

COUNSEL



AS SORROWFUL, YET REJOICING

GOD ONLY WISE

OUR ALL-KNOWING GOD

"WHENCE THEN COMETH WISDOM?"

DOES HE MEAN AS MUCH TO US

PSALM 2

HE KEEPS THE KEY

THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION

...WITH A SHOUT!

PAUL'S MESSAGE ON MARS' HILL

January—February 2010

As Sorrowful, Yet Rejoicing

**“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing”
(2 Cor. 6:10).**

Paul’s life was a life of contradictions. Two seemingly incompatible and contradictory states existed side by side in his life’s experience. He wrote, *‘By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things’* (2 Cor. 6:8-10).

In many ways the apostle set the pace for all who would follow the Lord. He lived out the terms of discipleship the Lord spoke about. Paul is a living example of what it is to be a Christian.

His experiences were very much like the Lord’s experience when He was here on earth. Take for example this one of Paul’s, *‘as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing’* The Lord Himself is described as *‘a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:’* (Isa. 53:3).

Therefore it should not surprise us as Christians today that we too are called to such a contradictory life. Sorrow is not beyond the experience of the Christian. There is sadness in life. Broken health, broken homes, broken finances and broken hearts are everywhere. They may not be obvious on the surface, but experience teaches us that every life has a sorrow.

Too quickly we look for a rational reason for sorrow. We may hastily blame ourselves or others for ours or another’s circumstances. The mind searches for order, logic, an answer

to why? This is most of the dialogue in the book of Job as Job and his would be comforters look for an explanation for Job’s trouble. Even concluding that Job himself was the reason would have been better than no explanation they thought.

But sorrow does not always come with an explanation. We may see a connection to our sorrow and some foolish action or even sin. Perhaps the actions of others have intentionally or unintentionally brought about our grief. But none of this adequately explains how such things were allowed to happen. And further, sorrow itself was the experience of the Lord Himself.

It is the apostle who points us to comfort in sorrow. For him sorrow and joy coexisted. Paul knew what it was to *‘count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations’* (Jas. 1:2); Or like the believers Peter wrote to, *‘Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:’* (1 Pet. 1:6).

There appear to be at least two main things that gave Paul such a positive outlook in the midst of sorrow. Firstly, he recognized his sorrows were a privilege to bear because they were linked with his identification with Christ. In other words, because he belonged to Christ, it followed that, like Christ, he would find sorrow in this world. Paul put it this way, *‘Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.’* (2 Cor. 4:10). The apostle saw his sorrows as something that would be part of anyone loyal to the Lord Jesus. So

today this principle remains. We are in a spiritual warfare that the Lord allows us to be in. Whether it be because of service for the Lord or whether it be because we belong to Him, sorrow may be a part of our personal circumstances.

Secondly, Paul’s joy was based on the promise of future glory. There is *‘our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal’* (2 Cor. 4:17-18). As sorrow was linked with the ‘dying of the Lord Jesus’ so future glory is linked with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:14).

So much was Paul’s grasp of these things that he wrote, *‘Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong’* (2 Cor. 12:10).

If this life was all we had, sorrow would be a bitter pill. But for the believer, sorrow is incapable of robbing us of accompanying joy. Faith demands we live out this truth.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

—George Matheson

Brian Gunning
St. Catharines, Ontario



COUNSEL

TIMELY TRUTHS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Volume 40 • Number 1

Postmaster:

Please send address changes to:
COUNSEL P. O. Box 427
St. Catharines ON L2R 6V9

For changes of address and new readers:

jbn1p322@vaxxine.com

Previous Editors:

Robert McClurkin
J. Boyd Nicholson

Editor: Brian Gunning, Ontario

Editorial Matters:

bgunning@sympatico.ca

Purpose:

To present truth in words easy to be understood; to bring the Word of God to bear on the confusion of thought that exists in many places today regarding the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, His assembly, His purposes, His people, their privileges and responsibilities Godward and manward. To give a variety of ministry by edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3).

Price:

COUNSEL is supported by those who appreciate the aims and ministry of this work. It is sent freely on request, as the Lord enables. All funds received are used entirely to produce and mail the magazine. No salaries, gifts, honorariums, nor expenses are paid to any of the committee or contributing writers. We are thankful to those who feel their responsibility in this ministry and express their appreciation by practical support.

Translation and Reproduction Policy:

COUNSEL is copyrighted only to preserve the integrity of the material, however articles may be translated into other languages, showing a credit line, "—COUNSEL Magazine" provided no changes are made to the sense of the article. English reproductions may be copied (with credit line), but only as published. Please send a copy of reproduced articles to the Editor.

Sorry, unsolicited manuscripts cannot be acknowledged nor returned.

Printed in Canada

Canadian & overseas donors:

COUNSEL
P. O. Box 427
St. Catharines,
ON Canada
L2R 6V9

U. S. donors:

Counsel Magazine
P. O. Box 176
Palos Park, IL
60464-0176
USA

U. K. and Ireland donors:

COUNSEL
c/o Roy Hill
The Glebe House
Stanton Drew
Bristol BS39 4EH
Cheques from U.K. donors
make payable to 'Counsel Magazine'

CONTENTS

As Sorrowful, Yet Rejoicing..2
Editorial

God Only Wise4
Dr. Boushra Mikhael

Our All-Knowing God.....6
C.G. Moore

**"Whence then
cometh Wisdom?"7**
Malcolm C. Davis

**Does He Mean as Much to us
.....9**
Garry W. Seale

Psalms 2..... 10
T. Ernest Wilson

He Keeps the KEY..... 14
Author Unknown

**The Blessings
of Salvation..... 15**
Drew Craig

...With a SHOUT!..... 10
Doug Kazen

**Paul's Message
on Mars' Hill (Acts 17) 18**
Mark Kolchin

Download *Counsel Magazine* at
[http://www.gospelfolio.com/
counsel_magazine.htm](http://www.gospelfolio.com/counsel_magazine.htm)

GOD Only WISE

This expression appears three times in the New Testament. First in Romans 16:27 in relation to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then in 1 Timothy 1:17 in relation to God's absolute control of times and seasons. And finally in Jude 24-25 where God is shown as the Savior and Keeper of His people.

