



Meditation— Isaiah 1.²¹⁻²³

²¹How is the faithful city
become an harlot!

it was full of judgment;
righteousness lodged in it;
but now murderers.

²²Thy silver is become dross,
thy wine mixed with water:

²³Thy princes are rebellious,
and companions of thieves:
every one loveth gifts,
and followeth after rewards:
they judge not the fatherless,
neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them (author's translation).

Nearly all of the Hebrew prophets utilize the imagery of marriage when contemplating and discussing the relationship between Yahweh and Israel/Judah. Israel/Judah were Yahweh's wives. In this reading, Isaiah ruminates on Judah's infidelity in the marriage. Not only has Judah been unfaithful to Yahweh but, through prostitution, she has been unfaithful with multiple partners—all of them false, idolatrous gods. The gross sin of idolatrous prostitution with multiply gods has given rise to myriad sins that, while less vile than idolatry, were nonetheless consequences of the original sin.

Keep in mind that the idolatrous gods with whom Judah cavorted were fertility gods. Judah worshipped these gods out of covetousness. These gods represented the nation's insatiable hunger and thirst for more wealth, more power, and more prestige. As these increasing became the goal of daily life and activities, indeed, the very reason for being, everything and everyone else was sacrificed in order to acquire the coveted wealth, power, and prestige. Others were dehumanized, objectified, and viewed as nothing more than tools to be used to gratify their insatiable ambitions.

Individuals were robbed through the legislative processes of governance. Individuals were cheated through immoral policies legislative bodies codified. Individuals were denied access to legal protections through inducements. Individuals were denied justice through bribery. Individuals were murdered through corruption. As always, it was the nation's leaders that engaged in such deviancy themselves and set the stage on which others could defile themselves in such deviancy. And, as always, the most vulnerable members of society were the most susceptible to being victims of the power elite's unholy enterprises. Such things could never be done, of course, to anyone who was deemed to be fully human and valued. Such things could never happen without a full capitulation to the covetousness inherent in idolatry.

Thus, when one observes such behaviors in society, often made possible and multiplied through legislative bodies and policies, one can be certain that society is guilty of the vilest of sins: idolatry. When one observes such behavior perpetrated against the most vulnerable segments of society, one can be

assured that society has prostituted itself on the altar of idolatrous greed.

Upon observing American society today, one can be certain that Isaiah's charge of idolatry and of corruption among the ruling classes is as applicable to American society today as it was to Jewish society way back when.

Judah and Jerusalem's prostitution would have been one thing, one suspects, if they had been born into a family left impoverished by the absence or even death of a father with no one to step into the void and care for the family. Yahweh might have understood prostitution in such circumstances. But Judah had never been placed in such circumstances.

While, according to Ezekiel's imagination, Judah had been abandoned as a child, Yahweh had found the abandoned baby girl and commenced watching after and nourishing her. When she had grown into young womanhood with all the advantages of Yahweh's care, Yahweh married the young woman, continuing to lavish every gift imaginable upon the beloved bride. All He asked is that she remain faithful to Him. So, the nation's prostitution of itself with other gods, indeed, with many of them, was a particularly egregious form of infidelity. It would be met with the most stiff of consequences.

America likes to claim it was founded by God and upon godly principles. It likes to claim its constitution "inspired." It likes to think of itself as an exceptional nation. An indispensable nation. Thus, privileged America, with its head long dive into the putrid waters of covetous idolatry—a dive that its leaders have instigated, propagated, and enhanced through wicked governance and legislative fiat—along with the attendant dehumanization and oppression of its most vulnerable members, should expect no less than what ancient Judah got.

Absent repentance—deep, sackcloth-and-ashes repentance—America cannot expect to endure. It can expect the same dissolution as ancient Judah. How long does she have, this American prostitute? I don't know. By I do know that she cannot survive in the present environment of covetous idolatry and the injustices inherent in it. God has heard the cry of the vulnerable before. Many times. He will do so again. The dissolution will bring pain to all, including the innocent. But, hopefully, hearing the joyful shout of the redeemed will make the intervening pain worth it.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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