

Purpose: to encourage you to trust and obey the risen Messiah.
“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...”

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A Brief Review

In Part I of this essay, we looked at mysticism, particularly the version taught by Meister Eckhart of the German 1300’s. Eckhart’s cosmology may be summed up as follows: “There is a mundane world, but a more important sublime reality. Some elements of the sublime may enter the mundane, and vice versa. To enter the sublime, one must transcend all thought, all language, and all symbolism.”

Our Accusers

Since some of my readers may not agree with Eckhart’s cosmology, let’s stick with the reality we all acknowledge—that mundane world we were born into. Muddy roads are just one aspect of the mundane; another unavoidable feature of the mundane world is the “voice of accusation”.

We are all surrounded by adversarial voices which carry messages of opposition. The messages are sometimes a part of actions taken against us. The voices may be inside ourselves, or they may come from other people or from institutions. The voices may be false accusers (traducers), or they may accuse us truthfully. The voice of accusation is a universal. The messages are also somewhat universal: “you’re worthless”, “you’re a failure”, “you’re a sinner”, etc. The most challenging voice repeats to us: “You deserve to die”.

A person’s reaction to the voices of accusation is essential to his or her ability to live victoriously. What reactions are the most healthy? Which methods are most likely to result in sustainable living? Before tackling these questions, let’s look more closely at our adversaries and their messages of accusation.



The Sawtawn

The ancient Hebrew writers of scripture had a word for the adversarial voices that we hear: sawtawn (or sawtan). This is #7853/7854 in Strong’s Concordance, and may be singular or plural. The sawtawn is sometimes portrayed as a “prosecuting attorney”; sometimes Yahweh himself is a sawtawn for our benefit (as with Balaam in Numbers 22:22); sometimes the sawtawn is a person or group of people; sometimes the Hebrew writers actually personify the sawtawn; in these passages, the word is translated as “Satan”.

Joseph’s Sawtawns

The following table shows some “sawtawn type” encounters that Joseph endured in the book of Genesis:

Reference	Sawtawn	Type of Message
Gen. 37:4-8	Joseph’s brothers	You’re proud; We hate you.
Gen. 37:10,11	Joseph’s father	You’re proud; I suspect you.
Gen. 37: 18-28	The brothers	We’ll destroy you, you dreamer!
Gen. 38:31-34	The brothers	Joseph was killed by beasts.
Gen. 39:7-12	Potiphar’s wife	You covet me, don’t you?
Gen. 39:13-19	Potiphar’s wife	Joseph tried to violate me.
Gen. 39: 20	Potiphar	You molested my wife.

I have only listed the original “adverse voices”. Imagine the additional voices that Joseph might have heard inside his head, repeating the accusations that had been made against him.

Important: All messages of opposition have reference to the physical, mundane world. “You did this in a certain place at that time,” the voices say, or “You failed in this way at that location at that time.”

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How could Joseph endure his adversities? If he could transcend the physical world (as a mystic might), this would only offer temporary relief. When he returned, he would still be in the real, physical Egyptian prison.

Joseph's Answer

For Joseph, the answer did not involve a mystical transport from the mundane to the sublime. Joseph's creator extended from the sublime to the mundane, and came alongside Joseph in his Egyptian bondage. “**Yahweh was with Joseph...**”, and “**...his master saw that Yahweh was with him...**”. Even when Joseph was imprisoned, “**Yahweh was with him; he showed him kindness...**”; “**Yahweh was with Joseph and gave him success...**” (All quotes from Genesis.)

Since our messages of inadequacy take shape within the physical world, our refuge from those messages also must be found in the mundane. In Joseph's case, he did not “mentally check out” of the Egyptian prison, but his Heavenly Father “checked in”. Joseph's mental defense against the sawtawn was essentially this: “Yahweh loves me and Yahweh is with me.”

The Holy Spirit is sometimes called the “paraclete”, or “comforter”. This is literally “the one who comes alongside”. If the Spirit would truly come to the place where I am, in the time I reside in, this is a valuable refuge from the storm of accusing voices which assail me.

My Friend, "Peter"

As stated above, whenever a voice of accusation is raised, it refers to the world of time and space. The sawtawn always point to a specific place, a specific time, and a specific accusation. We can try to ignore the voices, or deny them, or disprove them. This is easiest if the voices are false, but what about when they are true?

The voices began to murmur against my friend “Peter”. Were they true voices or false? I may never know, but in either case, the clamor became great. Peter had strain and pain, but no adequate mechanism to deal with the voices of accusation. Ultimately, the only way he could silence them was to end his ability to hear them. I'm very sad that Peter did not know and use the strategy below.

A Strategy That Works

The voices of accusation reside in the mundane, real, physical world. They refer to the real, so it is in the real that we must find our refuge—not in some mystical, ethereal plane.

Suppose that you are troubled with accusations that are true. If so, admit to the truth of your sin, but run immediately to the cross of Jesus Christ. In effect, you must say: “I am guilty as charged, but in the first century A.D. in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ died for my sins because of his love for me.”

Suppose that you are troubled with accusations that are not true. If so, in effect, you must say: “I am not guilty of these charges, but I am guilty of many other things. However, in the year 4 A.D. in the city of Jerusalem, etc.” This strategy will not make all your problems disappear, but it can help you maintain some sanity in an insane world. Mysticism is not the answer to our sawtawn; the answer is found only in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

**“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...
...for what the law was powerless to do...God did by sending his own Son
in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering...”** Romans 8:1-3

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