

Heaven Can Wait

by Aimee Semple McPherson

Aimee Semple McPherson's sermon 'Heaven Can Wait' urges listeners to prioritize their eternal destiny and heed God's warnings against complacency.

Duration: 42:50

Scripture: Genesis 6:5

Topics: "Urgency of Salvation", "Eternity"

Description

Aimee Semple McPherson emphasizes the urgency of making a decision for Christ, warning against the complacency of thinking 'Heaven can wait.' She draws parallels between the people of Noah's time and Belshazzar's feast, illustrating how neglecting God leads to destruction. McPherson calls for a revival of faith, urging listeners to recognize the signs of the times and to prioritize their relationship with God over worldly distractions. She reminds the congregation that life is fleeting and the most important decision is where one will spend eternity.

Transcript

Heaven, heaven can wait. So said several people during the lifetime of the Bible, historians, and during modern life. The people of Noah's days said, oh, heaven can wait.

But the fire came and took them away. Heaven can wait, said the people of Noah's day. But the floods came and covered them in the midst of their sin.

Heaven can wait, said the rich man. My barns are filled, and I have much good for many days, and that night he died. And then whose were these things that he'd worked so hard to attain? All we're on earth for is to decide, once and for all, where we're going to spend eternity.

No question can possibly be so vitally important as that. Life at best is very brief, like the falling of a leaf or the binding of a sheath. It is therefore very important that we decide once and for all that we will live for Jesus Christ, who came into this world to die that men might be redeemed.

Listening today to the falling back of Poland, by the radio commentators whose voices came in from London, from Berlin, from Paris, from New York, hearing the marching tread of the Red Army as they moved in from Russia, solid walks and phalanxes, watching the people caught in the pincers as they themselves described it, fleeing and yet bravely trying to resist till the last, reminds me of tonight's chapter.

For I have settled on the fifth chapter of Daniel as a theme, for heaven can wait, or man's opinion that it can wait. Belshazer and his people are much like the people of 1939.

His grandfather, father of the real godly men, the Nebuchadnezzar, had had a definite experience with God beyond question of adultery. He knew what it was to pray, he knew what it meant to backslide, he knew what it meant to be reinstated with God and the glory of the Lord in his heart. But today, some of us who are younger on the American continent know that our forefathers brought the Bible, we know that they were men of prayer, we know that we like to square our shoulders and sing our Father's God to thee, author of liberty, our Father's God.

But what about our God? What about our God? The Bible that came over him a loaf of bread and the Mayflower won't suffice. What about our Bible? And is it in our heart? Belshazer had backslidden as the fifth chapter opens. And though he had a very definite warning, a warning that has come to America and has come to the whole world, he did not repent.

I believe our good revival will do all of us good, don't you? Say amen out there. You say, well Sister, are you going to preach about the handwriting on the wall? I am. You know, a little boy went home one day after hearing this chapter, and not at Fifth Sunday School but another church, and his mother said to him, well darling, what did they talk about at Sunday School today? He said, they talked about Amy, Amy Sample MacPherson.

He had it all wrong. It was Meany, Meany Tickle Jefferson, but he just had the name all mixed up in his little boy's mind so much so that it got in the newspapers. But let us smile and decide tonight.

God is still speaking to the world. Let us see if we can cause a story to rise before our minds. The enemy is at the gate.

The Nisan Persians are already like rodents creeping in through the country. We would like to say America is a hundred percent for America, and yet we know that right in our country we have people who are absolutely un-American. Lord, help us to live a Godly, Christian, Bible-influenced life, amen? Till there's no room for anyone except those who love our God, the God in whom we trust.

If people like the other way of living, let them go back to their own country and live that way. But over here, give us our God, and give us our body. Gong sounds.

It is time for the great feast of Belshazzar. God has called him to fast, but instead of fasting, Belshazzar resorts to feasting. He knows that the enemy is at his gate, but he says, look for the enemy.

My army, my air force, and my boat, I'll overwhelm them by showing them my power. Beloved, this is when Belshazzar needed God. He needed prayer, and he needed to know that he was in a place where God was with him.

It isn't so much a case of how strong or weak we are. We need to be right with God. Someone once said to Abraham Lincoln, well, I hope God's on our side.

He said, I'm not so much concerned about that, but I'm concerned whether or not I'm on God's side. Lord, help us to be on God's side. And so Belshazzar the king said, we will set a great feast.

Not a great fast. Instead of putting on sackcloth and ashes, what feast? Come, slaves, set the gong, open the gates, and bid my visitors assemble. And so the game caroling began.

Happily, we read that the king entertained and drank wine before one thousand of his lords, his warlords, and his admirals, and his chiefs, and his concubines, and his maidens. Come! Come to the feast! Come! Come! And great and important was the occasion. I see them gathering now.

