



DECISION

THE EVANGELICAL VOICE FOR TODAY

OCTOBER 2024

2024
ELECTION
GUIDE



AMERICA'S FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

SOCIALISM

VS.

FREEDOM



02

CONTENTS



AMERICA'S FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

BY DECISION STAFF

How the candidates and parties align with moral and Biblical issues—and why Christians must vote.

VOL. 65 | NO. 10 | OCTOBER 2024



8

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS APPROACH THE 2024 ELECTION?

BY TONY PERKINS

Five Biblical principles to help you vote wisely on Election Day.



24

DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE PRAYERS

BY ERWIN LUTZER

In times like these, let us be done with superficial prayers.



28

A WARNING TO THE NATION

BY BILLY GRAHAM

The Bible is clear that any nation that departs from the Lord will suffer judgment.



32

BEN CARSON ON THE PERILOUS FIGHT

BY BOB PAULSON

Famed neurosurgeon and former HUD secretary says we face an enemy that wants to destroy faith and family.

DEPARTMENTS

1 FRANKLIN GRAHAM

38 BIBLE STUDY

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Franklin Graham
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Jim Dailey

EDITORIAL
EDITOR: Bob Paulson
SENIOR EDITOR: Jerry Pierce
SENIOR COPY EDITOR: Jerri Menges
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Lee Weeks

PRODUCTION & GRAPHICS
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Peter Taylor
ART DIRECTOR: Dwayne Cogdill
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Jamie Adamson

EDITOR EMERITI
Sherwood E. Wirt (1960-1976)
Roger C. Palms (1976-1997)
Kersten Beckstrom (1998-2002)

INTERNATIONAL MAIL
CANADA: 20 Hopewell Way NE, Calgary, Alberta T3S 5H5.
GREAT BRITAIN: National Ministry Centre, Richardson Way, Crosspoint Business Park, Coventry, CV2 2TA, England.
AUSTRALIA: PO Box 964, Kings Langley, New South Wales, 2147.
NEW ZEALAND: PO Box 870, Shortland Street, Auckland, 1140.

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CONNECT
WEBSITE: DecisionMagazine.com **EMAIL:** decision@bgea.org
TELEPHONE: 877-247-2426 (Mon.-Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sat. 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eastern Time)
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PRAY AND VOTE, BUT PUT YOUR HOPE IN GOD



Dear Friend,

In just a few weeks, our nation will hold one of the most consequential elections in decades. Voters will go to the polls on Tuesday, Nov. 5, to cast their ballots for the next president of the United States, as well as for many crucial congressional, state and local offices.

The future of our nation is at stake. America has drifted far from the Biblical values that once stood as our rock-solid foundation. In so many ways, we have turned our back on God, and the results have been devastating.

Progressive, liberal thought and activism have so contaminated the mainstream of American life and culture that once-unthinkable abominations such as same-sex marriage, abortion on demand and transgender advocacy have become dogma in one major party's platform.

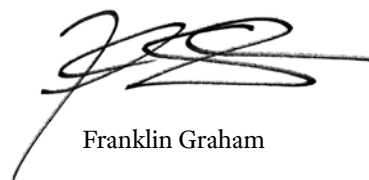
Our dangerous plight reminds me of Isaiah's warning to apostate Israel, which had abandoned allegiance to Almighty God and instead adopted the godless culture of surrounding nations. "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

Be warned, if we continue down this rebellious path, our nation will reap the bitter fruit of blatant immorality that shakes its fist in the face of God. Remember, we reap what we sow, more than we sow, later than we sow. "Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction" (Galatians 6:8, NIV).

In this special 2024 election issue of *Decision*, we have carefully examined and outlined the positions of the presidential candidates and their parties on key moral issues. We also highlight the difference in the platforms of both political parties. Additionally, we examine the critical congressional and gubernatorial races, along with pivotal state contests.

The Bible clearly teaches that governments are ordained by God to restrain evil and enable righteousness to flourish (Romans 13:3-4). That's why Christians should carefully pray and vote for candidates who best align with and stand for Biblical principles.

Above all, I encourage believers across this nation to pray for God's merciful, providential hand to turn our nation back to Him. For Almighty God to heal our land, we the people must first cry out to Him in repentance. We can't expect God to bless America while godlessness runs rampant in our land. My hope for our nation's future—as always—remains in Christ alone.



Franklin Graham

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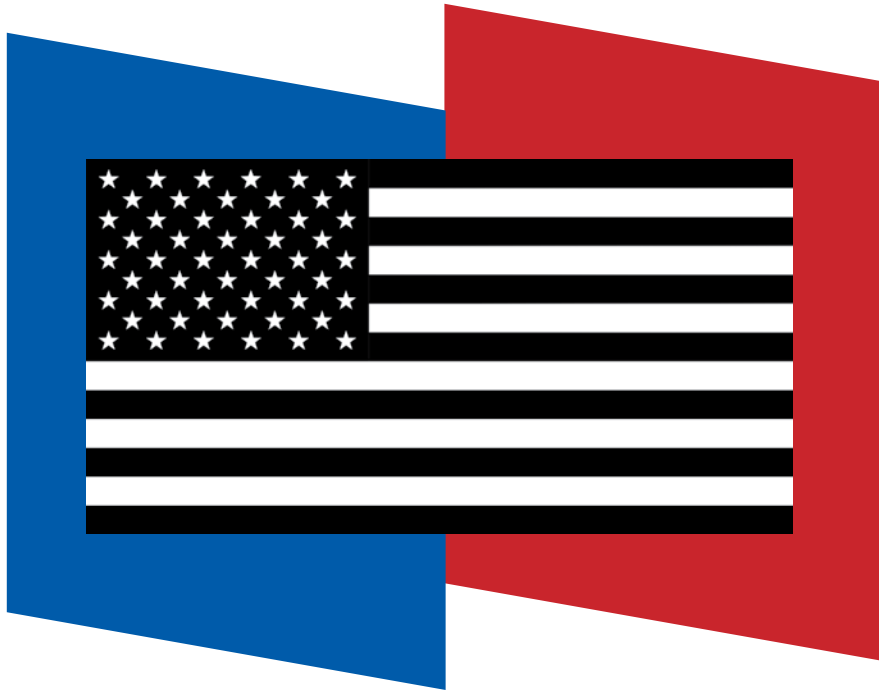
2024
ELECTION
GUIDE

AMERICA'S FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

*HOW THE CANDIDATES ALIGN WITH
BIBLICAL AND MORAL ISSUES*

by *Decision staff*





**“SOCIALISM IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF FAILURE,
THE CREED OF IGNORANCE, AND THE GOSPEL OF ENVY.”**

**“THE INHERENT VIRTUE OF SOCIALISM IS THE EQUAL
SHARING OF MISERIES.”**

—Winston Churchill

As we approach Election Day on Nov. 5, Christian citizens have a responsibility to vote for leaders whose views most closely align with God’s Word. The following pages outline the contrasting policies and track records of the presidential candidates and their parties. The differences are stark on virtually every issue, even causing concern among many observers that progressives might seek to steer the nation toward socialism and increased government control over the speech and actions of individuals, families, businesses and organizations. This issue of *Decision* also includes information about congressional and state races, and efforts by some to change the makeup of the nation’s judiciary. Most important, we present a fervent call to prayer and a reminder that no matter what happens in an election, our God reigns now and forever.

FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION

“Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men.’” —Acts 5:29, ESV

KAMALA HARRIS:

- Sponsored the Do No Harm Act, which would have prohibited use of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as a defense in many cases.
- Joined an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to rule against Hobby Lobby and other businesses that objected to the government’s mandate to provide contraceptive and abortifacient coverage.
- Supports the Equality Act, which would criminalize employees, medical professionals, parents and organizations that hold Biblical views on sexuality.
- The Biden-Harris State Department removed Nigeria from its list of Countries of Particular Concern, reversing a Trump administration designation despite genocide against Christians.
- The Biden-Harris administration reversed a Trump federal rule denying federal funds to colleges that violate the religious liberties of students.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM:

- Respect the right of every American to worship according to their conscience, and to live out their beliefs in everyday life.

DONALD TRUMP:

- Trump’s Department of Health and Human Services issued a rule protecting religious nonprofits from the Obama administration’s contraceptive mandate.
- Funded programs that advanced international religious freedom.
- Signed executive order integrating religious freedom into foreign diplomacy.
- Hosted a U.N. conference on international religious liberty, calling on nations to end religious persecution, repeal laws that restrict freedom of religion and increase prosecution for crimes against religious communities.

FREE SPEECH

“You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious.” —Ezekiel 2:7, NKJV

DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM:

- Says the party supports “protecting the Constitutional right of our citizens to free speech.”

KAMALA HARRIS:

- As California attorney general, tried to require that nonprofits report the names of people donating \$5,000 or more, which was widely seen as having a chilling effect on free speech.
- Harris criticizes conservatives for “banning books” in schools, but the Biden-Harris administration coerced tech companies to censor books, videos, posts and other online content.
- Administration officials compared parents’ speech at school board meetings to “domestic terrorism.”

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM:

- Prohibit the federal government from colluding to censor free speech.
- Defund institutions engaged in censorship.
- Protect free speech online.

DONALD TRUMP:

- Signed executive order withholding federal funds from colleges that don’t protect free speech on campus.
- Administration filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in support of Jack Phillips of Masterpiece Cakeshop, who had declined to use his artistic talents to create a custom cake that would celebrate a same-sex wedding.



“**Our enemies are waging war on freedom and faith, on science and religion, on history and tradition, on law and democracy, on the family, on children, on America itself.**”

—Donald Trump, speaking to Moms for Liberty in June 2023

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.” —Psalm 139:13, ESV

DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM:

- Calls the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* an “extreme act” with “devastating consequences nationwide.”
- Pledges to pass national legislation to make *Roe* the law of the land again.
- Promises to repeal the Hyde Amendment, which bans the use of federal funds for abortion.
- Promises to promote access to the abortion pill.

KAMALA HARRIS:

- Supports legislation to make abortion legal nationwide.
- Held more than 90 pro-abortion events in 21 states since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.
- Co-sponsored California law (later struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court) that required pro-life pregnancy centers to inform clients about abortion services.
- Twice voted against protecting babies *born alive* after abortion attempts.
- At an abortion clinic, called pro-life laws “immoral.”
- The Biden-Harris administration endorses the “Women’s Health Protection Act,” which would strike down more than 1,300 state pro-life laws.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM:

- Affirms that the 14th Amendment protects the life of the unborn.
- Defers to states to make their own laws regarding abortion.
- Opposes late-term abortion.
- Supports policies to advance prenatal care, access to birth control and in vitro fertilization (IVF).

DONALD TRUMP:

- Took action to ensure abortions weren’t taxpayer-funded (defunded Planned Parenthood).
- Appointed Supreme Court justices who helped overturn *Roe v. Wade*.
- Cut funding to the pro-abortion U.N. Population Fund.
- First sitting president to address the March for Life.
- HHS issued federal guidance supporting conscience protections for health care workers who do not wish to participate in abortions.

