



**Hope for the Christian is the imminent return of Jesus. Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.**

**December 2016**

## **A Different Appraisal of the 2016 Presidential Election**

With all things being normal Donald John Trump will be the next president of the United States. In the early morning hours of November 9<sup>th</sup>, he was called as the winner by various news outlets and the reactions were quite the show, especially from his political foes. But some are looking more deeply than the mere political and economic impact of this election. They want to know what this election means, if it even means anything at all, for the spiritual aspect of America. That is a good question.

Said another way, and aside from the partisan convictions of the electorate, what does this mean for Christians who believe in the imminent return of Jesus for His church? What should be their concerns when it comes to our country? Little has been heard from these Christians in the last several weeks, but at the very least their questions bring up some interesting thoughts.

If words have any meaning at all Mr. Trump's victory does, in fact, mean that changes are coming, and many are pleased with that expectation. But what many Christians are wondering is if this 21st Century micro revolution will affect change in other ways; like a national environment more favorable toward a traditional and biblically-based society. Though only time will tell to what degree that might or might not happen, there are some things we need to realize before we get too far down the road with our hopes.

I believe this political victory will not return America to a state of national godly righteousness because, to begin with, we have never been a Christian nation by law. Though most of the people responsible for our founding were convinced of the need for God to be at the forefront of our politics and that Judeo-Christian values should be at the heart of our national pulse, they did not incorporate the Bible into our Constitution.

They realized that the problem was not with biblical principles because those are good things. They realized, rather, that the problem was everybody has a different idea of how those biblical principles should be interpreted and applied. At the very moment the Declaration of Independence was signed those men committed to a war for independence from a country that had a national church, and they did not want their newly-formed nation of Americans to be bound by another national church.

In this regard we must accept the fact that America is not Israel, that God has not made a national

covenant with the U.S. as He did Israel, and that as Americans we do not have the national right to demand one. We most certainly should devote ourselves privately and nationally to godly righteousness, but we can never have a national relationship with God as does Israel. There is much to be said for George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, et.al., but none of those men, as great as they were, had a relationship with God as unique as that of Abraham. In fact, no human in the last 4000 years can make that claim.

Though many Christians want to see positive changes morally and spiritually in the new administration, we should remember that America has been, is and will always be a secular republic. It is true that years ago, our secular republic reflected aspects of Christianity in public life because of the pervasive place of the Bible and Christianity in our nation, but that is no longer the case.



For example, should the Trump administration push for prayer and Bible reading to be allowed back into public schools? Well, think about how slippery that slope would become. Yes, sixty years ago, prayer and Bible reading were a part of public school life, and we did not have the problems we have today. But back then there were no demands for equal time by pagan religions like Islam. Illegal and biased accommodation of Islam over Christianity is already a real problem in many school systems today, so just consider what doors this would open for the demands of not only Islam

but Atheism, Humanism, Wicca, Animism, social Christianity, etc. This is just one of many circumstances that represent a lose/lose situation for Christians because there is no good solution. That is the reason many of us, though perhaps politically pleased with the election, realize that our ultimate hope is not in political change but in the return of Jesus.

It should be clear to us that the whole of America is not going to be converted to Jesus as a result of Mr. Trump's election. There are some godly people who have his ear and we should want him to listen to them, but we might be overly optimistic to look for a national spiritual revival.

There is something else that some are talking about regarding the new administration, and that is America's future relationship with Israel. The fact that Mr. Trump's daughter, Ivanka, converted to Orthodox Judaism just before marrying Jared Kushner in 2009 should seem to have a positive influence on the American/Israeli relationship. Further, we might consider that Vice-President Elect Mike Pence, a self-proclaimed "born again, conservative Catholic", is a strong supporter of Israel. Disturbingly, though, is the fact that General James Mattis (Trump's nominee for Defense Secretary) is a strong supporter of John Kerry's "two state solution".

