

## **Jesus Government**

This coming Tuesday, January 31, we in Florida will formally begin the process of choosing who will be the principle leader of our United States of America. Then again in November, we will conclude that process. And this election is not just about choosing one man over another. The ideologies that separate the two major political parties in our country and the frontrunners carrying the banners of those parties make this election the most important, drastic, potentially life-changing of our lifetime and probably the entire history of our nation.

What is at war today in the presidential race can be best summarized into the single question: Do we want a government like that established by our founding fathers, based on biblical principles, faith and freedom conforming to the Constitution and other keys founding documents or do we want a drastically changing government that is fluid and conforming to the models of European socialism where big government has its hands on and in every aspect of the lives of its citizens?

Few would argue that the president of the United States is the most powerful person on the planet. We must choose wisely. We need discernment. We need divine intervention. As I have mentioned before in previous political seasons, I vote values first. Even though the matters of jobs, national debt, the deficit, immigration and foreign policy are huge this year, the thing I want to know first and foremost is which candidate is most likely to honor God and His commands, seek His guidance, and truly govern through a biblical, Christian world-view.

I would remind you that the American experiment of freedom and democracy is unique to all of world history. After 6,000 years of kings, anarchist, dictators, and power hungry maniacs, the first Continental Congress, made up almost entirely of committed bible believing Christians, embarked on the journey of self-government, government of the people, by the people, and for the people. A nation with limited central government. One nation under God. Evidence-

Continental Congress September 6, 1774, made their first official act a call for prayer,

The Library of Congress, from the collected reports: "Washington was kneeling there, and Henry, Randolph, Rutledge, Lee, and Jay, and by their side there stood, bowed in reverence, the Puritan Patriots of New England, who at that moment had reason to believe that an armed soldiery was wasting their humble households. It was believed that Boston had been bombarded and destroyed. "They prayed fervently 'for America, for Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston,' and who can realize the emotion with which they turned imploringly to Heaven for Divine interposition and - 'It was enough' says Mr. Adams, 'to melt a heart of stone. I saw the tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave, Pacific Quakers of Philadelphia.'" - September 7, 1774. First Prayer in Congress –

Continental Congress September 1774, passed the Articles of Association, as recorded by the Secretary of Congress, Charles Thomson, in the Journals of Congress. It stated: "Article X That the late Act of Parliament for establishing... the French Laws in that extensive country now called Quebec, is dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant Religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America; and therefore as men and protestant Christians, we are indispensably obliged to take all proper measures for our security." - September 1774, article 10 of the Articles of Association

Continental Congress June 12, 1775, less than two months after "the shot heard 'round the world" was fired at Concord, issued a call for all citizens to fast and pray and confess their sin that the Lord God might bless the land: "And it is recommended to Christians, of all denominations, to assemble for

public worship, and to abstain from servile labour and recreations on said day." - June 12, 1775. The Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789

Continental Congress May 16, 1776, appointed a day of fasting and prayer for the colonies: "The Congress.... Desirous... to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely... on his aid and direction... "Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness." -

There is no doubt who we were and the motives and foundation we began on. The only question today is, "Who are we now who will we become?" Much is at stake!

Was there anything Jesus said or did that can shed some light on how we as bible believing Christian Americans should conduct ourselves in the processes of our government today? I think so.

**15** Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to trap Him by what He said. **16** They sent their disciples to Him, with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that You are truthful and teach truthfully the way of God. You defer to no one, for You don't show partiality. **17** Tell us, therefore, what You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" **18** But perceiving their malice, Jesus said, "Why are you testing Me, hypocrites? **19** Show Me the coin used for the tax." So they brought Him a denarius. **20** "Whose image and inscription is this?" He asked them. **21** "Caesar's," they said to Him. Then He said to them, "Therefore, give back to Caesar the things that are

Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." <sup>22</sup> When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left Him and went away. **Matt 22:15-22 (HCSB)**

To start with, be sure and note that Jesus, during the time of His entire life and earthly ministry, from birth to crucifixion, was living under and dealing with two distinct governmental systems, that of the Jews with the Sanhedrin as the governing body supposedly enforcing Jehova God's laws as given to Moses and, the Roman government administered by local governors under the pantheistic, gods are everywhere, authoritarian Caesar which allowed the Jews to maintain their form of government and religion under the ultimate authority of Rome. The Jesus movement was seen by both systems to be a threat to their strength and control over the people beginning with Herod's slaughter of the infants two years old and younger in Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth. So, conniving and evil plans to entrap Jesus were common throughout His ministry particularly and especially among the Jewish leaders.

The Pharisees were a division of the Sanhedrin not unlike the division of our congress among the political parties. It was this political group along with the Herodians, who were another political party among the Jews who favored cooperating with the Roman government, who sought to trap Jesus into saying something foolish or divisive. Though these two groups found themselves often opposing one another on many matters of government and religious practice, they agreed in their desire to trick and embarrass the one who claimed to be the Son of God.

Of course they didn't believe that Jesus was "truthful and taught truthfully the way of God." Their facade of offering dignity and respect to Jesus was just a set up for the trick question. The question, instead of trapping Jesus in His words, served to reveal His wisdom and confound the Pharisees and Herodians. They were amazed.

### **Lessons:**

**Laws should be obeyed**/taxes paid- Even a government, like ours or any other, that we perceive reeks of corruption, disdain for God, or we just don't like. God's people must obey the laws and pay the taxes it requires. The only exception would be if the laws of that nation contradict God's laws. Then we should obey God rather than men.

