



*"...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)*

a homily on just society and our mad state of rebellion

healing our brokenness inadequately (part 6):

US law and more weapons, more war, more retribution, more death

*"They heal my people's brokenness inadequately, asserting:
'It's OK! It's OK!'
But nothing is OK!" (Jeremiah 6.14, author's translation).*

Introduction

Judicial inequality and injustice. Economic inequality and injustice. Rampant greed and fraud on the part of wealthy individuals and essential institutions. Bribery and corruption of government officials. Inordinate influence of the wealthy of laws and public policy. Unjust laws and policies favoring the powerful and influential while disadvantaging the less powerful and influential. The infliction of the vulnerable with hunger, homelessness, sickness, and anxiety. Self-righteous justification of the mad state of rebellion. Stubborn refusal to acknowledge these and a host of other societal ills.

No, I am not talking about America of 2024. However, if the shoe fits...

I am talking about late 6th and early 5th century B.C. Judah. These, and many other evils undermined the temporal, moral, and spiritual health of the nation. All the signs were there.

The nation was on the verge of collapse. It was in desperate need of truth, however sour it might be to the national palate. But the nation's shepherds fed the populace an empty diet of propagandistic myths of nationalism. Many of Israel's prophets joined the fray. Israel's watchmen, Jeremiah charged,

“Heal my people's brokenness inadequately, asserting:
‘It's OK! It's OK!’”

“But nothing,” Jeremiah replies, “is OK!”

Does this, too, sound familiar? Strike close to home? It should. Too often, today's religious leaders—whether they go by the name, “prophet,” “priest,” or “pastor”— seem to lack both discernment and courage. They seem utterly blind to and mute about sin and evil, unless, of course, it involves some form of real or imagined sexual deviance. If they do speak out, it is often with muted, vague, delicate, and generalized voices and statements. These shepherds seem not up to the challenging task of bold and clear truth telling of the sort that our society so desperately needs. Now is not the time for delicacy and caution.

This homily is the sixth in an ongoing series entitled, “Healing Our Brokenness Inadequately,” based on Jeremiah 6.¹⁴ In this series, we explore specific examples of individual and societal sins about which political and religious leaders all too often remain willfully blind or, if sighted, stubbornly mute... and therefore complicit. Tragically, sometimes their complicity is even active and enthusiastic. With these examples in mind, we will often call upon the classic Hebrew prophets as well as other ancient and not so ancient prophets to speak as if from the dust. We read these discerning writings in light of the societal ills and injustices that abound in our modern world. Sometimes we even imagine and take a stab at replicating what a Hebrew prophet might have to say if he were to come to us from the past.

In today's homily, we offer another example of our brokenness about which too many remain silent and worse, in which too many engage themselves. Such moments as ours desperately

cry out for the type of discernment, boldness, and truth-telling so characteristic of the Hebrew prophets.

the character of this world

In homily and meditation, we have discussed scripture’s characterization of this planet as a place of violence; of “wars and rumors of wars.”¹ If possible, this characterization is even more true of the “latter days” than former days. Observing the rebelliousness of America’s southern states in his lifetime, Joseph Smith could see that, sooner or later, “the rebellion of South Carolina [would] eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls.”² But this was but the tip of the iceberg. Joseph’s discernment went far beyond the tragedy of the American civil war. “The time will come,” Joseph saw, “that *war will be poured out upon all nations*, beginning at this place.”³ Joseph discerned that the latter-days were to be an era of war and rumor of war. Time has vindicated this ugly and unwelcome insight.

So common is war and rumor of war that we have become immune to their horrors. Many, not immune, are infected with the supposed heroism of war and rumors of wars. Many simply stick their head in the sand and pretend that things are normal and inevitable. I thought of this world’s characterization and the many responses to it when I read this recent headline, “Congress Is Poised to Cede Even More of Its Oversight of Foreign Weapons Sales.”⁴

According to U.S. law, the executive branch of the U.S. government must clear all arms sales above a certain amount with congress—we have to ask why all sales, whatever their dollar amount, do not come under this law. A new proposed law—written and backed, surprise, surprise, by the arms industry—raises by 66 percent the dollar amount of an arms sale before the executive branch must inform congress of the sale. “In short,” the authors of the article

¹ See, for example, my meditation on 1 Nephi 12.¹⁻³, my five meditations on Psalm 46, my five homilies on Revelation 6.¹⁻⁸, entitled, “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”

² DC 87.¹

³ DC 87.²

⁴ Lora Lumpe and William D. Hartung, *Responsible Statecraft*, Feb. 3, 2024.

observe, “this proposed legislation would speed up the delivery of deadly weapons while scaling back the ability of our elected representatives to assess the security implications of such transfers”—and it isn’t as though those elected representatives have acted responsibly in the past.

Not only, then, would this proposed law keep congress ignorant of much of the mayhem that the American executive branch, in collusion with profiteering American arms dealers, unleashes the world over, but the American people would remain ignorant of the diabolical and murderous mayhem of their own government.

