

Ryan Tucker

Ms. Giknis

College English

December 2nd, 2022

In the Beginning, Was The Boy

God is very important to “The Man” in our story. There are religious references littered throughout the story and it becomes very obvious that before the apocalypse our character was in some way religious. I found the way he talks about religion in relation to “The Boy” very telling of his feelings toward him. The scene that I want to discuss takes place very early in the story and a close reading of it gives you a very interesting perspective on our pair's relationship. In *The Road* Cormac McCarthy has The Man view The Boy as his “messiah” and due to that their relationship can’t be viewed through the typical father-son lens.

We start off with The Man just relaying what he sees. While waking with The Boy he comments “When it was light enough to use the binoculars he glassed the valley below. Everything paling away into the murk. The soft ash blew in loose swirls over the blacktop. He studied what he could see. The segments of road down there among the dead trees. (3)” There is a very foreboding sense to the scene which is reasonable considering the context of our story but an interesting detail that McCarthy included is the word “valley”. It may just appear that this detail was included carelessly but when we skip to the end of this scene it becomes clear that this

word choice was very intentional. “He knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God, God never spoke. (3)” The only person in the bible that is said to be “The Word of God” is Jesus Christ. Much as missionaries today use Jesus to fuel their journey The Man uses the boy to fuel him when he calls him his warrant. He is his reason to keep pushing in this apocalyptic world. In the Bible, we also get references to God guiding people through valleys such as the one that our characters are in now. You might argue that this could just simply be a father motivated to keep his child safe but I disagree. Just as God protects people, the boy is protecting him and keeping him safe. In this world, his “Word of God” is the only thing that gives him a right to live. The Man has taken all that he knows religiously and now looked toward The Boy.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” - Psalm 23:4-6

This is important to our story because now we can understand why things play out the way they do for the rest of this story. We are looking at someone who is not motivated by survival, finding out what happened to the world, or even by keeping his family going. Rather he is pushed on by his spiritual belief that the boy is going to get him through each and every valley. He also believes that this boy can serve to be the post-apocalyptic messiah.