

HOW SHOULD A BELIEVER VOTE?
1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

Introduction

Now understand that I am going to share a lot of Scripture with you today in what I say. But I want to start out with this **ONE PRIMARY PRINCIPLE OF SCRIPTURE** that applies to **EVERY** area of our lives as **BELIEVERS** as we begin to answer this question—**How should a believer vote?**

(Read the verse!) And here is a parallel verse...

Colossians 3:17 “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*”

Now, if we are to **GLORIFY GOD** in **WHATSOEVER** we do as Believers, and that even includes the basic areas of life such as our eating and drinking. AND, if we are to do **WHATSOEVER** we do in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Would “**WHATSOEVER YE DO**” include us exercising our rights as citizens of a free nation in casting our votes at the ballot box? (*Nod your head up and down or say Amen right there because whatsoever means...WHATSOEVER!*)

With that being said, I want you to understand that **THERE ARE SOME PRINCIPLES laid down in Scripture** that can help us to understand **our RESPONSIBILITIES before God** both as **BELIEVERS** and as **CITIZENS** of a nation where **WE ARE BLESSED** to have the **PRIVILEGE** of choosing those that lead us in this **REPUBLIC** in which we live!

(And make no mistake about it, **OUR NATION WAS FOUNDED AS A REPUBLIC, NOT A DEMOCRACY!** And there is an important difference that I don’t have time to get into today!)

Something else I want you to understand is that what I am saying here **applies to voting at all levels—FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL elections!**

And it applies not just here in the U.S.A. in 2018, but to **ALL TIMES AND PLACES WHERE CITIZENS ARE BLESSED WITH THE PRIVILEGE TO VOTE FOR THEIR LEADERS!**

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I. **IS THIS A LEGITIMATE QUESTION TO DISCUSS IN CHURCH?**

Some folks might think or say: “*Preacher, you should not mix God and politics.*” Did you know that many preachers during the founding of our nation did mix God and politics and **it had a profound influence on the founding of our nation!**

But some raise objections about whether God would want us to do so. However, the first person to “**mix**” God with politics was **GOD HIMSELF!** After all **He is the one Who instituted Government in the first place!** **We call it one of THE DIVINE INSTITUTIONS!**

What is the definition of a “Divine Institution”—Well it is a principle of Divine Operation directed toward the human race for its orderly direction and preservation. (THE HOME—MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY! THE GOVERNMENT! THE CHURCH!)

As we read through the Bible we find that **God continually addresses kings and governments with commands and instructions—both on what they should do and what they should not do!** (e.g. **Saul and David**)

We need to understand that **the Bible is not just about religion; it is about life in general!** And **it is important for us as Believers to have a world view based on Scripture—That is called having A BIBLICAL WORLD VIEW!**

The Bible has **PRINCIPLES** that apply to **EVERY AREA OF LIFE!** Whether that area be education, economics, entertainment, work life, family life, **OR ANY OTHER AREA OF LIFE!—INCLUDING GOVERNMENT—THE BIBLE HAS PRINCIPLES FOR US TO LIVE BY AS BELIEVERS!**

Now the Church’s primary message to the world is **THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!** Amen! We know that!

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But listen: **THE GOSPEL IS TO AFFECT EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES AS BELIEVERS!**

We know this from what Paul told the young preacher Titus in: *Titus 2:11-12* “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 **Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;**

THE GOSPEL IS TO AFFECT OUR LIVING! AMEN?

Remember what Paul told the Ephesian Church in: *Ephesians 6:10-13* “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.** 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

The bottom line here is that human government is God’s idea... HE is the One Who instituted or started it!

Romans 13:1-4

This passage shows that God alone, as the sovereign Creator, has authority inherent within Himself; but it also shows that He has instituted or appointed several kinds of delegated human authority.

Authorities that exist include:

Husbands within the marriage. (Eph. 5:22-23; 1 Peter 3:1)

Parents within the family. (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-2)

Pastors/Elders/Bishops within the Church. (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17)

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And yes, this includes human government:

Including the heads of State—President, King, Prime Minister

Including all law-MAKERS (e.g., At all levels—Federal and the States [Congress, Senate] even down to the Local level of county commissioners and city councils)

Including all law-ENFORCERS (e.g., police, judges, courts of law).

