

Should we believers VOTE in this U.S. election?



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October 27, 2018

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In the USA, on Nov 6, 2018 we will have what could be the most consequential election in many decades. Many of the races could be won or lost by razor-thin margins. SHOULD you as a believer vote? Or would that be participating in “Babylon”? Does it matter to our God if we vote or not? This message will make you think, no matter which side of the debate you’re on. I hope all believers hear this in time to decide to vote or not to vote on or before Nov. 6.

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GREETINGS, everyone, and welcome to Light on the Rock. This is Philip Shields with today’s message that I believe is so important.

This teaching is geared more for Americans, but it can pertain to believers anywhere and everywhere. This coming election in the USA could be the most pivotal one and will likely change the course of our nation for months and years to come. So with that in mind, should you register – and cast your vote ASAP -- or should you sit back and just let God handle it, as many believe God will do what God will do, regardless of what his people do or ask.

Is all that true? Should you vote, as a believer?

There is no scripture that clearly says we should or should not vote when we’re given the opportunity. The vast majority of humanity down through time was ruled by despots and had no opportunity to stand up (via their votes) for something they believed in.

I hope you’ll hear or read this sermon regardless of your present view. I will do my best to base my thoughts on scripture and scriptural principles. I promise you, most of you will be surprised by something in today’s message.

In the end though, you must not vote if your conscience simply won't allow it. “Whatever is not of faith is sin” – Rom. 14:23. But our

consciences can be educated and we can come to do things we would have never done before.

Early in my life, the church in which I grew up was against voting.

- We were to come out of the world, and “come out of her (Babylon), my people, lest you share in her sins...and plagues” Revelation 18:4.
- I was taught that our citizenship was in heaven (Philippians 3:20) so we were taught not to get involved in the governments of this world.
- There are several verses that say God himself selects our leaders. See **Daniel 2:21; 4:17, 32** for examples of this. If that’s the case, why bother voting? The argument against voting said that we could even find ourselves fighting God himself if we voted.
- Our kingdom is not of this world – Yeshua himself said that to Pilate (**John 18:36**).
- **We’re told God’s will is always done**, and so if God chooses the leaders and his will is always done, then why should we vote and maybe even end up voting against God’s will? That’s the way the argument went. But is it at all true that God’s will is always done regardless of what God’s people do or pray for? We’ll examine that too, and I think many of you are in for a surprise.

Of course keep in mind that most of our spiritual forefathers never had the opportunity to safely voice their opinions by the vote. By all predictions, some of the “races” in this election can end up very close. So should you vote?

So let’s get down to brass tacks.

GOD CHOOSES LEADERS – YES.... BUT....

Daniel 2:21 says God raises up kings and removes kings. Dan 4:17 says “The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it whomever he will, and sets over it the lowest of men.”

So God himself put our leaders into power. Our heavenly father selected President Barack Obama. Our God also selected Donald J. Trump as current president. I totally agree with those 2 statements. Dan 4:17 says God sets over the nations the basest of men! So if we vote, it is true we are voting

for imperfect men and women – but if we vote Christian values more than for or against politicians, maybe we can understand our opportunity better.

But is it true that God's will is always what's done – or does God show us OFTEN in scripture that he can be moved to do something different from His original intention when his people cry out to him humbly and fervently?

Here are some examples: Jesus said the following:

Matthew 23:37-38

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often **I wanted to** gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but YOU were not willing!**"

Did you get that? Yeshua's will was to protect Jerusalem's residents – but that's not what happened. Why? Because he gave in to what the people wanted. "YOU were not willing".

Yeshua also said God's will was for the Pharisees to repent and be baptized by John the Baptist. But look at what scripture says. It's shocking.

Luke 7:29-30

"And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30 **But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves,** not having been baptized by him."

Did you get that? People are allowed by God to reject HIS WILL for them! We have free moral agency.

This is exactly why Yeshua taught us to pray for, to ask for, God's will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven, in the famous "Lord's Prayer" (Matthew 6:10). God's will clearly is not always done, at least not immediately, here on earth. Surprised?

