

**W D J S**  
**Jesus and Politics**  
**Matthew 22**

Come out with a HILLARY sign first, then turn it around and show a TRUMP sign. Ask: Did it BOTHER you that 1)Your pastor would vote for either Trump or Hillary? or that 2) Your pastor would dare to bring POLITICS into the PULPIT? (Dangerous ground!!) Relax!

A lot of people have been asking me how they should vote this year. A lot of other people have even asked me IF they should vote this year! I understand the dilemma. I have never seen an election year quite like this in which the office of the president is going to be decided more by what Americans DON'T WANT than by WHO they DO WANT! The slogans, "Never Hillary!" and "Never Trump!" are common expressions of the attitude of many Americans. Don't get me wrong; there are a lot of people who DO know exactly whom they want to be our next president. They have signs in their yards and stickers on the bumpers of their cars. Some of you are going to be checking bumpers in the parking lot today to see who you DO NOT want to park next to (or sit next to) from now on! Isn't it funny; few things can DIVIDE us like politics (unless it is sports)! Does the current political scene rile YOU up? The question that I want to bring to mind this morning is this: **What did Jesus say about RELIGION and POLITICS?** Others wonder if he addressed this issue at all. Are you curious? If so, then let's check the Gospels and find out: W D J S?

**JESUS WAS BORN INTO AND LIVED IN A VOLATILE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT.**

\*His birth caused a king to tremble and rage.

- Herod's fear when the Wise Men came to Israel
- Herod's murder of several thousand children

\*His ministry occurred during the HEIGHT of political frenzy over the coming of the Messiah.

- Rome ruled Israel.
- All hope rested on the Messiah as a POLITICAL SAVIOR.
- The goal of this hope was the establishment of Israel as a world power.

\*The TRIUMPHAL ENTRY was a massive POLITICAL event to them!

- Palm Branches: A political symbol of Jewish independence. [Maccabees]
- Hosanna! This was a PLEA for political DELIVERANCE. "Save us!"

\*Many would-be messiah's tried to lead political rebellions during this season:

- 67 to 37 BC, 150,000 rebels were subdued and killed by Romans
- Sepphoris was looted and had to be burned; 2,000 rebels CRUCIFIED.
- A man called the Egyptian led a rebellion where 4,000 were CRUCIFIED.

\*He said the walls of Jerusalem would fall at his command!

- Judas (another man) led in a revolt against taxes & founded the Zealot party.

\*His descendants led the revolt at MASADA.

**-We THINK we have problems!** Civil uprisings were CONSTANT in their day!

\*It is like SYRIA and PALESTINE and IRAQ today! [SAME AREA!]

\*EVERYONE wants THEIR GROUP to be IN CHARGE. How about you?

\*There were 3 main political categories in Israel during Jesus' day:

- The ZEALOTS: Rebels who consistently DEFIED Rome.

\*They HATED the system and tried to overthrow and replace it with their own.

- The ESSENES: Religious idealists who simply WITHDREW from society.

- \*They IGNORED the system and kept themselves in isolation.
- The SADDUCEES: Pragmatists who simply ASSIMILATED into society.
- \*They USED the system for as many advantages as they could get.

\*JESUS was right in the CENTER of all of this controversy and confusion.

-Jesus had disciples who were members of all (and no) political parties.

\*Simon the Zealot and Matthew the Tax-Collector!

-Do you think you know what political party Jesus would choose if he were here today?

-Republicans, Democrats, or Independents?

-Religious Conservatives or Social Liberators?

-Anti-political hermits? Don't vote; gather your Y2K resources and wait for the rapture.

What if there were ANOTHER category? There is! Jesus spoke of it often. First, let's see what Jesus presented as HIS view of the governing authorities: **Matthew 22:15-22 NLT**

15 Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. 16 They sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with him. "Teacher," they said, "we know how honest you are. You teach the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don't play favorites. 17 Now tell us what you think about this: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 18 But Jesus knew their evil motives. "You hypocrites!" he said. "Why are you trying to trap me? 19 Here, show me the coin used for the tax." When they handed him a Roman coin, 20 he asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?" 21 "Caesar's," they replied. "Well, then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." 22 His reply amazed them, and they went away.

**Jesus instructed us to HONOR the existing government.**

\*There are certain things that DO BELONG to Caesar; ACCEPT that!

**Jesus AFFIRMED the AUTHORITY of Government.** [NO MATTER HOW GODLESS.]

-We are instructed to SUBMIT to this authority. [Romans 13]

\*We must HONOR those in authority over us, not undermine them.

