

Rise Up and Walk Conference Talks

'Rise up and Walk'
The Gentile Mind and the Gentile World

David Gooding

A Myrtlefield House Transcript



MYRTLEFIELD
HOUSE
www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

Contents

1	‘Rise up and Walk	3
2	The Gentile Mind and the Gentile World	12
	About the Author	25

David Gooding has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

Copyright © The Myrtlefield Trust, 2018

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version. Sometimes Dr Gooding gives his own translations or paraphrases.

This text has been edited from a transcript of two talks given by David Gooding at the Rise Up and Walk Conference, Charlotte, NC, USA in 2003.

All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this document in its entirety, or in unaltered excerpts, for personal and church use only as long as you do not charge a fee. You must not reproduce it on any Internet site. Permission must be obtained if you wish to reproduce it in any other context, translate it, or publish it in any format.

Published by The Myrtlefield Trust

PO Box 2216

Belfast

BT1 9YR

w: www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

e: info@myrtlefieldhouse.com

Myrtlefield catalogue no: clf.005/bh

'Rise up and Walk'

Reading: Mark 2:1–12; 1 John 1:1–2:6

Now in these moments we begin to consider the major theme of our conference, which is the exhortation to *rise up and walk*. It is, therefore, exceedingly appropriate that we should remember who it was that first issued this enabling command. It was none other than our blessed Lord and the circumstance of his issuing this command was as follows.

He was in a certain place teaching, and there were present some theologians, professors of the law—the law of Moses, and they were decidedly critical of this new young preacher. Suddenly there was a commotion as the roof opened, because people were removing the tiles. Then there appeared four faces through the hole and these four men, to whom the faces belonged, began lowering a friend of theirs on his bed through the hole and down to the feet of our Lord. Because there were so many people present, this was the only way for them to get him anywhere near the Saviour.

The Lord saw at once, of course, that he was a paralysed man, but instead of saying, 'Be healed', to everybody's surprise he first said, 'Son, your sins are forgiven', at which the aforesaid theologians murmured among themselves and muttered, 'This is sheer blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

They had a point. For instance, if someone injured you severely and you were disputing with him and he with you, and I came along as a complete outsider and said, 'Stop all that, for I forgive the man', you would turn round on me and say, 'What on earth have you got to do with it? It's not within your power or authority or privilege to forgive my enemy's sins.' And if it be the fact, as it is, that each one of us has sinned against God, there is only one who can pronounce divine forgiveness.

And then our Lord said distinctly to that paralysed man, 'Your sins are forgiven.' He was implicitly claiming to be God incarnate, but of course his critics were not to be persuaded if he simply said so. So he answered their criticisms by saying, 'Which do you think is the easier thing for me to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Rise, take up your bed and walk"?''

They didn't attempt to reply, and so, to prove that he had the authority to forgive sins because he was God incarnate, he said to his critics, 'That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,'—turning to the paralysed man he said—'Rise, pick up your bed, and go home.' The man rose up and walked, supplying the necessary evidence to the theologians that our Lord's claim was true.

The Christian walk

We who claim to have been forgiven may immediately deduce this lesson for ourselves. We will be required by our critics, and they are many, to demonstrate the evidence that we are in fact forgiven. The evidence that can convince them is that we do possess the power to rise up and walk in true Christian grace and courage and holiness and practicality, and if that kind of evidence is missing in our lives, a claim to have been forgiven will convince very few people.

But now our purpose is not so much to exhort one another to walk as Christians should walk, nor is it our purpose to investigate all the many practical implications of what is involved in walking as a Christian should walk. Rather, I wish to take our topic back to its basics, to put this thing in its context and to discuss the principle of the Christian walk, and to see what hangs upon it.

We shall have noticed in our reading that twice over in this passage John mentions the matter of our Christian walk. In 1 John 1:6–7 he talks about our *‘walking in the light, as God is in the light.’* In 2:6, he tells us that we are *‘also so to walk, even as he [Christ] walked.’*

Two different aspects

We should notice carefully the distinction in the two phrases. They do not simply repeat one another, for the first tells us about the question of *where* we walk. Are we walking in the light, or are we walking in the darkness? Where we walk is here the most important thing, for, *‘If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth’* (1:6). In order to have fellowship with God it is altogether of supreme importance where we walk. Are we walking in the light, or are we walking in the darkness?

So first we have to think about where we are walking; but secondly, he’s not so much concerned with where we walk, but *how* we walk: *‘Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked’* (2:6).

We must walk in the light in order to have fellowship with God

Next, we shall notice what hangs upon the necessity of walking in the light, namely *fellowship* between us and God. *‘God is light, and in him is no darkness at all’* (1:5). If, therefore, we would have fellowship with him we must walk in the light. He or she who says they have fellowship with God and walks in darkness is uttering a manifest untruth. It is impossible to walk in darkness and have fellowship with him who is light.

What does ‘fellowship’ mean?

That leads us to another basic question for the understanding of our passage. What does John mean when he talks of fellowship? *‘If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another’* (1:7). We must ask ourselves what exactly that means.

Sometimes we use the term ‘fellowship’ of two people meeting together over a cup of tea if they’re English, and over a cup of I don’t know what, if they’re something else! We say they’re having fellowship together and what they are talking about is nobody’s business. It could be the weather, or the state of runner beans, or stocks and shares on the market—it

wouldn't really matter what they were talking about, it's just that they are close together and having a natter the one with the other.

That's one meaning of fellowship, but the other meaning of fellowship, of course, is two people, or more than two on each side, sharing in some third thing. The question now is, what does the apostle mean when he says, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another'? What does he mean by the term 'fellowship'? And the answer is of course that, if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with the Father and with his Son, and with the apostles and with all believers. But what is it we have fellowship in? What is it we have in common; what do we share in this fellowship? And John defines the answer precisely, lest we be mistaken.

