

# The Palace He Left

by J. Wilbur Chapman

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*Jesus Christ came from the heavenly realm, the Ivory Palaces, to bring us life, salvation, and transformation through His sweetness, suffering, and healing power.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 45:8, Isaiah 53:3, Isaiah 53:5, Mark 2:17, John 3:16, John 9:6, John 10:9, John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 2:15, Colossians 1:19

**Topics:** "Christ's Character", "Incarnation"

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## Description

J. Wilbur Chapman preaches about the beauty of the character of Jesus Christ as depicted in the Old Testament, emphasizing His sacrifice and the blessings of His incarnation. The sermon explores the imagery of the 'Ivory Palaces' from which Jesus came to be our Savior, contrasting the splendor of earthly palaces with the magnificence of His origin. It delves into the tenderness and pathos of Christ's life, from His bitter experiences to His healing power as the great physician, inviting listeners to surrender to His love and be transformed by His sweetness.

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## Transcript

When an Old Testament poet would give us a glimpse of the beauty of the character of Jesus Christ and press upon us some conception as to what his incarnation meant to Him by way of sacrifice and to us in the fullness of blessing, he writes these words: "All Thy garments smell of Myrrh and Aloes and Cassia, out of the Ivory Palaces." These words form only one touch of a master's hand in the almost perfect delineation of a perfect character; for the forty-fifth psalm is a picture of the Son of God, from the first verse almost to the last. It is so presented that it appeals to us in different ways. To the eye he is the most fair, to the ear most gracious, and his garments are so perfumed that even as he sweeps past us, by faith, there comes to us a better fragrance than any that has ever been borne on the wings of the summer wind. It is the purpose of this little book, not only to present the 'Ivory Palaces' from which he came to be our Savior but also to present the great Palace of a Christian's life; at the door of which he stands today beckoning us on, saying, "I am come, that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." The very idea of a Palace is that of splendor. There have been magnificent palaces in this world like the Tuileries of the French, the Windsor castle of the English and the Alhambra of the Spanish; but they are not for a moment, to be compared to the Palaces of Ivory from whence He came to redeem the world.

The Old Testament poet then, could only have had this thought in mind: that the Palaces of Ivory were overwhelmingly beautiful, almost beyond the power of words to describe, and yet, God so loved the world,

and His Son was so submissive to His will, that the scene in Bethlehem was enacted and the death on the cross was made real.

The most touching thing about it all to me is this; that He came from such a place; to such a place; from the company of the angels to this world where His own received Him not: where He was despised of men, a pilgrim without a home, a wanderer without a friend; and yet He knew all about it before. He came, and herein is seen His marvelous love, for He was "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Holman Hunt had the idea in his master piece, "The Shadow of the Cross," in which he represents Jesus of Nazareth as standing at the carpenter's bench where he is wearied with his work, and, as the day is dying, he lifts Himself from the constrained position in which He has been laboring, and seeking to relax His muscles, He stretches forth his arms, and stands thus for a moment while the sunlight is coming in at one of the windows just at the proper angle to cast at his back the shadow of a cross. The artist caught this idea in his picture. The shadow of the cross was on him at Bethlehem, in Egypt, at Nazareth, in Gethsemane and at last deepened into Calvary. And yet in the shadows ever deepening he moved on to become our Redeemer.

I am persuaded that if I could only make you feel all that he endured as he came out from the Ivory Palaces, to be your Savior, you could not resist his power. Another thought about his coming may be suggestive. From other palaces of earth, there is a way that leads out to the greater highway. Along this the friends make their journeys to and from the mansion. Not infrequently they may be seen at quite a distance, then at a bend in the way, they are lost sight of, only to be seen a little nearer, until at last their journey is completed and with their friends they are united. As I think of Him coming out of the Ivory Palaces, such a highway springs to my mind. It is the Old Testament: it is the grand avenue that leads up to the gospel dispensation. There are very many people who have turned away from the Old Testament, with its sacrifices and burnt offerings, but that man has not yet taken hold of the real sweetness of God's book who has found it only in the New Testament scriptures. The old couplet is true: "The new is in the old contained; The old is by the new explained."

The Old Testament becomes not only plain but convincing when you make it point to Christ. One of my friends took home a dissecting map to his little children seeking thus to instruct them in geography. They worked diligently to put it together but failed. One girl lost her patience and rose up from the floor where they were at work saying, she would try no more. Her foot touched one of the pieces of the map and turned it over and she saw on the other side a part of a man's hand. Turning over another piece she saw part of his face and then to her great surprise she found a part of the figure on every piece before her; then she said to her sister, "let us put the man together first." this they did, and when the map was turned over behold every river, mountain and sea was in its proper place. This is the secret of Bible study. Put the man Christ Jesus together first. Isaac bound on the faggots thus becomes a representation of Christ, while Abraham points to God. Jacob's Ladder rising up from Bethel is a type of Jesus Christ. One side of the ladder is His human nature, the other side of the ladder is His divine nature; all the incidents in His life are the rounds of the ladder, and as we stand and look up, we hear His voice saying: "By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The smitten rock in the Old Testament tells of Him who said on the great day of the feast, "if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." The Brazen serpent is a type of him who said, "and if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me."

