

How Would Jesus Vote?

Final Thoughts

1 Kings 18:1-46

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Final Thoughts¹

Scripture

Some of you are familiar with Maxine, the cartoon character who has an irreverent outlook on life.

Recently she said, “Everyone concentrates on the problems we’re having in this country lately: illegal immigration, hurricane recovery, and alligators attacking people in Florida. Not me. I concentrate on solutions for the problems. It’s a win-win situation.”

And what are her solutions? Here are Maxine’s solutions: “First, dig a moat the length of the Mexican border. Second, send the dirt to New Orleans to raise the city above the levees. And third, put the alligators in the moat along the Mexican border! That will solve illegal immigration, hurricane recovery, and alligators attacking people in Florida!”

Easier said than done!

But that is often what we hear from political candidates. They are quick on promises but slow on delivery.

We are currently in a series titled, “How Would Jesus Vote?” We are examining key issues that confront us today and asking how Jesus would vote, if he were here.

Today, I want to conclude this series on “How Would Jesus Vote?” with some final thoughts.

To that end I want to draw your attention to one of the most remarkable confrontations in all of history. It is the narrative of the Prophet Elijah’s confrontation with King Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Let us read 1 Kings 18:1-46:

¹After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.” ²So Elijah went to show himself

¹ The material for this sermon is drawn from *How Would Jesus Vote?: a Christian Perspective on the Issues* by D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2008).

to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. ³And Ahab called Obadiah, who was over the household. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly, ⁴and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.) ⁵And Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys. Perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, and not lose some of the animals.” ⁶So they divided the land between them to pass through it. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself.

⁷And as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him. And Obadiah recognized him and fell on his face and said, “Is it you, my lord Elijah?” ⁸And he answered him, “It is I. Go, tell your lord, ‘Behold, Elijah is here.’” ⁹And he said, “How have I sinned, that you would give your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?” ¹⁰As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent to seek you. And when they would say, ‘He is not here,’ he would take an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you. ¹¹And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, “Behold, Elijah is here.”’ ¹²And as soon as I have gone from you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you I know not where. And so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. ¹³Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD’s prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water? ¹⁴And now you say, ‘Go, tell your lord, “Behold, Elijah is here”’; and he will kill me.” ¹⁵And Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.” ¹⁶So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him. And Ahab went to meet Elijah.

¹⁷When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” ¹⁸And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. ¹⁹Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

²⁰So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. ²²Then Elijah said to the people, “I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. ²³Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. ²⁴And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God.” And all the people answered, “It is well spoken.” ²⁵Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it.” ²⁶And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. ²⁷And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” ²⁸And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

³⁰Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. ³¹Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, “Israel shall be your name,” ³²and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. ³³And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood.” ³⁴And he said, “Do it a

second time.” And they did it a second time. And he said, “Do it a third time.” And they did it a third time. ³⁵And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.

³⁶And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. ³⁷Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” ³⁸Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.” ⁴⁰And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

⁴¹And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.” ⁴²So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. ⁴³And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. ⁴⁴And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’” ⁴⁵And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (1 Kings 18:1-46)

Introduction

In their book titled *How Would Jesus Vote?* Kennedy and Newcombe tell the story of a pastor who asked his congregation a couple of questions after the national election in 2000. You may recall that this was the election that had all the problems with

How Would Jesus Vote?

“hanging chads.” The pastor asked his Palm Beach, Florida congregation, “How many of you are opposed to abortion?” Virtually every hand went up.

“How many of you oppose the militant homosexual agenda?” Virtually all hands went up.

“How many of you support religious freedom and oppose things like removing God from school?” Virtually all hands went up.

“How many of you voted for Al Gore?” Virtually all hands went up.

The minister told this anecdote on Christian radio and made the point that we have a lot of work to do to educate Christians.²

One of the great problems is that people vote for candidates simply because they belong to a particular party. They vote for candidates whose principles are completely opposed to biblical principles. Or they vote for candidates because they believe that somehow God is for the party represented by the candidates.

My purpose in spending these past few weeks has been to show you the importance of looking at each particular issue from a biblical perspective. Once you have done that, you then look at each candidate and see how he or she lines up with Scripture on each issue. Only then are you in a position to vote, and you may discover that you will support candidates from different parties.

The point is that God is not for one particular political party and opposed to all other political parties. God is concerned that we vote for candidates who are consistent with what the Bible teaches.

It is imperative that we show discernment and carefully examine each candidate’s position before we vote. It is all too easy to put our faith in one political party. But neither party has an exclusive claim on the kingdom of God.

Do you remember when Jesus appeared to Joshua before the battle of Jericho? Joshua asked him whose side he was on, and Jesus answered, “Neither” (Joshua 5:14, *NIV*). The question is not, is

² D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *How Would Jesus Vote?: a Christian Perspective on the Issues* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2008), 184.

God on our side, but rather are we on God's side?

Lesson

So, as we consider some final thoughts on "How Would Jesus Vote?" I want to bring to your attention a man who did not compromise even when virtually everyone around him did.

Let me use the following outline to guide us:

1. The contest.
2. The test.
3. The result.

I. The Contest

First, then, the contest.

There is no greater contest in all of history than the contest between the Prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18.

The nation of Israel had fallen on hard times. They had an ungodly king and a wicked queen. The nation was contaminated with prophets of false religions who had been brought to the country by Queen Jezebel. She had 450 prophets who worshiped Baal, the sun god, and 400 prophets who worshiped Asherah, the fortune god (1 Kings 18:19).

These false religions were threatening to crush the true religion of Jehovah. It was up to Elijah, one of the few prophets of Jehovah, who was willing to stand up and speak up against the false religions. He was willing to confront the power of the throne, the seduction of the false religions, and the wrath of the multitudes.

