Providential Politics

As we contemplate the results of last night's midterm election - conservative Christians across the county are wondering what happened!?

And as we consider the unbiblical policies of the progressive politicians who were just elected…

…it's easy to think that the King of kings has lost control of His creation.

If this is something you're struggling with - - then I encourage you to realize that…

…there are times when the Lord raises up ungodly rulers - in order to punish a nation…

…who's people are living for the lust of the flesh - the lust of the eyes - and the pride of life.

In other words - there are times when the Lord appoints the political leaders that we deserve.

In order to prove my point - let's consider a few examples - of the times when the Lord providentially appointed wicked men - to rule over the nations of men.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles - to Romans chapter 9...

...and as you make your way to the 9th chapter of Romans - I want to take a moment to point out that...

...the word - Providence - speaks of God's foreknowledge - coupled together with His perfect provision.

The doctrine of Divine providence - refers to the loving way in which our God...

...is graciously governing and divinely directing everything in the universe.

To sum it up with simplicity - God is providentially working all things together...

...for the good of those who love Him - and who are called according to His purposes.

And seeing how the Lord is providentially working all things together for our good...

...then - we can rejoice in knowing that - God is providentially providing us with political leaders...

...who will help accomplish His perfect plan.

But now - before we get it twisted - and before we begin to believe that God will always give us the leaders we want...

...we should take a moment to consider some of the rulers - that the Lord has raised up in the past.

And with this as our focus - I should remind you that the Lord was the One…

…Who raised up the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Pharaoh

Let's consider how Paul explained it - here in Romans chapter 9 - look with me beginning there at verse 14 - where Paul asked...

Rom 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!
Rom 9:15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."
Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Rom 9:17 For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”

The passage that Paul was quoting is actually found in Exodus chapter 9 - where the Lord said to Pharaoh...

“...for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”

Now - think about that for a moment - - the Lord was the One...

...Who raised up the Pharaoh - who enslaved the people of God.

The Lord was the One - Who raised up the Pharaoh...

...who refused to set the people free from their slavery.

The Lord was the One - Who providentially appointed that evil Egyptian ruler...

...so that the people of faith - could see how the Lord is able to deliver those who trust in Him.

And that’s exactly what they witnessed — as they watched the Lord...

...pouring out the 10 plagues - upon the people of Egypt.

And listen - the Lord not only was the Lord the One - Who providentially appointed Pharaoh - according to His perfect purposes...

...but - the Lord was also the One - Who providentially appointed Nebuchadnezzar - to enslave the people of God.

In order to prove my point - let's take some time to consider the perspective of the prophet Habakkuk.

Nebuchadnezzar

Let's make our way to Habakkuk chapter 1 - - and as you make your way to the 1st chapter of Habakkuk...

...it'll help you to know that - Habakkuk was a prophet - who was ministering in the land of Judah...

...after the Assyrian captivity of the Northern tribes - - but before the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

And it's here in the first chapter of his book - - where we find the Prophet...

...complaining about all of the unrighteous rulers - who were perverting justice.

With this context to in mind - let's consider the way that the prophet put it - here in the first chapter of Habakkuk - look with me - there at verse 1...

Hab 1:1 The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.
Hab 1:2 O LORD, how long shall I cry,
And You will not hear?
Even cry out to You, "Violence!"
And You will not save.
Hab 1:3 Why do You show me iniquity,
And cause me to see trouble?
For plundering and violence are before me;
There is strife, and contention arises.
Hab 1:4 Therefore the law is powerless,
And justice never goes forth.

For the wicked surround the righteous;
Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

As we consider these complaints - it's important to remember that...

...the prophet Habakkuk not only witnessed the evil Assyrians - conquering the northern tribes of Israel...

...but - he also allowed the king of Egypt - to kill the righteous king of Judah - who's name was Josiah.

What's even worse - was that Josiah's son - Jehoahaz - was a man who did evil in the sight of the Lord.

And it's for this reason that - the prophet Habakkuk cried out to the Lord.

