

HOW PERFECT IN ALL HER WAYS

Responsorial Song from Psalm 104 for Sunday 26B
for Psalmist/Cantor, Assembly & Descants
with Keyboard, Flutes, Voice & Guitar

TONY BARR

*How perfect the Law of God,
she is wisdom and joy for the heart.*

How perfect in all her ways,
life-giving is the Law.
Whose decrees shall endure for ever,
for the humble of heart, they are wisdom.

How holy to be in awe,
in reverence unconcealed.
While commanding, the are but truthful,
rich in justice, compassion, instruction.

The faithful are formed, made
find courage, see light!
Are there any who boast, as blamers,
Wash away ev'ry flaw, every failing.

Produce from greed and pride,
no man shall judge.
With no evil in my steps,
my sin has no future.

Why the feminine pronoun? To understand the Law, we have a sense of Wisdom, and she is with God at the beginning. She is our Mother who nourishes us. We attempt to compartmentalize God, into 3 Persons, with distinct attributes such as the Law, Divine Love, and so on, as though describing a next-door neighbor. But we do well to never forget that God is total simplicity, and the result. Beauty beyond imagination.

The beauty of this psalm is that it is completely thought and feeling. It is simple, not only in expression but in understanding. The real meaning of the word is to 'be like'. This generates reverence, which is the beginning, and ultimately the fullness, of our lives. Where we even open our lips to mouth these words, we have already heard them in our heart, in the silence which existed in us since the Universe came into being.

The so-called natural laws, which govern the unfolding of nature, contain an unspoken mystery, namely the ever-expanding Universe in nature, which according to its own unwritten laws (though written into the dialogue of evolution) should be constantly dissipating to the dynamics of entropy. This fundamental entity in nature asserts that once a certain amount of energy (such as the Big Bang), the ensuing energy which is being constantly transmitted should be constantly dissipating, after almost 14 billion years. Yet the laws of thermodynamics maintain that energy (of whatever matter is but one form) can be neither created nor destroyed.

In a much more profound way, the law of God, written not on tablets of stone but into living hearts of flesh and blood, holds a deeper mystery because she moves us to respond, and in our response Creation is constantly being renewed. This evokes 'send us your Spirit, your Breath, to renew the face of the earth.' This evokes a type of mystery, of God as Ruah, the Breath of Creation, and Torah, the Law which perfects Harmony and provides the fullness of Beauty.

Psalm 104 is a hymn in two parts. The first is a hymn to God's creating breath, the second to God's redemption. At the Vigil, the singing of O felix culpa, O happy sin of Adam. In this psalm, Ruah and Torah are two images of the Incomprehensible One provided for us in the Scriptures. Many of the contemplative theologians of the Middle Ages express Adam's sin as the first great gift of redemption, because only then did we deserve the gift of Jesus to fulfill us. And with the Spirit who is Wisdom, Creation is able to begin anew. The Law of God is perfect because she brings all to perfection, which from its Latin root means complete.

- Tony Barr

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How Perfect In All Her Ways

Responsorial Song from Psalm 19 for Sunday 26B

INTRO ♩ = ca. 90

& text from Psalm 19 by Tony Barr

Flute I

Flute II

Cantor first time only

How per-fect — the Law of God, she is — and joy in her heart.

Gm

Cm7

F

Gm

REFRAIN

Flute I on selected Refrains

Flute II on selected Refrains

Selected Refrains only

per - fect the Law of God, she is

per - fect the Law of God, she is

Cm7

The musical score is written in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system includes two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "wis - dom joy for" and "wis - dom and joy for heart." The piano accompaniment features chords such as F and Cm. The second system includes two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "wis - dom and joy for heart." The piano accompaniment features chords such as Cm and Gm. The score concludes with a double bar line and the word "End".

VERSES

Violin

Psalmist from the ambo

- 1. How per - fect _____ in all her
- 2. How ho - ly _____ to be in awe
- 3. The faith - ful _____ are formed, made strong, and _____
- 4. Pro - tect me _____ from greed and pride, _____ no _____

Gm

Cm7

- 1. giv - ing is the Lord's way, his crees shall en - dure for _____
- 2. rev - 'rence un - con - ceal - ed. While they com - mand - ing, they are but _____
- 3. cour - age, see - ing light! Are there an - y who boast as _____
- 4. mal - ice as my judge. With no e - vil to guide my _____

F

Bb

Gm

(8^{va})

D.S.

- 1. _____ er, _____ fe - ble of heart, they are wis - dom.
- 2. _____ uth - ful _____ rich _____ jus - tice, com - pas - sion, in - struc - tion.
- 3. _____ blame _____ Wash a - way all my sin, ev - 'ry fail - ing.
- 4. _____ foot _____ dead - ly sin has no claim on my fu - ture.

D

Gm

, D.S.

How Perfect In All Her Ways

Responsorial Song from Psalm 19 for Sunday 26B

REFRAIN ♩ = ca. 90

Descant on selected Refrains only

Music & text from Psalm 19 Tony Barr

How per - fect the Law of God, _____ is

All
How per - fect _____ the Law of _____ she is

wis - dom _____ joy _____ for _____ her

wis - dom _____ and joy _____ the hear

VERSES Psalmist from the ambo

1. How perfect are all her ways, life -
2. How majestic is her name in awe, in _____
3. The faith of the angels are formed, made strong, find _____
4. Pro - tect me from greed and pride, no _____

1. giv - ing _____ the Law. Whose de - crees shall en - dure for _____
2. rev - erence _____ cealed. While com - mand - ing, they are but _____
3. cour - age, _____ light! Are there an - y who boast as _____
4. _____ as _____ judge. With no e - vil to guide my _____

to Refrain

1. _____, for the hum - ble of heart, they are wis - dom.
2. _____ - ful, rich in jus - tice, com - pas - sion, in - struc - tion.
3. blame - less? Wash a - way all my sin, ev - 'ry fail - ing.
4. foot - _____ dead - ly sin has no claim on my fu - ture.