The wisdom of God is a topic that occupies a large part of the Holy Scriptures. It has been an inspiration for His people, in all the dispensations, to praise and adore Him. For this wisdom has been clearly displayed in all His works; whether in creation, (Ps. 104:24), providence, (Ps. 107:15), or redemption, (Ex. 15:13). For us, however, believers of this dispensation, those three references speak of Him as being ALONE, in the greatness of His wisdom, not to be compared with any one else.

GOD, ONLY WISE, AND THE PLAN OF SALVATION, (Rom. 16:25-27)

"Now unto him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. But now is made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

The Scriptures always emphasize how that God planned salvation through His Blessed Son before time began. *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not ac-*

ording to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). And again *"In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began"* (Tit. 1:2). *"Before the world began"* is also translated *"Before the*

ages of time" (JND), or *"Before the beginning of time"* (NIV), that is to say in eternity past. The marvelous plan of salvation was the result of the eternal counsels in the Godhead before anything was created. However, since time began, the preaching of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to all nations, and not to Israel alone, was kept a secret. Its revelation made possible after the Redeemer has come and has laid down His life for sinful humanity, this was according to the commandment of the Eternal God. Thus the counsels of eternity were fulfilled according to God's good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself, (Eph. 1:9). Receiving the good news of the gospel by faith, in obedience to God's call is the only way to obtain salvation. Now not all Israel have obeyed the gospel, (Rom. 10:16). Therefore, God in His infinite wisdom opened the door to the gentiles, who have obtained mercy through Israel's unbelief. Yet at a later time Israel as a nation will obtain that same mercy

when they return to their Messiah, (Rom. 11:30-32). No human being could claim to have contributed to this marvelous plan. Therefore we hear Paul breaking into a doxology of praise *"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judg-*

"... Him ... being ALONE, in the greatness of His wisdom, not to be compared with any one else."

ments, and his ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:33). God was His own counselor; He needed nothing from any created being neither is He a debtor to any, *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?"* (Rom. 11:34-35). Our God is the source of all, the channel of all blessings and the final goal for all things. *"For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen"* (Rom. 11:36).

GOD, ONLY WISE, THE KING OF THE AGES, (1 Tim. 1:17)

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

In our beloved AV the translators used the word "eternal" to describe the non ending kingdom of God. In the original Greek the word used is "aionic King" best translated king of the ages. (See Strong's 165, also JND).

The Greeks believed that the universe existed and will continue to

exist for aions of time meaning endless subsequent époques of time. They never espoused the idea of a beginning and an ending of the universe. Unlike the Bible which speaks clearly of a beginning, (John 1:1, Gen. 1:1) and an end (Rev. 20:11) of the current creation.

The use of the word “aionic” emphasizes the perpetuity of God’s rule and how His kingdom has neither beginning nor an end. Furthermore He is the author, creator, designer and controller of times and seasons, (Acts 1:8). And though He inhabits eternity, (Isa. 57:15) yet He controls times and époques of human history. And He causes the rise and fall of nations and determines their territories (Acts 17:26).

He has determined a time for every incident and His timetable is always on time. For example He warned Noah of a coming flood and gave humanity 120 years for repentance. When that time was ended, we read that non-believers were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all, (Luke 17:27).

The Lord also spoke to Abraham about the exact number of years of captivity which his seed were to suffer in the land of Egypt (Gen. 15:13). And according to His promise when those years were completed the Lord sent Moses to deliver them.

In our dispensation of grace we read “*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law*” (Gal. 4:4). There was a distinct time, appointed in the counsels of eternity, when the Eternal Son of God was to enter the sphere of time and space, incarnated in a body prepared for Him in the virgin’s womb.

Likewise there is coming a time

appointed by the King of the ages described as the dispensation of the fullness of times when “*He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him*” (Eph. 1:10). We see then how all these times and seasons were appointed, and are controlled by the King of the ages who knows the beginning from the end. “*Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, I will do all my pleasure*” (Isa. 46:9-10). James addressing the

“The Scriptures always emphasize how that God planned salvation through His Blessed Son before time began.”

counsel of Jerusalem sums this up saying “*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the age*” (margin), (Acts 15:14).

THE ONLY WISE GOD THE SAVIOR AND KEEPER OF HIS PEOPLE, (Jude 24)

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

The three well known enemies of God’s people are the flesh with its lusts, the world with its attractions and the devil who orchestrates their attacks on the child of God. Christian life is a warfare and it is only through the power of God that we are kept from falling. For how else could we fend the attacks of Satan,

or mortify the deeds of the flesh or keep worldly attractions at bay were it not for Divine power? And the God who saved us is able to keep us from falling, as long as we are yielded to Him, since we cannot live our Christian life in our own strength. But see how wonderful the prospect before us is! Who can imagine that weak failing vessels; children of fallen Adam will one day be presented faultless before the presence of God’s glory? And not only this but with an overwhelming feeling of joy without any fears or regrets.

Who could do such a work in us? Who could achieve such transformation in our destiny? None could

but the ONLY WISE GOD. The very same One who designed the plan of eternal salvation before the world came to being. The very same One who, as the King of the ages, has perfect control of times and seasons as He has appointed in His eternal counsels. What comfort and encouragement should this be to the hearts of His Children as we wait the glorious day of the coming of our Lord!

O Lamb of God still keep me
near to thy wounded side
‘Tis only there in safety and
peace I can abide
With foes and snares
around me and lusts and
fears within
The grace that sought and
found me,
alone can keep me clean
—James G. Deck

Dr. Boushra Mikhael
Toronto, Ontario



OUR ALL-KNOWING GOD

**“He knoweth the
way that I take”
—Job 23:10**

Let me speak to your very inmost heart. It is by no means enough to set out cheerfully with your God on any venture of faith. Tear into smallest pieces any itinerary for the journey your imagination may have drawn up. Nothing will fall out as you expect. Your guide will keep to no beaten road. He will lead you by yawning gulfs and under overhanging cliffs, such as you never dreamt your eyes would look upon. He knows no fear, and He expects you to fear nothing whilst He is with you. The clinging hand of His child makes a desperate situation a

delight to Him. A true walk with God will do more to awaken awe, wonder, and amazement in your soul than would a century of travel through the sights of earth. It is your business to learn to be peaceful and safe in God, in every situation time or eternity can develop, in this or in any other world to which He may lead you.

To take you to His ‘end’ by the way you know would profit you little. He chooses for you a way you know not, that you may be compelled into a thousand intercourses with Himself, which will make the journey for ever memorable to Him and to you.

In Heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear,

And safe in such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may rage around me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

Wherever He may guide me,
No want shall turn me back
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.”