With this in mind - let's consider the Lord's response found here in Habakkuk 1 - look with me - beginning there at verse 5 - where the Lord declared...

Hab 1:5 "Look among the nations and watch—
Be utterly astounded!
For I will work a work in your days
Which you would not believe, though it were told you.
Hab 1:6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places that are not theirs.
Hab 1:7 They are terrible and dreadful;
Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves."

In other words - the Lord was saying - - Hey Habakkuk - - you think it's bad now? - - you ain't seen nothin yet.

Then - - he began to describe His providential plan - to raise up the Chaldeans.

And just to be clear - the Chaldeans were the inhabitants of Babylon.

Therefore - the Lord was helping Habakkuk to understand that...

...He was already putting the political pieces into place...

...for the day when He would empower the king of Babylon...

...to conquer the Southern tribe of Judah.

With this as our focus - we should consider the post-captivity perspective - of the prophet Daniel.

Let's turn in our Bibles - to Daniel chapter 2 - - and as you make your way to the 2nd chapter of Daniel...

...I want to take a moment to remind you that- the prophet Daniel was an Israelite...

...who was captured and carried away - by the Chaldeans.

And yet - Daniel was quick to confess that - - the Lord was the One...

...Who had empowered the King of Babylon - to accomplish this campaign against Israel.

Let's consider how the prophet put it - here in Daniel chapter 2 - - look with me - beginning there at verse 20 - where Daniel declared...

Dan 2:20 Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.
Dan 2:21 And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Here in these verses - we find the prophet Daniel - - acknowledging the fact that...

...the God of Israel was the One - Who removes kings - and He is the One - Who raises them up.

And with that being the case - it only stands to reason that...

...the Lord is the One - Who providentially appointed King Nebuchadnezzar...

...to this position of power - over the people of Israel.

And while the truth of the Lord's providential power over our Earthly governments - was something that prophet Daniel knew full well...

...this was something that the Lord also revealed - to the king of Babylon.

With this in mind - let's flip forward - two chapters - to Daniel chapter 4...

...and as you turn to the 4th chapter of Daniel - I want to take a moment to remind you that...

...the Lord sent to prophet Daniel - to inform king Nebuchadnezzar...

...that he would be driven to mental madness for 7 years...

...so that he might realize that - the God of Israel - is the One Who is in control

Let's consider how Daniel put it - there in Daniel chapter 4 - verse 25 - where the prophet informed the king - that...

Dan 4:25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

Here in this verse - we find Daniel - helping the king of Babylon to realize...

...that the Lord was going to humble him - until he finally came to grips with the fact that...

...the God of Israel is the One - Who providentially appoints those - who rule over every nation.

And this was in fact - the conclusion that the king came to — once those 7 years were completed.

As a matter of fact - look with me again here in Daniel chapter 4 - let's begin reading there at verse 34 - where the king of Babylon declared...

Dan 4:34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:
For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.
Dan 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Dan 4:36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.
Dan 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

Here in this official statement - we find the King of Babylon - bowing his heart - before the God of Israel.

And the reason why was because - he had come to realize that...

...the Most High rules in the kingdom of men - and He gives it to whomever He chooses.

In other words - the God of Abraham - Isaac - and Jacob is the One Who rules over the Earth...

...and therefore - He is the One - Who providentially appoints those...

...who are placed in political positions.

In order to further prove my point - let's consider the statement that Jesus made - as He stood trial - before a Roman governor - named Pontius Pilate.

Turn with me to John chapter 18 - - and as you make your way to the 18th chapter of John's gospel account...

...I want to take a moment to remind you that - - Jesus Christ is the human incarnation of God's only begotten Son.

He is the King of kings - - which is to say that - He has authority over every other king.

And yet - at the same time - He willfully submit Himself - to a Roman Governor named Pilate.

Let's consider John's account - found here in John chapter 18 - look with me - beginning there at verse 33 - where we learn that...

Jhn 18:33 Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"
Jhn 18:34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"
Jhn 18:35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"
Jhn 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."
Jhn 18:37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Here in these verses - we find the Lord Jesus - helping Pontius Pilate to understand that...

