

# Kingdom of God: An Election Day Sermon

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## I. Introduction

- A. In the Massachusetts colony, Election Day was an important holiday
1. Puritans didn't observe Christmas, so Election Day was one of biggest days
    - a. A cannon would fire to signal for everyone to gather at the local church
    - b. Officials & candidates would march in parade from town hall to church.
  2. They would all listen intently to the Election Day sermon (2-3 hours).
    - a. This sermon didn't endorse candidates or deal with political issues
      - 1) It reminded people that God ordained government because of sin
      - 2) Government was to promote the common good and oppose evil
    - b. Candidates were charged that they must promote virtue and suppress vice.
      - 1) Citizens were taught that they had responsibility to obey such rulers
      - 2) Candidates were warned ungodly rulers would eventually be judged.
    - c. Of course, these sermons weren't always successful in avoiding issues; sermon in Boston in 1776, "*On the Right to Rebel Against Governors*"
  3. People would then discuss the sermon, and then they would go vote.
- B. This year I thought I'd preach an Election Day sermon (*but not for 2-3 hours*)
1. In keeping with tradition, I will endorse no candidates nor political party
    - a. I believe in the old adage, "*If you can't say something nice...*"
    - b. Many of us admitted last Wed. that we're looking forward to this Wed!
  2. Tuesday's election is historic; elect either a black president or female VP
    - a. This election is historic in another way-- amount of fear being generated
      - 1) We're embroiled in a war and on the precipice of economic collapse
      - 2) Editorial lamented what we need isn't McCain or Obama, but FDR!
    - b. Historic elections don't come around every day... and aren't we glad!
  3. This won't take 3 hours because I have only 1 point (*take awhile to get there*)
    - a. When it comes to our political life as Christians, it's easy to miss the point
    - b. Some think that all faithful Christians vote same way (preacher in Wis)
    - c. My one point this morning is to suggest **why** this can never be the case

## II. The Kingdom of God: An Election Day Sermon

- A. We begin with some deep background— in coronation of Josiah in 639 BC
1. Josiah became king at age 8 following the assassination of his father Amon
    - a. His grandfather Manasseh ruled for 55 years as Judah’s most wicked king
      - 1) Manasseh introduced Molech worship, offering infants as sacrifice
      - 2) He erected idols in the Temple and banished the worship of Yahweh
      - 3) Writer of 2 Kings says Manasseh filled Jerusalem with blood (**21:16**)
    - b. Josiah began to seek God at 16 and began series of reforms (**2 Chr 34:3**)
  2. At 26, he restored the Temple and “*Book of the Law*” was rediscovered
    - a. This book (likely Deut) showed how far Judah was from God’s will
    - b. He had it read to the people and pledged to follow it (**2 Kings 23:3**)
      - 1) Josiah then launched further reforms to bring Judah back to God
      - 2) Not content to restore Judah, he tore down altar in North (**23:15**)
    - c. No king before or after was as dedicated to Lord God (**2 Kings 23: 25**)
      - 1) Never before had their been a ruler more focused on serving God
      - 2) There’s David “*man after God’s heart*” and “*Good King Hezekiah*”
      - 3) But for personal piety and devotion to God, none compared to Josiah
  3. Despite personal piety, Josiah didn’t lead Judah to victory (**2 Kin 23:26**)
    - a. Josiah died in an ill-advised battle with Pharaoh Necho at age 39 (607)
    - b. He died on the plain of Megiddo, and with him died nation of Judah
    - c. The defeat was so significant it lent its name to later battle, *Armageddon*
- B. What does this thrilling history lesson have to do with election? *Let’s go on.*
1. Josiah died at Megiddo trying to stop Egyptians from aiding Assyrians.
    - a. The Egypt-Assyria alliance was formed to oppose the rising Babylonians
      - 1) Nebuchadnezzar had sacked Nineveh and moved to finish the job
      - 2) Egyptian-Assyrian army was defeated at Battle of Carchemish (607)
    - b. Assyria was completely destroyed and influence of Egypt severely reduced
  2. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonian Empire controlled the whole world
    - a. He was a vicious, brutal tyrant who had his foot on neck of the world
    - b. Difference between he and Hitler was Nebuchadnezzar *did conquer world*

3. Yet all thru the Biblical narrative, we see God working in Nebuchadnezzar
    - a. The book of Habakkuk begins with the prophet crying out to God
      - 1) He wants God to do something because of Judah's sin (**Hab 1:3-4**)
      - 2) God says He is raising up the Babylonians to punish (**Hab 1:6**)
      - 3) That doesn't satisfy Habakkuk, but it shows God working in Babylon
    - b. God has Jeremiah call Nebuchadnezzar as "*my servant*" (**Jer 25:9, 27:6**)
      - 1) God would use Babylon and exile to move His people back to Him
      - 2) So what righteous Josiah could not do, Nebuchadnezzar would do!
  4. It was to Nebuchadnezzar that God revealed "*things to come*" (**Dan 2:29**)
    - a. Nebuchadnezzar saw an huge image made of gold, silver, bronze & iron
      - 1) A huge rock was cut out without hands that destroys the image
      - 2) The rock then became a great mountain that grew to fill the earth
    - b. The point of the vision was that God would establish his eternal kingdom
    - c. He would establish His eternal kingdom in the days of 4<sup>th</sup> great power
      - 1) But Nebuchadnezzar was head of gold; this dream was given to him
      - 2) God used "*ruthless and impetuous*" Nebuchadnezzar to do His will
- C. What if righteous Josiah was running in election against Nebuchadnezzar?
1. Suppose voted for who be emperor of world. *Who would you vote for?*
    - a. Josiah would run on a platform of holiness and personal integrity
    - b. Nebuchadnezzar's campaign slogan was, "*Vote for me or I'll kill you*"
  2. Who would you vote for? I'd vote for Josiah, my favorite OT character.
    - a. He was born under wicked Manasseh (fortunate not to be sacrificed).
    - b. He rose above father/grandfather to become a holy and good man.
    - c. He tried by the sheer force of his own faith to muscle Judah back to God
  3. But God worked thru arrogant, violent Nebuchadnezzar to do His will
    - a. At times, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God— likeafter fiery furnace
    - b. He praised God when he was restored after 7 years of insanity (**Dan 4:37**)
  4. But he never tried to move his people to worship God as did Josiah
    - a. I would have voted for Josiah, but God was able to use Nebuchadnezzar
    - b. God rules the world no matter who appears to be ruling the world!

### III. Conclusion

- A. On Tuesday, we have privilege of casting our vote for our next national leader
1. There really isn't anything particularly Biblical about democracy
    - a. When God set up His earthly kingdom in the OT, it wasn't a democracy
      - 1) The whole Bible was written to people ruled by tyrants and despots
      - 2) Bible was written to people without penicillin or indoor plumbing
    - b. There's nothing to suggest that the heavenly kingdom will be democratic
    - c. It can't be... there won't be any politicians there. (*OK, one cheap shot*)
  2. The right to vote is a great blessing that we should take very seriously
    - a. Before you vote, study all the issues and the candidates as best you can.
      - 1) Expose yourself to all sides, not just NPR/CNN or Fox/Limbaugh)
      - 2) Discuss the issues and candidates with others in a respectful way
    - b. Before you vote, spend some time in prayer. *Dare we not?*
    - c. Before you vote, read **Romans 13:1-7** which speaks of purpose of gov't
  3. And then vote your conscience as you believe that God would want you to
- B. But before and after voting, know that God king of kings, Lord of presidents
1. God reigns over all the earth **no matter** who occupies the White House!
    - a. God worked through Nebuchadnezzar just as he worked thru Josiah
    - b. Whether we elect a donkey or elephant, we are the party of the Lamb!
      - 1) There is no Christian candidate/party. *Politics is always compromise*
      - 2) And we must **never** judge one's desire for God by their politics!
      - 3) This is Romans 14 issue; whatever your choice, make it for God
  2. At some point Tues/Wed (*I hope*), we'll hear a victory/concession speech
    - a. Both of those speeches will probably mention "*the will of the people*"
      - 1) But we know the future will not be determined by will of the people
      - 2) Faith means that we believe the future belongs to the will of God.
    - b. John Greenleaf Whittier, "*Before me, even as behind, God is, and all is well.*"
  3. That's my one point—when we wake up on Wednesday, God will reign!