



“...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})*

STOP
THE
MADNESS

Friday, June 16, 2023

America's love affair with criminality

²¹My, how it has become a whore,
the once faithful city!
It was once full of justice.
Law and order resided in her,
but now, murderers.
²²Your silver has become impure.
Your alcohol diluted with water.
²³Your leaders are criminals,
collaborators with thieves.
All of them want bribes,
and, more, actively seek out kickbacks.
They do not stand up for the orphan,
or hear the widow's complaint” (isaiah 1.21-23, author's translation)

In the short section encompassing Isaiah 1.²¹⁻²⁶, Isaiah began with a lament over Jerusalem's turn from fidelity toward Yahweh to the prostitution of idolatry, with its attendant ethical lapses and social injustices (1.²¹⁻²³). It ended with the hope for a better future when the city would return to its fidelity toward Yahweh (1.²⁴⁻²⁶). The path from infidelity back to fidelity goes through the nation's leadership. God would see the nation's corrupt leadership removed and replaced with just leadership.

“I will take hold of you
and smelt away your impurities with a purifying agent,
remove all your contaminants,
and return to you the kind of leaders you had to begin with;
the kind of advisors you had in the beginning” (1.²⁵⁻²⁶).

Judah's leadership, then, was at the heart of the nation's infidelity to God.

In reading this brief prophetic critique of Judah's corrupt political leaders, it is impossible to not think of the perversion of America's current political class. For example, bribery, dressed in the garb of campaign contributions, is rampant, and has thoroughly corrupted the political process. The monied class that can afford to pay into such legalized bribery benefit at the expense of the less advantaged. As a result of this

American style legal bribery, vulnerable populations—the compassionate treatment of whom is central to any government’s legitimacy—are left without advocacy just as they were in Isaiah’s day (this is most recently exemplified by the Fed’s rising of interest rates to tame inflation, much to the disadvantage of the already disadvantaged and to the advantage of the already advantaged).

All of this is made possible, as Isaiah proclaims elsewhere, by corrupt laws.

“Warning! To those who issue oppressive statutes
and continuously write laws that afflict;
that put redress out of the reach of the underprivileged
and rob the poor among my people of justice,
making prey of widows
and plundering orphans” (Is. 10.¹⁻²).

But what really grabs our attention today is Isaiah’s charge that

“Your leaders are criminals,
collaborators with thieves.”

Now, before considering this observation and its application to the present, we should make one very important point. Among the many differences between Isaiah’s time and ours, there is this one ginormous difference. In Isaiah’s time, political leaders were autocratic and unelected. The populace had little or no say as to who led them. Obviously, America’s leaders, albeit imperfect so, are elected by the people. The people can control who their leaders are. Thus, whatever America’s leaders are reflects the character of its people. Thus, whatever criticism is made of America’s leadership applies to its electorate. When applied to modern American society, whatever criticisms Isaiah made of Judah’s leadership extends to the entire populace. So, again,

“Your leaders are criminals,
collaborators with thieves.”

It is impossible to read this without thinking of the life-long criminal and former president who currently leads all other GOP candidates as the GOP’s potential nominee for president of the United States. That this unholy man is a life-long criminal cannot be doubted by anyone with a whiff of discernment. We can declare him criminal with the same certainty that we testify, “the Book of Mormon is true, an inspired text containing the words of God. Amen.”

Having received the support of the party’s base and many of its leading politicians, his criminality has only grown over time. He attempted to undermine American democracy through theft of an election. In this attempted theft, he encouraged a sort of violence previously unknown in America’s 250 years of electoral history. Failing in his attempted coup, he arrogantly and petulantly stole documents, many related to national security. Challenged in his theft, he committed countless acts to obstruct justice.

In his attempts to defend the indefensible, he spouts lie after lie. This is fully consistent with this deformed character. Indeed, his greatest theft is his attempted theft of truth and reality themselves. He is a liar. As great a liar as human history has ever seen. Truth has never been known to escape his lips. Never. Not once. Every word he has ever spoken has been a lie. Every. Single. Word.

In a twisted way, his capacity to lie is truly marvelous. The consistency is impressive, nearly unimaginable. It borders on magical. His consistency in lying, though, has its usefulness since the truth can always be discerned in his spewing forth: the truth is always the exact opposite of what he says. Easy peasy.