Still, some in Israel and in the U.S. believe President Elect Trump will not put pressure on Israel regarding Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria. We cannot know for sure about that, but there is one thing we can know for sure. The so-called "two state solution" is a treacherous maneuver that not only has no biblical basis, but also has no politically moral basis because the Arabs already have a state; it is called Jordan! My prayer is that someone will point out God's warning in Joel 3:2 to Mr. Trump and that he will heed it.

And there is something else that needs to be faced, though difficult it might be. Our nation is not going to escape God's wrath for its ongoing and unashamed national rebellion against Him. As it was in the case of the ancient city of Nineveh (read the short book of Jonah), judgment might be delayed for a short while, but there is no hope for escape. Not because God is unmoved by repentance, but because this country is unmoved by God's warnings. And that is the problem - with some effort our people can sometimes be moved to a point of political regret, but it seems all the effort in the world will

not move our people to spiritual repentance.

No matter what Mr. Trump does, the heart and soul of this nation is not going to be changed. Nationally we like what we have become, and nothing that will be done in the political realm will heal the spiritual addiction we have for certain things vile, rebellious and of low repute. The national heart of America (with or without Trump) has become so hardened that God's alarms, though they were proclaimed from the very portals of heaven, go unheard and unheeded. There is no wonder that scripture speaks of people being caught by surprise when God's judgment falls upon people and nations.

Many Christians voted for Mr. Trump in an effort to forge a more conservative Supreme Court in the future. They voted to ensure that the Framers' original intent that the Constitution could not be changed by judicial activism influenced by shifting cultural winds would continue. They believe that liberty demands a supreme judiciary that will "...support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic;" and they feel this fidelity to the U.S. Constitution has been betrayed of late.



Though this kind of noble intent is often found at the highest levels of patriotic zeal, it will not change the direction of a nation whose executive, legislative and judicial leaders have no regard for sacred oaths, and whose electorate does not care. Time might have been gained in this election, but the fact of the matter is that ultimately the corruption so prevalent in the human heart will find its way even into those honorable political efforts began by men of principle. In reality the problem is not the Constitution; it is the godlessness of the human heart.

There is much to be said for trying to restore honor to a secular political system and making a nation great again. But what does one mean by being great? Does being great only have a couple of characteristics like ethical politics and a dynamic economy? Most of us would argue that those are included, but there is more and this is where evaluations about the election become divergent.



Scripture says that a nation is blessed whose God is the Lord (Psalm 144:15), but in our secular society we do not accept that. When we are at our very best what we really want is for our politicians to be honest and our coffers to be full. In this process, we believe it is OK to give a token nod to God, but we certainly do not want to overdo the religious thing because that can become awkward.

Any number of people go so far as to want special prayer at political events but unfortunately, at least for many, prayer has nothing to do with acknowledging God's sovereignty and asking for His blessing upon our efforts. It is the Norman Rockwell syndrome; it has more to do with public prayer harkening back to an earlier day when things in our families, and in our country, were better. It is more about impotent nostalgia than heart-changing supplication. Harsh? Well, how do we think God feels about being relegated to tokenism?

The point is that there is no good end to this world system because it is orchestrated and energized by Satan through the use of rebellious humanity. It is rotten to its core because all of its parts are cursed by God Himself due to the volitional sin and rebellion of men. Ultimately this story will not end well for those nations who reject the sovereignty of God, and that includes ours.

It is the opinion of many Christians that one of the first things Mr. Trump should do is to call for, and lead, a voluntary national day of confession and repentance similar to President Lincoln's day of prayer and fasting in 1863. No one can say what the result would be of having such a day, but even that is not the point. The point is it the right thing to do.

In November the American electorate renounced the reeking, vermin infested cesspool that is bureaucratic Washington. But what the American electorate has thus far failed to do is to renounce our national sin and rebellion. Big difference.

How we view the 2016 election is indeed personal. But, every Christian will agree that Mr. Trump needs, and our country needs, our prayerful intercession. We must not be remiss about this. DLM

## That One Solitary Life



He was born in an obscure village, the son of a peasant woman. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He did none of those things one usually associates with greatness.

He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through a mockery of a trial. He was executed by the state. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life.

-a short essay from a sermon by Dr. J.A. Francis, 1926

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