



*"...The heart of the sons of men
is full of evil,
and madness is in their heart
while they live..."
(Ecclesiastes 9:3)*

*Wherewith shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before the high God?
He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;
and what doth the LORD require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with thy God?
(Micah 6:6,8)*

the righteousness of being woke:
resisting the un-biblical anti-woke heresy

part 4

Luke 22.¹⁹⁻²⁰

¹⁹And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

²⁰Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Introduction

In our previous homilies in this series,¹ we observed God's call that Israel remain in woke remembrance of its experiences under Egyptian oppression and of God's intervention in emancipation from that oppression. The remembrance of oppression and emancipation went together. One could not remember and commemorate the latter without remembering and commemorating the former.

God did not extend Israel the call to woke remembrance out of antiquarian interests. The call to woke remembrance of oppression and emancipation sought to accomplish more than maintain an appropriate reverence for and appreciation of God. God's call to woke remembrance sought, primarily, to produce in Israel a more just nation, devoid of all forms of injustice, violence, and oppression—personal or institutional. Therefore, the woke remembrance of the nation's past oppression was foundational for much of Israel's law code.

¹ The preceding homilies examined the subject in light of Deuteronomy 4.⁹, Exodus 13.³⁻¹⁰, and Deuteronomy 6.²⁰⁻²³.

“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, ‘What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?’ Then thou shalt say unto thy son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand...’”²

Stipulations were issued with the reminder of past oppression in hopes of eliminating present and future injustice. Sleepy, and stubborn, forgetfulness is tantamount to apostasy. It is tantamount to turning one’s back on God. Forgetfulness leads to individual behavior and national policies that can only be immoral, unethical, and serve to expand ungodly injustice, violence, and oppression.

For thousands of years, Jews have remained in woke remembrance of millennia old oppression and under obligation to observe the Law’s stipulations meant, primarily, to produce healthy human relationships and avoid social injustice. This inspired woke remembrance is not, however, exclusively Jewish. Christianity, Judaism’s stepchild, is also called to woke remembrance. In this homily, we consider Jesus, how he suffered injustice and violence, the call he extends to disciples for woke remembrance of his violent death, and Christianity’s continued woke remembrance of him, his suffering, and his death—a remembrance that is institutionalized, especially, in the ordinance of communion/ sacrament.

The woke remembrance of the sacrament/communion

All three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) report that one of Jesus’ final ministerial acts was to conduct a Passover meal with his disciples.³ During this Passover feast, and consistent with its standard traditions, Jesus served his disciples bread and wine. In doing so, he transformed these traditional emblems into something new: a “New Testament,”⁴ or “New Witness.” Whereas the “Old Witness,” celebrated especially in the Passover Feast, remembered Israel’s oppression at the hands of Egypt and its emancipation

² Deuteronomy 6.²⁰⁻²¹

³ Matthew 26.²⁶⁻²⁹, Mark 14.²²⁻²⁵, and Luke 22.¹⁹⁻²⁰.

⁴ See Mark 14.²⁴

through the outstretched arm of God, the “New Witness,” celebrated especially in the Christian ordinance of sacrament/ communion, remembered Jesus’ violent murder at the hands of Rome, the western world’s great superpower, and the emancipation from sin that his death revealed.

Consistent with its too-common disparaging views about “the cross” and Jesus’ death on the cross, my LDS culture does its very best to tame and domesticate the sacrament and turn it into something, anything other than a remembrance of the injustice and violence perpetrated against Jesus. To be sure, much is happening in that most ubiquitous of all LDS ordinances—a celebration of our renewed and energized life, for one. But make no mistake about it, among the many things it is, it is most certainly a woke remembrance of Jesus’ oppression, or the unjust and violent death that Jesus suffered at the hands of wicked men.

So, let’s just be clear, folks. Upon that table/ altar at the front of every LDS chapel and under that white covering/ shroud draped over every sacrament table is a body. If one lets one’s eyes pass slowly from one end of the draped table to the other, they will see, if they are discerning, the indications of the veiled body that lies below the shroud—head, chest, ribs, hips, knees, and toes. There is no movement below the veil because the body found there is dead. It has been violently brutalized. It is broken and bleeding. The priests who officiate at the altar will pick the body apart and offer it as food to the congregation. They will prepare the blood so that the congregation may drink.

If you are offended or repulsed at such thoughts, language, and imagery you are not alone. “Verily, verily,” said Jesus,

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are

dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”⁵

Then, we read,

“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, ‘This is an hard saying; who can hear it?’

When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, ‘Doth this offend you?’...

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”⁶

Yes, that most taken-for-granted of ordinances represents some intense and radical woke remembrance—one that the Romans, to be sure, would not have appreciated. As with all woke remembrance, the undiscerning are offended. But, the commemoration of the sacrament, with its woke remembrance of Jesus’ violent death and brutalized body, was the second commandment—after baptism—given to the Church newly formed in 1830.

