

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #29

“Politics and the Christian”

I. Introduction

A. The Crisis of a Lifetime

CBN News

1. As we approach the most important election in American history, statistics tell us that *40 million* Christians will not vote at all and *15 million* are not even registered to vote. How can these things be?

Gary DeMar

“Many Christians are convinced that they have a biblical mandate not to be involved politically. They claim they should abstain, remain neutral, or not apply their Christian faith to political issues. We need to remember that if we don’t vote, other people are voting and who they elect will have an impact on us.”

a. Christians are misleading Christians with books:

Jeremy Pryor

“3rd Way Politics: A Call to Christians to Avoid Exerting Political Power”

b. Christians are misleading Christians writing newspaper articles like this:

Dallas Morning News 2/9/20

“By Making So Much of Politics Christians are at Risk of Shifting Their Focus Away From God”

c. Christians are carrying signs and slogans like this:

“Only God can make America great again.”

“Real power is not found in a flag, party, or our country. It comes from a cross.”

2. Some of this sounds super-spiritual. But is it? I leap into the breach.

3. Politics is not a dirty word. It is an inescapable part of life.

a. God Himself is the Author of all government, including political government.

“Politics”

The activities associated with the governance of a country or other area; the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve and use power in a country or society.

b. What happens politically affects every one of us.

Harold Lasswell

(1902-1978)

“Politics is who gets what, when and how.”

3. Remember, it was our *Christian* forefathers gave us the great American political system: these were Christian men who engaged in politics.

a. Again I am compelled to quote the French aristocrat and historian who studied the greatness of America in her early years, and made note of our unique knitting of religion and politics.

Alexis de Tocqueville

“In France, I had seen the spirits of religion and freedom almost always marching in opposite directions. In America, I found them intimately linked together and joined and reigned over the same land. Religion should therefore be considered as the first of their political institutions. From the start, politics and religion have agreed and have not ceased to do so.”

b. Even our Presidents have recognized the close connection between religion and politics...

President Theodore Roosevelt described the American presidency as a “bully pulpit.”

4. But what has happened today?

David Barton

The Role of Pastors and Christians in Civil Government

“America today has forgotten where we have come from and what we have been about, and this is especially true in the role of the church—of ministers and Christians—in the civil arena.”

5. In his recent article on “Christians, Politics and the Upcoming Election”...

GARY DEMAR

“I hear that tens of millions of Christians fail to vote in presidential elections. It this is true, then it is a great evil with far-reaching implications. When you can stop a great tyranny and fail to do so, you are engaged in sinful behavior.”

James 4:17

To him who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, to him it is sin.

6. If a Christian knows they should vote and does not vote it is a sin; but I believe *many of Christians who fail to vote are not so much sinful as they are deceived*; believers who suffer from ‘misbelief’.

“Misbelief”

A wrong or false belief or opinion

7. I believe the devil has disenfranchised many of American Christians who hold misbeliefs about how we are to relate to politics. So tonight I want to address...

II. 7 Common Christian Misbeliefs About Politics

- 1. We should just preach the Gospel.**
- 2. Jesus did not get mixed up in politics.**
- 3. Our real citizenship is in heaven.**
- 4. Our constitution demands separation of church and state.**
- 5. Jesus’ kingdom has nothing to do with this world.**
- 6. We must not impose our morality on other people**
- 7. It is never right to resist authority**

A. First Misbelief: We should just preach the Gospel.

1. These people, and there are a lot of them, are those who believe the business of the church is to simply get people saved.

2. Elizabeth and I were first baptized in a church like this; the focus every week was on winning the lost, which is good; but it had no vision for the nation.

Gabriel Rench

“The church has long bifurcated the Gospel and acted like it only applied in your heart and not to the whole world.”

3. We need to remember that the Apostle Paul applied the Gospel to every area of life:

Acts 20:26-27

**Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.
(Some translations: the whole ‘purpose’ of God)**

4. Jesus spoke of the “kingdom” over a hundred times; remember that the word ‘kingdom’ is a political term that He applied to the ‘nations’, another political term.

Matthew 24:14

But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

a. The Book of Revelation reveals Jesus as...

Revelation 19:16

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

b. Don’t limit this to the future! He is all this *right now*.

c. Eventually He will be revealed as Lord of all political systems...

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

Dr. Peter Enns

“At least part of what it means for Jesus to fulfill His prophetic role is his ultimate rule over all rulers, all political regimes—a point made at great length in the book of Revelation. The Gospel, in other words, is the standard by which the rulers are judged. Not so much on the level of personal piety but on the level of how their rule actions affect people.”

B. Second Misbelief: Jesus Didn't Get Mixed Up in Politics

1. There are many things Jesus didn't do:

- a. He never married
- b. He never had children
- c. He never owned a home or had a means of transportation.

If you say we shouldn't do anything Jesus didn't do you have some things to undo!

2. We often forget that every time Jesus addressed the Scribes and Pharisees He was addressing those who held political power; the fact is that the Bible is full of politics.