But Elijah was God's man for the hour. He had come to King Ahab three years before, and at the command of God, he said, ". . . there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (1 Kings 17:1). And for three years not a drop of rain fell. Ahab wanted to blame the trouble on God's people, particularly Elijah.

Initially God told Elijah to hide himself from King Ahab. But then, after many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the

How Would Jesus Vote?

third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth” (1 Kings 18:1).

Elijah emerged from his hiding place and confronted Ahab. When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17).

Knowing that he had been called and sent by God, Elijah answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals” (1 Kings 18:18).

There are many similarities between our culture and that of Ahab’s. As John MacArthur wrote in his recent newsletter:

People are overwhelmed, worn out, beaten down, and fed up. Skyrocketing gas prices, poor job security, the ongoing wars in the Middle East, the looming threat of terrorism, economic instability, political uncertainty, environmental disasters, heat waves, power outages—no matter where you look, there seems to be bad news.

The situation is far more bleak from a biblical perspective. Secularism and moral relativism permeate our culture. Rampant sin and perversion are celebrated throughout our society. Islam is spreading like the plague it is. Anti-Christian sentiment continues to gain traction, and evangelicals are openly mocked in the news and entertainment media.³

We have the prophets of Islam, humanism, atheism, and secularism infiltrating our country today. We are facing primarily an internal rather than external crisis. Abraham Lincoln once noted, “If America is ever to be destroyed, it will not come from without, but the destruction will come from within.”⁴

Another president, John Adams, said on October 11, 1798, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”⁵

³ John MacArthur, *Grace to You Newsletter*, August 15, 2008, p. 1.

⁴ Blogs for Bush, www.blogsforbush.com/mt/archives/007069.html.

⁵ John Adams, quoted in Bill Federer, ed. *America’s God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations* (St. Louis, MO: Amerisearch, 2000), 10-11.

Elijah wanted all people to see the contest between God and the false prophets of Baal and Asherah, and so he called them all to Mount Carmel. He said, “Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table” (1 Kings 18:19).

II. The Test

Second, let us look at the test.

Elijah did not go to Mount Carmel to give yet another sermon in order to persuade people of the truth. They knew what God had done for them. They knew that God had delivered them again and again from the oppression of their enemies. They knew that God had protected them from all their adversaries.

So, rather than give them yet another argument, he called upon them to make a decision. He said to the people of God, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21a).

Now, Elijah’s message does not apply to those who are opposed to Christianity. Elijah’s message applies to God’s people. Elijah is speaking to people who have one foot in the world and one foot in the church, to people who love God but who support candidates who embrace principles clearly spoken against in the Word of God.

Vacillation is one of the greatest problems in the church today. Many people love God and want to serve him, but they support things in the world that are totally contrary to God and his Word.

Friend, listen again to Elijah, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21a).

Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Mat-

thew 6:24).

The Psalmist said, “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” (Psalm 146:3-4).

Rather, we are told instead, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD” (Jeremiah 17:7).

Elijah presented a test to the prophets of Baal—a test that would result either in victory for him and life for the nation, or in his destruction and the destruction of faith in the living God. He set up the test in favor of the false prophets. He gave them every advantage. If their gods answered by striking the sacrifice with fire, then the people would follow Baal. But if Jehovah struck the sacrifice with fire, then the people would follow Jehovah God.

III. The Result

And third, let us see the result.

Suddenly, out of the cloudless sky the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God” (1 Kings 18:38-39).

Now, we don’t need another demonstration of fire from heaven today. The fire has already come. God does not choose to demonstrate himself like he did in the day of Elijah for each successive generation.

You see, we know who the true God is. He did, however, give us one more demonstration of his power, one more definitive demonstration that he is the Lord, he is God.

That was on a mountain named Calvary, just outside Jerusalem about 2,000 years ago. There the altar and sacrifice was prepared. The fire of God’s wrath fell upon his Son, and he bore the guilt of our sin, and the wrath of God consumed all of our sin and guilt on that cross.

Three days later God raised Jesus back to life again. God demonstrated clearly, once for all, that Christ's sacrifice for sin was the only sacrifice that was acceptable to him. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

What is needed now is not further argumentation, but a decision. Choose today whom you will serve, "If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21a).

Do not vacillate. Choose God, follow him.

Conclusion

America needs preachers who will say with the Prophet Elijah, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21a).

I pray that you will not vacillate like the people of God did in the days of Elijah.

I pray that you will not have one foot in the world and one foot in the church.

I pray that you will plant both feet firmly in the kingdom of God and determine that you will love God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength.

I pray that you will meet the crisis of our time—the forces of Satan—with steadfast faith in the true and living God.

I pray that you will follow God wholeheartedly without compromise.

How do you follow God wholeheartedly without compromise in the upcoming election?

You need to examine each issue in light of Scripture. And then you need to examine each candidate's position on each issue. Make sure that his or her position is consistent with Scripture.

Ask yourself, "How would Jesus vote?"

And then vote for the candidate that you believe Jesus would support. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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1. www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/Sermons
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributor_profile.asp?ContributorID=11181
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PRAAYER:

O God, thank you for your Word. Thank you for what we learn about how Jesus would vote.

As we think about the upcoming general election and our responsibility (and privilege) as citizens to vote, help us to understand how Jesus would vote on each issue.

O God, your Word asks, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18:21a). Help each one of us here today to affirm, like the people of God in the days of Elijah, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God” (1 Kings 18:38-39).

Would you help us to know and understand the issues that confront us today from a biblical perspective so that we can support candidates who will govern in a way that is consistent with your Word?

And all of this we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

CHARGE:

Go and glorify God in all that you think, do, and say! And as you do, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.