

THE GATHERING

A 21 DAY DEVOTIONAL

DAY1

SCRIPTURE

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.” – **LUKE 4:18**

REFLECTION

In America today, we are witnessing what might be considered the devolution of a nation. We are eye-witnesses to the disintegration that is occurring on all levels and subsequently undermining what used to be known as American exceptionalism. Yet even though historically America has had major flaws in areas where it has failed the citizenry; neverthe-

less, it was an experiment in history that was unique and subsequently produced unique outcomes.

But in the days that you and I live, America is quickly becoming a far different nation than it ever was before. Yet in order to stop a disease from progressing, you must first identify its cause. You need to uncover what the root of it is and from where the problem has come.

DAY 2

SCRIPTURE

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.” – **PSALM 33:12**

REFLECTION

Problems arise when people adopt the institution of government but dismiss the divine Ruler over government. Many people want, “God bless America” today—they just don’t want, “One Nation Under God.” The issue is that you can’t have one without the other.

God has given us the freedom to choose whether or not we will be one nation under Him—whether we will recognize His rule and operate underneath it. But with that choice comes either “God bless America,”

or not. God only promises to bless the nation who recognizes His authority (**PSALM 33:12**).

Freedom means you get to control the choice, but because God is the sovereign ruler over His creation you don’t get to control the consequences. He will rule by either endorsing your choice, or He will rule by allowing you to have the consequences of a decision made against Him.

DAY 3

SCRIPTURE

“The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.” – **PSALM 103:19**

REFLECTION

The Bible tells us that we are all “under God.” We read in Psalms that, “the LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all” (**PSALM 103:19**). The book of Daniel says that “the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,” (**DANIEL 4:17**) and that “it is Heaven that rules” (**DANIEL 4:26**).

Scripture clearly distinguishes for us in these places and in many others that God’s rule operates universally over everything, every nation, every person and every system whether that be political, economic,

educational or familial. Yet while there is one ultimate Ruler, there are multiple rulers who have been put in place in order to rule. That is why Paul tells us to be in subjection to the governing authorities (**ROMANS 13:1**).

The reason for the plurality in governing authorities is because the division of power provides the best environment for the fair dispersion of power underneath the ultimate ruler, God.

Just like at the Tower of Babel when mankind tried to unite in order to usurp or reach God’s authority in the heavens, God resisted their attempt at a centralized world power (**GENESIS 11:1-9**).

DAY 4

SCRIPTURE

“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.”

– **ROMANS 13:1**

REFLECTION

Unless God and His revealed Word is the overarching influencer and rationale over how our decisions are made as believers, then we cannot expect God to be the overarching influencer in our nation. Nor can we expect God to pour out His blessings on us as a country when He has been similarly marginalized, and at times even dismissed from the equation.

It is time to return to the Book. It is time to look to the one source that holds the answers for how our country should operate, the Bible. And to do so, I want to start with the foundational principle upon which all else should rest.

This principle is located in the book of Romans where we read, “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” (**ROMANS 13:1**).

God is in charge, and God alone sits as the ultimate government over His creation. All other governments are to reflect His ultimate rule.

DAY 5

SCRIPTURE

"Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same." - **ROMANS 13:2, 3**

"Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness." - **PROVERBS 16:12**

REFLECTION

One of the four systems of government instituted by God in His kingdom rule on earth is civil government. Civil government is that system which has been set

in place to create and maintain a righteous and just environment in which freedom can flourish. It is a representative system designed to manage society in an orderly fashion. Yet it is to do so without interfering with, negating or contradicting God's other governing agencies.

Civil government is to support, not replace, the other two institutions of government (family and church) so that self-government, and therefore maximum freedom, can be experienced.

In the above verse, Paul introduces us to the one overarching job of civil government which can be defined as this: Under God, the government is to promote the

conditions for the wellbeing of the citizenry for good while protecting the citizenry against the proliferation of evil. And since civil government is to operate under God, He—and not man—must be the ultimate standard of what is good or evil.

This means that politics is fundamentally an ethical enterprise based on what is right and what is wrong.

When the government successfully keeps evil in check, good can flourish. This holds true whether that means keeping the evil out that shows up in our enemies around the world, or whether that means keeping people from knocking down your front door. Government is to restrict the flow of evil while simultaneously and intentionally seeking to expand the flow of good. Everything within civil government ought to be aimed at this one primary goal.

DAY 6

SCRIPTURE

“It’s the men who walk straight who will settle this land, the women with integrity who will last here.”