The life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us. (1:2)

Listen to what John is saying; these are some of the basic terms of his message. 'You see,' says John, 'that eternal life that was with the Father was manifested, and we apostles saw him.'

Just imagine the thrill, if you had been Peter or John, as suddenly you woke up to the fact that the man sitting in your boat was God incarnate, and you can detect the excitement in John's pen as he writes it.

'We saw him', he says—as though that was something extraordinary, and indeed it *was* infinitely extraordinary. 'We handled him, we observed him, and we write to tell you about this wonderful thing—that eternal life that was with the Father was manifested to us. And we do it so that you may have fellowship with us apostles, who saw him when he was here in the days of his flesh; and so that you may have fellowship with the word of life himself and with the Father who sent him.'

The privilege of seeing what God himself is like

We ought to pause there for just a moment or two, so that we may enter into the very heart of these familiar words, 'That eternal life, which was with the Father.' As we meditate on those words we are peering into the very Godhead itself; we're not merely thinking of what God has done—he's done many marvellous things. We're not even thinking merely of what he said, but, by this extraordinary privilege given to mortal men and women, we are for a moment allowed to peer into the very Godhead to see what God is like in himself.

There's no more awesome topic for our consideration. We need to take the shoes off our feet and chasten our minds for these next few moments, thinking of that eternal life that was with the Father.

You will be familiar with the opening words of John's Gospel, 'In the beginning . . .' There he refers to the second person of the Trinity as *the Word*; here he refers to him as *that eternal life*—it is the same person.

'In the beginning', says John in his Gospel, '*was* the Word'. You'll notice the verb. He doesn't say, 'In the beginning the Word started to be', or, 'the Word came into existence'. He uses the Greek word very deliberately; the verb 'to be' in a timeless sense. At the beginning of

creation, the Word already was, by the power of his eternal existence—that was what he was in the beginning.

And then John adds, ‘and the Word *was with God*’. He uses a particular Greek preposition followed by a particular grammatical case, which in New Testament usage indicates that, when John says the Word was with God, John is talking about two persons in a personal relationship. Not two distinct people, of course; not persons in our modern sense, but persons in the sense of substantial relationships.

Oh, what a thing it is. Do you feel the awe creeping up your spine? If you don’t, you’re not getting the point of what it is to be allowed to look within the very Trinity of the Godhead and to consider the Word who eternally was with God in that divine, unbreakable, unimaginable fellowship.

The Word was therefore distinct from the Father—it can be said that he was ‘with the Father.’ He was with God, but then it hastens to add, ‘And the Word was God.’ Don’t read that with the wrong emphasis, will you? Don’t say, ‘In the beginning, the Word *was* God’, as though he’s since ceased to be. The emphasis lies elsewhere; ‘“The Word was *God*”, and I’m writing to you,’ says John, ‘about that eternal Word.’

So now we use John’s phrase in his Epistle about that eternal life that was with the Father in that marvellous, indescribable divine fellowship of the Godhead, ‘The eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us’ (1:2).

What is eternal life?

Those of us who claim to have it do well now and again to remind ourselves that *eternal life is a person*. You will notice that John says,

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands. (v. 1)

‘The eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us, *we saw him, we were able to touch him, we heard him speak*.’ He is a person then, God incarnate; and the Bible talks like this—

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. (5:11–12)

And now we begin to get our minds clear from any fog they might have had. What does it mean to claim to have eternal life? It is a claim that we have fellowship with almighty God—in what? We have fellowship with God *in that eternal life that was with the Father*—in that blessed person whom we call the second person of the Holy Trinity, and nothing less than that. God has sent him into our world; that life has been manifested and God invites us to share that eternal life with him.

‘Surely your fellowship,’ says John, ‘is with us [apostles], because we saw and handled him and heard him when he was here on earth, and we write these things so that you may have fellowship with us. But, in actual fact, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son’ (1:3).

Eternal life is Christ—‘He who has the Son, has the life. He who doesn’t have the Son, doesn’t have the life.’

Conditions for having eternal life and fellowship with the Father

It becomes all important, therefore, for us to follow the argument that John is making. If eternal life is sharing the very Son of God with the Father, we must ask what are the conditions of having that eternal life, of having that fellowship with the Father. So John announces what the message is: ‘This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all’ (v. 5).

Walking in the light

‘If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth’ (v. 6). It is actually impossible to do, because of what eternal life is—that life is in the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, and if God is light, and if we would have eternal life, we must come and walk in the light, as he is in the light (v. 7). And we notice therefore, the first condition is not quite so much *how* we walk as it is *where* we walk. Are we walking in the light, or are we walking in the darkness?

Let’s repeat the reminder. If we’re walking in the darkness we can say what we like about having fellowship with God, but in fact it would be false. It’s impossible to have fellowship with God if you are walking in the darkness. To have fellowship with God, to share the Son of God, that eternal life that was with the Father, with God—it is absolutely essential and necessary that we walk in the light, as he is in the light.

The condition that our Lord insisted on

And now shall we notice the next thing—what is the condition? Please notice it is not, ‘if we *come* to the light’; it is, ‘if we *walk* in the light’. Let me try to illustrate what all that means from the words of our blessed Lord Jesus himself, recorded in John’s Gospel chapter 8.

As our Lord was speaking of the way he had come down from the Father—had come into the world and was about to depart this world and go to the Father, and announced that he, the Son of God incarnate, was God, the great I AM—John tells us that some who heard this believed on him, or so they said. So Jesus said to these Jews that had professed to believe on him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’ (vv. 31–32)—and a sort of a shadow came over their faces.

They said, ‘Excuse us, “we shall be free” —free from what?’

‘Ah,’ said Christ, ‘I was talking about being made free from habitual sinning.’

Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house for ever; the son remains for ever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’ (vv. 34–36)

At which their faces grew darker. They said, 'Do you know who you're talking to? What do you mean, saying that we're slaves of sin? We're Abraham's children, we're not in bondage to anybody.'

'That's odd,' said Christ, 'because if you were Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham, wouldn't you? You wouldn't be seeking to murder me. Abraham never did that kind of thing.'

At which they began to get very angry and hot under the collar. 'We weren't born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God,' with a sidelong glance to the rumour that went around that Jesus' mother was a virgin, or said to be.

'Really?' said Christ. 'That's even odder, for if God were your Father you would love me; and you don't, do you? You're going to try to kill me one of these days. I'll tell you who you are and who your father is; you are of your father the devil.'

That was blunt talking, wasn't it? What relevance has it to our passage? The condition for enjoying eternal life, sharing the life—that eternal life that was with the Father and now manifested to us—is that we not merely come to the light, we walk in it.

You see, these men in John 8 had come to the light, they professed to believe, but when the light started to shine on them and expose their hearts and characters to them they got angry and eventually picked up stones, as they attempted to throw them at our Lord and put the light out.

The condition that our Lord insisted on was this: it's not merely that you come to the light, but that you walk in it—that's the condition.

The distinction between false and true profession (John 6:52–68)

Our Lord said to the Jews who were disputing among themselves, 'You don't have eternal life in yourselves; it's those who receive me, who [to use his term] *eat me*. The people who receive me and I dwell in them, these have the life.'

And when he said this many of his so-called disciples said, 'This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?' and they went back and walked no more with him. For all they said they were his disciples, they weren't prepared to walk in the light.

Our Lord then turned round to Peter and the rest and said, 'Do you want to go away as well? Surely not, Peter? You're not going away, are you?'

And Peter, for all his faults and failings, said, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.' Dear old Peter stuck with the Lord. You see, the condition is walking in the light; it's where you walk.

You say, 'But if I walk in that light, it will expose me.'

It certainly will!

I remember a dear good lady who found the Saviour years ago, and when I met her she said, 'You know, David, since I've become a Christian I've been worse than I was before I was a Christian, and therefore I'm not a Christian.'

The logic was a little difficult to follow. Did you get it? 'Since I've been a Christian I've been worse than I was before I was a Christian. Therefore, I'm not a Christian.'

Well anyway, that's what she said. What had been happening? She gave every evidence later on of being a genuine believer. Before she came to Christ personally she was very religious but walking in the dark, and thought she was pretty decent. When she came to Christ and started walking in the light she found out the real facts about herself. And that is the critical point when some who have that experience want to draw back.

The light exposes our sin

Hear then again the marvellous provision of God. We, fallen, sinful creatures, can come and share the very life of God on this condition: that we're prepared to come and walk —where?—in the light, as he is in the light.

You say, 'But will that expose me as a sinner?'

Of course it will! And it will go on exposing you until you are ninety-nine or perhaps one hundred, and then you go home to glory. The light will still be showing you things about yourself that you don't like, but the glorious thing is that we can stay in the light.

You see, if we say we have not sinned we deceive ourselves; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, and it exposes all our faults and failures, nevertheless it remains true, 'the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin' (1 John 1:7).

If I say I have no sin that's sheer nonsense. But what does John mean when he says, 'If we say we have no sin' (v. 8)? Some think it means to deny that we have a fallen nature. What does it mean *to have sin*? We all have sin, in the sense that we are of Adam's fallen race, but some people deny it. They think they can become completely perfect in their own strength.

Or it could mean, as John uses it to mean elsewhere, 'to have sin' is to be *guilty* (see John 15:22, 24). There are some people who try to wriggle out of the fact that they sin and they say, 'It isn't my fault.' They don't own any guilt. The Bible will have it that we're not only sinners, but guilty sinners, and these are the facts.

How can a holy God admit us into his fellowship?

It is on these terms: if we're prepared to come and walk in the light, as he is in the light, then, when we discover our sins, we are to know that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we were to be so absurd as to say we have not sinned ever, then we make God a liar (1 John 1:10). If God is light, he reveals himself in all his glory and beauty and in all his holiness. We are summoned to come and walk in the light, and of course it will mean our willingness to be transformed and to walk in a holy fashion.

Says John, 'I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin' (2:1)—'When I tell you that God is faithful to forgive us our sins, that isn't to be taken as though it means that it doesn't matter if we do sin.' Sometimes some dear believers say things like, 'Once you are a believer of course you shouldn't sin, but if you do it doesn't really matter because we have eternal life.' But that is false.

To walk in the light is to be willing for that light to expose us and to be willing to repent and confess our sins. On those terms then, he is faithful and just on his side to forgive us our sins and to go on with his work of cleansing us from all unrighteousness (1:9).

How can we enjoy fellowship with God and become children of the light?

I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (2:1)

Oh, let us drink in these wonderful words that are the secret of how we, as still fallen and failing creatures, can have fellowship with the almighty and holy God in the very life of the Lord Jesus. He meets the anger and the wrath of God, a holy God, against sin, whose ever sin it is. He meets it and satisfies it by his death and atonement upon Calvary's tree, and therefore our fellowship with God can remain on those terms.

So then, we have to walk in the light. Remember how our Lord put it to his contemporaries, 'I am the light of the world but presently I shall be gone. While you have the light, walk in the light so that you may become children of the light' (see John 8:12-14; 12:35-36). That's how we become children of the light.

Paul is able to tell all true believers, 'You are all children of light' (1 Thess 5:5). How does anybody become a child of the light? According to our Lord you walk in the light so that you may become children of the light. That's what our Lord said and he must know, mustn't he? So it is all important *where* we walk.

Lest we should get this unbalanced, and think that so long as we walk in the light it doesn't really matter *how* we walk, John hastens to put the other side: 'whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he [Christ] walked' (1 John 2:6). If I say that I am in Christ, that I am abiding in Christ, then I have a bounden duty to walk as he walked; not to walk merely in the light, but to walk in that light *as he walked*.

