

When Abigail saw David, she hurried, and alighted from her donkey, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground. She fell at his feet, and said, On me, my lord, on me be the iniquity; and please let your handmaid speak in your ears. Hear the words of your handmaid.

*Please **don't let my lord regard this worthless fellow**, even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I your handmaid didn't see the young men of my lord, whom you did send. Now therefore, my lord, as Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, seeing Yahweh has withheld you from **blood guiltiness**, and from **avenging yourself with your own hand**, now therefore let your enemies, and those who seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.*

*Now this present which your servant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please **forgive the trespass** of your handmaid: for Yahweh will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord **fights the battles of Yahweh**; and **evil shall not be found in you** all your days. Though men be risen up to pursue you, and to seek your soul, yet **the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with Yahweh your God**; and the souls of your enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling.*

*It shall come to pass, when Yahweh shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and shall have appointed you prince over Israel, that **this shall be no grief to you, nor offense of heart** to my lord, either that you have **shed blood without cause**, or that my lord has **avenged himself**. When Yahweh shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember your handmaid. David said to Abigail, Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me: and blessed be your **discretion**, and blessed be you, that have **kept me this day from blood guiltiness**, and **from avenging myself with my own hand**. (1 Samuel 25:23-33)*

This story highlights a **close connection** between **taking offense** and **craving for vengeance**. Our human version of vengeance almost always involves **desires for violence, retribution** or at least some sort of **payback** against people we are offended by, whether close to us or even hearing about some event we perceive as an **injustice**. **Offense** therefore is **closely linked to our definition of justice** which more likely than not is rooted in the **reward/punishment scales** kind of justice.

*The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. **He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense** to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And **many among them shall stumble**; they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken." (Isaiah 8:13-15 NKJV)*

The more we come to **perceive God** is being **exactly like Jesus**, the **more potential** there is to be **offended by God**. This may seem **strange**, yet it is far **more true** than most are willing to admit. When God does **not meet our expectations of justice**, we either have to make **significant change in the way we think about justice** most of our lives, or we will **gravitate towards cherishing a spirit of offense** that fosters **unbelief in the real truth** as it is in **Jesus**.

*What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, **who didn't follow after righteousness, attained to righteousness**, even the righteousness which is **of faith**; but Israel, **following after a law of righteousness, didn't arrive at the law of righteousness**. Why? Because **they didn't seek it by faith**, but as it were **by works of the law**. They **stumbled over the stumbling stone**; even as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense; and no one who believes in him will be disappointed." (Romans 9:30-33)*

Why is **Jesus** identified as a **rock of offense**?

What does it mean to believe in Him?

Notice that **offense** is tightly **connected** with **disappointment**.

*For you who believe therefore is the **honor**, but for those who are disobedient, "The stone which **the builders rejected**, has become the chief cornerstone," and, "**a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense**." For they stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed. (1 Peter 2:7-8)*

*When he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the **souls** of those who had been **killed for the Word of God**, and for the **testimony of the Lamb which they had**. They cried with a loud voice, saying, "**How long**, Master, the holy and true, **until you judge and avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:9-10)*

***Woe to the world because of offenses!** For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! (Matthew 18:7 NKJV)*

What does this **actually mean**? Have we allowed ourselves to soak in this and seek to appreciate it at a much deeper level? Is Jesus insisting that **people have to be offended** or **be offensive**? If not, then **why did He say that offenses must come**? If this is not about **God forcing people to engage in offenses**, why did Jesus use such strong language insisting that offenses *must* come?

*Now I urge you, brethren, note **those who cause divisions and offenses**, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are **such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly**, and by **smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple**. (Romans 16:17-18 NKJV)*

It now dawns on me that **so long as** there are people **unwilling to synchronize** with the reality God designed and **cling to the counterfeit design** invented by Satan, **offenses cannot be avoided**. Those **claiming** to be part of the body of Christ **yet who cause division**, do so because they are **contrary to the doctrine of the Lamb**. This is why I am realizing more clearly how the **cost of authentically emulating the Lamb** as revealed in God's Christ is **unavoidably offensive** to all who **worship the contrived and projected god** the world prefers to make Him out to be.