

Picking up an offence against God

When we face many injustices in our lives, in our countries, with unjust leadership, conflict, the innocent suffering and so on, it's often hard for us to be able to trust that God really cares about us. This is a theme we often find in the Bible.

John 1:32-34 It's clear from this that John was very sure who Jesus was. But in Luke 7:18-19, he is doubting if Jesus really is the Messiah. Why?

Note Jesus' response, especially vs 32. 'Blessed is the man who takes no offence at me.' John the Baptist must have picked up an offence against Jesus. Note: Read the beginning of the chapter. His doubts came *after* hearing what Jesus was doing – healing the sick, raising the dead. It seems he wasn't very impressed and was getting disillusioned. Was it a case of:

- a) Personal offence because he felt abandoned, forgotten about? His unanswered prayers? You love everyone else except me....? I'm rotting in this awful prison and you don't seem to care at all.....

John 11. The story of Mary & Martha after Lazarus' death is also very poignant. Martha runs to meet Jesus when she hears He is approaching. She challenges Jesus very directly about not coming to help them when Lazarus was dying. Jesus is not the least perturbed by this, but dialogues with her, ending by drawing out faith from her. Mary's reaction is very different. She stays away, and doesn't come out until someone fetches her, saying that Jesus is calling for her. She falls at His feet in tears and says exactly the same words as Martha, but this time, Jesus is deeply troubled and weeps. Was He detecting broken trust in Mary? Could she have been communicating that she had really believed He cared, but now this was causing her to question that.....? (Note: Jesus doesn't condemn her - He weeps for her.)

Consider: Is there any disappointment in our lives which has caused us to 'stay away' in our hearts even if outwardly we still seem to be worshiping?

Or was he thinking:

- b) Is this what Messiah is supposed to do? What about the huge problems in my country? He's supposed to be our great liberator, addressing the national problem of unjust occupation, helping us overcome our enemies, ousting this bad king and ushering in the real King and His Kingdom? Instead, he's going round healing the sick and spending time teaching women of bad reputation and eating with tax collectors and sinners. This surely is not what Messiah was being sent to do?

Consider: Are we also saying "I want a God who is STRONG, not WEAK & IMPOTENT! Someone who DOES SOMETHING about all the problems I/we are facing!"

Was John confused and offended that the future King (if it was really him) was behaving like a *servant*? He seemed to have forgotten, or not understood, the many prophetic Scriptures in Isaiah which described the coming messiah as a Servant. For example:

- **The Suffering Servant Isaiah 53**

Peter didn't understand this at all. Straight after acknowledging that Jesus was the Christ, the Anointed King, he was rebuked for refusing the idea that the Kingdom would come through **REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING LOVE**. This idea was obviously offensive to him!

- **Isaiah 42** was written was written about the Christ – that He wouldn't raise His voice in the streets, wouldn't be organizing a political opposition group and rallying crowds against the Government, wouldn't even be announcing big miracle rallies! Also He wouldn't break bruised reeds. Any successful leader would get rid of weak people in his team, especially those with a dubious history who would damage his reputation.

Is this is why the cries of 'Hosanna' turned into 'Crucify him!' The supposed Messiah had turned out to be a disappointment. The king they were blessing earlier allowed himself to be arrested, beaten, and did not call down legions of angels to defend him. Therefore he must be a fraud.

But the Kingdom message is totally at variance with the world's way of dealing with things! 'My are ways are not your ways...'

The theme of many of Jesus' parables:

- the farmer sowing seed then patiently waiting for the harvest
- the farmer not picking out the weeds from the among the wheat for fear of damaging the wheat (and anyway, some of the weeds may turn into wheat! Remember Saul of Tarsus!!)
- the small and insignificant becoming big and significant in the end (the mustard seed, the leaven in the dough)

Consider: Am I really impressed with God and His way of working?? If not, I'm not a worshipper. *This is the test: is there anything about God's way of doing things that I would like to change?*

"You don't care!"

