

The Qualifications for Civil Rulers

Transcript of a Sermon by Phillip G. Kayser on 9/7/2003
Foundations Series #26

Miscellaneous Scriptures & 2 Samuel 23:1-7

After last week's sermon I was asked if I would preach another sermon on civil government, this time, not on the limits of civil government, but on the qualifications for civil rulers. And let me tell you something - there is a lot of legitimate debate on how this works out when you are living in a pagan era like we are that violates all of the principles we looked at last week. Some people automatically vote for Christians, but fail to realize that a pagan candidate might in reality be more Christian in their voting pattern than the Christian is. On the other hand, Scripture seems to be clear that Christian rulers are to be preferred to pagan rulers. *But* (as Tevye kept saying on the *Fiddler on the Roof*), on the other hand, can you really claim to be a Christian ruler if your rule consistently violates God's laws? Isn't that being a pagan ruler who happens to also be a Christian in his private life? Isn't that really a syncretistic ruler rather than a Christian ruler? On the other hand, you find non-Christian rulers that were preferred by God to other non-Christian rulers, and were even given a longer reign because of their outward repentance. It seems that God does value principles of justice even when they are being meted out by pagans. In fact, in the beginning of Deuteronomy, God protects pagan nations from conquest and explains that their cup of iniquity was not yet full. On the other hand, we have passages like the one that we just read that indicates that those who rule must rule in the fear of God. I am giving this (as it were) thinking out loud back and forth to let you know upfront that the issue of qualifications cannot be simplistically answered. Presidents Clinton and Bush are both professing evangelical Christians with regular church attendance, but I would rather have an explicitly non-Christian ruler like Thomas Jefferson who ruled according to Christian principles of government that we looked at last week, than to have a bible-waving born-again president that violates the Constitution and Bible left and right. On the other hand, I would rather have had an explicitly Christian Thomas Jefferson than a secular Thomas Jefferson? Do you see what I am saying? David is not perfectionistic in this passage. Verse 5 says, **although my house is not so with God...** That is an admission that he did not live up to his own ideal. When we are seeking rulers for office, we must have an ideal to measure by, but we must also recognize that when there is a candidate that you can agree with on most points, he may still be a legitimate candidate to vote for.

Turn with me to Exodus 18, and I want to flip through at least the first four of the passages that are given in your outline. I have given you a fuller outline so that you can see that there really are quite a number of qualifications that the Scriptures lay out. Exodus 18:21.

Exodus 18:21 says, **you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such**

over them to be rulers... Notice the first qualification: ability. One of the real embarrassments I witnessed was a person who ran for public office back in the 90's who was a good man, who feared God, who couldn't be bought, etc., but who was utterly unable to serve. It was embarrassing to me because he represented Christianity poorly. Not in his ethics. His ethics were great; but in his ability to rule he represented Christianity poorly. Let me tell you something, you shouldn't vote for a person based only on how nice of a Christian he is. He must also be an able man. And I find it interesting that God puts ability first, fearing God second, men of truth and integrity third, and being statesmen who can't be influenced by greed or advancement as last. And there may not be a significance to the order there, since God wants all of these characteristics. But the order definitely makes sense. Obviously I want a statesman who is a Christian as an ideal, but there are examples of men like Jehu (whom God anointed to become king) who were not Christians. But compared to the wickedness and tyranny of Jezebel (whom he killed by God's authorization), Jehu was preferable. He had more of the total number of qualifications. That's what we are looking for. Considering the options that we have before us, which one has most of the Biblical qualifications. Especially in America, where we get to choose.

And some of you may disagree with me on this, but in the primaries, we ought not to bypass a perfect candidate with the idea that he can't win. Years ago everyone said that one of our republican candidates for Congress who would have been perfect, had no chance of winning, and so they decided to cast their vote for the one that they really didn't like but that the papers thought had a higher rating. They were basing their votes on prophesying the future rather than on applying the Scripture. But ironically when the votes were tallied up, the best candidate (the supposedly unelectable candidate) had more votes than the one my friends were voting for as a second best. If they had gone ahead and voted for the one they thought was the best, he would have won the primaries, and I am convinced would have won the final election. That's the danger of trying to prophecy the future. We don't know the future. I think we should leave the results up to God, and pick the candidate that best fits the most qualifications. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "**The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.**" The secret things belong to the Lord our God (in other words, who is actually going to win in the future is not known to us, is secret, and is none of our business, it belongs to God). The things which are revealed (in other words, Biblical qualifications of who *should* be in office) belong to us and to our descendants forever, that we might do all the words of this law. I think we need to be more concerned with qualifications than we are with results.

