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Commentary — From the Margins

Pray for the King

Zedekiah the son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim. But *neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the Lord that he spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.*

King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “Please pray for us to the Lord our God.” Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem. / Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet: “Thus says the Lord, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, ‘Behold, Pharaoh’s army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land. And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city. They shall capture it and burn it with fire. Thus says the Lord, Do not deceive yourselves, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely go away from us,” for they will not go away. For even if you should defeat the whole army of Chaldeans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men, every man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire.” (Jer 37:1–10 emphasis added)

Why would the king send men to Jeremiah and ask him to pray for the king and the people of Jerusalem when none of them would listen to the words of the Lord that Jeremiah spoke? Was it only because Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiyah? For Jeremiah’s prophecies about the Chaldeans sacking and burning Jerusalem had not yet come to pass—his credibility as a prophet was not yet established by having his words come true.

The officials of Jerusalem expected Jeremiah to pray for Jerusalem’s success in defending the city. Like Americans who expect the pastors of America’s churches to pray for Coalition troops to be successful in Iraq or in Afghanistan, the people of ancient Jerusalem expected Jeremiah to pray for his nation’s military triumph over the Chaldeans. No assumption that God supports “your” enemy is ever made—God couldn’t

possibly support *your* enemy. And every nation or city-state has assumed that God fights on its side; e.g., German Catholics in WWI assumed that God supported the Kaiser until the reality of Germany's defeat was inescapable. The same has applied to every people since Cain killed Abel.

In the United States of America, it is an unquestionable truism that God supports every military adventure in which the nation becomes engaged; God supports American troops in whatever theater they fight. Although Senators and Celebrities do not support a military action taken here or there, they all claim to support the troops—could God do anything less? Only a kook would claim that God supports the nation's enemies. And this would be similar to the situation in which Jeremiah found himself.

Called while still a youth to deliver a message about Jerusalem's certain delivery into captivity, that it was too late for Jerusalem to repent, that because of the sins of forefathers Jerusalem would go into captivity with the people becoming slaves of the Chaldeans, Jeremiah prophesied against the city, and he had so-prophesied year after year for what would become twenty-three years. He was, as far as the prophets and priests of Jerusalem were concerned, a traitor harming the defense of the polis.

Regardless of how unreceptive to God's word a nation is [behaves], the nation expects the Most High God to support its military adventures—

Is the United States of America "righteous"? Very few Christians would claim that the United States is today righteous. Nearly all recognize that collectively the nation is far from God. Even without understanding that the nation is much farther from God than they realize, Christians nevertheless see in their neighbors the lawlessness of this world, but they pretend they don't see what they do, and they assume that God is blind and doesn't see the nation's obvious displays of unbelief.

When the President of the United States stands before a Muslim audience and says that the United States is not a Christian nation, how much support should a Christian expect Christ Jesus to extend to the United States?

Since Israel's rebellion against the Lord in the days of Samuel, the king or leader of a people has, in the personage of the king, represented the people before God. This is especially true concerning the United States of America, a nation that elects its leader. Hence in the person President Obama, all of America is represented before God—yes, it is. And through the person, Barack Hussein Obama, America has denied Christ.

Salvation is individual and is not dependent upon what a nation or a sect or a fellowship does. Prior to the Logos [ὁ λόγος] who was God [θεὸς] and who was with the God [τὸν θεόν] in the beginning entering His creation as His only Son, Israel could only inherit eternal life. The promises made by the Lord were national in scope and were for long physical life and for physical prosperity. The Lord addressed Israel as if the nation were a person represented by its king. Although Noah, Daniel, and Job are singled out for their righteousness (Ezek 14:12–23), none of these men could have entered the temple in Jerusalem [Noah and Job because they lived before Israel left Egypt, and Daniel because of castration] ... in the context of the Lord mentioning the righteousness of these three men, the Lord tells Ezekiel concerning the elders of Israel who came to the prophet,

Son of man, *these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I*

indeed let myself be consulted by them? Therefore speak to them and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols, that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel, who are all estranged from me through their idols. / Therefore say to the house of Israel, *Thus says the Lord God: Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel, who separates himself from me, taking his idols into his heart and putting the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to a prophet to consult me through him, I the Lord will answer him myself. And I will set my face against that man; I will make him a sign and a byword and cut him off from the midst of my people, and you shall know that I am the Lord.* And if the prophet is deceived and speaks a word, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear their punishment—the punishment of the prophet and the punishment of the inquirer shall be alike—that the house of Israel may no more go astray from me, nor defile themselves anymore with all their transgressions, but that they may be my people and I may be their God, declares the Lord God. (14:3–11 emphasis added)

What does the Lord mean when He said that *these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces?* Does the Lord mean that those elders of Israel sincerely believed that their idols were of God, that their lawlessness was righteousness? If so, then have not the preachers and pastors and theologians of pluralistic Christendom also taken their idols into their hearts?

