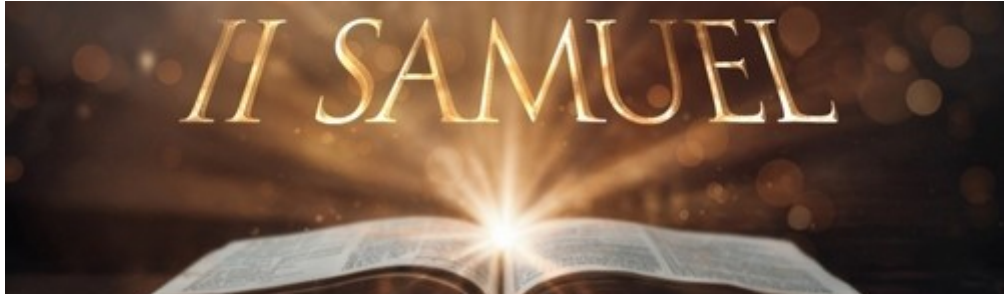


Let's Worship God

3rd - 8th August
2 Samuel





Monday - 2 Samuel 19:9-10 - Saying Nothing About The King

What is our greatest need as a nation at this moment? Surely it's the same as it was for the nation of Israel in 2nd Samuel 19. And that is to bring the king back. To realise that our experiment of appointing leaders who tell us what we want to hear has failed, and to bring back the true king - Jesus Christ.

God's people in this part of 2nd Samuel had been facing what we could call a leadership contest. Will David be king, or would it be Absalom? This leadership contest led to a literal civil war, a battle where, in the last chapter, 20,000 people were killed, including Absalom himself. Of course, the obvious thing to do now is to bring David back as king. But it hasn't happened yet. Instead we find the tribes of Israel hesitating and debating. Some of them recognise in verse 9 that David is the one who has saved them from their enemies in the past. And now the king they appointed is dead. He wasn't the better king they had thought he would be. The glorious reign he had promised hadn't come to fruition. The people had been bewitched by a handsome flatterer, but some of them have now come to their senses. And so they ask: 'Why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?'

And is that not God's question to Scotland? Our nation has tried putting a rival king in the place of Jesus Christ. The king of self. But how has that worked out for us? Are people happy? Are they flourishing? The family structure has broken down. Children are brought up without discipline, and are soon out of control. There's an epidemic of loneliness. Alcohol and drugs slay their thousands and their tens of thousands. There is moral confusion as to what is right and wrong, true or false, on a massive scale. For many people in Scotland their life, or rather their existence, consists in sitting in front of the TV, medicated to the eyeballs, whether legally or illegally. And at the other end of society people may be working long hours, they may be materially rich, but they're relationally poor. They're not happy. They're looking for meaning in life, in work, or family, or some political cause, but not finding it. Yet we as a nation refuse to acknowledge what the problem is. The national church has long since given up on the Bible. And the question comes: 'Why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?'

Question

1. What is the question of these verses?

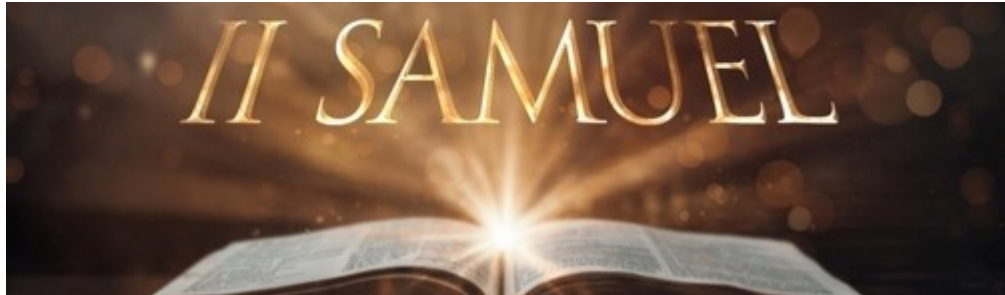
Prayer Points

1. Pray that our nation would bring the King back?
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:10b

Praise: Psalm 3 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - 2 Samuel 19:9-10 - A Question to Christians

This nation once formally recognised Jesus Christ as king. In the National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, Scotland, not just as churches, but as a nation, recognised Jesus as king. But these covenants, once signed by Charles II, were publicly burnt by him. So the question comes to our nation: 'Why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?' Following Absalom had gone disastrously for the people of Israel. He hadn't been able to deliver what he had promised. Just as our culture's promise turns out to be empty. Like Scotland today, the people of Israel were at a crossroads. The most obvious thing in the world was to bring back the true King. But would they do it?!