EDUCATION

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” —Proverbs 9:10, ESV

KAMALA HARRIS:

- The Biden-Harris administration drafted a radical rewrite of Title IX as federal education policy to give biological males access to female private spaces as well as girls’ sports.
- Harris called Florida lawmakers “extremists” for a law prohibiting teaching of sexual orientation or gender identity in grades pre-K through 8.
- The Biden-Harris administration announced in 2022 that any K-12 school receiving government funding must adhere to transgender-inclusive policies or risk losing federal funds that subsidize free breakfast, lunch and snacks to students of low-income families.
- The Biden-Harris administration targeted institutions it is ideologically opposed to, such as fining Grand Canyon University \$37.7 million for what the school, in a detailed rebuttal, calls “frivolous” claims.
- As senator, Harris voted against legislation providing funding for school choice and homeschooling.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM:

- Focus on the essentials of education.
- Defund schools that engage in political indoctrination.
- Champion the First Amendment right to pray and read the Bible in school.
- Support school choice.
- Expand education savings accounts.
- Support homeschooling families equally.

DONALD TRUMP:

- Updated federal guidance protecting prayer and religious expression in public schools.
- Signed into law the FUTURE Act, making permanent \$255 million in annual funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and increasing funding for the federal Pell Grant program.
- Pledges to withhold funding from schools teaching critical race theory.

BORDER SECURITY

“Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!” —Psalm 122:7, ESV

BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION:

- From January 2021 through July 2024, there were more than 9.9 million migrant encounters nationwide and more than 8.1 million encounters at the southwest border, compared to about 3.1 million in fiscal years 2017-2020.
- Roughly 2 million known “gotaways” have evaded Border Patrol agents since fiscal year 2021.
- Some 375 terror suspects from 36 countries have been apprehended at the border since 2021—a 3,000% increase in attempted illegal entry.
- Loose enforcement has resulted in nearly 100 illegal immigrants on the terror watchlist entering the country and remaining at large.
- Rescinded a Trump executive order that denied federal funds to sanctuary jurisdictions for illegal immigrants.
- This fiscal year alone, more than 1.2 million illegal immigrants have been released into the country with a Notice to Appear (NTA) before a judge at a later date.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM:

- Halt all releases of illegal immigrants into the U.S.
- Finish the southern border wall.
- Use military to crack down on cartels trafficking drugs into the country.
- Utilize Navy to create a fentanyl blockade.
- Remove all known or suspected gang members, drug dealers or cartel members from the country.
- Return trafficked children to their families in their home countries.
- Use strict vetting to protect the country from terrorism.
- Cut funding to sanctuary cities for illegal immigrants.

DONALD TRUMP:

- Built or replaced 450 miles of border wall.
- Expanded collection of migrants’ DNA information to add to FBI criminal database.



House Republicans passed an extreme bill today that will further jeopardize the right to reproductive health care in our country. This is yet another attempt by Republican legislators to control women’s bodies.”

—Kamala Harris, commenting on the passage of a bill to provide medical attention to babies *born alive* after an abortion attempt

FAMILY & PARENTAL RIGHTS

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” —Proverbs 22:6, ESV

DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM:

- Pledges to “continue to fight for LGBTQI+ youth by building on President Biden’s historic actions to ban so-called ‘conversion therapy.’”

KAMALA HARRIS:

- As senator, cosponsored legislation to block religious freedom for adoption providers.
- As state attorney general, refused to defend at the U.S. Supreme Court California’s Proposition 8, which recognized marriage between a man and a woman only.
- The Biden-Harris administration rescinded waivers for faith-based adoption and foster care agencies.
- The Biden-Harris Department of Justice has filed statements in federal district courts against state laws that ban or criminalize transgender procedures for minors.
- HHS adopted a rule requiring state child welfare agencies to place LGBTQ children with foster parents who will support the child’s LGBTQ status or identity.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM:

- Promote a culture that values the sanctity of marriage, the blessings of childhood, the foundational role of families, and supports working parents.
- Fight against policies that punish families.
- Restore parental rights in education.
- Stop schools from discriminating on the basis of race.

DONALD TRUMP:

- Supports school districts’ adoption of a Parental Bill of Rights.
- Finalized a rule through the Department of Health and Human Services allowing faith-based adoption agencies to receive funding despite not placing children with LGBTQ parents.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS APPROACH THE 2024 ELECTION?

Ever since Barack Obama’s vow to fundamentally transform America—a promise he kept—each Election Day has become less about politics and personalities and more of a ferocious battle over whose worldview will define a nation. Values that used to unite us have vanished, replaced by the hard contours of two parties without much common ground.

For Christians, this year has been marked by the shock of an assassination attempt and the shake-up at the top of the Democratic ticket. And the disappointments of a watered-down GOP platform still stings.

So how should Christians approach an election when the imperfections of both parties seem more evident than ever before?



by **Tony Perkins**

WITH REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

“None is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).

Our political system, like the rest of our fallen world, is messy, broken and flawed. As frustrating as it is to see our values trampled or ignored, we need to accept that the church isn’t going to find a perfect ruler until the millennial reign of Christ. Men and women in public office are human, and they’ll continue to let us down, no matter how sincere their faith may seem.

As someone who has watched recent Republican Party activity closely, I understand the disillusionment that comes with the betrayal of longtime principles. I watched leaders whom I considered stalwarts of the conservative movement—like Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn, who chaired the platform committee—wipe out decades of pro-life and pro-family progress. It convinced me of this: Christians should go into this election with eyes wide open. We must practice discernment, understanding that we will never have perfect alignment with any political party.

Does that mean we shrug our shoulders and walk away? Absolutely not. It means we recommit ourselves to being faithful witnesses to the truth of His Word at the moment in time that God has entrusted to us, whether it’s in vogue or not.

“While it’s true that we can’t save the country with a single election, the reality is: we could very well lose it.”



WITH DISCERNMENT

“But test everything; hold fast what is good”
(1 Thessalonians 5:21).

If Christians are going to change the country’s trajectory, we have to begin with a basic understanding of God’s truth.

In the first 12 chapters of Genesis, Scripture spells out the fundamental values we should be looking for: God the Creator (1:1); life (1:26); male and female (1:26); marriage (2:22); and Israel (12:3). Using these five categories as a guide, how do Kamala Harris and Donald Trump stack up?

While Donald Trump seems to have taken a disconcerting step back from some of his socially conservative views in recent months, Americans have the benefit of the 45th president’s four-year track record, which demonstrated his support for the sanctity of life, religious freedom, parental rights, biological sex, national security, legal immigration, military readiness, free speech, constitutionalist judges and justices, and Israel.

What is much less known is the record of Kamala Harris, who, like Trump, professes to be Christian but invokes her faith as a justification for policies like LGBTQ activism, same-sex marriage and even abortion.

When she ran unsuccessfully for the 2020 presidential nomination, Harris insisted that the work she did as California attorney general should serve as “a model of what our nation needs to do.” That “model” was a six-year master class in weaponizing the office of AG, in which she:

- Attacked pro-lifer David Daleiden for exposing Planned Parenthood’s sale of baby body parts;
- Demanded that California pregnancy centers promote abortion;
- Targeted businesses with moral objections to abortifacients;
- Refused to defend laws upholding Biblical marriage between one man and one woman;
- And fought to overturn abortion safety standards for women.

Harris’s record in the U.S. Senate led GovTrack to call her 2019’s “most liberal senator,” an unsurprising distinction considering she:

- Voted twice in favor of legal infanticide;
- Vowed to force taxpayers to fund abortion;
- Applied a religious test to judicial and Supreme

Court nominees;

- Sponsored the Equality Act to end religious freedom in America;
- Promoted legal prostitution;
- Supported the elimination of the Senate filibuster to pack the Supreme Court and abolish election integrity laws;
- Opposed homeschooling and popular school choice legislation;
- Earned 100% on Planned Parenthood’s scorecard;
- Introduced the Do No Harm Act to gut religious liberty;
- Cosponsored a bill that would block religious freedom for adoption providers;
- Campaigned on allowing trans-identifying men and women in the U.S. military;
- And lobbied for girls’ restrooms, locker rooms, showers, sports, and even women’s prisons to be opened to biological men.

White House insiders say she’s the force behind Joe Biden’s leftward lurch, even becoming the first sitting vice president to visit an abortion facility. Together with the president, she:

- Rewrote Title IX to force schools to use preferred pronouns, hide gender identities from parents, and elevate transgenderism above women’s rights;
- Sued pro-life states to overturn protections for the unborn;
- Allowed neighborhood drugstores to dispense the abortion pill;
- Granted taxpayer-funded travel to active military seeking abortions;
- Forced taxpayers to cover abortions for veterans; reinstated overseas abortion funding;
- Advocated for gender-mutilating surgeries and hormones for minors, while demanding taxpayers cover transgender procedures for veterans and military personnel;
- Prosecuted whistleblower Eithan Haim for exposing his Texas hospital’s unlawful transgender procedures on children;
- Lobbied to expose students to pornographic books;
- And funded Planned Parenthood through Title X dollars.

While it’s true that we can’t save the country with a single election, the reality is: we could very well lose it.

*“If we fail to be the salt and light
we've been called to be, we could clearly see
America sink deeper into darkness.”*

WITH OBEDIENCE

“Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26, NKJV).

Why should Christians care about politics? Because government is appointed by God. In Romans 13:1-7, Paul describes the governing authorities as “ministers of God,” responsible for administering civil justice. Government is God’s idea, and Christians should think about it and engage with it in a way that’s consistent with its God-ordained purposes.

As believers called to be agents of transformation in the broader society, we have a clear responsibility to vote—not just when we’re enthusiastic about the options or when the choices seem most obvious. If political parties and candidates don’t align perfectly with our values, the answer is not for Christians to retreat. If we fail to be the salt and light we’ve been called to be, we could clearly see America sink deeper into darkness.

WITH NEIGHBORLY LOVE AND GLOBAL COMPASSION

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves ...” (Proverbs 31:8, NIV).

God commanded us to love our neighbors (Mark 12:31), and one way we can do that is by engaging in the political process to meet people’s needs. While the race for president gets the most attention, there are much broader implications for voting this November than who will occupy 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. In our hands rest the hopes of soldiers on foreign battlefields, the persecuted church in faraway lands and the peace of God’s chosen nation Israel (Numbers 24:9).

And many would argue that there are much more important decisions than the presidency on the state and local ballot. Control of the House and Senate hangs in the balance. Governors, state

attorneys general, local school boards, even controllers are amassing major victories in protecting children from radical gender ideology, pushing back on corporate America’s woke agenda, fighting the Biden administration’s lawless overreach, and passing sweeping pro-life and pro-parent laws. While we might not have the ideal situation at the top of the ballot, Americans have several other issues to be mindful of as we head to the polls.

WITH ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

Regardless of what’s happening in America, we should be grateful that we live in a country where we still have the ability to vote. Even though the fabric of our nation is being stretched and tested as never before, each of us has the power to shape our future and our family’s future—a luxury millions of people around the world will never know.

As believers, we understand that this earth is not our ultimate home. However, we must engage with the culture, including politics, while standing firm on the transcendent truth of God’s Word. Paul tells the Ephesians to keep standing (6:13).

Will we turn this country around? We pray so, and we’ll work hard toward that end. When former president John Quincy Adams was asked a cynical question about the failure to end slavery after decades of trying, he said simply, “Duty is ours; results are God’s.” Let us do our duty! ■

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Tony Perkins is president of Family Research Council, which champions faith, family and freedom in public policy and culture from a Biblical worldview.

