

# Hidden Wisdom

by J.C. Philpot

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*J.C. Philpot's sermon explores the concept of hidden wisdom in God's plan, particularly through the lens of the cross and the experiences of believers.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 92:5

**Topics:** "Divine Wisdom", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

J.C. Philpot delves into the concept of hidden wisdom, emphasizing that while the wisdom of God is evident in creation, there is a deeper, hidden wisdom revealed through the mystery of Christ crucified and the dispensation of grace. This hidden wisdom is not understood by the princes of this world, including influential figures who shape public opinion, as it is a privilege granted to the matured children of God. Philpot highlights the profound display of God's wisdom and power in the incarnation of Jesus, reconciling justice and mercy to save humanity. He also discusses the hidden work of God in preparing His people for eternal glory, likening them to stones being shaped for a grand palace, hidden from the world's view but destined for a glorious purpose.

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## Transcript

Hidden wisdom

by J. C. Philpot

One expression in the word of truth has sometimes struck our mind with peculiar force, as throwing a ray of light on the mysterious ways of the Lord in the present dispensation of his grace. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." (1 Cor. 2:7.) There is a wisdom of God which is not hidden--at least not from the eyes of men who acknowledge God at all, and see the world and all things in it created and sustained by an Almighty hand. All that the great and glorious Creator has designed and executed must necessarily bear the stamp of infinite wisdom and omnipotent power. From the sun in its meridian height to a drop of water in the ocean, from the elephant that stalks proudly in the jungle to the mite that crawls upon the cheese, from the towering oak and spreading cedar to the blade of grass and the moss on the wall--every created object proclaims the wisdom and power of God.

As in earthly things, the counsels of men endued with wisdom display the character of the contriving mind, and are both the consequence and evidence of it; or as in the works of art, the statue or the picture at

once manifest the artistic eye or the fashioning hand, so in things divine the wisdom and the power of the Almighty are so stamped in all the works of his creative hand that none but the willfully blind can refuse to see it. David exclaimed, "O Lord, how great are your works! and your thoughts are very deep;" yet he adds, "A brutish man knows not; neither does a fool understand this." (Ps. 92:5, 6.)

There are still such brutish men, who, brutalized by sensuality and self-indulgence, or sunk into brutal ignorance by infidelity, know not the wisdom and power of God, though they carry about with them, in their own bodies, in their wonderful structure, the clearest evidence of both. But natural men, such as Paley, have been so struck with the wisdom and power of God in creation that they have pursued it with wonder and admiration from department to department, until they have stopped exhausted by the ever new display of both. Who, indeed, that is endued with any degree of thoughtfulness can walk abroad on a clear night, and not feel as if overwhelmed of the contemplation of the starry skies. David felt this when, looking up to the heavens glittering as they do in the East with their myriad orbs of light, he exclaimed, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; what is man, that you are mindful of him? and the son of man, that you visit him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4.)

The wisdom of God is not hidden in these wonders of his creative hand, for "the invisible things of him (that is, the things otherwise invisible, such as his wisdom and power, greatness and glory) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. 1:20.)

But "the hidden wisdom" of which the apostle speaks is that which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man. This is the wisdom of the cross, the mystery of Christ crucified, and the whole dispensation of grace here below, of which the cross is the sum and center, as well as the distinctive mark and symbol. This is the wisdom only spoken among and known unto those who are the matured, established children of God, who are no longer babes, and, as such, need teaching "the first principles of the oracles of God," but "by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (1 Cor. 2:7, Heb. 5:12, 13, 14.) It is their happy privilege to see the hidden wisdom--a wisdom "which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

As then, so now, the princes of this world know not the hidden wisdom of God; for "the princes of this world" are not merely kings and rulers, monarchs environed with all the pride and pomp of state, and governors endued with power and authority, such as Herod and Pontius Pilate, but the men of mind and influence, the ruling spirits of the period who stamp their spirit on the age. Who are now the princes of this world in our renowned isle? Not merely our temporal rulers, to whom, in all lawful matters, we owe obedience; not merely our excellent Queen, the houses of parliament, the ministers of state, and all endued with legal authority, whom we thankfully acknowledge as the higher powers to whom we are gladly subject, but those less conspicuous in rank and eminence, who really rule and guide the nation by ruling and guiding public opinion, and are princes, if not in title, in real authority and influence.

