

Fulfilling a Neglected Part of the Great Commission

Reaching Your local, state, and national Government Leaders

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Introduction:

- **How do you reach your school board, your county officials, your state political leaders and your national leaders with the gospel?**
- **There are two extremes of thought. It is important to state that both poles could be argued within legitimate *scriptural* interpretation. I will label these extreme poles as “Abandonment” and “Dominionism.”**
 - **Brief description of thought behind the two extremes below.**
- **The “Abandonment” extreme pole may be defined as the church abandoning engagement in politics completely because it is a corrupt system. God sets up kings and overthrows them. He is carrying out His appointed end. Involvement will take away from the primary focus of the gospel and teaching the Word. Jesus is returning and will take over when He returns.**
 - **Separating and abandoning the corrupt system to focus on individuals seems priority.**
 - **Influencers: evangelical shift away from post-millennialism, and kingdom theology; prophetic mindset – let’s wait and isolate, Jesus is returning soon and cultural mindset of separating secular and spiritual, church and state. Church exists as a subculture.**
 - **Key question: What does it mean to be salt and light in our city, state or nation? How now shall we live?**

“When you mix politics and Christianity you get politics.” – Nancy Pearcey

- **The Dominionism extreme pole focuses on the eternal law of God; the mandate in Genesis 1:28 interpreting that being renewed by the Great Commission and seeks to establish a Christian Nation abiding by Biblical law. This thought is driven by Calvins’ reconstructionism; kingdom and dominion theology. Its goal is to create a Christian “theostate” built upon Biblical law. Influencers: Moral Majority; Christian Right; the rise of statism in America. Cultural shifts away from God and ‘Saving the nation.’**
 - ***Today, our culture believes politics are the primary avenue of change, but politics flow downstream of culture, not the other way around.***

- **Question: Is the church responsible to advance the Rod of Iron rule of Christ on this earth? Isaiah 9:6; Psalms 2**
- **Another more recent division of the American Church is how should the church respond to government mandates?**

“The slow rise of statism has recently brought confusion as to submission to government authority. When someone is exercising God delegated authority, we are to submit, but when someone tells us to submit, we should not automatically assume that they have legitimate authority. With regard to Caesar specifically, he has God-given authority to punish evil as defined by God – he is not our parent, nor our doctor, far less our God.”¹ – Anthony Forsyth

1. Abandonment

(Politics involvement shunned.)
**Involvement takes away from primary mission of the Gospel*
**Anger toward politicians /no hope*

2. Dominionism

(Political Involvement Prioritized.)
** Christian Nationalism*
** Abandon pulpits to save USA*
(PASTOR SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON)

^

WHAT DOES GOD TELL US TO DO?

Both extremes take the church away from God’s call.

I. Talk & Listen to the Authority –Jesus is King of Heaven and Earth

- 1. Stand on that mountaintop with the disciples; watch Jesus approach and state:**
 - a. Matthew 28:18 “And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”**
 - 1) *My observation: many commentators are not clear on why Jesus makes this clear assertion because throughout the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, Jesus demonstrated and declared His authority; cleansing the Temple, forgiving sins, raising the dead, restoring sight***

¹ Anthony Forsyth, Caesar and the Church: A Biblical Study of Government and the Church (Kress, 2022) 105

to the man born blind, making lepers whole and healthy, and calming the storm.

2) **Hath been given** (ἐδόθη [edothē]) is a timeless aorist (Robertson, *Grammar*, pp. 836f.).² This usage speaks of it as fact and without regard to its duration.

i. The use of the timeless aorist begs the question. ***Is there previous or prophetic passage(s) that may help us understand this moment?***
Yes.

ii. **Daniel 7:13,14; Psalms 2.**

a) ***“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’ ”*** (Psalm 2:7–9, NASB95)

2. When did God the Father state to Jesus, “You are my Son, Today I have begotten you?”

a. Warren Wiersbe comments:

Christ speaks in these verses [Psalms 2:7-9] and tells us what the Father said to Him in His eternal decree. How good to know that God has decreed the fulfillment of His plan, and that man will not hinder God’s working. “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” When did the Father say this to the Son? Not when He was born into the world, but when He came out of the tomb. Read Acts 13:28–33 carefully. Christ was “begotten” from the virgin tomb into a glorious life of resurrection power. (This verse is quoted again in Heb. 1:5 and 5:5.)³

b. Scripture is clear on God raising Jesus from the dead being the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7.

² Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the NT*](#) (Mt 28:18). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). [*Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*](#) (Ps 2:7–9). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

"That God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON'; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.'" (Acts 13:33, NASB95)

3. When God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus received the inheritance of the nations. John and Peter were eyewitnesses to the victorious risen Christ standing in front of them and both recognize the inheritance Jesus had obtained. At that moment, the authority over all nations extended to the very ends of the earth.

1) John points out connecting resurrection to ruler.

i. Revelation 1:5 "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth."