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VOTE TO LESSEN EVIL

CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS COULD HAVE DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES

by **Lee Weeks**

With slim majorities at stake in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, the direction of the country teeters on the brink as Americans decide Nov. 5 whose priorities and policies will prevail in the halls of Congress.

For now, Democrats hold a razor-thin voting majority in the Senate thanks to four left-leaning Independents and a Democrat vice president who serves as the tie-breaker when votes are even. Meanwhile, Republicans hold an eight-seat lead in the House of Representatives.

But the balance of power in the federal government will soon be tested by the American electorate. All 435 seats in the House and 33 in the Senate are up for grabs before the 119th Congress convenes Jan. 3. Of the 33 Senate seats in question, 10 are held by Republicans, 19 are occupied by Democrats and four

are Independents.

And for Bible-believing Christians, this election couldn't be more consequential. Much more important than partisan politics, the Judeo-Christian foundation on which America was established faces a perilous future. From the sanctity of human life, to God's design for human sexuality, to parental rights and public safety, the fabric of a God-blessed America seems to be unraveling right before our eyes.

So, what is a Christian supposed to do when candidates on both sides of the political aisle fail to thoroughly uphold a Biblical worldview?

Instead of not voting or simply casting your ballot for the "lesser of two evils," vote to lessen evil, writes John Stonestreet, president of the Colson Center.

"Not voting in order to 'keep our hands clean' is a form of pietism, not Christianity,"

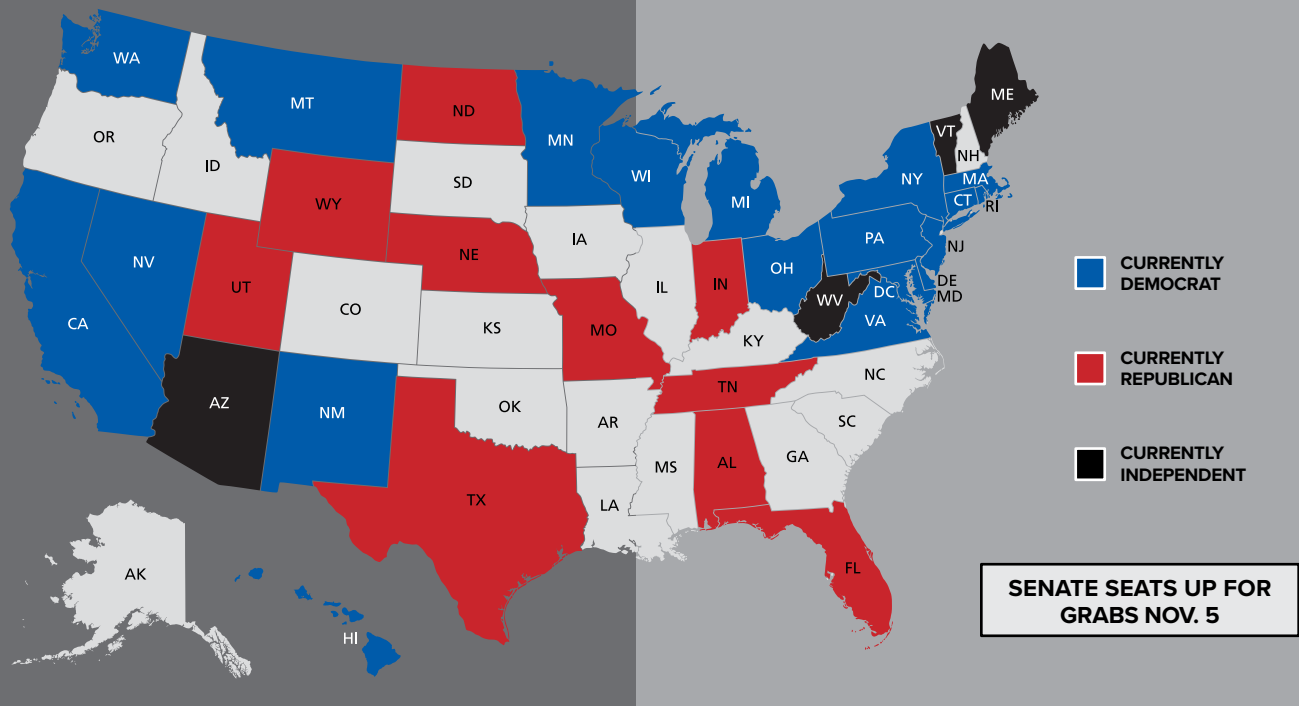
Stonestreet writes at Breakpoint.org. "[The Book of] James is clear that if there is good that we can do, we should. To not do the good we can, is sin. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, even in the face of far worse political realities than ours, rejected pietism as being contrary to Christian responsibility. Because Christianity is an incarnational faith, he wrote, it must be lived in 'the tempest of the living.'"

Although the office of the president takes top billing this election cycle, there's no denying the power that Congress wields to advance or thwart the commander in chief's agenda.

Case in point is the so-called "Equality Act" legislation that the Biden administration has tried unsuccessfully to ratify into law.

The Equality Act would allow male-bodied transgender women to utilize women's private spaces such as bathrooms, locker rooms, shelters and sports leagues;

"Not voting in order to 'keep our hands clean' is a form of pietism, not Christianity. [The Book of] James is clear that if there is good that we can do, we should. To not do the good we can, is sin." —John Stonestreet



employers would be forced to provide health care insurance coverage for hormone treatment and/or sex-reassignment surgery for individuals with gender dysphoria; and parents would be federally banned from seeking counseling for their children struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion.

The deceptively named legislation was first passed by the House of Representatives 236-173 in May 2019. But it stalled in the GOP-led Senate at the time and never made it to the floor for a vote.

Democrats reintroduced the bill in 2021, hoping for a win in both the House and Senate. It passed 224-206 in the House, with three Republicans joining the Democrat majority to vote in favor of the bill. But it lacked at least 60 votes in the Senate to bypass a legislative filibuster.

Franklin Graham calls the proposed legislation the greatest threat to religious freedom in his lifetime. And if Democrats were to win the White House and both chambers of Congress in

November, he fully expects the dangerous bill to become law.

“Under the broad reach of the Equality Act, schools, churches and hospitals could be forced to accept the government’s beliefs and mandates about sexual orientation and gender identity,” he says. “That would be highly intrusive and incredibly far-reaching. It will threaten everyday speech where people can be fined or lose their jobs for using the wrong name or pronouns.”

Thankfully, about half of the states throughout the country have passed versions of the Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE) Act. These commonsense protections shield minors from sterilizing puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and surgeries that remove healthy body parts and reproductive organs.

Still, the Democratic Party remains committed to giving abortion provider Planned Parenthood and other pillars of the multi-billion-dollar transgender industry the green light to carry out so-called “gender-affirming care,” with all its

irreversible effects, on minors whose brains have not yet fully developed—minors whom the law bars from getting a tattoo or smoking a cigarette, because they do not understand the long-term implications of those choices.

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris is hoping that her election to the Oval Office would also usher in Democrat majorities in Congress that could codify abortion rights into federal law—a goal first uttered by President Biden and echoed by Harris.

“I believe that we should put the protections of *Roe v. Wade* into law,” Harris said during a 2023 CBS News *Face the Nation* interview in which she refused to name a single limitation on abortion that she would support.

In addition to the president’s legislative priorities, other highly impactful decisions such as judicial nominations and approving government officials to lead federal agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and Department of Justice, just to name a few, all must be approved by Congress.

“A system that allows unelected officials to hold such power is flawed, as are the candidates who appoint, and the leaders appointed,” Stonestreet writes. “Voting to lessen evil should never be about excusing bad character. It should be our best attempt to enable the best outcomes possible while recognizing that the most important work the church will do won’t be political.”

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STATE, LOCAL RACES HIT CLOSEST TO HOME

*ACROSS THE LAND, BIBLICAL VALUES
ARE UP FOR A VOTE*

by **Jerry Pierce**

The eyes of voters and the attention of the media in a presidential election year are understandably focused on the White House. Yet in state and local races across the country, thousands of campaign volunteers and special interest groups are fighting in the trenches to advance their policy agendas.

In these crucial races, governors, attorneys general, secretaries of state, mayors, school board officials and state legislators will be elected and will set policies that often have the most immediate bearing on ordinary Americans where they live, work and worship. The voters in the states of Virginia and California can attest to how consequential state races are.

In Virginia, voters in 2021 elected a conservative Republican governor, Glenn Youngkin, to replace a liberal Democrat. One of Youngkin's campaign slogans was "Parents Matter," which resonated in a state embroiled in controversy over how public schools were handling LGBTQ issues and the teaching of critical race theory. In the same election, Jason Miyares, a

Republican who shares Youngkin's views on those issues, was elected attorney general.

Together, Youngkin and Miyares have required school boards and educators to respect parental rights, and Youngkin rewrote state guidelines for schools navigating LGBTQ issues, especially in regard to gender questions. The guidelines now say students' participation in sex-segregated sports and the use of school locker rooms and restrooms should be based on a student's biological sex. Also, school officials must call minor students by their given names in their official records, not preferred pronouns—unless a parent approves.

In California, voters have a starkly different experience. Second-term Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has doubled down on pushing left-wing social trends in public schools. By his side has been the state attorney general, Rob Bonta, who has sued school districts that have tried to ensure parents have the right to object to radical policies or be informed if their student wishes to identify as the opposite sex.

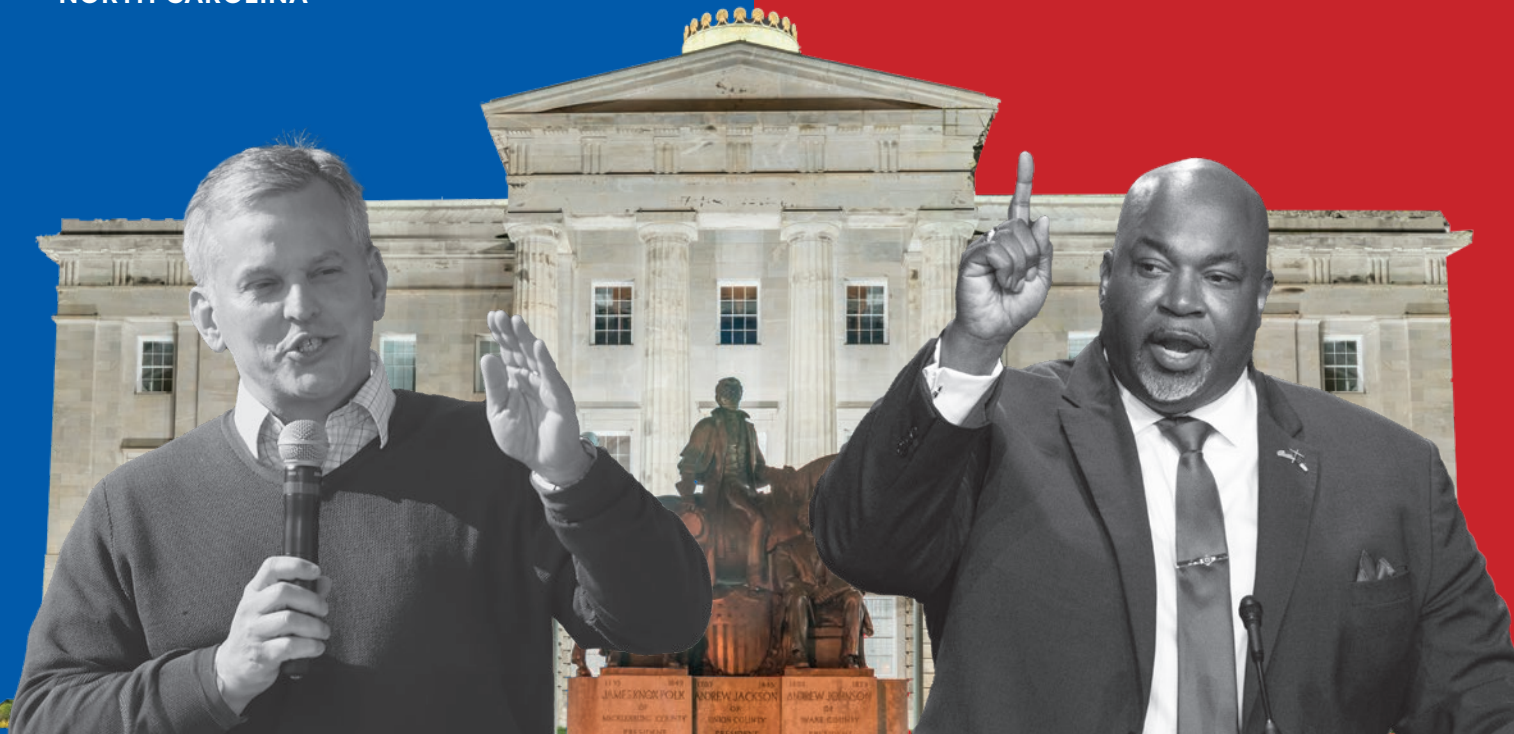
Matt Carpenter, director of FRC Action, says when good people are elected at the state level, they can effect righteous change where it matters most.

