



*A Personal Investigation
into the Morality of Voting*

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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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IN the World But Not OF the World

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Preface¹

“In”, but “not of”. These are the two contexts in which a disciple of Christ lives – IN the world; but not OF the world.² For more than two thousand years the Church has struggled to understand what this actually means, and has also struggled to discern how to live faithfully in these contexts – the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the World.

At the time of this writing, I’ve been pursuing a biblical worldview for 44 years. I’ve been pursuing a biblical worldview of politics for about 5 years. Before that, I considered myself “apolitical”, as I was fairly disinterested in politics. I can’t fully explain why I became more interested 5 years ago. I still consider myself to be essentially “apolitical” – namely, politics is not the answer to the fallen human condition. However, I think anyone who says they are not at all interested in

¹ I would like to thank Keith T. Graff of the University of Maryland Global Campus in Okinawa, Japan, for his help with edits and comments during the process of writing this essay. (He should not be held liable for anything I have written here.)

² John 17:13-19

what goes on in the political arena is not being honest – not with others or himself. While politics does not have the power to alter my spiritual life, it most certainly affects areas of my physical life. I am not only concerned about these effects in my personal life, but more so regarding the lives of my children in my extended household. And, while I am far from being altruistic, I do have a measure of authentic concern for truth and justice, poverty and suffering, health and happiness for Humanity at large in its fallen condition.

Now, what we can do to affect the political arena is, I think, highly questionable. I say this because of the shortcomings of the American two-party system, the electoral college system, gerrymandering, corporate funding of candidates, and the paralysis of partisan politics, et. al. Because of these things, I think an individual's participation in the political process seems to be quite impotent. I can totally understand political abstinence because of a lack of faith in the process.³

³ I personally think that publishing via social media produces more effective change in society than voting. I also think praying is more effective than voting. Of course, we can do all three.

Nowhere in Scripture does God *command* us to vote; but some human governments give us the *privilege* of voting. We don't have voting rights in the heavenly realm. *Voting is an activity in the kingdom of the World.* Yet, as followers of Christ, we also live in the Kingdom of God.

This essay does not purport to be the “official” Christian stance on voting. Nor is its intention to disparage anyone's perspectives on voting, nor to stir up controversy, nor to cause offense. But, rather, it is an honest, personal investigation of the following questions:

- For a disciple of Christ, is voting moral, or immoral?
- Or, is voting rather a matter of “faith which you have as your own conviction before God”⁴?

What follows are the “reasonings” I have wrestled with personally in an effort to come to a place of

⁴ Romans 14:22

discernment and peace before the Lord concerning various issues inherent to voting.

However, what is shared in the *Postscript* I do believe is “what the Spirit is saying to the churches”⁵; and therefore, I speak it in faith; and am open to it being spiritually judged according to the New Testament scriptures. “It is written: ‘I believed; therefore, I have spoken.’ Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak.”⁶

⁵ Revelation 2:7, 29, 3:22

⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:13; Cf. Psalm 116:10

Political Science vs. Political Philosophy

While I may be indicating *some* of what I *believe* about politics, I am writing here mainly to clarify (for myself) my *behavior* with regards to politics. Therefore, maybe I can further introduce this discussion by pointing out a possible difference in two terms: “**political philosophy**” and “**political science**”. *Political philosophy* is the study of *theories* addressing fundamental political issues. *Political science* is the study of *empirical political behavior*. My political philosophy of choice may be “Christian Libertarianism”.⁷

According to the teaching of Christ⁸, I live IN the world (but am not OF it). And, therefore, I live under human

⁷ N.B., I do not belong to the Libertarian Party, nor any other political party. To learn more about “Christian Libertarianism”, I would recommend starting at this page of the “Libertarian Christian Institute” website:
<https://libertarianchristians.com/get-started-here/>

⁸ John 17:13-19

government – namely, the State / the Empire. And so, this essay is about trying to clarify – *not political philosophy* – but **political science**: Namely, how to best conduct myself **IN** the world, while not being **OF** it – how to best conduct myself with human government – the State / the Empire – specifically with regards to voting.

The World System

Firstly, we must take a look at the context in which voting takes place – “the world”. What does it mean to be “in the World”? I think the subject of “the world” is crucial to understanding the Kingdom of Heaven, along with understanding the kingdom of the World. And yet, this subject of “the world” has been largely ignored by most Christians, or at best, has been misunderstood because of simplistic interpretations. It’s my conviction that this deficiency leads to a perspective that is different from the one Jesus and His apostles had with regards to the place of the Christian⁹ in relationship with “the world”.

In his First, Second and Third Epistles, 23 times the apostle John uses the word *kosmos* which is translated as “the world”. In the context of his epistles, John is referring to “the world” as *“the course and current of this world’s affairs, which have been corrupted by sin”*.¹⁰

⁹ And the Church (Ecclesia)

¹⁰ *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*

Greek scholar Marvin Vincent describes “the world” as *“the sum total of human life in the ordered world, considered apart from, and alienated from, and hostile to God, and of the earthly things which seduce from God”*.¹¹ In his epistles, John uses very simple language; but what he is saying about “the world” has much wider and deeper applications than we might realize. For example, some (including myself) understand the term “the world” in this way: *“An ordered world system governed from behind the scenes by Satan. This system encompasses politics, education, literature, science, art, law, commerce, music -- anything involved in the progress of mankind [humanism]. No matter how good the initial intentions, all organizations created by mankind eventually turn away from Godly power to worldliness. When the influence of Divine Life is removed, organizations gravitate towards materialism, humanism, worldliness, and Satan.”*¹²

Please refer to the Addendum for additional material on this matter of “The World System”.¹³ Suffice to say

¹¹ *“Word Studies in the New Testament”*

¹² This quote is from a book summary (not an excerpt) of *“Love Not the World”* by Watchman Nee offered by a Davin Dahlgren. This book, as with his many other books, is actually published from the notes taken by his students during Watchman Nee’s talks (1920-1972).

¹³ Also for a more complete treatment of this subject see my articles: [“The Spirit of the World”](#) and [“The Cross & The Powers of Darkness”](#).

here, from a biblical perspective, the world system – the global political, social, cultural, financial, educational, communication systems of the world - are under the control of powers of darkness.¹⁴ This includes human governments on all levels in all nations. One of Humanity's root problems is not believing this. In fact, most Christians in America also do not sufficiently believe this.

¹⁴ Ephesians 6:12. Cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

A Mixed Multitude

The peoples of the world – in each nation – are comprised of *both* those who believe and follow the Christ and the Christianity which are delineated in Scripture, as well as a majority who do not, including those who think and say they do, but do not. **How does God govern this mixed multitude?**

Firstly, God has revealed Himself, along with His heart and mind, plans and purposes for Humanity in Scripture, which must be understood in light of the New Covenant. And, God has revealed His New Covenant by His Spirit and written words and given every human being the free will choice to enter into covenant with Him through Christ – or choose not to; and then live with the consequences of their choice.¹⁵ So, **how does God govern those who are not in covenant with Himself? THROUGH THEIR OWN FREE WILL**

¹⁵ I think such a perspective is somewhat rare in Evangelical circles. I have never heard a “Progressive Christian” give such an understanding. And, obviously, people of other religions and people of no religion have contrary understandings of God and His creation.