But it's not just the nation of Scotland that this question comes to. It's also the Christians of Scotland. The Christian church in particular has the responsibility to be saying at this moment that what we need as a nation is to return to Jesus Christ. Could it be that God is asking a question of the Christian church in Scotland at the moment? And could it be that that question is: 'Why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?'

If you've ever wondered why the RP Church exists as a denomination, why we stayed out of the Church of Scotland all those years ago, this is effectively the issue. After the time of persecution came to an end, a time during which many Covenanters had been martyred, the Church of Scotland was reconstituted in 1690. But any reference to the nation's solemn vows to God was gone. Those who had suffered so much during the killing times were grateful that the persecution had come to an end. But they looked at the constitution of the Church of Scotland and how different it was to what had been before. And they asked: 'Why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?' Eventually they realised that their question was never going to be answered, and so the RP Church came into being as a separate body. And as time went on, more and more people withdrew from the church of Scotland and formed other denominations. All over the question, in one form or another, of the Kingship of Jesus Christ, and how it wasn't being recognised in the national church.

Question

1. Why did the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland come into existence?

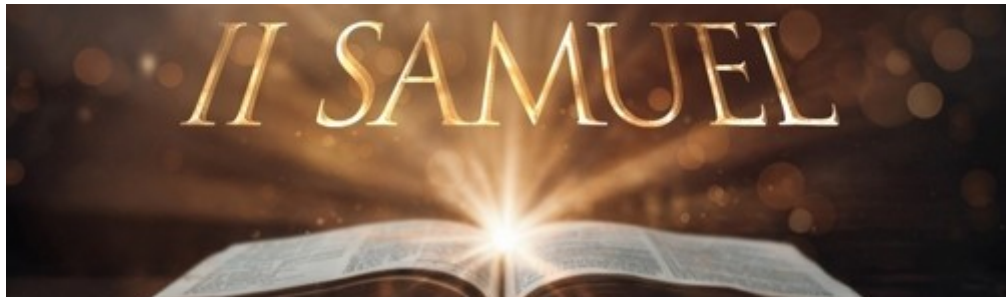
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would seek the kingship of Christ in everything.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:10b

Praise: Psalm 4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - 2 Samuel 19:11-17 - A Day of Reckoning

Just as it should have been blindingly obvious in 2 Samuel 19, that the need of the hour was to bring back the true king. So it should be blindingly obvious in Scotland today. But some have never heard about the true King. And so we must tell them. Others know about the true King. But the god of this world has blinded their minds to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. And for the church of Jesus Christ today our message to a sin sick world surely cannot simply be: 'We want an equal seat at the pluralistic table'. Rather our message must be: 'The true king must be brought back into the heart of our national life'. Because until that happens, the deepest needs of our nation cannot be healed. For our society not to acknowledge his kingship is to continue pressing the self-destruct button. But one day, he will return, bodily and in glory, and all will have to acknowledge him.

Before looking at the individuals who come out to meet David as he returns, something to notice straight away is that these are the same individuals who encountered him as he was leaving. Back in chapter 16, as David flees Jerusalem, he meets Ziba, who brings him donkeys and provisions. Then he meets Shimei, who belongs to the family of Saul. He curses David and throws stones at David and his men. But David refuses to let Abishai kill him. And then at the end of chapter 17, just before the battle, Barzillai was one of 3 men who came out and brought beds and honey and sheep and cheese out for David and the men who were with him. Now in this chapter, David meets the 3 of them again in the same order. Ziba rushes to meet him in verse 17, followed by Shimei and Barzillai.

One application of this straight away is that a day of reckoning is coming, and how we responded to the king the first time will determine how he responds to us when he comes back. The big question when it comes to each of these 3 men is how David will treat them, in light of how they treated him in his hour of need. It's the same with Jesus. A day of reckoning is coming, and how he responds to us when he comes in his glory, will depend on how we have responded to him the first time round, how we responded to him as a suffering king on the cross. Whether we, by faith, saw him as the son of God, or whether we were offended or ashamed by him.