The main accusation against God throughout the Scriptures is that He doesn't care. Some of the strongest accusations in the Old Testament come from the journeying of the **children of Israel** through the desert. Each time there is a testing, they accuse God of not caring for them, and not making adequate provision for their needs (Exodus 16:2,3,7-9,12; 17:3,7; Numbers 20:1-5; Ps 78:19). And each time, God had prepared the right provision for them had they only asked Him. We see the seriousness of these accusations in Psalm 95:8-11; Hebrews 3:8-12, 15-19 and Hebrews 4:3-11. These verses refer back to Exodus 17:7 where the question was. "Is God among us or not?" "The main accusation in their hearts was, *"You don't care! When human beings suffer You are nowhere to be found!"* The underlying unbelief caused hardness of heart which prevented the children of Israel from entering into God's promised rest in Canaan. They were led astray in their hearts, because they had not perceived or recognized His ways, and become progressively better and more experientially and intimately acquainted with them. (Hebrews 3:10 Amplified Bible). Instead they became recipients of His wrath. The awesome, solemn message to us is clear. "Therefore beware brethren! Take care lest there be in any one of you (in me?) a wicked unbelieving heart - which refuses to cleave to and trust in and rely on Him - leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12 Amplified Bible). No accusing heart could enter Canaan.

This theme of God not caring is even picked up by Jesus' own dear disciples. When they find themselves in a boat in a storm and Jesus is fast asleep, their response is, 'We're going to perish and you don't care!' (Mark 4:38)

(For a full study on accusing God in times of difficulty, see the document at the end of this teaching called Accusation against God – a study I did many years ago when I was struggling with this topic myself).

Application:

Am I personally offended because of the way God worked/ is working in me, my family...

Are we offended today by God's way of working (or seemingly NOT working) in our country? In the world?

'Why doesn't God do something? Doesn't He care?'

'Why doesn't He stop the injustices in my country?'

'Why doesn't He intervene? Why doesn't He strike Boko Haram's leaders dead?'

'Why doesn't He remove ISIS from the face of the earth?'

'Why is He rather working quietly in one heart at a time?'

Ps 139: 23-24

'Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me, O God and know my thoughts!
And see if there is any *offensive* way in me...'

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you anywhere in your life where you may have picked up an offence against God, which is stopping you from being able to really trust Him. You will need to repent of this.

But **behind the offence is often a wound**. This needs to be healed. You need to bring Him the pain of feeling abandoned, forgotten, and so on, and ask for a revelation of His heart. You may need to covenant with God to take time to go through this in depth, maybe with a trusted helper.

Conclusion

Offence is the seed out of which unbelief grows.

Taking offence at God for whatever reason is serious because it leads to unbelief, which then, like for the children of Israel, causes us to die in the desert instead of entering the promised land! We cut ourselves off from the Only One who can heal and restore us.

Accusation Against God

"Ascribe greatness to our God, the rock. His work is perfect, and all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness and without injustice, good and upright is He." (Deuteronomy 32:3,4)

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and merciful and gracious in all His works." (Psalm 145:19)

The Bible makes it quite clear that God is utterly blameless in all his dealings with mankind. There is no evil in Him at all. He is good, just and loving in all that He does. Man however, has not seen it that way. Ever since Eden, man has accused God, and is still doing so today. Even His own dear children have accused Him time and time again. We have accused Him of not loving, not caring, not keeping His promises, not being truthful, not being just. And I have realized that I have accused Him a great deal...

Why have we accused? Why have we not understood the truth? Satan knew that if we saw Him as He really is, we would flock to Him and willingly worship. Therefore he gives us a distorted interpretation of our experiences, and this causes us to accuse God instead of loving and trusting Him. He constantly lies to us about God's character and God's intentions in our lives (John 8:44b).

In this study, I would like to take a look at some of the accusations leveled against God in the Scriptures, and begin to expose them as being groundless. As I do so, I trust that *my* accusations will also be exposed for what they are.

