

COUNSELLORS

PSALMS 1:1-4

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
Nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night.
And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water
which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither;
and in whatever he does, he prospers.
The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away

Jim read these words over as a matter of duty. They were his 'Readings' for today and the reading was somewhat mechanical. He had a lot on his mind these days and the daily Bible readings only added to his burden. Jim was in his junior year at college and it was the week before finals. This school was not like some he had heard about. Here you worked like a dog because it was either sink or swim. At least that was how Jim had found it in his major field of General Science. Boy, when next week is over I am going to sleep for a week, Jim thought. During the next week Jim did indeed work virtually day and night preparing for his five final examinations. These finals were in Basic Geology, Calculus IV, Physics III, Basic Electronics, and American Literature. Never in his life had his basic beliefs been tried, tested, and often found wanting as they had in college. Everyone knew so much and he knew so little. The Professors seemed so sophisticated that he was completely intimidated by them. Jim promised himself that he would think about this later, during the summer, but for now he was totally immersed in 'study'. Sure enough, the days whizzed by with never enough time to prepare and then -- suddenly -- it was all over. He had absolutely nothing to do for four whole weeks.

About the third week of Jim's vacation he began to seriously think about his problem. His mind went back to that disastrous day in Geology class. They had been studying the various 'periods' of earth's history. The instructor seemed to have no doubt that the world was four billion years old, give or take a billion or two and that the various types of 'dating' systems and the fossil records provided scientific proof of the theories stated in the text. The fact that there had never been found any evidence of a transition from one species to another was brushed aside nonchalantly. In fact, these things were stated as laws, not theories. One day Jim had the temerity to ask the instructor whether Creation, as given in the Bible might possibly be considered as an alternative theory. The instructor delivered a scathing contemptuous response at which the entire class guffawed. Jim would never do

THAT again. Jim found this VERY confusing. He had been 'raised' Christian and had been taught to believe all that the Bible said. He was told that it was 'inspired' and had never had reason to doubt it -- until now. Here at the University he was in an entirely different world. The professors in Geology told a story of the entire history of the world in very convincing ways using four and five syllable words. They talked of ice ages, the decline of one specie, the rise of others just as though they had been there watching it all happen. They discussed carbon and boron dating systems with dignity and assurance never hinting that these were provenly flawed methods that did not agree with each other and that required some basic assumptions concerning the amount of isotope which was initially present. Every museum Jim entered, every National Geographic, every Smithsonian publication, the Encyclopedias, all used the same descriptions.

It was so different in Math and Electronics. Sure they were really hard subjects but the approach was so different. In these subjects they proposed a theory, tested it, discovered when it was 'true' and when it was not. Next they either accepted the theory, rejected the theory, or modified the theory so that they could repeat the results every time. Once they had 100 % repeatability, they had a good theory which, after a long period of time where it never failed, they might call it a 'law'. This seemed to Jim like a really solid process. Take Calculus for example. Once you caught the basic idea of limits and applied it to various functions, it really made a lot of sense. Then when you found applications, real world stuff, it was one of the most satisfying things he had ever studied. You could just 'feel' the great order of this physical world in mathematics. It made Jim feel closer to God and made God totally awesome in Jim's mind. The same was true with electronics and physics for exactly the same reasons. Learning all this stuff was really hard but the rewards were so great. After three years of studying Basic Science and learning more and more how every part in the world fit together with every other part, seeing how the laws of nature truly showed forth God's glory -- ! NO!! Much more than that. It showed forth glory after glory after glory and removed all doubt from Jim's mind that this universe could possibly have come into existence without a masterful, fantastic, Creator. All of these fit perfectly with Jim's Christianity and he would often read the first few chapters of Romans and meditate. Or he would turn to Colossians and try to imagine how Jesus was doing all the things described there.

Then came Geology and Astronomy !!

As he studied Astronomy, learning about light years, the big bang, etc it once again seemed that there were major descriptions of things about which there was

little evidence and much interpretation of data. Just like Geology. It was not that there was not data. There was lots of data in both fields. This data described many things clearly such as the location and description of the astronomical bodies, the amazing regularity of their movements, and the tremendous immensity of space. All of this was consistent with scripture. It was only when they began to make wild guesses about origins and time that things went nuts and yet - this seemed to be what they spent most of their time talking about. Why? Jim just could not figure out why. The science he knew, he loved, and could easily enjoy spending his life working in this field. Yet there were these intelligent, erudite, sophisticated people who spent 90% of their time talking about 5 % of their field and seemed to delight in ridicule of anyone who disagreed. The faith that Jim had learned from his parents and his Church was being besieged by ideas.