"The beauty of our federalized system of government is that a great deal of authority rests on government bodies closest to the citizens," he said. "When the federal government doesn't have the means or the willingness to step in, it's often state attorneys general who are able to step in and take the federal government to court."

On Election Day, 11 states will choose governors, 10 will choose attorneys general, and 40 will have ballot measures giving voters choices on policies, laws and state constitutional amendments. In 10 of those states with statewide ballot questions, *Decision* has identified measures where voters will decide policy on marriage, the sanctity of human life and drug legalization.

GOVERNOR RACES

Gubernatorial races will be held in North Dakota, Indiana, Missouri,



New Hampshire, Vermont, Delaware, North Carolina, West Virginia, Utah, Washington and Montana. Only three of those states have Democrats now at the helm—North Carolina, Delaware and Washington.

Two states electing a new governor in 2024—New Hampshire and North Carolina—are rated as tightly contested races by at least two political rating organizations, according to Ballotpedia.com. Neither of the governors in those states, New Hampshire Republican Chris Sununu or North Carolina Democrat Roy Cooper, can run for re-election in 2024.

In North Carolina, Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a fiscal and family-values conservative, is facing liberal Democrat Attorney General Josh Stein in a race *Politico* is calling the most important gubernatorial contest of 2024, in a state where the GOP hopes to gain a “trifecta” with a governor and majorities in both chambers of the legislature. Meanwhile, the Democratic Governors Association plans to spend \$5 million in North Carolina and New Hampshire in an effort to influence state judicial appointments by electing Democratic governors.

In New Hampshire, voters at press time were awaiting results of a Sept. 10 primary featuring six Republicans, three Democrats, one Constitutional party member and one Libertarian. Among the GOP candidates is former U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, whose past

“In North Carolina, Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a fiscal and family-values conservative, is facing liberal Democrat Attorney General Josh Stein in a race Politico is calling the most important gubernatorial contest of 2024.”

endorsements included the pro-life Susan B. Anthony Fund and National Right to Life.

ATTORNEYS GENERAL RACES

The top law enforcement official in each state, the attorney general carries significant legal and policy influence, and the position often is a political steppingstone. In the 10 states where attorneys general will be chosen on Nov. 5, four incumbents are up for reelection, with the remaining six electing a new AG.

“The consequences would include elective abortion throughout all nine months, paid for by the state, and removing the legislature’s ability to enact reasonable regulation without repealing or amending the Constitution again.” —Dr. Frank Arlinghaus

Races drawing national attention include the battleground state of Pennsylvania, where Republican Dave Sunday, a prosecutor in York County and a Navy veteran, faces Democrat Eugene DePasquale, former state auditor general. The seat is currently held by a term-limited Democrat.

Another race in a battleground state is in North Carolina, where two congressmen are seeking the office. Republican Rep. Dan Bishop faces Democratic Rep. Jeff Jackson in a race to succeed Democrat Josh Stein, who is running for governor.

STATE BALLOT MEASURES

In 12 states, voters will tackle issues that will have direct bearing on public morality, Biblical values and the general welfare of society.

ABORTION / EUTHANASIA

After the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, abortion activists have been strategizing to promote abortion on demand as broadly and liberally as possible. In eight states—Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Nevada and South Dakota—voters will decide whether or not to write abortion rights into their state constitutions.

Among the most radical of abortion measures is the one before

voters in Maryland, which already allows abortion up through fetal viability. In testimony before the state legislature, pro-life advocate Dr. Frank Arlinghaus said the measure is “unusual and extreme.”

“The consequences,” Arlinghaus said, “would include elective abortion throughout all nine months, paid for by the state, and removing the legislature’s ability to enact reasonable regulation without repealing or amending the Constitution again.”

In Colorado, a supermajority of 55% of voters is needed if a proposal to write abortion rights into the state constitution is passed. The measure would allow public funding of abortion, repealing a constitutional provision against it. Colorado is already one of 10 states that allows abortion up to birth.

Other states with abortion provisions on the ballot would allow legislative regulation after fetal viability.

In New York, an equal protection amendment would provide legal cover for everything from LGBTQ rights to abortion. In contrast, voters in West Virginia will consider a pro-life constitutional amendment that would prohibit “the practice of medically assisted suicide, euthanasia, or mercy killing of a person.”

GAY MARRIAGE

Another hot-button issue is marriage, with rumblings from liberal groups that a conservative Supreme Court might someday overturn the 2015 ruling that legalized gay marriage nationwide. Consequently, LGBTQ activists have worked to enact contingency state laws that would keep it legal in the states if the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision were overturned.

On Election Day, voters in three states—California, Colorado and Hawaii—will decide whether or not to write homosexual marriage guarantees into their constitutions.

In California, voters will decide whether or not “the right to marry is a fundamental right” and whether to repeal an invalidated law, Proposition 8, which defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman. In 2008, the state’s voters passed Prop 8 by a 52%-47% margin, with support from many evangelical churches.

In Colorado and Hawaii, voters will also be asked to repeal constitutional bans on gay marriage. In Hawaii, the measure would prevent the legislature from being able to “reserve marriage to opposite sex couples.”

DRUG LEGALIZATION

In Florida and South Dakota—states with conservative Republican governors—voters will consider whether or not to legalize the recreational use of marijuana despite mounting evidence that frequent cannabis use increases mental and physical health risks. ■ ©2024 BGEA

HELP PROCLAIM THE NAME OF JESUS IN CAN THO, VIETNAM

“The Lord is my rock
and my fortress and
my deliverer, my God,
my rock, in whom
I take refuge.”

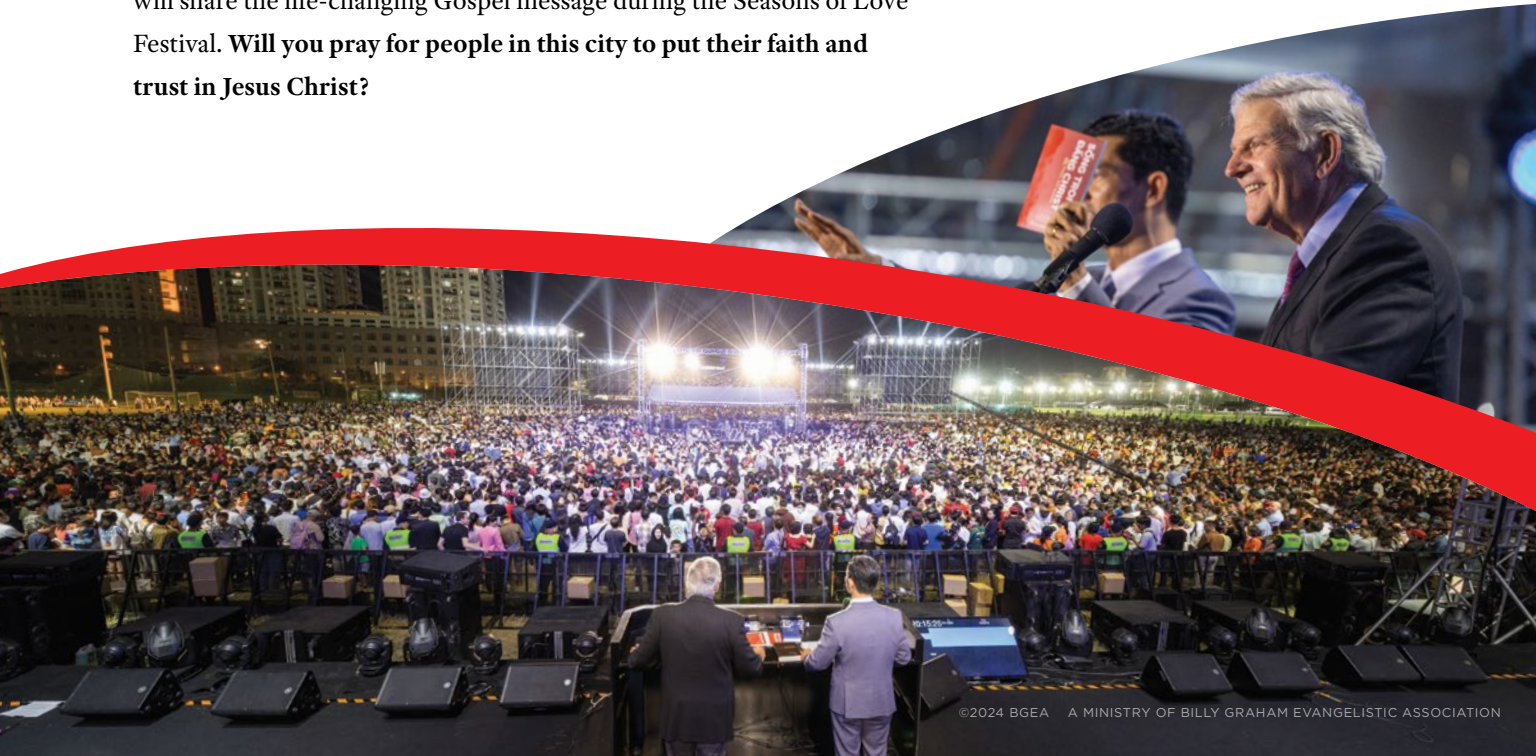
—2 SAMUEL 22:2-3, ESV

Seasons of Love Festival with Franklin Graham

DECEMBER 3-4, 2024

Called “a river delta city,” Can Tho is located in the Mekong Delta region in southern Vietnam. This large inland port is known for its waterways, vibrant floating markets and exotic fruit. Many of the 20 million residents in the Mekong Delta region have never heard the Name of Jesus—and are looking for the eternal security found only in Him. This December, Franklin Graham will share the life-changing Gospel message during the Seasons of Love Festival. **Will you pray for people in this city to put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ?**

Mùa **YÊU**
THƯƠNG
VỚI FRANKLIN GRAHAM



COURT REFORM OR POLITICAL COUP?

