

A NEW YEAR'S REFLECTION: CHOICES

"They Chose Creation over the Creator" (*Jeff Cavins, Bible in a Year, Introduction*)

This past Advent our Morning Prayer group used the 2022 Hallow Advent Prayer Guide to pray our way through Old Testament events leading up to Jesus' birth. We encountered Adam and Eve, whose choice to disobey God's sole law not to eat of the Tree of Good and Evil resulted in Nature being broken, Death entering the world and separation from God. We learned how God prepared mankind for the birth of Jesus, who would undo the consequences of Adam and Eve's bad choice. As we read through the history of events, it became clear that God was not about to let mankind sit on the sidelines. No... He invited us to participate in our salvation.

In our journey through the Old Testament, our group encountered Noah, who said, "Yes" to building a humongous ark 🤪, preventing life on Earth from being destroyed in the flood... Abraham, who said, "Yes" to sacrificing his only begotten son, Isaac, miraculously born of parents well beyond childbearing age 🤪.... Moses, who miraculously survived the slaughter of innocent, Israelite, baby boys and, despite being woefully unprepared, said "Yes" to God, leading His people out of plague-infested Egypt, through the parted Red Sea and 40 years of desert wanderings. And, of course, it was Moses who participated in a covenant with God which yielded Commandments and Laws by which Israelites were to live. 🤪🤪 I asked myself, with all of these miracle-filled yeses, why did it take God millennia to bring his plan of salvation to fruition with the birth, life, death and resurrection of His Son? And, having done that, why do our lives exhibit the chaos, violence and disharmony we see today? Could both questions share the same answer?

In the case of the Israelites, in addition to the yeses, there were many nos, nos which led to years of military and political defeat, captivity and, finally, exile in Babylon. Clearly, the Israelites needed more than bold yeses as in the days of Noah... commandments, laws, and miraculous interventions as in the days of Moses... sacrifices as in the days of Abraham... prophets as in the days of Isaiah... and powerful kings as in the days of King David... What the Israelites and mankind needed was reunion with God through a humble and obedient yes as in the days of the Mary.

Could the current state of our culture, marked by depression, alienation, broken relationships, violence and death, be western civilization's "Babylonian exile"? And could the answer to that exile be a humble, obedient "yes" to God? This New Year we will be asked to make many choices, which, like that of Adam and Eve, which will test our faith in God. Let us trust in God and His Word and choose Life over Death.... the Creator over Creation.

January 26, 2024

Postscript: The subtitle of this reflection is from a commentary by Bible scholar, Jeff Cavins. Early this year, I happened upon the expression, "They Created Creation over the Creator", while listening to an episode of the Bible in a Year. I thought to myself, "That's it!!! That's the sin of Adam and Eve!!! They chose Creation over the Creator!"