

Jesus and Politics

by TJ Smith

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POLITICS IS HEATING UP in Facebook preterist groups. I'm reading both sides and decided to add my two cents. This is taken from Vol. 3 of my series on "*Understanding the Bible for Average Christians*" available at www.tjsmithministries.com.

In 2014, some members of our church gathered at the pastor's home for a small dinner with some of the young adults. One of the millennials (28 at the time) and I were having a conversation about politics. I will call this young man "Bob."

Bob did not believe Christians should be involved in politics. He maintained that we serve a King, and His kingdom is spiritual. Therefore, Bob was flippant about where the nation was heading.

I pressed him about who he voted for. He admitted he had never voted in any election. Now, he had been eligible to vote for the previous 10 years, yet never once exercised his right. That's three presidential elections, plus mid-terms, state and local. Ok, fine. His choice. Leave that to the informed, concerned citizens who care about the country they live in.

I should add a disclaimer: not all millennials think this way. All four of our adult children and their spouses vote and participate in the political process.

Bob had a college education and spent his 20's traveling in the World Race, being financed by churches, Mom and Dad. He visited foreign countries, staying in hostels, experiencing the local culture and cuisine. I got the feeling his idea of Christianity was seeing Jesus as a social justice superhero, out to right the wrongs of our society (as he interpreted right and wrong).

Bob preferred not attending church, but rather hanging out in boutique coffee shops discussing the cool things Jesus did and the principles He stood for.

Bob did enjoy worship and I admired him for that. Yet, his preferred choice of worship was to go to the church by himself and worship alone. Again, nothing wrong with that. We all need quiet time with God. However, most Sunday mornings he would arrive either late to corporate worship or walk in after worship time was totally over. I know because I was leading worship and would see him shuffle in.

I do see the same attitude among other millennials. This ideology has been bred into this age group by Rockefeller's public education system and radical leftist factions that have us currently sitting at #31 globally for best education. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo even stated on August 15th, 2018, "America has never been that great."

I'm sorry if you disagree, but you can read more about this in my book "*Where Now? The Church and Homosexuality*" (www.tjsmithministries.com). In it, I describe how Critical Theory has undermined our freedoms and patriotism.

Bob's only reference point to this magnificent and majestic exceptionalism of America was shaped during his formative years under the Obama Administration and the most liberal, anti-American educational system in history. It was no surprise that he held the concept of American pride and nationalism at such an appallingly anemic level of indifference. It just didn't matter to him what was going on in his country. He served a much higher King.

The next day I chatted with the pastor about the conversation, and he too was surprised to hear Bob nonchalantly express disdain for the political system.

This got me thinking about Yeshua. What did the Messiah really believe about the Good News? Sure, He taught that they should give honor to Caesar and to God, but neither of those episodes should inspire a millennial to reject casting a vote. Maybe Bob took his cue from the events that arose while Jesus was standing before Pilate? Jesus answered, "*My kingdom is not of this world . . .*" (John 18:36 MLV).

Building a belief about politics, using the statements that Christ gave about His kingdom, does not affirm political dodging.

A major reason for the decline and reversal of victories won and bestowed on America via Christianity can be directly linked to the vacuum created by Christians snubbing politics. You may have been taught that we should just sell flowers at the airport and leave the democratic process to the wicked.

Ok, enough about the current problems. Did Yeshua and His disciples include governments in their evangelistic playbook? I hope you will conclude that your child or grandchild could serve God by running for office and continue cleaning the swamp for future generations. Here we go!

The following verses are from the MLV Bible:

"And you will also be led in front of governors and kings because of me, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Matt 10:18).

If Jesus wasn't concerned about leaders ruling under the influence of Yahweh, why would He care one way or the other? Why would He be concerned with earthly governments? Here is what John Gill commented about this passage:

Meaning Roman governors; as Paul was taken before Gallio, Felix, and Festas; for judgments relating to life and death were to be taken away, and were taken away from the Jewish Sanhedrim; and as they themselves say. As Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, and others, before whom one or other of the apostles were brought; not as thieves, or murderers, or traitors, and seditious persons, or for having done any wrong or injury to any man's person or property; but purely for the sake of Christ, for the profession of

their faith in him, and for preaching his Gospel; of all which they had no reason to be ashamed, nor were they.

