

# False Choices

Psalm 2:7-12

Our crazy presidential election is here and the Bible has a lot to say about how Christians should conduct themselves in elections and the aftermath.

## Christ's Possession

God's response to the rulers of world who would reject Him was the resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ from the dead and His inheritance of the nations (vv7-8). Peter tells us this "begetting" is about Jesus' resurrection (Acts 13:33). It's not about Jesus becoming creator, but it's about Him exercising authority as redeemer—the resurrected second Adam. The nations that hate the rule of the Prince of Peace are dashed to pieces (v9). The rest are invited to serve Him with fear, rejoice with trembling, kiss the Son and be blessed lest they perish in the way (vv10-12). There is no third option. In the fundamental sense of being under Christ's dominion, every nation is a Christian nation.

## Qualifications for Office

When Moses was delegating authority, he got some good advice from his Jethro the Midianite: "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Ex. 18:20-21). These are the *prima facie* requirements for public leadership. Since these were lesser judges in Israel, the argument would be how much more for high office. Luther said he'd rather be ruled by a wise Turk than a foolish Christian, and we can grant the exception. But what if we have neither? If you were choosing a new pastor and you were presented with one candidate who got drunk twice a week and another who was a serial thief, which one would you vote for? These are your only realistic options! Would you feel pressure if you knew one of them would be chosen regardless? If in principle we're committed to the lesser of two evils regardless of the issues, then we are essentially committed to evil.

## *Christos Kurios*

In 27 BC, Gaius Octavius founded the Roman Republic and began the 50-year *pax Romana*. He ostensibly empowered the Senate and settled the nation after years of civil war and unrest that followed the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. "Augustus" meant "illustrious one" and was a religious title. He brought an *euaggelion*, good news that peace and justice had arrived because *Caesar is Lord*. The early Christians countered this by saying, "*Christos Kurios*", Jesus is Lord. Our faith is not about Jesus being the Lord of our hearts (and then only if we allow Him). Rather, He is Lord of all (Phil. 2:9-11). He is the exalted Son of Psalm 2. It follows that if Christ is Lord, Caesar and the state are not. But if He is not, then something will fill the void, usually some sort of collective mankind.

NOTES:

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G.K. Chesterton said, “Once abolish the God, and the government becomes the God.” Divinity implies sovereignty, so our state reaches further into what God assigned to the family (health, education and welfare) and the church (word and sacrament). As Christians, we must reject politics and people as false saviors. Jesus alone is Lord.

## Voting for Repentance

Listening to someone make a positive case for either candidate is like hearing the case for the superiority of crack cocaine over heroin. One candidate has made a fortune taking bribes, the other giving them (Prov. 29:4). One sexually exploits women, the other enables exploitation. Once we come to the realization of what we have become as represented by our candidates, hope in man is finally lost. The lost hope is represented by the campaign slogan “Giant Meteor for 2016: Lest We Get What We Really Deserve”. But this means there really is an opportunity to hope in something else—God. He is in charge, and there are things we can do, beginning with our vote. If, as an act of obedience, a Christian votes for a major party candidate, it has to be a vote of subversion: “Lord, forgive us, and for the next four years use our prayers and efforts to undermine what this person will try to do.” Voting this way or for a third party is not a waste of time any more than any other prayer is, but it can’t be effective without repentance. If Christians in the US reject idols on the ballot and off of it, there’s no question we will be on our way to a free and blessed society here or elsewhere. To accept the false choice that you have to vote for one of these candidates or it won’t matter, or that you might as well despair and not vote, is to act like God doesn’t exist. Whatever happens, we should say Jesus is Lord, and then honor the king (1 Pet. 2:17). The early Christians didn’t worship Caesar, despise him, or give up; they rendered to him what was his and to God what was His (Rom. 13:7; Mk. 12:17). This is the opposite of retreat. Paul used his right as a Roman citizen to appear before Caesar in order to bear witness, and he thrived in Rome under arrest (Acts 25:10-11, 28:30-21). Reformation is always messy—remember Henry VIII! We’ve been here before and will be here again, but this ought to be our moment. Lights are the brightest in the darkest night.