CHOICE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT COMBINED WITH HUMAN GOVERNMENT. Humanity is free to be either God-governed or self-governed. However, relatively few people on the earth understand and submit to God's New Covenant. So, we must consider **how God governs both** - His people, as well as those who are not His people. *How* does He govern those who are *not* in His kingdom, and also those who *are* in His kingdom (but also must live in the world system during this age)? Again, we are **not** talking about the Kingdom of Heaven here – we are talking about the World System.

- **How does God govern this “mixed multitude”?**
- **And what powers has God ordained for human government?**

Human Government

“Every person is to **be in subjection to** the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and **they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.** ³For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, **an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.** ⁵Therefore it is necessary to **be in subjection**, not only **because of wrath**, but **also for conscience’ sake.** ⁶For because of this you also **pay taxes**, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.” Romans 13:1-7

According to this passage, we should “be in subjection to” and “not oppose” the governing authority. It says that we should “pay taxes”; but it does *not* say that we

must vote. Voting is not a law but a privilege. We can be “good” citizens without voting. In point of fact, no one will miss your vote except the politician you didn’t vote for, his party and its agenda, and all the other people who voted for him.

The passage also tells us that God has ordained human government to **protect** those who do good and to **punish** evil doers. Nowhere in the passage - nor anywhere else in the New Testament - has God ordained human government to **provide** for people. (This is of the utmost significance.)

Sacral Societies & Welfare States

There can be a tendency to equate the Old Covenant Jewish system of tithing for charitable support of the poor, the widow and the orphan¹⁶ with a modern system of taxation. But, there is an essential difference: Ancient Israel was a “**sacral**” society¹⁷ – that is, *a theocracy* –

¹⁶ (Hebrew) *Tzedakam*

¹⁷ A term used by Leonard Verduin in his book, *“The Reformers and Their Stepchildren”*.

*“the form of government in which a deity of some type is recognized as the supreme ruling authority, giving divine guidance to human intermediaries that manage the day-to-day affairs of the government”*¹⁸ – that is, a society in which the governing laws, policies, and programs were based in a particular religious faith – not by a humanly devised system of government. Ancient Israel was a sacral society. The Imperial Cult of Ancient Rome was a sacral society. Islamic nations are sacral societies. The idea that America was founded as a sacral society is highly debatable; but, in any event, it certainly has ceased to be one quite some time ago.

But what about the New Covenant Church? That could be labeled a sacral society, with the Law of Christ governing all that transpires between all of its members. But remember: It is the “Ekklesia”¹⁹ – the “called out” –

¹⁸ Merriam Webster’s Dictionary.

¹⁹ Strong’s # 1577 (Greek), usually translated, “church”. Some thoughts on using the word “Ekklesia”: **Not everyone identifying with the word “church” is part of the Ecclesia of God. There is only one true Church made up of those who have received the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9-10) - those who “possess the Son”. (1 John 5:11-12)** However, contrary to what is in vogue today for some, I make no distinction between the Greek word, ekklesia, and its English translation, “church”. I use the two words interchangeably. If I use the word “church”, I mean

that is, it is a society within a larger society – a society called to be separate from the larger society. The Ekklesia is a society, who's government and citizenship is in heaven, but also lives under a human government here on earth. It is IN the World, but not OF the World. **That is the issue.** The Church cannot identify with any earthly system or model of welfare state. To “complicate” matters further: This Christian sacral society (The Church / Ekklesia) doesn't belong to one country or nation – it is international (and, in fact,

the full and accurate biblical meaning of “ekklesia”. Simply using the Greek word, ekklesia, in and of itself, helps no one understand the biblical meaning. **The biblical meaning will always require explanation for the unlearned.** Therefore, I think the English words, “church”, or “assembly”, or “community” are adequate translations. When writing, I sometimes find myself leaning towards using terms like “the people of God”, or “the disciples of the kingdom”, or “the followers of Christ” - depending on the context. Furthermore, not identifying as “Church” does not “automatically” make us the “Ekklesia”. If we are going to identify as the “Ekklesia”, there must be the reality of being and living as “called out” AND “GATHERED TOGETHER” AND ENGAGED IN THE MATTERS OF THE KINGDOM (it's the latter that is demonstratively lacking today.) Donning the Greek word is duplicitous and inconsistent. If that were the thing to do, why aren't we using Greek words to communicate 100s of other New Covenant truths? Moreover, don't the words “congregation” and “assembly” ALSO conjure up images of people sitting in a BUILDING? Doesn't the term “ekklesia” conjure up the connotation “ecclesiastical” (man-made church systems)? We also have to reckon with Paul's injunction: “Solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.” (2 Timothy 2:14) What do we do with that? I think we are still “missing the mark” and “falling short” with all of this.

cosmic²⁰). If God were to reveal by Holy Spirit-inspired scriptures exactly *how* His people in the USA should and should not receive welfare from the US government, would He also have a different set of Holy Spirit-inspired scriptures to reveal *how* His people should and should not receive welfare from the governments operating under the Nordic model of Welfare States in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland? And then, yet another set of scriptures for His people living Communist countries like China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba. And then, what about His people who happen to be living the United Arab Emirates or other Arab nations which are also a sacral societies (like ancient Israel) – but are governed by the Islamic religion with its system of welfare for the poor²¹?

We Serve Our Source

No, if we survey the scriptures, we must conclude that God has **not** ordained human government to *provide* for

²⁰ Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 12:22-24

²¹ *Zakat* (Charity)

people. Those who do not look to God as Provider, have no other option but to look to themselves and Humanity for provision. Of course, most of those also want human government to help provide for them.²² And, since people will ultimately **serve their source**, exchanging control of their personal lives for that **provision**, most human governments, which desire control above all else, are moving more and more towards being the “providers” of Humanity. (Namely, the Antichrist Beast System²³). Therefore, most of us find ourselves living in nations in which *human governments are operating more and more outside that which God has ordained and are becoming more and*

²² Throughout *most* of human history, social welfare has been relegated to private charities, religious orders and denominations like the Roman Catholic Church. Another example would be the English Poor Law giving Anglican parishes responsibility for social welfare. However, there were a few minimal examples of State welfare programs in Ancient Rome (under Augustus, 27 B.C. – 14 A.D. and under Trajan, 98-117 A.D.), as well as under the Song Dynasty in China, 960-1279 A.D. But, generally speaking, the phenomenon of State welfare is a *relatively* modern practice beginning late 19th, early 20th centuries in Germany (1889), Great Britain (1913), and also in the USA with the Social Security Act of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” in 1935. The “Nordic Model” of social welfare exists today in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. It is worthwhile noting that even today 27% of the world’s population lives in “informal economies” – namely, economies in which there is neither monitoring of income nor taxation, so that those governments are *not capable* of supplying any social welfare.

²³ Revelation 13

more in control of our lives through various totalitarian forms of government. This applies to *all* governments, in *all* nations – regardless of their espoused political philosophies.