We see that way back in Eden, **Adam** tried to blame God for the fall. "The woman that *you* gave me..." (Genesis 3:12). It doesn't take much for us to see that God was utterly blameless here. Some of the strongest accusations in the Old Testament come from the journeying of the **children of Israel** through the desert. Before they left Egypt, God had already revealed Himself to them as the eternal "I AM", as well as being the El-Shaddai, the all sufficient One. He had shown His power and his concern for them through the miraculous way He had delivered them from Pharaoh's hand. Yet, as soon as they face hardships in the wilderness, - on the banks of the Red Sea, they are full of accusations. "God is playing a cruel joke on us! There weren't enough graves in Egypt! We were better off remaining in captivity!" (Exodus 14:11-12). Then God again displays His mighty power and care for them and on the other side of the sea, they rejoice and exult in their deliverance. There was not even mud on their feet! And God in His mercy had allowed the whole incident in order that they could witness with their own eyes the destruction of the enemies. How else would they have known that their pursuers were gone forever?

Only three days later, they are murmuring against God again, because of water shortage (Exodus 15:24). Again God miraculously meets their needs. In fact, He does much more than meet their immediate needs. At Marah He declares Himself as the healer for all time of all the consequences of our bitter accusations.

Just like the children of Israel, I also forget so soon how wonderfully God has met with me in the past. I respond to the needs of the moment with accusation against God - that He isn't there, or that He doesn't care, - that He doesn't provide adequately for my needs. Even straight after a mighty deliverance, I can return to my accusations and despair. No wonder God says with anguish in Hosea 6:4, "Your love is like the night mist and the dew that goes early away".

Each time there is a testing, they accuse God of not caring for them, and not making adequate provision for their needs (Exodus 16:2, 3, 7-9, 12; 17:3, 7; Numbers 20:1-5; Psalm 78:19). And each time, God had prepared the right provision for them had they only asked Him. We see the seriousness of these accusations in Psalm 95:8-11; Hebrews 3:8-12, 15-19 and Hebrews 4:3-11. These verses refer back to Exodus 17:7 where the question was, "Is God among us or not?" "The main accusation in their hearts was, *"You don't care! When human beings suffer You are no-where to be found!"* The underlying unbelief caused hardness of heart which prevented the children of Israel from entering into God's promised rest in Canaan. They were led astray in their hearts, because they had not perceived or recognized His ways, and become progressively better and more experientially and intimately acquainted with them. (Hebrews 3:10 Amplified Bible). Instead they became recipients of His wrath. The awesome, solemn message to us is clear. "Therefore beware brethren! Take care lest there be in any one of you (in me?) a wicked unbelieving heart - which refuses to cleave to and trust in and rely on Him - leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12 Amplified Bible). No accusing heart can enter Canaan.

In Numbers 11, we see the children of God accusing God for allowing them to suffer hardships and for leading them through a wilderness. Even **Moses** himself joins in the accusation (vs11), and feels that God has dealt ill with him. He even suggests it would be better for God to kill him (vs15). But God had already revealed to Moses why He had to lead them through a desert (Exodus 13:17-18). It was because they were not ready to cope with war in the land of the Philistines. His reason for allowing the hardships was also a good one as we see in Deuteronomy 8:2-5. It was to humble them, and to prove them, to know whether their hearts were truly towards Him. And through it all, God supernaturally provided for them (Deuteronomy 8:4). As for Moses, God had a strategy to take the pressure off him too (Numbers 11:16-17). I also often take offence at the hardships God allows in my life, and fail to see His loving purposes behind them. Yet God says, "I have tested and chosen you in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10). "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10). If I listen to Him, He has a strategy to prevent me from becoming overburdened. I *can* trust Him!

In Numbers 14:2,3,36 they accuse God of asking them to face giants in Canaan. They expected to be defeated, and accused God of having evil intentions towards them and their families. They said it was because He hated them! (Deuteronomy 1:27). This convicts me deeply. How often I have mistrusted God's intentions for me and my family. I have had expectations of disaster and felt this was what God wanted! I have believed the unbelieving messengers instead of the Calebs and Joshuas. I have focused on the giants instead of on the grapes, and have blamed God.