Here they come. One of the earliest to reach the scene is called merrymaking. And how strange it has been to listen to the radio, to hear the great crisis of a world, and then turn immediately and say, oh, well, let's forget that.

Let's have a little jitterbug music. Let's have a little bit of frivolity. Why, we're the very same as they were back there.

They dressed a little differently. But here is merrymaking. He says, ha, let's have a good time.

Let's forget that the enemy is at the gate. Come! I have come to welcome you royally. One of my princes stands at the gate, and next comes riches, and takes a bow.

He is followed closely by carnality. Ah, he says, the things of this world are the pleasant things. I have no thoughts for eternity.

Drunkness, of course, attends among the thousands of the lords. Evolution and unbelief is invited to come right in. War comes to the front and takes a bow, but the doors of Belshazzar are open.

Avarice is among the guests. Here also comes vice, and his cousin impiety. He doesn't know piousness at all.

Profanity is one of the guests. Frivolity, indeed, follows closely upon his heels. Jollity, guaranteed to be the life of every party, is absolutely, um, have the people in the aisles rolling in laughter.

Oh, we must have jollity. What does it matter if the enemy is at the gate, and civilization is tottering on the brink of chaos? What does it matter? Forget it! Stretch up the band! Music maestro, please! Jollity is followed by pride and position, one by one, and the concubines and the beautiful of the come together and welcome them there. So he said, I'll show the Medes and Persians and old Cyrus he thinks that he can overtake my country.

I have no need of prayer. Ask me to feast, I'll slap God right back with my answer. Feast, not fast.

Feast, not fast. And so began the joy. And now, they're only to wait for the king.

But remember, they're waiting in false security. But they say, oh, we'll never be forced to surrender. Why, the king would never offer to drink wine in our presence, unless he was sure that all was well.

And now the trumpets sound. And the king! The king! Our brother Thomas Johnson is all right and confined. And soon, he says, let's pour forth the wine.

Oh, he says, it's wonderful wine, such lovely wine. Ah, the sweetest of the countryside. Let us be drunken.

Let us be merry. Let the rest of the world worry with their cares. But we of Babylon wish a glory in the vine.

Suddenly, a thought occurs to the king. He says, why, after having tasted this wine, I realize that we should have better cups to drink it in. Well, strike the gong, please.

And send my servants to the temple. We've defied God. Now let's defy and desecrate God's temple.

Bring in the gold and the silver vessels that were used upon the table of the Lord when they served the holy race, where the high priest did show forth the love of God. Bring in the gold and the silver vessels. From the temple of the Lord, and we'll drink wine.

And this they did, desecrating God's house, denying God's power, declaring that he no longer lives. Ha! Heaven can wait. Why, it would be impossible for Cyrus to be digging in underneath.

Brother, you don't have to hear an airplane overhead, or see a hand grenade burst. The enemy has flyer ways of digging under a mesh and the mat. He can begin with your school children after school hours.

He can begin by sanctifying, or he can begin by talks that will lead them away from God, and away from Christ, and away from the Bible, and away from the things that we know are the only rocks and the only pages that will stand. Ah, the king said, Merriman, bring forth the girls of my court, and let them sing and be glad and joyful before me. And as they gathered up, their garments rounded up, music is in the air.

God's of gold. God's of gold. God's of gold.

God's of gold. And dancing. They've gotten away past the jitterbug.

Where is it now? Pseudaisy or something. That's way up the road, I know. But laughing, and laughing in the face of great king, who now makes up feet and goes, drink up, my lads, drink up, ladies, drink up, court, and be welcome, when suddenly a strange thing happens.

A strange sound, first like trickling water, and then a portion of a man's hand. The hour struck twelve. What is it? Some strange fear has ripped walls free.

Do you see it? Ah, he knew that it was a child of him. Mars, Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, call for the astrologers. In an ironclad agreement.

Is Germany, or England, or our neighbor country, Canada, to be plunged in a long war? He says, that's right, I don't know the answer, but I hope to God it's not so. Then I would say to you, God's finger is writing on the wall of the world today. Fear of wars and rumors.

But the wise men say, and all the scraps. It must be by fasting. Honorable followers of their own best beliefs.

They praise the gods of wood and stone. It was like a certain man who was taking pictures years ago of the life of Christ. And he came to the scene of the twelve at supper.

The scene cost \$100,000 for the fine details of the Lord's Supper. And the man blew up. He said, what? \$1,000 to feed twelve men, for why? Bring in 5,000 men for that amount of money at the Lord's Supper.

He couldn't understand the difference. Friends, if you take people out of their own sphere, they're into a world altogether different. And the wise men and the diplomats are helpless.

