

The Politics of 2012 – (*Psalm 90:10-17 and selected passages*)

Introduction – Try as we might to avoid it, we continue to hear news reports, the change in daily polls, and apocalyptic political opinions swirling around as we move into a certain volatile 2012 for our nation and world. In regards to our national politics and the primaries before us, I am struck by how much our presidential primaries look like the latest episode of American Idol; ninety seconds on stage, judged by three “experts” and voted up or down by the mob. How do the Scriptures instruct us to deal with this political process, this coming year before us, and all the hype surrounding the latest “news?”

Some Overarching Principles First – (*regarding any New Year or tomorrow...*)

First – Remember that our days are numbered and set, and it must follow, so are the days of a nation (Psalm 90:10-12) and so our first cry must be for God to establish the work of our hands (90:16-17).

Second – Wisdom, in God’s inscrutable ways, might not win the day (Eccles 9:13-18). There may be a quiet voice that has the right answer, but it may be that it is too politically weak to be heard (vv15-16), and it only takes “*one sinner*” in a place of power to destroy a city (v18). It does not follow that the wise voice should compromise in some immoral way in order to be heard.

Third – As we come to rest in God’s exhaustive sovereignty, it does not follow that we are to do nothing (Eph 2:10). At the same time, we must understand that, as we work hard before the Lord, the outcome ultimately only lies in God’s hands (Eccles 9:10-12). There are no guarantees in our short lives under God’s sovereignty like one might expect from a vending machine.

Fourth – Therefore, for the Christian, all plans and pursuits must be done with humility of mind that accepts our finitude (James 4:13-16) and God’s unsearchable ways (Rom 11:33-35).

That Said, How Are We to Live as Citizens – (*because they are God’s unsearchable ways, we have hope...*)

First – We are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken (Heb 12:28-29) and this is not an ethereal kingdom “up there” in heaven, which is why we pray, “*thy kingdom come...on earth as it is in heaven.*” Our first order of business is to worship the Lord in joyful assembly, bringing our children up in the covenant of grace, living out lives of koinonia-fellowship as we preach, teach, and partake of the Table together. Understood rightly, this covenant gathering is deeply political, and, even harder to believe at times, deeply victorious. We mean it when we proclaim Christ the King of kings.

Second – Civil government is a gift from God and not a necessary evil (2 Sam 23:3-4). Therefore, God’s law is the basis and soul of a good ruler (Exod 18:21) – what other basis could there be? While a monarchy existed in the OT, even there, the people had a voice in the selection of a king (1 Kings 12:1). Since we live in a land which system allows us to vote, as Christians we must consider the character and policies of potential candidates in light of the Word of God (Deut 17:14-20).

Third – Our basic demeanor towards civil rulers should be one of honor and respect (1 Pet 2:17, Rom 13:1).

Understanding this rightly and with wisdom means that we must honor our civil pillars. In our case this would include the Constitution, the balances of power, and the lesser magistrates (2 Chron 23:1-3, 11-16). Christians often have a simplistic view of Rom 13:1-4. Resistance of one ruler is not necessarily resistance of the established civil order. There is a time to defend the throne by removing someone from it.

Fourth – We must be aware of the cultural and political air we breathe. Tyrants are quick to feed the masses with pleasures and promises of more (“a chicken in every pot”). In our day, humanitarianism, egalitarianism, and entitlementism are stimulating an almost erotic frenzy of demand for the nanny-state to provide us with everything. Moral corruption, first allowed, then approved, legalized and protected, plays to the flesh and buys many loyal supporters. Christians are not immune to this at all (Rev 2:14).

Conclusion – We cannot cover all of this nor the countless other sub-topics to consider in our short time here. But consider where this inevitably leads (2 Chron 7:14). As we go through the hullabaloo of this next election cycle, do not focus so much on the polls, whether your favorite candidate is shining or burning out, etc. Most likely, it will be a wild ride and a crazy year. Instead, let the narrative of the events drive you to earnestly pray for an Awakening of God’s people in His church, a reformation in the pulpits and repentance in the Christian homes throughout this land – a change of heart where America turns to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and faith – only out of that will we ever hope to solve the political and cultural dilemma before us.

Are you the kind of people who gladly submit to Christ because Christ is King? That is where we must begin.

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