

Michael "Guerty" Guertin \*I recently preached in a highly-illustrative manner in Philadelphia re: "Propitiatic i.e., the removal of God's wrath from off of His people by the sacrifice of Jesus. It was filmed by this church. view it, go to their website: [www.citychurchofphiladelphia.org](http://www.citychurchofphiladelphia.org). Then click on their "sermons" link, & you should be able to view it. May it bless!

\*This month marks TEN YEARS of itinerant-ministry work! J

February 1, 2010

Dear Friends & Family,

"WHAT CHILD IS THIS?" or "SLAUGHTER of the INNOCENT"

(1/3) We've only sent out last month's newsletter just a day or two ago, but we are still in the Christmas Season, officially until the Feast of the Epiphany, Jan. 6th. Hence, I feel "authorized" to share w/you a bit more: a Christmas-related topic. We had many relatives here over the Holidays, including our 1 year old identical twin grandsons. One of them woke up one morning off-schedule, so to speak. This resulted in "Gpa & Gran' watching him while the rest of his family slept. We took turns holding him on the couch. He was quite docile as he was not used to being up this early. "Holy infant, so tender & mild", might best describe it. When it was my turn, I laid him on my chest, while I stroked his head, brushing his hair with my hand. Given the time of year it was, I could not help but think of Jesus at this age. I pondered the thought of Mary holding Him. Again I could not help but ponder the terrible awe of God's holy, furious, wrath against all the evils of His people, which would one day be poured out on Him outside the city of Jerusalem. This one-year-old I held so tenderly knew absolutely nothing, except for what he had taken in via his senses in the one brief year he had been out of our daughter-in-law's womb. I wonder when Jesus first perceived in His development as a human & grew in stature w/God & man re: His terrible fate that awaited Him, re: bearing the sins of many? As tender & innocent as our grandson looked, Jesus was exponentially more. How very hard it was (is) to fathom such an event happening. It staggers & goes beyond the orbit of human comprehension. There are cynics today re: this, one of which said the crucifixion of the Son of God was "cosmic child abuse". How arrogant, bold, & brazen we men are in our ignorance. We spit in the face of God & mock His most precious Sacrifice—that which was of greatest incalculable cost to Him. Yes, I could not take it in either, as I stroked the head of our precious grandson. My inability to take it in does not negate the truth nor the necessity of the event. Such statements of "cosmic child abuse" above reveal such deep ignorance, &/or unbelief: ignorance of the Scriptures, ignorance of the exactness of the Law, from which, even the Son of God Himself could not escape if

He were to bear our sin. As I lay in bed this morning, I tried to ponder the awesomeness, the gruesomeness, the immensity of the crucifixion, the laying of trillions of sins upon One Person, the incomprehensible fear Jesus must have felt as He saw it approaching. I pictured Him with but a pair of trunks on (actually, on the top of His head He was naked), fastened to the very iceberg that took down the Titanic in the icy-cold waters of the North Atlantic in the middle of the night. Can you imagine the horror, Beloved? I will answer for you. No, you cannot. But try to picture yourself tied down to that dreadful iceberg, in the icy-mist, unable to move, & beholding the behemoth of an ocean liner, the ocean liner of all ocean liners, a massive conglomeration of steel & million rivets, towering over & dwarfing you—coming at you. You knew impact was immanent. It was just a matter of time. Any one of us would have died long before, "for fear of what was coming upon us". Perhaps this is one of the reasons why it says in the book of Hebrews that Jesus "offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit".

## “EPIC PROPORTIONS”?

Those who know me to any degree know I have loved & collected biblical epic movies for many years. I have been inspired both in life & in dramatic ministry by them. Of all of them, there is one I have chosen not to add to my collection—“The Passion Of The Christ”, produced by Mel Gibson in 2004. The flogging scene was just too grue-some to me. I felt in my flesh it was “overdone”—no wonder another “shorter” version of the movie shortening these scenes was later released. No other biblical epic portraying Jesus’ flogging & crucifixion at the hands of the Romans came close in graphic portrayal to that of The Passion. And yet, could it be overdone? It is my personal conviction that the fear our Beloved Jesus felt in the Garden the night before, at the point of sweating blood, was not primarily for fear of the horrendous, indescribable physical torment, anguish, & pain He would endure. Rather, it was for the fierce “cup” He was to be handed by His Father—the fierce cup Jesus knew all too well, as He Himself handed it to nations in the Old Testament! It is absolutely crucial, Beloved, that we remember that the Father, Who would pour His holy, justly-deserved wrath upon His Son, sent His Son, first, to glorify His Son in the greatest possible way, & then, out of His love for His people. Secondly, it is of crucial importance, that we remember that Jesus, the Eternal Son, the Word, was not forced by the Father to come. He willingly submitted. “Child abuse” on earth is never willingly received by the child. Justly deserved punishment by a pristine holy God upon an Innocent Substitute in order to save the objects of His affection from eternal torment in a lake of fire burning with sulfur is not “abuse”. It is an indescribable act of mercy!

## “ONLY 2 PLACES”

There is another crucial & critical point we must remember: God’s wrath MUST be poured out somewhere! It must be released! If not, The Lord’s Word & His Own veracity is at stake. If not, sin reigns unchallenged & unpunished! If not, sin is condoned! Remember these mockers & skeptics of this wondrous sacrifice, another verse from Hebrews comes to mind: “...(they) have trampled underfoot the Son of God, & treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant... & have insulted the Spirit of Grace.” (10:29). And yet—Jesus said ALL manner of blasphemies spoken against God & Himself would be forgiven, except, of course, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mt.12:31,32).

## “ANGELIC FACES” or “ABOUT ‘FACE’”

Speaking of children, I was reading a commentary on Colossians yesterday, written by a doctor of the Episcopal Church from centuries past. Assuredly, this man was much more learned than me, & many years my theological senior. And yet, with fear & trepidation (?), I felt the need to correct his work. He rightly asserted that man cannot look upon the face of God, as no man has seen God (Jn.1:18). The only way the Father can be revealed & beheld is through the Son. Correct again. This was in the context of Jesus being described as the image of the invisible God (1:15). However, the author went on to assert that angels could not look at the Father either, except through Jesus. I got one of those “Hmms/?’s” inside. I later pondered that the Seraphim in Isa.6:2, so very close to His throne, had wings to cover their faces. Huh. Perhaps the author is right! But then, Jesus Himself asserted that there are angelic beings who behold the face of the Father continually ! (Mt.18:10). Guess whose angels these are? The angels of the little ones. While “little ones” in Scripture can mean “young disciples”, in this context, Jesus’ “object lesson” to which He is referring is a you

child He took into their midst to illustrate His point. My mind just recol-lected the passages in Acts re: the Apostles' preaching concerning Jesus, twice referring to Him as "Your Holy Child" Jesus. The Greek word rendered "child" may also be rendered "servant", as it is in many translations. The point? Jesus, God's Lamb so helpless, tender, innocent, unwary, etc. as an infant, children's angels privileged with continual face-to-face wonderment of the Father, & our new grandson whom the Lord used to instigate such thoughts, render new meaning to the oft'-sung Christmas carol, "What Child Is This?". I pray these thoughts become part of me as I minister to children in the coming year. May it be so.

Michael

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