2) Peter's Day of Pentecost Message

i. "God the Father has raised Jesus from the dead." (Acts 2:24, 32)

ii. "The Lord said to my Lord sit at My Right Hand, until I Put Your enemies as a footstool for Your Feet." (Acts 2:35)

3) **Prayer is dependent upon it.**

i. Prayer is powerful and effective because Jesus is King of Heaven and Earth.

a) Hebrews 4:14 "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us take hold of our confession.

b) The verse that precedes this, Hebrews 4:13 "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give."

4) Since Jesus is King of Heaven and Earth it makes sense that His priority action to fight the good fight of faith is prayer. I Timothy 1:18; 2:1-6.

Point One: Talk and Listen to Authority – Jesus King of Heaven & Earth.

II. Turn and Follow the Authority "Make Disciples of All Nations"

1) [It is this] authority [Jesus King of Heaven and Earth] that is the basis for his new directive now to the disciples⁴

2) Jesus has received the inheritance of all the nations [although ruling with a rod of iron is still to come] and the ends of the earth. It is this acquisition from the Father that drives the directive, "make disciples of all nations."

⁴ Nolland, J. (2005). *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 1265). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

Therefore, it makes all the sense in the world that Jesus refers to all the nations.

- 1. Daniel 7:13,14 distinguishes between peoples and nations. Most scholars see Jesus' statement, Matthew 28:19, as a partial fulfillment.**
- 2. The Septuagint, Greek Version of the Old Testament, uses the phrase 'panta ta ethne' one hundred and ten times. In reviewing the contexts, the phrase does not carry the meaning of individuals but nations.**
- 3. Mills supports by pointing out that 'of all the nations' in the Greek grammar is explicit; it means 'make all the nations disciples,' not 'make disciples out of some of the people of all the nations.'**⁵

4. Yes nations but note the shift in the Greek to individuals.

- a.** When Jesus said, "Make disciples of all *nations* [*ethne*], baptizing them [*autous*] . . . and teaching them [*autous*]," he shifts from the neuter noun *ethne*(disciple the *nations*) to the masculine pronoun *autous* (baptize *them*; teach *them*), instead of making *them* agree with *nations*. Why? Because individuals have hearts that can believe and bodies that can be baptized. And individuals have minds and hearts that can be taught. Corporate entities like nations, people groups, tribes, and families do not have an organ to believe or a body to be baptized or a mind to grasp apostolic teaching. Only human individuals have such organs, bodies, and minds.⁶

5. The example of Paul's missionary journey strategies takes the gospel to the leadership centers of the nation.

[Therefore Christ's commission] is not simply to individuals [it] must include a strategy [for] those who influence and direct the whole nation, the leaders of nations. The commission in Acts is just that...Jerusalem is a Capital city, Judea is where the people in the Capital city live, and Samaria is next. [Anderson notes] Galilee, where the disciples lived, is not even included in the commission. The commission finishes with the end of the earth, a phrase that refers to the Imperial Capital, {Rome.} ⁷

The book of Acts carries out the strategy of "making disciples of all the nations." It does so by engaging the individuals, including the leaders of the capital cities of Jerusalem, Samaria, and Rome. The Apostle Paul will

⁵ Mills, M. S. (1999). [*The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record*](#) (Mt 28:16–1 Co 15:6). Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

⁶ John Piper, Who Are the Nations? Discovering God's Global Mission, August 8, 2021 Radius International Missiology Conference, Minneapolis. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/who-are-the-nations>

⁷ David Andersen, Christ's Kingdom Commission, Gift Edition,(Graham, N.C.: Leadership Library,2021)6-8

plan his mission trips to reach the 'capital and most influential cities.' As noted above, this includes political leaders.

Conclusion: If we are going to fulfill the “Great Commission,” in the least there must be a strategy to reach the leaders of nations. God desires government leaders to hear the gospel and be discipled.

1) Questions:

- a. **Has God’s plan in the past included any of His prophets being with Kings?**
- b. **What about OT prophets Daniel, Isaiah, & Jonah?**
- c. **What about the commands in Jeremiah 29:7; I Timothy 2?**
- d. **Does the ministry pattern of Jesus or Paul give us example?**

2) This section can be summarized.

- a. **Talk and Listen to Authority [Prayer]**
- b. **Turn and Follow Authority [Presence] ‘Go’ = being there**

And in the going...

- c. **Tell the Message with Authority [Proclaim] ‘Make Disciples’ share the gospel and truth to life**

PRAYER, PRESENCE, AND PROCLAMATION GUIDE OUR STRATEGY.

III. How do we reach our local, state and national legislators?

Three questions can give us direction in our day.

1. **What approach toward godless government can we learn from God’s command to His people in exile? i.e. Jeremiah 29:7**

A. Actively engage Government Systems that are imperfect.

God calls us not to give over political leaders but rather to know, pray for, and engage them. The church is to give them counsel and rebuke (Acts 5:48). The body of Christ is not called to live as a subculture but rather engage culture.

