

# Where Is Our Citizenship?

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I was born during World War II—I'm not a boomer, I was actually born during the war and as a young boy, I saw all the movies about the exploits of the war. I was fascinated with that. I watched all of the exploits, I was fascinated by what happened during that war and as a young kid, I think anybody who grew up at that age knew about those exploits. About age five, my best friend down the street—he was a little older than I was—bought a model airplane kit. Back in those days it wasn't plastic, it was balsam wood and tissue paper and I remember looking at that—I remember like it was yesterday—and I thought, that's what I want to do; I want to be a pilot.

That realization occurred and then it stuck with me until adulthood and as a result, after high school I went to Texas A&M which was all male, all military at the time. I graduated as a second lieutenant and went into the Air Force. That was just at the time that God decided to throw the switch and began to call me and I began reading His Word. Quickly, within a year, I was faced with a question:

Is being in the military of a human government, with the express purpose of killing millions, when necessary, through nuclear weapons, is that compatible with what I was learning in God's word?

The question then becomes, where is my allegiance? Is it to the military of this government or is it to God Almighty? Actually, that was a dilemma that I had to face before I was even baptized.

I think we know that once we commit to putting our Father first; once we count the cost and are baptized, everything changes. Just about everything changes and I think we have all been through that and understand that. Certainly, a change within me was my attitude towards military service once I had proved it out of God's word.

We know that Christ is admonishing us to seek first the Kingdom of God; Matthew 6:33. We know and we realize that He came to this earth to set an example for us to follow. So, with that in mind, go to Hebrews 6:18. Paul tells us:

**Hebrews 6:18** ... *that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge [Paul is saying we have fled for refuge] to lay hold of the hope set before us.* (NKJV)

What we are going to see is that the fleeing for refuge is fleeing out of this world and that we are called into seeking a heavenly refuge.

19) *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

20) *where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NKJV)*

The Greek word for “forerunner” if you look at Help’s Word Studies is: *A person running ahead to reach a destination before others; that is, arriving safely in advance for the benefit of others who also need to get there.* It is an interesting way of putting it.

Christ is the forerunner of our salvation. He led the way, He set the example for us to follow. Think about that and notice Christ’s perspective about where our allegiance is and where we should look to. Go to John 18:36. We are breaking into the context where Christ is speaking to Pilate. This was shortly before His scourging.

**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.” (NKJV)*

I can remember reading that scripture when I was faced with the decision of staying with the military and staying loyal to the government or following what I read in the Bible. With that in mind, go to Hebrews 12:14, just one short verse. We could spend the rest of the time reading scripture after scripture regarding Christ’s perspective in John 18 and Paul’s perspective in Hebrews 12:14.

**Hebrews 12:14** *Pursue peace with all people [everyone; follow peace, seek peace and pursue it as it is in other scriptures], and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: (KJV)*

If we don’t seek peace, if we don’t pursue peace, if we don’t follow peace we are not going to be in God’s Kingdom. So, I began studying those scriptures and taking those scriptures to heart and it begs a huge question. What is the Kingdom I serve? Think about that. What is the Kingdom I serve?

Back in 1965 I had to answer that question because that was at the height of the cold war with Russia. We had B-52 bombers on alert, we had ICBM’s on alert, we had F106 interceptors on alert ready to counter Russian bombers coming over the north pole. The Vietnam war in 1965 was still popular. That was before it became fashionable to burn draft cards and where the resistance started in that regard. This was a time when young men were being sent to military prison for pledging their allegiance to the Father. Wil Berg talked about that in his message at the Feast. He dealt with situations like that from Pasadena. I knew of men who were going to military prison because they refused to obey a direct order if it meant violating the commandments of God, particularly the Sabbath or the holy days. So, the stakes were really high.

