

# Collateral Damage and the Heart of God

## Part Seven

(Spreading the Base)

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### Meditating on the Bible

#### 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life

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In the LORD, collateral damage has a definite purpose: however, it may not give us any comfort to know what it is. But, we will still pursue the knowledge of this portion of the way of the LORD. So, I guess we will just have to be uncomfortable, some more.

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One of the purposes for collateral damage is to broaden the base of understanding. Among the more public times that, that purpose was evident, is this one.

*And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.  
And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.*

*And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.*

*And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.*

*Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the*

*magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.*

(Exodus 7:6-13)

Oh, the calamity for the poor serpents. They were not involved in the decision to be destroyed for the sake of understanding. No, this is not just a calamity for serpents and other creatures. In time, we will see the human collateral that was damaged. Please note the beginning of collateral damage that is in this portion of the event: *he hardened Pharaoh's heart*. As proceeding from that damage to Pharaoh; Pharaoh stretched his influence out, and dragged much collateral into several episodes of damage. Those episodes of damage are enumerated in the plagues of Egypt, as occurred during the redemption of the children of Israel. Here is an overview of that time, as speaking of the LORD, and telling . . .

*How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan: And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.*

*He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.*

*He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*

*He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.*

(Psalm 78:43-52)

At the conclusion of the anguish that is accountable to Pharaoh, the collateral damage penetrated deeply into the heart of the human population; up to, and through, this very great damage to the precious generational collateral of Egypt.

*And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for*

*Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.*

(Exodus 12:29-32)

In that assessing of damage to Egypt; firstly, the base of understanding was expanded to incorporate all the interior of Egypt.

*And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.*

(Exodus 12:33)

Also, understanding flowed through the remainder of the land of Egypt; in the fashion as spoken by the LORD, here.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.*

*And they did so.*

(Exodus 14:1-4)

From that expansion, understanding radiated out from the land of Egypt, to envelop the whole of the land of Canaan. That affect was expressed in the following event of a certain group of the people of the land.

*And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.*

*And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I*

*shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.*

*And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.*

(Numbers 22:1-7)

In that day, understanding wore this guise: fear of the LORD'S people. An incident during the time of Israel's initial settling contains words that describe this mental garment that the people had wrapped around their perception. In that event; first, we see the respect that was given to Israel.

*And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.*

*And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.*

*But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.*

(Joshua 2:1-7)

As surrounding that respect, here is the indication of the fear.

*And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more*

*courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

(Joshua 2:8-23)

The fear of the other people of the land, as for Israel, was a substitute for the pure understanding of the LORD God. A change was set out in the flow of time, by the LORD God. This change went out into the world, in order to transform that fear of human ability to cause damage. This did not require a blanket transformation, such as this one, in the time of Noah . . .

*And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.*

*And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.*

(Genesis 7:17-23)

The transformation of the fear of human capability, as was in Israel, was done in a progressive fashion. A progressive approach was necessary because; though the fear was broad, it was not complete. In that regard, I am reminded of this word of prophecy that was given by Jesus Christ, as pertains to the spread of the understanding of the God of the New Covenant.

*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

(John 10:14-18)

Please highlight these words: *I lay down my life*. Those words point the way to the spiritual progression of man's spirit, as it moves toward completed understanding of the LORD. In that pointer; think of the word, *life*, as being more comprehensive than mortality (birth to death). Think of that word, *life*, as also being applicable to the choice of how you will live--the lifestyle. In the spread of understanding; the lifestyle, too, will have to be laid down. Moreover, into the conceptualization of that commitment of the release of your hold on your lifestyle, please merge these words: *other sheep I have*. This is an admonition for all leaders that are a part of broadening the base of understanding, as follows: do not rest in your local outreach, only. This is the other side of the contract of service to the LORD

On the other side of the contract of service to the LORD; as for the leaders that are a part of the broadening of the base of understanding, please give this, here, your full commitment: do not only assess your congregation's affects, as to identify the damage that your lapses of faithfulness cause. Please consider that, there is much collateral damage that spread to places that are outside your local environment. To see it, you must open your heart to the LORD. As you do that, you will see, more precisely, the scope and span of the damage that you have caused.

The census of the time of David gives us an opportunity to see how an unseen base can be damaged by the ripple that is adjacent to our center. In this example, it seems that, the center is in David's court and other portions of his royal atmosphere; as indicated, here.

*And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.*

*And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?*

*Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.*

(2 Samuel 24:1-4)

From his center, in the royal court, king David sent out this seed of collateral damage, for the surrounding environment in the congregation of Israel.