- **God commanded through the prophet Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon.**
- **Jeremiah 29:7 “But seek (make a path) the welfare (shalom) of your city and pray to the Lord on its behalf.”**

- **Seek = דָּרַשׁ (*dā·răš*)** Command to the people in exile to inquire, literally search to the point of making a path to find out the situation of your city.
- **Welfare = שְׁלוֹם (*šā·lôm*)** You inquire about the health, wholeness, safeness, completeness, need-satisfying characteristics or lack thereof of your city.
- **Pray = פָּלַל (*pā·lāl*)** *Make a request to God with expectation for an intervention in a situation.*

1) Action Points:

- A. God moves His exiles from subculture to engaging the marketplace.
Engaging the darkness is God's call to you!
- B. Measure your school board, city, county and state by the characteristics of Biblical Shalom and then pray for the outcome and ask God to give the leadership;
 - a. Divine Wisdom
 - b. That they come to know the true God
 - c. They would be humble
 - d. Teachable
 - e. Moral Integrity emphasized
 - f. Protect the safety of women and children
 - g. Elevate the health of society in every way
- C. You are exiles and pilgrims, and yet God calls you today to these precepts.
 - a. *Occupy till He Comes!*
 - b. *Do not hide the light in the church building, get it into the darkness.*

2. Can we learn from how Jesus and the early church interacted with political leaders? What was their priority?

Before we look at that it is important to establish what Daniel 1:31-45 makes clear. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdoms of the World do not mix.

TWO KINGDOMS

1. The Kingdom of Man

- a. This kingdom is seen in the heart motivation to build the Tower of Babel; it is man gathered against God, Genesis 11:4. It comes to life in the prophetic dream of a statue in Daniel, chapter two, where the

stone, not made by human hands is hurled against the statue representing the Kingdom of Man and defeats it. It is part of what we as believers wrestle against, Ephesians 6:10-12. It is the "way of the world" I John 2:15-17, "the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world." We battle against "the world, the flesh, and the devil." The Kingdom of the World will unite to battle the Lord Jesus Christ, Revelation 19:19-21 and it will be obliterated.

2. Kingdom of God

- a. It is not of this world, John 18:36. It is eternal, Isaiah 9:6-7, and was established on earth in the First Advent as God became Man and carried out His mission, Isaiah 61:1-2a; Luke 4:16-20; Matthew 28:19-20. It is the "Kingdom of the Son God loves," the place where God's chosen are translated upon putting their faith in Christ, Colossians 1:14. It is an unshakable Kingdom, Hebrews 12:26-28. It will culminate in the Second Advent of Christ. Isaiah 61:1-3; I Corinthians 15:25-28. Revelation 20:4-6 presents the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ on this earth before the eternal state of the Kingdom of God.



The First Century and Early Church Influence on Politics

1. The First Centuries of the Church did not Affect Roman Government Policy.

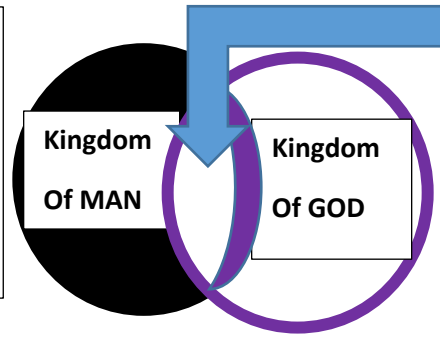
Did you know that during His entire earthly life and ministry that Jesus did not influence or change one policy decision of the Roman government, the prevailing government of His day? Interesting! The incarnate Son of God, the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity, visited this planet and, **on a political level, left the Roman government essentially unaltered**, at least as it came to any positive structure or policy change. **Did you know** that during the sixty-plus years of the first-century church, 33 A.D. to 93 A.D., a time when the church was empowered by the Holy Spirit and led by the Apostles, they did not positively influence or change one policy decision of the Roman government? This was a time that some consider the local church's most powerful expression. **Did you know that from the early church until the**

time of Augustine, there was no evidence of any positive influence or changing one policy decision of the Roman government?⁸

"It has commonly been taken for granted that Christianity must have had a great and beneficent influence upon the Roman Empire, **[But] We know enough about the Roman Empire to be reasonably confident that no general and permanent political improvement marked its history from the second century on...**the earliest date when Christianity may be supposed to have exerted and influence upon its political principles and civil institutions and economic ideals.⁹

The "permeation" begins with Constantine's "conversion" and then his edict of Milan 313 A.D. which made Christianity legal.

Council of Nicaea 325 A.D. "Affirmed the Deity of Christ."



This crossover of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of man is the battle line in politics today.

2. The Crossover is the battle line.

A. Erwin Lutzer clarifies, "secularism is not a neutral agenda but rather a movement against Christianity." He quotes Benjamin Wiker's description of secular progressivism as "the steady removal of Christianity from the center of culture."¹⁰

B. **Throughout history, that line of permeation has been widened and narrowed.** Someday, Christ will subdue the Kingdom of Man, but not by a political victory achieved by the efforts of Christians who will overtake the world. It will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, uttering His Word toward the world's armies gathered against Him.

C. God does not need the crossover.

a. I agree with Jamie Rasmussen's observation that **"God does not need the crossover! God worked very powerfully before it occurred. He can work very powerfully without it today."**¹¹

In a time when politics seem to be "the hope" for many, it is good to be reminded!

