

Messianic Believers and the Political Process

by J.K. McKee posted 01 October, 2004 www.tnnonline.net

Five years ago when I was a freshman in college, there was a high amount of prophetic speculation in the Christian and Messianic world. Many people were expecting the return of the Messiah at any moment, or the start of the Great Tribulation right around the corner. Many I dialogued with believed that the Y2k computer problem would be the end of things as we knew them, and that massive political changes were on the horizon. I had a feeling that given all of the fear, and fear-motivated teachings that were circulating at the time, that the things that some were expecting were not going to take place. With this as a backdrop, rather than majoring in history as was my original intention, I decided to major in political science. I did this, because I knew in the future that when it came time for me to teach on Bible prophecy, I would have to do so objectively, with both training in the Scriptures and in global affairs.

Today in 2004, I do not regret the decision at all to study political science. I have a unique view of the world and of the Scriptures that most do not have. I will never forget what I was first taught in political science in the very first class. I was taught to always critically analyze things, never just accept what you read, and always make sure that what is being presented before you is a well thought out case that can be validated by credible sources. I was also taught to always question the motives of people, as everyone has an agenda. The Bible tells us the same things:

“A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed” (Deuteronomy 19:15).

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

How many Bible teachers do you know in the Messianic movement, or for that matter, Christianity in general, who keep these things in mind? How many present well detailed and reasoned cases for their teachings, that they substantiate with scholarly reference sources that are credible? How many of them have honorable intentions that are geared to help people grow in their walk of faith and into a closer relationship with God? These are things that we all have to keep in mind, and we have to keep them in mind this year, not only for our Bible study, but also for what we are all facing as Americans.

This year in the United States, my collegiate training is coming into play because we are facing a presidential election. I am sure that many of us remember where we were four years ago in November during “Indecision 2000” when the electoral votes in Florida proved indecisive. I am likewise sure many of us remember where we were when George W. Bush was announced as the 2000 election winner. And, I am sure that many of you have followed the presidency of George W. Bush very closely, especially since the events of September 11, 2001.

The responsibility of being the president of the United States is no small task at all. When I look at the history of our country, and think about all of the important decisions that have to be made as president, I certainly do not covet the job. When I think about all of the sacrifices that have to be made and work that needs to be done just to even think about running for president, I lose interest immediately. Think about all of the decisions that had to be made by George Washington or Thomas Jefferson when our country was still in its infancy. Think about all of the decisions that have been made in the White House during war time. If you had been Harry Truman during World War II, would you have decided to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? This is what it takes to be a president. You are the commander-in-chief of the world's most powerful country, and you have an awesome responsibility both to the office and to those whom you serve. And yes, compromises do have to be made. You have to, a certain degree, appease the masses. There is never going to be a president whom we agree 100% with on every issue.

Because of my training in political science, I am asked about my feelings about American politics and what our responsibility as Messianic Believers is. The question of any Believers' participation in politics of any kind has always been a controversy. There are those on one side who believe that we should not participate in secular politics in any way, shape, or form. Then

there have been Christian political lobbies which believe and advocate that we can “retake America.” Not surprisingly, I have encountered Messianics who do not believe we should concern ourselves with secular politics, and those who believe that by some slim chance we can “Messianicize” America. Sometimes we need to be reminded,

“It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding” (Daniel 2:21).

Ultimately, it is true that it is God and He alone who decides who leads a country. He is the One in His omniscience who has decided from long ago who is going to be the winner of the 2004 American presidential election. I certainly encounter a few in the Messianic community who believe in unprovable conspiracy theories involving secret societies which are supposedly controlling things behind the scenes. I have seen the negative impact they have on the credibility of various ministries and choose not to get involved. I do not wish to give any credit to Satan. I believe it is ultimately the Lord who controls things.

However, the challenge for us is that in ancient times, the way leaders would arise is much, much different than it is for us today. In ancient times, a new king would often come forth because he was a prince, the son of the previous king. Or, God would have His Prophets appoint a king, as was the case with Saul and later David. Today, because of the influence of democratic principles in the society we live, we elect our leaders, including our “kings.” We have a say in who leads us, and so the leader we receive is partially our responsibility. Ultimately, God has decreed who our leader is going to be, but as American citizens He has placed us in this society and we have the responsibility to honor the laws of the country in which we live. The Apostle Paul wrote similar things to the Roman Believers of the First Century:

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves” (Romans 13:1-2).

I believe quite strongly that we should participate in the political process. While I have no inherent interest at all to ever hold public office, I will be voting on November 2. I will be voting for the candidate whom I believe will best lead this country, maintain our security, and maintain the Judeo-Christian heritage and principles that have sustained our country from its founding.

I know that it is very easy to criticize whoever is in the presidential office. In fact, some Messianic Bible teachers have gone on record saying that they believe that the current president is not a Believer, nor a friend of Israel. I am not going to tell you in this editorial who to vote for, nor am I going to state publicly my opinion of either candidate. I am sure that some of you would agree with my opinions, and some of you might disagree. But what I will say is that it is not my right to criticize unfairly, and I am not going to say who is saved or unsaved regarding any political candidate, as that is not my job. You will have to make the decision as an American citizen this Fall, if you are going to participate in the election process. You will have to make the decision who you are going to choose for president, and then whatever other state and local officials will lead you. This is a responsibility we have as Americans, and we should not ignore it. Just as God has sovereignly decreed from eternity past who the president of the United States is going to be from 2005-2009, so do we have the free will responsibility to choose ourselves whom we believe should be in office.

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