Question

1. What is the day of reckoning that comes to all of us?

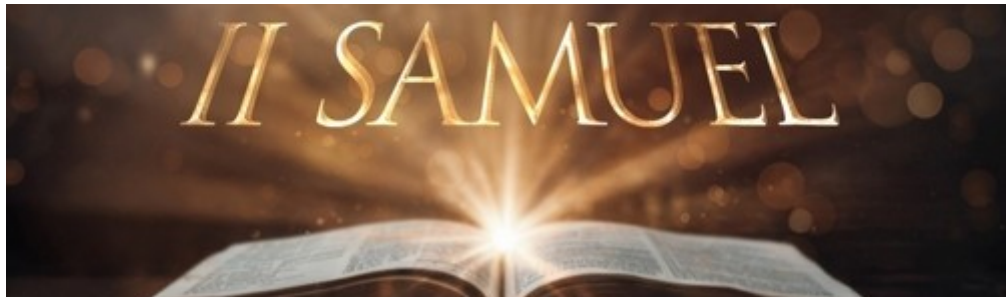
Prayer Points

1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:10b

Praise: Psalm 51:5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Thursday - 2 Samuel 19:16-23 - Delayed Judgement

Shimei and Ziba in particular might have thought that David would never come back. But here he is. And it's going to be a day of reckoning for them. So how does David respond to these 3 men?

David refuses the request of Abishai to put Shimei to death. We're reminded, perhaps, of Jesus' refusal to let James and John call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village which did not receive Jesus. They want to call down fire from heaven - Jesus turns and rebukes them. Here, Abishai wants Shimei put to death, and David responds: 'What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah?' But is it a case of David pardoning his enemies, or more the case that, in verse 22, he doesn't want anyone in Israel put to death that day? Because there's no indication that Shimei's repentance in verses 19 and 20 is genuine. Shimei has made a big miscalculation, and I don't think we have any reason to see this as anything other than an attempt to save his own skin. Perhaps we might think his repentance was genuine if all we had to go on was this chapter. But in 1st Kings 2:8, David leaves instructions with Solomon about him. David tells Solomon that although he had sworn not to put him to death with the sword, Solomon is not to hold him guiltless. I don't think we have to defend everything David does in this chapter. Some of his decisions seem clearly to be influenced by expediency and pragmatism. But I think here we can take him at his word that he doesn't want anyone put to death this day. Just like Jesus wouldn't let James and John call down fire from heaven - but those in that village who rejected him will still have to answer for that one day, if they didn't repent. Either way, Shimei is an example of someone who repents only after the king he cursed returns in glory. And it's too late. Just as it will be too late for anyone to try and put their trust in Jesus once he comes back. 'Now is the favourable time; now is the day of salvation'. So to say that David pardons Shimei here is to go too far. He delays judgement. He promises that he won't personally do it. But Shimei will still one day have to answer for what he's done.

Question

1. What happens to Shimei?

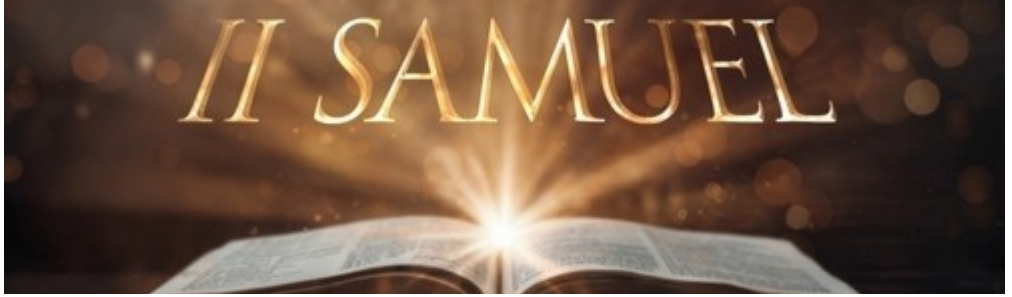
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would not put off being reconciled to God until it is too late.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:10b