— A.L. Waring

C.G. Moore

Reprinted from *Simply Trusting*,
published by B. McCall Barbour,
28 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh
EH1 1ES, Scotland, U.K.

“Whence then cometh Wisdom?”

Study of Biblical Wisdom (Job 28:20).

1. Its Meaning

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the adjective “wise” as follows: “Having or showing experience, knowledge, and good judgment.” Wisdom is the ability to use information or knowledge for good

Get wisdom: And with all thy getting get understanding

and beneficial purposes. In Biblical poetry it is often paired with “understanding,” which includes the idea of “insight” into a situation. For Biblical wisdom is not so much academic prowess as the intensely practical ability of being successful in all situations and of forming the correct plan to gain the desired results. Its seat is the heart, the centre of all moral and intellectual decision. True wisdom is vitally linked with morality and integrity of character in everyday living.

2. Its Necessity

In the present age, which has witnessed a greater “information explosion” than any previous one, it is

obvious that we all need wisdom to handle this mass of information correctly and for beneficial purposes. For information by itself can be misused for worthless, wrong, and destructive ends, and can be positively dangerous. We need discriminating wisdom to maximise its value.

3. Its Source

The Bible asserts that, “*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,*” (Ps. 111:10 and Prov. 9:10; cf. also Job 28:28, Prov. 1:7; 2:6)—a truth that this evil world has long rejected. True wisdom comes only from the experiential knowledge and reverential fear of God, the direct result of our faith in, and obedience to, Him. It involves living by His

of life on earth, the study of which is the concern of all worldly academic philosophers.

4. Its Personification

In the Book of Proverbs Wisdom is personified as a wise and godly woman who constantly calls men to trust in her and to learn from her godly ways of living, while Folly is personified as a prostitute who tries to seduce gullible men to commit immorality and wickedness. In Proverbs 31 the wise, or virtuous, woman is a model of godliness, industry, and family virtues, while in chapter 8 the personification of wisdom comes close to being a description of the Pre-Incarnate Son of God. Certainly, much in that chapter is

Wisdom is the ability to use information or knowledge for good and beneficial purposes.

rules for life in His divinely-ordered universe, and being rewarded for so doing. The obedient believer is really the only person who can understand the true nature and meaning

true of Christ, although the fact that the passage says that God created, or possessed, wisdom in the beginning of His way probably indicates that this is not exactly a portrayal, or

True wisdom comes only from the experiential knowledge and reverential fear of God, the direct result of our faith in, and obedience to, Him.

prophecy, of Christ, since He never had a beginning in His pre-incarnate days; rather, it is a wonderful personification of Wisdom.

5. Its Incarnation

In the New Testament, however, the personification of wisdom is superseded by the full revelation and perfect incarnation of wisdom in the Person of Jesus Christ, who is God Incarnate, Emmanuel, God with us. In Christ's perfectly sinless and holy manhood all the fullness of the Godhead, that is, all God's attributes and characteristics, came to dwell permanently, so that He is God manifest in the flesh. Now this fullness includes "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. 2:3), which are hidden in Christ, not seen or understood by the unbelieving world, but certainly appreciated by all of us who believe in Him.

6. Its Supreme Manifestation

But the supreme manifestation of God's wisdom in Christ is the Cross of Calvary, by means of which God at one stroke solved the whole problem of sin and its effects in His universe. Christ crucified appears to most men the very epitome of weakness and foolishness, but really His death is the supreme evidence of both God's power and His wisdom to save those who believe in Him. To believers Christ crucified manifests the wisdom of God, who knew how to effect our justification, sanctification, and redemption from sin by

the sacrifice of His Son in our place, 1 Corinthians 1:30. Yes, Calvary was God's catalyst, the supreme proof of His infinite wisdom.

7. Its Characteristics

James, at the end of chapter 3 of his letter (in which he has stated that, if a man can control his tongue, he can control his whole body also), expounds the contrasting characteristics of carnal and spiritual wisdom in verses 13 to 17 most helpfully, thus— "Who is wise and understand-

The godly wise person does not seek peace at any price, that is, not at the expense of holiness or honesty, unlike those who are worldly-wise.

ing among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic... But the wisdom that comes down from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good works, impartial and sincere," (ESV). True wisdom does not produce disorder or evil conduct, but righteousness and peace. Notice that it is first pure, then peaceable. The godly wise person does not seek peace at any price, that is, not at the expense of holiness or honesty, unlike those who are

worldly-wise. Jonadab, Amnon's friend, for instance, is called a very "wise" man in 2 Samuel 13:3, in the bad sense of "shrewd," or "crafty," but his advice to Amnon concerning his sister Tamar was quite contrary to all moral standards of holiness and even common kindness. Likewise, in the very next chapter, the so-called "wise woman" of Tekoa was used by Joab to effect David's reconciliation with Absalom without first securing Absalom's true repentance of his murder of Amnon. So peace at the expense of righteousness led only to immediate, furthermore serious trouble for David in chapters 15-18. No, the lovely features of true heavenly and godly wisdom listed in these verses from James stand in very marked contrast with those of earthly wisdom, and should be em-

ulated by all believers. Then there will be true holiness, harmony, and happiness in both our personal lives and in the fellowship of the local assemblies of the Lord's people.

8. Its Value

Scripture is full of examples of wise men and women who in their generations accomplished much for God's glory. First of these was Joseph, who, because he was divinely-enabled to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, saved the then-known world from the worst effects of famine. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but also learned God's wisdom to lead Israel out of Egypt.

Daniel was likewise learned in the wisdom of the Babylonians, but was also granted divine wisdom to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams concerning God's future purposes for the times of the Gentiles. In answer to prayer, King Solomon became the wisest man who had ever lived, second only to Christ Himself, the Greater than Solomon. Bezalel and Aholiab, the makers of the tabernacle vessels, were granted special wisdom, or technical expertise, from God to do so. Joshua, Ezra, and Stephen were also granted special wisdom for their missions in life.

God's manifold wisdom can be seen in the constitution of the New Testament Church, according to Ephesians 3:10, in the fact that it is one indivisible body composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers saved on the same basis and sharing the same privileges, a miracle of sovereign grace.