Now I'm a firm believer that God's will ALWAYS wins out in the end. But sometimes that takes many, many years, even decades and sometimes longer. He's more patient than we are. Here are a couple great scriptures to that end:

Psalms 115:3

"But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases."

Job says this to YHVH:

Job 42:2

"I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You."

Other great scriptures that show God's will gets done – are **Isaiah 46:9-11; Lamentations 3:37-38.**

GOD OFTEN works out HIS WILL through People

So God's will gets done, but he also allows us in the interim to go against his will for a time. I've shown that. And it's also very, very clear that God works his will through humans he has put in place – including YOU and including me.

How does God spread his Good News? Is it not thru PEOPLE? How does he feed the poor? Is it not usually through people? I thank the handful of you, by the way, who help LOTR feed 30 orphans and send them to school. Thank you. How does he comfort the sick and dying, and those who have lost loved ones? SURE, his spirit is with them –but he largely does it by people.

So in nations that elect their officials, how does God put people into power? Is it not through the elections, by using people? Sure, God can also change the projected outcome by circumstances, weather, news events and so on. But still, leave that part to God and you and I should do our part.

As a great friend said, "I vote, then accept that God's will was done."

God works within the laws of the land – and tells us to obey the laws of the land (See Romans 13). He tells us to PAY our taxes. Yeshua said to render to Caesar what is Caesar's (taxes) **Matthew 22:15-22.**

I cannot think of a stronger approval of being involved in the governments God has placed over us than by paying your taxes. We have to, in fact, or there can be terrible consequences.

When we vote, are the people of God not taking a stand on what laws will be the laws of the land? For example, I hate killing unborn and defenseless boys and girls in the womb. I hate it. And make no mistake: an abortion stops a beating heart. I'm sure their nerves are developed and if we could hear their screams as scissors are plunged into them and their lives ended, we'd be

horrified. And I believe unborn fetus body parts are being sold for research, etc. It's horrific.

I for one do not want my tax dollars going to fund any abortion anywhere in the world. I can make my voice heard – and stand up for the principles of the Bible and of God – by voting FOR congressmen and senators who will work to protect unborn little boys and girls.

So I'm voting ISSUES, even more than voting for specific men or women.

We know the people God puts into office are far from perfect. They are appallingly bad at times, as you and I have been at times also.

Even "Bible heroes" – whom God chose -- did evil things. King David killed one of his top commanders to try to hide his adultery with Uriah's wife! David also often lied, and numbered Israel against God's will – and 70,000 died as a result!

- **Samson**—where do we start with this judge and leader, who ends up listed in the Hebrews 11 Hall of Faith heroes? He broke his Nazarite vow by touching dead bodies and having his hair cut off – plus he seemed to have this thing about women, bad women, and loose women. (Remind you of our present leader?). And frankly probably most male leaders have had issues with women, if you were to know the truth.

What about Solomon – whom God put into office – and all his sins? And on and on. So we're not looking for perfect candidates, are we? Since Christ is not running for office, my choice is the less imperfect of the candidates. So in fact, I vote issues – not people.

Look at the story of Esther.

Esther was a Jew, but her husband Emperor Xerxes (probably a terrible man to be anyone's husband) didn't know she was Jewish and allowed Haman's decree to go out that all Jews in the empire were to be exterminated. I know, I know – God surely would not have allowed that! BUT, God works through people. That includes YOU. In serious times as we have before us, we can't just abdicate our need to be involved. Look at Esther's story.

And before we read it, remember the word "God" is not to be found in all the book of Esther – and yet His presence is clearly seen.

Esther 4:10-16

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:
11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." 12 So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews.

14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

What's Mordecai, her cousin, saying? "God will work this out, and he will have to use something or someone else if you weasel out and say and do nothing right now. Trust God to protect and guide you, but DO your part!"

