

Commentary — From the Margins *The Innocence of Infancy*

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:1–6)

After these things *God tested Abraham* and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Gen 22:1–2 emphasis added)

1.

The same Lord that came to Abram and promised the man of faith that he would father the heir that would inherit his promises, later came to Abraham and commanded him to sacrifice his heir, his son of promise, as a burnt offering—

The Apostle Paul ignored Abraham's second journey of faith, the journey to the land of Moriah where Abraham bound his son Isaac and had the knife poised to kill Isaac when the Lord stopped Abraham and said that "for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me" (Gen 22:12). ... Fear is a powerful motivator, but in love there is no fear. Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac? Because Abraham believed the Lord that his seed would be his inheritor, saying to the young men who accompanied him to the land of Moriah—before he went up the mountain with Isaac—"Stay here with the donkey; *I and the boy will go over there and worship and **come again to you***" (v. 5 emphasis and double emphasis added).

Abraham truly believed the Lord, but textual evidence says that the Lord wasn't certain until the knife was poised to strike out Isaac's life—and so it will be for every person who is Abraham's seed through Christ Jesus; for James, citing this same incident, wrote,

Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that *a person is justified by works and not by faith alone*. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For *as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead*. (Jas 2:20–26 emphasis added)

And the Apostle Paul agreed with James:

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For *it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified*. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:12–16 emphasis added)

Believing the Father and the Son and having that belief counted to the disciple as righteousness gets the disciple into the presence of the Lord where the disciple's belief/faith will then be tested to see if the disciple will do what the disciple knows is pleasing to God; for the disciple who truly loves the Lord will keep His commandments, the commandments that He as the Logos [ὁ Λόγος] who was God [Θεὸς] and who was with the God [τὸν Θεόν] in the beginning and who entered His creation (John 1:3) as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus the Nazarene (John 1:14)—the commandments that the Logos spoke from atop Mount Sinai.

Jude said, "Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe" (v. 5) ... I want to remind you that Paul's gospel holds that it will be the doers of the law that are justified, not that the works of the law have significance, but the person's willingness to believe God and do what is pleasing to God is what keeps the person under the mantle of Christ Jesus' righteousness. If the person does not willingly walk as Jesus, an observant Jew, walked, the person condemns him or herself; for two cannot walk together unless one walks the same path that the other walks. Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness. The person who strives to keep the law has no fellowship with the lawless. Therefore, *all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law*; for grace cannot cover the willful sinner who refuses to walk in the same way that Jesus walked.

2.

When Abram believed the Lord about him fathering an heir, Abram had the faith of a young person even though he was well along in years: Abram had not learned to distrust, or not believe the Lord. And as such, Abram can be likened to Job, who said of himself concerning why he walked uprightly and was blameless before the Lord, “For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty” (Job 31:23) ... Job did what was right because he feared calamity from the Lord: he sincerely believed that “calamity [is] for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity” (v. 3). Thus out of true fear of the Lord, Job walked perfect in all of his ways—

Again, in love there is no fear.

A person will confess to crimes he or she did not commit out of fear; a person will betray friends and family out of fear; a person will perform extraordinary feats of strength out of fear; yet another person will stand paralyzed by fear while another curls into a fetal position to await death. Thus, what will be seen when fear is evaluated as a motivator is that certain behavior modifications can be achieved through fear, but that these modifications remain outside of the inner person and are done in spite of what the person truly wants to do. So when the inner self is empowered, what is truly within the inner self is revealed: any good behavior that was produced by fear is quickly jettisoned, and the person returns to being whomever he or she has always been inside the person.

Therefore, fear of God will not produce a truly obedient son of God, but will produce an outwardly compliant son that will *cut loose* as soon as that fear is no longer present, as was the case at Mount Sinai when Moses ascended into the cloud for forty days and forty nights. In order to produce sons that will obey God and do the will of God when these sons are glorified, the Most High God cannot terrorize His sons and compel obedience through fear. He must back away from His sons and wait for them to come to Him out of love.