Drawing from the many verses which speak of the effects of godly wisdom, we can say that it achieves the following ten things:

1. It saves the soul, through the application of the Scriptures; (2 Tim. 3:15).
2. It protects from danger and prolongs life; (Prov. 3:2, 16; 4:10; Eccl. 9:13-18).
3. It understands God's will and purposes; Joseph and Daniel.
4. It builds for God, never seeking to destroy His work; the "wise-hearted" men and women who helped to construct the tabernacle, (Ex. 31-36; Prov. 24:3).
5. It is humble, always submitting to God's will and Word; (Prov. 11:2).
6. It speaks carefully, and pacifies anger; (Prov. 15:2, 7; 16:14; 18:4; Eccl. 10:12).

7. It accepts correction, and is willing to learn from its mistakes; (Prov. 9:8-9).
8. It lives circumspectly, not causing needless offence; (Eph. 5:15-16; Col. 4:5-6).
9. It judges righteously and impartially; (1 Kgs. 3:16-28).
10. It gives joy and satisfaction to all, including the wise man himself; (Prov. 3:13; 10:1; 13:14; 15:20; 24:14).

To conclude, therefore, let us all heed the words of Proverbs 4:7: *"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: And with all thy getting get understanding."* Today this is equivalent to saying that we should have the mind of Christ, who is Himself Wisdom Incarnate and indwells all who trust in Him. And James 1:5 promises that if we ask God for this wisdom, He will give it to us liberally. Let us go in for it!

Malcolm C. Davis
Leeds, UK

DOES HE MEAN AS MUCH TO US

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9).

The human heart "abhors a vacuum." Before the Thessalonian saints left their idols, they had an Object to turn to—an Object which was far more attractive to them than the useless idols to which they had once been so dedicated. The Lord now filled their spiritual gaze and drew them to Himself. Does He mean as much to us today?—Garry W. Seale

*Oh how the thought
of God attracts
And draws the heart
from earth,
And sickens it
of passing shows
And dissipating mirth!
—Frederick W. Faber*

*Why do the heathen rage,
and the people imagine a
vain thing?*

*The kings of the earth set
themselves, and the rul-
ers take counsel together,
against the LORD, and
against his anointed, saying,
Let us break their bands
asunder, and cast away their
cords from us.*

*He that sitteth in the heav-
ens shall laugh: the LORD
shall have them in derision.*

*Then shall he speak unto
them in his wrath, and vex
them in his sore displeasure.*

*Yet have I set my king
upon my holy hill of Zion.*

*I will declare the decree:
the LORD hath said unto
me, Thou art my Son; this
day have I begotten thee.*

*Ask of me, and I shall give
thee the heathen for thine
inheritance, and the utter-
most parts of the earth for
thy possession.*

*Thou shalt break them
with a rod of iron; thou shalt
dash them in pieces like a
potter's vessel.*

*Be wise now therefore, O
ye kings: be instructed, ye
judges of the earth.*

*Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.*

*Kiss the Son, lest he be
angry, and ye perish from
the way, when his wrath is
kindled but a little. Blessed
are all they that put their
trust in him.*

Psalm 2

The Official Glories of the Eternal Son

Psalms 1 and 2 are linked together in the Hebrew Bible. They are an introduction and a preface to the Psalms as a whole. Attention has been drawn to the fact that the first psalm begins with a beatitude, and the second ends with a beatitude. Together they form an admirable introduction to the Messianic psalms. In the first we see Christ's moral glory, in the second His official glory. In the first He is the happy Man, occupied with a book, a tree, and a river; in the second He is God's King, destined to rule the nations with a rod of iron. In the first we have His humanity, in the second His deity. The common theme of both is the glory of God's beloved Son, the Messiah, who, in spite of all the anarchy and wickedness in the world, will one day occupy the throne of world dominion.

The second psalm is quoted seven times in the New Testament; twice in the Acts (4:24-28; 13:33); twice in Hebrews (1:5; 5:5); three times in Revelation (2:27; 12:5; 19:15). All of these references are applied to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, giving us our authority for calling it a Messianic psalm. There are four official Messianic titles in the psalm, one in each section: The Anointed (v. 2); My King (v. 6); My Son (v. 7); the Lord (v. 11).

Psalm 2 has twelve verses, divided into four sections of three verses each. There are four speakers, one in each section:

1. The voice of rebellion-man in revolt (v. 1-3).
2. The reply of Jehovah-God in His wrath (v. 4-6).
3. The revelation of the Son (v. 7-9).
4. The Spirit's call to reconciliation (v. 10-12).

Note: It is the answer of the Holy Trinity to the anarchy of man.

(1) Voice of Rebellion-Man in Revolt (Ps. 2:1-3)

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against His anointed, saying: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

The Apostle Peter applies these words to the crucifixion in Acts 4:27-28: *"For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done."* This is the primary application of the passage, but it has a prophetic application as well.

Here we have a fourfold coalition of power united against Almighty God and His Christ. First the united nations; secondly, "the people," the nation of Israel; thirdly, organized government represented by Herod; and finally, judicial power represented by Pontius Pilate. The confederacy at the cross foreshadows another

at the end. They imagine a vain thing, that they can overthrow God! The words “take counsel” and “set themselves” indicate the deliberate adoption of a policy, the passing of a resolution. It is the overthrow of law and order, the underwriting of the slogan, “God is dead.”

The law of God in the Bible, and all rules concerning morals and

as restrainers (2 Thess. 2:7), what will it be when they are removed? Today the mystery of iniquity is already working, but it will be revealed in all its lurid wickedness when the avalanche breaks forth.

The French Revolution of 1798 was a little foretaste of it, when a harlot was enthroned in Notre Dame, and again in 1917 after the Bolshevik

climax of the work of the United Nations and the final fulfillment of the first section of this psalm.

(2) The Reply of Almighty God (Ps. 2:4-6).

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord [Adonai] shall have them in derision.” It is a terrible portent when God laughs. The very idea that puny man can defy the One who has the universe with all its potential in the palm of His hand is supremely ridiculous. Ballistic missiles and laser beams are as children's toys to Him. He knows all their secrets and more.

“Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure.” “The wrath” in the book of Revelation is a technical term, indicating the final series of judgments in the great tribulation. The seal judgments are those that men bring on themselves by their own folly, such as the building up of nuclear arms, which one day will be unleashed, with a large portion of the world's population wiped out and material resources destroyed.

