Fulfilled Prophecies

When Politics Becomes More Important Than Christ



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† There's nothing wrong with Christians being interested in politics, voting in elections, or caring about the direction of their country. The problem begins when political loyalty becomes more important than loyalty to Jesus Christ. When believers spend more time defending politicians than defending the gospel, something has gone wrong (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1-2).

† Today, political disagreements can divide families, friendships,

and even churches. Some Christians become so devoted to a political party or leader that anyone who disagrees with them becomes an enemy. But Jesus never commanded His followers to build their lives around political movements. He commanded them to seek His Kingdom first (Matthew 6:33; John 18:36).
† No election can accomplish what Jesus Christ has already accomplished. No president, king, or government can provide salvation. No political party can establish the everlasting Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ has already received all authority, and His Kingdom cannot be shaken (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 12:28).
† This study isn't about Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, or liberals. It's about something far more important. Who has first place in our hearts, Jesus Christ or the political leaders of this world (Colossians 3:1-2)?

Seeking God's Kingdom Must Come First
Matthew 6:33
But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
† Jesus didn't tell His disciples to seek political power first. He told them to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness. That establishes the proper order of our priorities (Matthew 6:33).
† When a Christian becomes more concerned about winning political arguments than demonstrating Christ's righteousness, that priority has been reversed. Our conduct should reflect the Kingdom we belong to (Romans 14:17; Ephesians 4:1-3).
† Political involvement isn't necessarily wrong. But when politics begins controlling our attitudes, relationships, and behavior, we need to examine whether we're still putting Christ first (Colossians 3:12-15).
† A political victory doesn't make someone righteous, and a political defeat doesn't remove anyone from Christ's Kingdom. Our standing before God depends on Christ, not election results

(Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:13).

Jesus Said His Kingdom Was Not Of This World
John 18:36
Jesus answered, 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.
† Jesus spoke these words to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who represented the political authority of that day. Jesus clearly distinguished His Kingdom from earthly governments (John 18:33-37).
† His Kingdom wasn't established through military conquest, political campaigns, or human elections. Its authority came from heaven, not from the political systems of the world (Daniel 7:13-14).
† Notice that Jesus didn't say His Kingdom would eventually become an earthly political government. He said His Kingdom wasn't of this realm. Its origin and authority were heavenly (John 18:36; Luke 17:20-21).
† Christians shouldn't confuse advancing the gospel with advancing a political party. The Kingdom of Christ doesn't depend on controlling a government, passing legislation, or winning elections (Romans 14:17; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Our Citizenship Is In Heaven
Philippians 3:20
For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
† Philippi was a Roman colony, and Roman citizenship carried considerable importance. Yet Paul reminded those believers that their greater citizenship was in heaven (Acts 16:12; Philippians 3:20).
† Paul wrote during the first century when believers were awaiting the completion of the promised redemption. From the fulfilled perspective, that covenantal expectation reached its fulfillment with the passing of the Old Covenant age in AD 70

(Luke 21:22; Hebrews 9:28).
† Today, believers belong to Christ's established Kingdom. Our earthly citizenship may identify the nation where we live, but our spiritual citizenship identifies the King we serve (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:22-28).
† We can love our country without making it our spiritual identity. Nations have governments that change, but Christians belong to a Kingdom whose King never loses His authority (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

Christians Must Not Place Their Trust In Political Leaders
Psalm 146:3
Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation.
† This warning was written long before modern political parties existed. Yet its message applies to every generation. Human leaders are mortal, limited, and incapable of providing salvation (Psalm 146:3-5).
† Political leaders may accomplish beneficial things, but none of them can forgive sins, reconcile humanity to God, or provide eternal life. Only Jesus Christ can accomplish those things (Acts 4:12; Romans 5:10-11).
† When believers speak about a politician as though that individual alone can save their country, they risk placing expectations on a human being that belong to God alone (Psalm 118:8-9; Jeremiah 17:5-7).
† We shouldn't give any political leader the devotion, trust, or unquestioning loyalty that belongs to Christ. Every human leader must be measured against righteousness, truth, and justice (Proverbs 21:3; Acts 5:29).

Give Government What Belongs To Government And God What Belongs To God
Matthew 22:21
They said to Him, Caesar's. Then He said to them, Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.

