

The culpability of immoral leaders

In past times people realised that there was a close connection between the way a country was led and the evils that befell it. This was because all nations believed in God, even though they may not have worshipped the God of the Bible, and all knew that God commanded righteousness.¹ Consequently, they accepted that there was divine retribution for wickedness, especially the wickedness of rulers. Experience, God's moral law written on the human heart and the objective laws of God in the Bible, all testify that there is a consequence to human actions. This is multiplied when it comes to the actions of national rulers. In short the wickedness of national leaders ruins the nation.

- The LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah. (2 Chron 28:19)
- When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan. (Prov 29:2)
- And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done' ... So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. (2 Sam 24:10-15)
- 'Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: *is it* not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil ... Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity ... Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed *like* a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.' (Mic 3:1-4, 3:9-12)

The way a leader rules his people has direct effects, both on the moral state of the people and even the natural order. As God is not slow to call unjust leaders fools² so believers must evaluate and judge national leaders to avoid supporting wicked decisions. The repercussions of wicked policies at high levels of government are disastrous to the country.

What are the consequences of evil leadership?

Famine

He turns rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of those who dwell in it. (Ps 107:33-34)

The word 'barrenness' here really means 'saltiness'; it is not just a wilderness where people can scratch out a living, but an utterly barren land where nothing can live. God rules rulers and owns the whole earth; if leaders fly in the face of this God, committing acts of wickedness unrepentantly - then there may well be a temporal judgment. A nation cannot corporately indulge in sin without the consent and encouragement of its leaders. Indeed a prime job of rulers is to restrain evil and encourage morals. Leaders are culpable for a nation's evil.

For example, the worst and most consistent famines occur in Africa, and yet this vast continent has some of the world's richest natural resources and some of the best land for cultivation. In past ages the land was naturally wealthy (hence its exploitation by the west)

¹ This is made all the more clear in God's word. It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness. (Prov 16:12-13). Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with you? (Ps 94:20). See also: Prov 16:10, 28:16, 29:2; Ps 2:10-11; Isa 10:1-2, 59:14-15; Amos 5:11ff; Hab 1:4.

² Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools; Pharaoh's wise counsellors give foolish counsel. (Isa 19:11)

and even the Sahara desert was cultivated and inhabited. Prosperous kings were able to rule over large swathes of the country. In the 1800s, Shaka Zulu ruled over an empire, that was far larger than that of Alexander.

Even black Africans readily acknowledge that the rulers of the independent African states for the last 50 years have been, by and large, corrupt; several have been despotic monsters, Idi Amin was not an isolated case. Some African spokesmen have urged the west not to keep sending millions of dollars in aid as it actually makes the situation worse, most of it is stolen by leaders and underlings and it serves to keep them in power. The richer rulers have become, the more downtrodden the people and the land is raped instead of nurtured.

Before the years when African states gained independence, say in the last 50 years, many states, such as Gambia, were far richer than North Korea. Today North Korea is a nuclear threat to the US and is 400 times wealthier than Gambia. The Koreans ploughed investment into people - with education programmes and such like, while African states did nothing but let the previous administration's infrastructure fall apart.

A classic example of this today is Zimbabwe. Before Robert Mugabe took over the reins of Rhodesia, the state was called the breadbasket of Africa; it was rich and prosperous with excellent agricultural land, maintained by white farmers, who in turn provided employment and homes for black Africans. After re-possessing the white farmlands and giving them to political sycophants, the economy has fallen to pieces. Zimbabwe is now forced to import grain to survive, many of the population are starving. However, Mugabe himself is rich; his fortune is estimated in billions held in offshore accounts. Add to this his cruel oppression of all critics and political opposition - to the extent of burning up the suburban dwellings of areas opposed to him - and it is not difficult to see how just one evil ruler can bring famine to a nation.

While sometimes the famine is induced by evil political decisions and greed, sometimes the famine is generated by cataclysmic natural events in the wake of wickedness as a sovereign act of God. Places where empires once stood, such as Carthage, Sumeria or southern Egypt, are now just sand and wilderness.