So here are some qualifications. Ability to rule.

Second, fear of God. Is that really an essential qualification? I think so. Without the fear of God driving men, they will fall victim to the fear of man. And that's what politics is all about: licking your finger and feeling

which way the political wind is blowing and then doing what seems easiest. And that is what has gotten our country into such terrible trouble. We need statesmen who fear God and do right no matter what winds are blowing. And if you read the writings of the men who signed the Constitution, you find them saying the same thing. I've given some quotes on the back of the worship notes that would surprise you if all you ever read was what the *newspaper* says our Constitution allows. Let me read some of those. Look at the second quote: This is John Jay, the first Supreme Court Justice of the United States Supreme Court. He said, "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christian rulers for their rulers." And most of the States in the Union had clauses in their Constitutions that showed that they didn't trust people who didn't believe in hell, because these were people who had no fear of God. Look for example at Pennsylvania's Constitution. Referring to the legislature it says, "Each member, before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: 'I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine Inspiration.'" (Pennsylvania Constitution, 1776) Look at the wording of the Constitutions of both Tennessee and Mississippi. Mississippi in 1817 mandated this: "No person who denies the being of God or a future state of rewards and punishments shall hold any office in the civil department of the State." They wanted people who feared God. Why? One founding father said that nothing restrains men who have no fear of God. Daniel Webster, a Congressman, Senator and Secretary of State for three presidents, said this: "God intends you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God...If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupt."

Noah Webster (who by the way, was largely responsible for the wording of Article 1, section 8 of the US Constitution, said something similar. He said, "When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty..." (Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1832) p.6.)

"It is alleged by men of loose principles or defective views of the subject that religion and morality are not necessary or important qualifications for political stations. But the Scriptures teach a different doctrine. They direct that rulers should be men "who rule in the fear of God, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" [Exodus 18:21] . . . [I]t is to the neglect of this rule of conduct in our citizens that we must ascribe the multiplied frauds, breaches of trust, peculations [white-collar larceny] and embezzlements of public property which astonish even ourselves; which tarnish the character of our country; which disgrace a republican government." (Noah Webster, *Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education*

(New Haven, S. Converse, 1823) pp. 18-19, Letter 1.) Here was a signer of the Constitution who insisted on this qualification.

I had to throw away a ton of quotes simply for time sake, but let me give you one more. It is from James Madison, whom people often appeal to as the promoter of a secular government. But he said in 1785:

"Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society [Civil Society meaning the society of government], he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe. . . ." (*The Papers of James Madison*, Robert Rutland, ed., Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973, Vol. 8, pp. 299, 304, June 20, 1785; cited in Barton, p. 120.) The fear of God.

Exodus 18:21 goes on to say, **men of truth**. If a man cannot be trusted to tell the truth, he cannot be trusted to govern. In fact, lying under oath was an impeachable offense. It's popular today to say that ability to govern others is all that is essential, and private morals and character is unimportant. "So he lied!" they say. "Does that make him a bad ruler?" And Scripture would say, "Yes." There must be integrity. If he can't govern himself, how can he govern others?

Hating covetousness is another characteristic. And unfortunately, with the lifetime salaries that are given to our national rulers once they are out of office, we work against that qualification. I have no problem with paying Senators, Congressman and Presidents well while they are in office. But do they really need a lifetime pension after having served just one term?

Let's move a little more quickly. Turn to Deuteronomy 1. This is a passage that gives a few more qualifications. We won't look at everything on this sheet. But I do want to give you enough of a sampling that it can help you with your prayers for our rulers and help you in determining your votes. Deuteronomy 1:13-18. **Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.** In verse 16 he said to those men: **You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of any man's presence, for the judgment is God's.** When we are voting for candidates, we need to make sure that they have wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to apply Scripture to life in a practical way. They need knowledge and understanding. If any of you children aspire to public office, you need to learn biblical civic theory and practice inside and out. Leaders must be readers. Wisdom, understanding, knowledge, righteous judgment, impartiality. That means that your judgment is not swayed by friendship, the wealth of an individual, how nice they seem, or how much political clout they have. You make decisions based on what is right, not what is expedient. And then Moses lists once again the qualification of fearing God more than fearing man.