"God does not need the crossover!"

⁸ Jamie Rasmussen, Sermon: Biblical Values for Voting, Scottsdale Bible Church, Scottsdale, Arizona Open Topic Series Message reviewed at scottsdalebible.com October 2022.

⁹ Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Harvard Theological Review, Volume 2, Issue 1, January 1909, pp.28-49

¹⁰ Erwin Lutzer, No Reason to Hide, () 71

¹¹ Jamie Rasmussen, Ibid.

- b. Dominionism is not God's plan for the church in this age. It is God's plan when Christ returns.**

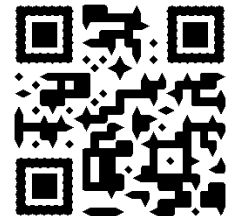
Point: In our culture, politics is thought to be the primary avenue of change. That is not true; it is the church fulfilling its commission.

We are blessed to live in America, a nation founded with a crossover of the Kingdom of God into the Kingdom of Man.

Biblical and Practical Engagement of our Political Leaders

1) PRAYER for kings and those in authority over us is the priority action to fight the good fight of faith.

- a. It is beneficial.**
 - One purpose is peace (Biblical Shalom).
 - "a wholesome, peaceful, prosperous, healthy civilization."
- b. It is beautiful.**
 - "It is good." - God
 - One purpose is the proclamation of gospel truth seeing Jesus as the One Mediator between God and Man.
- c. It is commanded. Jesus passionately compels the church to pray for their political leaders.**
 - I Timothy 1:18 - A charge to Pastor Timothy on how to fight the good fight.
 - Instructions are given in I Timothy 2:1-3:14 – local church setting
- d. Use this prayer tool to carry out the priority action to fight the good fight. I Timothy 2:1**
 - e. "Pray for everyone, Kings and all those in authority over you."**
 - f. It does not bring political party into the tool.**
 - g. It is active for all fifty states and D.C.**
 - It presents one congressional leader, two senators and three representatives each day.
- h. It gives you a daily scriptural prayer focus.**
- i. It allows you to interact with your state legislators through email or social media**



www.Pray1Tim2.org

2) Presence

- a. A non-political presence in the name of Jesus focused on building trust relationships with your leaders. This requires the discipline to stay away from lobbying or engaging them politically. This approach with a consistent presence gives opportunity to help them come to see Jesus as Christ and Lord.

3) Proclamation

- a. A simple clear gospel message and clear teaching of Scripture.



*** Lobbying for the greatest moral cause changes the relationship.**

*** A trust relationship opens the door to proclamation. That said, identify as a minister of Jesus. But slowly build relationship and let the Holy Spirit open the opportunity to share who Jesus is with your leaders.**



What do the person and example of Jesus teach us about reaching government leaders?

1. Jesus' Person – Eternal, God the Son, Lord of Lords, King of Kings

A proper Christology compels us to minister to our government leaders.

- God desires all to realize this truth; there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all.
- a. Eternal – “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God....” Hebrews 7:3; Hebrews 1:8; John 17:4
- b. Creator – “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth....” Genesis 1:1
 - i. “For by Him [Jesus Christ], all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, **whether thrones** or powers or rulers or authorities; all **things were created through Him and for Him.**” Colossians 1:16; John 1:1-3
 - ii. “...God who created all things through Jesus Christ **to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,** according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:8-9
- c. Redeemer – “**In [Christ] we have redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace...” Ephesians 1:7
 - i. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace **through the redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Romans 3:23 - 26
 - ii. “**But Christ** came as High Priest of the good things to come with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but **with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having **obtained eternal redemption.**” Hebrews 9:11-12
- d. Preeminent – “And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” Revelation 19:16, Colossians 1:15-22
 - i. “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and

of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11

How does Jesus' person compel us to minister to government leaders?

- A. Jesus Created "thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities." **Conclusion: It must be for good!**
 - a. *"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."* Romans 13:1
- B. **Government Leaders are "God's servant for your good...ministers of God"** Romans 13:4,6
 - a. What is the good God desires government to bring? Lawfulness, peace between parties, righteous and fair judgment, fairness in business, and healthy civilization. Deuteronomy 16:18-20, Jeremiah 29:7; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17; Titus 3:1
[Suggested study: Biblical Shalom]
- C. **How does God want people to respond** to Government Leaders?
 - a. **Prioritize Praying for them** - *Government Leaders are called to exemplary work.*
 - i. God commands people to pray for all kings and those in authority as the priority action to fight the good fight of faith. I Timothy 1:18, 2:1,2
 - b. Obey and Honor the authority of the office.
 - i. *"Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment."* Romans 13:2
 - ii. *"Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Honor the emperor."* I Peter 2:17
 - iii. *Exception: When God's appointed leaders command us to violate what God has commanded us to do. "...we must obey God rather than men."* Acts 5:29
[Immediate context: proclaiming the gospel of Christ]
- D. **How does God Hold Government Accountable?**
 - a. "Thrones" are positioned, dethroned, and guided by a direct act of God.
 - i. *"Blessed is the name of the Lord forever and ever; For wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings."* Daniel 2:21
 - ii. *"You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."* John 19:11 ESV Context: Jesus speaking to Pontius Pilate
 - iii. *"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it where he will."* Proverbs 21:1
- E. ***The rulers/kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord and His Anointed.***
Their relationship to the Son brings blessing or judgment. Psalm 2, Psalm 33:12; 144:15
- F. Government will ultimately be upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Revelation 19:16 Jesus will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 - b. Isaiah 9:6 *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder."*
 - c. Psalm 22:27-28 *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations."*