The Hopelessness of Human Government

Just as not all cops are bad cops, and not all African Americans are law breakers, and not all Latinos are rapists, and not all White Evangelical heterosexuals are racists, I suppose it is true that not all politicians are corrupt hypocrites. There are politicians on “both sides of the aisle” that are sincerely wanting to do their jobs with integrity. Like the rest of us, they see the social ills in our society and want to *legislate in ways that will help their fellow human beings*. I believe those politicians, along with most people in our country want all people to live and pursue happiness – or as it says in 1 Timothy 2:2: “that we may live a calm, tranquil, undisturbed quiet, peaceful physical life in godliness and honor”.

Here is the problem: Democrats think that goal will be achieved one way, Republicans think it will be achieved another way, and Libertarians think it will be achieved yet another way. And all are vying for our votes, employing what is nothing short of propaganda.

To put it in more spiritual terms: Most likely without their cognizance, it is, in fact, **sin** that Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians are all trying to deal with,²⁴ and are, unfortunately, failing miserably. How can those who do not believe that there is such a thing as **sin**, nor acknowledge the existence of “rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”²⁵ deal with such? Excuse my sarcasm, but, isn’t that like fighting climate change when you don’t believe in the science of climate change? **The effectiveness of all human government and the efficacy of all human legislation falls far short of dealing with the problem and consequential problems of fallen Humanity.** That should be abundantly clear to

²⁴ Cf. Romans 13:3-4

²⁵ Ephesians 6:12

any rational human being that considers the history of the human race. There is absolutely no historical precedent upon which to place any hope. Faith (trust, dependence upon) human government is “vanity of vanities”.²⁶ **“... in the world, without God, without hope....”**²⁷

²⁶ Ecclesiastes 1:2

²⁷ Ephesians 2:12

Two Kingdoms

Martin Luther indicated that Christians live in Two Kingdoms²⁸ – one heavenly and one earthly. Through God's Spirit and written words, as Christians, we can know how to conduct ourselves in the Kingdom of God. But the question *here* is **how are we to conduct ourselves in the world system which is growing increasingly secular and totalitarian²⁹?**

²⁸ To learn more about Martin Luther's "Doctrine of Two Kingdoms", I would recommend "The Ethics of Martin Luther" by Paul Althaus. The following is taken from Doug Douma's book review of that title summarizing Luther's view: Luther's views can be summarized as follows: a) Government is to punish evildoers (as the Left hand kingdom of God).

b) The church, The Right Hand Kingdom, is not to be involved in government itself, but in preaching the gospel.

c) The church and the government shouldn't cross roles. People are never to be coerced into belief.

d) Christians must submit to the governing authorities. Christians should never rebel against a government even when the government commits crimes.

e) A person should never use violence as a person, but it is allowed when used in its office. This "office" can be either in the government (executioner, judge, soldier, etc.) or in the family (the parents).

f) Laws should be formed by "reason."

g) Christians are not necessarily better at government than non-Christians.

h) There is no "best" form of government.

²⁹ Because of his historical context, namely, the political power of Rome, and the predominant climate of cultural Christianity (Christendom), it seems to me that what Luther had to offer falls somewhat short of fully addressing the times in which we live with the predominant trend towards greater secularism in culture and increasing totalitarianism in governance.

What did Jesus do? Jesus said, “Give to Caesar the things that belong to him; but be sure to give God the things that belong to Him.”³⁰ I think it is difficult for us to appreciate how foreign this sounded to the Jews Jesus was speaking to at that time. Yet, we absolutely need to understand and appreciate what He was saying, because we are in the exact same situation now as they were then: As Christians, we endeavor to live according to the laws that govern the Kingdom of God. But the secular society in which we live is governed by a very different set of laws – and are becoming more different as time goes on. With His novel statement Jesus confirmed:

- We are, in fact, living in Two Kingdoms.
- The earthly kingdom is ruled by human governments under the powers of darkness.
- The earthly kingdom is made up of a mixed multitude – that is:
 - The people of God, who submit to God’s rule and serve (worship) God, but are also governed by Caesar (the State).

³⁰ Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26

- As well as, the people who have rejected God's rule, and who serve (worship) Caesar (the State), but who believe they are ruling themselves.

All peoples of the world, including God's people, live under some form of human government. The fact is: since the Babylonian Captivity³¹, the people of God have always lived in this Two Kingdom / Mixed-Multitude situation.³²

So, how *did* Jesus handle it? Jesus and His disciples never said a word, nor took any action toward changing Caesar's government to be more like God's government. Jesus' followers were a set-apart society within a larger secular society.³³

³¹ A time of God's judgement upon His people, the Hebrew nation, when He allowed Israel to be defeated by Babylon. There were actually several different times during this period (607-586 B.C.) when the Jews were taken captive by Babylon.

³² I personally believe this is the meaning of the biblical term "time of the Gentiles" (Greek: *ethnos*), that is, the time in which God's people live in subjection to the governments of the nations (Greek: *ethnos*) of the world. Cf. Luke 21:24.

³³ In Leonard Verduin's words, "non-sacral" society. (Cf. *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*)

We can see the same situation with Jacob and the sons of Israel in Egypt (before the Babylonian Captivity): For 400 years, they were a society set-apart to God, *but also* under the rule of Egypt (representing the world system at the time); and God had given them a place (Goshen) in Egypt (the world system).³⁴ It should be noted that in God's provision for His people in Egypt, **He did nothing to make the surrounding society less pagan, or more religious, or more Israeli, or in any way "nicer"**. In fact, as time went on, He allowed that human government to become oppressive of His people. And, eventually, He delivered His people completely out of that world system. He then brought them into a "Promised Land" and into a covenant with Himself – the Old Covenant – the Mosaic expression of His Kingdom. Of course, the "Promised Land" for believers in the New Covenant is *not* anywhere on this present earth, but rather in the new heaven and the new earth³⁵ – "a better country, that is, a heavenly one".³⁶

³⁴ Of course, both Egypt and Goshen represent spiritual entities in the New Covenant.

³⁵ Revelation 21:1-8

³⁶ Hebrews 11:16

Voting

It must be granted that neither Israel under Egypt, nor Jesus and His followers under Rome had voting rights.³⁷ But, we do (in the USA). So, what do we do with those voting rights? As I've already said, voting is **not** commanded by God. But, it seems to me that Scripture *does not* overtly condemn voting either. Does God leave it as a matter of choice – “a principle of conscience”, as in Romans 14? As I've already said, one does not have to vote in order to be “a good citizen”. But these are questions being asked in this article:

- Could voting possibly be immoral?
- Is it immoral not to vote?

Political Agendas

What is voting? Essentially, it is aligning oneself with a particular political agenda – supporting a particular

³⁷ However, the apostle Paul, a Roman citizen by birth, did have voting rights. But, there is no mention of him ever voting. Acts 22:25-28. Cf. Acts 16:37; 21:39; 22:3.

politician, along with the particular political party to which he/she belongs – including its philosophy, policies, and programs to which he/she pledges to represent. The enabling of particular political actions is the outcome of voting. So, the discernment needed is whether or not a particular party's political platform is to be deemed moral or immoral.

One thing to consider is this: It would be immoral to vote for – align oneself with, support and enable - a particular party platform which you have deemed immoral. **But, what if one has concluded that both party platforms are immoral? Would it be immoral to abstain from voting all together? I don't think so, for you have not participated in that which is immoral. And, as a voter, one has no other recourse besides the vote to address the immorality of political agendas, with the exception of "Public Demonstration" and "Civil Disobedience".**³⁸

³⁸ The subjects of "Public Demonstration" and "Civil Disobedience" are beyond the scope of this essay on "Voting".

