

Art Katz:

In Oswald Chamber's devotional My Utmost for His Highest for April 26, entitled "The Supreme Climb," we read:

The great point of Abraham's faith in God was that he was prepared to do anything for God. He was there to obey God, no matter to what belief he went contrary.

Strange that one's beliefs about God can actually come to a place of constituting a barrier to God. We can hold convictions so dear to one's self that they actually oppose God Himself – no matter how much we are persuaded of their rectitude. Such is the mentality I very often encounter in Christians sympathetic to Israel. They cannot conceive that the present nation can again be subject to Last Days' trials that might require its defeat and expulsion from the Land of the Jewish people, and a yet future ingathering of the redeemed survivors.

It is apparent that nothing less than the view of God is at stake here. How could He require another suffering? Haven't Jews suffered enough already? Don't they deserve a place of security and peace at last? Are we ready to have all our humane and just notions of what God will or will not do turned upside down? In what, if this is true, can we safely believe?

Can one not begin to suspect in these responses a greater concern for self than for God? One immediately thinks of the consequence for one's self rather than how this will affect God? How does such an apocalyptic scenario relate to the issue of His purpose and glory? Can His glory be better served in the final expression of His righteous judgment that again disperses Israel and the Divine intervention that returns her? Or are we impressed with the present history of the State so much the result of its own Zionistic endeavor? Would we prefer to rob Him of that glory in our insistence that present Israel is already the fulfillment of prophetic scriptures? Can it be that not only our view of Israel, but our whole spirituality as the Church is at a warp, even though it has sufficiently served our ends till now? Can the depth of it be altered without a calamity of the kind, thus bringing everything we have known up to now into question?

As Chambers says, "a supreme climb" was required for Abraham in the bringing of his cherished Isaac to the mount of sacrifice! "God could purify his faith in no other way." And whatever our own wrong traditions about God – even in that which is "correct" – even given of God (for a season), "if we keep true to God, God will take us through an ordeal which will bring us out into a better knowledge of Himself."

I am suggesting that Israel's future Holocaust is that ordeal. We will have to painfully surrender our convictions and conventional beliefs about Israel, or, in disgust and disappointment, give up the faith itself. Chamber's encouragement is that "if you will remain true to God, God will lead you straight through every barrier into the inner chamber of the knowledge of Himself!" Job's final revelation of God required the destruction of all his categories while, at the same time, God's anger was kindled against his friends whose "correct" doctrines completely missed the point of the ordeal. Perhaps what is lacking for ourselves is the paraphrase of Job's cry, "Yea, though He slay Israel, yet will I trust Him." This did Abraham, with Isaac the very son of promise, and so also must we, if we be Abraham's seed.