How can we provide evidence?

When a child is born everybody shouts for joy if the baby cries. Why? Because crying is evidence that the baby is alive. The child didn't get life by crying, did it? It got life as a gift, but if it's alive it will be expected to show some evidence, and the first evidence is that it starts crying. If a mother went upstairs and found her child had suffered a cot death she would say in a frightened panic, 'Start crying.' But how could it? It didn't get life by crying, it got life as a gift.

We get eternal life as a gift, but when we have it we are obliged to show some evidence. We've got to walk—begin to walk, even as he walked. Just as those old Pharisees demanded evidence that Jesus had the right to pronounce forgiveness of sin, so our Lord provided the evidence in that he empowered the one-time paralytic to walk straight, to the glory of God.

So there are the two sides to the question. But this evening we're not so much exhorting one another, we are taking this matter of our Christian walk in its ultimate and basic context. Let the wonder of it sink down into our hearts.

What does it mean to have eternal life?

Thank God, I have eternal life, through simple faith in receiving the Saviour. How shall I describe it adequately without going beyond what is true?

If you claim to have eternal life ('this is that eternal life that was with the Father'), it is through that blessed person—'God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son' (1 John 1:2; 5:11). I have embraced his Son and he has received me, a fallen, guilty sinner. He died for me and still remains a propitiation for my sins, so that I may yet abide in the light and have fellowship with God. Not only so, but as I discover and confess my individual sins to him, he sets himself not only to forgive me, but to cleanse me from all unrighteous.

Don't you love him? Oh, that God would save us from the many false ideas of what eternal life is, and help us to realise the awesomeness that to claim to have eternal life is to claim to share with almighty God in that eternal life that was eternally with the Father and has been manifested to us. How can we help loving him?

But then, it's easy to say, 'I love him', isn't it?

'How do you know that you love God?' says John.

You say, 'I know God.'

But how do you know you love God?

'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments' (1 John 5:3).

That's how you know.

Suppose you said to me, 'What is your favourite country in the world? Where would you go on holiday if you had the choice?'

'Well I think Switzerland really. I love Switzerland,' I reply.

And then you said, 'And how do you get on with mountains?'

'Oh,' I say, 'I don't like mountains. I never go anywhere near mountains.'

'You don't, but you like Switzerland? That's funny.'

You love God, but you don't like his commandments and don't want to walk with him—that's a contradiction in terms. May the Lord at this moment hear the breathing of our hearts as we bow in his presence and say, 'Lord, like Peter had to say, you know that I love you. How often I have strayed and it seemed very dark, but Lord I bless you that you have made provision, even for me, to walk and stay in the light, and when my sin is exposed I know the blood of Jesus your Son cleanses me from all sin.'

Here are the basic principles of our Christian walk on which the exhortation to 'rise up and walk' is based.

Shall we pray.

Our Father, we bless thee from our full hearts for manifesting that eternal life that was with thee to us. And we bless thee for thy divine assurance that 'he who has the Son has the life', and for thy provision that we may walk in the light and remain in it. Only help us, we pray, to be given the evidence in our practical living that we know thee and we love thee; and may we try to walk ever more closely, even as he walked.

So may thine evening blessing be upon us, we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Gentile Mind and the Gentile World

These two brief Scriptures will introduce us to our final meditation.

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. (Eph 4:17)

At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. (2 Tim 4:16–17)

There will be two parts to our study:

1. The danger that *the Gentile mind* and way of thinking should infiltrate and invade the church.
2. The opposite danger: that the church will not take hold of the resources that God has given to her and make her intended impact on *the Gentile world*.

God's resources and strategies. We shall find that the danger in each case comes from a failure to understand, or a certain forgetfulness of, the tremendous resources that God has put into our hands and the wisdom of his divine strategies. Those vast resources and strategies are for protecting his people from the assaults of the Gentile way of thinking, and also as we go out to make our impact for Christ on the Gentile world. So obviously we shall spend much time thinking of these tremendous strategic resources that God has put at our disposal.

The Gentile mind

We start then with the Gentile mind, and to ease us into consideration of that topic I want to use an extended illustration from the Old Testament. I refer to *the third captivity* that Israel suffered in the time of the Judges. It was led by a certain King Jabin and by his commander-in-chief, Sisera, who lived in Harosheth *of the Gentiles* (Judg 4:2 KJV). I suspect you know this story well, and even if you don't the children do.

The book of Judges, of course, is full of a number of captivities that the Israelites suffered. Although they were all alike in the fact that they were captivities, they had different features. Yet again, they all shared one feature: that every captivity was a practical denial of one of the basic principles of Israel's spiritual existence.

For instance, *the first captivity* was to the King of Northern Mesopotamia, who conquered and suppressed some of the tribes of Israel (3:8). That was odd, was it not, for when Abraham set out to come to the promised land that God had given him, he lived for a while in precisely that part of Northern Mesopotamia. He left Mesopotamia deliberately, by an act of faith in response to God's promise, and came into the promised land and lived there as a pilgrim. Although he in his lifetime was not permitted to possess it, he believed that this was the God-given inheritance for which he had left Mesopotamia.

And here were the Israelites, dear souls, now by Joshua's strength and God's grace in the promised land. It was theirs, they said; and in by the back door came the King of Mesopotamia and collared them once more. Curious, isn't it?

And then there was *the second captivity*. When Joshua led the combined armies of Israel across Jordan, the first place they attacked was Jericho. At the time Jericho was armed to its teeth and barricaded in, so they thought that no one could possibly penetrate it. But by a miracle of God the walls of Jericho fell down and in went the ark of God with the armies of Israel.