Job’s genuine “fear of God” was tested in that all Job feared came upon him even though he was upright and blameless—and Job withstood the testing: he refused to curse God. Likewise, Abram believed the Lord, with his belief being counted to him as righteousness, but this “belief” was tested in the Lord commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son of promise.

Now, I want to remind you even though you already know: the Adversary will seek to attack a person where he or she is weak, thereby causing the person to commit fornication with unrighteousness, the helpmate of the Adversary, but the Lord *tests* a person’s strengths to produce even greater strength.

Jacob was a very strong man as evidenced by:

Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well. Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of

Nahor?" They said, "We know him." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" *He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."* While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. *Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, **Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth** and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.* (Gen 29:1–10 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Although it took all of the shepherds gathered together to roll the stone from the well's mouth, Jacob rolled the stone away by himself, for indeed, Jacob had great strength and apparently some pride in his strength; therefore the Lord tested Jacob by wrestling with him in a contest of strength:

And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. *So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."* The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. (Gen 32:24–31 emphasis added)

As any high school wrestler or former wrestler knows, six minutes of wrestling is a long time and usually leaves the person exhausted. To wrestle from sometime shortly after sunset until dawn would take tremendous endurance and strength, especially when your opponent is the Lord.

Saul of Tarsus' zeal for the Law was "tested" when he was called by Christ Jesus, renamed Paul, and sent to preach repentance to Gentiles—sent to preach the Way that he had previously persecuted ... Paul could have easily aligned himself with the Circumcision Faction, former Pharisees holding the doctrinal position that a Christian convert must become a physical Jew before becoming a spiritual Jew. But as in the case of Noah, a preacher of righteousness who experienced the death of all those to whom he preached except the seven that boarded the Ark with him, and as in the case of Job, who feared calamity coming from unrighteousness and yet experienced such calamity, and as in the case of Daniel, who prayed thrice daily to the Lord and who was cast into the lion's den for his love for the Lord—these three men named by the prophet Ezekiel as able to save themselves (Ezek 14:12–23)—the Apostle Paul's zeal for the Lord caused

him to outwork the other apostles as he labored day and well into nights to convey a message that is today labeled *replacement theology*, the teaching that Israel has become the nation circumcised of heart, that circumcision of the flesh has value only to the extent the person is a doer of the Law and not a hearer only; for it will be doers of the Law, outwardly circumcised and uncircumcised, that will be justified before God (Rom 2:12–16; 25–29). Hence, outer circumcision is nothing. Ethnicity and genealogy is nothing. Faith—belief of God—is everything; for where faith is, belief exists, and this person, believing God and out of love for God and seeking to please God, will be a doer of the Law, with the works of the Law written on his or her heart.

3.

There are Christians who insist that God will not test, will not try, will not tempt anyone; that all trials come from the Adversary. There are Christians who deny the validity of what the prophet Ezekiel recorded about the Lord giving to Israel commands and statutes that were not good and by which Israel could not have life: “Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, and I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. I did it that they might know that I am the LORD” (Ezek 20:25–26). And inevitably, the passage these doubters cited to *prove* that God didn’t command Israel to offer up the nation’s firstborns is Jeremiah chapter 19:

Thus says the LORD [to Jeremiah], "Go, buy a potter's earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you. You shall say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, *I am bringing such disaster upon this place that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind—* (vv. 1–5 emphasis added)

There might be a problem here; for the Lord told Moses,

When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, “How did these nations serve their gods?--that I also may do the same.” *You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their*

daughters in the fire to their gods. (Deut 12:29–31 emphasis added)

If the Lord hadn't thought long and hard about the nations of Canaan burning their sons and daughters—their firstborns—in fire, the Lord would not have said anything to Moses about the practice ... indeed, the Lord had thought about a practice that angered Him for firstborns belong to Him. It was His sons and daughters that the peoples of Canaan, then Israel in the land of Canaan were killing before these firstborns could be defiled by unrighteousness—

Wait a minute. Why would anyone worship God in a certain way? Is not worship of God *learned behavior*? Is this not why children reared in Christian orthodoxy worship on Sunday? Do they not worship God on the day after the Sabbath because these children mimic their parents, worshipping the Father and the Son in the way and manner that their parents did/do?

