

POLITICS AND THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

- In Ephesians, we landed on the section that addresses Spiritual Warfare.
- We find ourselves as American citizens who are Christians in another election cycle.
- The two are related: spiritual warfare and governmental systems; remember the princes of Persia and Greece in Daniel 10?
- How should we, as Christians, approach governmental systems or politics?

Current Issues in Our Country

- Freedoms: Speech and Religion – this is very real, with hate speech legislation just passed in our State and signed into law by Jay Inslee; SB 5427. Your biblical worldview and beliefs could be hate speech.
- Parental rights: stripping the rights and responsibilities from parents toward their children.
- Grooming of children toward sexual perversion with LGBTQ ideology.
- Women (transgender women/biological males in girl's locker rooms and competing in women's sports)
- Children's Protection: Abortion, Gender Change Mutilations
- Government schools' primary focus is shifting from education to indoctrination.
- Justice and the rule of law: conservatives and faith-based people who stand up to protect their kids for Judeo-Christian based values are depicted as terrorists and the FBI is weaponized against them and jailed.
- Safety: crime has surged, and murder rates are at all-time highs. Assaults on innocent people are on a dramatic increase, all in the midst of defund and hate the police rhetoric.
- Unsecured Borders:, with multiplied millions of illegal people freely flowing into our country; human trafficking of children and women, with criminals and terrorists embedded in the numbers.
- Inflation makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for families to have the basics of life.

The Question

- Are these merely issues of American politics, or are they not issues in which God has a vested interest?
- Are these issues that we leave with a few politicians to concern themselves with in the halls of Congress, of which we can then wash our hands, or are these issues that every person who declares that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior has a kingdom responsibility toward?

- Some would say that the Church should not concern itself with politics. Others might view politics and government as the saviors of our societal dilemmas.

GOD'S DESIGN

God IS Government

Isaiah 33:22 (ESV) For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.

- God is government! And it is His government that is to characterize the earth's order.
- The Bible uses the word "Lord" almost 8,000 times, most often referring to God.
 - Lord means "a person who has authority, control, or power over others; a master, chief, or ruler."
- Almost 8,000 times, the Bible refers to God as the governmental head.
 - *The entirety of Scripture is about government!*

Creation and Early Civilization

- In God's creation, it was intended that humanity, created in the image of God, should be the stewards of His creation and fill the earth with God's glory, having been created in His image. **Gen. 1:28**
 - Good governance was always intended to be a part of creation, whereby mankind would reflect God's government on the earth.
- **The earth early on became a world of nations.**

Genesis 10:32 (TNIV) These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

Israel, a Nation

- **Genesis 12:1-3** God calls Abram, who from Him was to come a nation of and for God which would govern life on earth to represent and glorify God.
 - God said that if you govern and live by my directions and commands, which cover every aspect of life, you will be blessed and will be a light to the nations!

Israel's Politics and Government was to Glorify God

Deuteronomy 4:6 (ESV) Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

The Gospel and God's Kingdom apply to all areas of life, including government and politics.

WHAT IS POLITICS

- The word "politics" comes from the root word *polis*, meaning city.
 - At the root, politics is about ordering affairs of a town, neighborhood, or city, extending to a nation.
 - Politics is the process by which a community is ordered.
- The word politics was originally understood not in terms of a political party or party platform, political campaigns, and the like.

SHOULD WE?

- There seems to be an assumption in some circles that political involvement is inappropriate or at least a distraction for God's people.
 - Adherents of this view suggest that Christians should exclusively focus on evangelism and discipleship because Jesus' final command was to make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20).

Satan's Effective Strategy

- One of Satan's most effective strategies has been to alienate God's people from government.
 - He has deceived many into believing that involvement in government or politics is inappropriate and even unspiritual.
 - Let them teach Bible stories, share the gospel, and do missions and church activities. But 1) don't let them know they're His government here on earth (Christ's Ekklesia), and 2) keep them from involving themselves in any and all government processes.
 - In so doing, he has succeeded in rendering God's government on the earth ineffective and has mitigated the salt and light effect of God's Kingdom.
- If we note Matthew 28 closely, we are to disciple people of all **nations**.
- Upon a close examination of Scripture, to truly be committed to the gospel, discipleship and equipping of the saints encompasses the whole of life!
 - *Marriage, Family, Parenting, Workplace, Education, Finances, AND government.*
- The Biblical worldview has much to say about civic responsibility, government, and politics as God's Ekklesia.
- Think about it: entire groups of people were either cursed or blessed based on the actions of government leaders.
 - More suffering on earth has occurred because of government leaders' actions than for any other reason.

- Millions of people have been killed and persecuted because of government leaders.
- Poverty has overtaken nations because of government leaders.
- Sixty million babies in America have been murdered since 1973 because of government leaders.

