

**“To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”
2 Cor. 2:16.**

Savor: to impart a flavor or scent to. Just look at the amazing context of this verse. *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the SAVOR OF HIS KNOWLEDGE BY US IN EVERY PLACE.”* 2 Cor. 2:14. However things may seem to us, as we are in the midst of the battle. However sluggish we may appear to ourselves to be. We have God’s word for it: He always causes us to triumph in Christ, and He always makes manifest the savor of His knowledge by us IN EVERY PLACE. Our frame of mind is irrelevant on this point. We often feel like Dr. Watts in one of his great hymns; to wit:

*“Look, how we grovel here below, Fond of these trifling toys;
Our souls can neither fly nor go, to reach eternal joys.
In vain we tune our formal songs, In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues, And our devotion dies.
Dear Lord! and shall we ever be, In this poor dying state?
Our love so faint, so cold to thee, And thine to us so great.”*

I tell you, Beloved, our feelings are irrelevant on this point. We have God’s word for it: WE ARE KICKING UP A STINK (a savor of death) ALL DAY, EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE WE GO. *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”* Phil. 2:13. The Lord our God has purposed to do a thing! From all eternity He has purposed to work in us that which is well pleasing to Him, and to make us perfect in every good work to do His will – and it is a matter of supreme irrelevancy how we – belatedly – feel about it! I tell you, it is irrelevant, and it is too late – by a few billion years; to wit:

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK to do his will, WORKING IN YOU THAT WHICH IS WELL-PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Heb. 13:20,21)

Beloved. We shall much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live. Heb. 12:9. It is the eternal, omnipotent God Himself that causes us to triumph in every situation, and that causes us to kick off a strong, penetrating odor (savor), always and everywhere; to wit:

“Now thanks be unto God, which ALWAYS causeth us to triumph in Christ, and MAKETH MANIFEST THE SAVOR OF HIS KNOWLEDGE BY US IN EVERY PLACE.” (2 Cor. 2:14)

Now the next verse in the context; to wit: *“For we are unto God a SWEET SAVOR of Christ, in them that are saved, AND IN THEM THAT PERISH.”* 2 Cor. 2:15. Notice! God’s Elect preach the truth about the Elect AND the Reprobate (the non-elect); and such knowledge about the

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Truth of God as it is made manifest by these servants of God always and everywhere – is a sweet savor unto God. The Truth about the lost and damned souls in Hell is just as sweet to God Almighty, as the Truth about the saved souls in Heaven. And, the same savor that is kicked off by the Elect always and everywhere – and which is sweet and refreshing to God and the saved – THAT SAME SAVOR produces “**DEATH UNTO DEATH**” upon the reprobates – i.e., upon the teeming masses of mankind.

These “*natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed,*” (2 Pet. 2:12) all succumb to the deadly fuminations of Hell (fumes rising from the pit); which Goodwin calls “*exhalations of Hell and wrath,*” and “*the scent of Hell itself,*” and, “*the very evaporations of that Lake of Fire and Brimstone, which is the second death*” (Rev. 20:14), and, “*the precursory (i.e., precedes and announces something to come) odors of death.*” And, remember, Beloved, that it is the SAME WORD OF GOD – as preached on the street and on the Web by the Westboro Baptist Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, – that is a sweet savor of Christ, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. 2 Cor. 2:15. And, also remember, that by the WORD OF GOD, which we preach, we mean that we expound the true knowledge of the nature and attributes of the living and true God; to wit:

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph” – (i.e., in the propagation or publication of this message) – “in Christ, and MAKETH MANIFEST THE SAVOR OF HIS KNOWLEDGE BY US IN EVERY PLACE.” (2 Cor. 2:14)

Lest there be any doubt about this matter of what activity we are engaged in that results in our being unto God – simultaneously – a sweet savor of Christ – SIMULTANEOUSLY – in them that are saved, and in them that perish, (2 Cor. 2:15); I say, lest there be any doubt about what we are up to, verse 12 ought to settle it; to wit:

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, AND A DOOR WAS OPENED UNTO ME OF THE LORD.” (2 Cor. 2:12)

