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The reason why?? - "There is sin in the camp!!"

A response by Rev Ivan Foster to the decision of the court on the Asher's Bakery case.

"Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you," Joshua 7:13.

'Gay cake' row: Judge rules against Asher's bakery - so reads the BBC Northern Ireland news site article on the court decision on the case brought against Asher's Bakery on behalf of an acknowledged sodomite, Mr. Gareth Lee. Mr. Lee wanted the bakery to provide a cake with the slogan "support gay marriage" along with a picture of Bert and Ernie from Sesame Street, and the logo of the 'Queerspace' organisation.

Many Christians here in Northern Ireland and much further afield have been much in prayer regarding this matter since it came before the court at the end of March of this year. I too prayed that the Lord would defeat this evil scheme, whereby sodomy would receive even greater sanction and acceptance within our society and obeying God would become even more pilloried as abnormal, but doubts formed about the outcome of the court case as the issue became more public. It was not a matter of whether or not God was ABLE to answer the prayers of His people but rather it was a matter of whether or not it was God's WILL to intervene as so many believers desired.

Of late, the portion of God's Word in Joshua 7 has come before me and I was forced to look at this case in the light of what the Lord has to say to His people in that portion.

Israel, like many Christians in Ulster today, was very confident of victory at Ai. However, to their dismay, their confidence was found to have been misplaced and the Lord did not do as they expected and their forces were routed by the enemy at Ai. "And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water, Joshua 7:3-5.

The defeat was so contrary to their expectations, especially so in the light of their recent most notable victory at Jericho (Joshua 6:20-21). Fear and dread and consternation filled the hearts of Joshua and the leaders of Israel. "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads," Joshua 7:6.

Basically, Israel blamed God for not fulfilling their expectations. "And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Joshua 7:7-9.

God's answer

God's answer to this charge, for the Lord is pleased to explain His will and purpose to His people, is given in Joshua 7:10-13. "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even



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among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you."

The fault was not God's! He had not failed them but rather there was sin in the camp of Israel which robbed them of their expected victory.

That is also the case with the Asher's bakery battle.

I have read carefully the reports of the court case and long before the judgment was given I was perturbed by some of the evidence given by the McArthur family.

1. The order for the cake which celebrated sodomy was initially accepted, whereas I believe that an earnest, God-fearing Christian would have immediately rejected the order with abhorrence.

It was stated in court by Robin Allen QC, representing Mr Lee, the complainant, "Mrs McArthur did not feel so strongly about this that she refused to take his money and his graphic."

Sadly, that is what her actions suggest and by acting so she greatly undermined the family's claim that they were motivated by their Christian convictions when they turned down the order two days later and returned the money to Mr. Lee.

Embarrassed

The Belfast Telegraph of March 30th reported: 'When asked why she took Mr Lee's money, signed the order and gave him a receipt when she was not planning to fulfil the order, she said she "did not want to embarrass him or have a confrontation in the bakery". Mrs McArthur said her problem was with the message on the cake, because, as a Christian, she does not support gay marriage.'

Might it not be said that Peter sought to avoid embarrassment when he denied the Lord? Now the two incidents may not seem to have any comparison yet in principle there is the same motivating spirit in each case. It is a matter of the believer owning Christ and His truth openly, immediately and boldly before the world, irrespective of the consequences that may follow such a stand. Embarrassment about owning Christ was, and still is, all too common!

Here is what is said of some in John's gospel. "Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews," John 7:13. "And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus," John 19:38.

Here Joseph openly owns the Lord in His hour of reproach and shame though before he concealed his faith in Him. We honour him for eventually coming out into the open and standing up boldly for the Saviour and likewise we honour the McArthurs for coming out and owning the Lord, but both Joseph and the McArthurs will have to live with their hesitation and delay.

Had Mrs McArthur senior immediately rejected the order it might not have altered the course of events, but I believe that such would have been the response that the Lord would look for amongst His people.

2. It was only after some time that the family, following discussions amongst themselves and their friends and confidants, that a decision was taken to return the money paid for the cake and cancel the order.