The second psalm is quoted seven times in the New Testament... All of these references are applied to the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

marriage are to be rejected. Man is the maker of his own destiny and “situation ethics” is to be the rule of life. All bands and cords are to be thrown away and modern man is to be liberated from all restraint. Even today there are straws in the wind which indicate what will happen at the end when all the bars are down. It starts in the home where the child instead of the parent rules. It continues in the school, where it is illegal to discipline with the rod, and where evolution and Hegelian philosophy is taught by infidel teachers and professors. It increases in the social sphere, where the gay generation openly claims license for unnatural sin, abortion has been legalized, and unisex breaks down the distinction between man and woman. Then it reaches into the sphere of government: sex scandals, graft, and corruption, from the policeman on the street to the judge on the bench, penetrating into the highest echelons of government.

If these things take place while the Holy Spirit and the Church are here

Revolution, when millions were liquidated and godless atheism took over. It was repeated in Red China when Mao and communism swept the country, and kangaroo courts accounted for the lives of untold millions of victims.

The second psalm points forward to that day when a satanic trinity, the two wild beasts of Revelation

The common theme ... the glory of God's beloved Son, the Messiah, who, in spite of all the anarchy and wickedness in the world, will one day occupy the throne of world dominion.

13, backed by the devil himself, will proclaim a decree prohibiting the worship of God and His Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:4-8, 12:17). Those that refuse to obey, to carry his mark, and to worship the image of the man of sin will be executed. This will be the

The trumpet judgments are mainly satanic, when men will reap the wages of sin. They are similar to the plagues of Egypt described in Exodus 5-12. But the bowls or vial judgments are the wrath of God, the concentrated anger of the Almighty poured out on the seat of the beasts

and their followers.

The climax of all this is: *"Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion."* This is God's unalterable purpose, and nothing on earth or in hell can thwart it. In the first section of the psalm, He is the Anointed, but here He is King. This points forward to

The eternal Sonship of Christ is one of the most vital, basic doctrines of the Word of God.

that day foretold by the prophets, when, after dealing with the enemies of God at the battle of Armageddon, He will enter the city at the head of His victorious army and occupy the hill and the house. He will be the King-Priest on the throne of His father David (Pss. 24; 110; Zech. 6:13). God regards this in His purpose as already accomplished.

(3) The Revelation of the Son (Ps. 2:7-9).

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."

This is one of the decrees of the Godhead in eternity past, here revealed for the first time by the Son. It is one of the greatest Messianic passages in Holy Scripture. The eternal Sonship of Christ is one of the most vital, basic doctrines of the Word of God. It is denied by many heretical cults, but held and valued by all those who know and love our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great passage on which the doctrine is based. Another term, used only by the Apostle John, is *"the Only-Begotten Son,"* the monogenes. John uses the term five times.

Some theologians teach that the word *"begotten"* must not be understood as referring to any act in time but to what they term an "eternal generation." The word *"day"* is explained as "eternity." Taken in this way, the eternal Sonship of Christ is safely guarded. But others maintain

that the three places in the New Testament where the words are quoted give the explanation. In view of the definiteness of the term *"this day,"* it would seem difficult to define it as synonymous with eternity. It must refer to some special act in what we know as "time." Here we must be on our guard against those who

say that He only became the Son of God at His incarnation and who deny His eternal Sonship.

The statement in verse 7 is in two parts:

"Thou art My Son." The decree in eternity past. That is an eternal relationship.

"This day have I begotten Thee." That is Messianic, quoted in three contexts in the New Testament.

Acts 13:32-34: *"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their*

children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." Verse 33 clearly refers to His raising up to Israel, His incarnation, and verse 34 to His resurrection. Between the two statements we have the quotation from Psalm 2:7: *"Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."* Thus it is linked with His incarnation and His resurrection.

In Hebrews 5:5 it is quoted in connection with His exaltation as our High Priest. *"So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten thee."*

Hebrews 1:5-6, the quotation is linked with His second advent. No angel receives worship, but when He brings again the First-Begotten into the world, He says: *"Let all the*

True wisdom is in reconciliation while there is time and before the judgment falls.

angels of God worship Him."

At His birth, He was saluted as Son by the angel (Luke 1 :35); by His Father at His baptism (Luke 3:22); and at His transfiguration (Luke 9:35).

So to summarize: the two statements of Psalm 2:7 indicate: *"Thou art My Son,"* a unique eternal relationship. *"This day have I begotten Thee,"* an official salutation, a term linked with His incarnation, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, priesthood, and second advent. Kenneth Wuest, who does not believe that it refers to His incarnation, but

to His resurrection, comments, "The reference is not to entrance into life, but to entrance to an office."

After Sonship comes Heirship: "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the ut-

Ballistic missiles and laser beams are as children's toys to Him. He knows all their secrets and more.

termost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This points forward to the day when He shall return to reign. The shepherd's rod, symbolizing authority and rule, to His people will be a golden scepter, but to the rebel nations at Armageddon will be a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15; Ps. 110:2).

(4) The Spirit's Call to Reconciliation-Psalm 2:10-12

The admonition of the Spirit is to the kings and judges of earth, the executive and judicial branches of government. True wisdom is in reconciliation while there is time and before the judgment falls.

"Kiss the Son" (v. 12). The kiss in Scripture is a symbol of various attitudes. In Luke 7:38 it is a sign of repentance. The poor woman who came into the house of Simon and stood behind Jesus, did five things: she wept, she washed His feet with her tears, she wiped them with the hairs of her head, she kissed His feet, and she anointed them with the

ointment. The tears and the kiss were an evidence of true repentance. Our Lord said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

The kiss is also a token of forgiveness. In Luke 15:11-24 the prodigal came back home to his father, and after his confession, received the kiss of forgiveness, a ring, a robe, shoes on his feet, and a welcome home banquet.

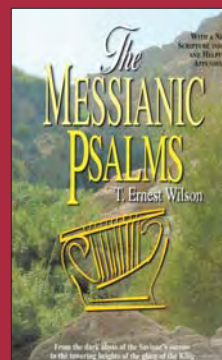
But here it is an expression of homage and loyalty (Gen. 41:40; 1 Sam. 10:1). The ARV renders the expression, "with trembling kiss His feet."

It is interesting to notice that two words for "son" are used in the psalm. In verse 7 it is "ben" but in verse 12 it is "bar". The first is the Jewish word, cf., Benjamin; the second is the Gentile word, cf., Bar-abbas. Why the difference? The first is His relation to God as the Son of His right hand; the second His relation to the Gentile powers referred to in the psalm. At the crucifixion they cried, away with Him, give us Bar-abbas. The use of the word here would be a stab at their conscience. Judas gave Him the kiss of hypocrisy and treachery, but here the admonition is to kiss the Son in true contrition and repentance. If the psalm was written at the time of the Absalom rebellion, what a tragic local reference it has!

