

## Election Results from a Biblical Perspective

### Col. 4:2-6

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A monumental event occurred in America last Tuesday. The media has been talking about it ever since. Some people are so upset about it that they are rioting in the streets. Although there is some evidence that some of that was planned and people bussed in to make it happen. The point is that people all over the world know it was a major shaking.

I want to make a few observations from a biblical point of view.

#### **I. God answered prayer.**

It would be a mistake to attribute the results to secondary causes. Yes, Hillary's credibility was undermined by some of the things exposed by Wikileaks and other revelations. The timing of the Anthony Weiner scandal during the last week of the campaign changed the dialogue. There were many secondary factors at work.

But behind all that was God answering prayer. During the last year the Holy Spirit led our prayer meeting to ask God over and over to "expose the hidden works of darkness" going on behind the political scene. I suspect many others were led to pray that same prayer. And in answer to that prayer God exposed the activities and motives of both Democrats and Republicans. The process unfolded in a way that shined the light on the real intents of insiders on both sides of the aisle. God answered prayer by pulling back the curtain and revealing a lot of ugly things.

God also answered prayer by raising up people of integrity like Ben Carson, Mike Pence, Mike Huckabee. Carson and Huckabee had to humble themselves and take a supportive role instead of the lead role. But they had the character and humility to do that. Mike Pence may be God's man of the hour. The anointing of God is on him. God has His people in strategic places just like He did in the days of Esther.

God raised up leaders like Franklin Graham to take a bold stand and lead many Christians into prayer. The prayer generated the votes. I do not believe the majority of Christians really got serious about prayer. But it did not take a majority. It only took a remnant. God saw enough of His people humbling themselves and praying that He mercifully intervened. Remember when Abraham interceded for Sodom. He began by asking God if He would spare the whole city if there were 50 righteous people in it. That was certainly a minority, not a majority. But God said He would spare the whole city if there were just 50 righteous people in it. Abraham kept praying until God even agreed to spare the whole city if there were just 10 righteous people in it. Of course, it turned out there were not even 10 and the city was destroyed. God does not need a majority in order to demonstrate His goodness and mercy. The votes were important; but they were a fruit of the prayers. God found enough sincere godly people that He has turned a pending disaster into a powerful opportunity.

For the last couple of years God has had us focused on 2 Chron. 7:14 *"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*<sup>1</sup> We have been very careful to stay with that mandate. I'm sure many other Christians were doing the

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotes are from the New King James Version unless indicated otherwise.

same. I believe overall we did what the Lord told us to do. This Scripture will always be important to us and always have application. We never arrive at a place where there's no pride to address and no humbling to do. We never arrive at a place where we don't need to pray. However, I sense a shift in our assignment. The focus is shifting outward to a lost world. I'll talk about that more in a moment. I draw this conclusion from Tuesday's election. God answers prayer.

God also confounds the wise with His wisdom.<sup>2</sup> Pollsters and broadcasters were confounded by the results they saw. How does a candidate put his foot in his mouth so many times and still come out on top? How did Donald Trump make so many foolish statements and still win the election? God raises up whom He chooses to raise up; and He puts down whom He chooses to put down. Frankly I saw other people running for the presidency whom I believe are more upright and godly people. But God has His purposes and His ways for bringing His will to pass. And He doesn't always do it the way we think He should.

In Eccl 9:11 Solomon made this observation. *"The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all."* God hands opportunities to people as He sees fit. In the Parable of the Talent the master gave one servant 5 talents, another 2, and another only 1.<sup>3</sup> It was His to give. In Rom. 9:16 Paul is talking about the sovereignty of God and says, *"So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy."* If you fully understood the sovereignty of God, you would fully understand God. And that is not going to happen. Just understand that His ways are higher than our ways.<sup>4</sup> He knows how to run the universe. People don't always get the credit they deserve. Later in verse 14 of Eccl. 9 Solomon tells the story of a little city that was under siege. The army coming against the city was overwhelming and there seemed to be no way the people in the city would survive. But there was a poor wise man in the city who came up with the answer and saved the city. He had done something no one else could do. After it was all over with no one remembered the poor man who had actually brought about the victory. There may be behind-the-scene people who were strategic to this victory that no one recognizes or even knows about. There may have been some little grandma on her knees at home that made a big difference. Who knows? Bottom line, God cast the deciding vote!