Why do the grown children of Roman Catholic parents feel compelled to pray to the Virgin Mary, pray to and through plaster statuary? Why are there so many plaster statues of the Virgin in upright, discarded-cast-iron-bathtub grottos throughout rural Michigan? Surely an informed person in the 21st-Century doesn't believe that a thigh-high plaster or concrete statue has real significance before God, especially when these statues are seemingly mass produced in their painted color patterns.

What grown children of Roman Catholic parents do in praying to Mary is scripturally idolatrous, but they do not think so—they worship idols. They cannot see that it is. They refuse to believe that their parents mock Christ Jesus and have mocked Him for generations by praying to His earthly mother who is and who remains (for at least another seven years) dead in the dust of this earth. They sincerely believe they worship God in truth and in spirit when they are spiritually dead idolaters, their idolatry *covered* by their lack of life in the heavenly realm. But frankly, it would be spiritually better for every Catholic Christian if they had died in their infancy: they would not then have to unlearn pagan dogmas that bear the stamp of Roman approval, dogmas that in the Affliction (when they will actually have indwelling heavenly life) will cause these Catholic Christians to rebel against God and condemn themselves to the lake of fire. And yes, when the lawless one, the man of perdition is revealed on day 220 of the Affliction, Roman Catholic Christians *en masse* will rebel against God and align themselves with the lawless one, thereby causing God to send a strong delusion over them so that they cannot repent of their lawlessness ... cannot repent because they will not repent; for in their eyes, they will, in following the lawless one, worship God in truth as they and their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents always have.

Again, a Catholic Christian who died in infancy has a far better chance of entering into the kingdom of God than one who grew to maturity in the faith, the grown child of devout Catholic—or for that matter, Mormon, Southern Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist—parents. And what I write is true and the truth ... the preceding does not mean that every Catholic Christian will rebel against God in the Apostasy (2 Thess 2:3), but that most will; that the majority will; that nearly every Catholic Christian will; that it will be the rare Catholic Christian that repents of his or her present idolatry when the person is filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God at the Second Passover liberation of Israel.

Would it, then, be a good thing if firstborns belonging to the Lord that are born into an idolatrous culture are murdered by their parents before the hearts of these future sons of God can be defiled? Would God do that? Command parents to murder their firstborns? To protect His future sons from defilement, would God have parents kill their firstborns before these firstborns can be consumed by idolatry? That wouldn't be how a human father would protect his son from the unrighteousness of this world, but a human father cannot bring his son back to life at will—and God can. And a human father, in this age of the Gentiles—in this age when the nations are far from God—is of this age in which God has consigned all of humankind to disobedience so that He can have mercy on all (Rom 11:32); whereas God has chosen to remain separated from humanity until the court of the Ancient of Days sits in judgment and dominion over the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and his angels and given to the Son of Man. Therefore, in an extremely idolatrous culture, it is perversely logical for God to command the people of that culture to slay their firstborns so that these firstborn sons and daughters remain innocent when they are resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment.

So the question of the moment is, would God have *protected* His future sons born to Him in pagan cultures from the “paganism” of the culture by having the parents of these future sons slay them while they remained in the innocence of infancy? And if God would have done such a thing, which He claims to have done, then can a similar command be in effect today when even full-term children are aborted by parents because the infant is unwanted, or less than perfect, or of the wrong sex as has been the practice in China? What percentage of aborted children would have been the first to open the womb? A high percentage? Yes, a very high percentage. And certainly, no aborted child has been spiritually defiled by his or her parents' idolatry; by the parents' adultery, fornication, quest for perfection; or by the State's desire to control its internal population.

