

“They Hated Me Without a Cause”

One of the themes that run throughout Scripture - from the very first to the very last chapter - is that of Light and Darkness – and particularly the division, or enmity that Yahweh has set between the two.

Genesis 1:3-5 reads:

“And Elohim said, Let there be light: and there was light. And Elohim saw the light, that it was good: and *Elohim divided the light from the darkness*. And Elohim called the Light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:3-5).

So we find then, that the first Creative act upon the formless earth (Gen. 1:2), was marked by *division*, yea, a Divinely ordained division, between the two principles of Light and Darkness. Notice also: the commandment for Light to come into being is the first time in Scripture that we have words spoken. So it is, that Light entered into, and dispelled darkness, as a result of Yahweh’s Word being spoken.

These principles are brought together by the inspired Apostle in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, where we read that the manner in which the first words were spoken forms a pattern for the words of the Gospel being proclaimed – the means by which the New Creation is formed:

“God, *who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4).

And 2 Corinthians 4:3 informs us that the “knowledge of the glory of God” is enshrined in “the light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ” that shines to those who are able to receive it. This parallel between the beginning of the Old and New Creations goes further: just as Genesis tells us there was a “division” between Light and Darkness, so John informs us that this same condition existed in his day:

“In the beginning was *the Word*, and *the Word* was with God, and *the Word* was God ... in it was life; and the life was *the light* of men. And *the light shineth* in darkness; and the darkness *comprehended (or, overcame)* it not” (Jno. 1:5).

Notice that we have the same three elements being brought to the fore: the Word, the Light, and the distinction between Light and Darkness. In the preaching of the glorious principles of the Gospel, by the very nature of things established from the beginning, there is a marked *division*. The Gospel itself makes that division, because it contains ideas, precepts and principles that the natural man cannot “receive” (1 Cor. 2:14) any more than darkness can receive light. As in the natural, so in the Spiritual – there is a Divinely ordained division between Light and Darkness.

Our Master, Jesus the Christ manifested himself as a “light”:

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jno. 8:12).

Notice Messiah’s identification with the first chapter of John, cited above: “light of life”. He was the Light of the World, and that Light was the life of men. But the Pharisees, being unable to see beyond the natural state of affairs, did not comprehend his saying. Rather, they sought to destroy him, and so extinguish that light which manifested their deeds to be of men, and not of God:

“this is the condemnation, that ***light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Jno. 3:19-21).

Those who scorned and rejected Messiah, hiding in the shadows and obscurity of darkness, perished without hope. Being unable to bear the “reproof” of the Word (2 Tim. 3:16), they hated the Light – and therefore the supreme Light Bearer: Yahweh manifest in Christ.

We read of this enmity between the carnally minded, and those who have the mind of Messiah in our New Testament reading for the day, in John chapter 15:

“if the world ***hate*** you, ye know ***that it hated me before it hated you.*** If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, ***therefore the world hateth you ... He that hateth me hateth my Father also ...*** now have they both seen ***and hated*** both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, ***They hated me without a cause***” (Jno. 15:18, 23-25).

The benighted world hates those who cause their light to shine before men (cp. Mat. 5:14-15), because it inevitably reproves them and their deeds (Eph. 5:11). It exposes them to be lovers of men, seeking the praise of men, as distinct from lovers of God, seeking His praise at the last.

Our Master was not the first to be hated of men because of the words he spake. Revelations were given to Joseph, who related them to his brethren. They already hated him, for the love that Jacob had to him, but they hated him all the more for the visions he was given:

“When his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more” (Gen. 37:4-5).

Again, he was given another revelation, which he also made known to his brethren, who were not slow to perceive the meaning:

“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” (Gen. 37:7-8).

Ironically, one of the dreams to which Joseph’s brethren took exception to portrayed them as being lights – eleven stars (Gen. 37:9). Indeed, at the last they did humble themselves before Joseph as the later chapters of Genesis describes, as Joseph’s dreams became a reality. But Jude alludes to their initial expression of disbelief in describing the false brethren who have crept into the family of Christ:

“likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities ... wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 8, 13).

Notice the allusion here: just as Joseph’s brethren hated him because of the exalted position he would be given over them, even so these false brethren “despise dominion”. Just as Joseph’s brethren were pictured as stars, even so the false brethren are “wandering stars”. And whereas Joseph’s brethren dismissed him as a “dreamer” (Gen. 37:19), in actual fact, it is the false brethren who are the dreamers, for what they imagine will not come to pass, whereas those who comfort themselves with the visions of the Kingdom shall have their faith rewarded. But, there is a difference here between the false brethren and Joseph’s brethren. Joseph’s brethren came to repentance: for them there is not “the blackness of darkness for ever”, but light and glory when Messiah comes as the Sun of Righteousness, and when the wise shall “shine as the brightness of the firmament” (Dan. 12:3) in the New Day to come. For the false brethren however, they are like shooting stars – a momentary burst of light, yet once that light has diminished as they burn themselves out, nothing but darkness remains.

We find then, that Joseph’s brethren, at the beginning, took a hostile stance against him, for the revelations that he received - just as the Jews did against Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, one of the Master’s parables strongly echoes Joseph’s circumstance:

“his citizens hated him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14).

Even so, the Jews hated their Messiah, to the extent of conspiring with the Gentile powers in an effort to secure his destruction (Acts 4:27).

Another example of one who suffered hatred by his people, was David. He was promised the kingdom, following the failure of Saul to exercise wisdom in his rule. Saul therefore sought to slay David, seeing him as a threat to his position, rather than a saviour to Israel. So Jonathan rebuked his father in speaking of David:

“he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and Yahweh wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice:

wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

Notice the similarity here, with the words of John 15:25, cited earlier. They hated Messiah "without a cause," just as Saul hated David "without a cause". David had wrought a great victory for Israel in defeating the mightiest man of the enemy – but instead of honouring David for his work of faith, Saul, (the tallest man amongst the Israelites, who should have been able to go against the Philistine as his counterpart) instead sought to kill him.

Interestingly, it was whilst David was fleeing from Saul, that men sought to leave the city to seek after him. Hiding in the cave of Adullam, we read that "when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him" (1 Sam. 22:1). His brethren, like Joseph's, had begun with scorning David's pretensions to go against Goliath (1Sam 17:28), but having seen the salvation he wrought for Israel, they went outside the city to join him in his time of shame and flight. But it was not only David's literal brethren that came to join him: all those who were dissatisfied with their lot under Saul's ruinous reign:

"And every one that was *in distress*, and every one that was *in debt*, and every one that *was discontented*, gathered themselves unto him; and he *became a captain* over them ..." (1 Sam. 22:2).

Forsaking the comforts of city life to share a cave with a rejected king, these, according to Paul, were those "of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, *and in dens and caves of the earth*" (Heb. 11:38).

We, as they, are discontented with our lot as we dwell among the kingdoms of men. We, as they, look to a future day when our Captain shall save us from the enemy, and lead us into a glorious day of righteousness. But we, as they, have to join ourselves to our Captain going "without the camp, *bearing his reproach*" (Heb. 13:13). Though we may be despised amongst men, we recognise that as they hated him, so they will inevitably hate us, if we allow our light to shine before them, holding forth the Word of Life. Being considered "the foolish things of the world" and "base things of the world," God hath chosen us to confound the mighty, for the word of salvation is not with the mighty men of this life, but rather in the mouths of babes and sucklings has God perfected praise. Let us therefore bear the yoke cheerfully, knowing that we do it for Christ's sake, and that our labour can never be vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

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