

REJECT FALSE HOPE: THE LIE OF THE NEW RELIGION

Universal equality and autonomy are the bread and butter of modern thought. The mantra goes: we are accountable to no one, dependent on no one, but must have precisely the same things as everyone else. A false hope is associated with these falsehoods: if you will simply be your independent self, and abide by the principle of universal equality, then all will be well. We will all gather downtown, hold hands, and sing *Kumbaya* as one big happy group of independent individuals. This false hope appeared in the wake of the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Many Christians spoke glowingly of Justice Ginsburg while acknowledging disagreements with her over abortion. They say she was a wonderful example and leader, even though she got the abortion issue wrong. The problem is she was wrong on abortion because she was wrong on autonomy and equality. Anyone who would say she was a great advocate for women's rights must, of course, deal with her approval of all of the murdered women in the womb. When it comes to the understanding of life, death, equality, self-governance,

womanhood, and justice, the Christian positions and Justice Ginsburg's positions are as oil and water.

NO GRACE WITHOUT HEAVEN

On the night of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, American citizens gathered on the steps of the Supreme Court Building in Washington D.C. Beneath the engraved words "Equal Justice Under Law," they sang John Lennon's *Imagine*, a song which subverts the very pillars upon which such a notion stands. His song is an anthem of the East, one that cannot be harmonized with the Christian faith.

Lennon implores us to imagine there is no heaven above us and no hell below us. He reassures us that it is easy to imagine this if you try. Before we take Lennon's advice, we should consider that a gazelle can imagine no lion. It may even be easy for the gazelle to imagine the lion is not there. But it is not very smart. The same goes for heaven and hell. God has determined that heaven and hell exist. Autonomous man claims he can imagine away what God has established. But God says, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4).

In the attempt to erase heaven and earth lives the impulse to reject "the binary." But, the Christian system is full of the binary. Creation itself is marked by the binary. There is light and darkness, land and sea, sun and moon, man and woman. Creation points to the ultimate binary, God and not God, or God and creation. But Lennon imagines no countries so that we can share the world. He goes so far as to dream of no possessions whatsoever. We assume that would include his song, so perhaps we can remove his name from it. The dream maintains that once the binary is gone, the world will live as one.

Imagine is the worship song sung by those who possess the false hope of equality and autonomy. When we hear the word autonomy, we often think of the autonomous individual. When we think of equality, we assume you need two individuals who are equal in some sense. But when equality must be universal, when you must have an equal amount of everything, you end up being identical. If you are identical, then you are no longer two, but one in every sense. This new humanistic and holistic oneness, attained by removing possessions and borders, cannot have another entity outside itself standing over it. The whole lot of humanity must be autonomous. God must go. The lie is that we can do such a thing and maintain love and peace. That is the false hope of universal equality and autonomy.

Such an anthem, sung on the steps of the Supreme Court, is troubling enough. But things got worse that evening as the group followed *Imagine* with John Newton's *Amazing Grace*. Grace comes down from the heavens, but Lennon has erased them. Grace implies that someone gives you something you do not have, but Lennon has said there are no possessions. Grace involves receiving help from outside of yourself. But, autonomous man is not allowed to do such a thing. He cannot do such a thing because we are all now one in every sense, so there is no other being from whom we might receive help.

While there can be no peace between *Imagine* and *Amazing Grace*, syncretism is precisely what is being attempted. The combination of these two songs is a troubling example of what is happening in certain evangelical churches. There is an attempt to blend Lennon's vision and Newton's vision, the secular faith and the Christian faith, the false hope and the blessed hope (Titus 2:13).

OBSERVING THE FALSE HOPE

Remarkably, the same people sang both of those conflicting songs on the steps of the Supreme Court of the United States. The attempt to harmonize those songs illustrates the religious impulse even within people who claim they want no religion. We have an opportunity to see how you can gut Christian concepts of their Christianity while still using the vernacular. When the arc of a particular culture is away from its Christian heritage, you face the problem of singing your father's song without the actual content. *Amazing Grace*, however, like the Constitution, is not a living document that we can twist to say whatever we want it to mean.

For example, when Newton wrote that amazing grace saved a wretch like him, he referred to his rebellion against God. God says, "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10-12). Humanity's wretchedness arises from humanity's sin. We identify sin according to God's law, "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Newton was wretched because he transgressed God's law. He broke the Ten Commandments.