## **II. We must receive this deliverance with humility and thanksgiving.**

Ps 34:2-3 *"My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together."* My prayer for the winning party is that they would not become prideful, but receive this from the hand of the Lord with humility. It's possible to have a win, then trip over your own pride. Personally I was pleased to see some humility in both Republicans and Democrats when the results of the election came in. I respect the fact that both Obama and Hillary conceded gracefully and called upon their followers to respect the system. I know that the demonstrators are getting a lot of coverage by the liberal media. But that represents a tiny fraction of American Democrats. Both Obama and Hillary should be commended for their public statements conceding the election. I was also appreciative of the humility I saw in Donald Trump's acceptance speech. It is no time for boasting. It is a time

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 1:27

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 25:15

<sup>4</sup> Isa. 55:9; Deut. 29:29

for healing and compassion. I pray Donald Trump will hear the concerns of all Americans, regardless of race or religion. I pray he will lead justly and that solutions will be found that address the needs of all Americans. I also pray that we will deal wisely and compassionately with illegal immigrants. It would be a mistake to stereotype every immigrant into one category. Yes there are some criminals and even terrorists that must be dealt with firmly. There are also some who came here to get a free ride and need to go to work. But there are many who came willing to work and willing to do their part to “Make America Great.” I hope we don’t treat all those the same. May the churches and our nation reach out to sincere, hurting people and help them find a place in our society through a fair, legal process. I pray right now for illegal immigrants in America who sincerely want to live an upright life, work hard for their families, and embrace American values. “Lord, make a way for these people. Separate the wheat and chaff and show us how to keep the wheat and get rid of the chaff.”

It is important that we give thanks to God for protecting us from evil forces. Every Christian should be praising God for His mercy toward us. He has graciously held back the forces of evil and given us a reprieve on the judgement that was coming our way.

The dictionary defines reprieve: “to give relief or deliverance to for a time.”<sup>5</sup> I believe that is what we have received. We have been given a window of time to either fall back into the apathy that got us to the edge of the cliff or take advantage of the opportunity and “Make America Great” by leading it back into godliness. That is going to be a lot of work. I’m not just talking about political work. There will be work in that area. But the most important work will be spiritual. Will the Church step up to the plate and hit a home run during this next four years of opportunity. Or will the Church see it as an opportunity for passivity and personal comfort? That remains to be seen.

### **III. We must seize the opportunity God has given us or we will be right back on the edge of destruction again.**

We have a history of being very short-sighted. When 9-11 happened, people filled the churches. Change happened immediately. But it only lasted a few weeks. It was like the seed that fell into stony ground. It immediately sprang up; but because it had no depth of root system, when the hot sun came up it withered away.<sup>6</sup> There is a certain amount of excitement among evangelical Christians right now. There is something to be excited about and thankful about. But the question I have is this: what are we going to do about it? Where do we go from here? How do we capitalize on the opportunity?

#### **1. We must realize the election did not solve all our problems?**

We are facing difficult systemic problems that are neither Democrat or Republican in nature. What do we do with a \$ 20 trillion debt? The Obama administration is the worst culprit; but the Bush administration stacked it up as well. The tendency is to just keep kicking the can down the road until there is no place else to kick it. Obama Care has been a disaster; but there is no easy replacement for the program. In the end, healthcare has to be paid for by somebody. The world is probably a more dangerous place than it’s ever been before. More nations have nuclear weapons. The countries are more interdependent than ever before; and with more interdependence comes greater possibility for conflict. We have to negotiate with other countries from a position of financial and military strength. But military strength costs lots of money; and others will build

<sup>5</sup> Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1993) p. 993.

<sup>6</sup> Mark 4:5-6

their military strength for the same reason. Solving the problems we face is beyond human capacity. We are going to need divine wisdom to deal with these issues.

Therefore, our prayers must continue. We must pray for a peaceable transition of power in America. We must ask God to give our leaders wisdom in the hard choices they must make. Paul wrote in 1 Tim 2:1-2 “*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*” We have elected leaders for the next four years. Will we uphold them in prayer for the next four years? It’s one thing to send a missionary to the field. It’s another thing to finance him while he is there. It would be a cruel thing to elect these people to office; then pull the prayer support out from under them after they get there. First of all, as a priority, we must pray, pray, pray. This win is not a signal to let up on prayer; it is a call to accelerate prayer.

## 2. We must seize the opportunity that God is giving us.

Col 4:2-6 “*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;*”

[that’s a couple of things we have already been talking about this morning; don’t let up on your vigilance; don’t stop praying simply because you think the crisis is over; and be thankful to God for what He is doing]

“*3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*”

Let me read Col. 4:5 from the NIV “*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*” This is the heart of what God has sent me to tell you this morning. Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> opened a vast door of opportunity for us to evangelize. Just as the door was being pushed shut, God miraculously shoved it wide open. We are going to have a season of unstoppable evangelism, if we will seize the day.

