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Who is God's Candidate?

Daniel 2:21: (NLT) *He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars.*

Special Guest: Len Griehs

In just two days, America will experience what is perhaps the most anticipated Election Day in recent memory. As a country in financial turmoil, we stand at a crossroad: Do we continue to follow the path that the current administration has set under the guidance of President Obama or do we scrap it for an entirely different approach, as laid out by Republican candidate Mitt Romney? What is the role of a Christian in this decision? Is there a right or wrong side for us, or is it not our primary concern? What would Jesus do?

Election Day 2012: Who is running?

- The Federal Election Commission requires filing a Form 2, "Statement of Candidacy."
- As of October 6, 2012, there were 411 candidates officially registered to have their names on the ballot.
- Some names are not recognizable: ADESHINA, YINKA ABOSEDE (R) or DEBUONAPARTE, HRM CEASAR ST AUGUSTINE from Turtle Island on the Other Party - he has registered in every election since 1996!
- Some very recognizable: ROSEANNE CHERI BARR (Green Party)
- Two legitimate candidates: Barack Obama and Mitt Romney

Is God behind our form of government...or any form of government?



Pastors break federal law for freedom of speech, CW 30 News

- *Hundreds of Pastors will break a federal law this Sunday when they endorse a candidate for President. It is part of a growing movement called, "Pulpit Freedom Sunday." According to the IRS, churches, which don't pay taxes, cannot participate in a campaign or endorse a politician. But Pulpit Freedom Sunday has been going on for a few years. Pastors say they have the right of freedom of speech, even when it comes to politics. Reverend Dwight Montgomery clearly is not hiding who he is voting for come November. He wants to make sure his congregation votes the same way. "...I'm going to use my influence to get them to do the right thing and endorse the right candidate."*

We need to remember that we are Christians first. Whatever emotions we have tied up in whatever political system will have to be balanced with that Christian perspective. Whatever happens, the history of man has gone through many different political systems that have promised to deliver Utopia and all failed. Each has promised a "Golden Age" of peace and prosperity. For the most part, they have tried, failed, and faded away. The ideals may be noble, but the world in which we live makes it impossible to achieve on a global basis.

Throughout the program, we are going to look at various types of man-made governments. For example:

Monarchies: One Sovereign, such as a king or queen

- *After the year 1800, most absolute monarchies have fallen.*
- *Today, 44 nations are monarchies with heads of state.*
- *Although there were dozens in Europe before WWI, today there are only seven, including Vatican City.*
- *Islamic monarchies are now being threatened.*

God did not want Israel to have a king, but He allowed it: 1 Samuel 8:6-7

Does God make any election go the way He wants it to?

First, give the context of the following text (our theme text): Daniel 2:19-20: So, what do we want in a leader? God has a grand plan and our theme text shows He will execute it despite whoever is in a leadership position. He can raise or put down any who are interfering with that plan. One example is George Washington. That spirit of liberty and freedom from oppression was so important from the standpoint of religious freedom and the growth of the reformation. Lincoln is very likely another example, who had certain principles that could withstand the issue of slavery that threatened our nation. God rose up kings like David and Solomon for certain purposes. There is a need and a person identified who can fill that need to advance His plan.

What about the Bush vs. Gore election? Did God oversee the election of Bush for Israel's sake? Consider these points:



- Saddam Hussein was a known sponsor of terror.
- He openly funded Palestinian terror against Israel.
- He contributed \$30-\$35 million to families of genocide bombers.
- It was channeled through what was known as the Arab Liberation Front in West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- The last payment was made April 2003—just 2 months prior to the U.S. assault.
- He was the only real Arab leader that sided morally and financially with the Palestinians.
- The Israeli strategic planners always said that they feared that Jordan would be swallowed by Iraq and expose their whole eastern front.
- That would allow joining up to Palestinians and attacking Israel on the eastern front. Attacking Iraq really relieved that threat.

Would the other candidate have attacked Iraq? Obviously there is no way of knowing. But these are the kind of big events we believe God likely overruled. Daniel 2:21-22: It's not that we are robots, but at the same time, He will not allow His plan to be thwarted by anyone who becomes too arrogant. He will overrule to make sure things progress the way they should. We don't want to get caught up in the day-to-day events and forget that God has a design for all of creation.



