

POLITICS AND THE BIBLE



by
Dr. William R. Glaze

“Jesus Christ didn’t come to take sides, He came to take over.”—Tony Evans

One of the great things about being an American is having the right to vote. This can also be a curse when we consider all that is associated with this right. It begins with the efforts of the politicians to get our votes; the accusations, character assassinations, negative campaigning, and the ad counter-ad commercials. Even mild-mannered Christian voters are transformed into a hideous political creature. As a part of this transformation they vilify other believers who do not agree with their political choice. They engage in hostile confrontations where they put their Christianity on a shelf. In addition to all this, they elevate their identification with their political party above their identity with Jesus Christ. Elections are times when our faith is put to the test. On the bright side, it provides for us an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ for those who do not share our political point of view.

POLITICAL PARTIES ARE MADE UP OF MAN AND RUN BY MAN

Romans 3:10-18 gives us a frightening picture of fallen man. *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth*

good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

As we consider many of the financial and sexual scandals that have occurred in the political field, this passage in the book of Romans gives us an indication as to the root cause—sin and depravity. This should serve as a solemn reminder that all human beings (politicians included) are far from perfect. We should not anoint political parties to be God-ordained institutions neither should we look at political figures as saviors of the world who can supernaturally solve all the problems.

JESUS DID NOT ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH ANY POLITICAL GROUP

There were many political parties (both social and religious) in Jesus’ day:

1. Pharisees (Matt. 23:23-26; Mk. 7:1-13; Lk. 11:37-42; 18:12) –A Jewish religious group which practiced strict adherence to the Jewish Old Testament Law and the interpretations of it by the elders.
2. Sadducees (Matt. 22:33-34; Mk. 12:27) – A Jewish religious group that adhered to the Law of Moses but

rejected the tradition of the elders and their interpretation of the Law.

3. Essenes – A Jewish religious group who exercised strict discipline and isolated themselves from those who did not practice their way of life.

4. Herodians (Matt. 22:16; Mk. 3:6; 12:13) – A Jewish political party who supported the policies of the Roman government especially that of the Herodian family.

5. Zealots (Matt. 10:4; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13) – A Jewish political party that believed in strict adherence to Jewish law and opposed the Roman rule over Palestine. They also believed in using military power to fight for their freedom.

When Jesus began his public ministry He did not commit to any political group. Even though He could identify with some parts of each agenda, He could not line up with their whole political platform. Jesus serves as a good role model for us in this area. If a believer affiliates himself with a political party, he must be careful not to become so interwoven into it that he goes along with the ideals of the party even when they oppose Biblical truths. If Jesus took up residence today in a human body, He would probably agree with certain agenda items in each political party, but He would not accept the entire agenda of any group. For instance, He would certainly embrace the pro-life platform of the republican agenda while also

identifying with the democratic agenda of caring for the poor.

There is an interesting verse in John's Gospel which says, "Jesus did not commit himself unto [man], because he knew all men" (2:24). Jesus knew the hearts of men and did not trust them because it could change according to the direction the wind was blowing. Even in our political system we see politicians changing their views and even their political parties.

We see that Jesus not only didn't associate with a political party but He actually started His own movement. Dr. Tony Evans says, "Jesus didn't come to take sides, He came to take over." He established a theocratic system which later became known as Christianity. A system which focuses on God's kingdom and not the kingdoms of this world. This Kingdom is to be identified as separate from any political party or nation. This is a Kingdom whose emblem is not an elephant or donkey but the Lamb (Jn. 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:12).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR CHRISTIANS DURING THE VOTING SEASON

1. Pray for elected officials and for candidates who are running for office (1 Tim. 2:1-3). Sadly, some Christians struggle with the idea of praying for a politician who does not line up with their values, but God's Word says "pray for all...that are in authority."

2. Know what the Bible says about key issues. Then realize that some issues should carry more weight than other issues for Christians (Matt. 23:23). For instance, when considering a candidate, the pro life issue should carry more weight than giving students school vouchers.
3. Become an informed voter, get a voter's guide to see which candidate most lines up with the ways and values of God (Jer. 9:23-24).
4. Exercise wisdom (Prov. 1:2-5); don't vote straight down the party ticket. If a candidate is opposed to some critical Biblical value, give prayerful consideration on who you will pull the lever for.
5. Even if the politician we would like to see elected does not get into office, we must remember that *"promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, or from the south. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another"* (Ps. 75:6-7).
6. Believers should seek to vote for candidates who are God-fearing, qualified, moral and trustworthy (Prov. 29:2).
7. Christians must be careful to not vote their pocketbooks. Thorough study should be given to see which candidates promote the most righteous agenda even if it does not benefit you personally (Matt. 6:33).

8. Do not lose your Christian testimony by getting into hostile confrontations and heated arguments over politics with others (including other believers). Seek to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
9. Do not allow politics to disrupt the unity between you and a fellow believer (Ps. 133).
10. Don't vote for a candidate because he/she says they are a Christian. Some politicians say they are Christians but hold unbiblical views (Matt. 10:16).

In some elections there maybe candidates who fall way short of the standards God has placed in His Word. There will never be a perfect candidate, but some elections may arise where the candidates are absolutely terrible. In that case the Christian might have to vote for the lessor of two evils. Even in this situation, the child of God should side with the one whose platform and policies come nearest to weighty Biblical values.

When there seems to be no suitable candidates running for a particular office, one might choose to opt out of the voting process for that election. However, it must be kept in mind there might be other offices open for election, where the political waters are not as murky. When there are candidates who line up with weighty Biblical issues in other positions, the Christian voter should not stay at home but be compelled to head to the polls.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. William R. Glaze
Bethany Baptist
7745 Tioga Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15208
412-242-3255
pwrglaze@aol.com

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