† Jesus was answering a question designed to trap Him politically. His opponents wanted to force Him into a conflict over Roman taxation and authority (Matthew 22:15-20).
† Jesus acknowledged legitimate governmental responsibilities without surrendering what belongs to God. Paying taxes and recognizing civil authority didn't require anyone to make Caesar their spiritual master (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:6-7).
† Christians can participate responsibly in government while remembering that obedience to God comes first. When human commands conflict with God's commands, the apostles established the proper priority (Acts 5:29).
† Our responsibility isn't to worship government or reject every form of government. It's to live responsibly while recognizing that Christ holds the highest authority over our lives (Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 28:18).

We Should Pray For Leaders Instead Of Worshiping Them
1 Timothy 2:1-2
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.
† Paul instructed believers to pray for those in authority. He didn't tell them to worship their rulers, excuse their wrongdoing, or treat political leaders as spiritual saviors (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
† When Paul wrote these instructions, the Roman Empire governed much of the Mediterranean world. Christians didn't have to approve of everything Roman rulers did to pray for peaceful conditions (Romans 12:18; 1 Peter 2:17).
† We should be willing to pray for leaders whether we voted for them or not. Prayer isn't an endorsement of every political decision. It's an expression of our desire for peace, righteousness, and godliness (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
† If we can only pray for politicians we agree with, our political loyalty may be influencing our spiritual responsibilities more than we realize (Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:14).

Christians Must Set Their Minds On Things Above
Colossians 3:1-2
Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.
† Paul directed believers toward Christ, who was already seated at God's right hand. Their spiritual identity wasn't determined by the political circumstances surrounding them (Colossians 3:1-3).
† Setting our minds on things above doesn't mean ignoring earthly responsibilities. It means allowing Christ's authority and righteousness to govern how we fulfill those responsibilities (Colossians 3:12-17).
† When politics fills our thoughts with constant anger, bitterness, fear, and hostility, we should examine whether we're allowing earthly controversies to control our spiritual lives (Ephesians 4:31-32; Philippians 4:8).
† Christians should be recognized for their love, kindness, patience, forgiveness, and faithfulness to Christ, not merely for the political positions they defend (John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:12-14).

Jesus Christ Has Already Received His Everlasting Kingdom
Daniel 7:13-14
I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.
And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
† Daniel saw the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days to receive dominion, glory, and an everlasting Kingdom. This

wasn't a description of Jesus campaigning for earthly political office. It was a heavenly presentation of divine authority (Daniel 7:13-14).
† Jesus identified Himself with Daniel's Son of Man and declared that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him (Matthew 26:64; Matthew 28:18).
† From the fulfilled perspective, the first-century transition from the Old Covenant order to the fully established New Covenant Kingdom reached its completion in AD 70. Christ's Kingdom wasn't waiting for a modern political movement to establish it (Luke 21:31-32; Hebrews 12:28).
† No election can remove Jesus from His throne. No political party can overturn His authority. His Kingdom doesn't rise and fall with the fortunes of earthly governments (Daniel 7:14; Revelation 11:15).

We Belong To A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken
Hebrews 12:28
Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;
† Hebrews was written during the first-century transition when the Old Covenant order was becoming obsolete and ready to disappear. The writer contrasted what could be shaken with the Kingdom that couldn't be shaken (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-28).
† From the fulfilled perspective, the removal of the Old Covenant temple system in AD 70 completed that covenantal transition. The New Covenant Kingdom remains established through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:8-10; Hebrews 12:28).
† Earthly governments change. Political parties gain and lose influence. Presidents enter and leave office. But none of those changes can shake the everlasting Kingdom of Christ (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).
† That's why Christians don't need to live in constant fear over every political development. We can take our earthly responsibilities seriously while resting in the certainty that Christ

remains King (Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:6-7).

Historical References

† Josephus, writing in the first century in Antiquities of the Jews and The Jewish War, described the political tensions, Roman authority, and conflicts that affected Jewish society before Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70. His writings provide historical background for understanding the political world in which Jesus and the apostles lived.

† Tacitus, in his Annals, described the Roman imperial government and the persecution of Christians under Nero. His account reminds us that the early church existed under rulers who didn't necessarily share Christian beliefs.

† Pliny the Younger, writing to Emperor Trajan in the early second century, described Christians gathering to honor Christ. His correspondence provides evidence that Christian devotion continued under Roman political authority.