*And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the*

*city that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer: Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to Zidon, And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, even to Beersheba.*

*So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.*

(2 Samuel 24:5-9)

Surely, the center of that outreach of David is the benefit that could come to the reign of king David; and not, for the sake of the strengthening of the awareness of the LORD God. In that outreach, king David wanted to bask in the glory of his kingdom. O, if only David could have envisioned a time such as the one when a certain king was warned about a potential recompense for his misdirection. The warning was given in two layers. The first layer was counsel for the king, telling him to avoid discomfort, as sent from the LORD.

*Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him.*

*The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee.*

*Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.*

*The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.*

(Daniel 4:19-22)

In this reminder from the LORD, the center was, too, the reign of the king. The message, and the concern that Daniel expressed, indicate that, the kingdom was moving toward damage. To address this, the king had to evaluate his intention to appear as being a great worldly ruler. So, after the stirring of the king's intention, the messenger of the LORD worked to persuade the king to divert the intention, to repentance. The persuasion was in the form of; understanding the waiting consequence of, continuing to abstain from

righteous submission.

*And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:*

*That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.*

(Daniel 4:23-26)

Finally, Daniel made a clear call for repentance; just in case the king was too immersed in the desire to see his greatness in the spotlight (as seen by who, I do not know). This is the kind of thing that Joab was trying to incite in king David.

*Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.*

(Daniel 4:27)

Maybe, if David could have imagined such an event; then, he would have seen that, a similar thing, such as, this, here, could happen to him.

*All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*

*While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

*The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body*



*was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.*

(Daniel 4:28-33)

Yes, he could have also looked forward to the recovery that occurred for king Nebuchadnezzar; but, why should David choose to undergo the suffering that the king felt, prior to the time his soul resetting event occurred, as chronicled here.

*And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.*

*Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*

(Daniel 4:34-37)

Actually, such knowledge may have only mildly affected king David. We say that because; he could have placed his main focus on this part of the experience of king Nebuchadnezzar: *mine honour and brightness returned unto me*. Therein is core of the expression: this, too, will pass. As a warrior, David could have found that type of outcome to be a comfortable position for his expectation.

Let us think of such presumptuous a one as would rely on the spirit of, "this, too, will pass", as being like unto an animated pebble that is thrown into the water. As sitting in their presumption, may feel comfortable saying, "Eventually, I will settle into a new my-place, at the bottom of these waters." Such ones need to receive an expansion of their understanding of collateral damage. For David; surely, his understanding needed expansion. To accomplish that, a measure of discord was sent forth into time, as a ripple of collateral damage, which was directly attributable to David--that event's pebble that was thrown into the water of Israel's focus on the straight way of the LORD, as sending out waves of the need for renewal of their walk in the straight way of the LORD. The base for the expansion of understanding was laid when king David came to this realization.

*And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and*

*now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.*

(2 Samuel 24:10)

Then, on this base; understanding of the damage that he had caused, as against the collateral of Israel, was solidly placed, thusly.

*For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.*

*So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him,  
Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?  
or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee?  
or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?  
now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.*

(2 Samuel 24:11-14)

At the fulfillment of the charge to David's account in history, as for his contribution to damage, as for the call to number Israel, there is the ripple of collateral damage. It is this ripple, which was spread out from the selfish, central focus of David's desire . . .

*And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.*

*So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand.*

*And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.*

(2 Samuel 24:14-16)

As we discover, later; David would have been content with the LORD'S judgment being applied to him, alone. This was revealed when David made this request.

*And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me,*

*and against my father's house.*  
(2 Samuel 24:17)

Yes, David would have been content with the LORD'S judgment being applied to him, alone; but, that would not have shown how folly can spread the base of impact. It would not have pricked the spirit, to fill it with the measure of guilt that is required for diversion of our path from the crooked way of self-focus. Even so; in that expression of remorse, David had shown a willingness to take responsibility for his error.

Many of us, who are concerned servants of the LORD as for the people of a congregation, might have made the same sort of pronouncement as David did. But, imagine how much more potent this is: As you stand waiting for the LORD God to come and remove the pain of your ignorance; instead, the LORD strikes out against your crops, or your landscape, or anything else that projects your glory. Do you think that; at that time, God would have your undivided attention? Therefore, when you decide to complain about adversity and personal collateral damage, consider the surrounding environment, and the entities that are in it--people, groups, projects, and others that are spread out from the base of responsibility and accountability.

O pebble, your surroundings will feel the waves that spread as by the impact of your, stirring the waters. So, as we prepare to do further study of this potentiality, consider this principle, which we will investigate more, later . . .

*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*

*Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.*

*Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?*

*Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?*

(Isaiah 45:5-10)

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**Next In  
Collateral Damage and  
The Heart of God**

(Pebbles Make Waves)

