

The Heart of the King: In His Hand

Wilson L. Thompson, Ph.D.

Will November 2010 bring a halt to Washington's expansive bureaucratic binge? Will the reconstituted Congress rein in out-of-control spending? Can the "loyal opposition" muster the political will needed to repeal the rushed health care bill with its delayed, "stealth care" taxes? Pessimistically, bureaucratic roadblocks may combine with the evasive "Potomac two-step" to frustrate efforts to cut taxes and roll back spending. Can any one deter the President? Where is the Lord who has "the king's heart" in His hand (Proverbs 21:1)?

We will do well to learn from Solomon's reign over Israel that began well and ended so badly. The young king was early blessed with wisdom he displayed in an impossible custody dispute. When Israel learned of Solomon's successful "divide-the-baby" decision, "they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment" (I Kings 3:28). Frivolous litigation was suppressed in Israel's supreme court under Solomon.

Nevertheless, Solomon's reign was crippled by bureaucratic blunders, being re-enacted today in D.C. God's Law commanded Israel's kings not to multiply horses, wives or the currency metals; silver and gold. And the king was to read from his own copy of the Hebrew Torah "all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deuteronomy 17:16-19). Solomon failed to adhere to these principles of limited government due to failure to read The Royal Handbook - the Law of God.

Sadly, Solomon sought peace for Israel through massive military overkill. He "multiplied horses" to equip 12,000 horsemen and 1,400 chariots deployed in his "chariot cities" (II Chronicles 1:13-14). Yet King David had earlier crippled horses for all but 100 of 1,000 chariots captured from King Hadadezer (II Samuel 8:4). Solomon proceeded to strengthen his kingdom through marital alliances with 700 foreign princesses who "turned away his heart after other gods" (I Kings 11:4). He also built a high place to his wives' gods and thus re-injected infant sacrifice into the body politic (I Kings 11:7-8). The Lord angrily denounced Solomon, saying, "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant [Jeroboam]" (I Kings 11:11).

Finally, Solomon multiplied gold to Israel's sorrow. Hiram sent him 120 talents of gold (I Kings 9:14), Solomon's navy imported 420 talents of gold (I Kings 9:28) and the Queen of Sheba brought 120 talents of gold (I Kings 10:10). Massive public works taxed Israel to the hilt under Solomon. It took 7 years to finish the Temple and 13 years for Solomon's house (I Kings 6:37-7:1). And a gold-based inflation ravaged Israel's currency. "Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, . . . none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon" (I Kings 10:21). Jeroboam fled to Egypt to bide his time until Israel was primed for revolt.

When Solomon died, Jeroboam returned to Shechem and joined Israel's elders in their petition to Rehoboam to lighten their tax burden in time and treasure (I Kings 12:3-4). Oddly, officials who had overseen Solomon's burgeoning bureaucracy advised Rehoboam to order a sharp cut back in government and taxes. Unlike, the new king's young turks, these senior officials were convicted by Solomon's eleventh-hour indictment of big government and grandiose projects recorded in Ecclesiastes. But, Rehoboam "hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD" to set up the kingdom of Northern Israel under Jeroboam (I Kings 12:15).

Israel's "Preacher" still offers exhaustive repudiation of any human enterprise - in or out of government - based on defacto secular principles. "Vanity of vanities, . . . all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). The gist of Ecclesiastes is, in sum, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

The heart of America's movers and shakers remains "in the hand of the LORD, . . . he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Proverbs 21:1). We sing "He's got the whole world in His hands." So, let us pray "for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:2). May silenced clergy exit bureaucratized prayer closets, preaching "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" and staunch the awful flow of innocent blood (Luke 1:17).