Thus, to argue that God would not have commanded idolatrous Israel to continue a practice the people of Israel had borrowed from the Canaanites they dispossessed is not logical, and certainly not based in Scripture. It is true that God would not have commanded Israel to sacrifice the nation's firstborns if the people of Israel had not already borrowed the practice from idolatrous neighbors, but once the people began to do what the heathens they dispossessed were doing before, then it was reasonable on the Lord's part to demand that they continue killing their sons and daughters until the practice sickened them as the practice sickened Greeks and Romans when these peoples encountered the practice in Carthage. And 21st-Century American Christians can experience how the practice sickened pagan Greeks through how repulsed these Christians are by publicly sanctioned abortion of innocent children, devaluing these children through identifying them as *unviable tissue masses* ... may those who condone abortion perish as ancient Israelites perished in Jerusalem during the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, king of earthly Babylon.

4.

The prophet Jeremiah continues:

[T]herefore, behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds. And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.

Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, and shall say to them, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended. Men shall bury in Topheth because there will be no place else to bury. Thus will I do to this place, declares the LORD, and to its inhabitants, making this city like Topheth. The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah—all the houses on whose roofs offerings have been offered to all the host of heaven, and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods--shall be defiled like the place of Topheth."

Then Jeremiah came from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the LORD's house and said to all the people: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, behold, I am bringing upon this city and upon all its towns all the disaster that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their neck, refusing to hear my words." (19:6–15)

It's not okay to worship the Lord however and whenever the person chooses: to do so will cause the Lord to break the person and his or her culture as a piece of pottery is broken, for the Lord changes not. How the Lord thinks—His logic, His mindset—isn't like how a person thinks, but that should come as no revelation to anyone. What is less well known is, again, that God will test every person, but not on the person's weaknesses but on the person's strengths. It is the Adversary that attacks a person where the person is weak. For God doesn't desire that a person fail a test as the Adversary does, but that the person grows in his or her strengths.

And returning to the man who rewrote the role of Adam: the most recognized person in Scripture who was tested is the man Job in the land of Uz:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And *the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"* Then Satan answered the LORD and said,

"Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:6–12 emphasis added)

The Lord didn't directly test Job, but brought Job to the attention of the Adversary and permitted the Adversary to attack first all Job had, then later even his person ... what were Job's strengths? He was perfect in all his ways. He did nothing wrong. So why would the Lord set Job up to be severely tried and tempted by the Adversary? Why not have Satan attack the unrighteous, those human beings who already served the Adversary as sons or as slaves. And the answer should be self-evident: Satan has no interest in destroying the dead: they are already his. Satan will attack those who have slipped and are slipping out from under him. Job had become such a man through being blameless and upright. Job had no intercourse with unrighteousness, the helpmate of the Adversary.

Human logic would have us, if we were in the position of the Lord, to continue protecting Job, again a man perfect in all of his ways albeit lacking in understanding how great the schism is between man and God. *Human logic would never have us strip away Job's covering, the garment that Job's obedience to the Lord afforded him, the hedge the Lord had placed around Job, thereby leaving the man Job to figuratively stand naked against the Adversary as Adam was naked until he made for himself and Eve aprons of fig leaves.* Yet, the reality of the Second Passover liberation of Israel—when the Son of Man is *revealed*, disrobed, stripped naked (Luke 17:30)—is that every Christian will be delivered into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh as Job was delivered into the hand of the Adversary. Every Christian will be filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God and will be made perfect in all of the Christian's way, and then, when perfectly clean and blameless, every Christian will be given to the Adversary for testing, for seeing what is truly in the heart of the Christian.

When a Christian is filled-with and empowered by the spirit/breath of God, every Christian will have the power to rule over his or her body: whatever is in the person's mind and heart will be made visible through the acts of the flesh. And if unrighteousness dwells in the heart of the Christian, this person will act upon that unrighteousness and take sin back inside his or her cleansed earthly *house*, thereby committing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and adultery with the Adversary's helpmate.