The Lord told Ezekiel,

Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God. (14:13–14)

Do not today's Christian preachers and pastors sin against the Lord by acting faithlessly ... Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). When on trial, Paul "argued in his defense, 'Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense'" (Acts 25:8). No Christian preacher or pastor standing in a pulpit on Sunday morning can claim what Paul claimed in his defense; for the simple act of holding weekly services on Sunday is an offense against the law and would have

been an offense against the temple. But Christian preachers and pastors have taken the idol of lawlessness into their hearts; they sin against the Lord by acting faithlessly. And they are the righteous of America, the ones who diligently pray that God intervenes in the affairs of America, but they do not understand for what they pray.

Why would God respond differently to America ruled by President Obama than the Lord responded to Jerusalem ruled by King Zedekiah? What claim to divine providence does the United States have that ancient Israel did not have?

The assumption American Christians make is that regardless of how far this nation gets away from living by the commandments, God will support this nation, but this assumption is based in false faith—

Ancient Jerusalem trusted in the walls of the city, and in the Lord to defend the people: their faith was misplaced, for the Lord was with the Chaldeans, a heathen people that the Lord was using to execute His judgment on several peoples. And is not the Lord today using equally heathen peoples to fiscally defeat and send into captivity the United States, for the borrower is subservient to the lender ... is “heathen” a politically incorrect identifier for the People’s Republic of China, or for Japan, Saudi Arabia, other buyers of America’s national debt. The United States debt used to be owned by Americans, but today the world owns America, with the problem of borrower-subservience becoming greater every day.

Those politicians who have been embarrassed by America’s superpower status, the ones who make *apology tours* around the world—those politicians will find that their embarrassment is short-lived; for the same Lord [YHWH] that supported the Chaldeans against Israel will shortly deliver both the righteous and the unrighteous into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh.

When moving from physical to spiritual, the earthly temple in Jerusalem becomes the living Body of Christ (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16), the temple constructed of living stones (1 Pet 2:4–5), with Christ Jesus being the cornerstone rejected by outwardly-circumcised Israel. Long ago, when Rome reigned supreme in the Western world, Christ Jesus was the cornerstone rejected by inwardly circumcised Israel [i.e., the Christian Church], a nation that chose to curry favor with Emperor Hadrian who felt betrayed by Jewish patriots.

As Barrack Hussein Obama sought to curry favor with moderate elements within the Muslim world when he (actually, correctly) said that the United States of America was not a Christian nation, Christian leaders in the 2nd-Century CE made sure that Rome would not mistake “Christians” for Jews by openly denying Christ and spurning the heritage of Moses.

Jesus told doubters, “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words” (John 5:45–47). The answer is, neither Christians nor Jews will hear and believe Jesus’ words if they don’t first believe Moses.

What Jeremiah wrote concerning Jerusalem can be paraphrased, repeated, and made applicable for every nation comprising the single kingdom of this

world. For the United States of America—the nation I regard as humankind’s last and best hope; the nation of my birth—let it be said that this nation has, in its Christian pluralism and tolerance for open blasphemy, done the same thing that Jerusalem did when that polis permitted drink offerings to be poured out to gods other than the Lord. If the United States came into existence via divine providence, then America will be cursed as ancient Israel [both the northern kingdom of Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah] was condemned to national servitude, with slavery in a person not born of God representing the absence of inner life in the Church ... as Israel was a slave nation in Egypt before its Passover liberation, the Christian Church is inwardly enslaved to sin and death before the Second Passover liberation of Israel.

To be the bondservant of the present prince of this world—to be humanly born as a son of disobedience—is to be inwardly enslaved to sin and death, meaning that the inner self remains spiritually lifeless. But in the days of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the people of Jerusalem returned to national slavery, with earthly Jerusalem serving as a shadow and type [the left hand enantiomer] of heavenly Jerusalem. Once filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God following the Second Passover liberation of Israel, the Christian who returns to sin will become the slave of sin, which leads to death (Rom 6:16) in the lake of fire.