- a. Moses and Aaron confronted a political power so Israel could go free.
- b. The Book of Judges is named for those who ruled in Israel, some badly.
- c. I and II Kings and Chronicles are filled with politics.
- d. Many of the prophets confronted Kings!

GOD'S PROPHETS CONFRONTED POLITICAL AUTHORITY

- **Elijah confronted Ahab and Jezebel about their sins**
 - **Samuel confronted King Saul about his sin**
 - **Nathan confronted King David about his sin**
 - **Isaiah confronted King Manasseh**
 - **John the Baptist confronted King Herod**

3. We have forgotten that holding political governments to God's standards is the job of the Church.

Pete Enns, P.H.D.

“Christians in Politics: It's About Holding Powers to a Higher Standard”

“One of the things that I find fascinating about the Old Testament is how the power of the king was kept in check. A king’s word wasn’t automatically law. A king’s will was not automatically the will of God. Rather, a king was held to a standard higher than and outside of himself.”

Dr. Pete Enns

“Concerning the prophets, they weren’t predictors of a far distant future time, but conduits for the will of God for very present problems, often focused on the abuse of power by kings or priests. So think of the prophets as part of this check on power.”

Dr. Peter Enns

“Those who follow Jesus have an obligation to voice their opposition to corrupt rule, and to never allow the Kingdom of God to become enmeshed with political agendas. Rather, we, like the prophets of old, have the obligation to be sure that justice, peace, and righteousness remain the higher standard by which the state is held accountable rather than aiding and abetting the state to redefine and co-opt that standard.”

C. Third Misbelief: Our (The Christian’s) real citizenship is in heaven

1. It is true that the Apostle Paul spoke of those who set their minds on earthly things and reminded the Philippian church...

Philippians 3:20

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

(English word ‘citizenship’ is from Gk. Word ‘politeuma’)

2. True, our primary citizenship is in heaven. But this does not preclude our participation in earthly politics. Just because we are citizens of heaven does not mean we are not American citizens! We may have multiple citizenships.

a. The example of the Apostle Paul:

Paul called himself a citizen of Israel (Philippians 3:4; Romans 11:1); and the fact that he was a citizen of heaven and of Israel did not stop him from claiming his Roman citizenship (Acts 16:37;22:25-29) nor from appealing to Caesar (Acts 25:9-12) when he was under Roman jurisdiction.

3. To use our “citizenship is in heaven” as an excuse to avoid our civil duties on earth is a copout; we are dual citizens of heaven and earth at the same time!

D. Fourth Misbelief: Our Constitution demands the separation of Church and State

1. Many Christians believe this lie and our enemies use it against us whenever we dare address political issues from the pulpit.

2. **But there is no place in the Constitution or the Amendments where the phrase ‘separation of church and state’ can be found.**

a. The phrase comes from a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to some Baptist pastors in Connecticut to assure them that the United States would never impose a national religion upon the people.

3. Here is what the 1st Amendment to the Constitution really says:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to freely assemble, and to petition the government for the redress of grievances.

4. It is amazing that an uninformed church has allowed God’s enemies to silence us by misapplying the very law that gives us freedom of speaking out on political issues.

a. By the way, this is the same 1st Amendment that prohibits the Government from shutting down church services.

Gary DeMar

“Why is it the Rev. Jesse Jackson can quote the Bible in support of his pet causes, but conservative ministers and lay people must argue purely on secular grounds for their social and political agenda? It seems that mixing religion and politics is acceptable as long as the road turns to the left.”

5. The socialist politicians twist the Bible to support their own views and tell the Christians that religion and politics don’t mix. Where does that come from?

Jerry Falwell

(1933-2007)

“The idea that religion and politics don’t mix was invented by the Devil to keep Christians from running their own country.”

Beverly LaHaye

“Yes, religion and politics do mix. America is a nation based on biblical principles. Christian values dominate our government. The test of those values is the Bible. Politicians who do not use the Bible to guide their public and private lives do not belong in office.”

6. The truth is that we American ministers have failed to lay the foundation of a biblical worldview into the lives of those we lead; if we had, God’s people would realize that you cannot separate a politician’s spiritual views from the politician’s policies.

Voddie Baucham

“The Bible does speak to every issue of life, and our political issues are informed by our theology. There is no such thing as a politician or a political issue that is not theological. You cannot do politics without theology! So we have to break this false dichotomy.”

7. The sinister socialistic forces at work to overthrow America as founded use the ‘separation of church and state’ to keep God out of

a. Billionaire venture capitalist George Soros gives billions to socialist politicians and causes. He does not want a Christian in the oval office.

George Soros

“The separation of church and state is the bedrock of our democracy and clearly undermined by having a born-again President.”

8. Socialists see every Christian political leader as a threat to their commitment to keep Christians out of politics. Christian businessman Gabriel Rensch calls for our repentance.

Gabriel Rensch

“For too long, Christians have been drinking the Kool-Aid of private faith, separation of church and state, and thinking that Jesus is Lord over Heaven but not of earth.”