– **PROVERBS 2:21**

REFLECTION

When civil government is limited to its primary role, while maintaining an environment for God’s other governments to flourish, it does not overextend itself and those underneath it while trying to be everything to everybody while still charging taxpayers for things it does not have divine authorization to do.

An overextended civil government and overtaxed citizenry limits the freedoms of individuals to pursue their calling under God, and their capacity to contribute

to economic development. It also creates an environment of restriction, doubt and concern thus stifling both opportunity and ingenuity.

DAY 7

SCRIPTURE

“Make Jesus your Lord proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God’s emissaries for keeping order. It is God’s Will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of fools... Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.” – **1 PETER 2:13-17**

REFLECTION

Biblical justice provides society with a divine frame of reference from which to operate using Scripture as the defining template for how it is to function.

The word justice in Scripture simply means to prescribe the right way. Since God is just (**DEUTERONOMY 32:4**) and is the ultimate lawgiver (**JAMES 4:12**), His laws and judgments are just and righteous (**PSALM 19:7-9; 111:7-8**).

They are to be applied without partiality (**DEUTERONOMY 1:17; LEVITICUS 19:15; NUMBERS 15:16**) seeing as justice identifies the moral standard by which God measures human conduct (**ISAIAH 26:7**).

It is the government’s role, then, to be His instrument of divine justice by impartially establishing, reflecting, and applying His divine standards of justice in society (**PSALM 72:1-2, 4; 2 SAMUEL 8:15; DEUTERONOMY 4:7-8**),

regardless of one's economic status. (**EXODUS 23:3, 6;**
LEVITICUS 19:15).

Biblical justice, therefore, can be defined as the equitable and impartial application of the rule of God's moral law in society. The one constant factor that government is to provide protection in the areas of economic, political, social or criminal justice, is the understanding and application of an established moral law within the social realm.

DAY 8

SCRIPTURE

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” – **EPHESIANS 5:25**

REFLECTION

In the governmental institution of the family a large part of how God relates to, blesses or does not bless a family has to do with the male leader who has been assigned to cover the family. If the man is not in alignment underneath Jesus Christ and is himself not covered by God’s care, protection and favor—then the family will experience the consequences of this disorder.

In the book of 1 Peter, we read that a man who does not carry out his role well in relation to God’s rule of

love in accordance with leading his wife will have his prayers hindered (**1 PETER 3:7**). If his prayers are hindered, then those under his care and covering will not be the recipients of all of the blessing and favor that could be theirs as a result of their leader seeking God’s face on their behalf.

Likewise, how God’s representatives in civil government relate to Him frequently affects how He relates collectively to those underneath their leadership as well. Because this is so, it is even more important that you and I as believers make our voting decisions based on what and who best reflects God’s rule and God’s laws.

DAY 9

SCRIPTURE

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” – **MATTHEW 6:33**

REFLECTION

When you understand the values of God’s kingdom, you will best understand His agenda. However, it is my conviction that the message of the kingdom, and the values therein, is sorely lacking in understanding today.

As a result, this has caused much, if not most, of the confusion in our land. Not because people don’t speak of the kingdom, but because far too much of their speech is in esoteric, theological “code words” that seem unrelated to the realities of life in the here and now.

The absence of a comprehensive understanding of the kingdom has led to deterioration in our world of cosmic proportions. People live segmented, compartmentalized lives because they lack a kingdom world-view. Families disintegrate because they exist for their own fulfillment rather than for the kingdom.

DAY10

SCRIPTURE

“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” – **HOSEA 6:6**

REFLECTION

Churches are having a limited impact on society because they fail to understand that the goal of the church is not the church itself but the kingdom. This myopic perspective keeps the church divided, ingrown, and unable to transform the cultural landscape in any significant way.

And because this is so, society at large has nowhere to turn to find solid solutions to the perplexing challenges that confront us today—troubling problems

such as crime, racism, poverty, and a myriad of other ills which continue to show up in our politics and policies in voting booths year after year.

Yet for each and every issue, God’s kingdom agenda provides an alternative, another way to see and live life in this world. It transcends the politics of men and offers the solutions of heaven.

The kingdom of God can be considered as the alternative to the world’s agenda, because the Word in particular states that there is another way, another idea on the floor. As God’s people, we are not limited by the choices this world offers us. God has an alternative plan for us—His kingdom.

DAY11

SCRIPTURE

"For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, and the nations will be utterly ruined."