† These historical writers help establish the setting, but Scripture establishes our spiritual responsibilities. The early Christians belonged to Christ regardless of who governed the Roman Empire (John 18:36; Philippians 3:20).

How It Applies To Us Today

† Christians have the freedom to care about political issues, vote according to their convictions, and participate in their communities. But political participation should never become more important than following Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1-2).

† We shouldn't excuse dishonesty, cruelty, corruption, or injustice simply because someone belongs to our preferred political party. God's standards of righteousness don't change according to political affiliation (Proverbs 21:3; Ephesians 4:25).

† We shouldn't treat fellow Christians as enemies because they vote differently. Our unity in Christ is greater than our disagreements over earthly governments (Ephesians 4:1-6; Romans 14:19).

† We should examine how much time we spend arguing about

politics compared with studying Scripture, helping others, encouraging believers, and demonstrating Christ's love (2 Timothy 2:23-24; Galatians 6:10).

† We can respect governmental authority without surrendering our conscience. We can disagree with political leaders without hatred. We can participate in elections without treating the results as the foundation of our spiritual hope (Romans 12:17-18; 1 Peter 2:17).

† Ask yourself a simple question. If your preferred political party lost every election, would Jesus Christ still be your King? Of course He would. His authority doesn't depend on the approval of any earthly government (Daniel 7:14; Matthew 28:18).

† Another question is equally important. Are people seeing the character of Jesus Christ in the way we discuss politics, or are they seeing anger, insults, and division? Our words should reflect the Lord we claim to follow (Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29).

† The church wasn't established to become the religious arm of a political party. We belong to Jesus Christ, and our responsibility is to proclaim His gospel, demonstrate His love, and live according to His righteousness (Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:34-35).

† Politics may influence the circumstances of our earthly lives, but it cannot replace the salvation, peace, and eternal life we have in Jesus Christ. Our hope rests in what He has accomplished, not in what politicians promise to accomplish (Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:13-14).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Is it wrong for Christians to vote or participate in politics?
A: No. Christians can fulfill their civic responsibilities while keeping their devotion to Christ first. Jesus recognized legitimate governmental responsibilities in Matthew 22:21, and Paul discussed civil authority in Romans 13:1-7.

Q: Can a Christian support a political leader without making that person an idol?
A: Yes. Supporting a leader's policies doesn't require unquestioning loyalty. Scripture warns against placing our ultimate trust in human rulers (Psalm 146:3; Psalm 118:8-9).

Q: Should Christians defend politicians when they do something wrong?
A: No. God's standards of truth and righteousness apply regardless of political affiliation. Christians shouldn't excuse wrongdoing simply because they support a particular leader (Proverbs 21:3; Ephesians 4:25).

Q: What if another Christian belongs to a different political party?
A: Political disagreement doesn't automatically destroy our unity in Christ. We're instructed to pursue peace, humility, patience, and love toward one another (Ephesians 4:1-6; Romans 14:19).

Q: Does the Kingdom of God depend on Christians taking control of earthly governments?
A: No. Jesus said His Kingdom wasn't of this realm in John 18:36. Daniel 7:13-14 describes His everlasting authority, and Hebrews 12:28 identifies the Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Q: Should we pray for political leaders we disagree with?
A: Yes. Paul instructed believers to pray for kings and all who are in authority. Prayer for leaders doesn't mean approving of everything they do (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Q: What should Christians do when politics causes anger and division?
A: We should examine our priorities, pursue peace, speak truth with love, and remember that our identity is in Christ rather than a political party (Colossians 3:12-15; Ephesians 4:29-32).

Q: Has Jesus already received His Kingdom, or are we waiting for a political government to establish it?
A: Jesus has already received His authority and Kingdom. From the fulfilled perspective, the first-century covenantal transition reached completion in AD 70. His everlasting Kingdom doesn't depend on any modern government (Daniel 7:13-14; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28).

Q: What is the most important lesson Christians should remember about politics?
A: No politician is our savior. Jesus Christ is. We can care about our country and participate in government, but our highest loyalty must always belong to Him (Matthew 6:33; Acts 4:12; Philippians 3:20).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
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Source Index
† Matthew 6:33; John 18:36; Philippians 3:20; Psalm 146:3; Matthew 22:21; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Colossians 3:1-2; Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 12:28.
† Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews and The Jewish War; Tacitus, Annals; Pliny the Younger, Letters to Emperor Trajan.

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