The secularists sing about wretchedness, too. They use the same word, but a different dictionary. They do not believe we are wretches because we have broken divine law. Humanity is wretched because we have transgressed humanity's autonomous will. We have not been true to ourselves. In recent days, you are a wretch if you violate the standard that a woman has a right to kill her baby. You are a wretch because you think it is fine if human beings are not equal in every sense. You are a wretch if you say that a woman should submit to her

husband (Ephesians 5:22). You are a wretch if you believe fathers should raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). For that matter, you are a wretch if you say children should obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1). Such relational duties run roughshod over the false hope of autonomy.

Similarly, when Newton sang that he was once blind, but now he sees, he referred to Christian conversion. Conversion involves repenting of sin and trusting in Jesus Christ. It includes having the veil of ignorance removed so that we see the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The secularists can sing of moving from blindness to sight as well. But, here again, they use the Christian lyric without the Christian definition. For them, to move from blindness to sight is to get woke: “I was blind to the oppression that women were facing, but now I see. I was blind to how people were transgressing upon my self-sufficiency, but now I see that I am an independent person.”

Newton looked to the new heavens and new earth when he said, “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’d first begun.” He understood that our never-ending praise would require God making all things new. Therefore, He will be the one we praise forever.

The secularists can sing the same line, but they import an entirely different meaning. They believe they are the ones who will, without divine aid, bring in the glorious day. For them, the God of the Bible is not eternal. But the religious impulse within longs for someone to go on forever. So while the secularists have no hope in the resurrection or a literal new heavens and earth ushered in by God, they imagine

humanity's long march toward a golden age on earth where they will sing the praise of the creature forevermore.

That is a false hope. David was right, "Vain is the salvation of man" (Psalm 60:11).

ABORTION: THE FRUITLESSNESS OF AUTONOMY

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was made in the image of God. She paved several trails. By common grace, the Justice developed intellectual and argumentation skills. Yet she spent those good gifts fighting against God, most notoriously in the advocacy of abortion. On that issue, Justice Ginsburg once wrote,

I appreciate the intense divisions of opinion on the moral question and recognize that abortion today cannot fairly be described as nothing more than birth control delayed. The conflict, however, is not simply one between a fetus' interests and a woman's interests, narrowly conceived... Also in the balance is a woman's autonomous charge of her full life's course—as Professor Kasrst put it, her ability to stand in relation to man, society, and the state as an independent, self-sustaining, equal citizen.¹

It is a striking admission to say that abortion is more than birth control delayed. Birth control prevents the fertilization of an egg. It prevents the conception of a child, a being created in God's image. Justice Ginsburg has admitted that abortion is the taking of a child's life. She admits that the child in the womb, whom the Justice calls a fetus, has interests. Trees

¹ Ruth Bader Ginsburg, "Some Thoughts on Autonomy and Equality in Relation to *Roe v. Wade*," *North Carolina Law Review* 63 (1985): 383.

do not have interests. Rocks do not have interests. People do. She even goes so far as to admit that, in abortion, the child's interests are in "conflict" with the mother's interests. Her point is not that there is no conflict. Her point is that the conflict is not just the baby's interests in conflict with the mother's interests "narrowly conceived."

The baby has much more to battle against if she would not be murdered. She is in conflict with her mother's autonomy and zealous pursuit of equality in relation to man. The wickedness of these words cannot be described. But the logic is not hard to identify, "You desire and do not have, so you murder" (James 4:2).

Hopefully, it is clear why Christians have no place to say that Justice Ginsburg was a great woman. One of our major problems is Christian leaders who make the mistake of showing honor where it is not due. For one reason or another, there is a strong and present tendency to use words that people will like to hear while vacating them of their true meaning. For example, speaking of Justice Ginsburg, Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said that Christians "ought to recognize and respect her courage."² Christians indeed should acknowledge the worth and dignity of Justice Ginsburg as a woman created in the image of God. But, it is the progressive, feminist left that thinks Ruth Bader Ginsburg was courageous. That very distorted notion of courage is what results in the slaughter of the unborn.

Far from being courageous, we cannot think of anything more cowardly than murdering an innocent child against

2 Albert Mohler, "The Death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the Future of the Supreme Court," Albert Mohler, September 19, 2020, <https://albertmohler.com/2020/09/19/the-death-of-justice-ruth-bader-ginsburg-and-the-future-of-the-supreme-court>.