But what if there is yet a 3rd party platform which you deemed to be moral? One could align yourself with, support and enable that moral agenda with your vote. But, such action has never won a presidential election in America. Isn't that then just a "wasted" vote? I don't think so, because you have "made a statement" – taken a moral stand – by aligning yourself with that which is moral.

The fact that 3rd party voting most likely will only draw votes away from one major party and just serve to promote the other major party is only a negative if one deems either one of the other major parties to have a moral platform to begin with. Also: 3rd party voting could be worthwhile in voting for other political offices. **But is the platform of that 3rd party actually moral in any case?**

Another thing to consider is the fact that one could possibly deem some aspects of a particular party platform moral and other aspects of the platform immoral. But there is only one vote – one alignment - for the entire platform, carte blanche. Do we now weigh

up the pros and the cons, so to speak? Does God, in His righteousness, weigh up the pros and the cons? I don't think that sounds like the God who has revealed Himself through Christ and the biblical scriptures.

What about when "God is at work in all things, and causes all things to work together for good"³⁹ – is He weighing up the pros and the cons then? I don't think that is the most accurate way of analyzing the work of God in the affairs of men. But, we do know that God – in some manner - "changes the times and the epochs; and removes kings and establishes kings; and gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding"?⁴⁰ Exactly how does He do that?

God's Agenda

If we choose to vote, should we expect to change the surrounding society? I don't think we have any right to think such a thing. God didn't do that for Israel. He

³⁹ Romans 8:28

⁴⁰ Daniel 2:21a. It is significant to note how God accomplishes this: "He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding" (v. 21b) and "reveals the profound and hidden things – in the darkness". (v. 22)

didn't do that for Jesus and His disciples. And He is not doing that for many Christians living under totalitarian governments around the world today. The reason for this is because that, in fact, is NOT God's agenda.

According to the New Testament scriptures, God is not interested in *"transforming"* society, but rather, **influencing the surrounding society with salt and light.** His agenda is to have His people – the set-apart society (Ekklesia) – **individually and collectively be a witness to⁴¹ the larger surrounding secular society. *This will not necessarily transform that society.*** It will "save some, snatching them out of the fire".⁴² **That is God's** program, which is in progress and will continue until after this creation is destroyed by the fire, and is replaced with a new heaven and a new earth.⁴³

⁴¹ This involves communicating the Gospel of the Kingdom through preaching and teaching, as well as through demonstration and modeling. Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10; Romans 10:18; Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 1:6, 23; Revelation 14:6.

⁴² Jude 1:23. I'll return to this pictographic verse later in the essay.

⁴³ Cf. 2 Peter 3:7-13

The Power of the Vote? Or The Power of God?

But, getting back to the issue of voting ... **Who is in control of who governs the people?** Does God really “change the times and the epochs; and remove kings and establish kings; and give wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding”?⁴⁴ What actually places people in political office? Our votes? Or God? This is akin to the question: “*Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Pharaoh? Or God?*” Long story short: **God knows all things – even the free-will choices of human beings – including their votes.**⁴⁵ Yes, God is in control – not our votes. And He is in control when we vote and when we **don’t vote.** And “He is at work in all things and causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”.⁴⁶ **Bear in mind, that “good purpose” happens**

⁴⁴ Daniel 2:21a. It is interesting to note how God accomplishes this: “He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding” (v. 21b) and “reveals the profound and hidden things – in the darkness”. (v. 22)

⁴⁵ For a more in-depth treatment of the subjects of God’s sovereignty and human free will, see my article [*“Some Thoughts on Evil”*](#).

⁴⁶ Romans 8:28

to be “to become conformed to the image of His Son”⁴⁷ – not necessarily that you will have a “nice” life.

Pray and / or Vote

We may vote out of a sense of moral conviction. Or we may not vote out of sense of moral conviction.

Regarding voting and morality, I’d like to discuss a number of things:

Personality, Party, Policies, Programs

The reality is: In our two party system, voting with moral integrity is extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible. This is what I mean: If we were voting on specific issues, through our vote, we could align ourselves on a particular side of the given issue according to our biblical worldview. But we are not actually voting on specific issues, we are voting for one political party or another. Even voting for a particular “personality” (which typifies American voting) results in

⁴⁷ Romans 8:29

a “party vote” because it contributes to the influence and power of one particular party over another. Whether we vote “policy” or “personality”, we end up aligning ourselves with all the philosophy, policies, and programs of one particular party with a carte blanche alignment with all their various stances on a long list of issues. **Generally speaking, our “party vote” is almost always in moral alignment with one particular issue “of choice”, but out of alignment with a number of other issues.** We tend to pick a particular social issue, and tacitly say that the biblical worldview on that particular issue is the “Christian vote”, and align ourselves with the particular party which has the policies and programs in line with our moral choice. The problem is: There are many other moral issues to be concerned with, which we either ignore, or feel are somehow “less important”. This can often result in hypocrisy.⁴⁸ **And all too often, the issue we’ve placed “at the top of the list” is usually that one which has been appointed the official “political**

⁴⁸ An example is voting “Pro-Life”, yet having little to no concern about cutting programs to feed children in poverty. Another example would be voting “Pro-Choice” (pro-abortion), yet also promoting various “inclusion” policies and programs.

football” by the media. But, from God’s perspective, one issue is **not** more important than another. In God’s sight, sin is sin is sin.⁴⁹ **The concept of voting for “*the lesser of two evils*” is NOT the mind of Christ, nor in alignment with the righteousness of God. Can you imagine Jesus of Nazareth choosing “*the lesser of two evils*”? Can you imagine any of the apostles choosing “*the lesser of two evils*”? Is there anything anywhere in Scripture instructing us to choose “*the lesser of two evils*”? I think praying will accomplish more than voting. But, if we decide that voting is not immoral, we can do both.**

“Have a nice life”

I would also like to offer that the motivation behind our “moral conviction” in voting is at least somewhat influenced by a basic desire shared by all Humanity, which is this: We all just want a “nice life” – for ourselves and for our loved ones. If we can’t admit to that, we are not being honest. In this life, we all pursue

⁴⁹ Cf. Matthew 5:18-20, 48

health and happiness for ourselves and for our loved ones. We all do everything we can to have a “nice life” - “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity”, as it is expressed in 1 Timothy 2:1-4:

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions, *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority (or high positions), **so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.** ³*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God* our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

In the *Apostolic Bible Polyglot*, that phrase reads:

“that^{G2443} a calm^{G2263} and^{G2532} unassuming^{G2272} existence^{G979} should be led^{G1236} in^{G1722} all^{G3956} piety^{G2150} and^{G2532} seriousness.”^{G4587}

I think it is significant what the scripture says about praying for “kings and all those who are in high positions”: The goal of the praying is “that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity”. Paul indicated that “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God”, and that God’s ultimate desire is that “all

people would be delivered and come to the full knowledge of truth”. God’s agenda is concerned with **that** – knowing the truth and being delivered from “the lie”.⁵⁰

We must also keep in mind something we have already established from Paul’s epistle to the Romans: We live in a fallen world; and God uses even the afflictions, tribulations, pains, sufferings, and general negatives in this life “for His good purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son”,⁵¹ as well as employing these things to draw “all men to the knowledge of the truth and salvation”.⁵²

That may *not* be the goal of politicians, political parties, and human governments. But, according to Scripture, God’s desire for fallen Humanity is truth and salvation. And this scripture passage makes it clear that God also desires what all people really want - “that we may live a

⁵⁰ Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Jeremiah 9:6

⁵¹ Romans 8:18-22, 28-29

⁵² 1 Timothy 2:4

calm, tranquil, undisturbed quiet, peaceful physical life in godliness and dignity”.⁵³

I think praying will accomplish more than voting. But, if we decide that voting is not immoral, we can do both.

