

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ACCUSATION

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When the devil persuaded our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, to eat of The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil, the voice of accusation entered this world. Rather than being directed by the word and voice of God, man became governed by his own opinions and his own measurement of good and evil, right and wrong. He began to accuse those whose words and opinions were different than his, and excuse those whose opinions and actions resembled his own. One persons 'good guy' was the other person's 'bad guy.' Accusation enkindled flames of resentment and murder entered the world.

The present day division between left and right, enshrined in political parties, is largely an expression of the condition of man at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Those who live there are trapped in a cycle of hatred and resentment. "Factionalism" is listed by Paul as a work of the flesh i.e. an expression of the fallen nature that should be avoided by Christians (Gal. 5.20). As Christians, we need to always remember that we have no human enemies. Our only enemies are spiritual. Our enemy is the devil and his minions. and the lies they seek to implant in our minds.

In today's world where media - print, broadcast and electronic - bombard us with their data and beautifully presented opinions, it becomes even more difficult to discern truth. We tend to live in an echo chamber where we are exposed more and more (through the alchemy of algorithms) to opinions and stories that reinforce our points of view and convince us even more that we are right and the other is the enemy that needs to be feared and stopped. How can we tell the truth in the midst of this babel of confusion? Even our most trusted commentators are governed by their partisan opinions and are (willingly or not) part of the cycle of competing accusations.

The last 12 months in the US have been some of the most difficult times in its history. Earlier in the year resentment from the left was fanned into fury resulting in killing and destruction of property. Those who share their agenda justified these violent actions, and those who did not accused. In more recent days, resentment from the right boiled over into violence and disgraceful acts, by some extremists, resulting in murder and destruction of property in the area of the Capitol.

Are we to remain permanently locked in this cycle of hostility resentment and hatred? Are we Christians supposed to be a part of this? The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil always leads to bitterness unforgiveness and ultimately to violence and murder. The wisdom from above, on the other hand, *"is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."* (James 3.17)

Jesus breaks the cycle - the yin-yang - of good and evil and brings us to A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT REALM - the realm of The Tree Of Life - the realm of His word and truth. His word is truth and at The Tree Of Life we arrange our lives not around our opinions and ideas but around His word and truth. He lifts us not only from the control of sin but from the control of the "prince of power of the air" who pits us against one another in a cycle of accusation. Jesus brings us out from the cycle of hatred into His realm and His perspective where we are not guided by our opinions but by His truth. His truth is encapsulated in His word - rightly understood and interpreted.

God never takes sides with the right or left. (See Joshua 5.14) He asks us to unite with His viewpoint and does not permit His followers to call down fire or to wish evil against their enemies.

On the contrary, He asks us to forgive all, remove the plank from our own eyes and see through the single eye of truth and not through the double vision of good and evil - our side and their side.

Some believers have taken prophecies concerning Donald Trump and other matters as a call to political action. If God has truly spoken a word we believe it and pray for it to happen. Prophecy is usually **not a call to action but an invitation to faith**. Through prophecy God can give us a glimpse into His plan so that we can agree with Him and say: "Be it done according to your word." How He does it is His business. Usually He does not call us to make it happen, but to allow Him to do it His way.

Love cannot flourish or survive at The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil. The person with the opposite opinion will be seen as the enemy - as one to be feared because he upsets our expectations. Jesus' strategy for dealing with those who disagree with us is to have "the single eye," to forgive and actively make efforts to love and do good towards those who oppose our views. (Matthew 5.44)

Living at the Tree Of Life does not rule out speaking out on issues and speaking the truth forthrightly. In fact we are obliged to speak the truth in love - to speak out for the unborn, for God's eternal moral values, for the truth of the gospel, for social justice and many other matters. But, as prisoners of the Lord we can only speak the truth in love, without partisan bitterness, but as something that reflects the truth and spirit of God's eternal word and ways.

This has not been tried widely but it is **His forgotten way**. Those who have been lifted from the dominion of the "*prince of the power of the air*" (who reigns at the realm of The Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil - the realm of accusation) have been lifted out of his arena into the realm of God's marvelous light. Our lives are now no longer governed by our opinions but by His truth. His truth is His word. The eyes of those who follow Him will be 'single' - fixed on the word of God. The light of that word will enlighten us and lead us on. Their lives will be arranged not around human opinions but around the word of God and especially around the person and teachings of Yeshua. "*He who follows Me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.*" His word will be "*a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.*" His word is the voice of the Good Shepherd. His word has perfect moral standards and perfect forgiveness. His word leads to helpful action and never into hurtful strife. His word is incorruptible and whenever it is followed will make us free.

In these difficult days let us hear the voice of the Lord, follow Him and His ways above all the human voices and opinions around us. Let's hold fast His standards and believe His word.