Conclusion: God has instituted government leaders. They represent God's authority and are ultimately accountable to Him. He desires for each one to succeed. Their ultimate success will be through their relationship with God, the Son, and carrying out His desired will. They need Jesus.

2. Jesus' Example- Gives Us Discernment to Approach Government Leaders.

How did Jesus respond or relate to government, government leaders, and political agendas?

OT Example of Pre-Incarnate Christ

- Joshua 5:13-15** context points out that this is the Pre-incarnate Christ. He is worshipped.
- Joshua, who is now leading the Israelites, has crossed the Jordan and gone into the Promised Land. Israel is prepared and ready to attack the first fortified city, Jericho. Joshua, doing some recon, sees this man with a drawn sword. Joshua bravely goes up to him. He asks, which side are you on? "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" The answer to Joshua was, "No, but as commander of the army of the Lord, I have come."

Point: Despite Israel being God's chosen nation with whom He made a covenant, the pre-incarnate Christ did not come to take sides! Amazing!

Is this OT approach of neutrality consistent in the New Testament Life of Christ? YES.

There were two predominant political camps and two predominant religious groups during the Life of Christ.



**Pharisees ran the Synagogues and did not accommodate Hellenism, (Greek gods, mythology).*

**Sadducees ran the Temple and did accommodate.*

**Sanhedrin comprises 35 Pharisees, 35 Sadducees, and one, approved by Rome, High Priest.*

**Zealots were the political camp of revolution against Roman Rule. The Herodians were cooperating with Roman Rule.*

Note: In the Twelve Disciples, there were Zealots and Matthew was associated with the Herodians.

c. Neutrality with Zealots - Feeding of the Five Thousand Men (Households)

- i. "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world. **Therefore, when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force and make Him king.** He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone." John 6:15

- 1. Geography context: Feeding of Five Thousand was at Bethsaida. Bethsaida is on the North Side of the Sea of Galilee, East of Capernaum.

- a. Zealot headquarters was nine miles East of Bethsaida at a fortress known as Gamla. *Many Zealot leaders were probably present.*

b. Zealots were a political party focused on revolution against Rome.

- i. Was Jesus' plan to rescue Israel from the Roman rule? NO!
- 2. **Point: The moment we make Jesus second to anything less than His plan, we miss it.** *They missed the reason why Jesus Christ came!*

ii. The Feeding of the Five Thousand miracle authenticated His Message

- 1. Jesus' Purpose Revealed in the Bread of Life Discourse: "John 6:26-40"

- a. "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus' purpose is for people to know they have eternal life in Him.

d. Neutrality with Herodians

- i. **Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.** And they went to Him and their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do you care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do you think? **Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"** But Jesus perceived their wickedness and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show me

the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this? They said to Him, Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." When they heard these words, they marveled and left Him and went their way. Matthew 22:15-22

1. Although Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors, He was careful not to take up their agenda. Tax collectors would be Herodian. Matthew 9:10-17; Mark 2:15-22; Luke 5:29-39
2. Jesus pointed the Herodians to this; their Creator made them in the image and likeness of God.
3. Jesus stuck to His message, the way to eternal life and the kingdom of God.

Conclusions:

- Government Leaders desperately need to know the truth about Jesus.
- Placing Jesus into any group's agenda less than His hinders people from seeing who He is.
- This is why Capitol Commission is non-political, non-lobbying, and non-denominational.
- Our approach to the Capitols must be coming in the Name of Jesus, helping leaders to see that Jesus is Christ and Lord.
- Go deeper in your study – Examine: Jesus Commission "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Ask: Is Jesus desiring the church to reach the government leaders?

Man's View of Political leaders

"Politicians" definition:

1. Merriam-Webster - A person experienced in the art or science of government. Especially: **one actively engaged in conducting the business of a government.**
2. *Wikipedia* adds this clarifying business of government, "Politicians propose, support, reject and create laws that govern the land and by extension its people."

"Government" definition:

1. Merriam-Webster 1c. A small group of persons holding simultaneously the principal political executive offices of a nation or other political unit and **being responsible for the direction and supervision of public affairs:**
2. Britannica, Author Hugh Brogan **"The political system by which a country or community is administered and regulated."**
3. Elawtalk.com **"Government systems are the engines that run countries and nations all around the world.** There is a great diversity of these government systems that help people manage their lives on a daily basis." Systems refer to monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, [USA-constitutional republic], aristocracy, totalitarian, communist, socialist, and more.