Turn next to Deuteronomy 17. This is a passage dealing with kings, and we can't preach a sermon on qualifications without at least reading it. Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

Deuteronomy 17:14 ¶ “When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that *are* around me,’

Deuteronomy 17:15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; [notice first, that God’s choice of king needs to be the criteria for our choice of king. How do we know His choice? We are not talking about providence here, or God wouldn’t have had to command them to choose the king whom God chooses. God’s providence always happens. That’s God’s decretive will. We are talking here about God’s prescriptive will which governs our decisions. This is saying that we must set rulers up who meet the qualifications God has chosen in His Word. He goes on] **one from among your brethren** [so he needs to be a Christian] **you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.** So he had to be both a brother and a citizen.

Verse 16.

Deuteronomy 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, “You shall not return that way again.” [This is talking about not choosing a king with imperialistic ambitions (multiplying horses). Horses and chariots were especially for the purpose of conquest and expansion and to put you into a position to be an interventionist. While Israel was not isolationist in its policies, it was definitely not interventionist. And while most of our founding fathers disagreed with George Washington’s isolationism, they agreed with him that we ought not to be interventionists. America has had its times of imperialism – even by otherwise good presidents. Verse 17 goes on.]

Deuteronomy 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. [So here are two qualifications that show whether the person has self-control and contentment. He couldn’t be a womanizer and he couldn’t be greedy. People might wonder how personal characteristics like that could affect a person’s job. Spies use these vices all the time to subvert a nation, and they have subverted many political leaders down through the centuries through sex and money. Solomon was totally subverted by his wives. Yes, a man’s personal character must be evaluated when considering him as a ruler. In fact, in terms of this debate, let me give you an interesting quote from Samuel Adams, one of our foremost founding fathers. Sam Adams said, “He who is void of virtuous attachments in private life is, or very soon will be, void of all regard of his country. [P]rivate and public vices are in reality . . . connected. . . . Nothing is more essential . . . than that all persons employed in places of power and trust be men of unexceptionable characters. The public cannot be too curious concerning the [private] characters of public men.” (Samuel Adams, *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, Harry Alonzo Cushing, ed., (NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), vol III, pp. 236-37, to James Warren on Nov. 4, 1775.) Wow! Isn’t that a great quote? People were upset when Gary Hart was opposed by Democrats because of his adultery. Many still insist that despite his womanizing

adultery, President Clinton's personal life didn't affect his public governing. But Scripture says that without godly self-government there cannot be godly civil government. Anyway, moving on to verse 18:]

Deuteronomy 17:18 ¶ **“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites.**

Deuteronomy 17:19 **And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life** [here is a qualification that would get the ACLU riled up.

Before he could even start governing, he had to write out word for word the whole Pentateuch – the first five books of the bible. And he had to be a person who was characterized by reading the bible every day of his life. I guess that would mean that one of the qualifications for a king is that he has the ability to read. But more to the point that the Scriptures are a part of his daily reading. But here is an outflowing reason why he needs to be immersed in the Scriptures], **that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,**

[Fear of God and personal holiness were two more qualifications. Verse 20]

Deuteronomy 17:20 **that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren,** [The ideal ruler is not proud and arrogant. Why would that be a needed qualification? Because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Pride endangers the nation's security now just as much as it did in Nebuchadnezzar's day. It was his pride that was singled out as the most hateful part of his reign, and the reason that God removed Nebuchadnezzar from office. So don't think that personal morals are immaterial. Arrogant rulers truly do endanger the country. Going on in verse 20:] **that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left,**

[This speaks to limited civil government. The ruler does not have the discretion to go beyond what is authorized in the Word. You know, when it comes to the confirmation of judges, no judge should ever be confirmed that does not hold to strict constructionism because there are no limits then to what he does. Strict Constructionism means that he will interpret it in terms of original intent – not going to the right hand or to the left. This is saying that words must rule kings. And our Constitution (as fallible and defective as it is), still is a fairly good interpretation of what it means to have limited government under God's law. Remember that we saw last week that the Constitution mandates Common Law and that common law is simply Biblical law as it has been applied in English history for over a thousand years. And so strict constructionism is doing exactly what this text says – they are not willing to go to the right hand or to the left of what is mandated by our Constitution's understanding of biblical law.

And so, you get statements from signers of our Constitution such as the following. Pinckney said, “Blasphemy against the Almighty is denying his being or providence, or uttering contumelious reproaches on our Savior Christ. It is punished, at common law by fine and imprisonment, for Christianity is part of the laws of the land.” But that means limited government. Pinckney also said, “the great art of government is not to

govern too much.” God’s Word is the standard and it is the only standard that can keep government small.

If you look on the back of the worship notes, let me read the bottom two quotes.