His acolytes, great and small, powerful and pathetic, accept, repeat, and press his lies. Now, to be clear, when we speak of his and their lies, we are not referring so much to the fact that they are factually inaccurate. Factual error is not the same as a lie. What we mean by lie is that which does harm and is intended to destroy. He and his acolytes intend harm. They are agents of chaos and destruction. They are of the devil. He and they are, together, the maker of the lies and the lovers of the lies, on the dark path to hell.

“Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (DC 63.¹⁷).

What we are observing in this man’s character and actions is nothing short of sorcery. Tens of thousands have come under his spell, or curse. But no amount of sorcery can change the truth. No argument that denies or justifies this man’s life-long crime spree can be taken seriously. Any such argument can only be deemed to flow from the vain imagination of deranged minds.

Yet, tens of millions either claim his innocence or don’t care about his guilt. They lionize and laud him and the hundreds of, now, convicted felons who supported the criminal traitor during a violent insurrection. This brings us back to our earlier observation that in today’s political environment in which people choose their leaders, whatever criticisms are made of leaders can be applied to the people who put them in place.

“Your leaders are criminals,
collaborators with thieves.”

One begins to suspect that the millions who dismiss the vile criminal’s guilt do so because they are, in their own right, guilty of criminal behavior. A little looking around suggests that our suspicion is not without merit. Just this week, for example, the *Associated Press* reported “that fraudsters potentially stole more than \$280 billion in COVID-19 relief funding” accounting for roughly 10% of distributed relief funds. And, the AP reported, investigations continue so that the amount of fraud will certainly yet increase.¹

America, it seems, has a healthy pool of criminals. The sorts of criminals who would possess the wherewithal to engage in such fraud as the AP reported likely outnumber traditional criminals—you know, the ones who rob convenience stores at gunpoint and hijack cars—many fold. We feel safe in concluding that many of them are MAGA, though not exclusively so, and that their criminality helps explain their uncaring response to the criminality of their cult leader.

During Jeremiah’s ministry, God sent him on a search through the capital city for anyone “that acts justly or seeks truth.” He began with the common people. After searching among them, he found none who acted justly or sought truth. Concluding that these were simply the “toiling masses who don’t know any better or understand YHWH’s ideals” (Jer. 5.⁴), he went searching among the “great”, the powerful and influential for those who acted justly and sought truth. This search, however, also came up blank. Among the powerful and influential, he was disappointed to find that they had “as one, broken restraints and ripped off controls” (Jer. 5.⁵).

So it is today. Whether we look to the powerful and influential or the common masses, far, far too many engage in criminality. Its spread through society has brought us to the place where tens of millions of

¹ “The Great Grift: How Billions in COVID-19 Relief Aid was Stolen or Wasted,” Richard Lardner, Jennifer McDermott, and Aaron Kessler.

Americans energetically, and perhaps not ignorantly, support a known and obvious criminal and agitate to place him in the highest seat in the land. Even if he were to falter, one suspects that his acolytes would go in search of another criminal—there are several waiting in the wings.

It is impossible to observe the behavior of GOP leaders in their governance and in their support for a hardened criminal without thinking of Mormon's observation. He saw

“Gadianon robbers filling the judgment-seats... laying aside the commandments of God, and not in the least aright before him; doing no justice unto the children of men; condemning the righteous because of their righteousness; letting the guilty and the wicked go unpunished because of their money; and moreover to be held in office at the head of government, to rule and do according to their wills, that they might get gain and glory of the world, and, moreover, that they might the more easily commit adultery, and steal, and kill, and do according to their own wills...” (Hel. 7.⁴⁻⁵).

But, sadly, it is also impossible to see much of America's electorate and not think of this prophetic lament.

“On the other hand, the Nephites did build them up and support them, beginning at the more wicked part of them, until they had overspread all the land of the Nephites, and had seduced the more part of the righteous until they had come down to believe in their works and partake of their spoils, and to join with them in their secret murders and combinations. And thus they did obtain the sole management of the government, insomuch that they did trample under their feet and smite and rend and turn their backs upon the poor and the meek, and the humble followers of God. And thus we see that they were in an awful state, and ripening for an everlasting destruction” (Hel. 6.³⁸⁻⁴⁰).

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!