As first Samaria then Jerusalem returned to slavery because of national disobedience represented by the lawlessness of the king, especially Manasseh of Judah (see 2 Kings 23:26) who in his name and person represented both houses of Israel, following the Second Passover liberation of the Church, Christians will rebel against God and will be inwardly condemned to death: with exceptions represented by Joshua and Caleb, those Christians filled with spirit at the Second Passover will not enter heaven but will perish in a wilderness of sin.

Something Quaker pacifists discovered during the French and Indian War when the Crown demanded that Pennsylvania field a militia in its own defense is that political liberty in this present age can only be obtained at the expense of subservience to the prince of this world, Satan the devil: the United States of America never really could have been a nation obedient to God, for the price of political liberty is a standing army and the will to use that army against enemies. ... Loving one’s enemies is, under the present prince of this world, a much less effective means of securing peace than killing one’s enemies. (The concept of a “just” war comes from rebellion against God.)

Barack Hussein Obama displayed his theological unbelief before he was elected president: in 2006 when he spoke about the military being abolished in the same context as not eating shellfish as reasons for not believing Scripture, he disclosed his lack of scriptural understanding. Evidently during two decades of sitting in the pews of a Black Liberation Church Obama didn’t hear enough Scripture expounded for him to understand what Paul wrote:

For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual

food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, *with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. / Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.* Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. *Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.* Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. / Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?* (1 Cor 10:1–22 emphasis added)

If those things that Israel did in the wilderness were written so that Christians should not desire evil as Israel did, then will not the same things that happened to Israel also happen to Christians when they desire evil? And is not “evil” simple unbelief ... yes, evil is unbelief. The Christian who does not believe the Father and the Son desires those things that are evil—

No Christian can take the Passover sacraments of bread and wine as Jesus left an example and then live as if taking the sacraments meant nothing (i.e., live as Gentiles live, eating common foods and trusting in a standing army to defend the person) and not provoke the Lord. If the Christian lives as a Gentile after eating at the Lord’s table, the person deceives him or herself. He or she truly provokes the Lord. And the American military is not greater than the Lord; America is not stronger. Rather the United States is doomed to repeat the lesson Israel didn’t quite learn when the Lord delivered Jerusalem into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Ancient Israel, circumcised in the flesh, is the physical equivalent [left hand enantiomer] to the Christian Church, circumcised-of-heart spiritual Israel;

Nebuchadnezzar, ancient king of Babylon, is the physical equivalent [left hand enantiomer] to the Adversary, the spiritual king of Babylon (see Isa 14:4);

As the Lord delivered physical Jerusalem, the polis in which the temple of God was located, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord will deliver heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of the spiritual temple of God, into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh;

As Jeremiah was appointed a prophet to the nations [Gentiles] to deliver the words of the Lord to nations and to kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant (Jer 1:9–10), the Lord will appoint an endtime prophet to the nations to deliver His words—

Barack Hussein Obama will no more listen to the one whom the Lord appoints than Zedekiah, king of Judah, listened to Jeremiah whom Zedekiah had imprisoned. But Obama will not be alone in his failure to listen to the prophet the Lord appoints: neither Christian theologians nor Jewish rabbis nor Muslim clerics will listen. National politicians will not listen. Christians will not listen—until one third of humankind, all firstborns, die suddenly and unexpectedly on a second Passover day near in time.

As difficult as it is to believe that the Lord will really deliver Christians into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh, consider that the son of destruction (i.e., the man of lawlessness or the man of perdition) who comes by the workings of Satan will deceive Christendom at the time of the apostasy (2 Thess 2:3). Most Christians will follow this prophet of lawlessness who would have Christians fight to restore political liberty and return the United States of America to being the nation its founders intended. In other words, the man of perdition would have Christians return to the *Christianity* of the Great Awakening, and not to Christ Jesus, who walked as an observant Jew among Sadducees and Pharisees who had little or no love for Samaritans, their neighbors. But whether innocently or purposefully, the man of perdition will return liberated Christians to slavery by mingling the sacred and the profane ... in the year of the Second Passover liberation of Israel, the man of perdition will lead truly free Christians into slavery to sin on or about Christmas day, 220 days after the second Passover of that year.

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