

**Series: God & The Election #1830**

**Title: Various Scriptures**

***Christ's Kingdom Is Not of This World***

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. We continue today to answer our question, as Christ's people, how are we to live in America during the time of the election? Thus far we have quite a bit to consider and to prayerfully find how these insights apply to our lives. We've put down three foundation stones, and this third one is this: our mission is *not* to become overly involved in political movements.

To develop this in the Bible, we heard from Jesus in John chapter 18, verse 36. Our Lord is at the end of His earthly life. He has been arrested and brought before the Roman Pilate. This is Christ's first Roman trial before Pilate. Pilate questions our Lord and Jesus answers, **"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."**

What does this mean? Among other things, Jesus is saying His kingdom is in no way a political movement! *If* Christ's kingdom was of this world, *then* His servants would be fighting for an earthly political king and kingdom. But Christ's kingdom is *not* of this world. Meanwhile, the Democrats and the Republicans and the Independents are fighting in this country. Fighting for what? An earthly, political kingdom. At times this even involves physical violence. Politics is a knock down, dirty, nasty fight and it is filled with much vitriol and grievance on both sides of the debate. In *sharp contrast* our Lord's kingdom – to which Christians belong – is *not* a political movement and therefore, there is to be no fighting. We must flee from the temptation to jump into this and participate in the fighting ourselves.

If this is a temptation for you, something you are struggling against. If you find yourself often in the middle of fighting for a man-made or woman-made kingdom down here on American soil, then this lesson from Peter should offer you support, encouragement, and conviction. We know Peter, one of the Lord's closest disciples and apostles. Peter was the leader of the twelve, which became the eleven when Judas betrayed Christ. Turn with me in your text if you can to Luke chapter 22, verse 47. That's Luke 22 and verse 47. Again we are near the end of Christ's earthly life and here is His arrest. Luke 22, verse 47.

**"While [Jesus] was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. <sup>48</sup> But Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?' <sup>49</sup> When those who were around [Jesus] saw what was going to happen, they said, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?' <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> But Jesus answered and said, 'Stop! No more of this.' And [Jesus] touched his ear and healed him."**

This true story serves as a perfect illustration of what followers of Jesus are *not* to do. We are not to be like Peter. "Wait. What? You didn't read Peter's name." Ah, you are paying close attention! I love it. Listen also to John chapter 18, verses 10 and 11. This is the same story but John adds a detail that Luke left out. **"Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. <sup>11</sup> So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put the sword into the sheath...'"** John tells us it was Peter who reached for his sword and cut off the right ear of a slave named Malchus.

In Luke's account the disciples ask, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" But even as they are asking it impetuous Peter takes swift action and aiming for Malchus' head misses and slices off his ear. The Lord firmly corrects Peter, saying, "Stop! No more of this...Put the sword into the sheath." Not only that, but Christ went further and healed Malchus' ear. This was Christ's last miracle of healing in the Gospels. Our Lord healed the man who came to arrest Him. Let's remember how Jesus treated His enemies. We will be learning more about this soon.

You might wonder, where did Peter even get a sword? This was less of a sword and more like a short dagger and back in Luke 22, verses 36 and 38 we read this, **"And [Jesus] said to them, 'But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one... <sup>38</sup> They said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough.'" This was a very cultural thing to do. These daggers had many practical functions**

that did not involve violence against anyone. So, the disciples were equipped with them. That is why Peter had his with him when Christ was arrested.

Consider this episode in light of what Christ said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.” I grant, and I certainly hope, that none of us are about to unsheathe a sword, a dagger, or a knife and thrust it at the head of someone who we disagree with. But I believe this scene is still very instructive for the Christian who has taken upon him or herself the mission of participating in and even leading a political movement. In the words of Jesus, “Stop!” This is not your mission, because the kingdom that you *really, truly* belong to is not of this world. Our kingdom is the heavenly kingdom.

To be sure, one day Jesus Christ will reign and rule on this earth. He will establish His throne here. But that day is still future from where we are. As His people we are to live just like He lived in His first visitation. Hear the word of Christ and do it. Remember that your citizenship, dear Christian, is in heaven. Paul writes that in Philippians 3, verse 20, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”** Let’s be good citizens of Christ’s kingdom here and now. Largely, for the most part, leave political movements to others, and focus afresh and anew on our true purpose: the evangelization and disciple-making of all nations, including the United States of America.

As part of this foundation stone I must also make at least reference to Romans chapter 13. The truth is I just do not have time to give as full a teaching here as is necessary, but I do have time to read a few verses and comment. You can explore this further in your own study. Romans 13, verses 1 and 2. **“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.”**

These words fit our time perfectly. Every person – no exclusions – is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. The Greek word for “subjection” speaks of a soldier’s absolute obedience to his superior officer. And “governing authorities” covers all civil authority. Now there is an exception, and that is when civil government demands Christians disobey God’s Word. This is real where the church is being persecuted and told, for example, that by law they must not meet. They cannot gather together. But the Bible says we are to meet together regularly for fellowship, and worship, and Bible teaching, and prayer. Therefore, then, believers are to defy the government because the Bible clearly overrules governing authorities on this point.

However, we do not have that *yet* in the States. *Yet*. So we are to “be in subjection to the governing authorities.” And definitely notice how verse 1 ends. Romans 13, verse 1, “For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” Friends, this speaks directly to what we said a few days ago: God is sovereign over all elections, and He uses His sovereignty to put in place government. It is good for our current president and future president and everyone else serving in government to be reminded that *God* put them there by *God’s authority*. And it is also good for us to be reminded that we are to respect the authority that God has given our government.

Therefore, participation in political movements designed to overthrow a government is off limits to Christians. Ah, there is so much more to be said here, but this is where we will leave it for today.

Now that our foundation stones are in place, we will build upon these. Jesus will have some things to say to us next time that will further challenge and correct our attitudes and help us answer the question on how we are to conduct ourselves as the election swiftly approaches.

Our first stone is that God is sovereign over all elections, including this one. Our second stone is that elections do not change our mission, which is disciple-making. And our third stone is that our mission is *not* to become overly involved in political movements. Consider this, deeply, and join us again as we continue to discover who God Is.

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