Pragmatism vs. Principle

Thirdly, there is the problem of Pragmatism vs.

Principle: People have different ideas on how to accomplish that “calm, tranquil, undisturbed quiet, peaceful physical life in godliness and dignity”.

Progressive people are more **pragmatic** – that is:

“Whatever seems like it will work here and now is good.”

Conservative people are more **principled** - namely: *“It has to work rightly.”* And we also have amoral people –

both Progressives and Conservatives who are power-hungry - explicitly: *“There’s no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ – only what I deem ‘successful’.”* And without a doubt, in

American culture today, “success” is achieved solely through **pragmatism** – *not by principle*. Voters are told

⁵³ 2 Timothy 2:2

that to vote 3rd Party - to "make a statement", to "take a stand" on principles you believe in - is "a wasted vote", because it will not produce a "win", as the only actual "win" will be either the Democrats or Republicans. But for decades and decades now, this pragmatism has done nothing to correct the shortcomings of our two-party, partisan system of politics, nor the ills of our society. This is neither truly "winning" nor "success".

I think praying will accomplish more than voting. But, if we decide that voting is not immoral, we can do both.

Who Decides What's "Good" and "Bad"

With Humanity's universal goal of *"life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"*, who defines and specifies the "good" and the "bad", the "right" and the "wrong", the "just" and the "unjust"? The people. (They've been "playing God" and doing that since the Garden of Eden.) And the majority of these people are not God's people, nor are they particularly interested in God's thoughts and ways. But even God's people will often

have different interpretations of “good” and “bad” –
*depending on their particular material and financial
station in life.*

Let’s walk through just one example – Health Care:
A well-educated, high-earning Christian who has
savings can afford his own health care when he gets
sick. A not-so-well-educated, not-so-high-earning
Christian living paycheck to paycheck may not be able
to afford his own health care when he gets sick.
According to God’s thoughts and ways, the biological
family and the spiritual family should help out in this
case. But what about believers in impoverished nations
where their biological families and spiritual families
cannot help?⁵⁴

And what about all those non-believing people? What
are they to do? Look to their biological families and

⁵⁴ Actually, this is a good example of how the Church could fulfill “doing good to all people, especially to those who are of the household of the faith”. (Galatians 6:10) Throughout much of its history, the Church worked to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed; but **this calling has now been abdicated to secular governments.**

social clubs (which aren't operating according to God's design in any case)? Probably not. When the political parties are offering "free"⁵⁵ health care in exchange for votes (and control), non-believers will naturally go "the way of the world".

But this isn't about the non-believer, it's about the believer. How does the believer conduct himself in this fallen world system, particularly when he is a believer who is not independently wealthy?

What – on THIS Earth – is the Kingdom of God?

Speaking of "a nice life" - What should be the believer's "kingdom expectation" on this earth - not in the "age to come", new heavens and earth – but **during this age?**

Is it possible that we are not *on* "*The Road to Serfdom*", as Friedrich Hayek⁵⁶ warned, but rather are *already*

⁵⁵ Actually, nothing is "free" – some segment of taxpayers is paying for it, while the benefits are being enjoyed by others whose votes have been won because of the "free" stuff.

⁵⁶ Friedrich Hayek was an Austrian economist, philosopher, and founding member of The Mises Institute who wrote "The Road to Serfdom" in 1944. A .pdf

living in a serfdom which is inescapable? Is it correct for a believer to think that he could expect to see the Kingdom of Heaven in this fallen world system to which he is not OF, but is never-the-less IN?⁵⁷ For example: Why does the New Testament not condemn slavery? And again: Why did Jesus say, “The poor you will always have with you”⁵⁸? **Is it possible, that in this age, like physical sickness and death, some form and measure of physical enslavement is something that cannot be totally avoided?** I am referring to an enslavement which is, yes, spiritual, but *a/so* physical - just as, in this age, eternal life has been lost, both spiritually and physically – we all are “appointed to die”.⁵⁹ **Is total freedom from any form or measure of enslavement even possible in this age?**

download of a 1945 condensed version of the book is available at:

<http://iea.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/upldbook43pdf.pdf>

⁵⁷ This misconception, held by Christian Postmillennialists and Reconstructionists, is the direct result of a misunderstanding – or lack of understanding – of the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven. See my article, [“Your Kingdom Come”](#).

⁵⁸ Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8.

⁵⁹ Hebrews 9:17; Ecclesiastes 3:2

Who can afford to be free of enslavement? The more we possess, the greater measure of self-reliance and freedom we can maintain. But, is anyone 100% free of some measure of enslavement? Our goal may be 100% self-sufficiency. But, actually, **no one** is totally self-sufficient. Believers, according to the measure of their faith, can be dependent on God, rather than any earthly system of provision. Of course, non-believers are not even open to that idea. But for those who believe, God can supply supernaturally, even though, very rarely will He provide something from nothing. He almost always provides *through someone*.

He has indicated that He considers it righteous that the biological family and the spiritual family be the “some ones” to provide for those in material need. But isn’t there some measure of accountability owed in return to those who meet our needs – such as: *“We have a right to have some say in how you spend the money we are giving you – it’s called ‘good stewardship’”*. Isn’t this “quid pro quo” arrangement - *“We will do this for you, if you will do that in return”* - akin to the principle of serfdom in which

the serf must answer to the lord for the benefits of sustenance and protection he receives from the lord?⁶⁰

And, what if the biological family and spiritual family cannot help, because they are also needy – as in impoverished nations? In fact, there are places on earth where Christians cannot even look to human government to meet their need, whereas here in the USA, Libertarians, and to a lesser extent Conservatives, can afford to resist the idea. Here in the USA, many people can afford to be philosophical about who they would prefer to meet their needs and how they would prefer to have their needs met. But *some people* in the USA do not have those options. And many, many people on earth do not have those options. So, in that case, would receiving charity from the government be “unrighteous”? Obviously, it is a trade-off for some measure of personal freedom. One could adopt the motto of New Hampshire: “*Give me freedom or*

⁶⁰ Serfs worked for the lord of the manor; and the lord gave them a plot of land, food and protection. The serfs were not free because they were bound to the land they lived on and could not move away. If the owner of a manor sold the land, the serfs remained, and had to answer to the new lord of the manor.

give me death.” But would it be “unrighteous” in the sight of God, if one *does* receive aid from human government?

