

I. Introduction

A. Scripture governs our politics (along with our ethics, sexuality, economics, etc.) not the other way around.

1. The whole of Scripture, not just proof texts
2. Because Scripture does not directly comment on every scenario, we must take a posture of humility and trust.

B. Four main movements in the biblical narrative

1. Humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:3-5)

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the Earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the Earth." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And 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." (Genesis 1:26-28)

2. Humans are self-seeking sinners (Genesis 3; Romans 3:23, 5:12-21)

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:21-23)

3. God pursues humanity in redemption (Genesis 3-Revelation 20)

4. God has fixed history to a specific culmination of all things (Revelation 21-22)

a. *Therefore, living in this moment with all its enmity toward the Gospel and imitation of Christ, we do not fear as if the Kingdom of God depends on us winning every or any cultural or political debate.

b. Recognizing the truth of this, we must live consistently with Kingdom values (Matthew 5, Philippians 2, 2 Peter 1) in our culture. We do not hide the truth of God but bear witness and even persuade others of the good resulting from those values.

C. Some further clarity

1. Scripture does not endorse a political party nor a political candidate and it never will.

When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the Earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my Lord say to his servant?" (Joshua 5:13-14)

2. Scripture does not prohibit being active within a political party or ideology as long as that ideology doesn't become idolatry or violate biblical commands.

3. Scripture demands that we model the bold humility of Christ as we criticize and

stand as agents of change moving toward holiness and truth within anything we are connected with

4. *Matt: If I identify myself with political party A and primarily criticize political party B, I don't believe that I am honoring God and might betray my idolatry of politics. We work to change that which we can influence.

II. Our role in the Kingdom vs. the kingdoms

A. Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the Earth.

B. Mortimer Arias (Bolivian schooner/minister under communist persecution)

1. "The Kingdom of God is God's new order. Since its manifestation in Jesus Christ, human orders now belong to the old order. Precisely because the new order of God is a threat to any established order, the arrival of the Kingdom, forcing its way through the old order, produces a more intense reaction. It attracts and repels at the same time." The church grows and is persecuted at the same time.
2. Our job is not to save people or to seize power over people, it's to bear witness on Jesus' behalf.

III. Sampling of issues: the whole counsel of Scripture

A. Nationalism, patriotism, globalism

1. Nations are to seek God and find Him

And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the Earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us, (Acts 17:26-28)

2. Nations are born of sin yet can be redeemable by grace (Genesis 11(10)-12)
3. In the New Testament, God's people are no longer associated with specific nations but drawn from all nations as the Church.

- a. Even so, God's people are called to support and obey as it is a tool for bringing God's order to a dangerous world

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. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Romans 13:1-7)

- b. But God is always over the nation - obedience to Him is first and foremost. Seek first the Kingdom of God ... (Matthew 6:33)
- 4. *Nations are born out of sin (except Israel) but can be a conduit of grace under God's sovereignty.
- 5. *Matt: I can appreciate and be grateful for my nation but not at the displacement of God and the good of other nations.

B. War

- 1. Five phases of divine warfare
 - a. God fights Israel's enemies (Egypt, Canaan-Jericho)
 - b. God fights Israel (Ai, Philistines (1 Samuel 4))
 - c. God defeats the oppressors of His people (Daniel 7 and the Cloud Rider)
 - d. Jesus fights the spiritual powers and authorities
 - 1) Matthew 26:52-54
 - 2) Colossians 2:13b-15 (disarmed the rulers and authorities); Ephesians 4:8
 - e. Jesus wins the final battle over human and spiritual enemies
 - 1) *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:26)*
 - 2) *And I saw the beast and the kings of the Earth with their armies gathered to make war against Him Who was sitting on the horse and against His army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of Him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (Revelation 19:11-21)*
 - 3) Ephesians 6:10-12 (armor of God)
- 2. Held in tension
 - a. Scripture calls (and Jesus models) the people of God to self-sacrifice but also permits self-defense
And He said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about Me has its fulfillment." And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." (Luke 22:35-38)
 - b. Scripture demands that we act as peacemakers (sons of God) and allows for war led by governing authorities of nations
 - c. *Jesus was in His very mission a peacemaker, but He was not antimilitary. The focus for God's people is on the spiritual powers and authorities that continue to deceive the physical powers and authorities

C. Immigration

- 1. Old Testament Israel

- a. Social laws: Leviticus 19:10, 33-34; Exodus 23:9
 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:9-10)
 When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:33-34)
- b. Judicial laws: Deuteronomy 1:16; 10:18; 24:17; 27:19; 31:12; Jeremiah 22:3
 And I charged your judges at that time, "Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him." (Deuteronomy 1:16)
 Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. (Deuteronomy 31:12-13)
- c. Religious laws: Exodus 12:48-49; 20:8-10; Leviticus 16:29-30
 If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you. (Exodus 12:48-49)
 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. (Exodus 20:8-10)
2. Foreigners and the image of God
 - a. All humans bear the image of God.
 - b. Some humans are brothers and sisters within the family of God. (Philemon)
3. Jesus
 - a. Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
 - b. Sheep and the goats (Matthew 25)
 Then He will answer them, saying, "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." (Matthew 25:45)
4. Cities of refuge/sanctuary cities
 - a. Old Testament: for people who committed accidental murder/injury to protect from a blood avenger
 - b. Part of the legal system, not a counter-cultural undermining of it
5. *Scripture demands without exception that we love and care for those who bear God's image and, at times, to our own self-sacrifice. Scripture also allows for borders defining nations - borders are not biblically immoral.

IV. Conclusion

A. Scripture, Jesus followers, and politics

1. Every political ideology that has been or will be is, by nature, in conflict with God's Kingdom.
2. Just as Jesus, Paul, James, Peter, etc. lived and influenced within their political context, we are called to bear witness of Jesus first and agents of change within our spheres of influence when possible
3. *While our task is not to make America the greatest country in the world nor is it to acquire power to run the world, it is no less a grand and divine calling to the world: bearing witness to the powers and institutions of the world that Jesus is Savior and King and what will be at the consummation of history. Just remember that a witness is not the judge.
4. The burden is on each one of us to consider the whole counsel of Scripture as we decide what to support and how to vote. And each of us will answer to Jesus, not our favorite pundit or celebrity pastor.
5. *When our national politics become woven into our lives, they become a hurdle for us to carry out the great commission. The command Jesus gave us can only be accomplished with the politic of sacrificial love.

B. Non-negotiable

1. John 17 (zoom in on v20-26)

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:20-26)

2. Q: Is the prayer of Jesus less effective or unanswerable within the current political partisanship within Jesus' Church?

C. *As witnesses, are we displaying that Jesus is greater or do we have a form of godliness that denies the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?