

“ELECTIONS: CHOSEN BY GOD.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: Psalm 11:3; John 19-10-11; I Timothy 2:1-2

How we got here.

Psalm 11:3 If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Twelve score years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, a nation unique among all nations. Until that time in history nearly every nation was ruled by monarchs, tyrants or dictators.

240 years ago these United States of America, no longer under a king but under a constitution, embarked on a grand experiment, giving to the people the inalienable right to choose their own leaders.

Our forefathers under the influence of Biblical and Reformed doctrine knew well the hearts of man and the depravity of our souls. The constitution of this new nation carefully laid out a foundation made up of legislative, executive and judicial branches of government with checks and balances to hold accountable those in power.

In 1864 when Abraham Lincoln stood on the Gettysburg battlefield and spoke his immortal words he said:

“We are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.”

Since that great civil war our nation has been engaged in many subsequent wars, and I am not speaking of military wars, but of culture wars, wars for the heart and soul of our nation, wars that are testing whether this nation can long endure.

This grand experiment in human government has endured longer than most but the foundations are crumbling and being destroyed and will not long endure.

That great civil war was not all good, it tore the constitutional fabric of states' rights and the necessary checks and balances that state's rights gave to our federal government.

Along the way our government took over the education of our children. Later it took over the citizens and churches role in exercising compassion to those in need, creating a massive, inefficient and now corrupt welfare system that tears apart the fabric of families.

Our Supreme Court misapplied the understanding of the separations of church and state by restricting God from our schools, the Ten Commandments from our courtrooms and what can be said from the pulpits of our nation.

In 1973 the Supreme Court for the second time in our nation's history declared that certain citizens did not have constitutional rights and declared war on the smallest and most vulnerable citizens of our nation, the ultimate child abuse of the unborn.

Again, over stepping constitutional limits, our government interjected itself into our medical lives creating another massive, inefficient and increasingly corrupt medical care system.

Then, just last year the Supreme Court placed itself over God in declaring God's definition of marriage no longer valid. Our president called the ruling "a victory for America."

And all of that is just the political realm. How long could I go on about Hollywood and Nashville, about movies and music and TV, about computer porn and social media? Out of our culture has come rappers encouraging rape, cop-killing and foul language. 50 Shades of Grey is a best seller and then turned into a movie. Game of Thrones is popular TV fare. We are awash in immorality, everyone doing what is right in his own eyes.

This election isn't happening in a vacuum. It's the fruit of decades of decisions, the culmination of countless denials of God and rebellions against God. This election is the result of our slow slide into godless secularism and hedonism.

We did not get here overnight. We did not get where we are today just in this latest election cycle. We got here by a thousand steps, by a thousand different

elections at every level of government. We got here by a thousand silences and a thousand capitulations and resignations.

This understanding lead one pastor to reflect that in some ways the decision before us on Tuesday is one of the least important elections in our political history. Important elections are when you are deciding to go north or south, east or west, right or left. Important elections are like the one on the top of Mount Carmel when Elijah asked, Baal or Yahweh (Doug Wilson).

His point is the important elections are past and now it really doesn't matter which candidate wins, the result will be about the same. This election is just the fruit of all those other ones.

We cannot as a nation destroy life and marriage and morality and character and expect life to go well with us. Sin never leads to good. Good fruit doesn't come from bad trees. Why are we shocked at the two choices we have?

Psalm 11:3 If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

The judgment of God on our nation.

Chuck Colson once said, "Salvation is not going to arrive on Air Force One." That's true, but I wonder if God's judgment might arrive on Air Force One. He has done that before through the likes of Nebuchadnezzar and Caesar and countless others.

John Calvin said, "When God wants to judge a nation, He gives them wicked rulers" (see Institutes, 4.20.25).

In his commentary on Hebrews 13:3-4 he writes, "For since a wicked prince is the Lord's scourge to punish the sins of the people, let us remember, that it happens through our fault."

In other words we get the government we deserve. The two major party candidates are a mirror of our country, a mirror of our culture.

Nearly 40 years ago one of the truly wise prophets of our time, the great Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, said in a famous commencement speech at Harvard

University: “There are meaningful warnings which history gives a threatened or perishing society. Such are, for instance, the decadence of art, or a lack of great statesmen.”

On another occasion Solzhenitsyn reflected, “Over a half century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of old people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’”

We have forgotten God, and when we no longer fear God, God sends judgment. Sometimes God gives us a choice between which judgment we want. He did that with David.

When David took his sinful census of the people, God offered him the choice between three years of famine, three months fleeing from his enemies, or three days of pestilence in the land (2 Sam. 24:13). David could not bring himself to make that choice saying, “Let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great; let me not fall into the hand of man” (2 Sam. 24:14).

Who to vote for?

Psalm 11:3 If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Our nation has never been more divided and more in turmoil. Democrats are fighting Democrats, Republicans are fighting Republicans, third party candidates are getting more votes than ever. We have the two most disliked presidential candidates in modern history. We have heard and seen things that ought not to be in headlines, and certainly not spoken by people in such high levels of leadership.

But not only is our nation divided, I have never seen the Christian community and the evangelical community more divided, more conflicted over who to vote for. In fact, I myself have never been so conflicted over who to vote for. I’ve changed my mind several times.