The question is, is our allegiance to a kingdom of men, no matter how well intentioned they might be or is our allegiance to the country we live in—a state or province? For many in the Lone Star State—I grew up in Texas, born in Texas and grew up in Texas—for many in Texas, even to this day, Texas comes before Washington. So is my

allegiance to the State of Texas? As we come very close now to a very consequential election for the President of the United States, this question becomes more important to us. We might ask that question, and that is our subject for today:

Where is our citizenship and where is our allegiance?

What I would like to do is just give you some points to consider because we all have to answer that question individually, between us and God Almighty.

The first point I would like to make as background is:

### **1. The U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, most of the Western societies are following the example of ancient Israel.**

It's recorded very clearly in God's word. What was ancient Israel's historic sin? I think we all know that; we've looked at that a lot in the last few years. It's putting something—anything—before Yehovah. That was their sin. Once they got into trouble, they would get on their knees and appeal to the Almighty and the Almighty would rescue them and then once the crisis was over, they went right back to their idolatry. The same thing is happening today. In Jeremiah 6:13 we break into the flow as Jeremiah is condemning Jerusalem and obviously by extension, Judah, and it can be applied to us today. .

**Jeremiah 6:13** *Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness [taking for the self, looking after the self]; And from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely. (NKJV)*

They have an agenda; today we see that in politics and business.

*14) They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, Peace, peace! When there is no peace. (NKJV)*

We look around the world today and there is no peace. No matter what corner of the world you look into, there is no peace.

*15) Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore, they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, they shall be cast down," says the LORD.*

*16) Thus, says the LORD: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. [The solution is so simple; doing it is difficult but God just said seek the right way.] But they said, We will not walk in it. (NKJV)*

That's what the modern nations today are saying. We don't want God. We want to do what Adam and Eve did; we want to decide for ourselves.

17) *Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, Listen to the sound of the trumpet! But they said, We will not listen.*

18) *Therefore hear, you nations [the entire world], And know, O congregation, what is among them.*

19) *Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people— The fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words Nor My law, but rejected it. (NKJV)*

That is what is happening in the modern world today, certainly in the U.S. and Canada and Australia, and much of Europe. Now go to a very familiar scripture in the New Testament out of the NLT which follows this same theme, 2 Timothy 3:1. I'm going to read this out of the NLT because it has a different slant to it and is enlightening in that regard.

**2 Timothy 3:1** *You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. (NLT)*

We are just beginning to see that.

2) *For people will love only themselves and their money. [Putting themselves and their money before the Almighty] They will be boastful and proud [do we see that on the news today, do we see that at the highest levels of government; elevating the self—of course we do], scoffing at God [many areas of our country scoff at God; in fact scorn you if you dare even to believe God exists], disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. (NLT)*

Is that ever true.

3) *They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others [we see that all the time, presidential debates included] and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. (NLT)*

The interest is, what is good for me and satisfies me.

4) *They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride [we see that every day], and love pleasure rather than God. (NLT)*

Putting personal pleasure before God Almighty.

5) *They will act religious [photo ops and things like that], but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! (NLT)*

Sadly, we see this behavior in the church, but also in the world in which we live. The fact is, today the leaders of our nations fit these two descriptions in Jeremiah and here in Paul's letter to Timothy. Jay Leno famously said, "If God wanted us to vote, He would have given us candidates."

And how true that is. If you look at the last two presidential elections in 2016 and 2020, the thought that occurs to me is, is this the best we can do? Is this the best the United States has to offer?

Just look at the last two elections, we could go back a few years before that but for sake of time we won't, but just the last two elections. Compare what happened in these two elections and what is happening now to our previous presidents and what they have written. Notice how far down we have come as a society. Let me contrast what is going on today with Ronald Reagan. He was the fortieth president of the U.S. and he served from 1981 to 1989. This is a direct quote from him.

*Inside the Bible's pages lies the answer to all problems that mankind has ever known. I hope Americans will read and study the Bible.*

What a concept, for a president to say that. He went on to say at a different time:

*If we ever forget that we are one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.*

Think about that.

