

What is Jesus Doing?

CHRIST, THE ONLY WISE KING

Tomorrow is President's Day. Though you might think President's Day refers to all former U.S. presidents, it was actually created to celebrate the first president of the United States of America: George Washington.

It's thought by many people that all the founding fathers were staunch Christians. This was not entirely true. While Washington, for example, frequently spoke of divine providence, and his Farewell Address emphasized the importance of morality in government, he attended church services but rarely took communion. This leads some historians to question whether he was a Deist rather than a Christian as were a number of the other Founding Fathers.

For context, Deism is the belief in a creator God who made an orderly universe governed by the law of physics and thereafter, left it to run on its own like a well-manufactured clock. Clearly this is a very different view than we hold as followers of Jesus, with Whom we have a personal relationship.

Nonetheless, Washington's personal letters often referenced God's guidance, and he regularly called the nation to prayer. After Washington's death in 1799, Americans began to officially celebrate the former president's birthday, which fell on February 22nd. This yearly celebration continued until 1971, when President Richard Nixon officially declared President's Day a holiday honoring all U.S. presidents.

Today, President's Day serves as a broader celebration of leadership, democracy, and national history. It is supposed to be a day when we reflect on the leaders who have shaped our nation. We honor their contributions and remember their legacies. But amidst our reflections, it is important to consider a deeper truth—one that transcends the transient nature of earthly leadership.

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Throughout our history as a nation, we have seen a myriad of leaders, each with their own strengths and weaknesses both real and perceived. From the noble intentions of George Washington as first President and Founding Father, to the resolute determination of Abraham Lincoln, helping our nation to heal from a horrendous Civil War, ...for the most part, our leaders have strived to guide our nation through times of prosperity and adversity. Yet, despite their best efforts, they were only human, and all human leadership is inherently flawed.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that...

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- Romans 3:23

This includes our political leaders, who, despite their sometimes-noble intentions, are subject to human frailties. The quest for power, the temptation of corruption, and the influence of worldly desires often lead to decisions that may not align with God's perfect will.

Consider the example of King Saul, the first king of Israel. Chosen by the people for his outward appearance and stature, Saul initially showed promise as a leader. However, his disobedience to God and reliance on his own judgment ultimately led to his downfall.

Saul's story serves as a poignant reminder that human leadership, when not rooted in obedience to God, is destined for failure. Saul's story also shows us that we shouldn't make assumptions about what the will of God is just because something seems right to us. People can get very angry in support of, or in criticism of whoever is the current President. This has been true throughout our history as a Democracy, or a Republic, whichever you prefer...

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Sadly, and to our shame as Christians, we often seem to associate our party or candidate with our belief in God and become entrenched in our conversations about politics. We should remember that unjust wars and horrible atrocities have been perpetrated by various religions, and even denominations, all claiming that “God is on our side”. The Nazi Storm Troopers wore Belt Buckles proclaiming “*Gott Mit Uns*”. God with us. Especially as followers of Jesus, we need to be careful NOT to confuse political alliances with God’s Will.

King David, Saul’s successor and the progenitor of the line of Jesus said this...

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

- Psalm 118:8-9

God’s own Word shows us continually and consistently that no matter who is ruling our nation, Christ should always rule our lives as believers and is the ultimate authority. Jesus states in the Gospel of Matthew...

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

- Matthew 28:18

As we say in our house “whoever may be in the White House, God is still on the throne.” And yet, God does have His purposes for everyone He allows to be in authority. We don’t have to agree with their policies to bow to His Sovereign Will. It behooves us to remember that as God told the Israelites through the prophet Isaiah...

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

- Isaiah 55:8-9

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Paul admonishes the Churches in Rome and us as well when he writes...

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

- Romans 13:1

This said and understood, it is not always good and admirable leaders that God allows to rule. The Prophet Daniel understood that the God of Israel had allowed a wicked man to rule Babylon and to rule God's people when they were taken there into exile. Daniel told the wicked King Nebuchadnezzar, who considered himself to be "a god," that it was the one true God that had given him his power when he said this...

You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

- Daniel 2:37

Daniel had asked the God of Israel to reveal to him a prophesy about a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, so that he might communicate it to this king who had the power of life and death over him. Daniel had asked the Lord to reveal to him a truth that only God Himself could know... The Lord revealed it. This is Daniel's prayer of gratitude to God...