In Numbers 16:3,11, 41, and 17:5, they accused God of not giving them the right leaders and authority figures. They thought they could have made a better choice, but God vindicates His anointed servants. Sometimes even a mad Saul can be God's appointed and anointed ones through whom He fulfills His purposes in our lives. When we rebel against the leadership He has chosen, we end up destroying ourselves.

God's reactions to all the above accusations are two-fold. On the one hand He is broken hearted. The anguish of His heart is clearly heard in Jeremiah 2:5,11 as He asks what evil He has done to merit their rejection. On the other hand His reaction is anger - a deep anger that calls for judgment. Time and time again the accusation of His people kindles His anger, and He moves in judgment. I cannot escape from this. If I persist in an attitude of accusation, I will inevitably reap judgment in my life. But if I turn and repent, I reap the fruit of his broken heart on Golgotha. But even in the midst of judgment He is merciful and turns away His wrath, and keeps giving his children another chance.

This pattern of accusation continues throughout Scripture. I am amazed to see how prevalent it is. I will pick out a few individuals. **Naomi** accused God bitterly. In Ruth 1:13, 20-21 she accuses God of being against her, dealing bitterly with her, and afflicting her. Yet we are not told that it was in response to God's word that the family had left Bethlehem, the "house of bread", and gone into idolatrous and sinful Moab. If we move outside of God's will we cannot expect His protection. But even in Moab, God blesses her with a devoted daughter-in-law. By then, however, her accusations have locked her into bitterness, so that she even wished to be called Mara (bitter). This is a warning to me of how one's whole character can be twisted and warped by persisting in a bitter, accusing attitude.

Jonah was another who accused God and became angry enough to die! (Jonah 4:9 - an interesting statement. I wonder how much ill health is caused by anger!) He preached mercy, without having mercy in his heart, and then accused God for being merciful! (Jonah 3:8, 9; 4:2). Am I offended when God forgives my enemies? Does it cause me to accuse Him of being unfair? I can recognize times when I have felt that way.

Even **David**, the man after God's own heart, was angry with God on several occasions, and accused Him of injustice. When God smote Uzzah for touching the ark of the covenant (2 Samuel 6:6-10), David was angry and offended, and did not want the ark (God's presence) anywhere near him. He could not accept the fact that God's holiness, embodied in the ark, could not be contaminated by sinful man doing things his own way. But David was open to correction, and later accepted the ark into his city with celebration and great joy. We see this change of heart quite often in the Psalms: for example in Psalm 73, the writer accuses God of injustice for allowing the wicked to prosper, but by verse 17 he is coming round to God's perspective, and ends up deeply repenting (vs 21-22), and putting his whole trust in God. In several Psalms (44:24; 42:9; 77:9) David and the other writers accuse God of forgetting them, and fear He may forsake them. (Psalm 38:21; 71:9,18; 138:8) but most of the time there is praise and victory by the end of the Psalm! God appreciates this kind of honesty. He is happy for us to pour out our anger and confusion in His presence, where He can then lead us into his perspective. I am in the process of learning to do this!

Jeremiah, like David, found it hard to accept the prosperity of the wicked, though in his heart he knew God was uncompromisingly righteous and rigidly just (Jeremiah 12:1).

Habakkuk, also, was open to be corrected. Although he accuses God of being unwilling to hear and save (Habakkuk 1:2-4), by the end of the book we have a glorious expression of trust in God's goodness whatever the outward circumstances.