- **ISAIAH 60:12**

REFLECTION

The reason so many believers are struggling in our nation today is that we have voted in the past asking God to bless our plans rather than casting our votes based on seeking to fulfill His agenda. We want God to sign off on our decisions rather than us following His. But it doesn't work that way. God has only one plan, one alternative, and it is to advance His kingdom. We need to find out what that looks like so we can make sure that we are voting for God's plan, and not ours.

DAY12

SCRIPTURE

“I said, I beseech You, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes OPEN to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants.”

- **NEHEMIAH 1:5-6**

REFLECTION

God has made Jesus Christ the sovereign over all of mankind's kingdoms (**MATTHEW 28:18, COLOSSIANS 1:13-18**). His rule is to be represented in history by those who are a part of His kingdom and who have been delegated the responsibility of dispensing His

rule to the nations (**MATTHEW 28:19, EPHESIANS 1:22, 23**). Christian voting should be reflective of this reality.

Colossians 1:13 says that everybody who has trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior has been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, your allegiance has been changed. You are no longer to follow the world's ways, but Christ.

And just in case there's any doubt, there are no in-between kingdoms. There are only two realms in creation: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. You are subject to one or the other. And as a believer, you are to be subject to Jesus Christ in His

kingdom. This means you belong to another realm, your allegiance is in another order, and no matter where you live, work, travel or vote—you are citizens of God's kingdom.

DAY13

SCRIPTURE

“But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments.”

– **NEHEMIAH 9:16**

REFLECTION

You cannot read the Bible and ignore the political realm. The Bible is thick with politics. You have two books, 1 and 2 Kings that strictly deal with the rule and reign of government leaders. John the Baptist condemned the immoral conduct of Herod Antipas, which led to the prophet’s execution (**MARK 6:14-29**).

In Thessalonica, Paul and his companions were charged with committing treason against Rome for insisting “that there is another king, Jesus” (**ACTS 17:7**).

And in the greatest act of political and moral rebellion ever against God, the Antichrist will set up his worldwide government of pure evil, and he will rule the earth (**REVELATION 13:1-10**).

Because God is the Sovereign of His universe, it follows that He is intimately concerned with the political affairs of the nations. Psalm 22:28 declares, “The kingdom is the Lord’s, and He rules over the nations.” There is nothing that happens in the governments of men that does not flow out of the sovereign rule of God. “The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes” (**PROVERBS 21:1**).

DAY14

SCRIPTURE

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." - **1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2**

REFLECTION

All through the Bible, we see God placing people strategically in the political realm. He moved Joseph into authority in Egypt (**GENESIS 41:38-49**) and elevated Daniel to a position of great influence in Babylon and later in Persia (**DANIEL 1:8-21; 2:46-49; 6:1-3**). God also placed Nehemiah in the Persian government so

he could rebuild his community with government support (**NEHEMIAH 1:1-28**). He also placed Esther as queen in Persia (see the book of Esther) and Deborah as judge in Israel to accomplish His agenda (**JUDGES 4-5**).

In fact, the greatest example of God's involvement in the political affairs of a nation is Israel itself where God established its constitution, legal structure and laws that were to be the model for other nations to emulate (**DEUTERONOMY 4:5-7**).

Along with 1 and 2 Kings, in books such as 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles, God is active on every page, setting up this king, judging that king,

and deposing yet another king. There is no escaping God's political activity. This means we cannot divide life down the middle, putting God on one side and politics on the other.

DAY15

SCRIPTURE

"Then He said to them, 'Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.'" - **MATTHEW 22:21B**

REFLECTION

A limited civil government is not one that excludes the priority of justice functioning in society, on the contrary, it promotes it. What it does do is free up the other governments to fulfill their responsibility without being illegitimately infringed upon.

Yet Jesus didn't stop with His statement to give to Caesar what was his. He went on to make the same requirement when it came to the things of God. So the question is, what things belong to God?

Scripture is clear that everything belongs to God (**PSALM 24:1**). So while Jesus' answer legitimized human civil government, it also limited human civil government. That is, you only give to civil government that which God has authorized it to be responsible for.

DAY16

SCRIPTURE

“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.”

– **2 TIMOTHY 2:25**

REFLECTION

The further a government drifts from God (which means it seeks to become its own god), the more it sets itself up for heavenly political action.

