



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ
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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we want to examine a few thoughts regarding the shortest psalm we have in our English Old Testaments. Psalm 117 is a psalm that I am even more thankful for this week. You see, if it was not for the truth contained in this Psalm, I would not have the comfort and assurance I have today!

Psalm 117 reads as follows (I have provided my own translation): "All you foreign nations praise the LORD! All people of all ethnic nationalities hold Him in high esteem! The LORD loves us (who are not Israelites) exceedingly. His truth is everlasting!"

You see this passage written around 1000 years before Christ was an affirmation by God that His grace would be extended to the whole world. In the OT the LORD's people were the Israelites! Though other prophecies did reveal that the Gentiles (most of us) would also be included in God's plan to save man, it was this passage that Paul quotes in Romans 15:11. As Paul noted, God was the God of all people.

Though this is the shortest of all the English psalms, it speaks volumes! In this Psalm is the revelation that all non-Israelites were invited to worship the One True God! I don't know about you, but I for one am so thankful that God is a God of all nations and all peoples! My hope and confidence is great because I can worship and serve the Faithful God!

jfb

Last Words

Last words are most often precious; they are the words people hold to sometime throughout their lives. For example, some of the last words of the Apostle Paul are those that are often preached by preachers young and old. Paul noted that he was ready to be poured out as a drink offering and that the time of his departure was at hand. He had fought the good fight, he had finished the course, and he had kept the faith. Because of this, Paul said that there was a crown of righteousness laid up for him. I love that message. It comes from a man who had sacrificed his life for Christ and was happy to look forward to his reward.

There are other things that could be considered last words. For example, the last line of a book is often a line that lives in infamy. Who does not know the line "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night." In *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, we read, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald ends with the following line: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." All of these are amazing lines for sure, but I have an even more favorite last line.

My favorite last line is found in Scripture. It is the last line of the book of Revelation and it reads, "May the gracious love of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen." I don't know of a greater wish or hope that I could have for anyone!

jfb

Sunday's Sermons:

A.M. — Jesus: Our Bridge Builder
Isaiah 59:1-2

Aaron Stratton, Guest Speaker

P.M. — Christianity
Acts 24:10-16

Matthew Wrote What God Intended

At the beginning of January we began our study of Matthew's account of the Gospel. Matthew was an eyewitness to Jesus' entire ministry and was one of the original 12 apostles. He was a tax collector who was employed by the Roman Government. As we noted in class, he was one who was most unlikely to write an account of the Gospel that was intended for a Jewish audience. The Jews would have strong ill feelings toward Matthew and would have viewed him as a traitor.

One of the things that we did not cover in our introduction to the book of Matthew was an event in the life of Matthew involving Jesus that Matthew himself does not record; it is an event that is recorded by another account of the Gospel—this one written by Luke!

In Luke 5:27-32 we read the account of Matthew inviting Jesus to his house for a banquet in honor of Jesus. It was here we read of Matthew's decision to forsake all and follow Jesus! Why is this something that I mention? Well let's look at this a little further.

It is amazing to me that Matthew does not record this event in his life that would seemingly be an event that would paint him in a good light. The fact that Matthew does not record this event that would look favorably upon him, and the fact that Luke does record it, sometimes leads to the suggestion that Matthew was a humble individual. The only problem with this line of thinking is that another writer of an account of the Gospel, John, appears to refer to himself as the apostle whom Jesus loved. Was John arrogant in this claim?

The answer lies more in the fact that neither Matthew nor John are writing these accounts of the Gospel on their own—they are guided in all they recorded by the Holy Spirit! For this reason, it is very dangerous to assign motives to the writings of Matthew or John. We do not know if John was being arrogant nor do we know if Matthew was being humble. All that we know is that the Holy Spirit was guiding each man to include what the Godhead desired would be revealed.

We simply need to realize how blessed we are that God saw fit to reveal to us His message! Remember John reveals that if all that Jesus did would have been written down, the world itself could not contain all the volumes that would be needed. But here is what we are blessed in... God did reveal to us all that He desired for us to know! We are blessed in so many ways!

*John F. Board
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