Job in chapter 1:20-22, and 2:10, was exemplary in his refusal to foolishly accuse God, and in his ability to worship and bless God in the most adverse circumstances. Later in the book, however, Job loses this victory. He accuses God of causing the innocent to suffer and being indifferent to his suffering. In Job 27:2, he accuses God of vexing and embittering his life. In Job 30:20-21 he accuses God of not answering, gazing indifferently at him, being cruel and harsh to him, deliberately persecuting him. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. In chapters 1 and 2 we see clearly that it was Satan, not God, who did all this to Job and that God was not wanting Job to suffer, but allowed His choice servant to be the focus of a confrontation in the heavenlies. Job, however, did have moments of glorious triumph in the middle of his intense suffering (Job 13:15; 19:25; 23:10) when he could reach out to God and proclaim His trust in Him in spite of everything. In the end, God Himself has to confront Job with his accusations (Job 40:2-4) and this leads to a deep repentance in Job 42:1-6, who is later restored and abundantly blessed.

On this Biblical Counselling School, God has confronted me with my accusation, and like Job I have had to admit that I have never really known Him! Spiritually, I have been on the ash-heap, and have come to see that the only way to experience eternal life is to *know Him* (John 17:3). Misconceptions about Him led to my being close to spiritual death in the desert. I have repented of my unfounded accusations and God has begun His restoring process in me. And I pray that God will give me, too, twice as much as I had before!

In Isaiah, God answers some of the accusations of His people.

In Isaiah 45:9-12 He reminds His children of their lack of right to accuse Him. Following their accusations that He refuses to come to their aid (Isaiah 63:11; 64:12), God then confronts them saying that He has called but they will not listen to him (Isaiah 65). Yet He is so merciful. In answer to their accusation in Isaiah 49:14, "The Lord has forsaken me and my Lord has forgotten me", He gives the wonderful reply that even if a mother forgot her own offspring, yet He would never forget them, as He had indelibly imprinted them on the palms of His hands. This was done supremely in the nail prints. God's answer to all our accusations is to call us to look at the cross where we see the constant disposition of the Father's heart towards us. This has been the place where I, too, have been able to lay down my accusations. "He who did not withhold His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)

In the New Testament, the accusations gathered more and more momentum and Jesus became the focus of all mankind's accusations against God throughout history. On Golgotha's Hill in particular, all the accusations of all the generations were targeted at one person, because He claimed to be Emmanuel, God with us. There mankind's fury against God came to its climax and God was declared guilty and worthy of death

The accusations of the **sophisticated religious** were not so much against His actions as against Him personally. John 8:6 says they kept hoping to find a charge for which to accuse Him – i.e. they merely used incidents to confirm a heart attitude of accusation. They accused Him of law-breaking and Sabbath breaking (Luke 6:7; Matthew 12:10; Mark 3:2). Yet they have no answer when He honestly asks them, "Who of you convicts me of wrong-doing or finds me guilty of sin?" Then He pertinently adds, "Then if I speak the truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46) Why indeed! They resented His not adhering to their rigid, preconceived ideas, His not fitting into their petty framework, and so do we. They accused Him of blasphemy (Matthew 9:3), of being demon-possessed (Matthew 12:8), of being a glutton and a wine-bibber, (though they had accused His cousin John of the opposite! Luke 7:32-34). They accused Him of misleading and deceiving people (John 7:12), and one can especially sense the despising tone of voice as they accused Him of being a friend of sinners (Luke 5:31; 15:12; 19:7; 7:34, 36-50). If He was going to be merciful to those they despised, then they would despise Him. It was unjust of Him to forgive in this way! They wanted to be acclaimed for their supposed merit, to be allowed to earn their salvation. Mercy offered to sinners was quite unacceptable.!

By and large, the **common people** accused much less, though their anger was quite easily aroused by the religious critics. They accused when their material well-being was threatened, as when a herd of swine was lost during Legion's deliverance (Matthew 8:34). They accepted His teachings to a certain degree, but murmured, found fault and grumbled when it became unpalatable, as when Jesus described himself as the Bread of Life (John 6:41,43). Even His own disciples began to accuse Him of preaching an offensive and unbearable message at this stage, and some withdrew from following Him (John 6:60-61, 66).