Cultural Definition summary: *politicians are governing leaders responsible for carrying out the business of government, whether it be city, county, state, or nation.*

God's View of Political Leaders

1. **God's Minister**
 - a. **I Peter 2:13-14 Honored because they stand in the office of God's servants.**
 - i. **Our honoring Kings, Governors and obeying their ordinances are for the Lord's sake because they are His agents "for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good."**
2. **God's minister carrying out His vengeance**
 - a. **Romans 12:19 "Vengeance is Mine says the Lord I will repay."**
 - b. **Paul takes this statement from Deuteronomy 32, "Song of Moses."**

The Song of Moses is a courtroom setting where Yahweh is testifying and swearing an oath on His eternality that He will justly judge His people and the pagan nations around Israel. He will judge His people Israel because they turned away from the True God, "our Rock," inconceivably in such a short amount of time, Israel turned and descended to the depths of Sodom's sin, and even worse (cf. Isaiah 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14). They worshipped false gods, devils, and idols. Israel's turning away after being lavished upon by Yahweh provoked Him to righteous jealousy and anger. His own chosen nation had tasted His far superior governing system and yet favored the pagan governing system descending into built around the precepts and philosophies of "their gods ("their rock") above Yahweh.

[These governing philosophies and precepts] were vastly inferior to Yahweh ("our Rock"). The God of Israel was superior not only in power but in quality ... the nations confessed that inferiority [those who witnessed the Exodus and Conquest of the Land]

...as they were forced to face the facts when confronted by the awesomeness of Israel's God, Yahweh. (cf. Exodus 14:4, 25)."¹²

Where did the philosophy of the pagan nations originate?

"For they are a nation void of counsel, nor is there any understanding with them...their vine is the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of cobras." Deuteronomy 32:28,32-33 NKJV

*"As far as the poet [of the Song of Moses] was concerned, **false gods found their source in Sodom and Gomorrah**, that is, in the gross perversion and unnatural affection these places epitomize (cf. Genesis 18:20; 19:4–28; Isaiah 1:10; 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14; Lamentations 4:6; Ezekiel 16:44–52; Matthew 10:15; 11:23–24). This vine of paganism with its roots in Sodom produced noxious (cf. Deuteronomy 29:18; Lamentations 3:5; Hosea 10:4) and bitter grapes... [in other words] the fruit of the worship of these detestable gods was far short of satisfying [and] left a bad taste in the mouth. But the final result of worshiping them was more serious than that—certain and agonizing death. The wine of the bitter fruit of paganism was as deadly as the venom of the most virulent snake (v. 33). Far from being merely harmless options to the worship of the Lord, devotion to the gods of paganism had fatal consequences. Israel had to understand this lest they credit these gods with what the Lord had done and thus bring most painful judgment upon themselves."*¹³

Therefore, vs. 35, "Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord, I will repay," in context, God is working through natural means and using the government systems of pagan nations as His instruments of vengeance. God, within His Own purview and according to His Own timetable, brings discipline upon God's people and His wrath on individuals and nations who justly deserve it. The first section of the Song of Moses points out the perfection of God's judgment. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and Upright is He, Deuteronomy 32:4-5 NKJV."

Paul applied God's perfect justice recorded in the Song of Moses to the present times. This use affirms that government, imperfect as it is, is a provision of God intended to protect and secure all people.

*"When Paul tells Christians not to take personal vengeance when a wrong has been done to them, he tells them that they should rather allow the wrongdoer to be punished by the "wrath of God." Then just a few sentences later (in Romans 13:4), he explains that God's wrath is carried out by the civil government when it inflicts punishment on them. This means it is often right for Christians to turn to civil government to ask for justice to be done when they have suffered wrong at the hands of others. The civil government, in this life, is the means God has established to carry out justice in such cases."*¹⁴

Paul appealed to the government of his day on several occasions.

¹² Merrill, E. H. (1994). [Deuteronomy](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 421–422). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Wayne Grudem, [Politics According to the Bible](#), (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010) 81

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Paul's trust in God did not preclude him from seeking the protection of the government when appropriate. Study the book of Acts and you see him exercise his political rights as a Roman citizen and seek protection under the [Roman] law. Paul took cover in governmental protections [many times as Luke has recorded] (Acts 16:37-39, 22:25-29, 23:12-27, 25:10-11). As a soldier of Jesus Christ, he was more than happy on several occasions to be guarded by Roman soldiers when expedient.¹⁵

Here are some conclusions:

1. **God knows the origin of pagan philosophies that make up government systems. He will bring that bad counsel to naught. (cf. also: Psalm 33:10)**
2. **God desires His people and all nations to know His good counsel. He wants His precepts to be the engine running a government system. (cf. also Ps. 33:11,12)**
3. **God warns His people not to turn away from His good counsel to follow the counsel of false gods that find their source in the blatant prideful sexual perversion and unnatural affection of Sodom.**
4. **Government systems built upon pagan philosophies deceptively promise life but instead bear the fruit of bitter lives and God's judgment.**
5. **Even with pagan rule, God has instituted government for our protection and security. There is nothing wrong with a soldier of Christ appealing to and relying upon provisions of government.**

God beckons Political Leaders to see His Son as the Authority and Forsake Ruin.

