

So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Deuteronomy 17:7b

Purged

CN THE MORNING AFTER I didn't know how to pray. It seemed only normal to come to God. When just about anything extraordinary occurs—pleasant or unpleasant—the impulse is to approach Him with thanksgiving or praise, entreaty, confession, or worship. Sometimes we just need to talk with Him.

But which of these is appropriate when the something extraordinary is the death of a human being? It is my habit to thank Him for just about anything for which I am grateful. What would the Lord think of me for expressing to Him the gratitude I feel in my heart over the violent death of Osama bin Laden?

But the more I thought about it, the less reluctant I was to express my thanksgiving. For in my mind I paged back through the history of God working on earth, and I was reminded of the many times God instructed His people—even those in the early church—to expunge from their midst those who were evil. And if He didn't instruct them to do it, He told them to get out of the way so He could.

The Lord's timing is His own. There were times, in the early years of Israel, when God instructed His people to immediately eradicate evil from their midst.

"If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel."

Deuteronomy 22:22

There were times when, for His own reasons, He punished evil, rather than extinguished those so guilty.

The sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

Judges 3:7-8

Other times, because of His grace, God would delay His response for many years. But, contrary to

what some might think, the immediacy of His wrath was not extinguished after the cross.

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it... Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*." And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last...

Acts 5:1-5,7-10a

Despite the protestations of the congenitally insipid left, there is empirical right and wrong in this world. The laws of God may be a healthy starting point (and they are), but even absent that, experience alone is sufficient to inform anyone paying attention that there is right and there is wrong. And some wrong is so wrong that it is unequivocally evil.

Joseph Stalin was not just wrong. He was evil.
Timothy McVeigh was not just wrong. He was evil.
Adolf Hitler was not just wrong. He was evil.
Pol Pot was not just wrong. He was evil.

Unlike some among us today, the Lord God of the universe does not blanch, He does not excuse or rationalize, He does not equivocate when He confronts evil.

He acts.



Osama bin Laden was not just wrong. He was evil.
And now that evil has been purged from our midst.
Osama bin Laden is dead.

Thank You, God.



If a man does not repent, [God] will sharpen His sword;
He has bent His bow and made it ready.
He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons;
He makes His arrows fiery shafts.

*Behold, he travails with wickedness,
And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood.
He has dug a pit and hollowed it out,
And has fallen into the hole which he made.
His mischief will return upon his own head,
And his violence will descend upon his own pate.*

I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

Psalms 7:12-17



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