

Worldly Counsel

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin.

– Isaiah30:1 –

There is no possibility for man to meet out the days of his pilgrimage in this world unmolested by manifold difficulties. The combination of the enigmas of a fallen creation, our human limitations to ascertain all relevant information, and the nagging and problematic reality of “self” require us to carefully tread life’s pathway lest we make any disastrous turns. Obtaining counsel thus becomes an inevitable part of human experience. Some of it we actively seek and some of it we passively absorb. All of it we need to weigh. And only a blessed fraction of counsel available to man is actually sanctioned by God, these being the advice of experienced, godly men and women, and more primarily, the direct oracles of God found in the Scriptures.

The Old Testament history of Jehovah’s covenant nation is one of anomalous periodic revivals disrupting an otherwise predominantly steady spiritual decline. Our text is one of God’s stark rebukes to His people. Via Isaiah’s pen, the Lord here ties Judah’s declension directly and causally to their consumption of and adherence to worldly advice. “[They] take counsel, but not of me.” Israel was covenanted to be a unique nation state, designed by God to witness to a fallen world how to approach Him, how to revere Him, and most importantly, how to trust Him. But their peculiar place in the Lord’s plan and the simplicity of His purpose for them proved unsatisfying to their lusting hearts. Their desire to emulate their neighbors – be it Philistia, Edom, Moab, or Egypt – drove them as a nation to adopt pagan counsel in the form of culture and philosophy. Such counsel would ultimately lead to their destruction, captivity, and scattering.

But all of this should not surprise us, considering that Christendom has proven itself vulnerable to similar propensities. Here in America particularly, we find professed Christians immersing themselves (both actively and passively) in a sea of overly available books, classes, podcasts, television shows, radio programs, movies, *et. al.* Some of these are secular, some of them are labeled as “Christian”, but all of them in entertaining format invariably offer us, either directly or subliminally, a wide array of “counsel”. This worldly wisdom spans a broad spectrum – from finances to parenting to personal happiness and fulfillment. These venues, however, are nearly always steeped in atheistic psychological constructs and anti-Christian philosophies. Many choose to read or watch or listen to something that entertains or educates rather than assiduously applying themselves to seeking counsel directly from the canon of Scripture. Sadly, the sufficiency of God’s Word for everything pertaining to life and godliness is the most neglected doctrine of the day amongst professing Christians.

We can all easily succumb to this snare. Antichristian forces control almost all of media, most of academia, and large swaths of political office. The prince of the power of the air is subtly and continuously flooding the information outlets with seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. These hellish philosophies are redacted to bite-size and pithy phrases that have become the common vernacular of worldlings and believers alike. “Follow your heart”, “Chase your dream”, “Forgive yourself”, “Embrace your truth”, “Believe in yourself”, etc., are just a few examples of widely accepted worldly advice that smell of brimstone and flatly contradicts the counsel of the Almighty found in the Scriptures. *The only remedy for the believer is to consciously consume more of Scripture than he does of other forms of information.* This is not impossible, but it requires resolve, tenacity, and discipline. The Holy Spirit will provide all of that.

Dear friends, let us be satisfied in and with God’s Word, making it our daily delight and the overwhelming majority of our daily information consumption. As we do so, we will find rest in its sufficiency in all matters, and we will not be found guilty of adding sin to sin.

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