

# BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

## A Christian Perspective on Politics

Romans 13:1-7

2020

### Introduction

**Joke:** Three people were arguing about what profession was used first in the bible.

1. The Surgeon says, "The Medical profession was used first when God took a rib from Adam and made Eve.
2. The Engineer says, "No, engineering was used first. Just think of the engineering job it took to create the world out of chaos.
3. The Politician says, "You wouldn't have had the raw materials if we hadn't created chaos in the first place?"

**Joke:** Is God a Republican or Democrat?

1. Right: Eccl 10:2 "The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left."
2. Left: Every time we find people in the Bible turning to God, it is to the "left":
  - a. Abram "left" Ur of the Chaldeans
  - b. The Israelites "left" Egypt
  - c. The disciples "left" their nets - Mt 4:20
3. Balance: Prov 4:27 "Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil."

Speaking of watching where you step, a lot of people make it a point never to talk about politics or religion. But I am going to violate that advice by talking about both and how they should biblically intersect in the life of the believer.

### I The Biblical Perspective

A. The **falling** of mankind

1. Man's probationary test: **God** as King - Gen 2:4-25
2. Man's probationary failure: **Man** as king - Gen 3:1-24

B. The **scattering** of the nations - Gen 11:1-9

The Tower of Babel

Gen 11:8-9 "So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel -- because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth."

C. The establishing/**stumbling** of Theocratic Israel - Gen 12:1-3

1. Israel's probationary witness: God as King
2. Israel's probationary failure: Man as king - 1 Sam 8:1-22
  - 1 Sam 8:4-7 "So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel

at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king."

D. The rebelling of the nations - Ps 2:2; Rev 16:14

Ps 2:2-3 "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

Rev 16:14 "They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty."

E. The **coming** of the King of kings

Ps 72:8-11 "He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth ... All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him."

Rev 17:14 "They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings ..."

Jesus, as we would expect, perfectly maintained His Father's perspective on these matters even though He lived in a society that was every bit as pagan and corrupt as today's culture – in fact, by most measures it was significantly worse:

1. Rampant immorality
2. Government corruption
3. Racial, class and economic-driven slavery
4. Oppressive taxation
5. Frequent political uprisings

**As Augustine wrote in his book, *The City of God*, he describes two cities:**

1. The city of man: built on the foundation of sinful/corrupt flesh.
2. The city of God: built of the firm foundation, whose architect and builder is God - Heb 11:10.

**Concerning Augustine's city of man, Lutzer writes:**

Augustine did not mean that the city of man is destitute of all civil righteousness and justice. Yes, pagans have built great civilizations, thanks to the virtues they inherited as those created in the image of God. Indeed, Christians should be actively involved in the city of man, building it, maintaining it, and working alongside of those headed to destruction. But Christians should also have no illusions about building an earthly utopia, for they must pass this life with continual opposition from the citizens of the city of man. They must march through the crumbling empires of the world, spreading the knowledge of the gospel.

## II The Practical Perspective

### A. **Acknowledge** and submit to political/governmental authority - Romans 13:1-7

1. It is established by God - v. 1
2. It is divinely delegated with authority by God - v. 2; 1 Pt 2:13-14
3. It is to commend what is right and punish wrong - vs. 3-4
4. It is an agent of God's authority - vs. 5-7

### B. Beware of political **idolatry**

1. Beware of national idolatry - Dan 3:1-30  
Babylon's demand that it's citizenry worship the image of gold!
2. Beware of political idolatry - Josh 5:13-14  
There is a tendency to ask, "Whose side is God on?"

#### **Illustration:** Joshua as he neared Jericho

Josh 5:13-14 "Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

The question isn't "whose side is God on"? The question is, "Are you on God's side"?

#### **Quote:** Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War

In 1863 President Lincoln overheard someone say that he hoped that "the Lord was on the Union's side."

The president responded: "I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

### C. Commit to political activity:

Old Testament and New Testament examples of saints who were politically active:

Joseph in Egypt (Gen 41:46), Daniel in Babylon (Dan 2:48), Zaccheus the tax collector (Luke 19:1-10), Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10) and the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:4-12) all continued in public service even after becoming followers of Jesus Christ.