Now let me quote from Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States, who was assassinated at the end of the Civil War. Notice what Abraham Lincoln said:

*Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side, my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right.*

What a profound statement.

Then James Madison, the fourth president of the United States said this; this is a fledgling nation now. He says:

*We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.*

Then let's go back to George Washington. This is public prayer that he gave and just think, would we expect this today? Quoting George Washington:

*Oh, Eternal and everlasting God, direct my thoughts, my words and my work. Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb and purge my heart by your Holy Spirit. Daily frame me more and more in the likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ.*

Can you imagine that being said today? If a President said that, the news media would just eat him alive and people would scoff and the intelligence would ridicule because a President would come out and say that and actually believe in God, trust in God and pray to God? How far we have come.

The problem is we are rapidly becoming a secular, Godless nation in the U.S. It's also true for Canada, the U.K and New Zealand, Australia and Western Europe. The church attendance in most of Europe—Poland is an exception—is less than ten percent. They are turning into secular societies. In the United States, we officially celebrate pagan days of worship, don't we? People get vacations for Halloween; we sanction Easter sunrise services and of course we have to have time off for Christmas and New Year's Day and all of that. We officially celebrate pagan days of worship. Making mention of the Creator is a cause for ridicule in many parts of our countries. Some countries are making reading of the Bible a hate crime; that's on the books in Canada. If you read certain parts of the Bible you can be accused of a hate crime.

Our nations are redefining marriage, outlawing school prayer and have legally authorized the murder of millions of unborn babies. All of the above is legal; officially sanctioned by our government, written into the law of the land. Of course, all of this has been prophesied to happen as we read in Jeremiah and we also read that in 2 Timothy 3 and many, many other places.

It is readily apparent, as we get closer to the end, that the Almighty has loosened His bands of restraint around our adversary. The prince of the power of the air is now working overtime to disrupt, confuse and to turn people and societies and governments against God Almighty. In these very difficult times, these trying times, we have to fight that trend and put our Father first, set a Christlike example and yet live in societies that are rapidly becoming like ancient Israel, societies that are circling the drain. We are swimming against that tide.

The first point is that we have to realize that we live in nations that are following the example of ancient Israel. The second point—this is all background as we get to our subject:

## **2. The world is being shown by God Almighty that their way—the world's way, man's way—just does not work.**

As we approach the end of the age, our Father is emphatically showing man that the course man has charted ends in death; it ends in disaster, it ends in pain, it ends in suffering. We have to remember as God's people that man simply doesn't know the way. If we look to ourselves, we do not know the way. Jeremiah 10 and verse 23 is one of my favorite scriptures. This is something that we need to continually remind ourselves of, because apart from the Father, we don't know how to walk; we just don't.

**Jeremiah 10:23** *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. (KJV)*

He just doesn't know how to walk. All of man's institutions and systems are failing, as a result of his failure in knowing the right path and the right direction. Just look around us; our infrastructure is failing, roads, bridges, sewers, water systems. Education is failing, our financial institutions are failing. Our religious institutions are in a state of utter chaos because most of them do not put the Almighty first. Governments are failing, dictatorships are failing, democracies are in the process of failing.

It's true that a democracy is better than most forms of government but the fact is, democracy is fatally flawed when compared to Yehovah's Government. Democracy depends on human beings and the government of our Father depends on the Almighty, the Most-High who has all power and is sovereign. George Carlin who is an American humorist and comedian—he died in 2008 but was popular in the '70's and '80's—he said this quite a few years ago but it's truer today than when he said it:

” The I.Q. and the life expectancy of the average American recently passed each other heading in opposite directions.”

He also said, and this applies to democracies:

“Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups.”

And we see that in our society today. The fact is, a theocracy with God Almighty at the head is the best form of government, the only form that will last, the only form that will stretch into eternity and hopefully that will come sooner rather than later.