“It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine *in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus...*”⁷

The revealed prayers confirm that we “eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son,” and “drink of it... in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them”⁸—and, again, that remembered shrouded body is not a living but a dead body. It is simply impossible to discerningly partake of the sacrament without a woke remembrance of Jesus’ violent death. The apostle Paul confirmed this in his instruction to the Corinthian church.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, ‘Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in

⁵ John 6.⁵³⁻⁵⁸

⁶ John 6.^{60-61, 66}

⁷ DC 20.⁷⁵

⁸ DC 20.^{77, 79}

remembrance of me.’ After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, ‘This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.*”⁹

Sacrament/ communion and its relation to injustice, violence, and oppression

Christians have been participating in woke remembrance of the injustice and violence perpetrated against Jesus for 2000 years. They are to continue to the end of time as we reckon it—“till he come.” But one would be very dense, indeed, if they remembered his death without the remembrance of how he died; dense if they refused to remember the violence of ancient Rome that it perpetrated against the innocent Son of God.

Yes, Jesus died for the remission of sins. The sacrament embraces that reality. But the sacrament is also a reminder of injustice, violence, and oppression, just as it is a reminder of Jesus himself. Indeed, Jesus’ very death was meant to reveal sin—especially in the many forms sin takes in injustice, violence, and oppression. Jesus submitted to injustice and violence and hung on that cross, in part, to force us to look. To bring us face to face with the injustice, violence, and oppression we perpetrate, especially against the vulnerable and innocent, and repent.

Just as Israel’s oppression and emancipation are inexplicably linked, each necessary to the other, the emancipation from sin that Jesus accomplished is inexplicably linked to the injustice and violence he suffered and the revelation of injustice and violence that his death on the cross represents.

Jesus sent his disciples out into the world to proclaim his violent death, revelation not only of his own power to emancipate, but of the world’s injustice, violence, and oppression. This proclamation was not only intended to remind hearers of Jesus’ redemptive past acts, but to

⁹ 1 Corinthians 11.²³⁻²⁶

change and reform hearers enslaved in an unjust, violent, and oppressive present. The proclamation was intended to put an end to all such injustice, violence, and oppression. Through him, we can be forgiven of sin. But through him also we can identify the sin of violence and, together, find strength to resist and reject it.

So, embedded in our woke remembrance of Jesus' violent death and our communal commemoration of it through ordinance is a revelation of the world's injustices and violence, especially its violence against the vulnerable and innocent. They are most dense who, having "viewed his death"¹⁰ on the cross and commemorated it nearly every week of their life in sacramental communion, continue themselves to engage in the violent oppression of others or support institutions that maintain themselves through injustice, violence, and oppression.

Whether "New" or "Old" the testament of God has always been founded on woke remembrance—first on woke remembrance of injustice, violence, and oppression, and second, on woke remembrance of God's direct and merciful response to such sin. It has always had as one of its primary objectives the end to injustice, violence, and oppression.

Conclusion

There was a time when, at this point, I would conclude with a brief testimony, offer a word or two of encouragement, and trust the reader to apply the message to their own life. But those days are gone. The days of speaking in parables or with a still small voice are over. We live in a new era when subtle, soft, tactful speech will not do. We live in an age of the scream. Too many, having lost their hearing, require the scream. So, now, in this new era, I make my meaning and intended application unmistakable.

Ancient Israel's woke remembrance of the violence perpetrated against it, and Christianity's woke remembrance of the violence perpetrated against Jesus serve as calls to personally reject and actively resist injustice, violence, and oppression against any new victim. The long

¹⁰ See Jacob 1.⁸

history of violent abuse of African Americans is a betrayal of both these revelations of injustice, violence, and oppression. The current demands that America's history of injustice, violence, and oppression be forgotten is a betrayal of both these revelations. The violent abuse itself and the demand that it be forgotten is in direct opposition to Jesus, his revelation from the cross, and his call to forsake sin, especially the sins associated with injustice, violence, and oppression. The hundreds of bills that various local, state, and federal legislative bodies have passed in just the first four months of 2023 against the LGBTQ community—transsexuals being the favorite and prime target at the moment—is but one of many examples of America's direct rejection of the biblical witness and is a vile and violent affront to all that Jesus lived and died for.

When “Christians” make common cause with the anti-woke heretics who demean and attack those who follow God's call to remember and resist such acts of violence and oppression as our nation has perpetrated, they show themselves to be in apostasy. They show themselves to be enemies of “truth,” or that which really has been.

Let such beware. For, when individuals refuse to repent, refuse to remain in woke remembrance of injustice, violence, and oppression, attack others who remain woke and resistant to injustice, violence and oppression, participate in continued injustice, violence, and oppression of the vulnerable and innocent—when such individuals then take the sacramental emblems of Jesus' violated body and spilt blood into their mouths they become guilty of partaking of the sacrament unworthily. In so doing, they deny Jesus and crucify the Son of God anew.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!