

"God and Caesar"

Matthew 22.15-22

1. Introduction

a. *The Meaning of "Politics"*

- 1) Broad: the whole of our life in human society
- 2) Narrow: adoption of specific people and policies

b. *Political Concerns*

- 1) Social Service: People
- 2) Social Action: Structures

c. *Political Involvement*

- 1) Individual: The Christian
- 2) Corporate: The Church

2. Jesus' Political Endorsement Sought vs. 15 - 17

a. *Pharisees: God Alone - Church over State*

Luke 13.1,31 John 19.11

b. *Herodians: Caesar Alone - State over Church*

Luke 3.19,20 John 19.12,15

3. Political "Image Making"

a. *Caesar: On Coin* vs. 19-21a Romans 13.6,7

b. *God: Made Flesh* v. 21b Hebrews 1.3

4. God over Caesar (Romans 13.1) Isaiah 40:

a. *God's Sovereignty* vs. 10,17,22-24

b. *God's Scripture* vs. 8,13,14

c. *God's Strength* vs. 28-31

TWO CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS - politics and religion - DO NOT MIX

Rev. Jesse Jackson & Rev. Pat Robertson - PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

BOTH MAKE EXCLUSIVE DEMANDS ON THE SOCIETY

1. Introduction

a. The Meaning of "Politics"

1) Broad: the whole of our life in human society

GREEK word (polis) = CITY // the life of the city

GREEK word (polites) = CITIZEN // responsibility of the citizen

ART OF LIVING TOGETHER IN HUMAN SOCIETY

2) Narrow: adoption of specific people and policies

GAINING POWER FOR IMMEDIATE SOCIAL CHANGE

WAS JESUS POLITICALLY ACTIVE??

BROAD SENSE: YES - CAME TO SAVE HUMAN COMMUNITY - KINGDOM OF GOD

NARROW SENSE: NO - Never endorsed or formed political party
Took no steps to influence policies of Caesar, Pilate, or Herod

b. Political Concerns

1) Social Service: People

Good Samaritan

Feed Hungry

Protect Unborn

Comfort Slaves

Acts of Mercy

ACCEPTABLE

2) Social Action: Structures

Safer Roads

End Causes of Hunger

Stop Abortion

End Slavery

Works of Justice

CONTROVERSIAL

COMPLEX PROBLEMS - BOTH APPROACHES NECESSARY

(2)

c. Political Involvement

- 1) Individual: The Christian - VOTE, THINK, DISCUSS, SERVE
- 2) Corporate: The Church - DANGER OF BLURRING THE MESSAGE

WITNESS TO THE ETERNAL GOSPEL - KINGDOM OF GOD

AUTOBIOGRAPHY - BILLY GRAHAM - Biggest Mistake in Ministry
PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF RICHARD NIXON FOR PRESIDENT IN 1972
"Christian" Nixon's Downfall - Discredited his Message

POPE FORBIDS PRIEST/POLITICIANS - DANGER OF PASTORAL ENDORSEMENT

Uganda 1980 - collapse of country - 8 years of Idi Amin
GARBAGE TRUCK STRIPPED FOR TANK / TROOP TRUCK PARTS
PILE OF GARBAGE ALL OVER CITY
GOT TRUCK - SHOVELS - BANNER "Jesus is the Answer"
PREACHED GOSPEL - PICKED UP GARBAGE
REPORTERS "is this a political movement" YES! KINGDOM OF GOD

2. Jesus' Political Endorsement Sought

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK - RELIGIOUS LEADERS ALARMED PALM SUNDAY

Matthew 22:15-17

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. {16} They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. {17} Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

HIGH LEVEL DELEGATIONS - BOTH CLINTON & BUSH - PEROT IN DALLAS

STRONG DIFFERING OPINIONS

a. Pharisees: God Alone - Church over State

// FUNDAMENTALIST MUSLIM STATE - IRAN - Ayatollah "Spirit of God"

PHARISEES ZEALOUS FOR JEWISH RELIGION / "ZEALOTS" = Revolution

MISTAKEN THINKING - GOD HAS GIVEN POWER TO THE STATE

John 19:11 Jesus answered (Pilate), "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."

