

Political Elections And The Careful Christian

By Ted Gatza

This nation is less than three months away from electing a new president. As Christians, we find ourselves having to make a decision who to vote for. Our involvement in this matter, and how it could affect us as Christians should be our primary concern.

The political rhetoric of voters that we see on the news and internet is not always honorable. Lies are told, insults are made, and candidates are repeatedly disgraced. As Christians, we should not be caught up in such matters. When we repeat the lies, or dishonor the candidates, even though we may believe it to be true or find humor in it, we could find ourselves on the wrong side of God. Showing a lack of respect and animosity is the sowing ground of sin.

Our Subjection To Authority And Why

Regardless of who is elected this year, we must be receptive to their authority and not resist their governance. While the people of this country may have elected them, we must remember that their authority comes from God. Paul was very clear about this in Rom. 13:1-3, "*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.*"

This appointment by God does not mean that they are righteous rulers who rule with the hand of God. What we are told is they are in power because God allows them to be. Daniel 5:21 says, "...the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses." God's decisions may not always be fully understood, but rulers serve God for a reason. We must trust God's judgment and respect it.

Knowing this, we should wisely follow Paul's admonition and not oppose their authority. If we find ourselves resenting their role as leaders, then we are resisting the ordinance of God and could bring God's judgment upon ourselves. (Rom. 13:2). Let us not invoke God's wrath because we are not satisfied with the election results and deride the President. He may be elected by the populace, but he is appointed by God.

Consider Saul, the first king of Israel, and his hatred for David. Despite all of Saul's faults and sins, David never once raised his hand against him. The reason why? Because Saul was "God's anointed". David said, "*May the Lord repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed.*" (1 Sam. 26:23). As Christians, we also should not want to cause injury to "God's anointed" in any way, and that includes defamation of character. Let God be the judge of the ruler. We have more important things to do for the Kingdom of God.

Peter says that when we submit to every ordinance of man, it is for the Lord's sake (1 Pet. 2:13-17). It is the will of God that we do so. When we do good, we silence the ignorance of foolish men by demonstrating the glory of God by showing our honor and dignity. We should never use our freedoms to allow the sin of loathing or ridicule of our leaders be the cause of unbelievers to

mock and blaspheme God. Our lives should reflect our love for the brotherhood, all men, and respecting God's laws.

Ruling Authorities Created For God

Paul reminds the Colossians about the authority of God and His control over who leads nations on earth. He says: *"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him"* - Col. 1:16.

Christ, however, shows us the limits of the authority of our leaders. In Matt. 22:19-21, Jesus said: *"Show Me the tax money."* So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, *"Whose image and inscription is this?"* They said to Him, *"Caesar's."* And He said to them, *"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

Rulers may have great power, but their authority is restricted. God's laws are supreme and take precedence over all things, including man's governmental laws. When we find ourselves having to obey man made laws that contradict God, we must obey God. The apostles were faced with this situation and told the rulers their authority was not greater than God's. They would not sin against God by obeying sinful dictates of man. In Acts 5:29, When Peter and the other apostles were commanded not to preach the gospel, they said: *"We ought to obey God rather than men."*

National Morality

There are laws that are made today that are contrary to God's laws. Abortion, divorce for any reason, drunkenness, homosexuality, and the like, are all legal in this country. However, we are not given this right by God to murder the unborn, become drunkards, condone homosexual marriages, or divorce our spouse on a whim. As Christians, we should not engage in these activities, and we should not endorse them. This would cause us to sin against God by failing to obey his commands. Just because man's laws give legality to sin does not mean that we have God's consent to practice such. So what does make a nation morally righteous?

Proverbs 14:34 says, *"Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people."*

There has never been, nor will there ever be, a nation that is *completely righteous* before God. However, There are nations that have righteous people. In order for a nation to be righteous, it must conform to the laws of God. As long as there are people seeking power for their own glory and willing to make laws to placate those who love sin, it will never have justified righteousness.

A righteous nation is one made through the conversion of people to Christ. Christians will honor and abide by God's righteous laws. The more Christians, the more righteous the nation becomes. In a perfect world, where a nation is entirely composed of Christians, there would be no laws legalizing, abortion, drinking, and homosexuality.

For example, when Israel followed God's law, they were approved of by God and received His blessings. When they followed after other nations, and their legalized sin, they were condemned.

It was the conduct of the people, as well as the conduct of the rulers, that brought on their demise. Choosing a righteous leader, will not make the people of a nation righteous. It is the hard work of converting the people to Christ that will achieve that.

How Should We Vote?

Over the years, I have heard many answers to the question of who should we vote for. Truth is, I really cannot answer that question for you. Neither will I try and persuade you how to vote. The reason is simple: God will appoint who He will give authority to, and He will have a good reason for doing so. It may be done to glorify a nation or to punish a nation. We just do not know.

As God's children, we must accept His wisdom, respect who He appoints, and carry out the work that God has given us to do. We must preach the gospel, convert the lost, and save their souls. By doing this, we will build up a righteous nation in this world, and glorify the kingdom of Christ that is not of this world. Therefore, let us pray that whoever leads this nation that "*we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence*" (1 Tim. 2:2).