If one is in that needy position – and everyone is to one degree or another - then that will have much to do with how we vote, who we vote for, what we vote for, and what we hope are the results of our voting. In this sense, very, very few people are 100% philosophical in their voting. **Everyone is highly influenced in their voting by their particular material and financial station in life.** For the non-believer, morally, it is a non-issue. But for the believer, is this having “little faith”⁶¹? And, is this being “of little faith” considered unfaithfulness in the sight of God⁶²?

And what about me? If I were “hard pressed”, would I continue looking to God as my Provider? Would I trust Him to provide either through my biological family and / or my spiritual family? And if that isn’t happening?

⁶¹ Matthew 6:30; 16:8

⁶² Luke 18:8; Romans 14:23; Cf. Hebrews 3:7-4:11

Would I set aside my moral convictions and accept government hand-outs, even knowing I am trading in my freedoms in some measure? I think there are a lot of variables which would figure into my choice of behavior.

I know that “setting aside my moral convictions” could not be adopted as a New Covenant prescription, but there is the case in Scripture where God told His people to – and enabled His people to - “plunder the Egyptians”, allowing His people to “get free stuff from the State”, as He delivered His people out of the slavery and oppression of the World system.⁶³

But, in any case, I think it true to say that our vote is highly influenced by our particular material and financial station in life - whether we are working or retired, have sought-after jobs skills or not, have higher education degrees or not, have a high earning potential or not, etc. We want the policies and programs which will afford ourselves and our loved ones a “nice life”. This is

⁶³ Cf. Exodus 3:21-22

the underpinning of what has become highly-developed “Identity Politics”. The political parties’ practice of “buying of votes” via campaign promises is despicable; but voting that which promises to meet your basic needs - and those of your loved ones – is only natural. Of course, the authentic disciple of Christ is “(continually) seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” because he believes that “his Heavenly Father know that we need all these things”.⁶⁴

Admittedly, there are certain forms of human government and certain genres of political philosophies, policies, and programs which better allow the Christian to look to God, in faith, for His faithful provision – in the context of personal freedom and responsibility for our own lives. And so, we can vote accordingly. But I maintain that whatever form of government, and whatever philosophies, policies, and programs we align ourselves with through our vote, we will still be aligning ourselves with many other things which are unbiblical and immoral, because no human government, in

⁶⁴ Matthew 6:32-33. Cf. vv. 31-34.

legislating policies or implementing programs, is capable of the righteous perfection of God. And again – choosing “*the lesser of two evils*” is NOT the mind of Christ, nor the righteousness of God. **I think praying will accomplish more than voting. But, if we decide that voting is not immoral, we can do both.**

Romans 14

One additional thought with regards to the question of the morality of voting: I think it is quite possible that the biblical principle of “Conscience” must be considered: “Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand for the Lord is able to make him stand.... The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.”⁶⁵

Possibly, in the end – or at least in given circumstances – the question of the morality of voting is a matter of “conscience” and one’s “own conviction before God”.

⁶⁵ Romans 14:4 & 22

Some Personal Conclusions

I believe God *does* “change the times and the epochs; and remove kings and establish kings; and give wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding”.⁶⁶ Along with this, I also believe “God is at work in all things and causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”,⁶⁷ bearing in mind, that “good purpose” is “to become conformed to the image of His Son”⁶⁸ – not necessarily that you will have a “nice” life.

For more than 70 years, I have never voted for either of the two major political parties in America. I do not have faith in that process. It’s the kingdom of the World and it’s a fallen one at that. It is not the Kingdom of Heaven. It’s a corrupt system ruled by powers of darkness and administrated by fallen people. God is involved, not for

⁶⁶ Daniel 2:21a. It is interesting to note how God accomplishes this: “He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding” (v. 21b) and “reveals the profound and hidden things – in the darkness”. (v. 22)

⁶⁷ Romans 8:28

⁶⁸ Romans 8:29

the sole purpose of making my life “nice”, but for His Kingdom purposes, which He is accomplishing in ways that are higher than my ways.⁶⁹

I realize that if the reader were looking for a “conclusive” answer to the question “Is voting moral or immoral?”, he or she is most likely still looking for that answer. I believe the best I have to offer myself or anyone else is this: The question of the morality of voting is a matter of “conscience” and one’s “own conviction before God”.⁷⁰ However, regarding this issue of the morality of voting, I have personally found all my “reasonings” necessary, and therefore beneficial. I can only hope they were for the reader also.

But, after writing all of my “reasonings”, I still have something in my spirit, which I truly believe was placed there by the Holy Spirit. In 1 Timothy 4:1, the apostle Paul wrote this phrase: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times”⁷¹ He then goes on to

⁶⁹ Isaiah 55:8-9

⁷⁰ Cf. Romans 14:4 & 22

⁷¹ NKJV

communicate something he believed the Spirit “said” to him. As I consulted various commentaries, I found that, indeed, what Paul shared was not Spirit-inspired words from the Hebrew scriptures, but something the Holy Spirit was saying *for that appointed time*.⁷² To put it another way - he shared a “prophetic word”.⁷³

Theologian, Wayne Grudem, offers a phrase which I like for the description of a “prophetic word”:

“Something which God brings to mind”. I’d like to share “something which God brought to mind” – a prophetic word, which in all honesty, has more significance for me than all of my previous reasonings.

⁷² Cf. 1 Corinthians 14:1-25. The discussion of the spiritual gift of prophecy is lengthy and multi-faceted. Suffice to say here that I am not a dispensationalist, nor a cessationist – I believe the gift of prophecy has NOT “passed away”. I have made a very brief “defense” of the gift in my essay, *“Discipleship & The Equipping Ministries”*. Beyond that, I think my view of the gift of prophecy would be in agreement with that which is set forth by Wayne Grudem in his book, *“The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today”*, which I would recommend for an in-depth treatment of the subject.

⁷³ Prophetic words may be, but are not always, regarding the future. One aspect of a prophetic word is that it is pronounced to *particular people* at a *particular time* – it is a “now” word.

Postscript

A Prophetic Word

At this writing, a little over 40 years ago, while reading the Scriptures, I had a very brief vision⁷⁴: The “canvas” was entirely black. Then out of the blackness, bright specs jumped into the center of the picture. This continued until the center had grown into a bright golden sphere. The understanding that immediately came to me was this: In “latter times”, people would be “jumping” out of the world into the Household (Kingdom) of God. This vision took place just before or just after reading Jude 1:23.

While writing this article, the same verse - Jude 1:23 - has been placed on my heart and mind, along with an instruction or direction from the Holy Spirit, which I’d like to share. Here is the verse in the *New American Standard Bible*:

⁷⁴ For those who would ask: I cannot remember if my eyes were open or closed.

“Save others, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”⁷⁵

Here it is in the *Apostolic Bible Polyglot*:

“And some with fear, deliver from the fire by seizing! Detesting even the [3by 4the 5flesh 2being stained 1inner garment]. ”

My working translation:

“And some, save (or deliver) by seizing (or snatching) them out of the fire, detesting (disdaining or hating) even the garment that has been polluted by the flesh (or fallen human nature).”

The Spiritual Context is This:

The World is “on fire” – the political sphere is riddled with “fires” continually springing up all over the World. Human governments are constantly working to “put out the fires” of social issues and political unrest, but there will be no end to these “fires”. At the same time, Christians have become more and more *involved* trying

⁷⁵ The phrase, “and on some have mercy with fear”, appears already in verse 23; and does not appear in verse 23 in the Septuagint.

to address these “fires” – the ills of fallen Humanity. Contrary to the “spiritual weapons” used by the apostle Paul⁷⁶, Christians are predominately and increasingly aligning themselves with various political personalities, parties, policies and programs in an effort to address these ‘fires’.