For further evidence that God sends famine as a result of wicked rulers:

- Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, 'It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.' 2 Sam 21:1
- Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, 'Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years.' [As a result of the evil of Jehoram, king of Israel, 2 Kg 3:1-3] 2 Kg 8:1
- I will make this city [Jerusalem] desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair. [As a result of the wickedness and apostasy of Judah] Jer 19:8-9
- But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you ... The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. Deut 28:15, 24

Stupor of strategies

- When they [the poor] are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow, he pours contempt on princes, and causes them to wander in the wilderness *where there is no way*. (Ps 107:39-40)
- Where *are* they? Where are your wise men? Let them tell you now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts has purposed against Egypt. The princes of Zoan have become fools; the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also deluded Egypt, *those who are* the mainstay of its tribes. The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst; and they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit. (Isa 19:12-14)
- He deprives the trusted ones of speech, and takes away the discernment of the elders. He pours contempt on princes ... He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth, and makes them wander in a pathless wilderness. They grope in the dark without light, and he makes them stagger like a drunken *man*. (Job 12:20-25)

How often do we despair of the utter stupidity of government decisions? So often we see policies and strategies mired down as a result of appalling foolishness; being ill conceived and poorly thought out. Yet this is a specific judgment upon national leaders for rejecting God's ways. He sends upon them a spirit of stupor so that wisdom is hidden from them.

God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear ... And David says: 'Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.' (Rm 11:8-10)

God holds leaders in contempt if they harm the poor and needy, no matter what they say about being spiritual or church going. When an American president postures in an Evangelical way and holds prayer meetings with national church leaders, this means nothing (indeed it is necessary in the USA to hold on to power). If he is cutting back on medical benefits, increasing child poverty, perpetrating further attacks on civil liberties and waging an unjustified war that kills tens of thousands of innocent people, he is in God's contempt - the scripture is clear and straightforward. The fruit must judge the person, not his words. When leaders act like this, then God sends them into a wilderness of folly where there is no way forward. They become lost in a stupor of stupid decisions and cannot find their way out.

We see this over and over again in history and it is being played out before our eyes today.

The nation brought low by God

- The LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah. (2 Chron 28:19)
- He makes nations great, and destroys them. (Job 12:23)

The word 'low' here means 'to be humbled, brought into subjection or subdued'. If rulers disobey God's law and encourage a downfall of ethical standards, the nation will be humbled and subdued. Perhaps the classic case of this in modern times is England.

One the ruler of the waves and the greatest mercantile empire, Britain has now fallen to become a third-rate nation, only a hair away from complete anarchy. The health service is so bad that people travel to India to get eye-surgery or to South Africa for hip replacements. Teenage pregnancies continue to increase as does truancy and bullying at school. While exam results stay high, everyone knows that they are false so that

Universities are now considering setting up a Sats-type system of entrance examination to differentiate between all the kids with 3 A* 'A' levels. Meanwhile they are forced to lay-on residual entrance courses to teach teenagers basic principles of numeracy, spelling and essay writing. Business leaders continually berate the government that school leavers are appallingly illiterate and innumerate.

Police rates of detection are at an all-time low while violent crime soars to the highest ever levels. Meanwhile, the police spend most of their time fining car drivers for trivial motoring offences or harass and arrest teenagers to hit their monthly target rates. Due to lack of funding the road system is approaching gridlock in many areas of Britain while petrol prices soar as a result of the huge proportion of duty levied upon it.

Whole streets of decent houses in the north-east are being destroyed while the government has forced local councils in the south-east to build thousands of unwanted homes in unsuitable places, such as flood-plains and ancient woodland, and even places where there is insufficient guaranteed water supplies. [Why not give industrial grants to the north to encourage commerce and people from the south to find work with guaranteed housing?]

As well as internal problems, Britain's reputation internationally is also jaded as a result of uniting with American jingoism so that terrorists now see it as a legitimate target. This year saw the first ever suicide bombers in London. Far from having any international clout, we can't even do anything to help the abused population of a former colony (Zimbabwe).