POLITICIZATION OF THE SUPREME COURT THREATENS JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE



by **Kelly Shackelford**

Every election year, candidates in both parties make bold claims promising a better future for the American people. But there's one campaign promise we're hearing this year that should raise red flags for all voters regardless of one's political perspective: court reform—a smokescreen that has nothing to do with reform, but everything to do with power.

In truth, “court reform” is nothing more than a desperate attack to subvert the legitimacy of the U.S. Supreme Court because it contains a majority of justices committed to the Constitution and originalism. If this coup succeeds, the rule of law will be over as the judiciary will become little more than a political tool of whomever holds power.

In 2020, just before the last presidential election, then-candidate Joe Biden stated in an interview, “The last thing we need to do is turn the Supreme Court into just a political football.” But shortly after the 2020 election, the Biden-Harris administration

assembled a 34-member commission to review multiple options to change the court by adding seats, inserting ethics guidelines, and establishing term limits. Now, in the waning days of his administration, Biden is moving full speed ahead with court reform efforts in response to the far left's demands. One liberal donor is spending \$30 million in support of the dangerous agenda.

This multi-faceted effort to destabilize the judiciary begins with court packing—a concentrated effort to stuff the court with enough justices to tip the scale in favor of a radical judicial philosophy. As many as 130 different left-wing progressive groups have united to advocate adding four justices to the Supreme Court—up from nine—and 200 lower court judges. Democratic presidential nominee and current Vice President Kamala Harris, who received Biden's wholehearted endorsement, has expressed support in the past, stating she was “absolutely open” to court packing.

Every country that has orchestrated this kind of judicial coup has seen the rule of law destroyed. The judiciary is no longer a separate branch, and it becomes a nefarious weapon of the political party in power. This is exactly what happened in Venezuela.

Court reform advocates, angry over a few recent court decisions, are hoping to restructure and overhaul the U.S. Supreme Court, all under the guise of “saving democracy.” One organization pushing for radical changes says that change is badly needed and claims the court's decisions are “badly out of touch with the views of the majority of Americans [and] prove that the Supreme Court and judiciary as a whole must be updated to reflect modern life and modern values.”

In fact, the meaning of the constitutional text does not fluctuate between liberal or conservative or the changes in modern values. There is only a true original meaning of the text and a false and “new” meaning of the



“Every country that has orchestrated this kind of judicial coup has seen the rule of law destroyed. The judiciary is no longer a separate branch, and it becomes a nefarious weapon of the political party in power.”

text. It is an originalist view of the Constitution that has led the high court to reverse *Roe v. Wade* and restore the First Amendment’s protection of religious liberty in cases like *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* and *Groff v. DeJoy*.

Court reform is a temper tantrum of the left that would have devastating consequences. What better way to take control than adding more liberal justices or instituting term limits? In Biden’s most recent

attack on the court, he is calling for limits for justices, but it is really just political partisanship aimed at removing the most conservative justices—Thomas, Roberts and Alito first. It is also unconstitutional and a bad idea. Our Founding Fathers said lifetime tenure was required in order to avoid the political influence on our justices. That is why the requirement is in our Constitution.

Another proposal, so-called

ethics reform, isn’t about accountability, transparency or any other euphemism. It is about giving enemies of the judiciary the power to punish justices by subjecting them to investigations and fabricated scandals. Judges must be able to make decisions without fear of partisan retribution from the executive or legislative branches. It also would be unconstitutional, violating the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary.

The rule of law is not a guarantee. Attacking or destroying the independence of the judiciary would end one of the most precious gifts all Americans have—their civil liberties.

Court reform is quite simply a euphemism for hyper-partisan efforts to end the independent judiciary. Fortunately, recent polling reveals that 87% of Americans believe an independent judiciary is a crucial safeguard of our civil liberties; 67% of Americans believe the politicization of the Supreme Court threatens judicial independence; and 59% oppose court packing.

An independent judiciary is a crucial safeguard of our civil liberties and an essential check on the power of the executive and legislative branches and the fleeting political whims of the culture. Americans who care about their freedoms need to speak up and stand up against this attempted coup. ■ ©2024 KELLY SHACKELFORD

Kelly Shackelford is president, CEO, and chief counsel for First Liberty Institute, a nonprofit law firm dedicated to defending religious freedom for all.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

CHRISTIANS MUST END OUR SILENCE ABOUT BIBLICAL AND MORAL ISSUES

by **Rusty Guenther**

I am constantly amazed as a pastor how much we have allowed the philosophies of this world to influence our lives and the church. People ask me all the time, “How did we get to where we are today in our country?”

I believe it is largely the fault of the church, because we have been living in our Christian bubbles and ignoring the outside world. Evil has incrementally marched into every area of our culture—our schools, our universities, our media, our government—and we have done nothing about it.

For many years, the church has blurred the line between Scriptural truth and cultural acceptance. This compromise has diminished our witness, robbed us of our spiritual authority in this nation and neutered the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Jesus prayed in John 17:17, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” But today our lives are not proclaiming that truth. We seem to have forgotten that while we have to live *in* this world, we are not to be *of* this world.

The Bible has a strong warning for the American church today. In 2 John 1:7, John says: “Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

The apostle is talking first about those who are false teachers within the church, but I believe he is also referring to those who have gone out into the world and brought into the church worldly teachings that are deceptive and are against Christ.

We need to recognize that this is happening. The church today finds itself like the frog in the hot kettle, not knowing how it got there but in danger of being boiled. And many Christians are discouraged and wonder how we have gotten to this place.

I believe we’ve gotten here by buying into the greatest lie that was ever sold to the church: that, for the sake of peace, we shouldn’t talk about politics and religion.

You cannot separate politics from the Bible. The Old Testament is immersed in politics; it is about God creating a nation in the midst of lostness, with kings and kingdoms and rulers, and with prophets rebuking kings. That’s politics.

And Jesus Christ came to Earth in the midst of one of the most dynamic political empires the world has ever known—one that had grown corrupt and divisive. If you don’t think the church used its voice to impact that culture, read the Bible. Christ’s followers were put to death when they wouldn’t bow to Caesar or remain silent about Jesus Christ.

Today, we cannot remain silent just because the world has relabeled some of the vilest views and behavior as political. They want to convince you that abortion is a political issue, so we can’t talk about it. That the LGBTQ agenda and the erosion of the family are political issues, so we can’t talk about them. That the desecration of God’s creation of humans as male and female is a political issue, so we can’t talk about it.

These are not political issues. These are moral and Biblical issues, and we cannot afford to be silent

“We cannot remain silent just because the world has relabeled some of the vilest views and behavior as political. ... These are not political issues. These are moral and Biblical issues, and we cannot afford to be silent any longer.”



“The moment you stand up against what the culture says is acceptable, you will experience conflict. But what the world calls radical Christianity, Jesus calls discipleship.”

any longer. We have sat on the sidelines while evil has prospered.

John continues with a strong warning: “Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 1:8-9).

He is warning us against complicity, telling us to be on our guard about these ungodly influences that we are allowing into our hearts, our minds and our homes.

What are some of these outside influences that are pressing in on the church and the family?

The first is secular humanism—the idea that we don’t need God because all of society’s solutions can be found through reason, rational thought and science. But that is a lie. The Bible teaches that man is lost and sinful, and he is separated from God.

The second influence is Marxism in the state. In other words, bigger government and more control as the answer to all of our problems. In this election year, I can’t tell you how often I hear Christians say that their hope is in a specific person, candidate or policy.

That is anathema. The only hope we have is in Jesus Christ. A politician is not going to solve the problems of America. Political policies are not going to solve the problems in America. Only revival and salvation in Jesus Christ offers any hope.

The third influence is abortion on demand and the LGBTQ agenda. A few years ago, a disorder called gender dysphoria would have called for mental health treatment. Today, we celebrate it by allowing young children to mutilate their bodies because

they think they don’t want to be who they really are.

They need help. They need hope. They need counseling. They need somebody to come alongside them and love them, not offer them drugs or surgeries that will distort their bodies for the rest of their lives.

John continues: “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [that Jesus is Lord, that He is sufficient, that He is our salvation], do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work” (2 John 1:10-11).

He is not just talking about people; he is talking about these worldly ideals and principles. Don’t make a place for them. Don’t give them room. He says that if you welcome them, you are blessing them, approving of them, and sharing in their wicked work. By your passive attitude, you are telling your kids, “this is truth.”

John is saying that there is no middle ground. Either you are opposing them or you’re welcoming and blessing them.

People may ask, “But what about unity? Doesn’t the Bible teach we’re supposed to be united, even if we disagree on some things?” The Bible never teaches that we are to have unity at the expense of truth. We are never to compromise truth.

Someone may say, “But we’re supposed to love our neighbor. What you’re saying doesn’t sound very loving.”

We *are* supposed to love. We are supposed to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are supposed to reach out, minister, and serve those who are hurting, but we also need to keep our eyes open to make sure we are not compromising the Gospel.

Let me warn you: The moment you stand up against what the culture says is acceptable, you will experience conflict. But what the world calls radical Christianity, Jesus calls discipleship.

I am not talking about standing on a corner, waving a sign and condemning people. I’m saying that we need to come alongside those in our lives and love them—love them with the truth that sets people free. ■ ©2024 RUSTY GUENTHER

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version.

Rusty Guenther is lead pastor of First Baptist Church of Blowing Rock, in Blowing Rock, North Carolina.


STUDY BILLY GRAHAM'S PERSONAL NOTES FROM HISTORIC CRUSADES

At the Billy Graham Archive and Research Center, researchers and students can browse through the evangelist's personal notebooks as they study his Biblical message and ministry. *Come be inspired and equipped for the work of the Gospel.*

Learn more about study, research and training opportunities at BillyGrahamArchiveCenter.org or by calling 704-401-3200.

"Teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others." —2 Timothy 2:2, NLT

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Billy Graham's sermon notes from the historic 1957 New York Crusade.

DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE PRAYERS



by **Erwin Lutzer**

“**G**od bless America!” We’ve heard that phrase many times in prayer meetings, patriotic rallies and, yes, from politicians. The words roll so easily from our

lips and sound so appropriate and consistent with our religious history. But is that really praying?

These are desperate times, with political unrest, racial polarization, economic uncertainty and loud accusations and counterattacks. What is more, it’s also a time of spiritual apostasy; a time when justice is whatever seems right in someone’s eyes. Frequently, even evangelicals are interpreting the Bible through the lens of culture, rather than critiquing the culture through the lens of Scripture.

Let us challenge one another to be done with superficial prayers.

God told the leaders of Israel that He was weary of hearing them pray; they could keep their platitudes to themselves. “When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer

many prayers, I am not listening” (Isaiah 1:15, NIV). They prayed many pious prayers, but God was deaf to their pleas.

What made their prayers ineffective? Why did their prayers make God angry? It’s because they were praying with mixed motives and hidden sin in their hearts. Their prayers, far from honoring God, were simply a way of covering their own sin. Piety on the outside; rot on the inside. As David warned us, “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Psalm 66:18, NIV). Iniquity, hidden in our own hearts, makes our words, no matter how carefully uttered, but puffs of air directed toward a silent heaven.