The Instruction of the Spirit is This:

There can be no “fellowship” – no partnership – with light and darkness.⁷⁷ Our *involvement* is to be with the Kingdom of God – **not** the World system. Know this: The World system is **not** going to be “redeemed” but rather burned up in the fire of God.⁷⁸ It is *not* God’s agenda to transform the World system into the Kingdom

⁷⁶ 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

⁷⁷ 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

⁷⁸ Cf. 2 Peter 3:7-13 This “fire” is understood to be both the judgment of God and a reaping of what has been sown in the fallen World system. I am aware of the controversy regarding the alternate translation of the end of v. 10: “... and its works will be discovered” instead of “... and its works will be burned up.” Since only two out of many manuscripts suggest this reading, and since this reading is quite inconsistent and therefore very problematic to the meaning of the passage, like the majority of Greek scholars, I do not see the necessity for over-spiritualizing the passage to mean that there will be a “renewed” earth instead of a literal “new” earth.

of God. It *is* God's agenda to have the Church witness to and be a witness to – that is, “to make known” – the Kingdom of God as an **ALTERNATE SOCIETY** – a light in the midst of the darkness.⁷⁹

*The Spiritual Direction
for Those Who Belong to Christ⁸⁰ is This:*

Firstly, **come out**⁸¹, and **stop involvement** with the World system – with a healthy fear and disdain of its spiritual pollution.

Secondly, align ourselves and our energies with God's agenda, preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, make Disciples of the Kingdom, be a collective witness of the Kingdom of Heaven, and thus **save some** – seizing (or

⁷⁹ Cf. Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20; Ephesians 3:10. I have developed this theme in other essays like, “Concerning Gathering”. But one can just survey the scriptures for a testimony to God's agenda in this fallen creation: e.g. In messianic prophecies: Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3; In the life of Christ: John 1:1-51; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:12; Through the Ekklesia: Matthew 5:14-16; Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 3:10; 5:8-14; Philippians 2:15; Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:5; 2:8-11.

⁸⁰ Cf. Romans 8:5-11

⁸¹ 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

snatching) them out of the fire through the power of the Word⁸² and the Spirit⁸³ of God.

And thirdly, implied in Jude 1:23 is that our focus as the people of God is to be the building up of the Ekklesia – *not* transforming the World system. As the World burns, *some* will also *come out* of the flames into the Household (Kingdom) of God.

Therefore, we are IN the World, but not OF the World. We are *involved* with “some snatched from the fire”, but not the World system. We belong to Christ – our citizenship is in heaven.⁸⁴ We are sojourners in this World system – *not involved* in its politic. In a manner of speaking, we can be likened to are “Conscientious Objectors to Politics” – “Political Atheists”.⁸⁵

⁸² Psalm 107:20; 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; 55:11; Jeremiah 23:29; Matthew 24:35; Acts 6:7; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Revelation 12:11

⁸³ Zechariah 4:6; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13 & 19; 2 Timothy 1:7

⁸⁴ Philippians 3:20

⁸⁵ I have written further of the theme of non-involvement in in the World’s politic in an article entitled [“Be Not Entangled”](#).

I believe this prophetic word is very much in sync with the series of messages I wrote just a few years ago: [*"A Remnant Will Return"*](#).⁸⁶ The key scripture passage there, Isaiah 8, portrays ancient Israel in the same situation as ourselves today – IN the World, But not OF the World. And the following verses give God's instruction to His people in that spiritual and political environment:

"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion."
Isaiah 8:16-18

I see in "Save others, snatching them out of the fire..." and "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples..." having something to do with **the formation of intentional Kingdom Households and Christian communities**, largely functioning independent of the

⁸⁶ For a complimentary copy of this series (and any other messages I've mentioned here) email: AtChristsTable@gmail.com This and other messages can be read, listened to, and downloaded online at: <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

World system – alternate societies which “are for signs and wonders” – a witness of the Kingdom of Heaven in a post-Christian world.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ I have begun to write on these things in an article entitled [*“Kingdom Households: A Governing Principle – Bearing One Another’s Burdens & The Law of Christ”*](#).

Addendum

Additional Material on The World System

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12

The World Forces of Darkness

There is the “Father of Lights”⁸⁸ and the “Father of Darkness”. The one whom we could call the “father” of the World Forces of Darkness is Satan, The Adversary - the Enemy of both God and Humanity, the Devil, the Serpent in the Garden.⁸⁹

“Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and brings out a weapon for its work; and I have created the destroyer to ruin.” Isaiah 54:16

From this verse, we can infer a number of things regarding Satan, which are borne out by other

⁸⁸ James 1:17-18

⁸⁹ Revelation 20:2-5

scriptures. Firstly, God has created Satan, and that he has been created for specific purposes in God's dealings with Humanity - that is, God uses him for the work of testing and purging, and for adversity, chastening and judgment. This is borne out in the Book of Job, the earliest book in the Bible, where we see God allowing Satan to afflict and test Job resulting in God's desired goal for good in Job's character and life.⁹⁰ There is a recurring statement by the Lord in the Book of Job which I believe is significant:

"Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him."⁹¹ And again: "So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."⁹²

From these statements we can see that it is God Who has allowed Satan the power to afflict Humanity; but it is significant to note that firstly, God has given Satan only limited power; and secondly, the power to afflict

⁹⁰ Job 42; James 5:11

⁹¹ Job 1:12

⁹² Job 2:6

evil is in Satan's hand, not God's. God is all good. "(God) Himself does not tempt anyone."⁹³ Satan is in rebellion against God, and his purposes are adverse to both God and us. But God works for good even within Satan's evil purposes.⁹⁴ Even in the midst of Satan's work, God is testing, refining, chastening and maturing His children. There are many Scriptures which bear out this thought.⁹⁵

Jesus referred to the Devil as "a murderer" and "the Father of lies".⁹⁶ In addressing unbelievers, Jesus revealed the following regarding Satan: "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."⁹⁷

⁹³ James 1:12-17

⁹⁴ Romans 8:28

⁹⁵ Psalm 119:75; Proverbs 3:11-12; Job 5:17; Deuteronomy 8:5; 2 Samuel 7:14; Luke 22:31; Hebrews 2:10, 12:5-11; Revelation 3:19

⁹⁶ John 8:44

⁹⁷ John 8:44

The apostle Paul referred to Satan as both “the prince of the power of the air”⁹⁸ and “the god of this world” who “has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ”.⁹⁹

Also, in reference to Satan, the apostle John tells us that “the whole world lies under the power of the Evil One”.¹⁰⁰ The literal meaning of the Greek phrase translated “lies under the power of” speaks of a trance-like power being exerted over peoples’ minds and lives.