...He is the Heavenly King - Who has authority over every Earthly king.

At the same time - Jesus was also willing to submit to the authority of Pilate...

...and the reason why - was due to the fact that - this was the Will of His Heavenly Father.

In order to prove my point - let's flip forward one chapter - to John 19.

You see - it's here in the 19th chapter of John's gospel account...

...where we find the Lord Jesus — informing Pontius Pilate...

...the earthly authority that he had - was actually given to him - from above.

Let's consider how Jesus put it - here in John chapter 19 - look with me - beginning there at verse 9 - where we learn that...

Jhn 19:9 (Pilate) went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.
Jhn 19:10 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"
Jhn 19:11a Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above."

Now - think about that for a moment - - according to the Lord Jesus...

...the only reason that a Roman governor had the power - to place Jesus on trial...

...was because - God the Father providentially provided Pilate - with the political power he needed...

...so that he could call for the crucifixion of Christ Jesus.

Paul later confirmed this - in Romans chapter 13 - when he declared...

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.
Rom 13:2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

According to Paul - there is no authority - except from God.

Not only that - but - according to Paul - the authorities that exist - - have been appointed by God.

I like the way that the scholars who created the New American Standard Bible - rendered these verses - they put it like this...

Rom 13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Rom 13:2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Now - - while it's true that this command - was written for the first century Saint - living in Rome...

...it's also true that - the New Testament epistles - were written for the purpose...

...of providing church age believers - with all of the instructions that we need...

...so that we can live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

Therefore - we have every reason to believe that - Romans chapter 13...

...applies to every American - living here in the 21st century.

In order to prove my point - let's consider how Peter presented the same basic instructions - in his first epistle.

With this as our focus - let's turn in our Bibles - to 1st Peter 2 - and as you make your way to the second chapter of Peter's 1st epistle...

...I want to take a moment to point out that - Peter was writing to the believing Jews...

...who had been dispersed into the Gentile world - - which included regions beyond the Roman Empire.

Therefore - this text was intended for every believer...

...regardless of the form of government that they were living under.

Look with me - there at 1st Peter chapter 2 - - beginning there at verse 11 - where Peter declared...

1Pe 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,
1Pe 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.
1Pe 2:13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,
1Pe 2:14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.
1Pe 2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—
1Pe 2:16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.
1Pe 2:17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Here in these verses - we find Peter - helping his audience to understand that...

...every born-again believers - has been called to become a bondservants of God.

And as the bondservants of God - - we've been called to live in submission with human government...

...knowing that the Lord is the One - Who providentially appoints political rulers...

...who are able to punish evildoers.

Now - this is not to suggest that - the rulers that the Lord raises up — are righteous - - and to the contrary...

...there are many times - when the Lord raises up unrighteous rulers - as a punishment for those nations - who will not repent of their sins.

Remember - the Lord was the One - Who raised up the Pharaoh - and the Lord was the One - Who raised up Nebuchadnezzar.

And I am convinced that - the Lord providentially appoints the leaders here in America...

...as He continues to guide the world - towards the future that He has predetermined.

In order to further make my case - let's take some time to consider John's vision - of the future - - which will eventually unfold.

And with this as our focus - let's turn in our Bibles - to Revelation 13 - - and as you make your way to the 13th chapter of Revelation...

...I want to take a moment to remind you that - the Lord has known about the end of time - - since before the beginning of Creation.

He knew about the fall of Adam and Eve — He knew about the crucifixion of Christ...

...and He knew about the rise of the Anti-Christ.

As a matter of fact - we actually find prophecies about the Antichrist - from Genesis - to Revelation.

With this as our focus - let's consider the prophecy that John presented - here in Revelation chapter 13

Look with me - beginning there at verse 4 - where we learn about the day - when the people of the Earth will...

Rev 13:4 ...worship the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

Rev 13:5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.
Rev 13:6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.
Rev 13:7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.
Rev 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Here in these verse - we learn about the day - when the beast - who is better known as the Antichrist...

...will be given all of the authority that the needs - to rule over every tribe - tongue - and nation.