FLAG OF SAUDI ARABIA - Creed and Sword

b. Herodians: Caesar Alone - State over Church 3

ASSOCIATED WITH THE HERODS - Idumean Jewish Rulers
PLACED INTO POWER BY ROMAN EMPEROR - PUPPET OF ROME
TRAP - CHARGE OF TREASON AGAINST ROMAN EMPEROR - NO TAXES

John 19:12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

John 19:15 "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

YES OR NO ANSWER WAS IMPOSSIBLE - REASON THE COIN ITSELF

3. Political "Image Making"

a. Caesar: On Coin vs. 19-21a Romans 13.6,7

Matthew 22:19-21

Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, {20} and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" {21} "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's

ROMAN DENARIUS - During reign of Augustus and Tibereas CAESARS

One Side - Bust of the Emperor

INSCRIPTION "Tiberius Caesar, son of the DEIFIED Augustus"
MAN MAKING HIMSELF TO BE GOD

Other Side - Tiberius' mother - Livia

INSCRIPTION "Pontifex Maximus" e.g. "Highest Priest"

VIOLATES THE FIRST (no other gods) and SECOND (no images) COMMAND

Rabbi Nahum ben Simai (3rd Century) "sign of holiness never to look at the portrait on the coin"

Bar Kochba - REVOLUTIONARY, CLAIMED TO BE MESSIAH (2nd Century) had coins collected - hammered the obnoxious symbols & words out
REPLACED WITH JEWISH INSCRIPTION

COIN ITSELF - most significant - HATED - symbol of Roman power
and Roman pagan idolatry

JESUS ASKS THEM TO GIVE COIN - THEY CARRY IT!! LOOK AT IT!!!

minted coins, maintained defense,
administered justice, built roads

Romans 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

b. God: Made Flesh v. 21b

EMPHASIS IS ON THE LAST PART OF STATEMENT -

v. 21 "and to God what is God's."

Hebrews 1.3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact presentation of his being

ANCIENT WORLD - KING / SIGNET RING or SEAL - HOT WAX PRESS
Jesus - MARK OF GOD PRESSED ONTO HUMAN FLESH

ONLY JESUS IS WORTHY OF ULTIMATE OBEDIENCE AND WORSHIP

JESUS DID NOT EXPECT THE STATE TO SUPPORT RELIGION

Matthew 22:36-39

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" {37} Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' {38} This is the first and greatest commandment. {39} And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

// Role of God / Church PROMOTE LOVE OF GOD
Role of State - PROMOTE LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

AMERICAN CONSTITUTION "separation of church and state"
HISTORICAL MEANING - REACTION TO ENGLISH STATE CHURCH

EACH FUNCTIONED SEPARATELY - kings cannot appoint pastors
pastors cannot appoint kings

UNDERSTOOD BOTH CHURCH AND STATE WERE RESPONSIBLE TO GOD

TODAY - separation of God and state - GOD HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH
THE AFFAIRS OF STATE - Christians stay out of politics

Romans 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

PEOPLE OF GOD (ISRAEL) AGAINST PAGAN NATION OF BABYLON

a. God's Sovereignty vs. 10,17,22-24 INCLUDING OVER THE STATE

Isaiah 40:10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

Isaiah 40:17 Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

UGANDA - 8 YEARS OF IDI AMIN - 1971 - 1979 - SUFFERING
 CHRISTIANS - 80% population PRAYED
 8 MORE YEARS OF POLITICAL CHAOS - KILLING - AIDS

Isaiah 40:22-24

He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. {23} He

brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. {24} No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

b. God's Scripture vs. 8,13,14 WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY

MANY POLITICAL ISSUES ARE NOT BLACK AND WHITE - COMPLEX

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

ETERNAL WORD NOT CHANGING SOCIAL VALUES

Isaiah 40:13,14 Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH THE WORD - APPLY TIMELESS PRINCIPLES
 CHRISTIANS MUST NOT NEGLECT THE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD

c. God's Strength vs. 28-31 THE VICTORY / KINGDOM IS GOD'S

Isaiah 40:28-31 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

CLIMAX - WALKING!! - DAILY OBEDIENCE IN GOD'S STRENGTH