

Debunking the Viral Christian Meme Claiming God Didn't Save Trump

A few days ago, a friend emailed me, asking how to respond to a statement that a family member shared with her. The statement said, "If you believe God intervened to save former President Trump, but didn't intervene to save the kids in Uvalde or Parkland or Santa Fe or Sandy Hook, then you are worshipping partisan politics, not Jesus."

It took me about two seconds to respond, as the meme was basically meaningless, without scriptural or even logical significance. What was the big deal?

Subsequently, I learned that the statement came from a viral post on X by Pastor Zach Lambert, at present boasting 3.7 million views and 196,000 likes. It was also echoed in an article by Shane Claiborne, a pacifist Christian leader.

The post Lambert has pinned on his X account reads as follows:

I certainly share Lambert's passion to introduce people to the real Jesus as opposed to the Jesus of my political party or ideology or nationality or ethnicity or personal biases. And I want to use the Bible to bring God's true message to the church and the world, without compromise or equivocation. So be it!

But could it be that Lambert, along with Claiborne, whose article we'll address shortly, are both guilty of reading the Bible through their particular theological and ideological lens, thereby weaponizing Scripture for their own cause? Could it be that this sword cuts both ways?

For those who don't me, as a two-time Trump voter, I wrote

books with titles like “Donald Trump Is Not My Savior” and “Evangelicals at the Crossroads: Will We Pass the Trump Test?” (For me, the “Trump test” was: 1) Can we unite around Jesus even if we don’t agree politically? 2) Can we vote for Trump if he is our preferred candidate without taking on his negative characteristics? In my view, we failed on both counts quite dramatically.)

I also wrote “The Political Seduction of the Church: How Millions of American Christians Have Confused Politics with the Gospel,” with a constant warning not to wrap the gospel in the American flag.

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All that to say I’m sensitive to the concerns raised by Lambert and Claiborne.

At the same time, I find this viral meme both vacuous and even potentially divisive. First, had President Biden narrowly and seemingly miraculously escaped an assassination attempt, most of us would have said that God spared Biden’s life. In other words, our view that God spared Trump’s life was not based on partisan politics but on a sense of divine intervention. It was theological, not political.

Second, many of us hold to a view of divine sovereignty that would suggest His activity in any seemingly extraordinary, life-saving event. (Or, conversely, we would see this in any seemingly extraordinary life-taking event, such as a terrorist being struck by lightning just before he was about to detonate a bomb.)

Third, we agonize over the fact that God does not intervene more, recognizing that for every life that was saved, many others were not. Why was one person miraculously healed in answer to prayer while others died? Why did one family member emerge unscathed from an accident while the rest of the family

died?

Ultimately, we don't have answers for these questions, other than holding to Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV): "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

But we do know that, since God has given us free will, with the rarest of exceptions, He does not stop us from doing wrong things, as horrific as those consequences may be. That He intervenes at all, showing mercy or acting for His own purposes, is His prerogative alone.

Why didn't He spare the life of the courageous firefighter who shielded his wife and kids, taking a bullet that was meant for Trump? Only God knows.

But that doesn't mean He didn't save Trump's life, and perhaps, because of this intervention, Trump will be a changed man for the good of America, resulting in blessing for millions of people. How can we say this will not happen?

For Claiborne, who was on my radio show once for some friendly interaction, because God is love, "we can be sure that God did not save Donald Trump but not the person killed by mistake. God did not save Trump, for that matter, but not the kids at Sandy Hook or Uvalde. God did not save some of the Israeli hostages but not the others. God does not want thousands of kids in Gaza to die."

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While I certainly appreciate these sentiments, they have no scriptural or even logical basis. In fact, using this same logic, you could argue that God is *not* love because He did not save all these others.

For Claiborne, the big lesson is that “There is no place for political violence in America from any quarter, but especially for any of us who choose to follow Jesus.”

He gets my hearty amen to that statement, for sure.

He adds, “If our theology does not make us more loving, then we should question our theology.”

Once again, I absolutely concur.

But that makes me question whether these kinds of memes and articles express God’s love for Christian conservatives or Trump voters or Republicans or whoever the people may be who believe that God spared Trump’s life. Are Lambert and Claiborne being equally divisive in the name of love?

Claiborne also states, “Any theology that puts God, rather than sinful human beings, behind a gun or a bomb is bad theology.”

Once again, however, he overstates his case in his understandable zeal to come against a pseudo-Christian, hypernationalistic, violence-exalting mentality.

And he fails to realize that God is with the policeman who pulls the trigger to stop a crazed murderer from slaughtering a child in a playground. Or that God is with the sniper who takes out a radical Islamic terrorist who is about to execute peaceful Christians. As the Word says, “For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:4).

But let me not end here. Instead, I extend a personal invitation to Lambert and Claiborne to each join me for a full-length interview on my “Line of Fire” show. Let’s have a civil, honoring dialogue on our perspectives and, hopefully,

bring more heat than light. What do you say?

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