomon, both claiming the baby was hers. Solomon had a dilemma. Who is telling the truth? So he tested their hearts. Remember? He said, "Take the living child and cut the baby in half. Give half to each one." One of the women said, "Yes! If I can't have my child, no one will! Cut him in half!" But the other said, "NO! Don't do it! The baby is mine, but if I can't have him, I still want him to live. So don't harm the child. Give him to her." Solomon said, "Now I know who is telling the truth. Give the baby to the lady who wants him to live."

When Mephibosheth said, "I don't want the land, David. You give it all to Ziba. I have what I want – to have you back. You've been better to me than I deserve. My grandfather's household deserved death, but you took me in and had me eat at your table. So I don't want the land. All I want is you, safely home."

So David said, "Now I know who is telling the truth."

The king was demonstrating that he was returning full of grace and full of truth, just like Jesus will. Jesus is not only the God of truth, He is truth itself. When He returns, He will expose every lie, and truth will prevail. Peter said everything will be laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Everything. Jesus said, "The things you have spoken in secret will be shouted from the rooftops. There will be no secrets. Everything will be laid bare."

Truth will prevail in this kingdom. Grace and truth came together in the man named Barzillai. When you pick up his story (19:31), Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, his hometown, when he heard that David was at Mahanaim. He was a very wealthy man, 80 years old. He came down to faithfully serve the king while he was away, providing for him, serving him, taking care of the king's business. So when David was ready to cross over, he said to Barzillai, "I want you to come and live in my house. I want to take care of you now. You have served me faithfully while I've been away. I'm going back to Jerusalem. I'm going back to my house. I want you to come with me."

Barzillai said, "I can't do it. I'm too old. The trip is too long. I can't enjoy the pleasures anyway. But, I understand the gracious offer. So would you take my servant, your servant, Kimham. (He might have been Barzillai's son.) Let him be the recipient of your grace in my stead. I'll be in your house, through him."

When I read that story, I thought Jesus had made that same offer to me, and to all of us who are faithfully serving Him while He is away. We're about the king's business while He is away. Being

disciples who are living for the king and His kingdom. There is an invitation to come and live with Him in the Father's house.

Remember in John 14:1-6, the night of the Last Supper, before Jesus goes to the cross – He tells the disciples He is leaving. He is going away. They were very troubled. Jesus said to them:

¹⁴ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Barzillai – I want you to come live with me in my father's house, my house. I want you to come and live with me because you have been faithful to serve me while I've been away. But now that I'm returning, I want you to come with me.

That's the offer Jesus is extending to us who are His disciples, who are serving Him while He is away. Who are about the king's business. Who are disciples, reproducing the life of Christ in others.

Jesus came the first time in the Nativity. John said (John 1), full of grace and truth. He is going to come back the second time the same way: full of grace and truth. David returned full of grace and truth, foreshadowing the coming of our great Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

Not only to reign in grace and truth, but like David, Jesus will one day return to reign in justice and righteousness.

In 2 Samuel 20:14-22, we find out what happened to Sheba who lead the rebellion.

¹⁴ Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maakah and through the entire region of the Bikrites, who gathered together and followed him. ¹⁵ All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maakah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down, ¹⁶ a wise woman called from the city, “Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him.” ¹⁷ He went toward her, and she asked, “Are you Joab?”

“I am,” he answered.

She said, “Listen to what your servant has to say.”

“I'm listening,” he said.

¹⁸ She continued, “Long ago they used to say, ‘Get your answer at Abel,’ and that settled it.

¹⁹ We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the LORD’s inheritance?”

²⁰ “Far be it from me!” Joab replied, “Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy! ²¹ That is not the case. A man named Sheba son of Bikri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Hand over this one man, and I’ll withdraw from the city.”

The woman said to Joab, “His head will be thrown to you from the wall.”

²² Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bikri and threw it to Joab. So he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

When you get to chapter 21, there is a famine. As I mentioned, it was because of Saul’s sin against the Gibeonites. Atonement needed to be made. Justice and righteousness needed to be done. Justice and righteousness were going to be done.

You and I are living in the day of the Super Hero resurgence. It is fun to watch your grandkids rooting for Super Man and Thor and Super Woman and the Avengers and the Justice League and all these guys you grew up with. These guys never die, they just get bigger and more powerful. They are popular because we all want to see justice done and righteousness to prevail. My favorite as a kid was Super Man. Not the wimpy Super Mans of today, but George Reeve (the real Super Man) – in black and white! Because I remember as a kid – no matter how bad it got for Lois and Jimmy, Super Man was going to show up! When he showed up, everything was going to be set right. That’s why we love Super Heroes.

Well, David wasn’t a super hero, but he was the king. When he returned, he returned to reign in justice and righteousness. He meted out justice in Sheba’s rebellion. Sheba the Benjamite couldn’t get away with his rebellion, and he couldn’t get his way with David back in power. He led a rebellion and David saw the threat and sent the troops out to get Sheba and stop the rebellion. Joab and the troops finally catch up with them at Abel Beth Maakah and there was no place for Sheba to hide.

When God metes out His judgment, there is no place to hide. Justice was done. Evil was judged. The threat to the united kingdom was vanquished and now there was one king and one kingdom.

When Jesus returns, He will defeat Satan himself with a final blow. Justice will be done. Evil will be judged and all wrongs will be made right. The threat will be vanquished and there will be one king and one kingdom. Justice will prevail.

David also acted in righteousness in atoning for the sin against the Gibeonites story is told in Joshua 9. Remember when Joshua and the Israelites were taking over the Promised Land, God has ordered them to destroy all the pagan nations. God said - you turn them over to Me; they are mine. So you totally destroy them. I’ll take responsibility for them. So do as you’re told. God is God and He is sovereign.