Paul was busy going from place to place – preaching on the street – among other places – when it was clear to him that the Lord God had OPENED THE DOOR OF UTTERANCE TO HIM – MUCH AS WE DO! The same message that blessed some people, cursed the masses. E.g., on the streets of Athens at Mars Hill; to wit: “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*” BANG! “*And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.*” Acts 17:30-34. (“*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: AND AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED.*” Acts 13:48.) Some mocked; some said, “See ya later;” and:

**“Howbeit CERTAIN MEN CLAVE unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”
(Acts 17:34)**

The first of the pitiful few citizens of the great city of Athens to whom the preaching of Paul was a “sweet savor of Christ,” even “a savor of life unto life” (i.e., a new creature in Christ NOW, in this present life, and bound for the promised land of Heaven and everlasting life SOON to be put into actual, glorious possession of – “life unto life”) indeed! – I say, the first Athenian to whom supernatural faith and salvation came, was DIONYSIUS the Areopagite – a prominent, highly respected, chief judge of the Court of Areopagus, somewhat comparable to the U.S. Supreme Court. Just think of that!

Athens was the thriving and vibrant capitol of Greece, and was given virtually complete autonomy by the Romans, in acknowledgment of her universities and legal culture famous worldwide for its scholarship and fairness. Gill says:

“The business of this court was not only to try causes of murder, which seems to have been the original business of it; but by these judges the rights of the city were preserved and defended, war was proclaimed, and all lawsuits were adjusted and decided; they always heard and judged causes in the night, in the dark, because they would only know FACTS, and not PERSONS, lest they should be influenced by their affections, and be led wrong; they were very famous in other nations for their wisdom and skill, and for their gravity and strict justice. Dolabella, proconsul of Asia, having a woman brought before him for poisoning her husband and son, which she confessed, and gave reasons for doing it, referred the matter to a council, who refused to pass sentence; upon which he sent the case to Athens, to the Areopagites, as to judges more grave and more experienced; and hence these words of Julian the emperor, ‘Let an Areopagite be judge, and we will not be afraid of the judgment.’”

At any rate, Dionysius and Damaris formed the nucleus and laid the foundation of a gospel church in Athens, with Dionysius as the first pastor; which endured for some five centuries before disappearing in a final cloud of heresy and corruption. When the Lord Jesus removes the candlestick the church is gone – leaving only spiritual garbage masquerading as a gospel church. To all such apostate churches the words of Christ apply:

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Rev. 2:5)

Let me digress a little, to say that the case of JUDGE Dionysius – later PASTOR Dionysius – is truly remarkable. For the most part, the Bible casts judges in a very dismal and irreversibly Hell-bound condition. The human judiciary is an institution of divine origin, empowered by God for the express purpose of delivering God’s servants from – and punishing – their persecutors and oppressors (**Rom. 13:1-4**); human judges are called “gods” with a small “g” because of their relatively absolute power over the lives, property, reputations and happiness of their fellow creatures (**Psa. 82:1,6**); with the Fall of Adam came also a perversion of human judges and human

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justice, as with Samuel's sons who turned aside after lucre, took bribes, and perverted judgment (1 **Sam. 8:1-3**); – (incidentally, we might want to build a new website to publicize judicial corruption as it is forever cropping up, and call it the SOS Awards, wherein are famously inaugurated corrupted judges like federal chief judge Earl O'Connor who killed his wife and then himself; we could give him a Sons of Samuel (SOS) Award, and make him an honorary member of the SOS Club; because, with rare exceptions, judges are unjust, with no fear of God and no regard for their fellow human beings (**Lk 18:1-8** – *“There was in a city”* – make that, every city – *“there was in a city a judge”* – make that every judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man – which pretty well describes every judge I ever saw, with rare exceptions. *“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.”* **Lk. 18:1,6**).