We often quote the words of James, “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:16). But we forget the admonition that precedes those words saying that we should confess our sins one to another for healing and restoration. In other words, a

righteous heart in the presence of God and reconciliation with other believers is the basis for effective prayer.

In this age of inflamed rage fueled by exaggeration, self-justification and a vitriolic spirit, have we forgotten that behind the chaos is the manifestation of spiritual warfare in the heavens? We should take seriously the words of Paul: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

So, how do we begin to pray effectively for ourselves and our nation?

To begin, we must confront personal sin. As we study the Scriptures, we discover that those who knew how to engage the Almighty in powerful intercession were those who repented of their own sin and then took the burdens of their country and made them their own. Their

words were an expression of their earnest and distressed hearts; they hated sin and loved righteousness. We think of Moses interceding for his people, asking God to not destroy them for the idolatry of fashioning a golden calf: “But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written” (Exodus 32:32). He

was so zealous for God’s reputation that he was willing to be smitten dead if God would just remove His threat of judgment and forgive the sin of the people.

Effective prayer necessitates that we confess our helplessness and see beyond the crisis to God in His majesty and greatness. We must believe that God alone is willing and able to help us in

our predicament. We think of Jehoshaphat who, when surrounded by cruel and powerful armies, commanded his people to fast and pray and then confessed, “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you” (2 Chronicles 20:12). Looking at the enemy brought fear; looking beyond the enemy to God brought hope.

Consider: How might God answer if we spent as much time interceding on behalf of ourselves, our churches, and our nation as we do criticizing our political opponents? What if we were to proclaim a fast from social media, excessive news consumption and selfish pleasures? We could then take seriously the command, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Timothy 2:1–2).

We don’t have to agree with a politician to pray for him or her; when Jesus taught us to love our enemies, that includes our ideological enemies. As we observe our confused culture, let us remember that God smites us in order that He might heal us, and He convicts us that He might restore us. Let us come before Him individually and collectively with pure hearts, selfless motives and a passion for His glory.

Repentance precedes restoration. Before we pray, “God bless America,” let us pray, “Father, forgive America.” We begin by seeking God’s undeserved mercy for ourselves and those around us.

From my heart to yours: Let’s begin to pray earnestly right now.

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Scripture quotations are taken by permission from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. The Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken by permission from The Holy Bible, New International Version.

Erwin Lutzer is pastor emeritus of Moody Church, in Chicago. He is an award-winning author and can be heard daily on the broadcast *Running to Win*.

“Effective prayer necessitates that we confess our helplessness and see beyond the crisis to God in His majesty and greatness.”



A CALL FOR ENDURANCE AND FAITH



by **Kevin DeYoung**

There is an unholy trinity eager to do its malevolent work in the world, and it wants you to fall for its tricks. The powers of darkness are not creative. They are copycats. The devil has no currency of his own. He only deals in counterfeits. He's a liar and a deceiver, and he's very good at what he does.

In Revelation 12 we are introduced to the dragon. In chapter 13 we meet his two accomplices: a beast from the sea (13:1) and a beast from the earth (13:11). The first beast represents the political sphere; the second beast represents the religious sphere. The first beast is a perversion of good government; the second beast, also called the false prophet (Revelation 19:20), is a perversion of true worship. The first beast shows us what a diabolical state looks like; the second beast shows us what a diabolical religion looks like.

The deadliest, most violent, most oppressive work the devil does on the earth always utilizes

a perverse government, empowered and supported by a perverse religion.

The purpose of this article is not to suggest that American society has become this awful (though sometimes it feels close). I do not intend to give you advice on how to think about voting or whom to vote for (though both are important). No matter which candidate or party wins in November, we must not forget that our ultimate hope and allegiance belong not to the president nor to the Congress but to Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. With that in mind, I want us to think about a strategy—thoroughly Biblical and desperately needed—that we rarely think about.

Revelation 13:10 must have been a hard message for the Christians suffering in Asia Minor: “If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.” This is not a graduation speech telling 22-year-olds they

can accomplish anything they set their minds to. This is not a cheery address assuring us that the good guys always come out on top. To be sure, the saints *will* be victorious in the end, but not apart from suffering, and often-times not apart from death.

So if the world around us loses all vestiges of Christianity and grows increasingly hostile to the Word of God, how then shall we live?

The end of verse 10 gives us an answer: “Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.” Revelation 13:10 is not a political theory. No doubt, Christians who live in a democracy, with thousands of churches and millions of other believers, in a country with a rich Christian history, have more political options than first-century believers did in a thoroughly pagan Roman Empire.

But if verse 10 isn't *everything* we need to hear, it is something that we almost never hear. The Spirit of God speaking through the Apostle John didn't say, “Here is a call for political strategy,”

or “Here is a call for cultural transformation” or “Here is a call for building a better Christian civilization.” There may be a time and place for all of those. But the singular call given in this passage is simpler—and perhaps harder: endurance and faith. It seems that God was less concerned that His people figure out how to change a godless empire, and more concerned that His people not be conformed to the godless empire in which they lived.

There are times where we are called to be bold and conquer. In some situations, we need that message, but when that’s the *only* message we hear, we can become anxious, arrogant, obnoxious Christians. When the whole world seems against you, and the burden feels crushing, and the weight is almost too much to bear, God’s Word to us is simple and clear: “Don’t quit. Don’t give in. Be patient. And do the right thing.”

We hear much about courage in our day, and rightly so. The

Bible has nothing good to say about cowards. But the cardinal virtue we call “fortitude” is as much about endurance under attack as it is about an eagerness to rush into battle. Conspicuous bravado in front of our friends is rarely more courageous (or more important) than faithfully putting one foot in front of the other in an unnoticed life of consistency, honesty and integrity. Tell the truth, love your enemies, rejoice always, again I say rejoice—this is the way of endurance and faith.

The world doesn’t know it is worshipping a defeated devil. One by one, the unholy trinity—the dragon, the beast and the false prophet—will be thrown into the lake of fire. No political program can put them there. But Christ will.

“The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:25). Are you tired? Do you feel defeated? Are you afraid? Discouraged? Weary in well-doing? This calls

“God was less concerned that His people figure out how to change a godless empire, and more concerned that His people not be conformed to the godless empire in which they lived.”

for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints. The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice—from Boston to L.A., from New York to Honolulu, from Miami to Fairbanks—let all the distant shores around the world rejoice, for our God reigns. ■ ©2024 KEVIN DEYOUNG

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

Kevin DeYoung is senior pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina.

The White House in Washington, D.C., lit with rainbow colors to support the LGBTQ movement.





A WARNING TO THE NATION

by **Billy Graham**

Americans have every right to be discouraged at the deteriorating world conditions. Everywhere we look in the world there is explosion and trouble. The world is falling apart.

Why has there been such an increase of trouble for the United States? Could it be that our sins are beginning to catch up with us? Centuries ago, Moses proclaimed to Israel that if she served God, she would be the most blessed of all nations, but if she disobeyed God, terrifying judgment would come: “And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life” (Deuteronomy 28:65-66).

Moses warned that Israel’s enemies would conquer her if she disobeyed God. And we know the history of Israel—we know that

Israel did disobey God and that she suffered one judgment after another.

Today our nation is following the same dangerous path. We worship the gods of secularism and materialism. God is displeased, and I warn you that His anger is being kindled. If ever a nation has enjoyed prosperity and the blessing of God, it is America. But instead of giving thanks to God, we have offered our reverence and worship to created things. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “They are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in



their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:20-21).

Could this be the difficulty with some of our leaders today? Has all the planning of the past few years by some of America’s most brilliant intellects begun to end in futility?

Paul said that although they boast of their wisdom, they have made fools of themselves. Then comes the awful judgment: “Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts” (Romans 1:24). In other words, the Bible says there will come a day when a nation sins so much against God that God will give them up, and will allow them to go on for a time in pleasure, worldliness, idolatry, wickedness and immorality. The Scripture says that there is pleasure in sin for a season (Hebrews 11:25), but warns that the pleasure will be extremely short-lived and that judgment will follow.

“As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness ... who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the

*“We worship the gods
of secularism and
materialism. God is
displeased, and I warn
you that His anger is
being kindled.”*

same but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:28-32). These words are from the Scriptures, but they sound like something taken from our daily news.

The Bible teaches that the kindness and patience of God are meant to lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4). However, we have spurned God’s mercy and kindness to America and have gone deeper into sin. The Bible says that God will render indignation and wrath “to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness” (Romans 2:8).

From the beginning of the Bible to the end, God warns that any nation that departs from Him is going to suffer judgment. America has been given more spiritual and moral light than any nation in the history of the world. We have millions of Bibles at our disposal; there are hundreds of thousands of churches. Yet in spite of all this, we continue to be the most crime-ridden, the most divorce-prone, and the most immoral nation on earth. We spew the filth of pornography all over the world.

How long will God withhold His hand of judgment? I tell you it will not be long. Unless we as a nation repent and turn to God, we are going to suffer

***“I pray that God will give us candidates
for office who are God-fearing, God-loving
men and women. One of our deep-rooted
troubles today is that so many of our leaders
either do not know God or deliberately deny
His existence by the way they live.”***

a judgment such as no nation has ever endured. The Prophet Ezekiel said: “Every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,” says the Lord God” (Ezekiel 21:7).

This day God is speaking to our nation in a thousand ways, urging us to repent of our sins and to turn to Him before it is too late. But as the Prophet Jeremiah said, “They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return” (Jeremiah 5:3). So there is nothing left but judgment.

Three thousand years ago, when King Jehoshaphat ascended to the throne of David, his country, like ours, was surrounded by threatening foes. Earnestly and sincerely, King Jehoshaphat sought peace for his people. This great ruler was a man of God. The Bible says that “he walked in the former ways of his father David” and that he “sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments. ... And his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 17:3-4, 6).

I pray that God will give us candidates for office who are God-fearing, God-loving men and women. One of our deep-rooted troubles today is that so many of our leaders either do not know God or deliberately deny His

existence by the way they live.

When the United Nations representatives met in London to frame their constitution, a delegate from the Republic of Panama was distressed because there was no reference to God in the proposed draft. He pleaded fervently for the Name of God to be included. He recalled that the Japanese and the Nazis had renounced God, and he demanded, “Where are they now?” The assembly remained silent. When the debate was closed and the vote was recorded, it was found that only Panama and Colombia favored the motion. As a New York newspaper reported at that time, “God was rejected.” How different this was from the attitude of our Founding Fathers who landed at Plymouth Rock! They knew they could not succeed without God; and so the constitution they penned—the Mayflower Compact—begins with the Name of God.

When King Jehoshaphat sought peace and social progress for his people, what was his course of action? Did he try new laws, new social plans, new educational projects and new financial programs? No. He went back to the Word of God. Jehoshaphat demanded that his people learn the Word of God, that they live by it and that they humble themselves before God.

When Judah returned to the teachings of the Bible, one of the most striking triumphs of military history occurred. When Jehoshaphat’s enemies—the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites—made an alliance against Judah to destroy her, Jehoshaphat trusted God. And he sent into the field the strangest army that the world of warfare has ever witnessed. Ahead of his forces marched not infantry or cavalry, not men with swords and bows, but singers who chanted the Lord’s praises and the words of Scripture. No wonder that without fighting a battle, without losing a man, Judah put the enemy to flight! Obedience to the Word of God had brought peace.

