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TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

November 2022

FROM US TO YOU

This is the month that Americans traditionally celebrate Thanksgiving, as a way to thank God for all the good things He has done for us. President Abraham Lincoln made it a national holiday in 1863. Do we hear groaning out there? We know that life is hard right now for many people. But God never caused America’s problems. Satan, the devil, did! This country was started by fundamentalist Christians who took the Bible seriously and feared God (Proverbs 9:10). As a result, God blessed America and made her prosperous, powerful, and rich. Consequently, we won wars (Deuteronomy 11:25), worshiped God in churches, read our Bibles, and raised American children according to Christian principles. Sadly, over the decades, that has changed (2 Timothy 3:1-7). America still has a few truly righteous believers in this nation. However, these days, most people who call themselves Christian are divided up into two groups, the nominal Christians (Luke 6:46) and the lukewarm (Revelation 3:16). Therefore, they have no spiritual power to fight against the evil spirits that are trying to destroy America. Don’t you know that the strategy for America’s problems is carefully planned in the spirit world? *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”* (Ephesians 6:12 NIV).

Although Thanksgiving comes just once a year, the true Christian worships God daily. Personally, we can remember all the times that God performed miracles to save our lives, like the time we were driving to a family wedding in Virginia. We were keeping up with the traffic, going seventy miles an hour. We were in the left lane, surrounded by vehicles, when suddenly our van started to lurch violently out of control. We had a flat tire. And we were veering uncontrollably toward fast moving traffic on our right. Anne yelled out “Jesus help us!” and then looked back toward the traffic on our right which seconds ago been right next to us. Amazingly, it was far in the distance! Eric steered the van over to the side of the road and began changing the tire while Anne sat on the grass thanking and praising God.

Then there was the time Eric was sleeping in the bedroom and Anne was listening to music in the living room. It was when we were living in our apartment in Baldwin. We had left the second floor window open because it was a hot summer night. There were young, dangerous, gangs in the neighborhood. And one of them had noticed our window open in an extra bedroom. Anne got up from the couch she was resting on, and headed for the open window to close it. However, God knew what was happening outside and put her in a type of trance. She walked in the room and headed for the window oblivious to the fact that the gang had reached the window circus style, with each of them standing on another’s shoulders. And the

one on top was just about to climb in the window! Amazingly, he took one look at Anne and screamed out in terror. “What’s the matter?” asked the man beneath him. “G-g-get down” he responded, his voice trembling. He couldn’t get down fast enough. Anne calmly walked over to the window, closed it and locked it. She went to bed and awoke about an hour later with a start, as God made her aware of what had happened. Anne knew it was no dream. And at only five foot three and petite, Anne was not a scary person. The next day we bought bars for the window. About two years later, that second bedroom became our first office and started this ministry.

How many times has God helped you out of a difficult situation? The media ridicules and mocks the fictional character Pollyanna, an orphan whose missionary parents had died. But Pollyanna had the right attitude. She saw God’s blessing even in great adversity. Also in the little things. For instance, instead of a doll, which she wanted, the missionary society mistakenly sent her crutches. She looked upon it with gratitude that she didn’t need them. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28 KJV). So much like the true Christian attitude, Pollyanna had lost both parents, but instead of being resentful, she continued to let her light shine (see John 8:12) for Christ. She was sent to live with her rich aunt. The people of the town were far better off economically and socially, than she was. But they took their blessings for granted and had no inner joy as Pollyanna did. As the Bible says, *“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song. The LORD is the strength of His people, a fortress of salvation for His anointed one”* (Psalms 28:7-8 NIV). Pollyanna was a blessing to the whole town and changed their thinking.

True Christianity is like a marriage. The church is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:31-32, Isaiah 54:5). He is to come first in your life (Mathew 10:34-38, James 4:4), before anything else, especially any idols. As Paul told the Corinthian church, *“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him”* (2 Corinthians 11:2 NIV). In a traditional wedding service, both partners take an oath before God to love, honor, and cherish each other, forsaking all others, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live. However, as Paul told the church, *“...I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 11:3 NIV). Do you just love Christ during the good times? The true test of a Christian is to remain faithful in the bad times as well. Have a nice Thanksgiving everyone!

