
To “the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever”

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— Keith R. Blades

Without a doubt we are the possessors of numerous privileges and graces in this present dispensation of God’s grace in which we live. And not only numerous, but exceedingly special. Some of them not even being considered or hoped for by those in God’s “time past” program and dealings with Israel. Each aspect of our position and identity “in Christ” abounds with them, and we are thereby made abundantly rich “in Christ.” As such each one of them should be regarded by us as precious and a delight to employ.

Now though each privilege and grace is magnificent in and of itself, certainly one of the grandest of these is the issue of being able to know, enjoy, and delight with God in all the various aspects of His astounding genius and wisdom that He has now made manifest, “having made known unto us the mystery of his will.” Having done so, God has now granted us the privilege of being mutual-counselors together with Him in the fulness of what He is doing. Through having now revealed what He had formerly kept secret, He has honored us with the ability to know “the deep things of God.” To probe the depths of His wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, and to by so doing delight with Him in the accomplishments of His unmatched genius. And this honor belongs to us, who in “time past” were not only “dead in sins,” but also dead “in the uncircumcision of our flesh.” Hence to us formerly twice dead Gentiles has God “in Christ” granted us the profound privilege of being mutual-counselors with Him in all the wisdom that He has employed in working “all things after the counsel of his own will.” Indeed this privilege

of ours can rightfully be called the pinnacle of godliness, and the grace of it cannot be overstated.

Moreover we also need to realize that this particular privilege of ours involves more than us simply rejoicing in God’s “manifold wisdom” with Him as we learn and consider the magnificence of each aspect of it. It also entails the issue of due praise and glory being rendered to God by us on account of His exceptional wisdom. This is something we bring about as we revel in the knowledge of God’s wisdom. And as we do so, an impact is made to God’s glory in the face of the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Not surprisingly therefore when we find the Apostle Paul talking to us about an aspect of the manifold wisdom of God and the privilege we have of being able to understand and appreciate it, we also frequently find him praising God for the glory of His wisdom that has now been made manifest. Paul’s own exultant doxology at the conclusion of Romans 11 is a prime example of this.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

(Romans 11:33-36)

In this particular example Paul is glorifying God as he extols the virtues of “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” And this is the natural response of Paul’s own spirit as he delights over the genius that he perceives is behind the great dispensational change that God has made, which he has just related the fundamentals of in chapters 9-11. Paul clearly understood that when God unexpectedly suspended His program with Israel and brought in this present dispensation of His grace for us Gentiles, that this was by no means a capricious act on God’s part. It was not done on a whim, nor as an act of desperation or salvage. Instead it was based upon His incomparable wisdom and shrewd understanding. It was in reality, therefore, an act of genius on God’s part. The “depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” was behind it, and as such it not only ought to be appreciated by us, but it also ought to be extolled by us. And without any overstatement whatsoever, the incomparable genius and wisdom of God truly is behind the bringing in of this present dispensation of His grace, just as Paul extols. In fact, it is not only behind it, it is also manifestly stamped upon everything that God is doing in His program and dealings with us in this dispensation. Little wonder, therefore, that we find in our epistles the Apostle Paul teaching us so much about God’s wisdom, along with the unsurpassed privilege that we now have to join with God in pure delight over what His genius has done with us and is doing with us. Hence, we have such verses as the following:

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

(1 Corinthians 2:6-8)

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

(1 Corinthians 2:15-16)

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

(Ephesians 1:8-9)

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

(Colossians 1:9)

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

(Colossians 2:2-3)

The genius of God — the depth of the riches of His wisdom and knowledge — is indeed something that God wants us to know, to comprehend, and to delight in together with Him. And again, as ones to whom He has revealed it, He has also granted us the honor of reveling in it with Him. Hence, it is something that we should be thrilled over and that we should rejoice in just as He Himself does. And as we do, we too should concur with Paul, to “the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.”

A Particularly Delightful Touch of God’s Genius

There is a singularly exquisite “treasure” of God’s wisdom that we should delight in, if for no other reason than for its capacity to completely confound. At first glance, however, it is a rather simple looking, almost unsophisticated piece of knowledge. But though it looks simple, (and in truth it really is simple), it is nonetheless equally brilliant and profound. This touch of God’s genius and superior wisdom is the knowledge of the way that He triumphed in taking the Adversary, or Satan, in his own craftiness, and thereby provided for the complete destruction of his entire plan of evil. And that way was by the very simple act of just keeping a secret from him.

The foundation for appreciating this goes back to the beginning of creation when Satan became Satan and formulated his plan of evil opposition to God. That plan of evil, as related in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, was founded upon the unabashed pride and vaunted wisdom that had developed in Satan following his iniquity. In fact simply put it was Satan’s contention that he actually had superior wisdom to God, and this primarily became what he set out to prove the reality of through the implementation of his plan of evil. Moreover once his plan was implemented, Satan’s inner bravado concerning his wisdom, along with the arrogance of his cocksure pride, just continued to grow as he responded to all of the challenges set before him by God’s own plan.

