

This Demonic Act Shook Many of Us, But ...

What a week. What an awful week.

The news was surreal. Not here. Not now.

Our Congressman and friend was cut down by a crazy ideologue. It was a senseless, hate-filled derangement brutally harming one of the more affable and congenial guys on both sides of the political aisle.

This demonic act struck close to home for many of us. By now we all know, had Congressman Scalise's brave security detail not been there, an unprecedented massacre would have likely taken place. Thank God, the evil was stopped, but great damage was done.

As the recovery process will be long and challenging, our prayers must continue for Steve, Jennifer and their young children.

This difficult week further validates the belief many of us hold regarding the powder keg of rage and terror we are sitting on. There is much I could say regarding the origin, the continued incitement and deliberate escalation of the anarchy and mischief we face today; the magnitude is far reaching.

Today, we all agree and mourn the loss of the civility, the Judeo-Christian ethics and the basic Americana manners most of us were raised on; they are all but gone.

Just days before, we had moved on from the cruel, vicious action of lifting, in ISIS style, a severed bloody head depicting the president, an unwelcome honor the other 44 were never afforded. Cruelty observes no protocol, just

destruction.

Yes, it is a dark, deep time. Mixed with a complicit media, many of the hijinks are grossly dishonest and illegal. Things usually get contentious when discussing the etymology of this darkness.

Fellow Congressman Rodney Davis observed that we are in a scary time of “Political Rhetorical Terrorism.” Columnist Peggy Noonan wrote, regarding the spirit of today, “Rage Is the Rage.”

Both sentiments are true. But it is deeper than this, much deeper, much darker. The Prophet Jeremiah nailed it: “The heart is more deceitful than all things and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9). And we know wicked hearts do despicable things.

Regardless of the “when one is attacked, we are all attacked” speechifying that has followed, truth is, the shooter had a written assassination checklist. Our congressman was targeted for his beliefs and for his values. Right now, Christians around the world are vividly understanding this.

Sadly, many who do what I do are intentionally silent, and some are even lovingly derisive about those who might speak out on these issues.

No, I don’t need a lecture regarding the fact that I belong to a higher kingdom. I got that. I believe that. I preach that. I’m a covenant guy. But, offending the donor base, jumping through the “make me happy” hoop or retreating to a pious safe zone shouldn’t figure in the equation while the house is on fire.

Right now, the House is on fire, and we need sane and spiritual voices.

Those who might disagree with the place and the voice of the

church in the leadership and civility of a nation would do well to refresh themselves with the likes of Moses, Daniel, Luther, Wilberforce, MLK and others. Eric Metaxas' classic book, *Bonhoeffer*, would also be a stunning but sobering place to start.

These dear men realized that, although they had their membership in the heavenly world to come, until then, they were living in a different world, a fallen world—a world that needed the Word of the Lord for direction, encouragement and comfort on its home turf. Literally, it was about a future and a hope.

They all had a love for God, a love for His Word, a love for their people and they fully understood they needed to be a voice when, as the hymn writer, Edward Mote, said, “When all around my soul gives way.” Today, the assignment has not changed.

We are now seeing a literal embodiment of Paul's Ephesians 6 wisdom warning:

“For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

We must not live in fear. As the Sunday School kids used to sing, “Be Bold, Be Strong, For the Lord Thy God is with Thee.” And, according to Micah 2, in all forms of injustice, the wicked need to be put on notice that God knows:

“Woe to those who conceive wickedness, to those who devise evil on their beds! At morning's light they execute it, because it is in the power of their hand ... Therefore, thus says the Lord: I am devising disaster against this family, from which you cannot remove your necks; and you will not walk haughtily, for it will be a time of calamity” (Micah 2:1, 3).

An evil time, indeed! But, in the middle of this, we have the Word of life, hope, healing and direction for all of the awful weeks we will face. In the midst of this, a fresh perusal of the great Psalm 37 might energize and encourage you as you speak peace to those in fear and confusion! It puts everything in perspective.

“Do not fret because of evildoers ... The wicked plot against the righteous, and grind their teeth against them. The Lord will laugh at him, for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay those on the upright path. Their sword will enter into their own heart, and their bows will be broken” (Ps 37:1a,12-15).

May God help us in these turbulent times. I’m fervently praying for our president, vice president and all of our leaders. I’m praying for them to walk in wisdom beyond their natural experience. I am praying for their safety, binding the mischief and wickedness that swirls around them. We should all pray this way, and we should all be asking the Lord for direction and wisdom.

I do know this: last Wednesday when demonic hate and abject rage were unleashed, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not taken by surprise. And in the days to come, nor should we be. He is with us. {eo2}