

Bible and the Headlines: California Yankee

David Bachelor, PhD

May 7, 2025

Mark Twain would have smiled if he were alive to read recent headlines coming from across the pond. Instead of 'A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court,' the British dailies are consumed with a California Yankee in King Charles' court. Playing the role of the California Yankee is Prince Harry, and his saga (this week) started with a judgment against him in a British Court.

On May 3, the BBC featured "Harry's Emotional Avalanche Hits the Royal Family." The piece was a review of Prince Harry's recent BBC interview released on the same day a British court ruled against Prince Harry over taxpayer-funded security in the UK.. In his comments, the prince expressed his desire to reconcile with his father, King Charles. According to the BBC, "The 'sticking point' for reconciliation is security when he visits the UK . . . calling on his father the King to help resolve this, he [Prince Harry] also called on the prime minister and home secretary to intervene." Friday's ruling by the court found that Prince Harry had not been treated unfairly.

The Sunday Times reported on May 3rd, "It's Not That the King Won't Speak to Prince Harry — He Can't." The Times' Royal Editor had access to several of King Charles' confidants. The consensus of the king's inner circle was, "How can you have a private and delicate conversation when you know it is going to end up on a news special within hours?" They suggested the Duke of Sussex should ". . . earn rather than demand a reconciliation."

The May 5th edition of the Guardian contained the opinion piece, "Memo To Harry: Megaphone Diplomacy Isn't Working. You Could Write to Your Dad – It Only Costs a Stamp" The writer was certain Prince Harry's BBC interview was a deliberate provocation after Friday's security detail verdict. The opinion continued, "If he [Prince Harry] thought his latest intervention was going to . . . effect the reconciliation he claims to want with his father . . . he has surely got another thing coming." The writer believed that Prince Harry would rather appear to be a victim than to fix things with the King.

In the Bible, Prince Harry's part was played by Absalom, the son of King David. Absalom was at the epicenter of a rift in King David's family, when Absalom killed his half-brother (2Sa 13:28-29). For three years Absalom was banished from Jerusalem, until a palace insider arranged for Absalom to return to Israel's capital (2Sa 14:21-22). Despite his son being in Jerusalem, King David declared, "Absalom must go to his own house; he must not see my face." So Absalom lived in Jerusalem but was not allowed in the royal court.

After two years of being persona non grata, Absalom decided he would force the reconciliation to happen. Absalom tried to contact the insider who previously helped end his banishment but this man would not return Absalom's calls (2Sa 14:29). In response, Absalom burned the man's crops (2 Sa 14:30). The fires had the desired effect and the insider got busy for Absalom. With this intercession, Absalom and King David were reconciled (2Sa 14:33).

In the Biblical narrative, the reconciliation does not last and Absalom eventually stages a coup against his father (2Sa 15:10). Let us hope if the California Yankee is ever re-admitted to King Charles' court that Prince Harry does not attempt to take the Crown.