Politics affects us all, federal law for freedom of speech, CW 30 News

- *According to the IRS exemption requirements code, organizations that don't pay taxes (like churches) can't influence legislation or participate in any political activity for or against any candidate. The penalty would be that you no longer are tax-exempt. You have to start paying taxes like everyone else. Pastors can educate people about voting and political issues but not endorse a specific candidate running for public office. Reverend Montgomery disagrees. He says the government is violating his first amendment rights. "A pastor has the responsibility to provide both for the spiritual and physical and emotional needs of the members. When you talk about politics, politics affects us all."*

Communism: A moneyless, classless, stateless social order

- *Common ownership of property*
- *First envisioned by Thomas More in 1516.*
- *Post-WW1, became dominant in Europe - Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary*

One of God's ancient provisions for everyone: Leviticus 19:9-10: This was a blanket command of compassion upon the less fortunate.

What is the role of a Christian in a political election?

1 Timothy 2:1-2: (NASB) We are to respect and pray for our leaders, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life.

Democracy: Ruled by the people

- *Today's standard for 167 countries (includes Arab Spring), full democracy in 25 countries per Democracy Index.*
- *Many hybrid forms have favored the powerful and wealthiest.*

Where does a Christian fit in to this form of government? Consider this proposition: If we have liberty to vote, it is not at all necessary that we should accept or use that liberty. Followers of the Lamb who walk in the footsteps of Jesus would have plenty else to do in following the Lamb. Is our role to be actively involved in the political process? 2 Corinthians 5:20: An ambassador represents their home country, and for us, that is heaven.

So which candidate said this? "The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest (the nation) become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance." Answer: Cicero - 55 BC in Rome. Man's search to resolve our issues never goes away!

Anarchy: The absence of government

- *The state is immoral.*
- *Big movement in the 1900's.*
- *Vision of Utopian society where individuals enjoy complete freedom without government or established order.*
- *There are no successful anarchies in history - confusion reigns.*

Romans 13:1-3: What is a Christian's responsibility? Let's review guidelines for ambassadors:



- Personal integrity: We need to maintain honesty and set the standard for others, especially during conflict.
- Alertness to problems and dignity of individuals: Do we have the willingness to try to improve the situation, not becoming irrational, having a sense of action?
- Objectivity: Can we take an unbiased view to see things from God's standpoint? Jesus took an unprejudiced view of people.
- Independence: Can we stand apart from the issues of the day and not be unduly influenced by the politics of our day?
- Development of others: On an individual basis, can we correct injustices wherever possible, not ignoring what is going on around us? Can we help others overcome their weaknesses?
- Interest in major problems of the day: We are the first generation capable of eradicating the entire earth and its inhabitants.

"The new technology has fundamentally altered the way in which the modern political candidate perceives his role. The great statesmen of the past saw themselves as heroes who took on the burden of their societies' painful journey from the familiar to the as yet unknown. The modern politician is less interested in being a hero than a superstar. Heroes walk alone; stars derive their status from approbation. Heroes are defined by inner values, stars by consensus. When a candidate's views are forged in focus groups and ratified by television anchorpersons, insecurity and superficiality become congenital." -Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*

"Neither party expected for the (Civil) war, the magnitude or duration which it has already attained... Each looked for triumph and a result less fundamental and astounding." -Abraham Lincoln on the Civil War

Lincoln was very frank about his limitations. With someone like Lincoln at those times in our history, we believe God allowed certain people to come in with principles like Lincoln. Principles of righteousness *should* always reign in human government but don't always. Proverbs 29:2: Righteousness is something we want to look for in a leader.

1 Peter 2:13-17: Christianity is supposed to have great respect for the systems that rule over us. So who *do* we think Jesus would vote for? Jesus faced a situation that might help us decide. When the Pharisees asked him if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, his answer was to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and render to God what is God's. He didn't call people to become part of a political revolution or to become just a mindless addition to the state. He called them to represent Christian principles but to not forget there are certain things that belong to the state: Allegiance is permitted as long as it doesn't conflict with God's laws. As a Christian, we have a dual perspective. The heavenly ideal is first, since it coincides with what God would have us to do. The earthly ideal is second where it does not conflict with the first. Jesus told Caesar that his kingdom was *not of this world, else would my soldiers fight*. Jesus was not a revolutionary in that way. Ephesians 5:11-14: But we could expose the deeds of darkness by participating in the political process, right? We certainly could, but we likely won't be able to change it. You may be forced to participate in an activity that doesn't follow Christian principles. All of these Scriptures are addressed to you personally. Jesus always brought it back to the individual level. We can't impose our standards on others but at least need to understand why we take the stand that we do, and it should be based on Scripture.

Aristocracies: A few elite citizens (the "best") rule.