Psalm 2:1-4 Political leaders plot against God “but not in some abstract way; they defy the Messiah, the Anointed One, Jesus Christ the Son of God. The one thing the nations agree on is “we will not have this man to rule over us” (Luke 19:14) ...Today God is speaking to the nations in grace and calling them to trust Him.”¹⁶

Psalm 2:10-12 Now then be wise, O Kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are those who put their trust in Him.

Satan deceives rulers in positions of power. The context is Paul before Agrippa II and Festus, the text, Acts 25:23. Agrippa and Bernice enter, “had come with great pomp”; the Greek word, fantasia, is used. It is our word “fantasy.”

So, King Agrippa and Queen Bernice presented themselves to this audience with great fantasy, a non-reality. This Roman fantasy (self-deception) was that they viewed themselves as the high(est) authority. This fantasy brought God's judgment upon Agrippa II's father, Acts 12:19-23. History records it. *Josephus Antiquities 19 Chapter 8 Paragraph 2*⁵

- **How dangerous was this fantasy to Agrippa?**
- **How dangerous was this fantasy to the high-ranking officials?**
- **How dangerous was this fantasy to those who were under the governance of Agrippa at large?**

¹⁵ Phil DeCourcy, *Take Cover, Finding Peace in God's Protection*, (Washington D.C.: Salem Books, 2018)85

¹⁶ Warren Wiersbe, NKJV Study Bible, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2018)Ps.2:2-3 note, 752

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- How dangerous is this fantasy today?
- How does God address this fantasy in Psalm 2?

This self-deception kept King Agrippa from repentance and that same self-deception keeps many political leaders today from repenting and turning to Jesus as Lord.

Capitol Commission approaches our mission field of legislators in the name of Jesus, praying for the opportunity to help political leaders see Jesus as Christ and Lord of All.

A. Actively engage Government Systems that are imperfect.
God calls us not to give over political leaders but rather to know, pray for and engage them. The church is to give them counsel and rebuke. (Acts 5:48) The body of Christ is not called to live as a subculture but rather engage culture. Politics flow downstream from culture and not the other way around. [Media used by the government flirts with this statement.]

B. Jesus makes a point of supporting imperfect government.

In the First Century AD, Jesus made a significant statement about government when The Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, brought him to Pilate. He was brought to Pilate by this Jewish ruling council because they rejected Jesus' claim to be God and wanted Him crucified.

John 19:6–11, When the [Sanhedrin] chief priests and the officers saw [Jesus], they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law, he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So, Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above...." (Underlined for emphasis)

Pilate was the Judean governor, serving under the emperor. Jesus clarified that God gave government authority. The point is that government exists by God's power and for His purpose, even though the human government is imperfect.

Just a few days earlier, the Herodians gave Jesus a coin and, after engaging Jesus in some cordial perfunctory asked, Matthew 15-22, "tell us what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" After rebuking them for testing Him. Jesus asked for a Roman Denarius and directed their focus to the image on the coin, then stated, **"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."** Jesus reminded the Herodians in an ingenious way that they were image bearers of God. Furthermore, all image-bearers of God were obliged to render worship, thankfulness, and glory back to God. But Jesus also pointed out that in a limited aspect, there is a God-mandated requirement to support government even when it was the imperfect government of Caesar.

Mark Dever points out:

Even when governments support immorality and sin, as every government since the Fall of Man has done in one way or another, we are at least normally to continue to support it. As we correct and improve it, we should be very slow to conclude that even when a particular sin is propagated that this removes the rightful authority of government... **[think about it] if Christians can support Rome, what government could they not support? This is the government that killed Christ and almost all the apostles. We should be very slow to come to the conclusion of not supporting our government.** For Christians, this means that we are law-abiding and tax-paying. We do not cheat on our taxes. **We should be honest in all and thank God for all the good there is in our government, establishing peace, protecting religious freedom, promoting justice.** This means we should be involved in encouraging good work in our government and through its members.¹⁷

Conclusion:

Political leaders will always disappoint us by making choices that go against our convictions or preference. We must continue our prayer and engagement with them.

Capitol Commission's approach of focusing on hearts instead of votes has given us great opportunities to minister to the soul of leaders. God has strengthened believers and has saved souls. God has also opened up a dialogue among those who have never spoken to someone across the aisle.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO HEAR LEGISLATORS SHARE THE IMPACT



¹⁷ Mark Dever, God and Politics, (Great Britain: 10 Publishing, 2016) 25-27

God's Creation Activity Helps Us See Political Leaders Biblically

You may or may not regard the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, but without apology, that is the Bible's claim. It claims to be God's authoritative word to all people for all time. The foundation is presented in the very first verse of the first book. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew drops our jaw; God, out of nothing, made everything.