“In the Courts over which we preside, we daily acknowledge Christianity as the most solemn part of our administration... Christianity, general Christianity, is, and always has been, a part of the common law...” (Supreme Court of South Carolina, **1846**)

“Christianity ... must be considered as the foundation on which the whole structure rests. ... there can be no substitute for Christianity... That was the religion of the founders of the republic, and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants. There is a great and very prevalent error on this subject in the opinion that those who organized this Government did not legislate on religion.” (United States Congress report received on March 27, **1854**)

Not going to the right hand or left hand of Biblical law still needs to be a qualification for office that we should pray will eventually be met. Actually, in my lifetime I have met people who have ruled in terms of Biblical law. In fact, I voted for one who had been in Congress for quite some time when I was in Georgia.

Deuteronomy 17 ends by saying **and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.** That is simply saying that God backs up his qualifications with sanctions. John Witherspoon (who signed a Declaration of Independence) said,

“Those, therefore, who pay no regard to religion and sobriety in the persons whom they send to the legislature of any State are guilty of the greatest absurdity and will soon pay dear for their folly.” (Witherspoon, *Works*, Edinburgh, J. Ogle, 1815, IV:266-67, from "A Sermon Delivered at a Public Thanksgiving after Peace.")

Of course, our founding fathers recognized our government would be only as good as its people. In 1798, John Adams said, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.” And that is why looking at our responsibility to choose is so important. We need to vote by the book.

Let’s just look at one more passage. It is 2 Samuel 23:1-7. Other passages deal with issues you can study on your own. But this is probably a good one to end the sermon on. It gives several more qualifications.

A. Acknowledge God (v. 1)

Verse 1 says, **Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel.** Here was a king who acknowledge that God had raised him up, and that he was therefore accountable to God.

B. Receive God’s Word (vs. 2-3a)

But David goes on to say that it is not enough to acknowledge that God has appointed public officials, but they must also listen to God. Otherwise it is a mere formality. He says, **The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me.** Now of course, David was inspired, and he wrote those words down in Scripture. But many passages indicate that rulers must listen to God by reading His Word. And when they do so, they are listening to God just as much as David was.

C. See God As The Only Security (“Rock”) Of A Nation (v. 3a)

The next qualification is that David sees God as being the only security for his nation; the only Rock upon which his nation could rest. And you know what, even unorthodox men like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin acknowledged that their only security was in God. They called for prayer and fasting and acknowledged that apart from God’s divine favor, they could not hope to prosper. That’s the most secular you could get. They just weren’t regular church goers, and were unorthodox in doctrine. In verse 3 David says, **the Rock of Israel spoke to me.** The solidness of a Rock is used in Scripture as a symbol of security and stability. We are a proud nation when we think that we can function without God. And so, I appreciate that fact that our current president, as illiterate as he is in Scripture, and as unconstitutional as some of his actions have been – that he has been trying to gain wisdom from the Scripture and prays to God, and he acknowledges that our security comes from God. Toward the end of his life, Benjamin Franklin told Congress, “We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that ‘except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it’ [Ps. 127:1]. I firmly believe this and I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel...”¹

D. Pursue justice rather than expediency (v. 3b)

But David goes on to say in verse 3, **He who rules over men must be just.** Augustine said, “Without justice, what are states but great bands of robbers?” And God defines justice in His Word. Justice must take precedence over national security. Justice must take precedence over political expediency.

E. Rule In The Fear Of God (v. 3c)

We have already seen the next qualification in verse 3. **ruling in the fear of God.** That qualification keeps coming up over and over again, and we need to pray that a true fear of God would descend upon Washington, D.C., Lincoln, NE and City Hall.

F. Look to Jesus as the standard for qualifications (v. 4)

Verse 4 then gives some descriptions that Christ alone could fulfil. **And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.**

¹p. 212 of God & Politics.

G. But realize that no ruler is perfect (v. 5 NKJV)

But then comes a hint that David himself has not lived up to the description of a king just given here. He can foresee that Jesus will meet the ideal, but that he does not. If you have an NIV or an NASB, this has been translated differently. NASB has, “truly, has not my house been so with God?” It is the very opposite meaning of what I have read. And I might say, it is the very opposite of what David says and what God says in 2 Samuel 7 when God made this covenant with David. God spoke of chastening David’s house with a rod of men and blows of the sons of men, and David says, **“Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? No, the NIV translation contradicts the very covenant passage which this verse refers to. In that chapter it speaks of God’s mercy on David’s house. So David is not saying that he was blessed because he was so good. That’s the implication of the NIV and NASB. He is saying the opposite. He is saying that God has blessed him and made a covenant with him despite the fact that he has loused up several times. Let me read three translations to this effect. The NKJV says, **Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant.** The ASV says, **Verily my house is not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.** Knox paraphrases this rather loosely, **What worth has my kindred in God’s sight that He should make an everlasting covenant with me.****