Oddly, technical accomplishments also reveal decline. Transatlantic flights are now slower than they were forty years ago. National train services are slower and more uncertain than they were 60 years ago. With road gridlock, even car journeys take longer than they did 20 years ago. Medicines available in third world countries are not available to people in some counties (yet they are in other counties). The more computers are made available in schools and government ministries, it seems the more things go wrong.³ We could go on and on. Britain is now a poor place to live with an underbelly of seething resentment to the way it has been governed; no wonder emigration (mainly to Spain and France where old fashioned values still prevail) has reached its highest ever level.

Britain has been laid low as a result of a string of unrighteous policy decisions and evil laws. While Britain may not have been a paragon of virtue in Victorian times, all would agree that England was a better place to live in the times before the 1980s.

Leaders who act unjustly will suffer God's wrath

- Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune, which they have prescribed to rob the needy of justice. (Isa 10:1-2)
- Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with you? (Ps 94:20)

Perhaps the worst affliction meted out by immoral leaders is the upholding of sin in society by passing laws that justify wickedness. When justice cannot be found because the law itself is against God's law - then society is in very deep trouble.

We see this happening on every hand in today's Britain:

³ Note the decline in children's spelling, numeracy and reading abilities since computers were laid on for them and calculators were allowed in exams. Note also the awful charade of new IT systems in the CSA, the Air -Traffic Control system and the Inland Revenue.

- Homosexuality is promoted while marriage is taxed and discouraged.
- Divorce is made easier and quicker to obtain while the innocent victims are discriminated against.
- Fornication in public by homosexuals is legalised.
- Promiscuity is encouraged amongst juveniles as a result of government sex education policies.⁴
- Civil liberties are attacked by draconian security laws.⁵
- Policemen caught speeding at 159 mph are not prosecuted while thousands of motorists are fined for 'speeding' at 34 mph (or 74 mph on motorways).
- Police officers repeatedly kill innocent people by illegal shootings, car chases or negligence in jails, but infrequently get charged.
- Rapists and killers get off with light sentences while fraudsters serve several years.⁶
- Gambling, soft drugs and 24-hour drinking are all endorsed by the government.⁷
- Recent government policies have reduced the availability of nursing home care for old people. More nursing homes have closed in the last ten years than ever before. Due to poor pay rates, many care-homes employ staff who care nothing for residents and treat them with harshness.⁸ A sure sign of wickedness is when a nation abandons its weakest and oldest members.
- Home-owners defending their homes and property are prosecuted and jailed for attacking burglars.⁹

Conclusion

Over and over again it seems that the government has lost its mind, so stupid are the policies it pursues and the laws it passes. But this is merely the righteous judgment of God for a leadership that continually asserts anti-Christian legislation and strategies. While this disease may be terminal, believers should ensure that they have no stain on their character by supporting such a government at the ballot box and that they speak out against unrighteous laws.

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⁴ Some Labour councils have even given explicit, visual sex-education comics to four-year-old kids. The highest levels of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases have occurred in the areas where extra, explicit sex education has been introduced.

⁵ Note the planned introduction of internment under anti-terrorism laws and the attempts to cease trial by jury in some cases; let alone the scandal of Belmarsh detainees imprisoned for years without charge.

⁶ For instance a woman who burned her 3-week-old baby to death on a gas stove was placed in care but not imprisoned. An illegal immigrant with no insurance or passport killed a young boy in a road traffic accident on the A27 but served only a few weeks in prison.

⁷ The gambling laws are being changed to allow for more casinos, including very large ones, with easier admission. Cannabis was made legal for personal use at the very time when studies revealed that it definitely causes psychosis, especially in teenagers. Laws allowing 24 hour drinking in pubs are presently being introduced.

⁸ Note the number of severe scandals in recent years or just go and visit a few to see how disgusting these places can be. Many old people have told loved ones that they daily pray for death rather than stay in such accommodation.

⁹ A respected middle aged special needs teacher defended herself - after months of vandalism, burglary and threats - by shooting an air rifle towards the feet of teenagers vandalising her car; she was sentenced to six months in jail for threatening behaviour.