- *Found in ancient Greece and Rome and in England and France in the 16th and 17th centuries.*
- *Birthright gave the right to rule rather than merit.*
- *The French Revolution overthrew most of the last aristocrats.*

Even in the context of a God-sanctioned arrangement, men can still mess up the responsibility of governing: Deuteronomy 1:26-27: You can have a perfect government but with corrupt men! We need to focus on what our role is and how we can individually best carry out our role as a Christian? That was Jesus' focus on the matter. Proverbs 21:30: Without God, nothing is going to stand forever. **The following is a God-sanctioned system put in place for Israel to govern themselves:** Exodus 18:17-23: This was a great method to handle the millions of people in the Exodus. Seventy judges handled the disputes but with God as their king. They weren't elected; Moses was able to choose them based on them being men of truth and not seeking dishonest gain. Our political process is extremely different. This gives us a sense of the great depth of integrity we want in our leadership.



))) Political or spiritual transformation, Jesus voting, CNN (Spring 2012)

Who would Jesus vote for? But what was Jesus' ultimate agenda? Was it the political transformation of society or was it a spiritual transformation?

We never see Jesus telling people their job was to overthrow or change the government. It was on an individual, spiritual level. He called disciples who would be willing to follow after him and endure what he endured. Jesus was not political in anything that he did. That is a really strong statement to consider. Philippians 4:6-7: Here is a clear message on how to deal with the political turmoil around us. Ultimately, God is in control.

Dictator: Autocratic rule by an individual

In modern life, these are individuals with absolute, unrestricted power. It turned into terror for the many as opposition to rule is destroyed. Think: Hitler, Mao Tse Tung, Robert Mugabe

Ideally, think what would happen if we had a real benevolent dictator - one who is motivated purely out of love, care and concern for people? This would be like what the people had with Moses and God, but the challenge is, is there such a person? Unfortunately not. Dictatorship only brings sickness, sorrow and death. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. 1 Corinthians 10:31-33: None of us is capable of always doing this all the time. When we look to participate in the political process, are we doing so to the glory of God? That should be our focus in everything that we do.

Oligarchies: "A few to rule or command"

Originally meant for "the best and the brightest" to be in power, but it was corrected into "rule by the privileged." Examples: USSR and South Africa. Rule is based on party affiliation or race, with little hope for others. Karl Marx was a big proponent of oligarchies.

We have found great flaws with all of these types of governments. Democracy seems to have the best chance, but it is filled with social problems that bring people unhappiness. Over the long term, no system has secured permanent peace and prosperity. None have been able to rule for the benefit of all people where *each* individual benefits.

Does God have an ultimate political plan for man?

Isaiah 9:6,7: God's plan is that at some point, Jesus will set up a kingdom that will address the issues in a fair and equitable way. Evil will be brought to justice and all mankind will be blessed. This prophecy in Isaiah has not yet been fulfilled, but once it is, there will be no end! Jesus, as a human being, did not accomplish this prophecy. The purpose of his work at the first advent was not to set up this kingdom at that time, but he did promise to return. **The purpose of Jesus' return:** Haggai 2:7: Jesus' first work with the world is to prepare for his kingdom on earth. Since at least World War 1, the world has been "shaking" as part of this process. Jesus is actually in the process of getting ready to set up his government of peace. Sometimes it is hard to see beyond our own difficult circumstances. God sees all history and the future. He allows things to happen but He doesn't change the end result because His plan will come true. Don't take anxious thought, because God's will *will* be done. Psalms 72:8: This is a truly global perspective for all people, everywhere. God is concerned about everyone, including those seemingly left behind. When will this happen? We cannot predict it, but we believe it is sometime in the not too distant future when God will render *all* current political systems irrelevant through direct intervention. He will establish His government through Jesus. That divine standard will bring prosperity in the sense of life for all. Psalms 22:27-28: This is a statement that tells us there will be true accountability for actions. Today many things remain hidden and go unpunished. God will deal with those because there will be true responsibility and accountability for every individual. Proverbs 11:24: The person who blesses others will be made "fat," in other words, blessed themselves. The more we do for others, the more will be done for us. 2 Peter 3:13,14: We are to stand as ambassadors for Christ and recognize that God is bringing in, at some point, a new world order with true equality established for all. Let us make sure that we maintain our Christianity for what it is really for - individual development as a true follower of Christ. Jesus was not political. Now if you feel so inclined to be involved in the political process, wonderful. Keep that in perspective with your spirituality. Remember your spirituality first and foremost. God does have a plan in which no human being is left behind.

So who is God's candidate?

For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,

Think about it...!