Now what difference does it make how we translate that? Well, to me this is a statement that we can take tremendous comfort in as we pray for our nation. God’s mercy rests upon kings and nations who submit themselves to His rule. It is mercy, not what we deserve. We have sex scandals in Washington, but so did David. We have Chapaquidics in Washington, but so did David. We have lies and deceit in Washington, but so did David. We have oppression in government, abuse of spending, overtaxation, but so did Solomon David’s son. God recognizes that even in government we are not perfect and the only way He can bless governments is through the mercies of Jesus, who alone is perfect as King of Kings and Lord of lords.

So it is one thing to say that these are qualifications towards which we ought to aspire, and quite another to say that no king can rule unless he has all of them. Then Jesus alone could rule. What we are looking for in candidates is evidence that this is the desire and the aspiration to be an ideal ruler. David’s statement that he was not perfect is no justification for embracing rebellion.

H. No rebellion

The next words indicate that we are either for Christ or against Him. Certainly He is a merciful King, and has blessed our nation richly despite our repeated sins against Him. But there comes a time when He says, “Enough is enough.” Look at verses 6-7: **But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away,** When men persistently rebel against Christ, Psalm 2 says that there finally comes a time when Christ will strike them with a rod of iron and remove such tyranny.

David says **But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands.** You can't change a rebel.

And yet resistance to tyranny is allowed by God. Here he speaks of resistance to tyranny. **But the man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.** I found it interesting that when they were suggesting what kind of seal the United States should have, Benjamin Franklin suggested a picture of Moses holding up the rod to divide the sea. Here are his words. "Moses lifting up his wand, and dividing the red sea, and pharaoh in his chariot overwhelmed with the waters. This motto: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." Imagine that coming out of his mouth. Well, he was a backslidden Presbyterian who didn't believe in election, but had a hard time shaking many of the other Presbyterian principles that he had been taught. "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." I like that.

But those are the two options: judgment to tyrants and mercy to sinful kings who repent and who kiss the Son and submit to Him. Verse 5 again describes that mercy.. **Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase?** If I had time I could show you from 2 Samuel 7 where this covenant was made, and from Acts 15, Hebrews 1, Isaiah 55 which all comment on this Davidic covenant, that they point to Jesus building the church and ruling over the state – and that this increases gradually over time. I had to cut about four pages out of my sermon. But it anticipates a time when King Messiah would not only build His church, but would establish the Davidic covenant over the kings of all the earth and extend His mercies to them. It's a wonderful covenant.

In summary I think we can say that unless we aim at the bull's eye, we won't ever hit the target. But let's not be discouraged if we shoot for the bull's eye and hit the edge of the target. Though we would all agree that Jesus would make a wonderful ruler since he meets all the qualifications, we might have disagreements amongst each other on our choice of lesser men. Some of you might emphasize certain qualifications more than others. That is understandable, and we ought to have charity towards each other on those disagreements of who to vote for. But let's be on the same board as to what the qualifications are, and keep praying that our rulers would be granted these graces, and keep pressing toward the fulfillment of them. Let's be governed in our voting by these qualifications.

Let me end by finishing the quote from Noah Webster that I started earlier. Noah Webster (as I said) was largely responsible for the wording of Article 1, section 8 of the US Constitution, said, "When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty; [now listen to what he says will happen if we fail to vote

according to biblical qualifications - and notice what incredible foresight he had. He goes on...] if the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made not for the public good so much as for selfish or local purposes; corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the laws; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizens will be violated or disregarded. If a republican government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the Divine commands and elect bad men to make and administer the laws.” (Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1832) p.6.)

And all I can say is, “I agree.” We have seen the results of voting by pragmatism. Let’s see what difference can be made if Christians will press our government more and more toward the qualifications laid down in Scripture. And may He receive all the honor and glory as His kingdom grows. Amen.

Lord, make us good voters. Make us good judges of character. Help us to place men into office who will advance your cause rather than taking away your cause. Help us to not be as concerned with winning elections as we are with pleasing you in our duties. Help us to discharge our duties as voters by looking to your Word. And may you receive the glory as we seek to advance your kingdom in all of life. IN Jesus name, amen.