#### 1. **Educate** yourself and vote your values

Christians should be good stewards of all things that God has entrusted to us, including our freedom to vote and to influence the moral, ethical and social direction of our nation.

Gal 6:10 "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,

especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

2. **Participate** in the process and run for office

**Quote:** Edmund Burke, an Irish political philosopher (1729-1797)

“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing!”

- D. Demonstrate political **sensitivity** - Rom 14:1-22

Though some might argue otherwise, I believe that one’s political affiliation is a biblically disputable issue.

Rom 14:1, 5-6, 12-14 “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters ... One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind ... So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.”

**Attitudes to avoid:**

1. Avoid loving your political party more than you love the souls of men and women.
2. Avoid loving being “winning” more than being true to the Word of God.
3. Avoid loving a spirited political debate more than being salt and light.
4. Avoid loving your patriotism and country more than the kingdom of God.
5. Avoid loving fostering an attitude of us vs. them more than building bridges for a potentially life-changing friendship.

- E. Fulfill political **responsibility**:

1. Through submission - Rom 13:1-5; 1 Pet 2:13-15

2. Through **taxes** and revenue - Rom 13:6-7

3. Through respect and honor

1 Peter 2:17 “Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.”

Titus 3:1-2 “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.”

4. Through **prayer** - 1 Tim 2:1-4; 2 Cor 10:3-5

- a. For kings and all who are in authority

- b. That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness

- c. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

### III The Eternal Perspective

- A. Renew your trust in God's **sovereignty**

1. He sets up kings and deposes them - Dan 2:21

- a. He gives them to anyone he wishes - Dan 4:17b
- b. He sets over them the lowliest of men

**Illustration:** Jesus' words to Pilate

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

- 2. He is sovereign over the kingdoms of men - Dan 4:17a
- 3. He does as he pleases: - Dan 4:34-35
  - a. With the powers of heaven
  - b. With the peoples of the earth
- 4. He has given His full authority to Jesus Christ - Mt 28:18
  - a. Who is head over all things - Eph 1:20-22; 1Pe 3:22
  - b. Who is the King of kings, Lord of lords - 1Ti 6:15
  - c. Who is the ruler over the kings of the earth - Re 1:5
- 5. He will accomplish His purposes
 

Ps 33:10-11 "The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."

**Wonderful discovery:** I am an official member of the sovereignty movement – and so are you if you claim the name of Christ!

- B. Remember your true **citizenship** and kingdom
  - 1. Pilgrims in this earthly kingdom (aliens and strangers) - 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11
  - 2. Citizens of God's heavenly kingdom - Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20
- C. Reconfirm your primary **mission**:
  - 1. To seek first His **kingdom** and righteousness - Mt 6:33
 

As always, our greatest challenge is not political or cultural, but spiritual.
  - 2. To proclaim the praises of God
 

1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."
  - 3. To make **disciples** of all nations - Mt 28:19-20
 

The church's unique, God-given purpose does not lie in political activism! Nowhere in Scripture do we have the directive to spend our energy, our time, or our money in governmental affairs. Our mission lies not in changing the nation through political reform, but in changing individual hearts through the Word of God.

Only as the hearts of individuals in a culture are changed by Christ will the culture begin to reflect that change.

If we do not evangelize the lost and make disciples of new converts, nothing else we do for people -- no matter how temporarily beneficial -- will be of any eternal consequence.

**Conclusion:**

So on Election Day, we will once again cast our votes. But unlike our local or national elections that take place every two to four years, as believers, we have the privilege of voting every day by word and deed for the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

1. Join the Sovereignty Movement!
  - a. Make sure you are a citizen of God's eternal kingdom
  - b. Admit your sin, believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord!
2. For those who are already citizens of God kingdom:
  - a. Renew your trust in God's sovereignty
  - b. Remember your true citizenship/kingdom
  - c. Reconfirm your primary mission – seeking first His Kingdom and righteousness and making disciples (new heavenly citizens) of all nations!