Never have I heard so much talk of having to vote for the lessor of two evils. How can it be a good thing to vote for evil, however much or little? Never have I heard so many say they’ll have to vote holding their nose.

Both candidates are infected with that trinity of political diseases, money, sex and power.

Her sins seem especially related to money, his sins seem especially related to sex, both sin in relation to power and the abuse of power. And both are over the top arrogant. Their fall will be in the direction of their sins.

Neither candidate passes the test of personal integrity, sound judgment or trustworthiness. Neither candidate represents Biblical values; both have mocked God in many ways.

Neither candidate measures up to the standard of leaders Jethro gave to Moses:

Exodus 18:21 Look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe.

This much I know, I cannot vote for a candidate with extreme views on abortion. In a recent interview on *The View* Clinton said unborn children have no Constitutional rights, no matter what point in the pregnancy, even when partially born. She is a persistent advocate for the legal killing of unborn children.

My stand there should be no surprise to you. I wouldn't vote for the town dog catcher who was pro-abortion. And it's not because I am a single issue voter, it's because it's an issue that's fruit from a bad tree, it's a mocking of God and of the image of God He has created.

I understand and am sympathetic with those who can't vote for Trump, some of his extreme comments about women and some minorities are horrible. He is brash and bombastic, sometimes acting more like a six year old than a mature adult.

I also understand the arguments some make in support of voting for Trump, that they are not voting for him personally but for a package that includes Pence as the VP, that includes keeping Clinton from appointing the next Supreme Court justice, that includes a platform that still has some good in it concerning policy positions on abortion and homosexuality and other issues.

If you vote for Trump for those reasons, fine, but please don't whitewash him as a good man, he is not. As Christians we have to speak the truth about his lack of character.

I understand those voting for a third party candidate, that out of integrity you can't endorse either major party option, and you want to send a message to the two front runners and their parties.

I know some say a vote for a third party is a vote for Clinton. But that can be said on the other side as well. Some Bernie Sanders supporters are voting third party. Those votes are saying the present way things are is unacceptable. If the third party candidates get more votes than in previous history, that will speak.

The third party vote may be the King David vote, the casting ourselves on the mercy of God, to not decide our judgment but leave it in His hands.

When you vote, vote as a Christian. That means prayerfully seek God and His wisdom and will, vote with your conscience tuned to spiritual things, vote for what honors God and Scripture.

What to remember on Wednesday, November 9.

Christ is Risen! Sin and death and Satan are conquered.

Christ is Ascended! He is seated at the right hand of the Father in eternal glory.

Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, He holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

John 19:10-11 Pilate said to him, "Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."

Our study in the evening of the book of Daniel is a clear message God sent the Jews, "the Most High God rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whom He will." He raises them up and sets them down, who uses wicked pagan rulers for His purposes just as much as godly leaders.

The whole book of Daniel is about the fading glory of human governments and institutions, contrasted with the increasing glory of the kingdom of God.

Spurgeon used to say that he read the newspaper to see how God was governing His world. That is the best way to read and listen to the news, otherwise you might get upset or worried.

Mr. Trump and Mrs. Clinton are pawns in the hands of God and pawns in God's great purposes in history. We should tremble before such a God and tremble that His purposes for our nation at this time call for such leaders as He is giving us.

God will be glorified as He always has been through all the ages, even through the worst leaders and worst nations.

God will choose the next president and God will appoint the next Supreme Court justices. God holds all things in His hands and He is the only source of stability in our times. Take this to heart and be encouraged by the sovereignty of God over this election.

Psalm 11:3-4 If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?
4 The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven.

What can't the righteous do when God is on His throne and He gives us these choices?

Do what God's people have always done in this kind of crisis. Cry out to God.

I Samuel 12:8-10 When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers *cried out to the Lord* and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. 9 But they forgot the Lord their God. And he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab. And they fought against them. 10 And they *cried out to the Lord* and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, that we may serve you.'

Nehemiah 9:27 Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering *they cried out to you* and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies.

As we vote we should be confessing and repenting and acknowledging our sin and folly both personally and as a nation that we have been brought to this point and pray for mercy.

I Peter 4:17 It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.

We must take responsibility for our country by taking responsibility at home and in our churches and communities. The best and most important government is at the lowest levels, at home and in our communities. We need Christian men to exercise godly, moral leadership, who will stand up to those around us who speak about women and minorities the way we have heard from some leaders. We need Christian men who aren't intimidated, who defend the truth and fight the enemies of the Gospel, who advocate for the unborn and for God-honoring marriage.

Then we must do what all righteous people do and that is live by faith in the living God.

Make your loyalty to Christ clear. You do that by not being afraid, no matter what happens. You do that by bearing witness that your citizenship is not on earth. You do that by witnessing to the truth of the Gospel and the hope that is ours in Christ. Our ultimate loyalty and allegiance is not to a candidate or a country, but to a person, Jesus Christ.

Watch your own life and doctrine, live close to Biblical truth, walk in personal holiness, be salt and light, speak the truth in love, live in hope of the eternal life that is secured for us by the blood of Jesus.

Our comfort is not found in our own understanding or in having things turn out the way we expect or want. Our comfort and confidence is found only in the unchanging, never failing perfect wisdom and will of our heavenly Father.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,
18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.
19 God, the Lord, is my strength.