E. Fifth Misbelief: Jesus' kingdom has nothing to do with this world.

1. This mistaken belief comes from a misinterpretation of something Jesus said in....

John 18:36

My kingdom is not of this world.

2. Some Christians quote these words to excuse themselves from any political responsibility; but they fail to consider the context.

a. Jesus is standing on trial for His life before Pontius Pilate, who asked Him if He was a King;

John 18:36

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

3. Jesus was not saying, "I am a king but my kingdom has nothing to do with this world". He was saying, "I am a King but my kingdom is not FROM this world".

Matthew Henry

"He means His kingdom's rise is not from this world. The kingdoms of men arise out of the earth but the holy city comes from God out of heaven. His kingdom is not by succession, election, or conquest but by the immediate and special designation of the Divine will and counsel."

Albert Barnes

"Jesus says that his kingdom is not of this world-that is, it is not of the same nature as earthly kingdoms. It was not originated for the same purpose, or conducted on the same plan. Then He immediately adds a circumstance in which they differ. The kingdoms of the world are defended by arms; they maintain armies and engage in wars. If the kingdom of Jesus had been of this kind, he would have excited the multitudes that followed him to prepare for battle."

4. We must not misuse Jesus's words here to discourage Christian involvement in the public arena.

F. The 6th Misbelief: We must not seek to impose our morality on other people.

1. My personal opinion is that this is one of the worst excuses Christians use for not voting; anyone who believes this has just not thought it through.

2. The laws of a nation define the nation and the character of the people; laws are the expression of morality.

3. God gave Israel the 10 Commandments; an expression of God's nature.

Gary DeMar

“All law is the imposition of someone’s view of morality. The question is, what areas of life are civil magistrates given the authority to legislate, and by what ultimate standard? I guarantee you that non-Christians have no problem imposing their morality on the rest of us. They do it with every piece of legislation they draft and hope to put into law.”

4. There was a time when abortion on demand was illegal; there were laws against it; laws passed by Christians who were involved in politics. Anti-abortion laws were an expression of Christian morality.

a. But in 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the Roe v. Wade decision; by a vote of 7-2, the Court ruled that state laws that banned abortion were unconstitutional.

5. Think of it: 7 men in black robes, appointed made a decision that has resulted in the deaths of over 61 million babies. These men were not elected to office; they were appointed by the President.

6. Our current President has now nominated a Christian woman to sit on the court who could tilt the court toward overturning Roe v. Wade because she is known to be a devout Roman Catholic who actually practices her faith.

And who hates her? Professing Roman Catholic politicians who support legalized abortion.

7. You cannot get away from the importance of politics; somebody is going to impose their morality on someone.

G. The 7th Misbelief: It is Never Right to Resist Authority

1. The Bible clearly sets forth the doctrine of submission to authority.

Romans 13:1 NKJV

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.

Rom 13:1 NLT

Everyone must submit to governing authorities.

Romans 13:2

For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

2. The operative word that leads to misbelief is ‘never’.

Roger Williams

Founder of the colony of Rhode Island (1603-1683)

“This scripture must not be wrested from its place...it cannot mean that the power of the civil magistrate may be exercised in matters of the spirit and soul.”

3. The Bible itself proves when the kingdoms of men collide with the Kingdom of God we must obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:27-29

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name?

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

a. We see the same principle in Acts 4:

Acts 4:18-20

So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

4. There are many biblical examples of godly civil disobedience:

a. In the book of Exodus, Pharaoh commanded the midwives to kill all male babies born to the Hebrews; the first recorded post-birth abortions.

Exodus 1:17

But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.

Exodus 1:18

So Pharaoh called them on the carpet.

But God delivered them and blessed them in Exodus 1:20-21

So God was kind to the midwives...and because they feared God He gave them families of their own.

c. In the Book of Daniel, the King commanded the 3 Hebrew children to bow down and worship his golden image; but they refused.

We will not bow down

d. Daniel defied the King's command and ended up in the lion's den, but God delivered him. The lesson is...

5. God commands us to obey the civil government; up to the point where our obedience to man would require disobedience to God; at that point he will bless the disobedient!

6. Review: We must overcome these....

7 Common Christian Misbeliefs About Politics

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III. Close

A. Our Greatest Need

1. Our greatest need today is to re-enfranchise millions of born-again voters for the coming election.

a. William Wilberforce was an English Christian politician who led the abolition of slavery in Great Britain by mobilizing Christians.

William Wilberforce

(1759-1833)

“A private faith that does not act in the face of oppression is no faith at all.”

b. I found this quote from his great great grandson...

George Wilberforce

“I am often asked what would the campaigns my great great grandfather be fighting if he were alive today—at the top of the list would be the issue of abortion.”

2. Awakened American Christians are, quite rightly, calling us to PRAY!
But I will close with this:

William Wilberforce

“There is a time to get on your knees and pray. But there is a time to get up off your knees and do something!”

3. We need to pray that God deliver us from all misbelief that has immobilized us politically; then we must act. These words are still true...

Thomas Jefferson

“The government you elect is the government you deserve.”