

The Holy Spirit's Unpleasant but Effective Antidote to Your Viral Rage

A woman driving her little girl to dancing lessons changes lanes improperly. This forces a man in another car to break hard and swerve. There is no wreck. Neither car is even scratched. Yet the man lays on the horn, screams curses out the window and follows her, tailgating dangerously. She speeds up to get away, but he draws a gun and shoots into her car.

Stories similar to that happen almost every day. We read them and shake our heads. *What is going on?*, we ask ourselves.

The answer is implacable, uncontrolled royal rage. The rage of royalty is different from common anger both in intensity and toxicity. No one is totally exempt from anger. From a kneeling position under an open drawer, stand up abruptly, banging your head as hard as you can, and you may well discover the frontier of your own exemption. You may in fact, be shocked at the fury with which you slam shut the drawer you yourself had left open. *Stupid drawer! Stupid, stupid drawer!* The universally shared experience of anger at an inanimate object serves perfectly to reveal our own carnality. However, that is hardly the murderous, imperious road rage of a tyrant.

In Chapter 3 of the book of Daniel, king Nebuchadnezzar is a murderous example of royal rage. Having erected a golden statue, which may or may not have been a statue of himself, he commanded that it be worshipped by everyone in his kingdom, on pain of being incinerated alive in a huge furnace. When three Hebrew lads refused, Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual and ordered the three young men to be bound and cast in.

The previously announced punishment was not changed because of

the king's fury. What changed was Nebuchadnezzar. His was not merely an appeal to law. Certainly there was a law, the law of the king's command. Refuse to worship, and into the fire you go. The law is the law. However, his response when they refused to worship the statue was something more than law enforcement. It was fury, sheer unmitigated rage, and its effect was textbook.

In the grip of rage such as Nebuchadnezzar's, all sense of reason, all self-control is gone. The Bible says the king ordered the furnace dangerously overheated. Even the guards who opened its doors were burned to ashes because of the blazing heat of Nebuchadnezzar's rage.

An emperor's rage doesn't care who gets burned. Such rage is unrestrained by concern for the innocent. It cannot be reasoned with or made mindful of collateral damage. Those who are destroyed by its flames are not real to enraged royalty. They are mere props in the monarch's theater of rage.

The first verse of Psalm 2 (KJV) asks an astonishing question. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Verse two holds the answer. "The kings of the earth set themselves ... against the Lord." The rage of royalty is actually the rage of rebellion.

The rage of royalty refuses to be softened by mercy, will not be entreated and cannot forgive. Not even the risk of self-destruction can cool its furnace. The flames that leapt out and killed his guards might just as easily have cremated Nebuchadnezzar himself. In the blaze of his uncontrollable anger, the thought of his own risk never occurred to him, and any such caution coming from cooler heads would have been ignored. The rage of royalty will not be satisfied by anything except the destruction it lusts to unleash. Furthermore, royal rage will not easily suffer delay. Vengeance is said to be a dish best served cold. Not rage. Rage is an overheated furnace, an explosive volcano whose lava could burst out at

any provocation and pour down the mountainside now—not next year, nor next week or even tomorrow. Now!

The Latin word for rage is “rabies.” The Romans claimed “mad dogs” suffer from the disease of rage. It was also the Romans who observed the toxicity in the saliva of rabid dogs. Hence the ancient Romans called their saliva “virus,” which is Latin for poison. In other words, rage is a form of madness, a toxic, lethal and poisonous virus.

The question remains, why should rage be a particular virus of royalty?

Here’s the answer: It is a disease of the entitled. Nebuchadnezzar felt entitled to be obeyed, perhaps worshipped if the statue was of him, even at the cost of another’s most deeply held religious convictions. Entitlement is always the source of the toxic virus of rage. When the royal sense of ownership is frustrated, rage quickly boils over.

Road rage is the perfect example. If I deserve to go first, to have the outside lane, to turn in front of you or whatever, the virus that transforms a minor traffic irritant into road rage is entitlement. Such rage is not a normal reaction to frustration. Road rage is not caused because someone was inconvenienced. Irritation becomes road rage because someone dared to usurp something to which some king (or queen) felt entitled. Whether behind the wheel of a car or in an office or at protest rally, violence springs from entitlement.

Take, for example, the violent rage of the black-clad antifa (anti-fascist) thugs. Theirs is the spirit of entitlement. They feel entitled to have their way despite elections. The Occupy Wall Street hoodlums (the weaker cousins of antifa) felt entitled to the wealth of others, irrespective of the rights of others. The antifa thugs are exactly what they claim to oppose. They are, in fact, fascists. Some see Fascism as hyper-patriotism. Fascism may wave the flag when it chooses,

but that is hardly the soul of Fascism. Its core conviction is entitlement, the correct few entitled to absolute authority over the multitude who refuse to “worship” as they are told. That is Fascism, and an unchecked resort to violence is endemic.

How dare anyone, absolutely anyone stand up to them? How dare anyone think differently or, God forbid, actually say anything of which they do not approve? Antifa ‘s fascist thugs and their distant but approving patrons in Congress, academia and elsewhere truly believe they are entitled, like Nebuchadnezzar, to control the public discourse. Anyone who dares to speak out is refusing to bow before their golden statue and deserves the fiery furnace. Seven times hotter than necessary. Now. No questions asked.

