

Three Kings

Recently, I read a very small book, took about an hour and a half to read. It is called *A Tale of Three Kings* (written by Gene Edwards). It was originally written in 1980 and since then has been turned into a staged drama. It is not a complicated book. Its simplicity is found in the Biblical record of three kings: David, Saul and Absalom. It does something I've never really run into before while reading a book; as usual, it backgrounds the Saul and David story but leaves you hanging on the David and Absalom story. You have to do a little research after reading the book to get the full picture of David's kingship, his anointing if you will.

The story is found in II Samuel, and it puts the focus on David and the rebellion of one of David's sons, Absalom. It's an interesting read because David is confronted with Absalom's challenge after many years of ruling Israel. David suffered the ridicule of Saul in his early 'anointed-life', and now, after having been king for over 30 years, David again has the choice to embrace fear and threat or to remember Samuel's promise of anointing and rest in the knowledge of God's will for his life. Absalom, motivated from a reformer's heart and maybe just a little ego, confronts David with a direct challenge to the kingdom. David has the sizable choice of handling it as young David handled Saul, or mimicking the heart of Saul, literally, physically trying to kill the challenger, his son, who would be king. David can decide to trust completely in God, as he did in the past, or rely on his own authority, army, and rights of his current kingly position that simply comes from having been given authority by men. Would David preserve his place with the power of his office or the power of his God? Because of Absalom's threat, David must decide what to do to maintain and preserve his life.

Not too surprisingly, David chose to leave the city of his reign, exactly what he did when Saul attacked him. Surprisingly, when he did leave, David's priest decided to bring the ark of God with them, but David instructed the priest, Zadok: 'Carry back the ark of God into the city, if I find favor in the eyes of God, He will bring me again (to Jerusalem) and show me both the ark and His habitation.' David gave instructions that both the ark and the priest were to return to Jerusalem. David wanted something of himself remaining, a place to return to that was his own, something continuing of his that David could come back to at a later time. The story reminds me of the world we find ourselves in at the present time. David wanted a place, in place, in the place of the rejection of his kingship. In David's heart, he was coming back to that spot, that home spot, when he returned to Jerusalem. Likewise, God, in His heart, has left an 'ark' in the world that He can return to also. In spite of having been rejected by this

world and having gone away, God retained an ark by His Spirit in His Church. He will return, and He too will have something to come back to: you and me and all the family of God.

You are that place in the heart of God. People that have talked to me over the years know that I think "the end will come" when the Gentiles reject Him, reject His presence in the current world (Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ) just like the rejection of the Jewish community at His first coming. By that I mean, when the world does to Him what the Jews did to Him, then I believe Christ will return for His Church, the ark that has been left here just like the ark that was left in Jerusalem by David.

Scripture

tells us: "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Christ was rejected by His people, but He was also rejected by the very Creation He had so carefully made. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Here is the Creator of all things, the proprietor of all things, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the brightest of all Morning Stars, who came and the created offered nothing to its Creator. As the parable states: "This is the heir; come let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him, and cast him out..."

Now, in the place that rejected Him, that rebelled against Him, that killed Him, God has a place. It's in you. It's a place He can call home, someplace where He is recognized. As Martha paused and sat at His feet and "received Him" so the Church has that same place in this world. Now, for the tough part, Martha did not only receive Him but she was "listening". That's what we must do today. That's what's so unique about today. We believe in Him, however, can we hear Him? It's not easy is it? The world around us is busy, noisy and unfocused. It isn't like we have a quiet place to listen, but listen is what we must learn to do in this present chaos. In fact it's a little more than listening that we must do, it's a step up from listening; it's actually hearing and absorbing the heart of God. Right now, in this very place, we live in a world rejecting the Love of God and His provision about as quickly and as eagerly as is possible. We are all being asked every day, will we go our own way or will we choose His? Are we able to hear the quiet voice of God during all the chaos? The way I will answer that is: Yes. In fact, the Church will do just that because that's exactly what will constitute His Church in the middle of this mess! Without doing that we will just become a religious tradition. We will need to learn to be the place that receives Him and listens, following Him with our lives.

We've been taught hundreds of doctrines. Now, it seems, we will have to learn how to apply what we have learned. You know, actually live it. A library of books and sermons on cd will not be enough to meet this challenge. While that can be frightening, in spite of the stress and pressure the Church will find new and wonderful ways to experience and depend upon God.

Martha's friends were around the same Word from the Master, but only Martha paused, received, and listened. It is not simply being busy that qualifies believers for serving, but listening also, perhaps even more so. A feverish pace of religious activity is not the same as hearing Him speak to us. Leading Him to bless our plans and our ways doesn't have the same quality of Faith to it as following Him no matter where that

leads us.

In some ways
the Church was made for a time such as this.
To be set in the place of His rejection, to be a testimony to those
times. When He returns, He will return
to this, to us. Now you say, what if this
is not that time, the final time? No
matter. Should this be or not be that
time is of no real consequence. It is,
at the least, another opportunity for us to come out on the other side with a
renewed vigor for the Gospel, or at the very best, it will be a revealing of the
Glorious.

David told
Zadok to return to the city and "when I come back I shall come back to
something that is with me." Are we ready
for such a relationship with God? I
think so. We must be sober with
expectation and excited with anticipation and celebration of our Faith.

We are
playing a song by The Sonflowers titled "Legacy." It's about someone who died giving his life
for "the call" of Christ. In it is a
line, "I wanna love enough to give, give enough to die, die enough to live my
life for such a sacrifice." That's
pretty good advice for us in these times.
We don't have to enter into the pressure kicking and screaming. We can be like David who, even as he left the
place of his kingdom, knew God would deliver him back and establish him in the
place of his rejection...that's hope in God.