

Text, Context and The Soul
The Divine Conspiracy #1

THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY:

God In Action In History

Read Col. 1:13-20 & Phil. 2:5-11

WHY PEOPLE PERISH FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

- The constant problem for human beings: to find an adequate basis for life in knowledge
- We know something when we are able to represent it as it is, on an adequate basis of thought and experience.
- Knowledge involves truth: An idea or belief is true if what it is about IS as that idea or belief represents it to be

WHY PEOPLE PERISH FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE #2

- If we act with knowledge and truth, our actions harmonize with reality. Otherwise not, or just by chance.
- Reality is totally unyielding to false belief.
- Truth frees you from bondage to a reality you disagree with.

THE MEANING OF BABEL

- BABEL (Gen. 11:1-9) represents human efforts to succeed by human abilities ('flesh').
- They had no idea of what they were doing.
- The 'Babel' of today is the secular knowledge system—universities and professions.

HUMAN LIMITATIONS WITH RESPECT TO KNOWLEDGE

- Our individual powers of observation and thought are very small.
- This is a good thing because of the limitless self-will natural to man.
- So knowledge grows slowly in human history
- That allows opportunity for moral growth.

SELF-WILL IS SET AGAINST TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE

- Our desires always exceed reality.
We will what is not.
- This is true of individuals and groups, and
of institutions. (Rom. 1:18)
- The illuminating case of Simon Magnus.
(Acts 8:18-24)

BUT THE WILL (HEART OR SPIRIT) IS GOD DESIRE

- God looks on the heart.
(1 Sam. 16:7, 2 Chron. 16:9, John 4:23-24)
- In our heart we decide what we are really about, and in particular whether what we want will govern us: God or us.
- To be joyfully abandoned to God, delighted in Him and His will, is what God wants of us.

DEUS ABSCONDITUS: WHY GOD MUST HIDE

- “Truly, Thou art a God who hides Himself.”
(Isa. 45:15)
- God hides to permit us to hide from Him if we want.
- The hiddenness of God from eyes and ears that do not wish to find Him.
(Matt. 13:13-17)

A WORD FROM SCREWTAPE

“Merely to override a human will (as his <God’s> felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo. For his ignoble idea is to eat the cake and have it; the creatures are to be one with him, but yet themselves....” (Letter VIII)

SO GOD IS PRESENT, BUT--

- With individuals who love Him—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, David.
- How He was present in Jesus—anyone could still deny it.
- Post-resurrection presence.
- Present in the Bible—can be disregarded or twisted.
- Present in the church —“You are hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3-4)

WHAT THE DIVINE CONSPIRACY IS:

The Divine Conspiracy is God's plan to overcome evil with good in the grinding processes of human history.

“The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Hab. 2:14)

THE CRUCIFIXION AS THE CENTER POINT OF IT ALL

- “And through him (Jesus) to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.” (Col. 1:20)
- “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” (John 12:32-33)
- Like the poisonous serpent (John 3:14) the poison of human self-will is what killed Jesus and what is seen on the cross.

TRUTH IN A COMMUNITY OF CRUCIFIXION

- “The household of God, which is the church of the living God, <is> the pillar and support of the truth.” (1 Tim. 3:15)
- Truth can only be endured and promoted in a community of grace where self-will does not rule.
- Jesus did not say “the truth will make you free.” (Read John 8:31-32)

THE BURDEN OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY #1

- The battle today is not which policies shall we as a people follow, but who shall determine policy.
- That is: Who has knowledge.
- The secular mind had redefined knowledge so that it alone has it. Christians do not!

THE BURDEN OF SOCIAL AUTHORITY #2

The greatest challenge to the people of Jesus Christ today is to stand in our world as representing knowledge of reality, and with love and intelligence to show that we have that knowledge by the lives we lead.