One of the passages that has given me most understanding on the nature of my accusations is the story of **John the Baptist** in prison. In Luke 7:19 we are told that John sends his disciples

to Jesus, asking if he really was the Messiah or should they look for someone else. Yet John had known this by the Holy Spirit as soon as he saw Him, and had heard the amazing confirmation from heaven “This is My beloved Son”! So why was he doubting now? Jesus’ response to this question is very illuminating. He simply tells them to give him the evidence. But they had already done this. At the beginning of the chapter we have an amazing miracle carried out at a distance, then a funeral that they intercept ends up no longer being a funeral, and the people conclude, “God has come to help His people.” Verse 18 says that John’s disciples told him about all these things. In fact, it was on hearing these amazing reports that John decides to send his disciples to Jesus to ask that question. How can we make sense of that?!

The next bit of Jesus’ response is very significant. He says (vs 23) "Blessed is he who takes no offence in me, and who is not hurt or resentful or annoyed or repelled or made to stumble whatever may occur" (Luke 7:23 Amplified Bible). Why did He send that message back to John? What offence could John have taken at Jesus? There must have been some offence otherwise Jesus would not have sent him that message. Could it be that John was thinking, “It’s all very well you doing these wonderful things for everyone else, but you seem to have forgotten about me. The Messiah is supposed to open prison doors and set captives free, but I’m rotting here in this prison while you seem to be having a very good time.”

What this shows me is that *taking at offence at God is the seed out of which unbelief grows*. Unbelief is not intellectual. It is rooted in an offence taken against God for some personal reason – some incident or season in our life where we felt abandoned by God. We begin to think He is lying to us when He tells us that He has loved us with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3) We say inwardly, “Don’t expect me to believe that. I have too much evidence to the contrary.” Essentially, unbelief is a character assassination of God. “You are not who You say You are!” This helps me understand the seriousness of unbelief and why it causes people to harden their hearts and die in the wilderness.

It is the accusations that come from **His own beloved disciples** that pierce me the most. During the storm on the lake, straight after witnessing the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, they accused Him of not caring that they were going to perish, (Mark 4:38), although He had made it clear He would give His life a ransom so that they would never perish (John 3:16). This has been the central theme throughout this study - that God doesn’t care. Nothing is more painful to us than the accusation that we don’t care. How much more so for Him?! We see another incident in the death of Lazarus. Both **Martha and Mary** both accuse Him but in a different way. Martha runs out to meet Him and comes straight out with it (John 11:21). "If you had been here, it wouldn't have happened! And we sent you word, but You didn't come!" Jesus is not fazed at all by her honest outburst but dialogues with her and draws faith out of her. Mary, however, was so hurt, she even refused to go out to meet him (John 11:20). She doesn’t come until He specifically calls for her. She then falls at his feet, weeping. She uses exactly the same words as Martha, but Jesus hears something different from her and was deeply troubled. Was she saying in her heart, “Jesus, I sat at your feet and listened to your words. I trusted You! I really thought you cared! But now, it seems You don’t”. When Jesus sees her distress, He is deeply moved and weeps (vs 33-35). I don't believe He wept because Lazarus was dead, - He never doubted He would be raised from the dead. More accusations follow in verse 37 after the statement that Jesus had loved Lazarus, and again we are told that Jesus was deeply moved. I believe He wept because He saw how much their accusations were hurting them, as well as hurting Him. Their trust had been broken, and so they stayed away from the only One who could heal their broken hearts. And He still weeps for us when in our hearts we accuse Him. Dear Lord, do my accusations cause You such grief? But You don’t condemn me – You weep for me.