Praise: Psalm 5:6-10 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Friday - 2 Samuel 19:24-30 - Pragmatic Choices

Next we have Ziba. And it's definitely not the case that David pardons him. Having heard Ziba's side of the story back in chapter 16, we now hear Mephibosheth's. And Mephibosheth's very appearance testifies to the fact that he's telling the truth. He has not taken care of his feet or trimmed his beard or washed his clothes all the while David has been in exile. He hasn't been living it up when the king has been away. Quite the opposite, he's been mourning his absence. So clearly Ziba has been lying when he said that Mephibosheth had gone over to the other side. But even though Mephibosheth has clearly been loyal to David the whole time, David doesn't completely reverse his decision to give Ziba the land. Rather he only gives Mephibosheth back half. It's very surprising! And it's hard not to see pragmatism at work. Why is it pragmatism? In verse 17, we're told that Ziba has 15 sons and 20 servants. It seems that David thinks a man with those connections is worth having on board. Just as his actions in regard to Shimei may have been swayed by the fact that Shimei had 1000 men with him. People are divided about whether to bring David back as king or not, and so he needs all the support he can get.

David doesn't actually come out of this chapter with a lot of credit. He makes peace with his enemies. But it's a peace despite false repentance or no repentance from his enemies. His removal of Joab as army commander earlier on in the chapter also seems motivated by political considerations. He appoints Absalom's army commander instead, to show that he is willing to welcome rebels into his kingdom. Perhaps some of the decisions David makes in this chapter are examples of wisdom and caution. But others are just pragmatism.

How different is the peace that Jesus Christ makes with his enemies! Unlike David, God doesn't need us on his side. But he pardons us anyway. Unlike with Shimei and Ziba, he actually pardons our sin. Rather than just ignoring it or delaying judgement. And he does so in response to genuine repentance, that very repentance also being his gift. David, as we saw previously, would have died if he could have to save his son. But Jesus gave his life for his enemies.

Question

1. What does David make the decisions he does?

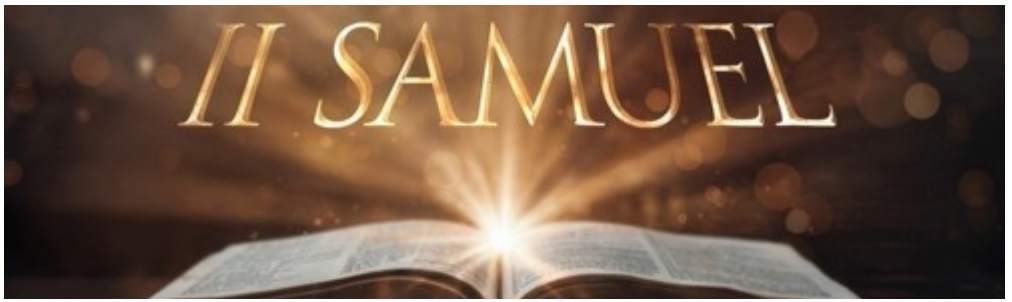
Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the salvation we have in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:10b

Praise: Psalm 6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - 2 Samuel 19:31-43 - The Return of the King

In David's final action that we're going to look at this week, he's a better picture of Jesus. Because he rewards someone who hadn't been ashamed of him the first time round. That is Barzillai, in verses 31-40. You might remember Barzillai and his ministry of refreshment at the end of chapter 17. Now he's rewarded for it. What an encouragement that is for us, that if we spend our lives seeking to refresh God's people - even by giving them a cup of cold water at times - that we will not lose our reward. If we are not ashamed of Christ and his people on earth, he won't be ashamed of us in heaven. And unlike Barzillai, we won't have to pass that reward on to someone else, because in heaven we will be able to enjoy it.

So we've seen the return of the king. It's what the people need - even if David falls far short of what he could be. Yet despite David's flaws and shortcomings, this chapter points us to the need of our society to bring back the true King. And it warns us - and encourages us - that how we respond to King Jesus now will determine how he responds to us on the day of judgement.

Question

1. How does David reward Barzillai?
2. What does this passage teach about Christ's return?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:10b

Praise: Psalm 149- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

**The goal of Let's Worship God is to
encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.**

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

**Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.**

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