

Have We Over-Spiritualized the Trump vs. Clinton Presidential Race?

As I've mulled over the many articles, opinions, the rhetoric and bantering that has consumed many believers over the upcoming election, I'd like to share some final thoughts.

I'm not sure if and how I'm going to vote yet, but I am starting to settle on some things. This one thought has simplified certain things for me: Perhaps too many of us have over-spiritualized this coming election and failed to use common sense.

I've used Exodus 18:21 to show the importance of voting for leaders with strong righteous character, but I've not equally emphasized the importance of voting for strong policies. Usually they are bound together, one being an outflow of the other, but this is not true concerning every candidate and their policies. Here are some basic scriptural guidelines that will help us consider not only the candidate which to vote for but their policies as well.

How to Vote

The first guideline in voting is to always look for righteousness.

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

Righteousness is not only found in candidates running for office, but in the public policies that the candidates and the leaders of a nation legislate.

For example, the Bible is full of leaders and kings who legislated corrupt policies that brought a curse on Israel as

a nation. The husband and wife team of Ahab and Jezebel are great examples of wicked leadership who produced unrighteous policies (1 Kings 16:30). For instance, a curse of three-plus years of famine came to Israel because of their wicked reign. Their bad policies and worship of Baal brought bad things on the nation.

One thing to also understand is that sometimes even good kings help to legislate unrighteous policies. For example, David who was called a man after God's own heart, took a census to number the people contrary to God's will, and it caused a curse to come on the nation and 50,000 people were destroyed (1 Sam. 24). Another good king, Hezekiah, also implemented bad policy and shared military secrets with the Assyrians, which also brought a curse on the entire nation.

It's not only the quality of your leader but the quality of the policies he helps to implement that can bring blessing or cursing to a nation. Both David and Hezekiah were godly leaders who did much good but who also occasionally instituted poor policies.

Even when wickedness was prevalent in Israel God in His mercy would often cause the nation to return to Him. For example, Manassah was the most wicked king in Judah's history and corrupted the nation. Isaiah, the prophet, lived in his reign. The Lord spoke to Isaiah that He was going to cause the nation to return to Him. But notice how he said he was going to do it.

"I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Is. 1:26).

1. Righteous Judges

One of the most important things to consider when voting is the election of righteous judges and counselors or lawyers.

Through the election of godly judges and lawyers, God can restore a nation. The opposite is also true. The culture war we are presently in will never be won without righteous judges and lawyers being elected because righteous policies come out of courtrooms. Some of the wicked policies America has legislated over the last few decades such as abortion, removal of prayer from our schools, and most recently, same-sex marriage and transgender laws, came out of the courtroom.

If you elect the right kind of judges and lawyers, righteousness will begin exalting a nation again. This is one of the most important policies in this election, and one of the most critical differences between the presidential candidates. One has promised to appoint Supreme Court liberal judges who will take away more of our religious liberties while the other candidate has promised to appoint conservative judges who will uphold religious liberties. This decision alone could potentially affect our nation for the next few decades.

Here are some other policies to consider in voting:

2. How a Nation Treats Israel

“I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3).

This verse speaks of the nation of Israel, a nation that came out of Abraham. God says that however people treat the nation of Israel is how God will treat them. This is another very important consideration in voting. The way America treats Israel is significant in how we are blessed. We don't even have to necessarily like the candidates, as long as they are going to implement righteousness and good policies.

God instituted 613 laws after delivering Israel from 400 years of bondage to Egypt. Those laws covered every conceivable issue you can possibly think of. They covered taxation, the

economy, immigration, health care, debt, welfare, education, environment, criminal justice, foreign relations and education. Everything a nation needs is included in those 613 laws.

In every election, many of these type of issues are discussed and debated, but they are not all of equal importance. The top issues that God gave the nation of Israel was the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are the foundation and backbone of God's laws.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "'Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.' So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments" (Ex. 34:27-28).

The word "tenor" has to do with the purpose and character of God's covenant. How a nation treats the Ten Commandments determines the blessings and curses that come upon that nation. Each presidential candidate differs greatly on these issues.

3. How a Nation Upholds Religious Liberty

For example, the first commandment involves public religious acknowledgement and religious conscience. It acknowledges God and will not institute laws or policies that prohibit Christians from acknowledging God and His commandments.

"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them; ... you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who

takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:3-5, 7).

Are you going to prosecute bakers and florists and others for acknowledging God or are you going to protect them? Are you going to protect the religious liberties of Christians, or are you going to persecute them for their faith and conscience? This is another huge policy in the upcoming election and each candidate greatly differs in this regard.

4. Marriage Protection

"You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14).

Another commandment has to do with adultery, which says that sex is between a man and a woman inside a life-long union. Anything outside of that, whether it's premarital sex, extramarital sex, gay sex and so forth, is wrong and against God's laws. Marriage protection is another big issue of our times and both candidates differ on this policy.

5. Abortion

"You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13).

Another one of God's top ten laws is "thou shalt not murder" or shed innocent blood. Throughout the Bible, anytime innocent blood was shed it brought a curse on a nation. Abortion has cursed America for decades and yet we keep praying for God to bless America, but laws have been set in motion to curse it. God has been merciful due the constant prayers of the righteous.

There are many other issues such as immigration and the economy and military defense that are important, but the ten commandments are the top issues with the aforementioned ones being of primary importance where the presidential candidates differ. When these are in line with God's will, the other things tend to work themselves out.

In all elections, whether it be for the presidency or state

and local authorities, these are the issues we have to look at.

Let us not only vote for the candidate but for the policies he or she has promised to legislate and implement. Always vote righteousness because righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to its people.