

The Adopted Life

Christmas Day ~ 12.25.2010

“Dude, Gimme Back My Rod!”

Stick this in your Yule log and smoke it: That sweet little baby in the manger is God’s wrath in action. Really. Everybody knows Isaiah 9.6:

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

This Hallmark-worthy verse evokes snuggly feelings in me. But when I read the verse in context, I find that the gift of this child does not arise out of God’s huggable-ness. Verse 8 says “The ZEAL of the LORD of hosts will do this.” Zeal is anger, the jealous rage of a jilted lover. It is the wrath of God that has caused this child to be born.

In his wrath, my Father shines His own Light into my “deep darkness” (v.2). He breaks the rod of the oppressor (v.4), and I hear my own voice shouting “Dude, gimme back my rod!” Surprised, I look down to see that my hands and clothes are soaked with the blood of my Father’s children (v.5).

The Father’s response? ZEAL. WRATH. FIRE. He takes my blood-soaked clothes and burns them in eternal flames (v.5). He plunders my life, preserving what is good, discarding what isn’t. The result is joy (v.3), peace on earth, and goodwill toward men.

~ John Stonecypher