The same message applies to us. DO we live in America at this time in world history for such a time as this? If all godly people stand back and do nothing, then do we not deserve the leadership and government we get? One pastor said, "God gives people the government and leaders they deserve."

If the Democrats take back control of the House of Representatives and the Senate, it will be much easier to kill unborn babies. We will not have a border wall, and people will just walk right on in to our country – including good people, sure, but also drug dealers and terrorists. Your taxes will go up – and will be used to pay (among other things) for the medication and schooling of people who entered our country illegally. Abortion could be approved right through the end of pregnancy. You watch, that's coming eventually.

I personally think God may be waiting to see what His people will do: nothing, or speak up by their votes. Who knows if you weren't called to speak up at "a time such as this", to paraphrase Mordecai to Esther.

DOES IT MATTER TO GOD – if we ACT, PRAY, VOTE OR NOT?

YHVH wants to see, I'm sure, what His people will do and say about the downward spiral in our country. You've been given the opportunity to boldly speak up for the oppressed, the poor, and the unborn children – by your vote.

But is voting the same thing as being a part of Babylon and not coming “out of her, my people” – **Revelation 18:4?**

Let me be plain: I've said for a long time now that the language of Revelation 18:4 is a very sexual one – “come OUT of HER, my people”. This is Biblical language for quit having intimate intercourse with the world's religions. The “her” here refers to the world religions. We are not to have any part in the false religions and idol worship of the world. We are not to be involved in her churches and religions like false Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, eastern cultic religions and so on. This is not at all talking about paying taxes, living in a certain place or voting.

Here's what another pastor wrote me:

My own comment would be regarding the understanding of Rev 18:4 - "come out of her my people." I know this is so often applied to voting and other forms of societal interaction with "the world", but I feel that this is a totally false interpretation of the verse. The context is clearly a religious one and the very expression "come out of her" ***intimates the sexual relationship that God uses throughout the OT prophets to represent religious infidelity with false religions.***

“If we interpret this verse to mean support and interaction with the world' political system we would not pay taxes (good luck with that :) which is a far greater level of support of the world's system than voting and which Jesus himself approved (pay unto Caesar...). But voting allows us to help control how our tax money is spent (whether on abortion, etc.). So I do not feel the argument of Rev 18:4 has any validity at all in relation to voting and that doing so is a perfectly legitimate part of seeking the prosperity of our culture (Jeremiah 29:7) for the good of us all.”

We're told to come OUT of Babylon. Could you imagine a time when God's people are being told to PRAY FOR the PEACE of Babylon? Here it is. The context is what God is saying to those he sent into captivity INTO Babylon:

Jeremiah 29:4-8

Thus says YHVH of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

5 “Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and

daughters — that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7
And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to YHVH for it; for in its peace you will have peace.”

There you have it! God himself tells the Jews who are captives in Babylon to pray FOR the city he put them into, and for its peace.

Also remember that WE also are NOT to be “OF” the world – but are sent INTO the world. Over and over, Yeshua admitted he himself had been sent INTO the world. I’m comparing the wording of Revelation 18:4 to “come out of her, my people” to the fact that Jesus – and we – have been sent INTO “the world”. This is significant. It also shows that Rev 18:4 is not talking about voting.

So don’t misunderstand Revelation 18:4 that says to “come out of her, my people.” Jesus himself was sent INTO the world and sends US into the world. One great way we can be sent INTO the world to affect change – good change – is by voting for the right *issues*.

John 18:37 –to Pilate:

“...for this cause I have COME INTO the world, that I should bear witness to the truth....”

What better way can we bear witness to the truth of God in areas such as protecting unborn life, and that marriage should be between one man and one woman, and so on -- than by showing up, standing up, speaking out- and voting for the platform that still promote those issues?

John 17:18—in Jesus’ prayer:

“As you have sent me INTO the world, I also have sent THEM (disciples, and you and me) INTO the world.”

Again, Yeshua himself was sent by the Father INTO the world (John 3:17). God gave us his only begotten because he loved the people of the world so much. And Yeshua’s friends were sinners of the world, remember. So please don’t feel you’re doing something wrong to vote in a way that will actually help people more so than if you don’t vote, or voted for the wrong issues.