Since that wonderful initial victory Israel had gone far and wide throughout the promised land, defeating king after king and taking city after city. But when they weren't looking, the King of Moab came in by the back door (3:12–14). He and his minions crossed the Jordan and built another city of Jericho, to which they gave a rather pleasant sounding name, 'the city of palm trees.'

That raised a big principle. What is the use of scoring initial victories and then making progress to further victories, if the enemy comes in by the back door and robs you of the first victory?

The fourth captivity was initiated by the Midianites. Cunning folks, they waited until Israel's harvest was nearly ready and then they came in on their camels by the thousands, like a plague of mosquitos or grasshoppers, gobbled up all the food in Israel and went as hurriedly as they came, leaving the poor Israelites starving (6:1–6).

Very odd, because God had promised them that when they got into the land they should find it flowed with milk and honey. To be in the promised land and find it a place of starvation was a kind of a contradiction. Just as it is if you should go into a church expecting to find it a land flowing with spiritual milk and honey, and subsequently find that drought has reduced it to famine conditions. God forbid that it should ever happen.

But what of *the third captivity*? This was by the Canaanites, and the commander-in-chief of their forces was a certain Sisera, who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles (4:2). Let's spend a little time thinking about these Gentiles. All the other nations besides Israel were Gentiles, of course, but the Holy Spirit refers to this people particularly as 'Gentiles'.

Who were they?

They weren't to be confused with the Moabites in the south. You remember that story of the Moabite captivity and how God used Ehud to come and visit the king, who was a typical Moabite. Eglon was a big fat man, and Ehud came in with his dagger hidden on his thigh and said, 'Your Majesty, I've a message from the Lord to you.' The king staggered to his feet with the weight that was upon him and, at God's direction presumably, Ehud despatched him by a dagger in his belly. That was his strong point, or perhaps you could call it his weak point, who knows? Thus that slothful, idle, self-indulgent monarch was dealt with.

The Canaanites up north were not to be compared with him. They were at the very forefront of technology. They had learnt how to smelt iron and, with a certain awe in his voice, the historian records that they had, if you please, nine hundred chariots of iron (v. 3). Can you imagine the technology of those days that went into that? In Israel to this day any interested tourist will see the magnificent feats of civil engineering that were performed by these Canaanites in the north.

You say, 'What's wrong with technology and scientific advance and civil engineering and all that?' Nothing whatsoever. It's very good and delightful—unless such modern technology becomes an oppression to the people of God; for it is written of these Canaanites with all their great advances that they mightily oppressed the Israelites. That was a contradiction too, because when Israel was in Egypt they were mightily oppressed by the Egyptians. The Egyptians built their storehouses and their pyramids and things, but for Israel it turned into a mighty oppression and God had to come down to deliver them and save them from such slavery. He brought them into the promised land; but now once more they were in oppression and slavery.

I wouldn't have told you that story had I not been able to add the marvellous way God came to their rescue. Just to anticipate the ending, this Sisera was killed not by a dagger through his belly, but by a tent peg through his brain, and that was the end of all his Gentile thinking for the time being.

You should remember that, when you listen to Paul's exhortation that from now on you should not walk as the Gentiles do, in *the futility of their thinking*—the futility of the Gentile mind (Eph 4:17).

Barak and his resource

I can't resist telling you how God came to their rescue. It was in the first place through a woman, a prophetess. Distinct from the superior intelligence of the Canaanites and their technology, here was a woman in touch with the living God. At God's instruction she had told a certain Barak to muster the Israeli troops and go north to meet the Canaanite army. So Barak mustered ten thousand troops and led them up north, but he was a wily and sensible strategist and tactician. He knew the Canaanites had chariots of iron and, if he left his ten thousand troops in the big plain outside Megiddo, the Canaanite chariots would have run circles round him and chopped them to mincemeat. So he led them up the side of Mount Tabor. Very sensible chap, because now he's up the mountain. The Canaanites couldn't drive

their chariots up the mountain, and if they tried to walk up on foot the Israelites had the advantage and could roll down boulders and stones on top of them.

I suppose Barak felt he'd done a good job; he was safe up there on his mountain where you didn't have to meet too many Gentiles. And then Deborah the prophetess said an alarming thing.

'Arise, Barak,' she said, 'and lead your troops down the mountain.'

Would you have done it and brought ten thousand troops down from the mountain to the plain, where the Canaanites had their chariots of iron? Who would dare to go? But Deborah explained why it was even possible.

Has not the Lord, the God of Israel, commanded you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand'? (Judg 4:6-7)

'Go down,' she says, 'for the Lord has gone down before you' — *there was his resource*. The Lord had gone down before the Israeli army and, being Lord of creation, he had caused a flash flood to come and the little trickle of a stream in the plain was now turned into a roaring flood. The great plain became a quagmire of mud, and now chariots were the last thing that you would need, because they got stuck and the Israelite army prevailed.

Jael and her tent peg

Sisera, who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles, saw his chariots were now no good and he hopped off and ran for his life (vv. 17-22). He came to a tribe of Kenites and approached a tent. The man was away but his wife was there and her name was Jael. She peered out of her tent to see this phenomenon of a Gentile commander-in-chief making hasty strides towards her tent.

What was she to do? He was coming to seek hiding there, how would she dare to say no? He'd have sliced her head off, so she had to let him in. Said he, 'If anybody comes and asks you, "Is anyone here?" say, "No".' But how could she tell a lie like that? And if she kept on telling people, 'There's nobody here', and her husband came home and found she had a man in the woman's apartment, what do you suppose would have happened to her then?

She decided the only thing to do was to use her womanly craft and strategies and tactics to put an end to this Gentile way of thinking. So she said, 'Come in, my lord', and she gave him some milk to drink and covered him with a rug and he fell fast asleep. The women in the family were responsible for keeping the tents stable, so she knew all about tent pegs and how to drive them into the ground. The family home was being threatened with more than wind just now, so while he was asleep she took a tent peg and went softly and hammered it through his brain. That was the end of his Gentile mind.