For **Judas**, the chief accusation arose when Jesus accepted extravagant worship, as very costly perfume was poured onto His feet in an act of pure love (Matthew 26:7-13; Mark 14:3-9). What unforgivable waste! What unacceptable extravagance! How could He accept such worship?! The scriptures tell us that this incident precipitated the betrayal. "Then", we are told, Judas went to the chief priests in order to betray Him for financial gain (Matthew 26:14; Mark 14:10). What was there in Judas that abhorred this worship? We are told it was not his alleged concern for the poor (John 12:6). It was guilt which could not tolerate Jesus' worth being recognized. Jesus' very acceptance of such worship showed clearly who He was, and it was unbearable to him. This accusation then struck the match that kindled all mankind's accusations into a mighty bonfire. Events followed quickly. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He was accused of not silencing His disciples as they acclaimed Him as King. (Luke 19:38,39) The accusations increase in intensity during his trial until they become violent and vehement (Luke 23:10) "This man perverts, misleads, corrupts, and turns away this nation! He stirs up and excites the people! He claims to be the Messiah! (Luke 23:2, 5,14 Amplified Bible) He is an evildoer and a criminal! (John 18:29) He is worthy of judgment as a hideous death-deserving blasphemer!! (Mark 14:64). The final accusation was written over the cross. "Jesus of Nazareth - King of the Jews". He claims to be our king, *but we will not have this man to reign over us!* (Luke 19:14)

But let's stop at the point where He stands in Pilate's hall, and Pilate asks what He has to say for Himself in view of all the accusations leveled against Him (Matthew 27:12,14). And in the face of all these accusations, Jesus was *silent*. Why silent when He had the chance to defend Himself, I wondered. Come on, Jesus, here's Your chance! The revelation of why He was silent has changed my life. *He was silent because He had come to earth to take the responsibility for everything*. Through His silence He was saying, "I will take all your accusations and anger. Count Me guilty for everything. Dump it all on Me. This is why I came." He knew that His answer now was not to be with words, but with blood. And His dignified silence was deafening.

And there, incredibly, in the very act of taking the blame and the responsibility and submitting to all these accusations, Jesus silences them forever! It is in making Himself totally vulnerable to my accusations that He disarms me. As I look at the cross, my heart cries out, "Not guilty! I still don't understand why we have to suffer, but I know now that it's not Your fault!"

"Be silent before the Lord God.. for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice." (Zephaniah 1:7) "Let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20). **GOD HAS TRULY VINDICATED HIMSELF!!**

Now I cannot but agree with scripture, that "The Lord is upright and faithful to His promises. He is my rock. There is no unrighteousness in Him". (Psalm 92:15) "Is there any injustice upon God's part? Certainly not!" (Romans 9:14). "For the Lord is good and His mercy endures for ever. His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

As I have done this study, I have seen afresh the horror of man's continuing unfounded accusation against God, - and especially mine. And I have been deeply moved as I have followed the progress of these accusations and seen them all accumulate at Calvary. I'm amazed at Jesus' silence in the face of my accusations. He does not defend himself. He just loves me and gives Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20b). And when I see that, I lay them all down at His feet, and worship. Then He sends His Holy Spirit to renew my mind and establish me in the truth about Him. Jesus, I love you!

How do I guard against accusing Him in the future? I must take particular heed to Jesus' words, "Blessed is he who *takes no offence* in me, and who is not hurt or resentful or annoyed or repelled or made to stumble whatever may occur." (Luke 7:23 Amp) In the parable of the sower it is the seed in the shallow soil which is offended and caused to stumble when trouble or persecution comes (Matthew 13:21). Jesus warned us ahead of time that there would be tribulations so that we would be prepared and not be offended when they came (John 16:1). I must make sure that my roots go deep into God so that tribulation will not cause me to accuse Him. This is of vital importance in facing the future, as we could well be entering a time of much tribulation. It is only those people who *know their God* who can be strong and do exploits! (Daniel 11:32)

So this is my priority as I leave this B.C.S. - to "have personal knowledge of Him, be acquainted with and understand Him, appreciate, heed and cherish Him - and serve Him with a blameless heart and a willing mind" (I Chronicles 28:9 Amplified Bible). When I really know Him, I will never be able to accuse Him again, but instead, give Him my wholehearted love and obedience.

Rhiannon E. Lloyd

Biblical Counselling School, Youth With a Mission, November 1985 (modified May 2010)