Those who serve in government (as heads of state, as law-makers and law-enforcers) are **God’s ministers** or **God’s servants**. This is because, **if they are doing it right, they are carrying out God’s will.**

We need to understand that in a corrupt world tainted by sin, not always do those that govern do that which is acceptable to God! That’s true with any of the Divine Institutions—The Home, The Government, The Church!

Now, since God Himself has established government, He must have a **PURPOSE** for it, something He intends for it to accomplish, something He commands it to do.

This leads us to ask, WHY does God want government to exist? And this, of course, will lead us back to our main question:

II. HOW DOES THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT RELATE TO ELECTIONS AND VOTING?

In case you have not thought about this, **we do not see God condoning any one TYPE of government that we have seen in history! In fact, God wanted to rule over His people Israel (Theocracy), but they rejected Him because they wanted a King (A Monarchy).**

(Rule by God will take place in the Millennial reign of Christ!)

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God's purpose for government can be satisfied by any number of the various forms of government. But here is the point: **God's Word DOES specify what every government is supposed to DO!**

(i.e. God reveals the purpose for which He has established it. The BIBLE tells us what God expects of governments.)

Unfortunately, most human rulers either **do not have access to**, or they **simply ignore, the Bible and its teaching about government.**

I don't think anyone is totally ignorant of this, however.

Because this is part of what is written on human hearts by virtue of our being made in God's image (Rom. 2:14-15; cf. 1:32). It is a matter of reason, common sense, or moral intuition.

We can expect this knowledge, however, to be **blurred and tainted by sin. That is why it is important to know that God's purpose for government IS revealed in the Bible!**

And we, as Believers, are the stewards or guardians of the Bible? If anyone should know the purpose of government, it is Believers!

So in a country like the U.S.A., where we are blessed to get to vote for our government leaders, **who is in the best position to know how best to vote? Those of us who believe and understand the Bible!**

What a **privilege** that is! But also, what a **responsibility** that is! By voting, we are helping to put God's Word into practice!

So, **does God care how we vote? YES! ABSOLUTELY! Not only does He care how we vote; He WANTS us to vote, as guided by His Word!**

He wants us to vote for the candidates who, in our best judgment, are most likely to use the power of government to accomplish the purposes God's Word says they are supposed to accomplish!

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Now understand that **this does not mean that the best candidate is going to be perfect**, because none of us are! **And this doesn't mean even necessarily that they must always be a Believer for us to vote for them. Understand that in the Bible God used even heathen rulers for His purposes**

The issue is this: What does my candidate believe about the purpose of government? Does his or her view match what God has revealed?

Sadly, even some politicians who are believers have a totally wrong understanding of this. For example, some have confused the purpose and role of government with that of the Church, which leads to disaster.

Whether one is a Believer or not is important, but it is not the deciding factor. Sometimes an unbeliever may have reasoned their way to the Biblical view of the purpose of government, without realizing that they have come to the Biblical view!

III. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD?

We can sum this up in the "two P's": government's job is to **PROTECT** and to **PUNISH**.

A. Government's Primary Purpose Is To Protect The Rights Of Every Citizen.

What are these "**rights**"? Our governmental documents touch on this. Our American Declaration of Independence says that our "**inalienable rights**" include "**Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.**"

This "**right to life**" includes **the right of every unborn child to stay alive and the ability to defend one's self!**

The right to "**liberty**" includes our **freedoms of speech, religion, work, and ownership of property.**

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The right to *“pursue happiness”* is simply **the right to live in peace, free from fear of those who want to violate our rights.**

One could also study the American “Bill of Rights,” or the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. But **these documents do not have the authority of the Bible.**

The only authoritative description of the rights government must protect are found in God’s Word, specifically in **1 Timothy 2:1-4! (Turn there!)**

Note that here in God’s Word, communicated to us by the Apostle Paul, is telling us to **pray for those who rule over us, but to what end?**

He says we should pray that they will accomplish certain things—and these are the things God WANTS them to accomplish, the very things He has established government to do.

Included here is the government’s job to protect our right to *“lead a peaceful and quiet life,”* i.e. our right to live in peace and safety, free from the fear of those who want to do us harm.