Deborah and her song

It was such a victory that, after it had happened, the prophetess Deborah sang a whole chapter long of songs to the Lord (Judg 5). In the course of it she said a very interesting thing.

Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: *arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.* (v. 12 KJV)

She's rehearsing what happened and what was said, meaning that he was to turn the tables on the Gentiles. They had been the captors and kept Israel in captivity, but now the tables were to be turned and Barak with his victory was to take them captive and receive their spoil, the gifts from them. It's an interesting story, isn't it?

Thinking like Gentiles

You say, 'What has that got to do with Gentiles?'

Well, that precarious little bit about Gentile thinking and the Gentile mind—what is the Gentile mind and how does it think? In Ephesians 4 Paul talks about three aspects of the Gentile mind that we are to avoid.

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (vv. 17–18)

1. *The futility (vanity) of their minds*

Not pride, in that sense of vanity; but vanity, where all is vain and vexation of spirit (Eccl 2:26 KJV). My dear brothers and sisters, in our modern world that is full of marvellous technology, from which we all benefit, we do need to stop now and again and consider the Gentile mind. I'm saying nothing against technology and scientific discovery—I wish I had the brains to be a scientist myself—but the basis of the Gentile mind makes its thinking futile.

Listen to the arrogant Gentile atheist. He doesn't believe in God, dismisses it as a fable to be told to kids. Let's ask him:

'Where do our minds come from and what produced them? Do they in turn come from some super-intelligent force or person?'

'No,' says he, 'they are the accidental product of mindless permutations. They came from non-intelligent, non-rational matter and somehow we've evolved into rational minds.'

And then if you press him hard and you say,

'Well now, these mindless forces you talk of that produce us and our bodies, are they the masters we should obey?'

And he has to bow to the fact that one day these mindless forces and bits of matter will enter our bodies, and proceed to strangle our very brains and destroy our rationality and mind and there will be nothing we can do to stop them. And when they've done it, they won't even know they've done it.

Forgive the sarcasm, but what a magnificent and marvellous result of human intellect it is, to discover that ultimately human intellect is at the mercy of mindless material forces.

'This is the futility of the Gentile way of thinking,' says Paul.

2. *The darkness of their understanding*

To them, God is merely a word on a bit of paper. They don't know the living God and because they don't know him their minds are darkened. Their ignorance and the blindness of their darkness has results at a moral level and leads to fundamental immorality.

You will see the course of events taking place under your very noses, my dear fellow believers. The technology has introduced us to some of the secrets of the human cell, and all kinds of ethical questions arise, do they not? Is it right to take an embryo and kill it for the sake of advance in medicine? Is it right to indulge in killing that is called *euthanasia*? Is it right to kill the unborn but already alive child? What will you base your decisions on when you come to think about things like that? What basis have you got for your ethics?

3. *Their alienation from the life of God*

If there's a living God who made us, then our ethics of course are ultimately based on the living God and the law that he's written on our hearts and manifested in inspired Scripture. But if there's no living God, who shall decide the ethics?

Professor Singer¹ tells us that we human beings must not indulge in *speciesism*.² We are just animals like any other animal, lion, pussy cat or snake, and we mustn't suppose we are superior. We're to judge the value of life by the way it contributes to the human pleasure of society. Therefore, a baby cow could be more profitable to humanity's joy and pleasure than a little babe who's got some deformity. So, up to the age of five it should be right and legal and ethical to destroy a baby if you decide it should be destroyed, just as you would destroy the pussy cat who had kittens, if you had enough kittens and didn't want any more.

Who's going to decide the big ethical questions that face our modern world as a result of technology? That's the number one thing to ask, isn't it? And Paul appeals to us not to walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of Gentile thinking.

Praying like Gentiles

But that area of technology and science is not the only area where we are called upon to challenge Gentile thinking. We're challenged by our Lord himself to investigate whether our prayers are in the Gentile mode, or truly Christian.

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matt 6:7-8)

For Gentiles, praying is a kind of a magic, you know. They think that, in order to force the deity to be kind and not cruel to you, you have to know the right words to say, and you say them. But if you really want to be effective you have to say them, and say them and say them and say them, until the deity feels obliged to give in and you've got what you want.

¹ Peter Albert David Singer (born 1946 in Australia) is a moral philosopher and Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University.

² 'a prejudice or bias in favour of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species' (Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, London: Pimlico, 1975, 1990, 1995).

‘Don’t pray like that,’ says our Lord. ‘That’s the Gentile way of thinking of God and prayer.’

We’re not to come like that, are we?

He says, ‘Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.’

God isn’t a cruel, irresponsible, self-contradictory dictator and despot. The God who made us loves us; the God who has redeemed us in Christ loves to bless us. You don’t have to twist his arm to make him bless you and you certainly haven’t to use prayer as a kind of a magic formula to induce him to. He knows what we need before we ask.

You say, ‘Why bother to pray?’

Mother has told little Johnny that if he’s good he will have ice cream for tea. So she spreads the table, and when her back is turned he grabs the ice cream from the table and devours it. What does she say? I suspect she doesn’t approve of little Johnny. She knew he would like ice cream and she was going to provide it, but she wanted him to come and ask, ‘Mummy, may I have some ice cream, please?’

She was not only teaching him good manners, she was thereby showing him a relationship between herself as mother and him as her child, the respect and understanding of her motherly loving heart, yet her motherly authority. She knows best what gifts to give and when to give them, because she knows in advance what he needs.

She doesn’t say, ‘I don’t care whether he comes and asks for it or not.’ She likes him to come and ask, and his asking is based on her character disposition. He trusts her love and her wisdom.

‘Pray like that,’ says Christ. ‘Don’t pray like the Gentiles.’