Now that leads us to the third point, given the fact that man is going in the wrong direction, nations, individuals, leaders and so forth:

### **3. We are to come out of this world, not be a part of it.**

We are told this. It could be a series of sermons in itself. Let's go to John 17:1; this is the night Christ was betrayed. We read this at Passover time.

**John 17:1** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: (KJV)*

His purpose was to glorify His Father. Now let's go to John 17:14, referring to His disciples.

**John 17:14** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

15) *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world [as we are going to see we have a job to do, we have a function to perform], but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

16) *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (KJV)*

He says it again for emphasis. We are not to be influenced, not to be captivated by Satan's world; we have to be careful about that. In 1 Corinthians 6:14 there is an admonition to a church which was very dysfunctional in their mix of demographics. It was very much akin to a combination of New York City and Las Vegas today.

**2 Corinthians 6:14** [Paul is telling those in Corinth and by extension us today] *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

15) *And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* (KJV)

This includes, not just being yoked together with individuals but being yoked to the world's belief systems and the world's values.

16) *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (KJV)

Paul is quoting Leviticus 26:12 and several other scriptures.

17) *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you ...* (KJV)

We want to be received by the Father and by His Son and we are told not to get mixed up with the world and the world's values and the world's goals—we can't do that.

Now go to the last book of the Bible, Revelation 18:1. Now we come down to the end time and see what the situation is at that time.

**Revelation 18:1** *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.* (KJV)

Can you imagine that? What a time that's going to be.

2) *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils [we see that today among the nations], and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

3) *For all nations [not just some, but all] have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her [the Babylonian system], and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.* (KJV)



This is true for the nations we live in. The goal is money, the goal is power, the goal is control.

4) *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people [think this might be the Father speaking?], that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (KJV)*

So, the question is, do we stay in a system hoping it will change? Working from the inside to maybe change it or do we come out of a Babylonian system that permeates all nations. We see this is part of God's plan. In 2 Corinthians 5:18 there is an instruction from Paul, again to the dysfunctional church, telling them what they should be doing and by extension to us today. Paul reminds us of the big truism in the beginning of verse 18.

**2 Corinthians 5:18** *And all things are of God, [He is the originator of all.] who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

19) *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (KJV)*

Because of all this, verse 20.

20) *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. [The Father] (KJV)*

The Greek word for "ambassador", Help's Word Study says this: *A trusted, respected ambassador who is authorized to speak as God's emissary.* Meaning an ambassador who represents the Kingdom—His Kingdom. If we are ambassadors for God the Father then we represent His Kingdom by our conduct and our words. Ambassadors represent one kingdom to another kingdom and that's a question we are talking about today; where is our kingdom? We're being told we are ambassadors for a kingdom and we represent that kingdom to another kingdom. In our case, we represent the Father's Kingdom, to whatever kingdom we find ourselves in; whatever nation into which we were born or where we are living now, we represent the Father's kingdom to those that surround us. So not only should we come out of the world, but our focus should be not on the world but on our Father's Kingdom and setting a Christlike personal example.

Now the fourth point; we get to the big question.

#### **4. Exactly where is our citizenship.**

Let's go to Hebrews 11:1. We know this scripture almost by heart but we are going to approach it from a standpoint of what kingdom we represent, what kingdom are we a part of and where is our allegiance.

**Hebrews 11:1** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

2) *For by it the elders obtained a good report.* (KJV)

So, who are the elders? In verse 4 it was Abel, verse 5 Enoch, verse 7 Noah, verse 8:

8) *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.* (KJV)

He just followed God.

9) *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise ...* (KJV)

The Greek word for “sojourn” means *to reside as a foreigner, to be a stranger*. He journeyed as a foreigner. He journeyed into a land where he was a stranger.

9 continued) *... as in a strange country ...* (KJV)

The Greek word for “strange” here means *belonging to another; not his country*. It can mean *foreign* or it can mean *alien*. We see Abraham journeyed into a country that belonged to somebody else. It was going to be his country, his land but at that time he was a sojourner, a foreigner, an alien.