The story of Job is a similar story to that of Adam and Eve, with Job's wife functioning as Eve functioned:

And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him

without reason." Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. Then *his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die."* But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:3–7 emphasis added)

Adam was perfect in his ways, upright and blameless, until he ate forbidden fruit: when Eve gave Adam forbidden fruit, he should have rebuked her as Job rebuked his wife when she served the Adversary as Eve served the serpent in the Garden of God ... unknowingly, Job links the first Adam with the last Adam—Paul didn't identify Christ Jesus as the second Adam, but as the last Adam: "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45)—as he, Job, , rewrote the *shadow* cast by the glorified Lamb of God when He leads the 144,000 *virgins* in the Endurance, the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years. The man Job stands between the first Adam and the last Adam, and he stands *perfect in all of his ways* and does not sin with his lips as the man Jesus the Nazarene was perfect in all of His ways, not sinning in any way.

Before the spirit was given, sin was always outside of the person. Sin was what the person did or said, not what the person thought. Thus, because Job did not sin with his lips, nor with his hand or body, Job remained upright and blameless regardless of what he thought about what had befallen him. From a physical perspective, Job was perfect!

Christians have never really understood the Book of Job. They usually claim that *Job was guilty of self-righteousness; the Book of Job is about self-righteousness*. Certainly when Job gives an account of himself to his friends, he finds no fault with himself:

I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? ***Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity?*** Does not he see my ways and number all my steps? / If I have walked with falsehood and my foot has hastened to deceit; (Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!) if my step has turned aside from the way and my heart has gone after my eyes, and if any spot has stuck to my hands, then let me sow, and another eat, and let what grows for me be rooted out. / If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door, then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down on her. For that would be a heinous crime; that would be

an iniquity to be punished by the judges; for that would be a fire that consumes as far as Abaddon, and it would burn to the root all my increase. / If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant, when they brought a complaint against me, what then shall I do when God rises up? When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? Did not he who made me in the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb? / If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it (for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow), if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. For *I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.* / If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence, if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much, if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above. / If I have rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him (I have not let my mouth sin by asking for his life with a curse), if the men of my tent have not said, 'Who is there that has not been filled with his meat?' (the sojourner has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler), if I have concealed my transgressions as others do by hiding my iniquity in my bosom, because I stood in great fear of the multitude, and the contempt of families terrified me, so that I kept silence, and did not go out of doors—

Oh, that I had one to hear me! (Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!) Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary! Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown; I would give him an account of all my steps; *like a prince I would approach him.* (Job 31:1–37 emphasis and double emphasis added)

In human logic and Calvinistic theology, calamity is always for the unrighteous and disaster for workers of iniquity, but these things are not always for the unrighteous when it comes to God, who can return life to anyone at any time—

Job claimed that if he were to appear before the Lord, he would enter as a prince ... why? Because he had been for a long time *in terror of calamity from God*—it was Job's fear of calamity brought upon him by God that had caused him to walk blameless and upright before the Lord. It wasn't love for God that caused him to walk without spot or blemish; it was internalized terror based upon his

assumption that calamity and disaster awaited the unrighteous. And today, what causes those Christians in the Sacred Names Heresy to strive to walk uprightly before God? What causes those in the Sacred Names Heresy to use bastardized Hebrew pronunciations for whatever is spiritual? Is it not fear of God, fear that they will not be saved if they do not utter a certain sound rooted in Hebrew as the linguistic signifier representing Christ Jesus? Do they not strive for perfection out of their fear that time is short and Christ will soon return? Yes, they do. And because they worship God out of fear, not love, they will perish as their fears are materialized during the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years.

For Job, *fear of the Lord* was real fear, not a literary expression without meaning as is the case in wayward Christendom in modern Western cultures. Job truly feared doing anything wrong.