One church leader I respect highly said this: “If the righteous in Christ do not support more righteous civil government, then we are not giving any

resistance to the downward spiral happening in society, as we too get swept away in it. We should speak with our vote.”

I cannot agree more.

Let me add this thought: *ANY of you who will not vote, please do not feel you ever, ever will have a right to say one negative word about the government we live under. You will have forfeited that right.*

Don't forget many of the Biblical greats were heavily involved in the government – such as Joseph, #2 man in Egypt. Daniel was either #2 or #3 man in Persia, plus his 3 friends. Job was likely a government official. Esther certainly made her voice heard. Mordecai was likely way up in Persian government under Xerxes. When Paul addressed the government leaders at Mars Hill in Athens, that's exactly what he was doing; speaking to government!

So if nothing else, at least PRAY FOR God to have mercy on this nation in this election and to confound those who want to expand abortion, stop the border wall, allow millions of foreigners into our country without due process, raise taxes, give us more government health care and its expenses – and stymie the plans that our President has for this country. And they will no doubt try to impeach him, and then the Vice President. If they succeed in all that, the next in line to be president, I believe, would be the Speaker of the House!

Again, God can stop or God can allow whatever he wants. But I really believe when he sees we CARE enough to pray fervently for our country – we could end up seeing amazing things!

I really have come to believe that voting is a blessing God has given me and you – and more than voting about imperfect people, we're voting about Godly issues.

- Which party, which candidate is likely to be for protecting unborn life,
- For being a country of laws and of law and order?
- Which party will not give sanctuary to criminals who came here illegally? The Sanctuary cities concept is a travesty.
- And which party will do all they can to help the Border patrol and ICE officers to do their job and apprehend people who are not following our laws?
- Which party will stand up to the abuses our nation takes from other nations to whom we give millions of dollars?

- Which party would allow prayers in schools and keeping “In God we Trust” on our coins?
- Which party will protect the rights of Christian bakers who refuse to put depictions of male kissing male on their wedding cakes?

And you think we should remain silent and do nothing in a time such as this?

I'll say it: without Christ himself running for office, our choice is to vote for the less imperfect candidate or party. But it is something we've been given the right to do. I don't see how it would be a sin to vote, but I see how we can be speeding up the moral decline in our country by NOT voting!

So should God's people stand by and just hope? I feel more strongly than ever that we **MUST** – like ESTHER – speak up, do something. **Did God really NEED Esther? No. God is all powerful.** But as Mordecai said, God put her there at that time to make God's will flow easily. If Esther failed to do her God-given calling, then God would have found a deliverer from elsewhere.

Does GOD need your vote? No. And yes. He will do what he will do, but he wants his children speaking and acting from a position of boldness, not lukewarm apathy and just being a by-stander.

Let me remind you again: if “getting involved” in the governments of this world is wrong, tell Daniel he should not have been involved in the government – of all places – Babylon. But he and his 3 friends all were involved! Mordecai was way up there too – in government. So was Joseph. I've said that already but wanted to be sure everyone gets that point.

We're DUAL citizens

Yes, it's true – our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20) and we are ambassadors of the Kingdom of God.

As one pastor wrote me on Facebook, “If we are ambassadors of the kingdom, should we not be doing everything in our power to properly represent God's kingdom and all it stands for?”

I totally agree. So yes, we are citizens of Heaven, but more technically true is that **we are DUAL citizens**. Paul perfectly understood that. He was born a Roman citizen and when he was about to be flogged without a trial, he spoke up and claimed and used his rights as a Roman citizen to keep from being scourged before he was tried. Read it in Acts 22.

Acts 22:23-29

Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

28 The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship."

And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

29 Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Paul used his citizenship to his advantage – and certainly to claim his rights. I am personally 100% convinced that if Paul had the opportunity to vote back then, and vote between perverted evil Emperor Nero or a more upright man, Paul would have voted for the less evil man. You couldn't get much more rotten than Nero.