\*Government establishes LAWS that protect and define civilization. [Pax Romana]

-No rules=ANARCHY and CHAOS!

\*Christians accepted this and felt called to be the BEST CITIZENS where they lived.

\*This is an attitude that must be CULTIVATED in Christian community.

\*We are instructed to PAY TAXES for the services that the government provides:

\*Taxes serve some good purposes! [Roadways, Money system & Commerce, etc.]

-Christianity became a RIDDLE to ROME [Best citizens - Yet, most independent]

\*This is the OTHER SIDE of what Jesus said in this passage and elsewhere.

**Jesus LIMITED the SCOPE of Government.** ["Give back to God what belongs to God."]

-There are some things that DO NOT BELONG to the government!

\*We all know this, but government always tends to FORGET!

-Government has no right to control our WORSHIP [Words on Coin: Caesar - Divine Son]

\*This separated the INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE from government control!

- \*RELIGION and STATE had ALWAYS been UNITED until Christ spoke!
  - Roman religion; Greek Religion [The gods that conquered ruled and were served]
  - 1st Century Martyr's quoted this verse in the Colosseum before their death!
- GOD, not government, has the right to our ULTIMATE SUBMISSION

### John 19:10-11a NLT

10 "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?" 11 Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above."

- \*Government's authority actually COMES FROM GOD!
- \*People should HONOR authority, but only ultimately SUBMIT to GOD!
  - Peter's answer to the Sanhedrin. [This is NOT rebellion!]

### Jesus commanded us to LIVE as citizens of a HEAVENLY KINGDOM.

- \*I LOVE being an American Citizen, but my ultimate allegiance is to Christ!

### \*GOD, not government, is our ULTIMATE SOURCE of HOPE!

#### WHO or WHAT are you putting your hope in?

- \*Ideologies: PRINCIPLES that you feel are the most important.
    - Free Market Economy, Socialism, Communism, etc.
  - \*Politicians: PEOPLE that you think will create the Good Society. [Saviors?]
  - \*I will NOT DESPAIR no matter WHO is elected our next president!
    - God is the One who sovereignly sets up kings and presidents!
- POSSIBLE SIDE NOTE: QUESTION: WHO HAS YOUR VOTE?
- I am not referring to which politician you are supporting!
  - Does your FAITH as a citizen of God's Kingdom drive your vote?
- \*A VOTE will only ever be able to PARTIALLY EXPRESS our values and vision.
    - Human beings are complex and contradictory [They may betray us in office!]
    - No single platform will contain EVERYTHING that we believe.
    - No political party will answer to God for its stance: INDIVIDUALS will!
    - YET, your vote in this country is a great PRIVILEGE and RESPONSIBILITY.
    - \*NO VOTE is one way to refuse to INFLUENCE government where you can.

### \*POLITICAL POWER will NEVER usher in the Kingdom of God!

- Jesus refused the people's insistence to become THEIR KIND of KING!
- He acknowledged that if they could usher it in this way, they would do it.

### John 18:36 NLT

36 Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

- This was another indication of the LIMITATIONS of government!
- The HUMAN HEART is the issue; Government just restrains or magnifies it.

"This is the crucial point. While human politics is based on the premise that society must be changed in order to change people, in the politics of the Kingdom it is people who must be changed in order to change society." (Charles Colson - *Kingdoms In Conflict*)

## SO, HOW CAN WE LIVE AS CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

\*Our ULTIMATE GOAL must be to INFLUENCE this world toward a heavenly kingdom!

-Salt, Light, and YEAST! **[Props and Parables]**

-We can INFLUENCE SOCIETY only as we INTRODUCE INDIVIDUALS to Jesus!

### HOW?

\***EXAMPLE** [LIVE in love]

\*We must be careful to remember how we are called to treat our political enemies!

**[QUOTE by PHILIPP YANCEY: [The Jesus I Never Knew](#) - P. 244-245]**

\***ENGAGEMENT** [SERVE in love: Servant leadership]

\*Meet practical needs. [Marcello and Mia]

\***EVANGELISM** (SPEAK in love)

-Society will never be FULLY REFORMED until the Reign of Christ on earth!

**\*I believe that our most important days as the church are AHEAD of us!**

-The church thrives under persecution. **[Ortberg: [Who Is This Man?](#) - P. 114]**

## ARE YOU READY?

Let's pray.