Thus it is government’s job to protect us against threats... both foreign and domestic!

Foreign—We’re talking about threats to our liberties! There are those who want to bring our nation and our way of life down! This is why we have the armed forces to defend our nation against attack. It is why we need border security!

Domestic—It is government’s job to protect us against criminal activities such as murder, rape, and theft; this is why we have police. It is also government’s job to protect us against thoughtless, selfish, and harmful behaviors such as reckless driving, intrusive noises, and “disturbing the peace” in general.

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Paul told Timothy and us that we should pray that government will enable us to lead a *“quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”* (vs. 2).

In this connection we should also be able to evangelize and to speak the truth openly. This is seen in vs. 4, which indicates that when government does its job, God’s desire for *“all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* can be fulfilled.

What this is talking about, then, is what we call *freedom of religion*, which includes *the right to share the gospel and preach the truth.* These are rights that government must protect.

Tragically, sometimes (even now) *the government itself is the very entity that violates these rights—How so?*

- e.g.
1. By allowing abortion (life)
 2. By attempting to suppress free expression of our Christianity (liberty).
 3. By redefining and destroying marriage and the family that God instituted,
 4. By their failed immigration policies and open borders.

When any government, even our own government, does such things, **they are doing the very opposite of God’s purpose for government!**

And the sad thing is, **many professing Believers voted for the ones responsible for these atrocities!** And even sadder, **many professing believers see no problem with these things that are literally changing our society and put it on the road to destruction and incurring the judgment of God!**

The point is this: **the government’s very purpose is to PROTECT the rights outlined in 1 Timothy 2:1-4!**

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(i.e. To make sure that no one PREVENTS us from enjoying these rights.) So, it is wrong before God when the government itself is the one who takes away these rights.

Here are two points we need to keep straight about “rights.”

- 1. No human being has a “right” to do just “anything he/she wants to do.”**

Sadly, this is the way some people understand their “rights.”

Here is a quote from a guy named William Powell, author of *The Anarchist Handbook*: “If I really want to do something, I don’t care if it’s legal, illegal, moral, immoral, or amoral. I want to do it, so I do it.”

That is a warped concept of “rights.” **Specifically, we do not have the right to do anything that violates someone else’s rights and we do not have the right to do something that God has forbidden!**

It is specifically government’s job to LEGISLATE AGAINST such activity, and to PUNISH those who do such things.

No human being has a “right” to do just “anything he/she wants to do.”

- 2. Government’s job is to PROTECT our rights to various things.**

BUT it is NOT government’s job to PROVIDE us with everything that we think we may have a right to!

“Justice” is not equal ownership, but equal opportunity. Socialism (forced equality of ownership based on false “rights”) is not Biblical.

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Government’s Primary Purpose Is To Protect The Rights Of Every Citizen.

- B. Government’s Secondary Purpose Is To Punish Wrongdoers!**

God’s Word specifies that rulers have been appointed by God to punish wrongdoers! (i.e. Those who have violated the rights of others. This is clearly stated in two texts.

Romans 13:3-4 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

1 Peter 2:13-14 13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Such punishment has two purposes. First, it is what the wrongdoer DESERVES. That is, it is retribution, vengeance (see Rom. 12:19), and wrath—God’s own vengeance and wrath, applied via the means He has appointed.

Second, it serves as a DETERRENT to potential wrongdoers by causing them to “be afraid” of government’s sword.

Summed up, these two purposes – to protect and to punish – can be called JUSTICE, or LAW & ORDER. These are the two main things we must consider when we are trying to decide for whom to vote.

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What candidate's views get closest to this Biblical teaching? Which is most likely to protect our rights and punish evildoers?

We must also ask which candidate's government will most likely take the role of villain and establish laws and policies that actually suppress our God-given rights.

Conclusion

Does God care how we vote? YES! **What a privilege** we have been given to have a voice in choosing law-makers and law-enforcers who can fulfill God's purposes for government!

What a responsibility it is for us to examine both the Biblical teaching on government, and to analyze the candidates' views to see who comes closest to the Biblical ideal.

And finally, what a tragedy it is when none of the candidates comes anywhere near this Biblical ideal!

Here is where we must obey James 1:5 and pray for wisdom.