Here is Albert Barnes' commentary on this same passage:

Peter is said to have been brought before Nero, and John before Domitian, Roman emperors; and others before Parthian, Scythian, and Indian kings. They were to stand there to bear a testimony against them; or, as it might be rendered, to them. That is, they were to be “witnesses to them” of the great facts and doctrines of the Christian religion; and if they rejected Christianity, they would be witnesses “against” them in the day of judgment. The fulfillment of this prophecy is a signal evidence that Christ possessed a knowledge of the future. Few things were more improbable when this was uttered than that the fishermen of Galilee would stand before the illustrious and mighty monarchs of the East and the West.

Let's look at some more passages:

“But the Lord said to him, Travel on, because this one is a chosen vessel for me to bear my name in the sight of the gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel, for I will be showing him how much it is essential for him to suffer on behalf of my name” (Acts 9:15-16).

Why did Jesus have to go to such extremes just to prove to Paul how much suffering he would have to go through? And why kings? Again, what's up with Jesus and governments? Lighten up, bro!

“For there stood beside me this night a messenger of the God, whose I am, to whom I also am giving divine service to, saying, ‘Do not fear, Paul; it is essential for you to stand-before Caesar. . .’” (Acts 27:23-24).

“And from thereon, they asked for a king. And God gave to them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And having removed him, he lifted up David to be king to them; to whom he also testified and said, I found David the son of Jesse, a man according to my own heart, who will be practicing all my will” (Acts 13:21-23).

Wait! Hold on! Why is God concerned about some government leader who would “practice all HIS will?” I thought YHWH didn't want us involved in politics? Yet, here He is, interfering and giving the people Saul, then taking him out and placing David on the throne.

“But Paul said, I am standing in front of Caesar's judicial-seat, where it is essential for me to be judged. I did not wrong the Jews, as you also fully well know. For if I indeed am wronging anyone, and have practiced anything worthy of death, I do not renounce to die, but if there is nothing of what these are accusing me; no one is able to grant me to them. I myself am appealing to Caesar.’ Then Festus, having

spoken together with the council, answered, 'You yourself have appealed to be in front of Caesar, then you will be traveling to Caesar'" (Acts 25:10-12).

"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.' But Agrippa said to Paul, 'Are you persuading me to become a Christian in few words?' But Paul said, 'I would pray to God, that both in a few words or in many words, not only you, but also all who hear me today, are to become such: what sort of person I am, except-for these bonds.' And after Paul said these things, the king and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting together with them stood up" (Acts 26:27-30).

Here is yet another example of Paul's understanding of the call to influence those in charge.

"Greet every holy-one in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are together with me greet you. All the holy ones greet you, especially those who are from the house of Caesar" (Phil 4:21-22).

This passage shows that Paul was doing everything possible to reach those considered influential to policy making, leadership, and cultural shaping.

Let's move to John's understanding and the instruction he was given:

"And they are saying to me, 'It is essential for you to prophesy again over many peoples and nations and languages and many kings'" (Rev 10:11).

Why would "kings" be a point of focus for John to witness to if it weren't important to the Father?

In conclusion, it appears governments are pretty important to God as a place for the Gospel to be shared and dominate. Maybe God knows something we don't. Maybe He expects us to get involved and make a difference. Maybe the fact we have been horse-whipped by the anti-Christian agenda to stay out of politics is the very reason we have lost the battles of prayer in schools, education, movies, entertainment, morals, the right to life, trans "equity," homosexual preference and protection, cake bakers, and the list grows.

Maybe taking a raincheck on responsible civic duties (e.g., voting) has given us exactly what we deserve: an ungodly nation. The ungodly love it when young people don't vote, unless they vote for socialism and anything anti-Christ. To ignore, withdraw from, and avoid politics is the equivalent of futurists "circling the wagons" and praying the mothership raptures them out of this. "Let them have it all! The worse it gets, the closer Jesus is to splittin' that eastern sky on that there White Horse."

As believers, we should be inundating every career field possible: legal, law enforcement, military, retail, medical, construction, IT, television broadcasting, news networks, entertainment, education.

The next time someone pipes up and says they don't get involved in politics because they serve a Higher King, remind them that the Higher King has always been concerned with who runs governments.

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will" (Prov 21:1).

Jesus and Paul were convinced of God's power over government. Are we? †