Prior to the election I began to sense a change of seasons for Life Church. We have been working on 2 Chron. 7:14 a long time. It has been a deep preparation for things to come. That preparation might have been for intense persecution—and that is not completely off the table.<sup>7</sup> But preparation may also be for a season of evangelism. I see us reaching out much more aggressively with the gospel in the days ahead. The decisions we make now have to accommodate that. Notice Paul’s prayer request in Col. 4:3 “*meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ....*” In a broad sense, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> represents an open door for evangelism for the American Church. In that context, I want us to pray for our local church “*that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ....*” We need the Lord to show us how to reach the harvest He has for us in the days ahead.

Here is what I’m seeing for the church in America. We either reach lost souls one by one during this time of harvest or we will face oppression worse than we were facing. The national transition must happen “one soul at a time”. Look at the demographics. Large portions of people my age voted for biblical values in this recent election. It was a major factor. But as my generation dies off, that will be fewer and fewer votes. There were many Christian Millennials who voted for

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Tim. 3:12

Christian values. But they were far outnumbered by Millennials who voted for the liberal agenda.<sup>8</sup> What will happen if we do not reach those Millennials with the gospel of Jesus Christ? They will determine the course of this nation; and it will not be good. Our opportunity is now! We must step through this open door and boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus to lost souls. This is a fresh mandate for Life Church as a part of that movement. We need to put personal evangelism into high gear for the next four years. Political events are just a reflection of the spiritual realities behind the scene.<sup>9</sup>

Now listen carefully to Paul's advice in Col. 4:5 *"Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."* Prov. 11:30 *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise."* There is a wisdom we must walk in if we are to win souls. We must treat unbelievers with a certain respect and consideration if we are to win them to the Lord. Our speech must be with grace. That's why boasting over the results of this election is the last thing we want to do. There no value in alienating the people we are trying to reach with the gospel. Even if they are feeling defensive and frustrated, we must be pure, peaceable, and approachable.<sup>10</sup> We must be willing to hear their pain and genuinely seek their healing. We pray for an open door of evangelism; but we also pray for wisdom on how to handle the opportunity once it comes our way. "Lord, help us make the most of the opportunities you are opening up for us!" John Greenleaf Whittier wrote "For all sad words of tongue and pen, The saddest are these, 'It might have been'."<sup>11</sup> I don't want my epitaph to be the words "It might have been." I don't want these words written over the American church four years from now: "It might have been."

Eph. 5:15 *"Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil"* (NIV). Did the days stop being evil because the election went our way? No, the same elements of darkness are still at work in the world. The same evil spirits are working to shut down the gospel and destroy souls. What we have is a window of opportunity to overtly declare salvation in Christ.

God gave Israel several reprieves during their history. There was a time in 2 Kings 18:13 when the Assyrian, Sennacherib came against Judah with a vastly superior army. They had already conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Hezekiah tried to pay them off; but it wasn't enough. It was a disaster about to happen. In that circumstance King Hezekiah and the Jewish people humbled themselves before God and prayed. In answer to their prayers God gave them a "reprieve". He turned the Assyrians around and delivered Judah. After that Hezekiah got sick; but God healed him. God mercifully answered prayer. What did Hezekiah do with this reprieve? What did he do with his window of opportunity? He showed the Babylonians all the gold and silver in the temple. He foolishly set up the eventual plundering of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>12</sup> The reprieve was an opportunity for blessing and prosperity; but Hezekiah's actions turned it toward destruction.

The first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt did not make the most of their

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<sup>8</sup> I express my political right to vote based on biblical values, not political affiliation.

<sup>9</sup> Dan. 10:12-13; 2 Kings 6:15-20; John 19:10-11.

<sup>10</sup> James 3:17

<sup>11</sup> John Greenleaf Whittier, Brainy Quote retrieved 11/11/16 at [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john\\_greenleaf\\_whittier.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john_greenleaf_whittier.html).

<sup>12</sup> 2 Kings 18-20.

opportunities. They had an open door to go right into the Promise Land; but they didn't go there. An opportunity given by God has to be seized by faith.

When Elijah was about to be translated into heaven, Elisha saw an opportunity and seized it. When Goliath was challenging Israel, David saw an opportunity and seized it. When Jesus was passing his way, Blind Bartimaeus saw an opportunity and refused to let it pass him by. When Zacchaeus knew that Jesus was coming, he took extraordinary means to avail himself of his opportunity to see Jesus. Naaman almost missed his opportunity. He came close to going back to Syria with his leprosy and an epitaph that read "It might have been." But by the grace of God he seized his opportunity.

Praise God for the opportunity God is giving us. What will you personally do with this opportunity?