



“...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

The company you keep

“I bring against you an indictment. And I am an expert witness concerning sorcerers, concerning adulterers, concerning false witnesses, concerning the extorter of a laborer’s wages, the oppressor of widows and orphans, the one who turns the foreigner away, and they who do not reverence me, says YHWH Šēbā’ōt” (Malachi 3.⁵, author’s translation).

It has been a while since I last offered a *Mad State* post. My *Mad State* posts consider a passage of scripture in relation to some current social justice issue. The interruption in *Mad State* posts certainly has nothing to do with a lack of madness. The madness has only deepened, widened, metastasized to stage four. Time will tell if recovery is possible. I am increasingly pessimistic about the prospects. My pessimism does not stem from the state of modern institutions—sacred and secular—but from the character of individual members of those institutions. The people. It is their madness that is driving the institutional madness.

Now, for today’s passage and modern application. The Lord brings an indictment against several classes of sinners. First up is sorcery. Everyone knows that sorcery is way up there on the wickedness scale. It is up there not so much because of the sorcerer himself, but because of the wide impact sorcery has on its targets. Then there’s adultery. LDS doctrine would have use think of adultery way up there at number two of the worst sins. Even those involved in the betrayal that is adultery know adultery is wrong—except, of course, for 45th president of the United States, who thinks it a sign of manliness and has, hence, engaged serial acts of adultery (and what to do with the millions of “Christians” who give the serial adulterer a pass and reward him with the highest office in the land—a special kind of madness—is anyone’s guess.).

Anyway, when God, the most expert of witnesses, lumps those who cheat laborers of their earned wages with sorcerers and adulterers, I for one sit up a little straighter and take notice. It is an extraordinarily series piece of sinning.

Recently, the Guardian reported that according to the *Economic Policy Institute*, “Workers in the US have an estimated \$50bn-plus stolen from them every year... surpassing all robberies, burglaries and motor

vehicle thefts combined.”¹

Millions of Americans, especially the FOX viewing audience, are regularly regaled with tales of inner-city youths robbing convenience stores of seventy-five bucks or of gangs of urban thieves smashing jewelry store cases and making off with thousands in precious jewels. They are appalled. Scandalized. Incensed. Secretly delighted, one suspects as such stories seem to confirm their vilest prejudices.

But FOX’s false prophets and their gullible audience speak nary a word about this theft of wage or the many other, larger, more damaging thefts of American’s wealthy business class. The attaché case and personal tablet are used to violate far more people than any snub-nose revolver. The business class’s many acts of theft impact far more people in equally profound ways.

But real prophets, true prophets, prophets worth listening to, they know. They know that cheating laborers is right up there with sorcery and adultery. Indeed, such fraud is a form of sorcery and adultery. They know that such fraud trickles down, impacting the vulnerable and helpless—widows, orphans, foreigners who are of special interest to God. They know that the practitioners of the dark art of wage theft have no reverence for God. They are godless. True prophets so speak. Loudly. Without compromise or equivocation.

We are no prophet. Yet we know. And we say, to quote an infamous scoundrel who is, himself, well known for his wage theft, “Lock them up!”

For all the harm they have done not only to individuals but to our entire society, let them all keep company with each other in the fiery inferno of Hades. Let them suffer the torment of Lazarus’ tormentor.

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented’” (Lk. 16.²³⁻²⁵).

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

¹ “‘I have not seen one cent’: billions stolen in wage theft from US workers.” This institute is by no means the only one to report such findings.