9 continued) *... dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob [two more elders], the heirs with him of the same promise:*

10) *For he looked [now he is looking forward] for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* (KJV)

His focus was looking forward to a heavenly dwelling place, a spiritual dwelling place. Verse 11 mentioned Sarah and then jumping to verse 13:

13) *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, [notice this] and confessed that they were strangers [that means a foreigner or an alien] and pilgrims on the earth.* (KJV)

The word “pilgrim” means *a sojourner in a strange place, a foreigner*. All of these realized that they were sojourning in an alien land, a foreign land but their focus was somewhere totally different.

Let’s go to 1 Peter 2 because Peter follows this understanding and repeats this understanding. We’ll read verse 11 from the NIV. [NOTE: Rick meant 1 Peter].

**1 Peter 2:11** *Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. [Your very eternal life]* (NIV)

He's calling the brethren aliens and strangers in the world in which they find themselves. Something we have to always keep in mind. We see that those whom the Father has called, from Abel on, were not part of the countries and the nations they found themselves dwelling in and in some cases, they were jumping from area to area; the apostles certainly did. They were not part of the nations and countries in which they found themselves dwelling. They were actually citizens of a spiritual realm. We see that in Philippians 3:20. I remember reading this as this young second lieutenant in the military and wrestling with these questions of where is my allegiance, where is my loyalty, who do I look to, who do I obey? It says it pretty plainly.

**Philippians 3:20** *For our citizenship is in heaven, [the New Living Translation says we are citizens of heaven] from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ ... (NKJV)*

The Greek word for "citizenship" is Strong's #4175 and it's the only time it's used in the Bible and it's the Greek word *politeia* and we get our English word *politics* from that word. It means, literally, *a form of government*. It goes on to say, *in usage it can mean a state or a commonwealth*. So, Peter is saying our state or our commonwealth or our form of government is in heaven, it's not on this earth. The fact is, once we count the cost, once we are baptized, our citizenship changes and our allegiance should change also; our ultimate allegiance, who we ultimately obey. In Ephesians 2:18 from the New Living Translation Paul is talking to the Jews and the Gentiles.

**Ephesians 2:18** *Now all of us [both Jews and Gentiles] can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.  
19) So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. (NLT)*

They were citizens of God's Government and of God's Kingdom.

*20) Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. (NLT)*

Pretty clear. Now go to Christ's words in Matthew 10:16. Christ is addressing His disciples and warning them; telling them a truth that they would soon find out.

**Matthew 10:16** *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves [as strangers and foreigners]: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (KJV)*

Don't create problems for yourself.

*17) But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; [the Jews]*

18) *And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 21.

21) *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. (KJV)*

Horrible times.

22) *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake [there is going to come such a time]: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

23) *But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. (KJV)*

After reading all these scriptures, it doesn't sound to me, like the followers of Christ will be involved or part of the governments of this world. If we are ready to flee and go to a different state, province, city or township to get away from persecution, we are probably not going to be part of that government. The reason is, our calling—frankly, our citizenship—is so much higher. The country, the province, the nation that we pledge our allegiance to is so much higher than something physical; it is spiritual.

The New Testament church began inside the Roman Empire, we know that. Stop and ask the question, what was one of the most egregious sins of the Roman Empire. Obviously, it was idolatry; they had multiple gods they worshipped. Next to idolatry, it was slavery. There were several ways you could become a slave in Rome. You could borrow money and not pay it back and you were sold into slavery. You could not pay your taxes and the government would come after you, take everything you had and sell you into slavery. Poor people would often sell a child into slavery in order to support themselves and the rest of their children. The biggest source of slaves came in battle. As an example, it was reported that Julius Caesar, in his campaign against the Galls in France—from 59 B.C. to 51 B.C.—in that eight-year period he sent over a million slaves to Rome. There were numerous ways to become a slave. It's estimated by several scholars that over half the population of the Roman Empire were slaves.

That begs the question: Did Christ address and condemn that egregious, horrible sin of making one man a slave to another man? There's no record of that; none I could find. You have to ask the question, why? Why didn't He address that? His mission from His Father was so much higher. He was not concerned with that horrible government and how they enslaved people and persecuted people; He was not concerned with that.

What about the apostles? Paul addresses the issue and its instruction. Go to Ephesians 6:5 and we'll read this out of the NIV. What does he say to slaves and to the masters of

slaves? Does he lead a revolt? Does he lead an insurrection or a movement of some kind?

**Ephesians 6:5** *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear [oh really?], and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.*

6) *Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.*

7) *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people,*

8) *because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.*

9) *And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. (NIV)*

It is interesting to note that Paul did not instruct those who were part of God's church, who had slaves, to free them. Isn't that interesting? You would think, this is a horrible sin, why didn't He instruct the masters to free their slaves. In 1 Corinthians 7:20 Paul addressed the same subject again to this church that was highly dysfunctional and which had a lot of problems. They were not very mature and he is trying to educate them. He is instructing all in the church.

**1 Corinthians 7:20** *Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.*

21) *Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.*

22) *For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise, he who is called while free is Christ's slave. (NKJV)*

Why would Paul make these two different statements in a letter to Ephesians and a letter to the Corinthians? The point is, their focus was not on their current society. It was not on the Roman Empire and the sins of the Roman Empire. Remember, we are told, seek you first the Kingdom of God; change to become like Jesus Christ--that is the focus. These scriptures show us that the focus is not on the government under which we find ourselves.

We have to understand that our citizenship is not of this world. We have to understand that mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We are called to rise above the national issues that beset us and swirl around us in the countries we're involved in. If we were a citizen of Somalia there would be a whole different grouping of concerns, problems and issues as opposed to here in the United States. We are to rise above that because our focus is on spiritual matters, not on physical matters.

The fifth and last point:

## **5. What about the subject of voting?**

When you think about it—no voting was necessary in the Old Testament because it was a theocracy; God’s government—the nation of Israel was a theocracy. Of course, they didn’t want that but the fact is, God was their ruler. They tried to elect or appoint kings and the Father said to Samuel, they are not rejecting you, they are rejecting me. But no voting was necessary.

In the New Testament, the apostles and the brethren had no say in the affairs of the Roman government because they were a conquered people. Palestine was a conquered people, they had no “vote” at all. The fact is, today we live in democratic societies. In the main, they didn’t exist back then; voting was mostly unheard of. Early Greece was an exception and the early Roman Empires were exceptions; they started off as democracies but quickly devolved into dictatorships as any student of history knows.

Pacific has said from the beginning voting is a personal matter; it’s between you and God the Father. We have said we should not judge one another if somebody decides to vote or somebody decides not to vote, it’s not our business to judge them at all. We are not to judge our brothers or sisters. Let’s consider the following scriptures when we think about this whole subject pertaining to voting. Let’s go to Psalm 75:6-7; trying to get an idea of our Father’s perspective on the nations of the earth.

**Psalm 75:6** *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*

7) *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* (KJV)

We are going to see that the Father is sovereign. Go to 1 Samuel 2:6; we’re breaking into the prayer of the mother of Samuel, Hannah. She is praying, praising God Almighty, Yehovah.

**1 Samuel 2:6** *The LORD killeth, and maketh alive [He is sovereign, we live at His pleasure]: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*

7) *The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.*

8) *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes [among officials, higher rank], and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and he hath set the world upon them.* (KJV)

Now let’s go to Daniel 2:20. God Almighty appeared to Daniel and talked to him. Here we are breaking into Daniel’s response to God the Father.

**Daniel 2:20** *Daniel answered [he’s answering the Father] and said, blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:*

21) *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings [clear statement; the Father is almighty, He is sovereign—He can remove a king, He can make a king] ...* (KJV)

Now go to chapter 4:17 from the NIV.

**Daniel 4:17** *'The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most-High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people. (NIV)*

The King James says “sets up the basest of men”. Certainly, God Almighty did that in the case of Saul because he was of the smallest tribe and he was apparently of the smallest clan of the smallest tribe when he was made king. As we know, David was the youngest of his brothers and he was out in the field herding sheep; nobody thought he would be elevated to king but our Father has different ideas from humans. He can set over a nation who He wants. Continuing in Dan 4:30

30) ... *The king spake [this refers to Nebuchadnezzar], and said, [notice the pride and vanity in which he speaks] Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?*

31) *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.*

32) *And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. (KJV)*

God is sovereign, He will do what He will do. Nothing happens without our Father's knowledge or without His approval—nothing happens on earth without that. Now let's ask the question, does the Father determine every official? Minor officials, city commissioners, State legislators and all of that? We find an answer in Hosea 8:2, in the next book over. We'll read this out of the NIV.

**Hosea 8:2** *Israel cries out to me 'Our God, we acknowledge you!*

3) *But Israel has rejected what is good; an enemy will pursue him.*

4) *They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold, they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. (NIV)*

So, we see here that the Father allows mankind to choose his own leaders within limits. Whatever the limits the Father sets. It depends on the time, the place and the country and all of that. He allows mankind to choose certain leaders within His limits and allows mankind to suffer the consequences of their choices. However, it's obvious from all the scriptures that we've read thus far, that our Father does indeed determine major world leaders to fulfill His purpose, to fulfill His plan and as we get closer to the end, you would think that even more world leaders would be chosen by our Father to fulfill end time prophecy. My only vote for President was in 1964 and I was just being called and I

voted for Barry Goldwater, a conservative Republican, versus Lyndon Johnson who was a liberal Texas Democrat and most of us in Texas had had a belly full of Lyndon Johnson but the rest of the country didn't know that. The fact is, Johnson won by the largest margin in history; in a landslide. That shows you my discernment of God's will. Taking into consideration all the above scriptures and the fact is, we as human beings do not know the hearts and the intents of the candidates. Only our Father knows that; He knows the hearts. Nor do we know our Father's specific plan for this nation or that nation in this moment in time because God sees the entire picture, He sees the road down to its final conclusion and we do not. We don't know who He wants for President to fulfill His will because He sees things we cannot see and those things we cannot know. Therefore, speaking personally, I don't want to be at cross purposes with our Father and possibly vote against our Father's will; that is just my personal decision. As I said before, people have voted for President, they do vote for President and if they feel that that's something they should do, that's their decision between them and God Almighty and we should not judge anybody. But let's remember basic principles, let's recognize basic principles. Let's go to Isaiah 55:8; we have to remember these basic scriptures, especially regarding God's will versus our will.

**Isaiah 55:8** *For my thoughts are not your thoughts [human beings], neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

9) *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (KJV)*

Our Father is not a Republican nor is He a Democrat. He is so far above that, He is in absolute control of everything, He sees everything, He knows everything. That being said, in the U.S., Canada, Australia and the democratic countries, we do live in a democracy. The U.S., because I know the history of the U.S. better than the other countries, was founded by humans with Godly motives; slavery being an exception. But our founding fathers did look to God Almighty.

What about voting in local issues? Let's say they want to run a freeway right through your front door or they want to expand school because they are behind—because of weather or who knows what—to include the Sabbath or they want to outlaw home schooling—something that affects each one of us directly as far as our keeping God's law. I would say to all of those, pray and vote. Your vote could be counted and has an influence on local situations. Pray and vote; if it were me, that's what I would do. Pacific has said from the beginning, voting is a personal matter, voting or not voting is not a salvational matter and we should not judge or condemn others whether they vote or not vote. So, I'm just giving you some points to consider and it's an individual decision.