In other words - the Lord is going to give him the right - to rule over the nations of this world.

And not only that - but - we also learn that the AntiChrist will demand allegiance...

...as he simultaneously takes control of the global financial system.

Let's consider how John put it - here in Revelation chapter 13 - beginning there at verse 16 - where we learn about the day when...

Rev 13:16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,
Rev 13:17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.
Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Here in these verses - we find John - describing the way in which the Antichrist will eventually control the world...

...through some sort of mark - which is connected to the global financial system.

And while there are different ideas - about the how this mark will be implemented...

...we can take comfort in knowing that the church will be gone - before that day comes.

At the same time - it's crucial for Christians to realize that - the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

And just like the days of Noah - - the world is going to grow more and more corrupt...

...as the people of this world - continue to reject the grace of God - which is received by faith in Jesus Christ.

Then - after the rapture of the church - - the Lord will send a strong delusion upon those who rejected Jesus...

...so that they might embrace the AntiChrist.

In order to prove my point - I'll remind you of something Paul wrote in 2nd Thessalonians 2 - beginning at verse 7 — Paul declared...

2Th 2:7 ...the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.
2Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.
2Th 2:9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
2Th 2:10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2Th 2:11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,
2Th 2:12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Christian - listen - there's coming a day - - when the Lord will send strong delusion...

...upon those who did not believe the truth - but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

And it's at that point in time when the Antichrist will be revealed...

...as he enforces a peace treaty - between Israel - - and the Muslim world.

With all of this being the case - I'd like to go on the record - and say...

...I don't know what it takes - to prepare this world - for the rise of the antichrist.

And I have no clue about the leaders - and the policies that must be put in place - before the antichrist can be revealed.

But what I can say is this - - we serve a God - Who has the wisdom - and the power...

...to providentially place political leaders into position...

...so that the predetermined outcome of the Lord is perfectly accomplished.

Not only that - but - I am also certain that our God is the One Who raises up removes rulers according to His perfect plan.

And while I truly believe that Christians here in America should vote for leaders who will legislate Biblical morality…

...I also believe that the Lord is the One - Who providentially appoints the political leaders of every nation...

...as He prepares our world - for the rise of the AntiChrist - - followed by the return of Jesus Christ.

Rather than complaining about the leaders that the Lord has appointed - let's pray for them.

I like the way that Paul put it - in 1st Timothy 2 - - it's beginning at verse 1 - where he declared...

1Ti 2:1 ...I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,
1Ti 2:2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.
1Ti 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
1Ti 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Christian - listen - we've been called to pray for the people who have been appointed to political positions of leadership.

We should pray for the leaders who are Christians - so that they might to lead according to the instructions of God's word.

And we should pray for the unbelievers - so that they might repent - and trust in Jesus Christ.

Let's pray for the politicians on both sides of the isle - so that they might pass laws…

…that enable us to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

I also encourage every Christian to remember that - the disciples of Christ haven't been called to divide over Earthly politics.

No - instead - we should seek spiritual unity - by committing ourselves to the great commission of Jesus Christ.

And while I believe that every Christian should take advantage of the political privilege to vote for those who lead our nation...

...I would remind you that there is no authority except from God…

…and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Knowing that there's coming a day - when the Lord Jesus will return - and establish His Kingdom here on Earth…

…I encourage every Christian to remember that we've been given the great commission.

And listen - this is true - no matter who the Lord appoints to political positions.

Rather than spending an inordinate amount of time - worrying about Earthly politics...

...let's take advantage of the brief amount of time we have to warn the world about that day…

…when the King of Heaven and Earth - will establish His throne.

Let's look for every opportunity to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ - with the unbelievers in our sphere of influence.

And let's warn them about the day - when every knee will bow - and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...

...to the glory of God the Father - Who is presently working all things together - by the power of His providence.

And let's remember that - the King of kings is on the throne…

…and He is the One Who is putting the chess pieces in place…

…as He prepares the world for the time of His return.

That being the case - I can assure you that there is nothing to fear…

…for those who walk by faith with Jesus.