The psalm ends with the benediction: "Blessed are all they that take refuge in Him!"

T. Ernest Wilson

Excerpt from *The Messianic Psalms*
Available from GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS



The Messianic Psalms

T. Ernest Wilson

B-MPS

The Psalms are the heartland of the Old Testament. Wrung from the soul in times of deep emotion, they strike emphatic chords in the spirits of the people of God. Deep within this verdant land are hidden the richest veins of truth—the Messianic Psalms—which yield their treasures to those who love the One these songs exquisitely portray.

In *The Messianic Psalms*, the author invites us to look with him at these sixteen psalms which portray the Lord Jesus at His birth and with His Bride: in His temptation and betrayal; as the last Adam, the Headstone, and the King of Glory. Taken in the chronological order of the life of our Lord, we feel like we have joined the disciples in the upper room when He said: "These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the ... psalms, concerning Me." These psalms are a veritable portrait gallery of the Christ!

Order from GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS

Call Toll Free: 1-800-952-2382

Phone: (905) 835-9166

Order Online: www.gospelfolio.com

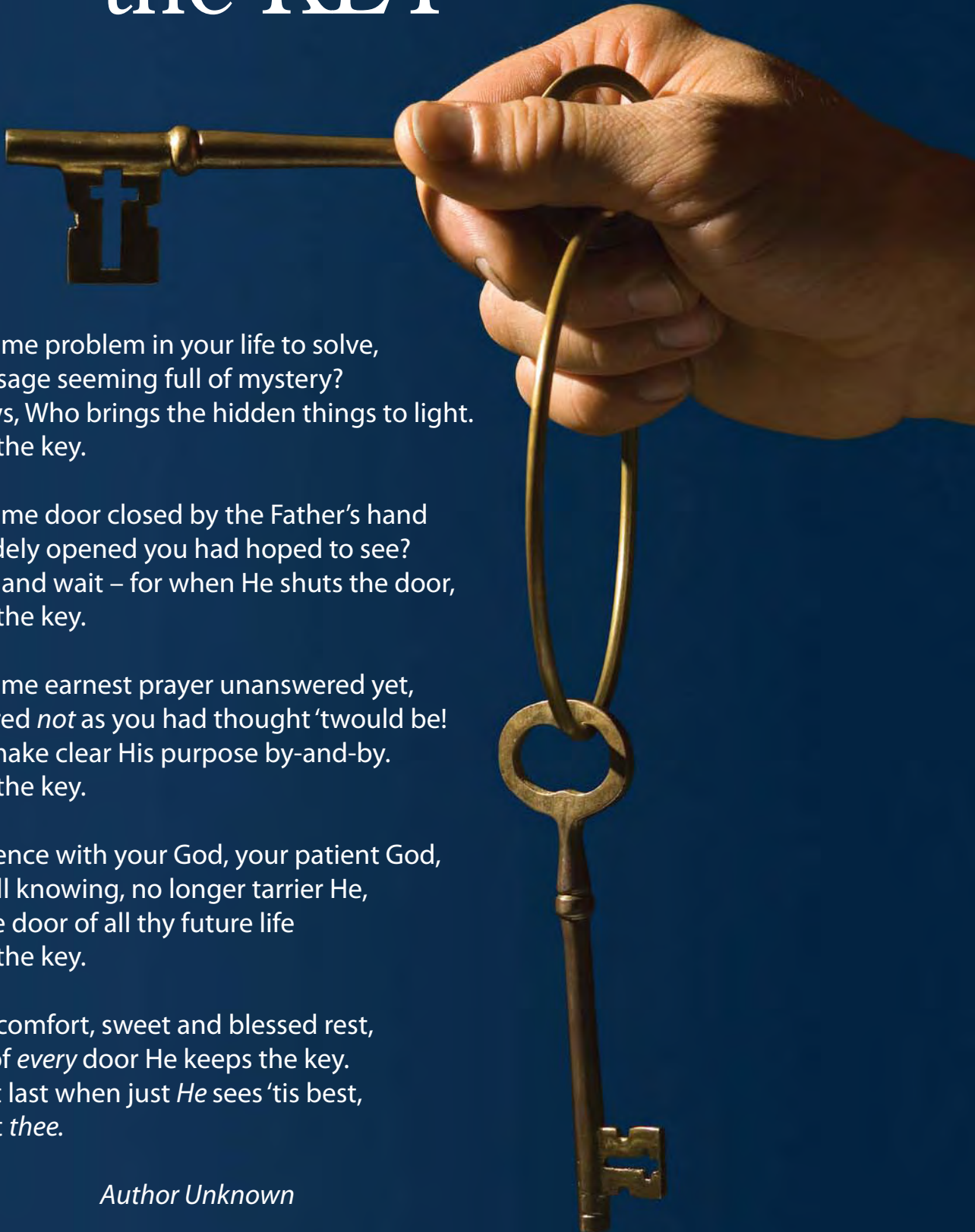
Mail Order:

304 Killaly St West,

Port Colborne, ON L3K 6A6

Canada

He Keeps the KEY



Is there some problem in your life to solve,
Some passage seeming full of mystery?
God knows, Who brings the hidden things to light.
He keeps the key.

Is there some door closed by the Father's hand
Which widely opened you had hoped to see?
Trust God and wait – for when He shuts the door,
He keeps the key.

Is there some earnest prayer unanswered yet,
Or answered *not* as you had thought 'twould be!
God will make clear His purpose by-and-by.
He keeps the key.

Have patience with your God, your patient God,
All wise, all knowing, no longer tarrier He,
And of the door of all thy future life
He keeps the key.

Unfailing comfort, sweet and blessed rest,
To know of *every* door He keeps the key.
That He at last when just *He* sees 'tis best,
Will give it *thee*.

Author Unknown

The Blessings of Salvation

Regeneration: Renewal: Redemption

“But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared. Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his Mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:4-6)¹

“...Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest [deposit] of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Eph. 1:13-14).

Verse 7 of Ephesians chapter 1 tells us that *“we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”* Here it is the basic matter of the ransom payment by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, symbolised in the shedding of His blood, to deliver us from the penalty of our sin. In verses 13-14 there is a progression to the future where the redemption in view concerns the glorification of our physical bodies. In between the PAST of verse 7 and the FUTURE of verse 13 we have the PRESENT of Titus 3:4-6.