Eventually the time came when Satan even gave clear voice to the bravado of his vaunted wisdom. This in particular occurred when he saw that he had succeeded in defiling Israel to the point where God had to send them out of their land and in so doing they became Satan’s “lawful captive.” At that time, as described in Ezekiel 28, Satan not only gloated over his apparent victory, but he also began to celebrate, so to speak. He even practiced through the prince of Tyrus at that time what he would do when the time would come in Israel’s

program when he would be able to establish his real man of sin on the earth. In connection with his unrestrained bravado at that time the LORD said to him,...

3 Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:

(Ezekiel 28:3)

Such indeed was Satan’s confident boast and brag. He was celebrating his vaunted wisdom at that time, professing his intelligence and his wits to be unmatched by anyone. And this, because of the depth of his pride, he was fully convinced was true.

However not only was Satan confident in his boasting, but as is often the case when one is so sure of oneself, he was failing to take notice of some small, seemingly inconsequential things. In accordance with the destructive and corruptive nature of pride, his pride had been blinding him from the beginning. And by this time it had produced a blind spot. In this particular case therefore Satan failed to note that though the Lord had said, “There is no secret that they can hide from thee,” He did not say, There is no secret that I can hide from thee. The former may have been true, and Satan’s pride was bedazzled by it. But the latter was definitely not true. Instead, the exact opposite would not only prove to be true, it would also result in Satan’s destruction. Indeed, it would be by the simple act of keeping a secret that God would take Satan in his own craftiness and provide for bringing to nought the implementation of his entire plan of evil, both in the earth and in the heavenly places as well.

Hence as the Apostle Paul sets forth in I Corinthians 2, the whole reason God had for keeping the knowledge of “the mystery of Christ” a “mystery” in ages and generations past was to keep it a secret from Satan and his co-horts. And in so doing He confounded their vaunted wisdom, and took them in their own craftiness and boastful pride.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

(I Corinthians 2:6-8)

The Sophomore Jinx

Think of it! By the simple act of keeping secret about something special that He would do through Christ crucified, God completely duped Satan. And a simple act is just what keeping a secret is. It is mere child's play. Yet by this simplest of stratagems God succeeded in accomplishing the very thing Satan's pride, corrupted wisdom, and bravado boasted could not be done. As such He completely took Satan in his own pride and craftiness. God therefore showed him up for what he really is — a sophomore; a wise-fool. Or more precisely a self-professed wise one, who in reality is a fool. For just as it is with men who “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,” so also it has been with Satan. In his vaunted wisdom, he has been shown to be a fool. And this, as Paul declares in Colossians 2, God has done much to the inexpressible chagrin and public humiliation of Satan and his co-horts.

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

(Colossians 2:15)

In view of this it should go without saying that Satan abhors the revelation of God's “hidden wisdom.” To be “made a shew of” by it is too much for him and his co-horts to endure. And because of that it is in his best interest to see to it that the “mystery” is kept a “mystery.” Hence his

policy of evil in this dispensation tirelessly works to produce doctrinal distractions and corruption among Christians in order to lose “the revelation of the mystery” in a morass of doctrinal confusion. Obscurity of sound doctrine about this present dispensation of God's grace is an essential part of his scheme for saving face.

Confounding The Wise

Taking Satan in his own craftiness is only part of God's response to dealing with vaunted wisdom and pride amongst His creatures. The Apostle Paul makes it plain in I Corinthians 1-3 that “confounding the wise” and “taking the wise in their own craftiness” are signature features in the outworking of God's plan and purpose. And this should come as no surprise to us. Rather it should be recognized by us as only natural, in view not only of man's ungodliness but also in view of the ungodliness that exists in the angelic realm as well. In truth, ungodliness demands that God do this. It is a necessary response to both the ugly fruit and the evil root of ungodliness.

Confounding the wise, therefore, is not unique to this present dispensation of God's grace. However both in this dispensation and through this dispensation, God is doing it in spades, so to speak. Hence, just as the opening chapters of I Corinthians relate, we in this dispensation are in possession of numerous revealed truths, which particularly have within the scope of their designed purpose the “confounding of the wise” and the “taking of the wise in their own craftiness.” And these range from those designed to confound the wise regarding their own salvation, all the way to confounding the wisdom of “science falsely so called.” May it be that as we learn these things, and they form their part of our godly edifying, that we ourselves also respond with our own doxologies “to the praise of God's glory.” Who being “the only wise God,” delights in confounding the wise. — *Keith R. Blades*