The greatest political statement in the Bible is the declaration of Revelation 19:16 that when Jesus Christ returns to earth to rule, He will come as “King of Kings,

and Lord of Lords.” Back in Revelation 1:5, John had seen a vision of the glorified Jesus, who was declared to be “the ruler of the kings of the earth.”

The Bible also says that “by [Jesus] all things were created... whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities” (**COLOSSIANS 1:16**). And He not only created heavenly and earthly kingdoms (**v. 15**), they are dependent on Him to “hold together” (**v. 17**) and exist by Him and for Him (see **v. 16**).

DAY17

SCRIPTURE

“By the transgression of a land many are its princes, but by a man of understanding and knowledge, so it endures.” - **PROVERBS 28:2**

REFLECTION

But we fear the wrong entity when we fear government above God. God not only deserves and demands our first loyalty, but we need to remember that government is under God and therefore is not to be made equal to Him.

See, the problem is that too many people are looking for “salvation by government.” They are putting their hope in the political realm, but God warns us what happens when we put our confidence in kings

(see **1 SAMUEL 8:9-18**). There is no such thing as salvation by government (see **JUDGES 8:22-23**).

This is why Jesus refused attempts to make Him a political Savior (see **JOHN 6:15**). The Democrats are looking for a Democratic savior, the Republicans are looking for a Republican savior, and the Independents are looking for an Independent savior. But God is sitting as the potentate of the universe, saying, “I am the only Savior in town.” The ultimate solutions to our culture’s problems won’t land on Air Force One.

DAY18

SCRIPTURE

“...and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

– **2 CHRONICLES 7:14**

REFLECTION

The church should be leading the way in educating the culture concerning how to vote because it is the specific entity that can interject a kingdom agenda into all the issues of the culture. The job of the church is to educate God’s people to look at life from a divine kingdom perspective, and to confront the government when it strays from or contradicts God’s kingdom principles.

The church alone possesses the keys of the kingdom (**MATTHEW 16:18-19**) giving it divine authorization to represent His perspective in history. When the church fails to fulfill this prophetic note of confronting God’s people and the culture with His unchanging standards based on His revealed Word in Scripture, then we become co-conspirators to the devolution of the culture since God determines much of what He is going to do or not do in society largely predicated on how effectively He can work through His people (**2 CHRONICLES 15:3-6; EPHESIANS 3:10**).

DAY19

SCRIPTURE

“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.”

– **ROMANS 13:1**

REFLECTION

Our government is in desperate need of people who can inject righteousness and justice into our political bloodstream, for a society can never rise above the quality of its leadership.

Yes, church and state are functionally separate and distinct institutions with specific spheres of responsibility and jurisdiction (**2 CHRONICLES 26:16-19**). But the idea that the church has nothing to say about how so-

ciety is governed is wrong simply because all law has a religious foundation. There can be no separation of religion and state since civil government is answerable to God.

The church’s job is to make sure that the state doesn’t lose sight of the truth that God rules and that there is a moral standard in which the political realm must operate. The state needs to recognize and protect the church’s freedom to exercise its prophetic role of being a voice for God and His righteous standards, since government is a divinely authorized institution and only God is autonomous, not civil government.

Then and only then will God’s kingdom agenda for society be manifested.

DAY20

SCRIPTURE

“For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” - **MATTHEW 18:20**

REFLECTION

Because the church has lost its own conscience in many ways, it has failed in its calling to be a conscience for society not only through the voting of its members, but likewise through their own daily governance in their personal life and families.

We have allowed what the majority gives us in our media, music, schools, policies and philosophies to infiltrate and infect the church.

The church is to be the key to the transformation of the culture, not the other way around. In the past, the church has effectively influenced the society in many ways. In fact, it was because of the emphasis of the freedom of religion, as promoted by the body of Christ, that America was born.

DAY 21

SCRIPTURE

“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.” – **ISAIAH 9:6**

REFLECTION

Scripture clearly states the role of the believer in the midst of society:

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under

a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

(MATTHEW 5:13-16)

Our job as Christians is to infiltrate where bacteria, unrighteousness and darkness have permeated and made themselves at home. Therefore, it is our job to act as salt and light in both parties and offer the kingdom’s point of view. One way you do this in a Constitutional Republic is through your vote.

As Christians, it is our job to promote God’s kingdom values and stand in the divide without giving full

allegiance to any one party. We are to model ourselves after God—the consummate independent who always votes for Himself. As such, we are to cast our votes according to that which most closely reflects, represents and promotes the principles, values and agenda of the kingdom of God.