Working like Gentiles

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (vv. 31–32)

‘Don’t go to work with those motives that Gentiles have, and nothing more,’ says Christ. Why do the Gentiles go to work? When they go to work, they’re thinking of clothes and food and entertainment and such like things.

You say, ‘What’s wrong with those things?’

You’re a Christian?

‘Yes,’ you say, ‘but I go to work to get food and clothes and a bit of holiday pay. What’s wrong with that?’

Nothing, but I’d hope it isn’t your chief and number one motive for going to work. If it is, I can’t see the difference between you and an old Gentile.

What is work for? Sometimes the notion has got about that we are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and then, in addition, go to work. Just put God’s interests first. I got that impression as a young man and I still do get false impressions in my head. For instance, perhaps you should give out the new tracts first and then go to work.

That isn't what our Lord is saying, is it? He's saying, when you go to work what should your first quest be?

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
(v. 33)

In daily work we should seek first the rule of God and the righteousness that comes from carrying out his rule in our lives. Work is not just for the sake of getting clothes and money and two family cars and things, good as they are. And if we don't work, we're worse than infidels if we don't provide for our home (1 Tim 5:8).

But there's more to work than that. The eight or ten hours we spend at work every day is not just for getting clothes that wear out, or furniture that will be broken. It's not going down the drain like that; daily work is to produce in us something that will last eternally—God's righteousness.

God sends all of us to work not just to feed ourselves, but to train us in practical righteousness. To face us with situations where we have to decide if we are going to behave like the Gentiles or keep the Lord's rules and commandments and be loyal to him. As we decide in our daily work thus to please him and keep his laws, it is automatically building up in us the righteousness of those who are subject to the rule of God in their lives.

'Don't be like the Gentiles in your basic thinking,' says Paul.

'Don't be like the Gentiles in your prayer life or in the ultimate goals that you are seeking in your daily work,' says Christ.

I am almost afraid to say it and perhaps I, for whom life is so easy, have no right to say it. There's nothing wrong with modern technology. We all benefit from it, and if we get appendicitis we hope the hospital has the latest form of technology; of course we do. But does modern technology now mean that believers, both man and wife, have to go to work just to feed the children and pay the mortgage and work eight, nine, ten hours a day, with virtually no time for God and spiritual things? Where and at what point does that become an oppression as cruel as Sisera of the Gentiles inflicted on Israel?

Sometimes these conditions are not within our control, I realise that. I know enough about poverty-stricken countries where people have to work nearly all hours of a day just to survive. But there is a point sometimes when we can make the choice: 'Which are we going to put first—our material prosperity or our spiritual prosperity?'

God's present strategy

In Ephesians 4 Paul talks about God's present strategy to build the Body of Christ; that is what is going on at the moment. Now when we think of the Body of Christ, we sometimes think of this as the way in which a local church is meant to function. We all have different gifts, but we form one body that is the church.

That is perfectly true, but it's a bigger concept than that and a bigger reality. In Ephesians and Colossians, when Paul mentions the Body of Christ it's in the context that Christ has been raised

far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Eph 1:21–23)

You see, it was not to angels and principalities and powers that God subjected the world to come (Heb 2:5), but to Christ. And the universe that is now organised and administered by angelic forces will be administered by Christ, the head, and human beings who have become part of the Body of Christ with the very life of Christ surging through them. Not completely independent creations like angels, but part of his very body. We do not know what we are being prepared for; perhaps eternal administration under Christ.

‘And if that is so,’ says Paul, ‘the immediate urgency is that we grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. So that the head shall have an efficient body that is grown up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Son of God himself’ (see Eph 4:15–16, 13).

But then Paul was a realist to know that that process of growing up is going to find opposition at every corner. He talks about those who deceive and pervert, and try to stop and to stunt; and the primary need here is for us to grow up (v. 15). We must grow, my fellow believers, we have eternal responsibilities in front of us. We have to grow to become efficient members in the great Body of Christ, and not remain just children.

Where is our resource to meet the opposition?

In Ephesians 4:8 Paul uses the very same word as Deborah used in Judges 5, as she thought of Barak and her command to go down the mountain and the Lord going out before him: ‘*Rise up, Barak, and take captivity captive,*’ (Judg 5:12). He came across the phrase, recording Deborah’s history, in Psalm 68:

Thou hast ascended on high, *thou hast led captivity captive*: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. (v. 18 KJV)

Paul scratched his apostolic head, and said, ‘How can this make sense? How could God ascend anywhere? How could God go up on high, because he is always at the highest point possible? God couldn’t ascend anywhere, could he? What does this mean by saying he has ascended up on high?’

And then the penny dropped. ‘Of course,’ says Paul, ‘it’s referring to the Son of God, isn’t it? Now he has been able to ascend.’ And how is that? Because, although God, he first descended to the lower parts of the earth (v. 9). Oh, the wonderful story: *here is our resource*. We’re not left alone in a world manipulated by his satanic majesty and forces that are too big for us.

He conducts the battle and the strategy

We don’t have to think like the Gentiles. Our blessed Lord has first descended. Oh, the wonder of it, as he descended to earth and eventually went to the cross. There, surrounded by principalities and powers, he stripped them of their armour and rose again and is now seated at the right hand of God, far above all rule and authority and powers and dominion

(Eph 1:21). He is our living Lord, and by his Holy Spirit he conducts the battle and the strategy.

Oh, that I should know more of the reality of the living, conquering Lord, amazed more by his condescension and the fact that he came down, so that now he has ascended far above all things, that he should fill all things (v. 10).

May God's Spirit help us not to have tiny ideas of the gospel as if it's just about us and our personal rescue from the lake of fire, though that is infinitely important, but that we get some idea of the cosmic dimensions of what Christ is doing. He is bringing home to glory a body of believers, joined to him as one body under him, to administer the vast new world and universes to be. Let's not think like the Gentiles.