Government is God's Idea

Psalm 115:16 (NIV84) The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

- Humanity is responsible for governing the affairs and well-being of the earth.
- “Government is God's idea, and Christians should engage with it in a way that is consistent with its God-ordained purpose.”

Romans 13:1, 4, 6 (TNIV) Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.

- Since government is of God, it is foolish to assume that Christ-followers are to leave the “politics” – *the ordering of the affairs of our community, city, county, state, or nation* to those who are not God-fearers.
 - Are we to expect righteous and godly legislation and governance from those who are unrighteous and ungodly?
- The function of government is to restrain evil and to maintain, uphold, and protect the sanctity of life.
- In Romans 13:1-7, Paul describes the governing authorities as “ministers of God” and says they are responsible for administering civil justice.
 - By virtue of governing authorities being “ministers of God” God's kingdom automatically engages with government and its politics.
 - Therefore, Christians should be interested in and responsible for politics.

POLITICS – AN ISSUE OF STEWARDSHIP

- In a constitutional republic, the constitution is the government, and “we the people” are the responsible stewards of the constitution.

Government's Role

- According to Romans 13, the government is ordained by God to promote good and restrain evil, to wield the sword for justice, and to protect the order for peace, equality, life, and freedom.
- Therefore, because power resides in the people of our republic, we delegate our ruling authority to others through elections.
 - We have a stewardship responsibility before God when we entrust others to govern on our behalf and hold them accountable for their actions.
- This requires us to think biblically about issues of righteousness and morality, candidates, legislation, and wisdom.

The Church's Role

- By the Ekklesia being involved and influencing the political system, we can work toward a government that fulfills its God-ordained role.
- It is a mistake for Christians to completely isolate themselves from the realm of politics.
 - When the people of God **do not take it upon themselves** to vote or run for office, we carelessly leave the fate of our communities, nation, and future generations in the hands of secular, sometimes immoral, and sometimes even corrupt people.

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE

Proverbs 14:34 (TNIV) Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people.

- Since righteousness exalts a nation, it is a profound act of love for Christians to influence the government and politics of communities, states, and the nation with God's values in righteousness.
- **The current downward spiral that this country is experiencing speaks to the fallen state of humanity, BUT it speaks even more directly to the lack of influence that Christians have had in public affairs.**
- We are to be our nation's conscience before God. We are to be light and salt.
- The current political system of our state and nation is now systematically weaponized against children, parents, Christians, houses of faith, and your freedoms.
 - These issues concern God! Therefore, these issues must concern God's people!
- Christians have a right to be concerned about where politics takes our communities and nation.
- Christians must be involved in who governs our nation and how it is governed, not to be is negligence.

WORD OF CAUTION

- Christians can never begin to think that good laws alone will solve a nation's problems or bring about a righteous and just society, that is a huge mistake.
- Good laws alone will not sustain transformation unless there is simultaneously an inner change in people's hearts and minds.
- It has been said, "We who are Christians are deluded if we think we will change our culture solely through political power."
 - Genuine, long-term change in a nation will only happen if people's hearts change so that they seek to do good, not evil.
- Our nation needs the gospel, revival, and a Third Great Awakening!
- God's people need to be actively involved in the stewardship of the earth in the political system.

ACTION STEPS

1. The Film "Letter to the American Church" - **Sunday, April 14th, at 5:00 pm**
2. Biblical Citizenship - **Beginning Tuesday evening, April 23rd, register online**
3. One Washington Event – "Unequivocal Truth" - **On Friday, May 24th, register online**
4. Andrew and Norine Brunson - The weekend of June 1-2
5. Register to Vote – Available here at HF
6. Get Involved for Candidates and Initiatives

Historically God's People Influence Culture and Governments

- In theologian Wayne Grudem's book *Politics According to the Bible*, Alvin Schmidt points out how the spread of Christianity and Christian influence on government was primarily responsible for outlawing infanticide, child abandonment, and abortion in the Roman Empire (in AD 374).
- Outlawing the brutal battles-to-the-death in which thousands of gladiators had died (in 404).
- Outlawing the cruel punishment of branding the faces of criminals (in 315); instituting prison reforms such as the segregating of male and female prisoners (by 361).
- Stopping the practice of human sacrifice and outlawing pedophilia.
- Prohibiting the burning alive of widows in India (in 1829).
- In England, William Wilberforce, a devout Christian, and member of Parliament, led the successful effort to abolish the slave trade and then slavery itself throughout the British Empire by 1840 in his Parliamentary work with the support of Christian brothers and the mentorship of John Newton, writer of *Amazing Grace*.
- Two-thirds of the American abolitionists in the mid-1800s were Christian clergymen, including Charles Finney.