Regeneration and Renewal in this context has to do with the PRESENT—the ongoing life of the believer.

¹ All Scripture quotations are taken from the Revised Version of 1881.

When speaking about this aspect of Regeneration the Apostle has in mind that our beginning—“genesis”—in the first Adam “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). So there is need for a new genesis! A rebirth, born from above (John 3). It is the divine impartation of the life of God to a person who is spiritually dead. It is the creation of something NEW! This is explained by the Apostle when writing to the church

ongoing washing or cleansing. Two truths are the basis of this life. First it is to be FORGIVEN through the Cross and then to be JUSTIFIED through the Resurrection (Rom. 4:25). In normal life humans can forgive but they cannot justify, in the matter of divine forgiveness—a guilty person going free—it is perfected by divine justification. The righteousness of Christ is reckoned or credited to us; *“But to him that*

Whereas blamelessness has to do with our motives, why we do what we do and that the Apostle has no hesitation in saying it is a possible goal to aim for which produces the transformation he speaks of.

in Corinth *“If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come”* (paraphrase, 2 Cor. 5:17) What is the NEW? Christ in us the hope of glory! He our beloved Lord is now our Master, He is the new owner (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

This newness is described as an

worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

The Apostle now continues by adding to Regeneration in Titus chapter 3 the *“...renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* In Regeneration it is the intervention of the Lord Jesus in his

It is yielding to the Holy Spirit in our lives that controls the sin virus, keeps it in check and allows the beauty and winsomeness of the life of the Lord Jesus to be manifested in these mortal bodies.

death and resurrection that imparts new life to the believer; in Renewing it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that causes that life to grow and mature. Renewal has to do with the restoration of the divine image in failing man. There is quite a breath taking teaching of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18, *“But we all with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit”* The resulting implication of this renewing process is a very practical one and explained by the same Apostle *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men ... to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming—presence—of our Lord Jesus with all his saints”* (1 Thess. 3:12-13). We need to note that it is not faultless hearts, that has to do with our faculties and our humanity and is unattainable in these earthly bodies. Whereas blamelessness has to do with our motives, why we do what we do and that the Apostle has no hesitation in saying it is a possible goal to aim for which produces the transformation he speaks of. In Romans 12:2, he confirms this truth; *“Be not fashioned according to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable will of God.”*

One of the greatest blessings of salvation which we must strive after is to give expression to the true inner reality of a Spirit filled life. The blessings of renewal come to us as we allow God the Holy Spirit to renovate and restore our lives. The old Adamic nature is still with us. I was taught as a very young Christian by a godly elder that the “old nature is neither removed or improved!” It is yielding to the Holy Spirit in our lives that controls the sin virus, keeps it in check and allows the beauty and winsomeness of the life of the Lord Jesus to be manifested in these mortal bodies.

In Romans chapter 6 the Apostle deals in some detail with this truth. *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to obey the lusts thereof... For sin shall not have dominion over you”* (vv. 12-14). Through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and submission to his control we have power to overcome temptation and not sin. As someone has aptly put it; *“It’s not a matter of not being able to sin but being able not to sin!”* The Apostle’s message is NOT eradication but domination.

We now come finally and briefly to future Redemption. We have already quoted that the indwelling Spirit is the “earnest” or deposit of a full payment that is yet to be made. Much of the latter part of Romans 8 is taken up with this great truth. In verse 23 the Apostle links the Holy

Spirit with final redemption calling it the *“first fruits.”* He continues *“... we groan within ourselves awaiting the redemption of our bodies”* For this final act of salvation the price has been paid at Calvary. The guarantee that it will take place is the risen glorified Saviour at God’s right hand.

In the last of seven prayer requests in John chapter 17 the Lord Jesus petitions His Father *“...I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory”* (v. 24). It is a request couched in a statement *“I WILL.”* He is certain of a positive response

We have already quoted that the indwelling Spirit is the “earnest” or deposit of a full payment that is yet to be made.

as He has completely satisfied His Father in the accomplishment of redemption. He will be the *“...author [pioneer] of salvation bringing many sons to glory”* (Heb. 2:10). This demands the believer’s glorification, to be like our glorified Lord. Glory gazing upon glory, What a prospect and consummation!

Drew Craig
Belfast, N. Ireland

... With a SHOUT!

Our Lord went to His death at Calvary with an attitude of quiet submission to His Father's will. He went like a lamb to the slaughter. When reviled, He reviled not again. His statements to His accusers were utterances of straight-forward fact, concerning which He did not argue. His utterances while on the tree were quiet declarations. He raised His voice only once; that was to commend His Spirit to His Father. He expired so quietly that even those close at hand barely perceived that He had died. He gave no shout at Calvary.

His resurrection was likewise accomplished in quiet dignity. Early in the morning of the third day He simply arose. A great, sealed, stone was rolled away to reveal the fact that He had already risen. It was left to two angels to proclaim, from within that stone crypt, the glorious fact: He is not here. He is risen. Even Mary and his disciples had to be convinced by personal contact with the Lord that he had actually risen. There was no shout to accompany the Lord's resurrection.

Forty days later, He ascended to Heaven. Again, the great event was accomplished quietly. Few saw Him go. He was received up to glory

with no fanfare that man could witness. Again, angels made the proclamation that this same Jesus will come again. There was no shout at His ascension.

Now at any moment, some two millennia having gone by, God the Father will indicate to His Son that the time has come for Him to fetch home His bride. And then the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout! (1 Thess. 4-16). No shout like this has ever been heard; nor will there ever again be any like it. This shout will reach the ear of every sleeping saint of all the Day of Grace. A mighty multitude will for the first time audibly hear their Savior's voice. That glorifying shout will be the expression of the fulfillment of the joy that was set before Him when He endured the cross. At last, He will see the fruit of the travail of His Soul and He'll be satisfied. What a shout of triumph and delight.

And the voice of the archangel. We believe the angels were held in restraint as they witnessed the suffering of the Lord at Calvary. One stroke of their power would have ended man's pathetic efforts against almighty God. But now, summoned at last to action, the archangel joins

in an act that magnifies and glorifies the very throne of God. For that great angel now participates in the delightful act of clothing every risen saint with his eternal house which is from heaven (2 Cor. 5). Thus in glorified bodies, and in a second of time, the mighty hosts rise from the depths into the fullness of everlasting light.