By the end of Jim's fourth week of vacation he had decided that he could not figure thing out. He needed help so he went to his Uncle George. In all the world, Jim knew no one who seemed so at peace as Uncle George. George was pretty knowledgeable about lots of things and was a Christian, though Church didn't seem as important to him as it did to lots of others (such as Jim's parents) but the thing that drew Jim to him was that George was not afraid to consider problems and try to think them through. He was certainly not a Bible thumper who would hurl scriptures at you as though you were a reprobate just because you had a question though his answers always were based on the Bible and Christian understanding. That evening Jim visited Uncle George and poured his heart out. George listened quietly and patiently as Jim talked. After Jim got started he even surprised himself at the way these worries gushed forth. They had been dammed up for so long that they were released like a flood. At times Jim was crying softly, at other times he was shouting because his very world was being shaken and he knew he would never be the same after this. He told George how in American literature the Professor would have them read classic literature by Increase and Cotton Mather or Jonathan Edwards and then hold them up to great scorn and ridicule for their beliefs. The Salem witch trials were also used as an opportunity to show the silliness of Christianity. Other writers such as Elliot, Durant, and Huxley were held up as the epitome of scholars and thinkers. Their athiestic and agnostic stances seemed to enhance their positions with scholars rather than otherwise. How strange.

Finally Jim ran down. He was exhausted and George was wise enough to give him a few minutes to come back to earth. "Remember Psalms 1", George asked? "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked Nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.

What do you suppose the 'counsel of the wicked' is? Neither spoke for quite

awhile because Jim was starting to see this verse as if for the first time. Gradually it was becoming a real statement, not just a memory verse. George continued "There are really only two sources of counsel. One comes from the one who is the Way the Truth and the Life. The other source is the one who is called a liar and the father of lies. He is also called the deceiver of the brethren. Each of these two sources have a story to tell us. If we listen to one source we will be blessed in ways described in this scripture. If we receive counsel from the liar we will wither and our lives will be drab and fruitless. You see, Jim, this world is mainly run by those who dedicate themselves to the worldly system. They work toward being rewarded by this world's system of things. It is this physical life that they seek their rewards. Those who are applauded and given great recognition are those who fit into and enhance things which are important to the system. Actually those who think they are running the system are in great bondage to the great deceiver." "Are you saying that the things that are being taught at the University are lies, they are not true", Jim exploded almost indignantly? "Of course not. Much of what they say has truth in it but because they do not believe in the One True God, they bring much mixture into their thinking. They can explore and analyze facts just as well as a Christian can. Their minds may be strong and quick. They do have an insurmountable problem however. They are very much like those who once made up the "flat earth society". They could see what they could see but they could not see what they could not see". "That sounds like a riddle but I think I understand. Because we have revelation from the Creator and, in fact, know Him and His personality, we have a better grasp, not only of what is, but also what this creation is all about." "I could not have said it better myself", replied Uncle George. "This world has many spokesmen. People who tell us how to live, how to think. People who desire recognition, power, and attention. Consider people in the media for example. From actors to newsmen there is no requirement that they portray true life, that there be any accuracy, that their guidance is correct. All they require is that the 'ratings' stay high. If they have a following, if others are making money from their efforts -- they will be highly spoken of and will remain figures of power. The same is even more true of politicians. It is not required that they do well for their people. It is only necessary that a small fraction of the public, those who vote, think that this candidate is less harmful than their opponent. Yet we lend great weight to their counsel We listen to their broadcasts, watch their shows, and vote for people we wholeheartedly disapprove of and disagree with. The world system will reward those who work to build the world system. Is it not inevitable that the world which does not know God would hate those who do know Him? "

Jim was dumbfounded. These were totally new ideas to him and he needed time digest them. Jim began, from that time on, to carefully consider the source of

those who counselled him. Was it God, or was it Satan? As he did so he began to see more clearly that those who walked in the counsel of the wicked, that is those who chose to walk the way of the world and to heed the wisdom of the world, also would stand with the sinners. Because their minds became fogged with deception they wanted recognition and honor from the world system and took their stand with them. From there is was a very short step for them the sit in the seat of the scoffers. During his senior year the Lord dropped a little book into Jim's life. It was a book written by an obscure Chinese Christian named Nee To-Sheng although Americans had given him the name Watchman Nee. The book was about Ephesians (which some say should be named Galatians II). The name of this book was "Sit, Walk, and Stand". Jim discovered that God, being rich in mercy and great love toward us has seated us with Him (Christ) in heavenly places. {Eph. 2:6}. In Eph. 4:1 he read that we are to walk in a manner worthy of the calling --- with humility, gentleness, and patience. Finally he discovered in Eph 6: that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but we are to put on the full armor of God and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm.

Jim now had two roads to follow. He could sit, walk, and stand with the power of God and expect blessings in the Kingdom or he could walk, sit, and stand with the sinners and scoffers and receive dullness and stagnation in the world.

NOT A TOUGH CHOICE

WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE. WILL YOU

WALK, SIT, AND STAND WITH THE SINNERS

OR WILL YOU

SIT, WALK, AND STAND IN HEAVENLY PLACES.