"The Bible begins with the bold fact of God in action, and its first assertion immediately demands that the reader reorient himself to the truth. The world we see around us did not come to be as the result of atomic randomness. It is the intentional handiwork of a Being so supreme, foundational, and high about our conception that his first spoken word can rightly be called *the beginning. Before he spoke, there was nothing. But after his first word, everything.*"¹⁸

The action of God in creation directly relates to our topic of thinking Biblically of government and politicians because the record of creation in Genesis chapter one draws our attention to the pinnacle of God's creation activity. "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, Genesis 1:26" Man and woman, Genesis 1:27, are the zenith of all creation because they bear the image of God. Ashford states, "As God's image bearers, we are uniquely fitted to act on his behalf...we steward God's creation because He has given us the reigns."¹⁹

Political leaders, regardless of party or views, are created in God's image.

In the beginning, Creator God established earthly authority, giving it to mankind to rule creation.

Genesis 1:28, God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

"As the crown of God's creation, man became God's representative on the earth in expressing and enacting divine rule over creation. The command to exercise dominion over the earth and all living creatures separated and elevated mankind from the rest of creation."²⁰

This was clearly understood by King David, who, guided by the Spirit of God, wrote these words about man in Psalm 8:6-8

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and ocean – even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the seas.

The command to "be fruitful and multiply" reveals God's intent for the human race to grow. Since God is a God of order, I Corinthians 14:33, government over community is a foregone

¹⁸ Bruce Ashford, Chris Papalardo, One Nation Under God, (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing, 2015)6

¹⁹ Ibid. One Nation Under God, 6

²⁰ Phil DeCourcy, Take Cover -Finding Peace in Gods Protection, (Washington D.C. Salem Publishing, 2018)90

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conclusion. **Therefore, politics, which is the conducting of government, is in and of itself a good work intended to bring order.**

Before the fall, government would have consisted of some sort of collective ordering of human life-setting schedules, making policies, and so forth. For example, whether or not to drive on the right or left side of the road- even unfallen humans would have had to decide this. But because of the fall government would have to expand to include the sword of Romans 13.²¹

Romans 13:4b (The governing authority) is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

God has delegated spheres of authority.

God instituted marriage and the Family as the most basic institution Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:24-25; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Ephesians 6:1-4; Parents are to raise their children in knowing God as good, what is right, wrong and the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is the basic moral fiber of a healthy, robust society and good culture fabric.

The church was instituted by God, Acts 2:2; Matthew 28:19,20; to make disciples who proclaim the good news and teach the Word of God, presenting the purpose of life, the redemption of God, and the gift of eternal life to all who put their trust in Christ. The church does not replace the family but is rather called to strengthen and protect it.

Government authority delegated by God is restricted and not to supersede the authority given to the family or the church.

Government is instituted next to the family, and God's purpose for it was to act as a bulwark against man's sinful nature and its societal effects, such as disorder, depravity, and death. God invested authority in human government to preserve order and, where necessary, take the lives of those who threaten the lives of others. (Genesis 9:5-6; Romans 13:1-7) ... without going too deep, it is of vital importance that men and women respect the God-given functions of each institution. When these spheres [the family, the church, and government] function side by side, law, and order are preserved, family life and generational continuity are advanced and, and God's blessing through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus enriches countries, cultures, and couples. However, disruption occurs when one sphere trespasses into the other.²²

God condemned the world, sending a worldwide flood through which God spared Noah's family.

The Depravity of Man demands the Advent of Human Government

1. Before the flood, God Himself administered judgment.

²¹ Ibid One Nation Under God, 7

²² Ibid, DeCourcy, 88-89

The first family experienced tragedy when their firstborn son murdered his younger brother. **God Himself judged the brother**, declaring it a sin to take human life. Generations later, as man multiplied, evil permeated every thought of humanity.

Genesis 6:5–8, The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted He had made man, and it grieved him to His heart.

2. **After the flood, God reiterated His first command but added something.** He gives mankind the authority to address a human taking another human's life—to protect and uphold the sanctity of life. This command speaks to the formation and first reason for human government.

Genesis 9:6, Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.

God instituted government because man is sinful. Its' purpose is to maintain order, make society healthy and protect life.

God is directly involved in the assignment of rulers.

This direct act of God flows from His overarching plan of history and His perfect judgment on nations.

In an ultimate sense, human government does not find its legitimacy in evolutionary inevitability, the ballot box, or the will of domineering men but in God. **From heaven's perspective, it is God who decides who is in power. It is God from a higher throne who sets kingdoms up and pulls kingdoms down. (Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 2:20-21,44;4:25-26,32)²³ (Emboldened for emphasis)**

But according to Scripture, the government is not to replace God. Neither is it meant to remove God from society. God instituted government as his servant, facilitating a safe, wholesome place for humanity to thrive. God's idea of civilization is wholesome, healthy, peaceful, and prosperous. This type of society encourages the value of work and allows people to use their talents to glorify God, uplifting others.

How important, then, is it for us to engage our political leaders, especially those who claim faith in Christ, holding them accountable to follow the Biblical Worldview?

God desires that government leaders succeed. He upholds their value by calling them "His Ministers" and commanding people to pray for their success.



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²³ Ibid DeCourcy, 86