There are passages in both Isaiah and Ezekiel that hint at a plausible speculation as to the origin and fall of Satan.¹⁰¹ But what is definitely communicated in the scriptures¹⁰² is not so much a clear scenario of what happened but a clear situation of what exists with regards to the Devil, the Flesh and the World:

⁹⁸ Ephesians 2:2

⁹⁹ 2 Corinthians 4:4

¹⁰⁰ 1 John 5:19

¹⁰¹ Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19

¹⁰² Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:9

Firstly, Satan and his angels are created beings – that is, created by God.¹⁰³ At some point before the creation of Humanity, Satan and his angels fell away from God, becoming estranged and antagonistic, so that now there was need that Christ should “disarm them, make a public spectacle of them and triumph over them through His cross.”¹⁰⁴

Secondly, after the material creation, the Serpent tempted Adam and Eve, and through their disobedience they fell into sin - the state of willful independence from God and the resulting separation from God. They abdicated the dominion over the earth given to them by God and forfeited it over to Satan, who was now the god of this world. The consequence was that all Humanity, while maintaining a vestige of the image of God, essentially traded the nature of God for the nature of Satan.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Romans 8:38

¹⁰⁴ Colossians 2:14-15

¹⁰⁵ Genesis 3

Thirdly, human society and culture, which is the creation of Humanity under the power of the Evil One, developed an ongoing system which governs the affairs of Humanity according to the nature of Satan, “the god of this world”, “the prince of the power of the air”, “the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience”. This world system, which is alienated and estranged from God, oppresses its populace. Humanity is spiritual fodder for the powers and principalities which live parasitically off the sin of those under their power. We now need to look more closely at these World Forces of Darkness and how they work “behind the scenes”, in and through the rulers of this world.

The Sons of Disobedience & The Rulers of This World

Something which needs our comprehensive consideration, but goes beyond the scope of this article to deal with fully is the fact that in Psalm 82 we see that “God takes His stand in *His own congregation*; He judges in the midst **of the rulers**”.¹⁰⁶ Other translations

¹⁰⁶ Psalm 82:1 *New American Standard Version*

have the verse reading this way: “God stands in **the congregation of the mighty**; He judges among **the gods.**”¹⁰⁷ And, “God stands in **the divine assembly**; He administers judgment in the midst of **the gods.**”¹⁰⁸ Also, “God has taken his place in **the divine council**; in the midst of **the gods** he holds judgment.”¹⁰⁹ The Hebrew word *elohim* appears twice – firstly in reference to **The Triune God**, and then again in reference to **the rulers** who are also **gods.**¹¹⁰ In his book, *“The Unseen Realm”: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*,¹¹¹ Michael S. Heiser deals comprehensively with the idea that there is a **divine assembly** – a **divine counsel** – which God intended to be “under-rulers” of His creation in accordance with His will – a “power sharing” situation, if you will. But some of these spirit beings sinned and rebelled, resulting in their Fall, and expulsion from God’s presence. These are those who are identified in the New Testament as “the World Forces of Darkness”.

¹⁰⁷ *New King James Version*

¹⁰⁸ *Lexham English Bible*

¹⁰⁹ *English Standard Version*

¹¹⁰ Also v. 6

¹¹¹ There is also a shortened version entitled, *Supernatural: What the Bible Teaches about the Unseen World and Why It Matters*.

The apostle Paul explains that our Lord has “rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”¹¹², revealing that there are two spiritual domains - the “kingdoms of this world” and “the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ”.¹¹³ These two domains are populated by either the “sons of light”¹¹⁴ or the “sons of disobedience”.¹¹⁵ In distinguishing the two groups, Paul wrote this: “You formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”¹¹⁶

Paul explains that there is a “spirit” – specifically, Satan’s - that “is at work in the sons of disobedience” which governs this present world system through

¹¹² Colossians 1:13

¹¹³ Revelation 11:15

¹¹⁴ Luke 16:8; John 12:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:5; Ephesians 5:8

¹¹⁵ Ephesians 2:2, 5:6 & 8; Colossians 3:6

¹¹⁶ Ephesians 2:2-3

exerting spiritual influences on the minds and lives of Humanity.¹¹⁷

This means that “the kingdoms of this world” are influenced by spiritual forces. More specifically, the rulers and governments of the earth are “under the sway of” these spiritual forces. As John had said, “The whole world lies under the power of the Evil One.”¹¹⁸ We can see an example of this in reading the opening verses of Psalm 2: “Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.”

Paul explained that there are “heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion”.¹¹⁹ And that “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”¹²⁰ The World Forces of Darkness are

¹¹⁷ Ephesians 2:2-3

¹¹⁸ 1 John 5:19

¹¹⁹ Ephesians 1:20-21

¹²⁰ Ephesians 6:12

at work “behind the scenes”, in and through the rulers and governments of this world. In the Scriptures, we often see the World Forces of Darkness being identified with – merged together with - the rulers of the earth, and vice versa. There are passages of Scripture, which some speculate to be referring to Satan himself, that are, at the very least, making reference to evil spirit beings – angelic beings, while at the same time, are addressing earthly kings.¹²¹

One example is in Isaiah:

“Take up this taunt against **the king of Babylon....**
How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”¹²²

¹²¹ Isaiah 14:4-23; Ezekiel 28:11-19

¹²² Isaiah 14:4-23

And in Ezekiel:

“Son of man, take up a lamentation over **the king of Tyre** and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub (angel) who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore, I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub (angel), from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.”¹²³

Also, in Daniel:

“He said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up

¹²³ Ezekiel 28:11-19

trembling. Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”¹²⁴

This familiar passage from the Book of Daniel¹²⁵ clearly shows the involvement of angelic beings in the affairs of the governments of worldly kingdoms. Daniel, a Hebrew taken captive as a teenager when Babylon defeated Israel, had over the years become very prominent in the court of Cyrus the king of Babylon because God had given him the ability to interpret dreams and prophesy for king Cyrus. In this passage, Daniel is receiving an angelic visitation in response to his prayers concerning when the Babylonian captivity would end for the Hebrews. What is significant for our

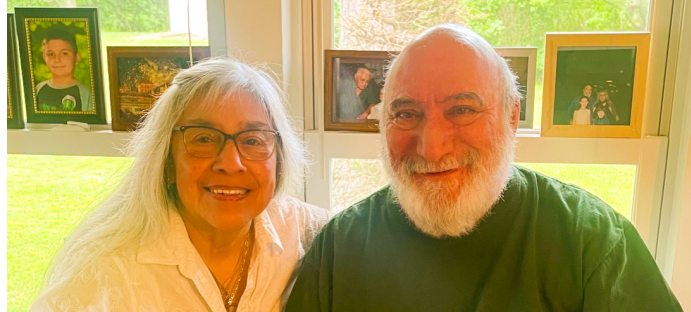
¹²⁴ Daniel 10:11-14

¹²⁵ Daniel 10

study is that on his way to visit Daniel, the angel was resisted by a being which is called **“the Prince of the kingdom of Persia”** – obviously another angelic being – and Michael, the archangel, was sent to help him in the struggle.¹²⁶ Three years earlier, Babylon had been conquered by Persia. This angelic being who was resisting the angel and Michael, the archangel, was exercising resistance because of his concern about what might be taking place in Babylon. For, since Persia had defeated Babylon, this territory was now under his domain.

¹²⁶ Notice that Daniel was not directly involved on this heavenly battlefield. There was no “identifying”, or “binding” of spirits being done in the human sphere.

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, disciplined many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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