I love what my friend Lowell said succinctly: "I say we vote, and then accept the outcome as God's will."

A female long-time friend said this: "Voting does not stop us from knowing our true Leader and paying allegiance to Him, the true Supreme Leader. If the government asks me to do something unholy, then I would balk. Conversely, given the opportunity, I would vote out evil, eg., abortion."

CARING ABOUT THE PEOPLE of the world

Another female friend said, "I like the principle of doing good, as you have opportunity, to all mankind...and to protect and rescue those innocents slated to be killed (like babies in the womb)."

Notice that 2 of those last 2 comments mention abortion, and are written by women. And they both focused on caring about people, on doing good – which we can affect by voting.

In my teen years, the church I belonged to wanted nothing to do with “the world”. The world was Satan’s world. The world (society, not the planet) was going to be destroyed. So we were taught to not have deep friendships in the “world”. Our friends were only to be people in our own church. So we didn’t vote. I was told it was like choosing between Satan and Satan, since this was his world. But then we got thinking again. WHO was “converted” that Jesus could have been friends with – with that mentality?

Jonah had that attitude. Those Assyrian Ninevites were horrible people he thought; they deserved to be exterminated, he reasoned. But God sent him INTO Nineveh to tell them what would happen – and they repented. They were valuable people too, also made in God’s image. Let’s be sure we don’t have a Jonah attitude.

God had decreed the end of Nineveh – but when those people humbled themselves, God reversed himself and spared the city. Had there been 10 righteous in Sodom, they would have been spared too. God had said he would wipe out Israel after the golden calf incident, but when the people repented and Moses interceded – God reversed himself. When God’s people pray for their country, who knows what God might do? Think about it.

I think a few people don’t vote, frankly, because some few have an “it’s me and God vs. the people of the world” mentality. They don’t want anything to do with people of the world, though the Son of God died for all the people of the world and God says he loves the people of the world – but not the world’s values of course.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “**Silence in the face of evil is itself evil.** God will not hold us guiltless if we remain silent. And not to speak, is to speak. Not to act- - is to act”.

So if you are going to vote – please be sure you’ve registered if you still can-- and know what to do and when to do it. There’s no time to waste. I’ve already mailed my mail-in ballot. So has Carole.

This is NOT saying you’re a part of the Babylon of this world. Frankly, though, until Christ returns – we do have to live here. Just like Joseph had to live in

Egypt, which God compares to Sodom. Just like Daniel had to live in Babylon for a time.

So we do the best we can in this world – we're sent INTO it, but we're not a part of IT. But like Paul, we are dual citizens. We are of the heavenly kingdom – and we're citizens of this country. Paul used his legal rights, and so do I, as long as I'm not asked to do something contrary to God's will. No verse says that when you're blessed to live in a lovely country and have the right to vote, that you shouldn't vote. There is no "thou shalt not vote".

IF you still won't VOTE... please at least pray for this country and for the peace of Jerusalem too, while you're at it. I see many verses where God tells us that if his people, called by his name, would humble themselves and pray and seek him – that all kinds of good things could still happen. See 2 Chronicles 7:14.

God put President Trump in power for His reasons. Time will tell fully what all those reasons are. Mr. Trump has some serious problems and issues, but he is standing up for freedom of religion, getting in justices who are more conservative and likely to protect the unborn, he is getting the unemployment rate way down, getting our national production humming again, bringing companies and jobs back to America – and he is a world leader. Pray for him. We're told to pray for our leaders.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that WE may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

I DO pray for President Trump and his wife and family and his entire cabinet and those around him. Many wish him harm, so pray for his protection. I prayed for President Obama as well, and refuse to ridicule any world leader. I pray for Pres Trump to have wisdom, self-control, protection, and good health and to lead this country eventually to goodness and righteousness. So of course I pray God also leads him to repentance and to a relationship with him as well. I hope you do too.

I hope that helps. I'd love to hear from you.

Closing prayer.