After more than 48 hours, and following consultations with her husband Colin, also a company director, Mrs McArthur senior telephoned Mr Lee informing him that his cake would not be made.



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The Belfast Telegraph of March 27th reported that Mr Colin McArthur said "I was wrestling it over in my heart and mind." I really cannot understand why a devoted Christian would have to wrestle with the matter at all. When the apostles were ordered by a court to do wrong, their response was IMMEDIATE. "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men," Acts 5:28-29.

3. There was much hypocrisy involved in the support that was given to Asher's Bakery. Ecumenical churches, ministers and members spoke in favour of Asher's yet within every mainline denomination there is a stout refusal to obey the Word of God on the sin of sodomy.

Quite a few members of the Democratic Unionist Party spoke in favour of Asher's Bakery. Yet as a party in the Stormont power-sharing government, its leaders have been responsible for paying out £100,000s to sodomite organisations which is designed to assist them promote their lifestyle.

Peter Robinson, First Minister and leader of the DUP has acknowledged he and his predecessor, Dr Paisley, were involved in such payments. (See **this article** pages 4-6; **this article**; **this article** and **this article**)

Recently, it was disclosed that Mr Mervyn Storey's, Department of Social Development, paid out £231,681.00 on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transexual) projects, including £170,000 to support the Strabane & Lifford LGBT group alone, and also annual subventions to Belfast Pride. For further comment **click here**.

Both these men spoke in favour of Asher's Bakery in the run-up to the court case.

With such hypocrisy on your side victory was hardly assured!

Silence

Many Christians have gone along with the wickedness of the DUP, whereby the evil of sodomy was funded from the public purse, not to mention the placing of murderers in government.

Politicians who professed faith in Christ went along with it, thinking it was an acceptable price to pay for obtaining power. The supporters of these politicians went along with this wickedness, likewise thinking that it was a small matter which was dwarfed by the elevating of their political party into a power-sharing executive.

It was these things that caused me to wonder just what the Lord would make of this 'coalition of compromise' surrounding the court case.

Playing with fire

Well, all those who foolishly acted so and gave their support to compromising politicians and the policy of aiding sodomites were playing with fire and little understood the monster let loose by their attitudes and actions within our society. They should not be surprised at how the sodomite has used the money given by the DUP to strengthen their hold upon society nor can they now complain at the verdict given in the Asher's case!

At the Belfast court today, the chickens started to come home to roost!! Both parties in the dispute agreed that £500 of damages are to be awarded to Mr Lee. The lawyers have seven days to raise any issues with the Asher's judgement. Personally, I would have served a jail sentence before agreeing to pay anything to a sodomite for doing that which is nothing more than obeying the Lord.

Sadly, this is but the beginning. This court decision has set a precedent, in which the McArthur family appear to have acquiesced.

It is now wrong according to the law of the land for a Christian businessman to refuse to comply with the



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demands of sodomites even when those demands contravene the Law of God.

God or man

The issue really was one in which the Christian is faced with whether or not they obey God or man. The McArthur family, after what I would consider an unseemly delay, decided that they had to obey God. They then chose the path of engaging a high profile organisation, The Christian Institute, to organise their defence and of course that involved a number of highly publicised protests.

That was not the way of the apostles. If summoned to court, they went to court and answered the charges themselves and trusted in the Lord for the outcome rather than allow the legal thinking of a lawyer decide the way their case should be presented and the emphasis that should be made in their evidence.

That is man's way but it is not the way that the Lord requires His children to act when so challenged.

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," Matthew 10:16-20.

The days are coming when more and more the Christian will be tested and tried on these issues. Many will deny the Lord and compromise even more. The faithful will be pilloried and miscalled - as they have always been.

The events in the last 8-9 years in Ulster in which many Christians out of misguided loyalty to political personalities, have turned away from their allegiance to old-fashioned truth, have been a foreshadowing of future responses that some professing Christians will make to the challenging times the Saviour tells us will face His people in the last days.

"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved," Matthew 10:21-22.

God help us to see our propensity to fail and enable us to cling to Christ for grace to strengthen us in the dark days ahead.

Ivan Foster.

19th May 2015.