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

- Daniel 2:19-21

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The Lord gave Daniel the wisdom he sought just as He will give it to us if WE ask. James advises us in this:

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- James 1:5

As followers of Jesus, we should always be asking God for wisdom. That includes God's wisdom about who we should vote for and why. As American citizens, we each have a right to our political opinions, but we should be acutely aware that the very nature of worldly politics is to get people to vote one way or the other by manipulating their hopes and fears. This is where the influences of the Powers and Principalities hold inordinate sway in our human minds.

We need to rest in the ultimate truth that God governs the affairs of men and agree that we want His will to be done. That is why we should always pray for God's wisdom. God's wisdom will always be consistent with His Word.

Jesus is the Living Word of God who will answer your prayer by His Spirit. We still won't always understand why God allows certain people to rule in the world. This includes all political leaders, who, despite their weight of responsibility to govern well, are subject to human frailties. The quest for power, the temptation of corruption, and the influence of worldly desires often lead to decisions that may not align with God's perfect will.

In our contemporary society, we witness the same challenges that plagued ancient leaders. Political divisions, power struggles, and moral compromises dominate the landscape. Leaders often prioritize personal gain or party loyalty over the common good. Politicians can be swayed by public opinion, special interests, and the desire for re-election. The pursuit of worldly success can cloud righteous judgment, leading to decisions that undermine justice and equity.

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This short-sightedness can result in policies that neglect the marginalized and the poor, perpetuate injustice, and fail to address the deeper spiritual needs of the people.

“It was ever thus”, as my dad used to say. God told the people of Israel in the shadow of Mount Sinai...

*‘Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger,
the fatherless, and widow.’*

- Deuteronomy 27:19

The error of worldly politics lies in its inherent focus on self-interest and temporal matters. In stark contrast to the flawed nature of human leadership stands Christ, the only wise King. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, embodies perfect wisdom, justice, and love. His reign is not limited by time or earthly boundaries. As believers, we recognize that Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, and His authority surpasses all earthly powers. The kingship of Christ is rooted in His divine nature and His sacrificial love.

Isaiah prophesied this declaration of His eternal reign:

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end.”

- Isaiah 9:7-7a

Christ’s kingship is characterized by His unparalleled wisdom and His commitment to justice and peace. Unlike many worldly leaders, who seek to amass power, Christ exemplifies servant leadership.

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In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus declares...

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

- Matthew 20:28

His humility and selflessness set Him apart from any earthly ruler, any King, any President. As followers of Christ, we are called to live under His kingship, recognizing Him as our ultimate authority. This requires a shift in perspective, moving away from the transient nature of worldly politics and embracing the eternal truth of Christ's reign.

In navigating the complexities of life and leadership, we must seek divine wisdom rather than relying solely on human understanding. Christ, our Wonderful Counselor, provides the guidance we need to make righteous decisions even as we live here in a world that is still fallen and foolish.

What we do know, and that upon which we can rely, is that one day Jesus Christ will return in glory and rule with righteousness. It was again the prophet Daniel who in his visions saw the coming Kingdom and the future reign of Jesus Christ...

*I was watching in the night visions, and behold,
One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.*

*Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.*

- Daniel 7:13-14

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Until then, as believers and as citizens of the United States, we need to trust in His plan and show respect and honor to the office of President, praying for the person who God allows to rule for the times in which we live.

Paul told his disciple Timothy...

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.

- 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Our prayers can have a profound impact, inviting God's wisdom and guidance into the hearts of those who govern us. As for us, whom He has placed here to usher in His Kingdom, under Christ's kingship, we are called first and foremost to pursue justice and righteousness.

The Prophet Micah reminds us,

*He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?*

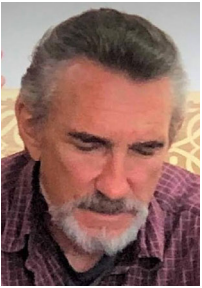
- Micah 6:8

Our actions, both individually and collectively, should reflect the values of Christ's kingdom, prioritizing the well-being of others and advocating for the oppressed. So, as we celebrate this President's Day tomorrow, while we honor the contributions of our nation's leaders, past and present, let's remember that true wisdom and justice come from God alone. Christ's kingship offers a model of servant leadership, rooted in love, humility, and righteousness.

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Let us commit to living under Christ's reign, seeking His guidance in all aspects of our lives. May we pursue justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. And let us pray for our leaders, that they may be convicted and endowed with the wisdom, courage, and righteousness that come from God alone.

Above all, let us glorify Christ, our eternal wise King, whose reign is unshakable and whose love is everlasting.



Let's Pray,

- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi