

Chapter 18 – Faith and Works, and Trusting God While Working in Politics and Government

A. What does it mean to trust God's Sovereignty over the direction of world history?

→ To believe and have confidence & peace in what God says about his rule over the nations

1. **God rules over the rulers and destinies of nations** (Pss 22:28, 66:7, 75:6-7, 103:19; Job 12:23; Prov 21:1; Dan 4:17; Jn 19:11; Ac 17:26; Rom 13:1)
 - a. God was sovereign over pagan Roman empire for His grand purposes (Caesar Augustus' decree, Lk 2:1-7)
 - (1) Caesar did not rule the world, God did (perhaps difficult to see at the time, but not now) (Ps. 22:8; cf. Gal 4:4-5)
2. **God will accomplish his good purposes on the earth**
 - a. God will accomplish his good purposes for Christian believers and for his church (Rom 8:28; Mt 16:18)
 - (1) Jesus, exalted & enthroned in Heaven, continues to work on earth (Eph. 5:25-27).
 - b. God's plans for all history
 - (1) God's plans for all history will stand, cannot be defeated (Isa. 46:9-10)
 - (2) Christ's promise regarding the course of history and the nations (Rev 2:26)
 - (3) Our work for God on this earth, even when seemingly defeated, has eternal purpose (Ex. Christian Lawyers who argue for freedom, justice, and righteousness in oppressive countries and lose, cf. Mt. 25:21).
 - c. Christ will return and will one day rule over the nations
 - (1) Who will one day rule the world? the EU? the Pres. of U.S.? the UN? No. – Christ will (1 Thess 4:16; Rev 11:15)
 - (2) In light of every verse discussed to this point, our fundamental disposition toward gov't & politics should be trust in God, never anxiety or fear (Isa 26:3), not even when it seems we are losing.
3. **God works through human actions to bring about his purposes**
 - a. God has not, yet, chosen to remove evil from the Earth (2 Tim 3:1-4, 3:12-13)
 - b. Evil in the world does immense harm God's image bearers
 - (1) 49 million preborn babies have been killed in the US alone.
 - (2) Sexual innocence and modesty of children are no longer the norm in the Western Hemisphere
 - (3) Nearly all sense of moral accountability to God has been removed from gov't and public square
 - (4) Terrorist bombs kill hundreds-to-thousands of victims in the world
 - (5) Christians in North Korea, China, and many Muslim nations are put to death for their faith.
 - (6) Rich and powerful oppress the poor and weak
 - (7) Powerful media outlets receive immense wealth by glorifying immoral conduct
 - (8) Marriage, families, & individual lives destroyed by alcoholism, drugs, sexual addictions, gambling addiction, dishonesty, and violence
 - (9) God's name is slandered rather than honored or praised by millions of people on the earth
 - c. To oppose evil, God works through our human actions to bring about the fulfillment of his purposes in history
 - (1) God calls us to pray (Mt 6:10)
 - (2) God calls us to evangelize (Mt 28:19-20)
 - (3) God does not often miraculously change the world without using a great deal of human effort (works through us!)
 - (4) William Wilberforce had to work his entire life before slavery was abolished in England
 - (5) Many thousands of Christians have worked for many years for preborn children, efforts not yet succeeded (I believe one day they will succeed)
 - (6) God calls us to work for good laws in gov't on earth, civil gov't is a primary device to restrain evil (Rom 13:4)
 - d. Our work is not done in the midst of confusion or uncertainty
 - (1) The final goal is for people on earth to live in accordance with the moral laws of God and to honor him.
 - (2) It is pleasing to God when we work toward the above goal
 - (3) We are to pray & act so that God's kingdom will come and his will will be done "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10)

B. The Future: Will the U.S. become a better or worse nation in the next few decades? – Will the work of Christians to bring about "significant Christian influence" succeed or fail? Only God knows the future.

1. **Negative signs pointing to God's impending judgment**

- a. There are signs of increased evil in the US which me worry about God's judgment (Ps. 66:7)
 - (1) Judgment could include economic collapse, disease epidemic, military attack from enemies, totalitarian gov't, some other means
- b. Hollywood, TV shows glorify adultery, premarital sex, homosexual conduct, murder, violence, demonic perversion
- c. Pornography floods the nation in print and on the internet
- d. Imposition of same-sex marriage (Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire)
- e. Massive irresponsible consumer and gov't debt
- f. Complacency about Islamic terrorism
- g. Complacency about nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea and, perhaps, Iran

- h. Possible trend in the evangelical world : God's moral standards really don't matter (ex. Ted Haggard, Gov. Mark Sanford, Sen. John Ensign, Sen. David Vitter)
 - i. "Christianity lite"
 - j. Presidential administration pushing far-left agenda (abortion rights, legitimacy of homosexual conduct, activist judges, swallowing up of large sections of economy, increased gov't control over personal lives)
- 2. Positive signs points to God's continued blessing and perhaps even to a revival of the church**
- a. Remarkable growth of home-schooling movement and private Christian schools teaching moral standards & truth
 - b. Evangelical Theological Society
 - c. Evangelical Seminaries
 - d. Good, reliable Bible translations
 - e. Strong parachurch and missions organizations thriving
 - f. Remarkable Christian influence on the Internet
 - g. Increasing unity, life, & spiritual power in churches (ex. California churches united for Prop. 8)
 - h. Courageous and committed younger generation of Christians
 - i. High-profile Christians have not been able to hide their sin. God's plan for exposure, discipline, revival? (1 Pet 4:17)
 - j. Victories of Christian Legal Organizations (ADF, LLI, Liberty Counsel, CLS, American Center for Law and Justice)
 - k. ADF's Blackstone Legal Fellowship
 - l. Outpouring of new worship songs
 - m. Remarkable (unprecedented) growth of Bible-believing evangelical churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America
- 3. North America, Europe, and Australia are the only continents untouched by world revival.** I have a strong expectation that the U.S. will included in this revival.
- C. The Details of Revival: What might it look like if God brought about a revival of the Church and a transformation of the nation for good?**
- 1. Preliminary steps**
- a. Evidence of deeper love for God and commitment to prayer (Jas 4:8)
 - b. Evidence of deeper repentance for sin and commitment to personal holiness in the Church (Heb 12:14)
 - c. Turning of many to Christ for the first time
 - d. Returning to Christ of those who have strayed
 - e. Personal evangelism will begin to bear much fruit (perhaps even in high gov't – Supreme Court, Exec. Branch, Congress; perhaps in Hollywood and Academia as well)
 - f. Pattern of events in the NT re. conversion – manifestations of the truth of the Gospel, powerful gospel presentations, God bearing witness by signs, wonders & miracles (Heb 2:4; Rom 15:19)
- 2. Next steps (part 1): the church**
- a. Increase of solid teaching to believers leading to mature disciples (moral standards & conduct, proper doctrine, holiness, etc.) (Eph 4;14-15)
 - (1) This would include sound teaching re. the Bible's standards and principles for civil gov't
- 3. Next steps (part 2): the society**
- a. Societal renewal follows large scale personal renewal; in the US, may look like:
 - (1) Courts return to their proper role as interpreters rather than take power to create laws
 - (2) Congress as a whole would seek truly seek the good of the nation, rather than personal political ambitions
 - (3) Christians at all levels of gov't would maintain religious freedom for all (Bible teaches faith cannot be compelled)
 - (4) Executive branch may encourage: Protection of life of preborn, protection of marriage between one man & one woman, protection of individual freedom & liberty, protection of the nation from those who would attack it.
 - (5) News media composed mostly of reporters who promote objective genuine truthfulness for the good of the nation
 - (6) Entertainment industry may, through Christian influence, turn to be purified and create great films depicting conflict between good and evil in human conduct.
 - (7) Universities find Christians can bring great influence on faculty, books, courses (need to be genuinely truthful)
 - (8) Increased school choice in public schools and increased parental control of education
 - (9) Commerce becomes a model of integrity, productivity, and innovation
 - (10) Permanence of marriage the norm
 - (11) Respectful obedience of children
- 4. Working now for such revival and transformation:** Until such revival comes, the work of Christians at all levels of society and gov't is necessary to protect the freedoms that bring about the above changes.
- a. Christian lawyers defending freedom of religion, speech, marriage, right to life.
 - (1) Measure of success is up to God, but we may be pleasantly surprised
 - b. Whether we're like Paul in prison or in the midst of great revival, we must work hard & pray for the good of our nation
 - (1) Faith in God & hard work are not contradictory; God works through our human actions (Jn 15:5).
 - c. At the end of the days, we might be able say for ourselves the words of 2 Tim 4:7-8 with the apostle Paul.