It is ironic, to say the least, that in the name of religion, Nebuchadnezzar determined to incinerate those whose religion forbade them to worship the statue. Hitler’s *Sturmabteilung*, the Brown Shirts, viciously beat people who dared to speak against National Socialism. They attacked the political rallies of opposing parties and practiced every kind of violent, disruption. They did all this in the name of “protecting the Nazis.” It is an exquisite irony that antifa ‘s fascist thugs, wearing black shirts rather than brown, use exactly the same Nazi tactics to shut down the free speech of those whom they label as fascists and Nazis. Perfect.

The question, for the rest of us, is how do they think? How can they believe it is their royal right to violently attack anyone who dares say anything different from their party line? The answer lies with Nebuchadnezzar. It is the rage of royalty. They feel the right and the authority to redefine the vocabulary of debate, dictate what beliefs and political philosophies may be expressed and violently end free speech because they are entitled to. They even feel entitled to words. Because they own them they can make them mean anything they like. On what basis do they claim this entitlement? Well

you may ask.

They claim to be superior, and the superior always feel entitled to control lesser beings. Nazis claimed a racial superiority that entitled them to a dictatorship of "true Germans." Communists claimed an economic superiority, namely that workers are the superior breed, which entitled them to a dictatorship of the proletariat. The antifa thugs claim a general and ill-defined leftist political superiority, which entitles them to a general and ill-defined dictatorship of the left, whatever that may look like.

The Democrat party and their candidate in the presidential race of 2016, felt regally entitled to the White House and all the corridors of Washington power. The antifa attacks on Republicans, conservatives and Trump supporters, while perhaps not orchestrated by the Democrats, were more than tolerated and weakly, if at all, denounced. The antifa violence was their not-so-distant cat's paw of intimidation. They deserved the election and any stubborn populist refusal to recognize that must be attacked by any and all means. If that meant slipping the leash on violent antifa attack dogs while denying responsibility, so be it.

Once the election was lost, and the antifa attacks had proven fruitless, the Democrats retreated behind the second redoubt. Longtime embedded federal employees began to act as underground operatives in an internal conspiracy of resistance. They began to do what saboteurs always do: disrupt, destroy and delay. They weaponized whole divisions of the federal government. Hiding behind the law, they became lawless. Claiming moral superiority, they acted immorally. They used the government to attempt to bring the government down. Why? Because they were entitled and they were enraged.

They were entitled to use the FBI as their political weapon. They also used the IRS, the CIA and various other departments. The rage of frustrated royalty consumed them, and the battle

was on.

Here is what Nebuchadnezzar teaches us. He could not be talked down from the ledge. The rage level in his blood was at seven times the normal heat. This wasn't Nebuchadnezzar bumping his head. He was a king, an entitled emperor whose will had been frustrated and who could not bear such an unutterable insult.

It must be said that royal rage is peculiar neither to the left nor to politics. Politics may be where it is most often and most publicly observed. Road rage, for example, is also royal rage. How dare you take the lane of the king of that lane? The husband who punches or emotionally punishes his wife because his dinner is not ready does so because his sovereign entitlement has been violated. He is the king of his castle, and he was not worshipped as he deserved. The teenager who screams and throws a tantrum because her freedom was restricted by her parents is a frustrated princess raging against an unbearable insult. She is royal. Her parents are peasants whose only purpose is to serve her. How dare they? The enraged ex-employee who feels he "owns" his job and cannot be ordered about or, God forbid, laid off, suffers from royal rage. He feels entitled to the position as a king born to the purple. How dare they depose him?

Obviously, such domestic sufferers of royal rage are hardly Nazis or deep-state saboteurs. They will probably not put on black masks and burn tires in the street or throw anyone into a fiery furnace. They may, however, in the heat of their rage, say and do hurtful things that can even burn themselves like Nebuchadnezzar's guards.

The more to which we feel entitled, the greater our potential for rage. When royal rage bursts into the open as a destructive conflagration, we can be sure of one thing. It was there within us all along, because we saw ourselves as entitled kings and queens rather than servants of God and of humanity.

There is an antidote for the virus of royal rage, but the taste is unpleasant. It is called humility. I must say to myself, *This is not mine. I neither own it nor deserve it. I am not entitled to it. If it comes to me by the will and grace of Almighty God, so be it. Likewise, if it is His will that I not be chosen or elected or promoted or whatever, then so be it. I will accept His will humbly and wait on Him.*

The three Hebrew boys whom Nebuchadnezzar threw into the furnace were the perfect example. They said, "We don't know what the will of God in this is. He is powerful enough to save. We know that. We do not know if He will. What we do know is this. We will not worship your statue no matter what."

They did not rage against the king, or against their sentence or against the guards. They did not rage against a silent but powerful God who only revealed His will after they were already in the fire. They never claimed to be entitled to anything: not their jobs, or their freedom, or to return to Israel or even to their other lives. They said all these things are in the hand of God. They were fully submitted to the will of Almighty God. They were calm, unafraid and rageless in the furnace of someone else's rage. {eoa}

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