The Gentile world

There's one other danger and that can be dealt with very swiftly. The danger that we are so afraid that the Gentile world and thought models will invade the church that we fail to go out on the attack and make our impact on the Gentiles. We're right to be afraid of that and need to take steps to stop it. It's easy to absorb the world's mind and mental outlook and, without knowing it, fade in our Christian thinking. But if, afraid of the danger, we don't reach out to the Gentiles, we're doing less than our duty, aren't we?

Look at dear old Paul. What a man he was! He's now in prison, about to stand for the second time before Caesar Nero, and he's almost certain that this time it's going to mean his condemnation and execution.

'What are you doing it for, Paul?' we say.

'What am I doing it for? Why am I chained to a Roman soldier, about to appear before Nero, that horrible "lion"? I'm doing it so that all the Gentiles might hear.'

The impact of the gospel on the Gentiles

Nothing less than that would satisfy Paul. It's a gospel so big that, cost what it may, he will take the necessary steps that all the Gentiles might hear. He has to record, sorrowfully, 'At my first defence no one came to stand by me' (2 Tim 4:16). He tells Timothy, 'all who are in Asia turned away from me' (1:15). He's referring to the Christian leaders; 'They have disowned me, repudiated me,' he said.

Why? It may not be true, but I suspect they felt Paul was an extremist. They had done their best to persuade him not to go to Jerusalem and not to go to Rome to defend the gospel, for they were content to be saved in their little patch. And they regarded him as being extreme, I dare say, for insisting to stand for the gospel publicly before the very government and get the name of the gospel cleared and relieve it of all the slanders that had been brought to bear upon it.

As I listen to that I feel ashamed many a time, when I hear the BBC allowing their broadcasters to blaspheme the name of the gospel and Christ and his honour, and I should begin to protest a bit more.

What gave Paul the courage systematically to determine to get the gospel right the way round from Jerusalem to Romania, to Albania and to Spain in his one lifetime? What gave him the courage to go again to the Gentiles? He tells us in Romans 15.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.' (vv. 8-9; Ps 18:49)

God proclaims that he's going to raise up a standard in the house of Jesse and the Gentiles shall flock to it. They are going to find Jesus Christ exceedingly attractive.

The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope. (v. 12; Isa 11:10)

Paul in Pisidian Antioch

Do you think that's an exaggeration? If you do, Paul would say, 'Come with me, I'll take you back to Pisidian Antioch.'

When he got to Antioch he went into the synagogue to preach (Acts 13:13-52). There he found some Gentiles, particularly women, who had got tired of paganism, and they used to attend the synagogue because they regarded it as a superior kind of philosophy in those days; they were called Godfearers.

One day there came this little Jew called Paul and he was asked to preach and immediately the Gentiles saw the difference. He wasn't merely expounding the law to them. He talked about Messiah, who had come according to prophecy to be a Saviour; now risen from the dead and able to give people hope, eternal hope. The ears of the Gentiles pricked up. They'd never heard it like this and, before the synagogue was emptied, they asked the leader of the synagogue, 'Could we have the same preacher next week?'

When next week came, nearly the whole city turned out and he preached the gospel. The Jews got envious and tried to stop it and persecuted Paul, and Paul said to them, 'All right, gentlemen, but have you never read your Isaiah; "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth"'?' (v. 47; Isa 49:6). 'Here they are, under your very noses!'

And three more times in Romans 15 he quotes the lovely prophecies to the effect that multitudes of Gentiles will be drawn to the Saviour.

As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.' (v. 9; Ps 18:49)

And again it is said, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.' (v. 10; Deut 32:43)

And again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.' (v. 11; Ps 117:1)

I don't know what your prophetic views are, and here I shall not enquire; but as I look upon you and perceive that most of you are Gentiles, I say, 'Good old Isaiah, he said that I've

got it right!—Look at these thousand Gentiles, they've found the Christ of God attractive and have come to the Lord Jesus.'

When I'm talking to my Jewish friends I sometimes make the point, as politely as I can, but I make the point: 'I know you don't like Jesus, but I'm a Gentile and now I believe in God. Not just any old God; I believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, just like you do. And why do I do that? It's Jesus Christ that brought me to do that.' And then I add, 'He has brought multi-billions of Gentiles to faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You can't quote another Jew like him.'

As we go to evangelise in a hard old world, let us not forget the inherent attractiveness of our blessed Lord, not merely to Jew but to Gentile. And if nowadays the centre of evangelism is passing from countries that once shone brightly with the gospel and are now going down the slope of rejecting the gospel and into atheism and every kind of perversion, there are other nations where the name of our Lord has been blasphemed and denounced for decades, but now multitudes are coming to see the wonderful beauty of Jesus Christ, the Son of Jesse of the house of David. We needn't be pessimists; he is still as attractive as ever.

God give us to believe it and, by personal fellowship with him, to discover ourselves how attractive he is. Armed with that assurance we may go out, not merely preventing *the Gentile mind* from invading the church, but going out determined because our Lord has said that *he's going to attract many Gentiles to himself*.

Shall we pray.

And so, Father, we rejoice in thy word and rejoice in the wonders and the glories of thy strategies. We thank thee for past history and its evidence; for the great surges of the gospel that history tells us have happened since our Lord was glorified.

Now in our present situation we seek thy grace. Oh that we may see thy strategies fulfilled in our world at large ever increasingly, to the glory of Christ. Imbue us with such vision of his magnificence and beauty and attractiveness that we might not fear in our day and generation, in our difficult world, to pioneer and make him known, that by thy grace many will come to find him.

Bless us now as we go, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

About the Author

DAVID W. GOODING is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. His international teaching ministry is marked by fresh and careful expositions of both testaments. He has published scholarly studies on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John 13–17, Acts, Hebrews and the New Testament's use of the Old Testament.