Our poets and historians, our popular authors, the newspaper press, the great literary periodicals, the speakers at large public meetings, the bishops and clergy, the leading Dissenting preachers, and, not to weary by a long enumeration, all who by station, property, rank, or intellect rule the age by impressing a distinctive stamp upon it, may be included among "the princes of this world," from whom, by a special dispensation, the supremest display of the wisdom of God is hidden. It is hidden from them by divine decree, and as an unalterable part of God's determinate counsel. No advance, therefore, of the human

mind in any other wisdom brings it any nearer to this, no, rather, as in the case of two diverging roads, every step takes it farther from it. The advances of human intellect and ingenuity, even in our short span of life, have been stupendous. To converse across the wide Atlantic, the last and latest triumph of human skill and ingenuity, would have been pronounced, thirty years ago, impossible. But men may connect continent with continent, and send the electric spark beneath the rolling waves, and yet remain ignorant of that invisible chain which links together the Son of God in his glory and the contrite sinner in the dust. They may weigh the pressure of the air by determining the rise or fall of a little quicksilver in a glass tube, who can never weigh the pressure of sin on a guilty conscience; may measure the distance of the sun from the earth who can never tell the nearness of the Sun of righteousness to a believing soul; may send messages with lightning speed from London to Paris, yet never receive a message of mercy from the God of all grace to their heart.

And yet the cross is the greatest display of the wisdom and power of God, which could be revealed to the sons of men. That the Son of God, the co-equal and co-eternal Son of the Father in truth and love, should take the flesh and blood of the children into union with his own divine Person, and in that pure and spotless humanity should suffer, bleed, and die to redeem his ruined people from the lowest depths of sin and misery--what a display is here, not only of love surpassing all thought, and grace beyond all expression, but, of wisdom issuing out of such depths that we can but stand upon the brink with holy wonder. To reconcile justice and mercy, fully to satisfy the intrinsic demands of God's righteousness and yet save a polluted worm of earth, to pardon millions of aggravated crimes, and yet not infringe on the spotless holiness of the great and glorious self-existent I AM--what a difficulty is here! what an impossible problem for men or angels to solve!

But the incarnation of the Son of God has solved all these difficulties, and not only so, but has brought God and man together in the person of the God-man. In union with the Father through his Deity, in union with man through his humanity, he is the Mediator between God and men; and thus is brought about that wondrous union of which the Lord himself speaks, and before whose words we solemnly pause with, "O the depth!" "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you have sent me."

But a part of this hidden wisdom is that the people of Christ, so dear and near to him as "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," should in their time state be conformed to his suffering image on earth, that they may hereafter be conformed to his glorified image in heaven. A mighty work is going on continually on earth, as much hidden from the eyes of men as the depths of the Atlantic Ocean from those who sail over its heaving waves. A people, for the most part poor and ignorant, and always hated and despised, are being prepared for eternal glory! As stones destined to form a noble palace, a work of consummate grandeur and beauty, are gradually hewed into shape in some field adjoining the quarry whence they are taken, it may be across a broad river or arm of the sea to the destined spot where they are built into the precise place designed for them by the architect as their fixed and final resting place; so it is with the living stones of the great and glorious building of which Jesus is both foundation and corner-stone. "I have hewed them by the prophets," says the Lord of his people. (Hos. 6:5.)

But when being thus hewn, what does the world see either of their present grace or of their future glory? What does the world know of the hewing thus going on? The very field itself is hidden from their view. And even those admitted into that field, what do they see for the most part--but the chippings, the dust, and the stones? some just lifted from the quarry, others in various stages of hewing and squaring, and others taken away out of sight, and borne across the wide river to the mansion above.

Let us not marvel, then, if the members are as much hidden from the eyes of men as their Head was, when here below. When that blessed Man of sorrows was tabernacling in flesh, who--except a few disciples, to whom his glory was divinely made known--knew him, loved him, or cared for him? So with his people now, for "as he is so are they in this world." To be unknown, neglected, hidden in obscurity, or so far as known to be hated, despised, persecuted, and misrepresented--this is a part of the cross. Here are some of the depths of infinite wisdom; here is "the glory of God to conceal a thing," (Prov. 25:2,) which will one day burst forth to his eternal praise. Let us, then, cleave to his cross as our secret joy.

Our proud flesh may be often crimped and mortified by neglect and contempt; but it is good for us to be so--we could not bear the world's smiles; they would seduce into that conformity from which the cross is meant to separate us. May we, with Moses, "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." We suffer but little compared with those who "were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, and others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground." (Hebrews 11:36-38.)

Compared, too, with our Puritan ancestors, those godly men who by their sufferings and passive resistance to the fury of their oppressors won for us our present religious liberties, what are our persecutions? We have neither their sufferings nor their grace, neither their separations from the world nor their devoted walking with God.

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