When the Gibeonites heard that Joshua and the troops of Israel were wiping out the surrounding nations, they feared for their existence, obviously. So they resorted to a ruse. Joshua 9:3-6

³ However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴ they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. ⁵ They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. ⁶ Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.”

Well, to make a long story short, the Israelites got duped. The Gibeonites weren't from far away; they were next door! They just didn't want to get wiped out, so they pretended to be from a far-off land. It tells us (Joshua 9:14-19) –

¹⁴ The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. [powerful lessons there!] ¹⁵ Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.

¹⁶ Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. ¹⁷ So the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. ¹⁸ But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.

The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, ¹⁹ but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.

Now there is no Old Testament record of exactly what happened when Saul invaded their town, but it does say that in his zeal for Israel and Judah, he was wiping out some of the surrounding nations. Maybe it was in his pursuit to find David. But whatever it was, Saul broke the covenant promise of God to the Gibeonites and he decimated them. That wrong sin brought consequences. God used three years of famine in the land under David's rule to bring it to David's attention. So David inquires of the Lord – God, what's going on? Why this famine? God said it is because of the sin of Saul against the Gibeonites. It hasn't been atoned for. So David asked how to make atonement.

There is no atonement for sin without sacrifice. It has to be a sacrifice of like-kind. The sin was Saul against the Gibeonites. Therefore, it had to be some of Saul's descendants who were sacrificed to make atonement for Saul's sin. So seven of Saul's family members and descendants were chosen. They were executed, their bodies left exposed. David later gathered up their bones, and the bones of Saul and Jonathan, and headed back to Saul's hometown. He buried them next to Saul's father Kish. It says in 2 Samuel 21:14 - after that, God answered on behalf of the land again. Justice was done. Atonement was made. Righteousness reigned.

300 years after David's death, God spoke of the kind of reign David's greater son, Jesus, would have. It would be a reign of justice and righteousness. Isaiah 9:6-7 –

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with **justice and righteousness**
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

If you grow tired of all the wrong and all the injustice in the world, Jesus is saying – just wait.

If you are like Lot, in the days of Abraham, tormented by the wicked and unrighteousness he saw people getting away with in the world around him – Jesus will tell you – just wait.

If you see a world full of wickedness and evil and worldliness, and you say, Where is God? Why doesn't He do something? Why is He allowing this? Jesus would tell you – just wait.

Jesus is coming again. He is coming back with justice and righteousness. But you don't have to be afraid if you are a Christian, if you have Christ in you. You see, there is no atonement, there is no justice, there is no righteousness unless sin is atoned for. There is no atonement without sacrifice. If you are a Christian today, you don't have to fear the coming judgment because the judgment for your sin and my sin, as a Christian, has already been meted out on Jesus at the cross. A sacrifice of like-kind. God came in human flesh in order to die for my sin and your sin, and the sin of the world. The full wrath of God in justice and righteousness was poured out on Christ on the cross.

If you are a Christian today, you don't have to fear His coming and judgment. But if you are not a Christian today, if you do not have Christ living in you, if you are not trusting in Him alone as your Lord and Savior, and He alone is your salvation – then you will face the full brunt of his justice and righteousness when He returns, either to get you in your death, or in the great and glorious day of His appearing. But I can assure you – as Sheba found out, and as the Gibeonites learned – God forgets nothing. He knows everything that has happened. Justice will be done. It will be seen to be done. There will be no place to hide when Jesus comes for that justice. The only ones who will be spared are those who are now hidden in Christ Jesus, by faith. That judgment and that justice has already been meted out.

So, you see the situation is easy for us. Invite into our lives today and trust Him, the coming king who is about to return. We'll have our sins cleansed and forgiven, and justice meted out at the cross – OR – face that judgment on your own. But you can be sure of this: justice is coming. Righteousness will reign. And nobody gets away with anything, for God does not forget. Those who are in Christ Jesus will be set free and live with Him forever.

This is the choice God is offering. This is what was foreshadowed in the return of David to Jerusalem. This is what the return of Jesus will be like. When Jesus comes back, He will, like David, come from the East. He will, like David, come down the Mount of Olives, through the Eastern Gate and into Jerusalem. The words of Zechariah the prophet will be fulfilled (Zechariah 14:9) – “⁹ The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.”

You and I are living in the “already but not yet.” Just like the people of Israel were, under David. David was already king, but he was away and not yet fully reigning over all of Israel. You and I are living in the “already but not yet.” Jesus is king, but we don't see His reign and rule over all the earth in every way – yet. But you will. Because the king is returning.

Frankly, I'm looking forward to it.

That's why the book of Revelation – the whole of Revelation closes with these words (Revelation 22:20-21)

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

All God's people said, amen.

Father, I want to thank You. Phil and I are leaving so much out of this teaching, it's staggering. But the wonder of Your word and it's endless depth, allowing us to come back over and over and over with new discoveries of how You are revealed on every page, and every situation. Jesus, You said in John 5, "You diligently study the scriptures; it is these that speak of Me." We are learning to see so much from this, that prepares us to know You better. Today, we are grateful to learn that, just as David returned as king, one king and one kingdom, so too, one day You shall return, one king and one kingdom, to reign in grace and truth; to reign in justice and righteousness from that day on, and forevermore. We thank You today, God, for the privilege of being revealed these things, that we may know You, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. That we may live not in fear or despair, but we may live knowing that while we are in the days of the already but not yet – we have the promise of Christ and we're forgiven and saved, and we look forward to the great and glorious day of Your appearing. Thank You, God, that one day You're coming! Taking us to be in the Father's house, and we're going to live with You forever. I thank You God for this great truth today. Today, as God's people, we look forward to the return of our king. We praise You today, in Jesus' name, amen.