The Adversary never recognized the flaw in Job's reasoning—

The Adversary recognized that he was not the equal of the Lord, that he had to appear before the Lord to give an accounting of himself—*an equal has to give no accounting* of his activities to his peers. He might choose to give an accounting, but an equal is not under an obligation to explain him or herself, which is why Scripture discloses that Peter was not the first Pope, which a paragraph of digression can establish:

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So *when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." But Peter began and explained it to them in order: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"* When they heard these things they fell silent. And they

glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." (Act 11:1–18 emphasis added)

If Peter was not subject to the will of the majority, he would not have had to explain to anyone why he went to the house of Cornelius and there baptized the whole household. And Peter was still subject to the will of the majority when he separated himself from Gentile converts at Antioch, an act for which Paul rebuked him:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (Gal 2:11–14)

The Apostle Paul was not subject to the will of the majority, but was the equal of Peter and could therefore rebuke Peter as was appropriate. If Paul had not been equal to Peter in authority, Paul would have been presumptuous in speaking harshly to Peter regardless of whether Paul was right or wrong. But because Peter had no authority beyond that which he shared with the other first disciples, Peter was in the habit of deferring to the customs of the temple, something that even Paul did later when taking James' advice (see Acts 21:18–25).

When Job spoke of coming before the Lord as a prince, he gave an accounting of his righteousness. He stated why the Lord had told Satan that Job was perfect in all his ways, but Job didn't need to say anything to his so-called friends for they had neither the authority to condemn or forgive him, authority that the first disciples had:

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.*" (John 20:19–23 emphasis added)

To have the mind of Christ is to have authority over unrighteousness, thereby allowing the disciple to forgive sins, or to withhold forgiveness.

Once again, unrighteousness is the helpmate of the Adversary: these two form one spirit. And Christ has authority over the Adversary and therefore over unrighteousness. His disciples—those disciples who truly form the Body of Christ and are one with Christ as the body of a human person is *one* with its living inner self, its *head*—also have authority over the Adversary and his helpmate, but authority that disciples have been fearful to exercise. For inevitably, disciples

have doubts about whether they really have authority over unrighteousness; about whether God will back them up if they rebuke Satan. They struggle with whether they have the mind of Christ. They simply don't know—and because they don't know, they are fearful.

In Christ, there is no fear—

An infant intuitively *trusts* his or her parents ... the infant has to learn not to trust parents, and does so through parental abuse, or most often, through one or both parents abandoning the infant, which is what makes divorce the harmful act that it is. And so it is with infant sons of God, who when initially born of spirit trust God to just a degree that miracles are not uncommon. But as the human son of God begins to grow, doubt enters: no longer does the son of God fully trust God. There are too many prayers that haven't been answered, too many promises made from pulpits that haven't been fulfilled. Tithes have been paid and offerings made; yet the disciple remains in poverty. *Why haven't the windows of heaven opened?* The ministry has promised that if the disciple sows into the ministry, the disciple will reap the harvest of God, who owns all of the gold and all of the silver. And the disciple becomes cautious, careful, fearful that God will bring calamity reserved for the unrighteous upon the disciple who fails to faithfully tithe and give generous offerings. God becomes a vengeful deity, one filled with wrath, ever ready to pounce on unsuspecting sinners—and we have arrived at Jonathon Edwards' famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

An obedient son has no reason to fear his father; for his father will give this son whatever good gifts that the father can—and probably give to the son more than is good for the son. It is the disobedient that have reason to fear; for the lie will become known, the theft will be revealed, the falsity of affection will be made evident. The disobedient wait in fearful anticipation of the inevitable, the unveiling of themselves for who they are.

There is innocence in infancy, and this innocence is usually lost before the infant grows enough to understand dual referents. Thus, a righteous God, seeking to protect what is His, will do things that repulse human beings, born in disobedience as servants of the Adversary; humanly born into lawlessness and rebellion against God ... the protection of death given to the Body of Christ at the end of the 1st-Century CE, will be stripped away from Christians when the Son of Man is revealed [disrobed] (see Luke 17:30). Then, the only covering that the living inner son of God will have is his obedience to God, obedience that will be severely tested. And those Christian teachers and pastors that tell their parishioners that God will not test them condemn their parishioners to the lake of fire; for their parishioners will fail their testing, refusing to make a second journey of faith, a journey that is spiritually equivalent to Abraham's journey to the land of Moriah.

*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

* * * * *

[[Current Commentary](#)] [[Archived Commentaries](#)] [[Home](#)]