

From Where I Sit . . .

Never Man Spoke Like This Man

Famed orators of all generations have stood out for their special abilities to stir their audiences -- men like Churchill, and even Adolph Hitler. Through oratory Sir Winston Churchill gave ceaseless encouragement to the masses of his despondent countrymen. Adolf Hitler, with his hypnotic oratory, built the National Socialist party to the largest in Germany by 1932. If one were to search for the master spokesman, however, a lone figure from the first century would have to be placed far ahead of them all -- these men whose movements lasted for so short a time.

Early in the Gospel according to Mark we learn of Jesus, the man who astonished the people with His doctrine, "...for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22). "...For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him" (Mark 1:27). "And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee" (Mark 1:28).

Here was a man who spoke powerful, convicting words, but with a note of authority not heard before. His words were accompanied with powerful evidence: "...what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" the disciples pondered (Mark 4:41).

Jesus as spokesman attracted the masses all around Galilee. Matthew 4:23 tells of His teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. "And his fame went throughout all Syria." This occasioned what we fondly call the "Sermon on the Mount." Here the master orator sat, as a teacher of His time would, with the learners at His feet. He taught them, not with a hypnotic voice or with catchy peace slogans and campaign slogans, but with a kind compassionate voice. "When he was come down from the mountains, great multitudes followed him" (Matt. 8:1).

This man spoke to the masses and they followed Him, and He offered them life. It was His mission to shepherd a shepherdless flock, and His speeches reflected this. "And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:33-34).

On the occasion of Mark 8:1,2 when he fed those who had followed him for three days, we learn that Jesus not only was a man of powerful words, but that He had a genuine love for His followers. Here was one who would ultimately lay down His life for them. This distinguishes Him from other great orators who have motivated large numbers of people to die for them and for "their" cause. Instead, Jesus died for the masses!

The prophecy of Isaiah 2:1-3 saw fulfillment as people turned to the Messiah to be taught. We can enjoy the blessings of its fulfillment even today. Isaiah pictured the Kingdom established and all nations flowing unto it to be taught by the Lord.

We are so privileged to have the recorded words of the Master to lead us to life today. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). May we grow closer to our Heavenly Father as we study Jesus' teachings, for truly, "...never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

..... Terry Broome

Printed in the *Broad Street Banner*, Volume XVII, Number 32, August 14, 2002.