When human judges meet on earth, God himself meets with them, judging their judicial conduct and judging the judges (**Psa. 82:1**); human judges – in a flagrant and blatant perversion of their original divine constitution – judge unjustly in respecting the persons of the wicked and condemning the persons of the righteous (**Psa. 82:2-4**); bereft of true knowledge or understanding, they walk on in darkness, whereby they turn the moral foundations of mankind out of course (**Psa. 82:5**); human judges are under a special curse of God for their obstinacy and arrogance (**Psa. 82:6-8**); they neither speak righteousness nor judge uprightly in their human decrees, but on the contrary, work wickedness, whereby they trigger all the violence in the earth (**Psa. 58:1,2**); human judges are a special breed of evildoers, estranged from God from the womb, speaking lies by nature and inordinately even as depraved sons of Adam, and whose malice and obstinacy is likened unto venomous serpents, infecting all mankind with the fatal poison of their perverse judgments (**Psa. 58:3-5**); *“who turn judgment to wormwood (poison hemlock)”* (**Amos 5:7**); think, Lawrence vs. Texas; human judges are the subject of the fervent prayers of God's humble servants, that God would deliver them from their devouring teeth and the malignant arrows of the judicial bow (**Psa. 58:6-8**); such that, each time a judge is taken away in God's wrath and vengeance, it is a refreshing time of great joy, that God has answered the prayers of His people, who then proclaim, *“Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.”* **Psa. 58:9-11**.

Beloved, human judges are included among those to whom *“we are the savor of death unto death,”* and to whom God *“maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place.”* **2 Cor. 2:14-16**. In the expounding of that passage, Goodwin says:

“The meaning whereof is, that just as venomous and sulphurous vapors and damps in mines and caverns, arising out of the earth, do strike up such scents or smells as often kill, by extinguishing the spirits of those that descend into them, such EXHALATIONS OF HELL AND WRATH doth the Spirit of God, BY THE WORD PREACHED, exhale and draw forth, and cause to ascend in some men's consciences, which gives them the very scent of Hell itself.”

Beloved, in other words, when we walk by, they get a strong and overpowering whiff of brimstone as Hell itself opens its cavernous maw (i.e., the stomach, mouth, gullet, throat, and esophagus). That's exactly what it means. And it is not pleasant to the wicked. It is a deadly sensation to be avoided by the wicked if possible. But it is hard to avoid, when everywhere the guilty soul looks – throughout the world – they see our Gospel signs and hear our Gospel words, – thanks to

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worldwide TV, radio, and cyberspace. Yes. When we walk by. Hell itself opens up its big, fat MAW, and belches out such a mighty whiff of brimstone as to overpower every guilty sinner in the vicinity. And Dr. Goodwin goes on:

“They are the savor or odor of death aforehand, unto death and damnation. Also he declares those PRECURSORY savors or odors of death in their kind to be, which do arise from the threatenings of the same word in horrors upon them that perish, which he pronounceth to be the very EVAPORATIONS OF THAT ‘LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH,’ in styling them the odor or ‘savor of death unto death;’ so speaks he. These men often smell the scent of hell in their consciences, and the spirits of it do strike up into their souls. The very ashes and smoke of that Vesuvius or Etna of Hell – (I allude to the last words of Deut. 32:22 – “For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and SET ON FIRE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MOUNTAINS.”) – I say, the very ashes and smoke of that Vesuvius of Hell do fall upon them, which lighting upon men in this life, do, as those ashes of the furnace – (Ex. 9:8-11 – “And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfulls of Ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains” – (i.e., burning ulcers, hot carbuncles, painful pustules) – “upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast...and upon all the Egyptians.”) – I say, as those ashes of the furnace miraculously did upon men’s bodies, these gospel words of truth that to sinners are “the savor of death unto death,” cause sores and blains upon men’s consciences.”

Now note the final words of our text; to wit: **“And who is sufficient for these things?” 2 Cor. 2:16(b).** Put another way, whose walk and doctrine is so conformed to the Scripture as to generate boldness sufficient to say, “When I walk by, all the sinners smell the brimstone of their own damnation in Hell?” And the answer is reflected in the next verse; to wit:

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” (2 Cor. 2:17)

In other words, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Answer: “WE ARE!” Because we are absolutely sincere and honest with God; and, above all, and in proof of our sincerity, WE DO NOT CORRUPT, OR PERVERT, OR WREST, OR HANDLE THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY – LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD DOES! 2 Cor. 2:17; Jer. 23:36; 2 Pet. 3:16; 2 Cor. 4:2.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, NOR HANDLING THE WORD OF GOD DECEITFULLY; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Cor. 4:1,2)

Amen.