If our nation at this hour would turn to the Word of God, then I guarantee on the authority of God’s Word that the enemies at our gates could be pushed back; God would intervene and put them to flight.

Visitors to Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific have compared the island to the Garden of Eden because it is a place of much

happiness and contentment. It was first settled by mutineers and outlaws seeking to escape punishment. Because of the brutality that these criminals practiced on the little island (which was then only two miles long and one mile wide), it became filled with treachery, betrayal, racial strife, murder and war. Yet within 20 years after they had come to this island, the community had undergone a complete change. Harmony and goodwill reigned. Quarreling and cursing and war disappeared.

The people had turned to the Bible. They never began a meal without a prayer of thanksgiving. If during the day an islander had spoken hastily to his neighbor, he refused to let the sun go down on his wrath. On the Sabbath, everyone went to church. All business was stopped. They had no labor troubles, no social troubles, no racial problems. Why? Years earlier, before the criminals burned the ship on which they had mutinied, someone rescued its

Bible; and that Word of God brought the people to Jesus Christ and made a small utopia out of a lonely island in the South Seas.

What would happen today if the Bible were the supreme authority in the United States, and if every individual in America would accept Christ as Savior and begin to live up to the terms of the Sermon on the Mount? Jesus Christ can solve the problems that the nation faces—the race problem, the crime problem, the home problem, the international problems. He can also lift the burdens that we have as individuals; He can reach the problems down in the innermost recesses of our own souls.

The things I have said here about the United States are largely true in other countries as well, so those nations also need to repent if they are to be spared the judgment of God.

But many of you have frustrations and difficulties on a personal level. You have a civil war raging inside of you. I want to tell you that Jesus Christ can solve that problem and lift that heavy burden. He can bring peace to your soul.

My message today to the nations of the world is this—turn to God before it is too late! And that is my message to you as an individual as well. Turn to God before it is too late. ■ ©1964 BGEA

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version.

DON'T WAIT

A day will come when it is too late to turn to Christ, and judgment will be upon you. Put your faith in Him today! Ask God to forgive you and save your soul. You can have a new life, a new beginning, if you will surrender to Christ. And you can do that right now. First, confess your sin to God and turn away from it. Second, receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, putting your faith in Him alone to save you. He promises to live in you and transform your life.

START BY SIMPLY TALKING TO GOD.

You can pray a prayer like this:

"Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I'm sorry for my sin. I want to turn from my sin. Please forgive me. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son; I believe He died on the cross for my sin and You raised Him to life. I want Him to come into my heart and take control of my life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

DO IT RIGHT NOW.

Then contact us, and we will send information to help you.

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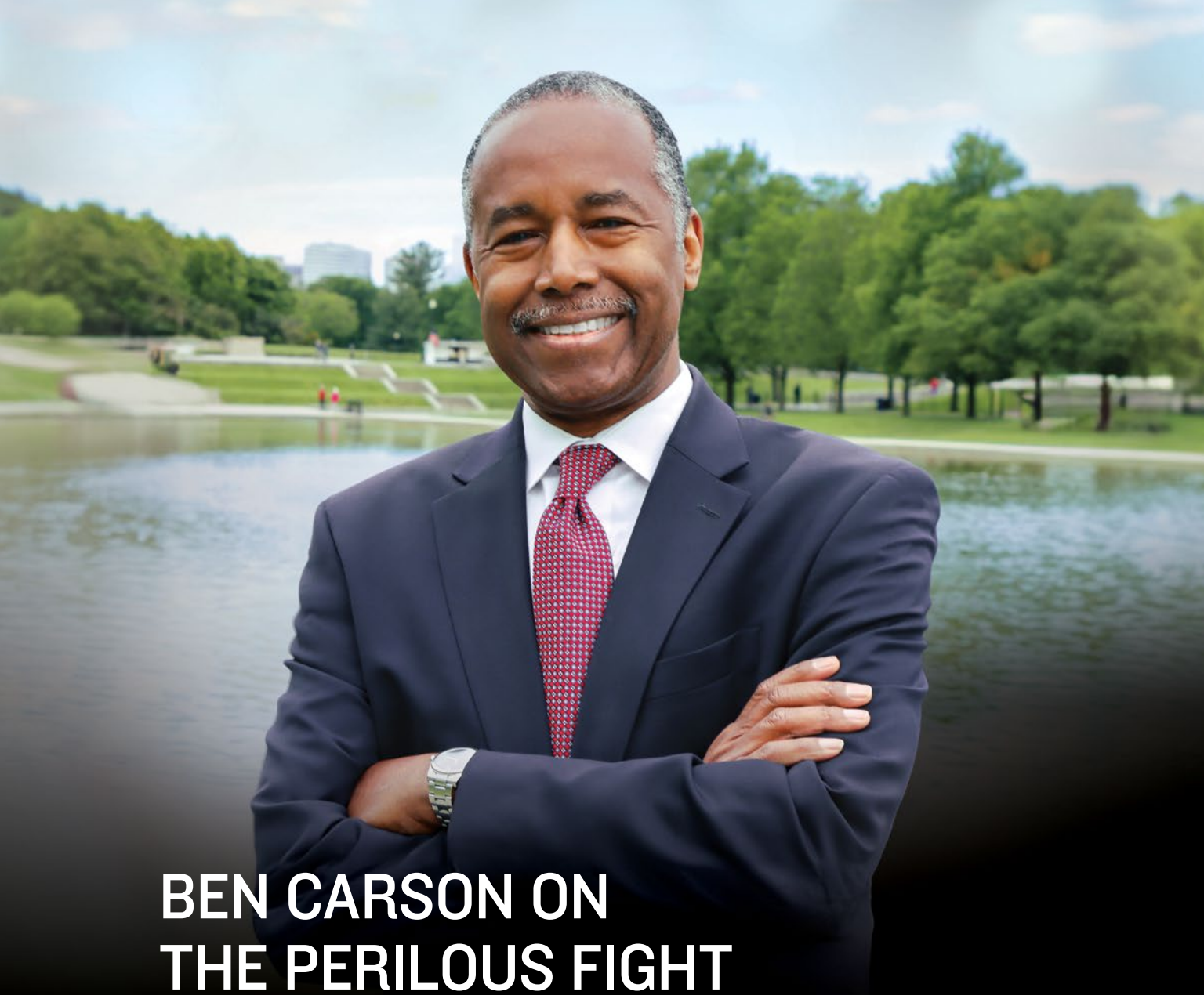
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BEN CARSON ON THE PERILOUS FIGHT

A BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF OUR NATION

by **Bob Paulson**

It's not uncommon to hear people warning that the United States is on the brink of a dangerous abyss. It's less common, though, to hear people back up their statements with both hard data and the authority of God's Word.

Ben Carson, famed neurosurgeon and the 17th secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, has done just that in his book *The Perilous Fight*, coauthored with his wife, Candy.

"The reason I wrote this book, *The Perilous Fight*—and you'll recognize those words from our national anthem—is because we *are* in a fight right

now for the soul of our nation," Carson said during a July 25 book signing at the Billy Graham Library. More than 650 people came to hear Carson and have him sign copies of the book.

So what is this perilous fight? Carson explains in the book's introduction: "We are facing an enemy who wishes to destroy us, not with rockets, bombs or ballistics of any kind, but from within." Specifically, Carson sees this enemy attacking two essential pillars of American society: faith and the nuclear family.

From the opening pages of the book, Carson backs up his arguments with facts gleaned from the Brookings Institution, Princeton University,

U.S. Census data, the Pew Research Center and others.

One study concluded that strong families have an impact that can be measured far beyond the family itself. Researchers found that higher levels of married-parent families were “strongly associated” with economic growth and stability at the state level.

Various experts have suggested reasons why such families tend to produce children who become successful adults, such as two-parent households being more economically efficient than other kinds of families. Carson sees a deeper reason:

“Children thrive in nuclear families for the same reason birds thrive in nests,” he writes. “They were created to do so. We know that because the Creator of human beings—who is also the Creator of the family—laid out the guidelines for families in the Bible, which is His manual for life.”

Carson quotes Genesis 1:27-28, which teaches that God created man in His own image, male and female, and told them to be fruitful and to have dominion over every living thing.

“Here is the principle,” Carson writes: “God designed the family to be the foundation for human life in our world.”

People who know the story of Carson’s childhood may wonder why someone who came from a broken family and nevertheless became extraordinarily successful and productive would argue so strongly for married, two-parent families.

After all, his mother married at age 13, only to find out years later, when Ben was 8, that her husband was a bigamist who had another family she knew nothing about. After that discovery, Ben and his brother, Curtis, rarely saw their father again. Still, Carson excelled in school, attended Yale University and became the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital, before serving as a Cabinet member during Donald Trump’s presidency.

Carson says he could easily have been sucked into a destructive lifestyle in his youth, as others did whom he knew. But he points to his mother’s hard work—holding down three jobs to support herself and the boys, her compassion for others and her deep Christian faith as key elements that helped to steer him in the right direction. In a 2004 interview with *Decision*, he described how he put his faith in Jesus Christ

“We are facing an enemy who wishes to destroy us, not with rockets, bombs or ballistics of any kind, but from within.”

at age 8. In his book, he writes that, following his mother’s footsteps, he developed the discipline of “praying about virtually everything.”

But, today, families are suffering, and Carson believes that America is in serious decline as a result. *The Perilous Fight* sheds light on many of the forces attacking faith and

family: socialism, wokeness, government control of personal lives, government-sponsored censorship, activists who push children into harmful and irreversible transgender procedures, schools that usurp parental authority, and organizations such as Black Lives Matter, which holds as one of its founding principles that it seeks to “disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure.”

But as bleak as the situation may seem, Carson sees reason for hope. He lays out a number of practical ways that individuals can fight—for their own family and for families in general.

“The easiest and most effective step you can take,” he writes, “is to pour yourself into loving, serving and enjoying your own family—and to make that same decision every day. Make your family a foundational priority in your life, and then don’t allow anything to push your family out of that coveted spot.”

Citing examples from people in his own life, he also challenges his readers to invest in the lives of others in their communities: “When you see needs to be met, meet them. When you see people who need help, help them. And especially when you see families in danger of succumbing to the relentless assault seeking to destroy them, step in and offer support.”

And in his remarks prior to his book signing at the Billy Graham Library, Carson identified the key to victory in this perilous fight: “We have to return to our faith in God, and that’s what will stop our downward spiral.” ■ ©2024 BGEA



Ben Carson signs books at the Billy Graham Library.

'WHERE DID AMERICA GO?'

*A CONVERSATION
WITH PAT BOONE*



At age 90, Pat Boone is still living vibrantly for Jesus Christ. Boone was a longtime friend of Billy Graham, singing at Crusades in the 1980s, and his late wife was a prayer partner with Ruth Bell Graham. The legendary singer, actor and author has recently acted in three movies, and he's written and recorded a new song,

Where Did America Go?

Q: What kind of response have you had to the song?

A: Two weeks after release, we're at 7 million likes and views. It's meant to be a song like Bob Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind*, which I think shaped a lot of America's thinking back in the 1960s. It woke a lot of people up, and I feel this song is doing

that very same thing. We have an acoustic guitar and a harmonica, because I want people to think of *Blowin' in the Wind* when they hear this song, because the purpose is the very same.