Friends, do you know that God is writing on the wall? America, do you believe God is calling the people today for a great revival? He sees a beautiful figure coming in, a rather ancient lady. And the Queen Mother of the court makes her appearance. And she says, oh King, I have not come to your feast.

But I've come to tell you, don't give up hope until you've talked. Queen Mother, coming forward, says, Listen, my dear, I've just come from my own room to tell you that even though you've forgotten God, there's a man in the country that hasn't forgotten God yet. Why have you been so busy making movies of the B.C.A. type? But listen, the enemy is here, and there's God's hand on the wall.

Send for Daniel. It can do no harm. The kings are all right, and thank you for coming and bringing this to my attention.

Call! Have Daniel brought! Bring Daniel! Oh, friends, when the world forgets, God never forgets. And when the world cannot understand, then sometimes we go to church and send the preachers. Call! Quickly! And quickly, in is God's Daniel, who is living a quiet, retired life.

Good old King, what is your pleasure? Oh, is it Daniel? Oh God, we've read whatever God writes. But we've forgotten, we've lost the art. Tell us, and we'll give you robes of beautiful purple and of red, and we'll give you chains of gold.

Daniel says, your gifts be to yourself or to another. You're in a fine position to offer me gifts when your whole kingdom is being taken underneath you, and you don't even know the top blade is being hacked to blow up like a bomb, right underneath you. I'll have you get them, please.

Show him the robes. Show him the, the wonderful things I have for him. All these treasures are yours.

Take them. Well then, please, read this. Can you read this? Can you read this? He said, yes, I can read it.

And suddenly, Daniel's voice reads forth, he calls you by a certain, the words are strange in their simplicity, meaning, meaning, numbered, numbered, numbered. Oh, how strangely God has allowed different men to live and rise in their day, and their empires, and pile up their pyramids, numbered. And then the whole drop of Napoleonic power, Zoroastrian power, whatever it is it's for, God just nips it off at the top and lets it fall.

Numbered, numbered. And the next word, tickle, weighed, carries into the meaning of your true life, because God, it's very impersonal. It really means tickle your burden.

It really means exactly what it says, numbered, numbered, weighed, broken. And the broken is a kind of a word with the elasticity of their language, of putting a clay pitcher of wine in front of an oncoming racing locomotive that's shattered into a thousand bits. God, who has been so kind for years, leaves no time now to repent.

Had Belshazzar fallen upon his knees, and all his people were too late, they were lost, the sword ran into the hill and came out red with blood. He said, your time has passed. And all the people, in their fear, and having delivered his message, Daniel went up in a strange earthquake to pay a tribute.

His low life, our low faith is gone. God, who's been laughed at, his ears, what he's meted out, was Belshazzar's flame with a sword. His palace was overthrown, and God's foolish corridor, but they made more than a corridor through his country, for his soul.

There's a light, friends, we still have a light above the ground, because our chosen fathers believed that we would still live glorious. And let us know, shall we all bow our heads, with every head bowed, I'm going to ask him in the building, God, to have his way with me, for the things... Lift your hands, everyone, please. Everyone, lift your hands.

All right? Welcome to the altar. Perhaps the question is in your mind, well, would I know if I was saved? Brothers, I think there are thousands here who'd shout the answer for me. If we're saved or not, what do we know? His Spirit said, you say it, there is our Spirit, that we are the child of God.

Friends, there's a writing out, when we're saved, you're saved and you know it. You say, well, I don't know whether I am or not. Well, then you're not.

Because if you were, you'd know it. Your whole life would be turned over anew, and you'd be born again. And now, show me praise.

Praise. Is anyone with that young couple? Bless their hearts. Dear Lord Jesus, I kneel at your feet.

At the foot of the cross, I surrender my life. Hallelujah. I believe you're my subject.

There is a need to be an illustrated sermon. Illustrated vividly. The sauce and everyone here to be dressed in icicles or else be on fire.

So be sure to be here. And Wednesday afternoon, we pray for the sick. And by God's grace, I'm preaching on the Book of Miracles.

And next Sunday morning, and don't forget, a wisdom tonight. My topic is, Here Comes the Bride. And there will be one of our loveliest young ladies who is to be wedded next Sunday evening.

People are still coming to the altars. Still praying. Let's give them a moment.

It's time. I don't like to hurry them. And Brother Tiefert, will you lead a song while I take a moment out here.

Get ready for the wedding. And all those who came forward, please see that they get seats near the front for the wedding itself. The Lord bless you.

Where he leads me, I will follow. These at the altar are finding Christ. May God bless them and take them all the way with me.

Amen. Where he leads me, I will follow.

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