

## **“Preparing for the Political Season”**

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by Matt Peery

Every four years our country goes through the remarkable process, at times circus-like, of electing our next president. Sensationalism and emotions run high as the country is divided into warring factions. This repeated process presents pitfalls for anyone seeking to follow Jesus Christ faithfully.

To begin with, there is the danger of elevating a candidate beyond the height to which any human should be exalted. Many elected officials present themselves as demigods, and it is no wonder why. Far too many citizens hold them in too high esteem. The Bible challenges the exaltation of any human leader. Psalm 146:3-4 says, “Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.” Every elected office holder is a human, a sinner, no less so than you or me. Followers of Jesus Christ are not to put their hope in mankind, but hope only in Jesus as our savior. As the first of the Ten Commandments directs us, we are to avoid all idolatry, having no other God but the One who is Father, Son, and Spirit.

A second danger in every election season is elevating too highly the state itself. The state, that is the governing authority, is not highly esteemed in the narrative of the Bible. At Babel the first formal state was formed and it was in direct disobedience to God. It was the powerful government of Egypt which enslaved the Israelites. In rejecting God, Israel requested to have a king, a human governor and government, to rule over them. In 1 Samuel 8:7 God says of the Israelites, “they have rejected me from being king over them.” And let us not forget that it was the Roman government which murdered our Savior.

It is a particularly prevalent temptation today to place one’s faith in the government as the government further and further expands its reach. Many look to the state to provide for them, protect them, and care for them. Often the state is presented as a guardian caretaker, nurturing people through its programs from the cradle to the grave.

Christians however are to have a healthy degree of skepticism towards the promises of politicians, political parties, and human government. Christians, of all people, know that mankind’s salvation does not lie in the plans and bills of congress, but in the will and power God. Therefore whatever hope a Christian puts into a political candidate or political party is to be a hope measured by our fallen and imperfect nature, and measured by the temptation within each of our hearts to hail a prince of man instead of the Prince of Peace.

As we prepare for the political season ahead, may we not lose perspective. May we not put misguided hope and trust in any person or plan apart from Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation. May we remember the words of Psalm 146:5, “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God.”