**Be wise.** There are many ways to oppose the policies and practices of an existing government that opposes our beliefs and convictions as followers of Christ. We can learn a lot from Jesus. Jesus, even in His incarnate state, could have called down fire from heaven to destroy both the Roman and corrupt Jewish governments and set up His own, but He didn't. That wasn't the plan. He chose to slowly dismantle the control and influence that those government systems had over the people by teaching and living a life of grace, truth, righteousness and wisdom of speech. Jesus' actions had far more impact on those nations and the rest of the world than any conqueror ever has.

Jesus began a movement carried out by His followers that totally changed the world including governments. In many ways, this transformation of world philosophy, culture and governments reached a zenith in the formation of a nation, the United States of America, where God's purposes and principles were the standard by which government was established and maintained. (until recently)

**5** Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" **6** When the chief priests and the temple police saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate responded, "Take Him and crucify Him yourselves, for I find no grounds for charging Him." **7** "We have a law," the Jews replied to him, "and according to that law He must die, because He made Himself the Son of God." **8** When Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever. **9** He went back into the headquarters and asked Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus did not give him an answer. **10** So Pilate said to Him, "You're not talking to me? Don't You know that I have the authority to release You and the authority to crucify You?" **11** "You would have no authority over Me at all," Jesus answered him, "if it hadn't been given you from above. This is why the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin." **12** From that moment Pilate made every effort to release Him. But the Jews shouted, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Anyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar!" **13** When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge's bench in a place called the

Stone Pavement (but in Hebrew *Gabbatha*). <sup>14</sup> It was the preparation day for the Passover, and it was about six in the morning. Then he told the Jews, "Here is your king!" <sup>15</sup> But they shouted, "Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your king?" "We have no king but Caesar!" the chief priests answered. <sup>16</sup> So then, because of them, he handed Him over to be crucified. John 19:5-16 (HCSB)

In this scene we have a major clash of the Jewish and Roman governments. The Jews demanded, according to their law that Jesus must die. Pilate, the Roman governor found no fault in him. It seems that Jesus was the helpless victim of two powerful, ungodly systems of government, but that is far from the truth. Of the few words that Jesus spoke during the entire time of His arrest, mock trial before the Jewish leaders and abuse and crucifixion at the hands of the Roman government, Jesus chose to reveal a profound truth to Pilate, "You would have no authority over Me at all," "if it hadn't been given you from above." So it was Jesus in cooperation with the Father and the Spirit who was truly in charge and those governments and massive and powerful as they were only existed and operated under the sovereignty and will of God.

That brings us to a pretty important question: Why does our loving, all-powerful, sovereign God allow such wicked, Godless regimes to exist and have such horrendous control over the people it should serve to protect?

\*In the case of the Jews and Romans, they were instrumental in fulfilling many ancient prophecies. That will also be the case in the end times.

\*God, just like with individuals, does not force governments to follow His principles and purposes. He allows individuals to sin. And He allows governments to sin. He ultimately will judge governments that reject Him and He will bless those that obey and love Him.

\*Sometimes God allows or even uses evil regimes to carry out His judgment. Such was often the case with His own people Israel.

## **Lessons:**

**Government is ordained by God.** All power, all governments, all positions of authority and influence exist under the sovereignty and permissive will of God. Some are good. Some are quite evil. We reasonably wonder why God allows so many tyrannical, cruel, satanic, violent government to flourish, but if you read Revelations you will see their demise. Truth, righteousness and holiness will prevail.

**1** Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. **Romans 13:1 (HCSB)**

**Choose** (vote) **carefully**. God prefers that all men who lead nations honor and obey Him, but He does not force

His will. Many an evil tyrant has risen to power over the centuries who oppress, manipulate and kill the people while rejecting God's sovereignty and even existence. They have stood and will stand accountable to God. And remember, Israel was originally a theocracy, a nation ruled by God, but they demanded a king like the other nations and God allowed them to pursue it. Not a smart move. God allowed them to choose and experience the negative impact of that choice.

<sup>6</sup> When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their demand sinful, so he prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup> But the LORD told him, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have rejected you; they have rejected Me as their king. <sup>8</sup> They are doing the same thing to you that they have done to Me, since the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, abandoning Me and worshiping other gods. <sup>9</sup> Listen to them, but you must solemnly warn them and tell them about the rights of the king who will rule over them." <sup>10</sup> Samuel told all the LORD's words to the people who were asking him for a king. <sup>11</sup> He said, "These are the rights of the king who will rule over you: He can take your sons and put them to his use in his chariots, on his horses, or running in front of his chariots. <sup>12</sup> He can appoint them for his use as commanders of thousands or commanders of fifties, to plow his ground or reap his harvest, or to make his weapons of war or the equipment for his chariots. <sup>13</sup> He can take your daughters to become perfumers, cooks, and bakers. <sup>14</sup> He can take your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give

them to his servants. <sup>15</sup> He can take a tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give them to his officials and servants. <sup>16</sup> He can take your male servants, your female servants, your best young men, and your donkeys and use them for his work. <sup>17</sup> He can take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves can become his servants. <sup>18</sup> When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you've chosen for yourselves, but the LORD won't answer you on that day." **1** Sam 8:6-18 (HCSB)

Be very careful and prayerful about who you choose. God give us wisdom!