

Collateral Damage and the Heart of God

Part Thirty-seven

(One Blood)

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Meditating on the Bible

Acts 17:22-31

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 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.

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One blood: in the modern day, the acceptance of this, as being a true definition for mankind, is not a common practice. One of the more common things to do is, to push against that perception, as being too limiting. Chief among the ways of pushing against that principle is, to define groups of people by using constraining titles: Arabs, Israelis, Palestinians, and so on. When we do this, we can, somehow, defy the fact of biology itself. In the extreme, when we do that, we can say that; these others are not worthy of life, at all. This kind of thinking brings sorrow to the heart of the servant of the LORD. An example of that type of sorrow is seen in the latter part of a certain event of the life of Elisha, the prophet. To give this context; here is the initial part of the event.

And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick;

and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

(2 Kings 8:7-9)

And, here is the latter part; which illustrates the sorrow of, understanding that there are people for whom, certain others' lives are deemed as being a thing to discard.

And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath showed me that he shall surely die.

And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.

And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord?

And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?

And Elisha answered, The LORD hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

(2 Kings 8:10-13)

Please note that; the LORD did not dismiss this pending attitude from reality, as He could have done. There are many natural catastrophes that could have done that for the LORD; however, God did not call any of them to eliminate the pending atrocity of Hazael. This does not mean that, God is an accomplice to Hazael: surely, God does not endorse the attitude. We received that understanding, here, as coming from the Old Testament times: *God will by no means clear the guilty.*

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and

transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

(Exodus 34:6-7)

Even though God is not pleased with such attitudes; still, the LORD is longsuffering; for, God surely is, the Big Picture, so to speak. From time to time, the restraint that is in the working of God stays the hand of immediate recompense; because, God sends His ordinances to us as for the benefit of all manners of missions and their associated stages in progressive development. As Jesus said . . .

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:

for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

(Matthew 5:43-45)

Though it may not be pleasant to think about this; the variances in the world are all portions of the Creation of God. These are in the portions of the Creation of God that was set in reality at the Beginning. Surely, we know that; the Beginning established these too, as categories of permanence in reality. What do we mean by that? To help you understand that, we share this, with you . . .

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

(Isaiah 45:18)

As a place of the expansion of the glory of God, the earth is in a category of permanence. Included in this category are other large physical things; such as, these . . .

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

(Genesis 1:14-18)

Those things have permanence because; even if there was no future, these things exist in history. And, in history, they show the majesty and glory of God. Moreover, this category--of large physical things--also set the pattern for the more esoteric category of; human-to-human interaction as practiced in structures such as, politics, and, religion. Here is an example of their appropriation for the purpose of making a political construct.

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

*And his brethren envied him;
but his father observed the saying.*

(Genesis 37:5-11)

That, the physical category would spawn ideas for other categories, makes much sense. We said that because; that particular category--the physical--is a very vocal one. The Psalmist presents a portion of the prevalence and impact of its voice.

*To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.
The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

(Psalm 19:1-6)

Also; that category--including the sun, moon, and stars, at which their associated physical laws--serve as a bridge between these two realities: the Spirit of God, and, the esotericism of the kingdom of man. A certain apostle of the New Age described the pass-through nature of the large physical things, as spanning forth throughout the kingdom of man, as sent forth from the Kingdom of God.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

(Romans 1:20-23)

All this enhances our understanding of the oneness of Creation. Wherefore it is reasonable that, the component categories of reality share in that oneness. In the early time of Creation, at the Beginning, this was obvious to us. At the Beginning, we understood the oneness, as by the presentation of this knowledge to us, as coming from the LORD God . . . *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.* (Genesis 1:31)

The indication of Scripture is that; the work was both, good, and, complete. Though we cannot point directly at the total completeness of the work; we do know that the work of Creation was sufficient enough for it to be a Major Checkpoint in the history of reality. The prominence of that Checkpoint is seen in the following Scripture.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

(Genesis 2:1-3)

Please do not substitute any of the modern, earth-based definitions of good, as setting in the place of the LORD'S designation of goodness. The LORD'S designation of good is much simpler than mankind's nuanced description of good things. Here is the simplicity that is the LORD'S designation.

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.

(Isaiah 45:5-8)

The bottom line of defining the good is this, God's identification of the Source for it .

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I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

(Isaiah 45:19)

As the saying goes: "God said it: that settles it". God's goodness is simple; isn't it? So, why do we press so hard against that simplicity? We do so because; in most instances of human resistance, God's simplicity forces an unwilling compression of our uniqueness, into a dull--by our estimation--oneness.

In the first issue that emerges in our resistance to the voiding of our uniqueness, we want to be the owner of complex things. Complex things seem to add value to our enterprise; whatever that enterprise is. In the dawning of the New Age, that assessment of value-add complexity received this rebuke, for certain ones of the religious elite of Israel.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

(Matthew 23:23-24)

If we own the formula, and, if the formula is "inscrutable"; then, we are important. At least, that is the principle that was active, and strong, here.

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

(Matthew 23:1-7)

Surely, God is not impressed by our manufactured uniqueness. God has His own formulation for uniqueness. This is that effect of the formula which makes each one of his servants' lives unique.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

(Psalm 37:23-28)

In honoring the LORD'S formulation, it is best for us to walk in this way of the LORD, as we move in God's simplicity, in this matter . . .

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

(Matthew 23:8-12)

In this Way, we have oneness in our communion with one another. It is from here that, we will move productively in the world's system. This is the formula that makes all that is in the world operate in the oneness that is a potent magnet-like attraction for the people of the LORD, as moving toward the unity of redemption. In that access, we receive the assurance that; we will excel, without having to manufacture uniqueness . . .

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

(Romans 8:28-30)

To accomplish these measures of oneness; we must rest in the fact that; it is the LORD God THAT give order to our life. We must also be content in the knowledge that; this order is for the purpose of removing a measure of the complexity of specificity, and, too, a bit of the segregation that accompanies particularity. However, these things are cherished by modern civilizations; and, they are why the resistance starts to increase. We think that, we need these things, in order to maintain our distinct space of prestige. Society persuades us to pursue this separation from others.

Moreover, we are too attuned to the flaws of others, for us to ever want to be like those others. Well; in its proper logical frame, that is a good thing. The proper logical frame is this: to not be like other worldly beings. Being like other worldly beings is not a good path forward. But, we need to be patient about growing to that place of spiritual maturation. As we move away from worldly imitative behavior, we must not lose sight of the fact that; in a former time, we were one with the world. In that time, we were like others, in this respect . . . *we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags* . . . as the prophet Isaiah declared.

The answer is not; for us to model our self after human others. The answer is: for us to join in another category of service, with many others. This is that category.

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

(Galatians 3:22-29)

In this category, we give up uniqueness. In this category, we receive Uniqueness. The Uniqueness that we receive is: to be joined with God. What; surely that is not possible: surely, we must have a clearly defined limitation in our association with the LORD, which assigns us to this, seemingly permanent, lower position.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him

a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

(Psalm 8:3-8)

If we evaluate that position carefully, we will realize that, there is a great opportunity for us, as we sit at this point of service for the LORD. At this point, we begin to understand that, we have access to this most precious gift of the LORD: the knowledge of an opportunity for growth. The opportunity is in the fact that; all those things which are subject to our dominion are assets of the LORD. We are introduced to that truth, here.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.

50:10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

(Psalm 50:7-10)

Since we have been given a proprietary like interest in the assets of the LORD, we can become joint heirs in excellence. We will evaluate that, some more; as framed by this portion of a prayer of Jesus Christ.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

(John 17:23-26)



**Next In
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(Joint Heir)