Q: You wrote the song as a wake-up call to America.

A: To wake us up to how we're sliding and how we're letting the most important things that

“We are spiritually and Biblically ignorant, illiterate. We can’t say anymore that we’re a nation under God, because less than half of us are seeking God at all.”

created America slip away.

Wake up, because the devil is very cunning. And the Bible says the heart is deceptive. When we follow our hearts and our inclinations and not God’s will, Satan can easily lead us astray.

Going back to the beginning, in Genesis, when the devil appeared first to the woman, he said, “Oh, look at that fruit. Isn’t it beautiful? It’s delicious, too. And besides, if you eat it, it will make you as wise as God.” Well, she fell for it.

Then both she and Adam ate, and suddenly they realized they were naked, and that hadn’t mattered before. And when God came in the late afternoon to have His daily visit with them, they were hiding.

We are so easily deceived, and we can fall out of favor with God. Abortion is a major part of the election coming up. And the Democratic candidate is letting us know that she’s planning to make it available in every state in the union. And she sounds so highly motivated, as if that’s a great thing.

All I can say is that God created life, and He’s highly displeased with those who want to disrupt His creation.

Q: One of the verses in your song says:

*Can America still rise again?
Find our way back to where we were then? Yes, that old family Bible still holds our survival.
It spells out the way we can win.
Yes. It spells out the way we can win.*

A: Barna and Gallup and the pollsters have told us recently that less than 50% of Americans go to any place of worship now. They don’t read the Bible. They don’t know that, if they pray, anybody is listening. And so, we are spiritually and Biblically ignorant, illiterate. We can’t say anymore that we’re a nation under God, because less than half of us are seeking God at all.

Q: Then comes the chorus:

*O God of Sweet Liberty
Help us and heal us again
If we fall on our knees
Will You still hear our pleas?
Take us back to where we were then.
Take us back to where we were then.*

Repentance and prayer are critical, aren’t they?

A: And recommitment. Oh, man, I can cry when I say that word. We’re just not committed

to God as a country. And because of that, He cannot be as committed to us. I read through the Bible every year, and I’ve just gotten into Ezra now, in the Old Testament. And of course, Ezra had been sent into Babylonian captivity. Israel had so rejected God that He just sent them into captivity. But

after 70 years, He was willing to bring them back. And He’s willing to bring us back, but we have to seek Him. And we have to be willing to be obedient and want to know what His will is, as we can’t obey it unless we know what it is.

Q: America has obviously lost its way. How do people find their way back to the Lord?

A: After 9/11, there was suddenly an explosion of flags on street corners everywhere, and people were going back to church. The churches were filled, and the nation, in a wholesale way, came back to the Lord. And then we flourished again. And, unless we do that—and I’m hoping it won’t take another 9/11 or maybe a bunch of them, because the terrorists that created that first 9/11 have come across a non-existent border—then God will allow terrible things to happen, which will again tend to bring us to our knees, if that’s what it takes.

And if we don’t get on our knees then, as the people of Israel too often did not, then we will suffer the same fate. As the Bible says, and as Lincoln quoted, a nation divided against itself cannot stand.

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Interviewed by Jim Dailey, executive editor.

HOW TO GAIN VICTORY OVER WORRY



by David Jeremiah

We live in a world that makes it very easy for us to worry. Worry is concern over the future. The problem with the person who looks out into the future is twofold. First of all, the future is not here. And second, the future is not ours. No one but God knows its true shape.

Jesus said that when we get so caught up in the cares of this world, it takes us away from our ability to hear and understand the Word of God. In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus uses the expression “Do not worry” three times, and in doing so, He gives us five things that we need to know about worry.

First, He tells us that worry is inconsistent with our faith. Jesus says in verse 25, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” God would not have given us life, and

He would not have created our bodies without also providing those things that are necessary to sustain us. If you believe in a creator God, you also must believe in a sustainer God.

Second, worry is irrational. “Look at the birds of the air,” Jesus says in verse 26. “They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” God almighty provides for the birds. Don’t you think He’ll provide for you?

Next, worry is ineffective. It doesn’t work. “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to

his stature?” (Matthew 6:27). You cannot use worry to accomplish your goal. It’s futile, and if you try it, all it will do is ruin your life.

Fourth, worry is illogical. In verses 28-30, Jesus says: “Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” If you know Jesus, you are eternal, and if God takes such great

“Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

care of the temporal, don't you think He's going to take great care of the eternal?

Fifth, worry is irresponsible. Verse 31 says, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

Jesus' words are stunning. The word *Gentile* in the text is often translated *pagan*, so He is saying that when you worry, you act like a pagan. You act like somebody who doesn't know God, who doesn't have a family or a Father. You act like an orphan.

It is amazing to me how many of God's people go through the problems of life that create worry in their hearts and never tell God about them. I think some Christians are embarrassed to go before the throne in Heaven and say, "Lord God, I'm having a real struggle here, and I need Your help." If you read the Psalms, you'll see David pouring out his heart to God in every imaginable situation. And these aren't veiled prayers, they're gut-level prayers: "Lord God,

I need help." You have a Father in Heaven; you have a family on Earth, and they were created to be helpful to you. Don't try to do all this by yourself.

Also in Matthew 6, Jesus tells us how to overcome worry. The first thing He says is to commit your life completely to Him. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (verse 33). You get up in the morning and say, "Lord, this day is Yours. My children are

Yours. My wife is Yours, my ministry is Yours, my health is Yours," and you give it to God. And don't take it back. Give Him everything and trust Him with it.

And focus on today, not tomorrow. "Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (verse 34). Every day we have in life is going to come with some adversity, some things that will make us anxious. So in order to avoid being overwhelmed, Jesus says we need to teach ourselves how to live in day-tight compartments. Live every day unto itself. Don't dwell on your tomorrows and don't dwell on your yesterdays.

This is the key that will lock the door on worry and open the door to peace. ■ ©2014 TURNING

POINT

Scriptures are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version.

This article was adapted from a sermon preached by David Jeremiah at Shadow Mountain Community Church on Oct. 19, 2014.

David Jeremiah has served as the senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, for more than 40 years. He is the founder of *Turning Point Ministries* and has written more than 150 books.



WORTHY TO GOVERN



by Anne Graham Lotz

This November, after months of media blitz, debates, a last-minute candidate switch and political intrigue, millions of us across the United States, and tens of millions around the world, will hold our collective breath as we wait expectantly to discover who has been chosen to be the president of the United States for the next four years. Whoever it is, will he or she be worthy to govern our republic during these very critical days? Only time will tell.

One thing we know for certain. There is coming a day when millions upon millions of people will gather before the throne of God and proclaim Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, as the only One worthy to govern, not just the United States, not just Planet Earth, but the entire universe. He alone is worthy “to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise”! And as that scene unfolds in Heaven, on Earth “every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory

of God the Father.” He is worthy to govern everything and everyone forever and ever!

Read Revelation 4

HE IS ENTHRONED IN POWER Revelation 4:1-2

- Who was seated on the throne? Revelation 4:2; 5:1; Hebrews 12:2.
- Who actually saw and recorded this scene in Heaven? Revelation 4:1; 1:1-2; 5:1.
- Describe John’s circumstances when he saw this. Revelation 1:9.
- Who else saw a similar scene, and what was the circumstance of each? Isaiah 6:1 with John 12:41; Ezekiel 1:1-5, 22, 26; Acts 7:54-60.
- If you are going through an extremely difficult time, how does this encourage you?

HE IS ENCIRCLED IN PROOF Revelation 4:3-8

PROOF OF HIS MERCY

- What were the circumstances of the first rainbow? Genesis 7:24-9:13.
- What did the rainbow

symbolize? Genesis 9:12-17.

- What did the rainbow remind Noah of? Genesis 9:15-16.
- Explain the difference between Noah remembering the covenant, and Noah remembering that God remembered the covenant.
- Give phrases from the following verses that describe God’s mercy: Isaiah 63:9; Micah 7:18; Habakkuk 3:2.
- Now explain in your own words the possible symbolism of the rainbow encircling His throne in Heaven.

PROOF OF HIS AUTHORITY

- Besides the rainbow, what else encircled the throne? Revelation 4:4.
- Give one of the titles for Jesus that relates to this scene. Revelation 19:16.
- Generally speaking, who do you think the 24 elders are? Matthew 20:20-23; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; Revelation 20:6.
- What do you think their white robes symbolize? Revelation 7:13-14; Isaiah 1:18.
- How do the following verses encourage you? Revelation 2:26; 3:5, 21; 7:13-17.

*“One day Jesus will govern the world.
And He is the only One who is worthy
and able to govern your world.”*



PROOF OF HIS ACTIVITY

- What words imply activity around the throne? Revelation 4:5.
- Read 2 Samuel 22. Underline all the verbs, and give verse numbers, that imply the activity of God.
- Since God cannot be less than Himself, and He is active, how does this encourage you when you pray?

PROOF OF HIS PURITY

- Who is represented by the blazing lamps? Revelation 4:5; 1:4-5; Luke 3:15-16; Acts 2:1-4.
- What is implied by His Name? John 14:25; 16:8-11; 1 Peter 1:15.
- What needs to be purged from your life so that you more clearly reflect the purity of the Holy Spirit? Malachi 3:2-3; Hebrews 9:22.

HE IS ENVELOPED IN PRAISE

Revelation 4:9-11

- Where did the praise in the Throne Room of Heaven originate? Revelation 4:6 with 5:8-10.
- Who are these living creatures? Genesis 3:24; Ezekiel 1:4-14; Psalm 103:19-20.
- How often did the four living creatures praise Jesus? Revelation 4:8.
- Since they do a lot of work in the Bible, yet “day and night never stop” praising Jesus, is this a contradiction? How is it possible to work and worship at the same time? Explain.
- Who began praising Jesus when they heard the four living creatures praise Him? Revelation 4:9-11.
- How did the praise become contagious? Revelation 5:11-12.
- How far-reaching was the praise? Revelation 5:13.
- What has interrupted, or even silenced, your praise?
- Who is praising Jesus because you are?
- What was the ultimate act of praise described in verse 10?
- Relate this act to yourself. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.
- What crowns are available to a believer to lay at His feet? Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10.
- How is it possible to be saved and get into Heaven, but without a crown? 1 Corinthians 3:15; Revelation 3:11.
- What crowns will you have to lay at His nail-pierced feet? What do you need to do today, or to start doing, so that you will not be bareheaded on that day?

One day Jesus *will* govern the world. And He is the only One who is worthy and able to govern *your* world. How accurately does your life reflect His government now? Does He govern on the throne of your heart in power? Is He encircled with proof of His mercy, activity, authority, and purity in the way you live your life? And while you pour yourself into His work, is He enveloped in praise, 24/7? ■ ©2024 ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ

This article is adapted from a study that was originally published in June 2013.

Anne Graham Lotz has proclaimed God’s Word worldwide for more than 40 years. Her newest book, which she co-authored with her daughter Rachel-Ruth Wright, is *Preparing to Meet Jesus—Moving From Salvation to Transformation*. It can be ordered from major booksellers online.



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The Bible tells us to pray for “all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:2, NIV). When we pray regularly for those who are willing to serve as political leaders, it will help us make the best choices when we go to the polls, for God gives us wisdom when we humble ourselves and pray for His guidance.

—Billy Graham