

Should Christians Vote?

Is voting in a political election the same thing as getting entangled in the world? Is voting a “sin”? What should a true Christian do? This year the stakes could be huge. Edmund Burke once said, “All that is required for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” What does the Word of God REALLY say on this question of great import?

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Literally, the word “vote” means “a formal expression of a wish or choice on a proposal, motion, candidate for office, or other matter under discussion.” A vote can be cast by a ballot, or by saying “aye” or “nay,” holding up the hand, standing up, or otherwise.

GOD chooses His ministers. Christ said to the apostles themselves, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16).

But what about voting in political elections? Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address ended with the words, “we here highly resolve . . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The United States was formed as a constitutional democracy, a republic, where the voters are the ones responsible for the nation. We have the right and the power to choose our leaders. Although God says in His Word that He sets up kings and rulers over men, still He gives us the right to choose our leaders, according to our own desires. This can lead to great trouble, if we choose unwisely or foolishly. It can lead to great blessings if we choose wisely and carefully.

What should a Christian do? Voting is the way we express our preference for leaders and make our opinions known. To not vote is to fail to exercise this right, this prerogative, this power as a citizen of the country.

The Apostle Paul’s Example

The apostle Paul used the fact that he was a Roman citizen, in the Roman empire, in a court of law, to avoid being falsely condemned by the Jews who sought his death. He appealed, as a Roman citizen, to Caesar, and had his case transferred to Rome, where Caesar eventually found him to be innocent of all charges brought against him.

Wise king Solomon wrote, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get

[seek], and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

In other words, there is a time to “vote,” and a time not to “vote.”

Jesus Christ came as a Saviour, to redeem mankind, not to judge them. John wrote, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For *God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world;* but that the world through Him should be saved” (John 3:16-17).

We also are sent by God as emissaries to this world – as “AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST” (II Cor.5:20). As Paul wrote, ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to US the *word of reconciliation*. Now then WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God*” (II Cor.5:19-21). That is our primary job and purpose.

However, this does not mean that we are cut off from our human national citizenship. It does not mean we should “do nothing,” as Edmund Burke wrote, or that we should not vote or participate in elections. God forbid! As citizens of a democracy, we have the right and obligation to use our powers wisely – to do what is the right thing – to vote if there is really a clear choice between two candidates for office. There are times, in a democratic type government, when there is a clear choice of candidates, and voting for the right man shows God where our heart is.

Years ago, Ronald Reagan, a staunch conservative and patriotic American, ran for president against Jimmy Carter, a weak-kneed apologist who gave away the Panama Canal and forced the Shah of Iran from power, bringing to power the ayatollahs who were religious despots and Muslim fanatics. I was disgusted with Carter’s terrible performance, so that year I exercised my power and franchise as a citizen and voted for Ronald Reagan, and have always felt good that I did.

This year Americans have a choice between an honorable man of great business acumen and a faithful family man, who gives generously to the poor and tithes faithfully to his church, and a man who fits the description of the biblical Antichrist – a man of lawlessness, pride, arrogance, who loves to exercise power, and hates Israel and who is by all accounts a “closet Muslim” and who has been called “the first GAY president.”

It seems to me the choice of a true Christian is very clear. As a citizen, you have the right to vote – don’t let the devil steal your vote. It is our responsibility, so far as it lies within us, to choose our leaders with wisdom and godliness, rather than simply allow evil to triumph because we did nothing!

The Example of Christ

The first time Christ came, He came to preach a message, the gospel of reconciliation, the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Matt.9:29-35). He did not come as a ruler. Israel at that time was under Roman rule. He came as a Saviour, not a Politician or Governor. However, at His Second Coming, He will wear the robes of JUDGMENT! He will come as KING OF KINGS! He will exercise judgment, upon all the wicked!

The apostle Paul writes, “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with all His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking VENGEANCE on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints” (II Thessalonians 1:7-10).

At His Second Coming, Christ WILL exercise judgment – in the *world to come* (Rev.19:14-20; Romans 14:10-12; Phil.2:9-11; Matt.25:31-46). At that time, as His glorified servants, true Christians will also exercise judgment WITH Him (Rev.5:10; 2:26-27; 20:1-4; I Cor.6:1-3; Dan.7:18, 27).

But what about at this present time? The apostle John wrote, “And we know that we are of God, and the *whole world lieth in wickedness*” (I John 5:19). He wrote that Satan the devil “deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

The apostle Paul speaks of “this present *evil world*” (Gal.1:4). He tells us that Satan the devil is the “god of this world,” the architect behind its governments, judicial systems, and he rules over it all (II Cor.4:4). He is the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). Yet, in this world God has His people, and that includes the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, now formed into nations. As I have written, America is largely descended from the tribe of Joseph, as is Great Britain, and the democracies of western Europe are largely descended from the lost ten tribes of Israel. Even though we are “in Babylon,” we are still God’s beloved people!

As citizens in this nation, therefore, we have the God-given right to participate in elections when we believe there is a clear choice between candidates. The law of God commands us to “do good,” and to “judge righteous judgment.”

A Matter of Judgment

As His people, God wants us to exercise good judgment – to make right decisions – to learn to judge wisely and with fairness. He doesn't want us to go to extremes. As Solomon advised, “Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?” (Eccl.7:16-17).

The bottom line is, “For he who fears God will escape [or come forth from] them all” (v.18). In other words, do everything in the fear and awe of God. Seek to serve Him in everything you put your hand to do. If voting on some issue serves to help you to do good, and obey God’s Law, then do what is right and pleasing to God, and exercise your prerogative in His service.

Voting itself is not a sin, but failure to vote at the appropriate time could be considered a “sin” – a sin of neglect and failure to act when you are given the opportunity. As James wrote, “Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

There is a sin of action and a sin of inaction. The bottom line is, therefore, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col.3:17).