

HUE AND CRY: Iniquity of the Fathers

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Back in the Spring, as it appeared that Barack Obama was going to be the nominee for the Democratic Party after John McCain had secured the Republican nomination, I was prompted to read their respective autobiographies. As I read the *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* and *The Faith of My Fathers*, the contrast I saw was overwhelming to the point of absurdity. However, as I finished up my chosen reading assignments and began to reflect on the relative merits of *Dreams* and *Faith*, I was significantly struck with the thought of ***the iniquity of the fathers*** and the consequences of our forebearers' actions. Of course, the inspiration for my inquisitive thought comes from the Ten Commandments where the sin of idol worship is adamantly forbidden:

"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands**, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:3-6).

Naturally, what was most disconcerting was the proclamation that the iniquity of the fathers would be visited upon or passed down to the children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren of the offenders. The jealous God of the Bible declared in ancient times that any idol worshipping patterns by one's forefathers were going to be passed down to subsequent generations if they continued to "hate Him." The proverbial "acorn not falling very far from the tree," and in essence growing up with the same inclinations and patterns, is a part of the created order. Without the radical change of loving God and faithfully obeying Him, which will result in a bestowment of lovingkindness in lieu of iniquities, mankind is doomed to follow the patterns of its predecessors. This sobering reality, woven into the Decalogue, gave me pause to then think about the two men chosen to be in a position to be considered the leader of the free world.

As I meditated upon these ancient words and thought about what I had recently learned about the fathers and grandfathers of Obama and McCain, I began to shudder. The grandfather, father, and son patterns were too similar to be by chance. Recognizing that we all come from flawed parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, I could not help but think about the obliquely revealed differences between the Obamas and the McCains. While I knew that the authors were attempting to cast as positive a light on their predecessors as possible, one could definitely read between the lines and come to some fairly accurate assumptions about what blatant iniquities or lifestyle patterns were predominant in the previous generations.

The hard drinking, driven, successful McCains appeared to idolize their country. Honor and respectful adherence to a code of life implanted by generations of military service to different causes predominated. Country even seemed to be above God and family. Sorting out those differences is beyond my understanding, but it is clear that discipline to higher authorities is definitely a pattern that has been passed down the generations. The fact that the living John McCain was willing to admit his rebellious attitude about this pattern was encouraging. The honesty was refreshing, but the rebellious streak appears to be unchanged.

On the other hand, the also hard drinking, relatively successful Obamas seemed to be following a different set of principles that originated in their native Kenya. As generational leaders in the Luo tribe, it is apparent that they used their authority to their advantage. Polygamy without regard for the consequences of fathering children with different mothers did not present a problem. Seeking power beyond the borders of their tribal community came naturally. Unable to achieve the assumption of power leading to abusive actions, excessive drinking, and ultimately a premature death in an auto accident is alarming. How the current Obama is dealing with these patterns is difficult to ascertain, but the inability to quit smoking is a strong indication that this man is very unsettled about who he is and where he wants to go. The fact that Barack Obama's father was a closet communist is troubling. Imagining oneself to be a savior of a country or of the

world is troubling. But the pattern is there. How you are going to achieve your goals, given the predispositions, is difficult to predict.

So, if these eternal words have merit, are we going to choose a driven, rebellious maverick—or an insecure, self-anointed savior come Election Day? The decision by the electorate to choose which set of iniquities we want our President to be plagued with is coming in just a few days. How those different iniquities will affect the citizens of America and the world is yet to be determined.

Historically speaking, God's sovereign hand in the affairs of humanity, typically allows people to get what they need for correction *or* deserve for punishment. Idol worshippers who worship themselves will choose another idol worshipper who worships himself. On the other hand, those who worship anything other than the One True God of Creation, such as country, conservative persuasion, one's political party, economic strength, or fill in the blank, may just be outnumbered this year.

The odds have it that the American Idol of self worship significantly outnumbers those that worship other things. While this analysis might not be scientific, it does pay homage to the One that establishes authorities over nations.

May God have mercy on us all!

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