Let's sum up now. In scripture we've seen that modern nations are following the example of ancient Israel; selfishness and idolatry. The Father is painfully showing mankind that man's way does not work. Throughout the Bible, we are told to come out of the Babylonian system, Satan's system, that has permeated the world and will rule the world toward the end. We've seen that our citizenship is in heaven; it is a spiritual citizenship, not a physical citizenship and then regarding voting in a democratic election,



is a personal matter. The fact is, we live in increasingly uncertain times and unsettling times. It's easy for us as humans to feel isolated and alone.

We recently had an article in the Herald Republic, on September 7 and it was talking about the Kaiser Family Foundation—they did a nationwide survey—about those experiencing anxiety or depression. They found out a year ago that 11% of the population experienced anxiety or depression. It has increased now to 40%. They determined the cause and it's obvious, social isolation, loneliness, job loss, economic worries, fear of getting the virus and on and on. With all the division and all the polarization in our country and in the world frankly, we have riots, burnings, looting on our streets, hatred among individuals, among nations, among races; it's easy to lose our focus on heavenly matters and get caught up in all of this. Our focus should be where our citizenship is. In Colossians 3:1 there is something we all need to keep in mind because it's so easy to get caught up in the physical matters that surround us.

**Colossians 3:1** [Paul says to us today and to Colossae back then] *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

2) *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.* (KJV)

The Greek word for “affection” means *to interest one's self in, with concern or obedience*. Set your interest, your concern, your obedience on things above. Go back to 2 Corinthians 10:3; a reminder from Paul and he has many reminders to the church at Corinth. It's actually his third letter, the first one wasn't recorded.

**2 Corinthians 10:3** *For though we walk in the flesh [we are in the flesh, no doubt about that], we do not war after the flesh:* (KJV)

According to man, according to Satan, according to this world.

4) *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

5) *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;* (KJV)

Put God first, become like His Son. The fact is, the world is going to do what the world is going to do. It is prophesied, the Father is in control of that, He allows Satan to provoke but the world is headed in the direction that mankind wants, that Satan provokes mankind to want, but it is under the Father's supreme control and supreme will. Why, in times like this, should our focus be in the heavens? It's obvious; that is the only long-term solution, that's what the Feast of Trumpets pictures. The Father's government, He and His Son coming to rule the earth; that is the only solution. Our job is to prepare ourselves for that day. Do we want to be a sheep or do we want to be a goat? Do we want to be the good wheat or do we want to be the tare?

We are living in very uncertain times and it's only going to get worse in this coming year, it's not going to get better. One thing is obvious, the pace of the fall of society in general is rapidly accelerating. Let's conclude with one scripture that is one of the most encouraging passages of scripture, especially if you are unsettled by recent events. Go to 2 Kings 6; this is the example of Elisha who followed Elijah. The background is that of Syria and Israel at war. The king of Syria is coming after Elisha. Elisha is residing in Dothan and Dothan is surrounded by a great army from the king of Assyria. Elisha's servant is scared to death. Verse 15.

**2 Kings 6:15** *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?*

16) *And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*

17) *And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* (KJV)

A spiritual army, unseen to human eyes.

18) *And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.* (KJV)

The point is, Elisha's servant did not see reality. The Father performed a miracle and opened his eyes so that he could readily see that the mountain was full of spiritual horses, spiritual chariots of fire, spiritual beings, ready to do battle according to the Father's will. The lesson for us is, not only do we have likeminded brethren with us and what a blessing that is, but we have spiritual help from our loving Father and his Son. That spiritual help comes from a realm that far surpasses any human power or any human government or from our adversary who provokes these human governments and tries to destroy us. Our Father's power is greater than all of that. Our citizenship is in a unseen realm, a spiritual realm that is hidden from most of mankind. It far surpasses any human form of government, any physical government. We cannot forget that. So, in these perilous times, our focus should be on where our citizenship should be and where our allegiance should always be; on the Kingdom of God our Father.