And, the trump of God. The mighty throne assembles. Anthems of worship erupt. And exalted above all stands that salutary One who once in quietness was slain, but now in glory bright draws to Himself that bride for which He died, for whom He long waited. From every kindred, tongue, and tribe they shall assemble. At this glorious meeting in the clouds, the Lord will gather His own to Himself; for the first time a mighty and united throng. His bride! His treasure! For this is the treasure that He found in the field, and for the joy thereof went and sold all that He had and bought the field (Matt. 13:44). His loved ones, together with Him at last! Indeed He will have cause to shout.

Doug Kazen
Kirkland, Washington



**May we be bold
and respectful,
direct and logical
as we too bring
the Gospel
message with us,
wherever we go.**

Paul's Message on Mar's Hill (Acts 17)

When Paul came to Mar's Hill in Athens during his second missionary journey, he was completely by himself. Timothy and Silas, his associates in ministry had been left in Berea, while he was sent away by the brethren due to the dangerous and escalating conditions there (Acts 17:13). The unbelieving Jews who had stirred up the crowds in Thessalonica were intent on doing the same in Berea and consequently the apostle had to flee the area for his own safety.

Arriving in Athens, the apostle discovered a culture steeped in pagan idolatry. Surrounding him were the abundant evidences of man's

dark and fallen nature. The scene deeply provoked his spirit as he witnessed firsthand the grip that sin has over the hearts and minds of people, whom God had created in His own image. Not one for stand-

ing idle, the former Pharisee made a beeline for the local synagogue, reasoning with the Jews and devout Gentiles and daily with those in the

marketplace who would meet with him. Others, like the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers adversely encountered him, ridiculing and questioning his new and unique message of Jesus and the resurrection (v. 18). Not backing away and always ready to give an answer, Paul certainly relished the opportunity to clarify his message to these religious curiosity seekers (v. 20), who brought him to Mars Hill, the central meeting place in town. What followed was a concise, yet effective presentation of the Gospel in all its simplicity, demonstrating that it is the power of God unto salvation—a message for everyone regardless of their cultural background or personal persuasions. It clearly shows that the Gospel can stand on its own and does not

**A message for everyone regardless
of their cultural background or
personal persuasions.**

require any props or apologies to ramp up to its audience, no matter how diverse that audience may be. It is also a display case of the quali-

ties and attitudes that are behind any successful Gospel ministry. What were some of the qualities and attitudes that Paul exhibited in this proclamation of the truth, qualities that we need to likewise embrace in our diverse, but depraved culture?

First, Paul demonstrated the quality of boldness. Without spiritual back up, Paul might have been tempted to waffle at the opportunity to speak to the crowd assembled on Mars Hill. But standing in their midst, surrounded by an adverse and potentially dangerous audience, he boldly proclaimed the truth of the Gospel. The scripture reminds us, *“the righteous are as bold as a lion”* (Prov. 28:1) and certainly Paul was that as he single-handedly preached the Word to them—*“a stranger in a strange land”* with a *“strange”* mes-

were—not superstitious but religious and devoted to their cause. He commended them for their intensity (albeit misdirected intensity) and by so doing gained a listening ear, at least initially. We also need to be respectful in our presentation of the truth.

Paul was also direct in his message. He was frank about the core issue – ignorance of God and His way of salvation. *“Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you”* (v. 23). The altar dedicated and inscribed with the words *“to the unknown God”* only heralded their misconception of the true God. Paul did not “beat around the bush” or sidestep the issue, but was direct in his words, dealing with the real matter at hand. *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand”* Paul reminded the believers

4) their ignorance in the past God overlooked, but now calls people to repent based on Christ’s resurrection from the dead (vv. 29-31).

At first, there was resistance to the message, but that resistance was countered by Paul’s powerful refutation, which was clear, orderly and logical in its development. Our messages should be the same. *“The Preacher ...set [s] in order many proverbs”* (Ecc. 12:9).

As is often the case, whenever the Gospel is preached there is a varied response to the message. In this case, here there was ridicule and indifference (v. 32) but also belief unto the truth (v.34). The fact that there were not more *“decisions”* for the Lord was not because Paul did not effectively present the truth—it was because

It clearly shows that the Gospel can stand on its own and does not require any props or apologies to ramp up to its audience, no matter how diverse that audience may be.

sage to a really strange audience. Paul was bold in the Lord and we need to be bold in the Lord, too.

Paul also exhibited respect. Even though he knew that he had to speak the truth in love, he also knew that he needed to *“adorn the doctrine of God”* (Titus 2:10) and emulate the Savior who brought a message that was both *“grace and truth”* (John 1:17). He knew that many, if not all of them, were lost in the darkness of sin and were fundamentally opposed to the Gospel of Christ, but still there was no attitude of condescension in his opening remarks. Rather, he acknowledged what they

in Rome (Rom. 13:12) and the time is short for us as well. *“Let the redeemed of the Lord, say so!”* (Ps. 107:2).

Paul was also logical in his presentation. He was orderly in his argument. The major tenets of his message were:

- 1) they were religious, but ignorant (vv. 22-23);
- 2) the God Whom they do not know controls them and not the other way around (vv. 24-27);
- 3) we are the offspring of a personal God, and therefore should not worship Him with fanciful images and carvings (vv. 28-29);

wherever the Gospel seed is sown there will always be hard ground that prevents it from taking root as well as indecisive hearts that have not yet been willing to release their grip from the pull of the world.

Paul’s message at Mar’s Hill was brief, but it was long enough to show us some of the essential qualities of the simple Gospel message that we also need to exhibit regularly in our preaching of the Word. May we be bold and respectful, direct and logical as we too bring the Gospel message with us, wherever we go.

Mark Kolchin
Lanoka Harbour, New Jersey

A Quiet Mind

What room is there for troubled fear?
I know my Lord, and He is near;
And He will light my candle, so
That I may see the way I go.

There need be no bewilderment
To one who goes where he is sent;
The trackless plain, by night and day
I set with signs lest he should stray.

My path may cross a waste of sea,
But that need never frighten me-
Or rivers full to very brim,
But they are open ways to Him.

My path may lead thro' wood at night,
Where neither moon nor any light
Of guiding star or beacon shines;
He will not let me miss my signs.

Lord, grant to me a quiet mind,
That, trusting thee-for Thou art kind-
I may go on without a fear,
For Thou, my Lord, art always near.

—Amy Carmichael