

Pocketbook, Party, or Principles

~ Joe Slater ~

With all the political talk maybe you think you've heard more than you want to hear about it already. But God's word sheds some needed light: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, the people groan" (Prov. 29:2). "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

In some cases, calling any candidate a "righteous" person might require quite a stretch! It's easy to become a cynic and say, "Politicians! They're all the same!" But sometimes clear differences exist; it is our privilege and duty to prayerfully and carefully decide for whom we will vote. What criteria should we use?

Some people vote their pocketbooks. That philosophy says: "I will support whichever candidate will do the most to increase my personal material wealth." Others vote their party. While parties may not receive the loyalty they did in the past, there are still those who would vote for the devil himself rather than support someone in another party!

(Continued below)



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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

Pocketbook, Party, or Principles (Continued)

There are, of course, legitimate economic concerns; and even party affiliation may play a valid role in our decisions. But shouldn't Christians be concerned about greater things than these? What about our principles?

Since one of the God-given duties of civil government is to promote what is good and to punish evildoers (Rom. 13:3), it behooves us to determine where the various candidates stand on important issues. What values do they embrace? What, according to them, is "good" and what is "evil"? How do their positions square with the Scriptures? Many specific examples could be listed, but some obvious and outstanding ones are abortion, homosexuality, and drugs. The moral fabric of our nation is being torn to shreds, and Christians who ignore moral principles bear some of the responsibility. Economic concerns are not unrelated to morality. God has been, is now, and always will be in control of the welfare of nations. It is He who gives the power to obtain wealth (Deut. 8:18). Not even the most brilliant economic policy can succeed without God's blessings (see Haggai 1:1-11).

Let us be clear: government cannot save us. A righteous nation will not be legislated into existence. Civil authorities can, however, promote what is good and help to provide a decent environment in which to live. Christians can exercise their influence as the "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13) by supporting candidates of high moral standards.

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

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ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Jeff Bingle
Jimmy Sweeney
David Williams
Chuck Wyatt

MINISTER

Robert McAnally
(863) 682-3600

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Brian Kenyon
(863) 944-8565

SECRETARY

Virginia Walker

OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30a.m.
Worship.....10:30a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00p.m.

HOME OF

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EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

sfacc.net

Almost, But Lost

Ernest Underwood

“Almost” is a sad word. In the different contexts where it is generally used, it denotes something that was expected, but that did not take place. It was almost a home run, but the outfielder caught it for the out. The pass receiver almost caught the pass for a touchdown, but now its fourth down and ten to go. The bullet almost missed its intended victim.

By far, the saddest “almost” concerns one who is almost saved. In the Bible we find King Agrippa using this word when he said, “*You almost persuade me to become a Christian*” (Acts 26:28). He had just had the privilege of hearing the apostle Paul preach the Gospel to him. Wouldn’t it have been a wonderful thing for any of us to have been in that audience?

When one is “almost” saved, he or she is truly not far from the kingdom of God. All that friends and loved ones know to do has been done. Teaching has been done, prayers have ascended to the throne of God on behalf of such a one; even tears of strong crying have been shed, but still that person is not saved--has not obeyed the Gospel.

Do you know that there are those who are earnestly praying for you to come to the knowledge of the truth of God, and obey that truth? We are told that many are reading these articles that come to you. We are told that you are learning the truth, and are indeed happy for this. May we implore you to not be “almost” but altogether persuaded to become what God wants you to be...what he offered his Son that you might become--a Christian, nothing more, nothing less.

The words of Jeremiah come to mind concerning those who are almost persuaded to become a Christian, yet have not done so. That prophet wrote, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” (Jeremiah 8:20). To be almost saved is to be altogether lost. How truly, truly sad! What is your condition, my friend, and are you willing to make the changes necessary to become a Christian?

Matthew Twenty-Four Misapplied

D. Gene West

It is supposed that a natural curiosity on the part of man regarding the return of Jesus to this world for the purpose of judging us in righteousness (Acts 17:30-31) is to be expected. However, date setting is an exercise in futility, for God has not revealed when his Son will return to execute the sentences of eternal damnation or bliss. Since God has revealed no dates, nor hints of dates, it is useless for us to set them. In the lifetime of this writer, no less than twenty dates have been set for the return of Jesus, and that event never materialized. If what a man predicts does not come to pass, we are to ignore such a prophet because he is a false one (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

Nevertheless, men continue to comb the Holy Scriptures in the hope that they can find some hint or sign of the Second Coming of Christ. We have heard it said that we will know when Christ is coming because the only way we will be able to tell one season from another is by the falling of the leaves. That is not much of a hint! How do we tell one season from another now? The Bible nowhere says anything remotely like this. This is called "chimney corner scripture," meaning it is not Scripture at all!