As bad as this is for governance, accountability, the equal separation of powers, and the health of American democracy, it is even worse for the planet. There can be no doubt that the planet, already flooded with violence and murderous weaponry, would be further deluged if such a law was enacted. Neither can there be any doubt that more weapons means more use of those weapons—just as Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, a supposed “progressive,” once asked in all seriousness, “What’s the point of having this superb military you’re always talking about, if we can’t use it?”

More weapons means more use of weapons, more violence, more war, and more death. This bill is most certainly not pro-life. It is anti-life. It is pro-death. It is satanic. It is utterly consistent with the satanic spirit and intent to “buy up armies and navies and reign with blood and horror on earth,” as Satan promised to do according to the LDS temple endowment.

Renouncing war and proclaiming peace

Discerning religious leaders—whether they go by the name, “prophet,” “priest,” “pope,” or “pastor”—would speak out against such satanic deviancy. To be sure, those who have sat in the LDS temple and been forewarned would, you would think, have something to say about such satanic deviancy being conducted in a nation that claims to be Christian.

Indeed, speaking out against this satanic deviancy is not simply wise and prudent. It is a commandment.

“Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy. For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.

Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children; and again, the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets, and the prophets unto the Jews; lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me.”⁵

One must ask if those who refuse to “renounce war and proclaim peace”—which must certainly extend to the grotesquely massive arms sales in which the U.S., the world’s largest weapons dealer, is engaged—are, in fact, guilty of being afraid of their enemies, may not be abiding in the Lord’s covenant, and may not be worthy of him. Neither do they seem true to the central aspect of the “spirit of Elijah,” about which the LDS church likes so much to speak. For, as the preceding passage makes clear, the linkage that the spirit of Elijah seeks to form goes far beyond moms and dads, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, etc. The spirit of Elijah seeks to form linkages between all human beings of whatever nation or era. The spirit of Elijah is intended to end war and bring peace between nations.⁶ This world-wide peace inspired by the spirit of Elijah is at the very heart of the temple’s message. Speaking of the temple, Isaiah discerned,

“All nations will come streaming to it;
many peoples will come, saying:
‘Come! Let’s go up to Yahweh’s mountain;
to the temple of the God of Ya‘qōb.

⁵ DC 98. ¹⁴⁻¹⁷

⁶ I have spoken at length of an expanded view of the spirit of Elijah. See my homily based on Malachi 4. ⁵⁻⁶, entitled, “The spirit of Elijah: An Expanded View.”

He will teach us his ways,
and we shall walk in his paths.
For Torah will come out of Şîyôn,
and the word of Yahweh from Y^erûşālāyim.’
Then will He mediate between nations;
He will reconcile many peoples,
so that they will retool their swords into plow blades
and their spears into pruning instruments.
One nation will no longer lift the sword against another,
nor will they any longer train for warfare” (Is. 2.²⁻⁴).

Conclusion and imprecation

While the proposed law discussed here is utterly consistent with this world’s characterization as a place of wars and rumors of wars as well as the satanic spirit foreshadowed in the LDS temple, it most certainly stands in stark and belligerent opposition to all that is godly—to the spirit of Elijah, to the message of the temple, and to God, Himself, and His wishes for humankind. It is yet one more step in a long line of steps toward the fulfillment of Malachi’s warning.

“Understand: I am going to send ’ēlîyâ, the prophet, to you before the coming, totally awe-inspiring day of YHWH. He is to restore the love of parents for children and the love of children for parents so that when I arrive, I need not strike the earth with annihilation.”⁷

Of course, at the rate we’re going, God will have no need to strike the earth with annihilation. We are on our way to doing it just fine all by ourselves.

Let us make new and better laws
say the invisible mammon loving puppeteers

⁷ Malachi 4.⁵⁻⁶

of murderous weapons and mayhem
to their well-paid puppets in corrupted Washington.
Laws that hide, conceal, shroud, bury
our murderous mayhem
from politician, from patrician, from plebe.
Let us deliver death faster,
more efficiently,
and more profitable,
in selling our instruments of death and murderous mayhem.
More violent death
means more hatred,
More hatred
means more calls for “justice” and retribution.
More calls for “justice” and retribution
means more arms sales.
More deaths, yes,
but shush,
keep your eyes on the ball:
more Mammon, the world’s adored god.

But hear this tragic warning,
you masters of death and mayhem.
You cannot hide, conceal, shroud, or bury
your murderous mayhem
from the One, True God.
He sees all—all the more, more, more
You crave;
the death you create
in your boardrooms, your factories, your hangers,
your congressional offices, your senate chambers,
and your oval offices.

You will come to know,
Fear, and loath
the true meaning of justice and retribution.
Though you make your home with dirt-dwelling rodents
and plead for mountains to cover and hide
you from the all-seeing God,
you will be seen and named, as was your father,
“Master Mahan,” the master of this great secret:
“I may murder and get gain;”
with your end being to dwell in a deeper hole,
a bottomless pit,
with something far worse and more devouring
than the dirt-dwelling rodents to whom you are kin.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

(edition: april 5, 2024)