Down the long avenue he comes. Types and figures get plainer and plainer until Bethlehem's gates swing open and shepherds are aroused with the angel's song: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord," and from His first infant step to the last one upon Calvary when, bearing

His cross he fainted beneath its load, His whole life was a seeking after the lost. There is not only given to us however, a hint of the splendor from which He came; there is also a touch of a master's hand which adds great tenderness to the fact of His coming. In the cathedral at Notre Dame there is an old chest which contains the robes worn on great occasions in the ages past. It is said that there is the robe worn by Pope Plus the VII., at the crowning of the first Napoleon, and the robe that was worn at the baptism of the Second Napoleon. A friend of mine said that as these garments were before him, there came a perfect rush of historical memories to his mind, and so it has seemed to me in order that the heart of the beholder might be made very tender and the picture of Jesus Christ Himself most impressive, the poet not only tells us of His coming incarnation but holds up before us the garments He wore.

Passing through the hall of my own home one day, I beheld on the couch in one of the rooms an old garment I had not seen for years. It was made after the fashion of twenty-five years ago. If one should put it on today, it would be only to provoke mirth, but as my eyes rested upon it, there came to my mind one of the tenderest scenes in a person's life. It was the last dress I had seen my mother wear. I stood alone in that room for half an hour with my hand upon the garment; the very touch of it seeming to bring before me, with ever increasing tenderness, the face of one who had been for twenty-three years in heaven. The very sight of the garment made the tears flow like rain I am sure the Old Testament poet himself must have wanted us to have some such conception of Jesus Christ when he said there was myrrh in his garments. He must have had some reference to the very sweetness of His life, for myrrh is always fragrant -- the smallest piece of it will fill a room with perfume. It was the first thing they gave Him at His birth -- almost the last thing they offered Him upon His cross.

Did not His garments smell of myrrh, because of the sweetness of His influence? You cannot wear Him out. Put upon him all your burdens. Afflict Him with all your griefs and He is ever the same. If we could but tell the story of His sweetness and if we could but live His life, we could charm the drunkard from his cups, the prodigal from his wanderings, and the sinner from his sins.

One of my friends owns the two master pieces of Munkasky's "Christ before Pilate" and "Christ on Calvary." When the former picture was on exhibition in the lower part of Canada, it is said a rough looking man came to the door of the tent and said to the attendant, "is Jesus Christ here?" When informed that the picture was there, he asked the price of admission. Throwing down a piece of silver, he passed in and stood in the presence of the masterpiece. He kept his hat on, sat down on the chair before the painting and brushed off the catalogue. The one having the picture in charge had a desire to see how such a picture would move such a man. The man sat for a moment and then reverently removed his hat, stooped and picked up the catalogue, and, looking first at it and then at that marvelous face which seemed to throb with life; tears started from his eyes and rolled down his cheeks; he sat for an hour, then he left the tent and as he went out said: "I am a rough sailor from the lakes but I promised my mother before I went on this last cruise, that I would go and see Jesus Christ. I .never believed in such things before, but a man who could paint a picture like that, must believe in them, and there is something in the picture that makes me believe in them too."

It is a marvelous thing that there is power in a canvass when touched by a master hand to save a soul, It is also marvelous that your life and mine may be so transformed that people can see in us Jesus Christ; and when they behold in us His sweetness there is a power before which they must surrender. One of the best things therefore to represent Him in His sweetness, is myrrh.

There is another touch given to the picture which adds both tenderness and pathos. David detected aloes in His garments. Very frequently aloes mean bitterness. It was a bitter life for Christ. The nights on the mountain, on the sea, and in the desert were nights of bitterness. His bosom was the resting place for John, and yet He had no place to lay His own head. He fed the five thousand, yet oftentimes He was an hungered and no man gave unto Him. Bitter betrayal, bitter pain, bitter bereavement stung its way through his brain, his hands, his heart.

There was one family that seemed to be very near him. They lived at Bethany, and one day as he visited them, behold Lazarus was dead. He knows what it is to miss one from the family circle. Lonely and afflicted, his eyes filled with tears which flowed down his cheeks, upon his breast, and then fell to the ground. Aloes in His very garments. Oh, ye who have done naught but reject Him, how do you feel in His presence -- who to save you, left the Ivory Palaces to endure all this?

There is still another touch to the picture, for Cassia is found in his garments. Cassia grows in India, and has healing power, and what could it mean but that He is the great physician? When He was on earth, mothers lifted their little children to Him that He might bless them, and fathers brought their suffering boys that He might set them free. Lepers ran crying after Him, that He might drive away their uncleanness. Blind men reached out to Him in their blindness that He might open their eyes.

When I was in Hartford at one time with Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins we were asked to visit the Deaf and Dumb asylum, and speak and sing to the children who never had heard a human voice. It was a very novel experience, and yet as my friends sang, "Shall you? Shall I?" and the interpreter told them the song, it so touched their hearts that tears flowed down their cheeks. But what moved me more than anything else, was one little boy who had been born deaf and dumb, and who at an early age had by sickness lost first his eye sight, then the sense of taste and the sense of smell; but as they introduced him to us, they also presented his teacher, a young, frail, beautiful girl, who, when the boy was brought to the institution, said that she would give her life to bring him to the understanding of some language. She taught him the language of touch, and I saw her fingers move rapidly in the palms of his hands, and the boy's sightless eyes flashed with intelligence as he hurried over the building to do her bidding. And I said to myself that was what Christ did for me. I was blind and He opened my eyes; deaf, and He unstopped my ears and poured into my very soul the harmony of heaven; dumb, and He unsealed my lips and pressed upon them the language of the skies. The great physician is a great Saviour, and He will help you whatever your need may be.

He came into the world becoming incarnate, dwelling in the flesh, a seeking, sorrowing, suffering Saviour, crying out with a tenderness which should touch every heart "By me, if any man enter, he shall be saved." And yet with all that Jesus Christ has done there is still something for every one of us to do before we may enter into the Ivory Palaces of a Christian experience.

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