

One Day (written by J. Wilbur Chapman, 1908)

1 Thes. 4:13-18

Introduction

The Christian faith is not merely a philosophy or a set of moral teachings—it is rooted in historical events centered on Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is to be embodied.

The hymn *One Day* beautifully summarizes the gospel in five movements:

- His Incarnation
- His Crucifixion
- His Resurrection
- His Ascension
- His Return

I. One Day He Came

The Humility of Christ

*"One day when heaven was filled with His praises...
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin,
Dwelt among men, my example is He."*

Scripture: John 1:14; Philippians 2:5–8; Luke 2:1–20

Heaven's King became earth's servant.

The One worshiped by angels entered the world as a helpless baby. He did not cease to be God. He added humanity without surrendering deity, yet did not use his divine power to his own advantage (He chose poverty over riches, He chose to love over violence, He chose to serve rather than be served, He chose to be with sinners over the so-called righteous).

Jesus entered our broken world.

"Sin was as black as could be."

Christ came into darkness to become the Light of the world and the Door to the Father.

Jesus is our Example. Jesus is our Victor. Jesus is our Propitiation.

He perfectly displayed obedience, humility, compassion, holiness, and dependence upon the Father. Jesus did not remain distant from sinners. He entered our world to rescue us.

II. One Day He Died

The Sacrifice of Christ

*"One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain...
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He."*

Scripture: Isaiah 53; Mark 15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24

Christ suffered willingly. The cross was not an accident. It was God's eternal plan.

Christ bore our sins. Our guilt was placed upon Him. God's wrath against sin fell upon His Son.

Christ became our Redeemer. Jesus is the ransom price for many. Our debt was canceled because His blood was sufficient.

Application: Salvation is accomplished—not earned.

III. One Day He Rose

The Victory of Christ

*"One day the grave could conceal Him no longer...
Then He arose, over death He had conquered."*

Scripture: Matthew 28; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15

The grave could not hold Him. Death has authority over sinners. It has no authority over the sinless Son of God. If the Spirit of the resurrection lives within, we will live.

The resurrection proves everything; It confirms:

- Jesus is God's Son.
- His sacrifice was accepted.
- Death has been defeated.
- Believers will also rise.

He ascended to reign. Jesus now reigns at the Father's right hand. He intercedes continually for His people.

Application: Our hope rests in a living Savior. Because He lives, we also shall live.

IV. One Day He Will Return

The Triumph of Christ

*"One day the trumpet will sound for His coming...
Wonderful day..."*

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19; John 14:1–3

Christ's return is certain: The first coming guarantees the second.

His coming brings hope: The dead in Christ shall rise first and Believers still living will be gathered to Him forever.

His coming ends the story of redemption: Faith becomes sight. Sorrow becomes joy. The Kingdom is fully revealed. Christ reigns forever.

Application: Live ready. The return of Christ should shape how we worship, endure suffering, pursue holiness, proclaim the gospel, and love one another without pettiness.

The Gospel in One Chorus

The refrain beautifully summarizes the work of Christ five phrases:

Living, He loved me

Christ revealed the love of God through His perfect life.

Dying, He saved me

His substitutionary death purchased salvation.

Buried, He carried my sins far away

Our sins were removed completely.

Rising, He justified freely, forever

His resurrection declares believers righteous before God (Romans 4:25).

One day He's coming

Our salvation will be completed when Christ returns.

Biography of John Wilbur Chapman: John Wilbur Chapman (1859-1918) was a Presbyterian pastor, evangelist, and hymn writer.

He grew up in a Christian home, but his mother died when he was 13. At age 17, Chapman made a public confession of faith in Christ but he continued to struggle with doubts about his salvation until three years later when he attended a D.L Moody crusade in Chicago. Moody himself helped him to find assurance through Christ's promise in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and

believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

After graduating from Lane Seminary in 1882 and marrying Irene Steddon, Chapman pastored Dutch Reformed churches in New York. In April 1886, their first child, Bertha Irene, was born, but the mother died a month later. This left the 27-year-old evangelist confused and discouraged and in a crisis of faith. At the Northfield conference in Chicago that summer, he heard F.B. Meyer spoke on surrender, saying, “If you are not willing to give up everything for Christ, are you willing to be made willing?” Chapman said, “That remark changed my whole ministry; it seemed like a new star in the sky of my life” (Ed Reese, *The Life and Ministry of John Wilbur Chapman*).

Two years later, Chapman married Agnes Strain, and they had four children. Their firstborn, Robert, died in infancy.

From 1890 to 1892, Chapman pastored Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Hundreds were converted and brought into the church through Chapman’s ministry, and the source of the spiritual power was prayer. When he first arrived, a group began meeting on Sunday Morning to pray for the new pastor, and this prayer meeting eventually grew to 1,000.

In 1903, Chapman published *Present Day Evangelism* (260 pages, New York: Baker and Taylor Co.). The book shows that Chapman’s ministry had real biblical substance. He was after something solid and lasting. The book emphasizes the following: the necessity of intercessory prayer, the necessity of every believer being an evangelist, the necessity of following up on seekers and trying to make them active church members, the necessity of parents reaching their own children for Christ, the necessity of holy living (as opposed to hypocrisy), and the necessity of the right kind of pastors.

Chapman warned that worldliness in the churches would corrupt the character of any new converts. He said, “[T]he new members will always strike the level of the older members of the Church. If the Church is worldly [partisan/divisive] they will become worldly, if it is given to questionable amusements [gambling, heavy drinking, pursuit of wealth, indulgence of immoral entertainment] they will follow in the same path, but if it is spiritual they will just as truly become spiritual.”