Predictors of the Second Coming along with many "doomsday" predictors often turn to Matthew 24 and tell us these are the signs of Christ's coming. Then they will speak of Christ's prediction of wars and rumors of wars, followed by, "Just look what is going on in the Middle East today." We are painfully aware of what is going on in the Middle East and wish to say unequivocally that a great deal of it is happening because of the theology of those who use Matthew 24 to predict the "end of time." Jesus nowhere gave a hint of the "end of time," and most certainly, he did not do that in Matthew 24. When Jesus gave signs of a coming destruction in this passage of Scripture, as well as in Mark 13 and Luke 21, he spoke not of the end of time, but of the end of the Jewish nation, their Temple and their religion. The seventeen signs given by our Lord are not things that are to happen in our time or in a time future to us because these events were fulfilled in the destruction of the great city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

There is one simple passage in Matthew 24 that shows conclusively when the events prophesied by our Lord were to come to pass. The Lord said, "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34). Notice, dear friend, Jesus said that the generation to whom he was speaking would not pass away (die) until all the things he had predicted in the passage would be fulfilled. These are not things coming on us, or on the people of the future, but these are things that came to pass in the generation living when Jesus spoke these things. The words, this generation, are found at least five times in the Book of Matthew, and in every instance, they mean precisely the same thing--the generation that was then living.

Someone may say, "No, this generation refers to the one now living, that is the one in which we are living." Not so! How do we know? Because J. N. Darby applied them to the generation in which he was living in the 1820s and they did not come to pass. C. I. Scofield applied them to the generation in which he was living in the 1920s and they did not come to pass. Hal Lindsay applied them to the generation living in the 1980s and they did not come to pass. Remember what Deuteronomy 18:20-22 said? If a prophet speaks a thing and it does not come to pass, forget him, he is a false prophet!

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Mary Shumake is in LRMC, but will probably be moved soon to a rehab facility. Sam Bolding, Duane Nelson, Margaret Coone & Sharon Washington.

Relatives: Kim Sheffield (niece of Frank & Ginny Hamby) had surgery Friday, and is in ICU at LRMC. Earl Anderson, Don Moore, Karen Swiney, Nina Hart, Annie Beth Coone

Shut In Members: Newman Kirkland, Artis Bassett.

Others: Colleen Deal, Christina Feussner, Graham McDonald, Harold Hooks, Annette Samson, Kathy Peel & Danny Edmonds *Please pray for all of the sick.*

Upcoming Events

Mar. 9th - From 8:00 am - 11:00 am. Our youth & families are invited to join in the "Great American Clean-up". Please meet at Highland City Elementary School. The youth can count these service hours towards the Good Samaritan category in Lads to Leaders.

Mar. 10th - Lads to Leaders will meet at 3:00 pm.

Mar. 16th - Semi-Annual Picnic/Sing at Mary Holland Park.

Mar. 23rd - Egg Hunt at the home of the Bingle's. Please let Rene know if you plan to be there.

Mar. 24th - 28th - Gospel Meeting at Sixth Street. Speaker will be Cameron Edwards.

Visitors

Jerry & Patricia Shaw, Smitty Smith, Barbara Paulin.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Robert McAnally who became a great-grandfather for the second time on March 1st, when his granddaughter, Courtney Hueter gave birth to Jonas Robert Hueter, who weighed 8 lbs, 2 oz. and was 22 inches long. The proud father is Jared Hueter. The grand parents are Jack & Elizabeth Sisk.

Congratulations also to Kenny & Reba French who are great-grandparents again. Braylon Scott Murrell was born March 28th. He weighed 7 lbs, 15 oz. & was 21 inches long. The proud parents are Lindsey & Scott Murrell. Grandparents are Bob & Teresa Murrell.

Hither, Thither and Yon

Dave Williams is still out of the country. Please keep him and any others who may be traveling in your prayers.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

March

Jimmy Sweeney..... **Table** David Anderson
Robert Cooper **Assist**..... Paul Romine

Sunday, March 10, 2013
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer..... Ken Walker

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Frank Hamby
Closing Prayer Kyle Williams

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Charles Paulin
Closing Prayer Phil Fife
Greeters Bruce & Dolores Longfellow
Att. Cards..... Ian Enamorado & Paul Sweeney
Open & Close Building..... Fred Strickland

Wed. March 13, 2013

Song Leader Ken Walker
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Closing Prayer John McShane

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt, so he can get a replacement - 859-5231.

Sunday, March 17, 2013
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer..... David Anderson

10:00 A.M.

Announcements..... Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Closing Prayer Jason Hendrix
Greeters Kenny & Reba French
Att. Cards..... Sebastian Rapley & Ian Enamorado
Open & Close Building..... Fred Strickland

Wed. March 20, 2013

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Jim Turner
Closing Prayer Jimmy Sweeney

~ HOW WE ARE GIVING ~

Feb. 10..... \$4,179.26
Feb. 17..... \$4,088.05
Feb. 24..... \$3,489.88
Mar. 03..... \$4,936.00
Contribution Average \$4,116.17
2013 Weekly Budget \$4,255.13