In the Lord’s service, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



Politics, Principalities, and Powers

By Anne Kaestner

Once, back in the days before people had cell phones, I called up the phone company to ask for a telephone book. The woman I spoke to at the business office wasn't very accommodating. I had heard that legally they were required by law to give them out to customers. So, when I saw that nothing was getting done and that I was getting the run around, I threatened to call the "Better Business Bureau." I could almost hear laughter at the other end of the phone. When that didn't work I threatened to call the Consumer Affairs office. That did not work either and, by then, I realized the woman I was speaking to was being stubbornly uncooperative. Finally, in exasperation, I blurted out, "The next call I'm going to make will be to some local politicians." To my surprise, her attitude instantly changed, and she was saying, "Yes, mam. We'll get that right out to you. What was that address again?" I had hit the target and found out where worldly power really was!

Politics affects the lives of all of us. So it's easy to be swallowed up in campaign rhetoric and for emotions to run high. The media exploits this and political ads pepper the country with juicy tidbits of information, usually taken out of context. Nevertheless, it is not God's will for His children to become tangled up in the "... cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14 KJV). Moreover, politics is far more spiritual than most people realize! Some insight into this matter is given in the book of Daniel. Gabriel, God's Heavenly angel, explains to Daniel that he had been dispatched to deliver a message to him 20 days earlier, but he had been unable to reach Daniel because a powerful demon had blocked his way. Demons are those fallen angels who chose to join Satan in his mutiny against God sometime back in the eons of time. That's when Satan led the assault into Heaven, and tried to dethrone the Almighty (Revelation 12:7-9). He failed, of course, and was thrown back to earth (see Luke 10:18), soundly defeated. Circumstantial evidence suggests that just as the Lord had changed Lucifer's name to Satan, and his title to the devil, God also changed the classification of those who mutinied with Satan from "angels" to "demons." Then God remade the earth, and created the first human being, Adam. But Satan was there in the Garden of Eden. Just like the demons, he had once been an angel (Ezekiel 28:14-15). He currently rules over the demons who fell with him. But it's worse than that! He also rules over this planetary system. God had given Adam control of this world for a specified period of time. To put it in human terms, it could be compared to a landowner who leases part of his land to a tenant free of charge. God is the owner of this world (Exodus 9:29, Psalm 24:1, 50:7-12) but He gave control of it to Adam, who was created perfect and without sin. Yet Adam is not running this world anymore. Satan is! Jesus never disputed Satan's claim to this world system (Matthew 4:8-10). In fact, the Lord was referring to Satan when He said, "...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30 KJV). So how did Satan get control of this world? He got it from Adam! (See Genesis chapter 3.)

Therefore, since we live in an atmosphere that is run by the devil and his demons, the Bible tells us that "...we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12 KJV). This means that powerful demon spirits, who work under Satan, plan and scheme their own evil strategy. Humans (flesh and blood) are just the pawns in their wicked game! The higher the stakes, the more these beings will be

involved. The term "principalities and powers" does not refer to municipalities or human authority. It is talking about high ranking demon spirits! Satan and his demons know how to manipulate humans in order to reach their desired goals. But they cannot do this with those who are no longer a part of their evil realm. That's why the Bible tells us to, "...come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV). It's also why we are told to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15 KJV). We are not to be tarnished by the world's business. Yes, those of us who can vote, have a responsibility to do so. And those who can't should pray about the election. However, a Christian's top responsibility is to God, not to any political party! As believers, we always need to consult the Lord in life's important moments, and ask Him to lead and guide us according to His will. If a nation's citizens are living for God they will elect righteous legislators. But if the people are Hell-bent on self-centered causes and choose politicians on a basis of "What's in it for me?" the result will be a broken, splintered nation of special interest groups, lawlessness, and immorality.

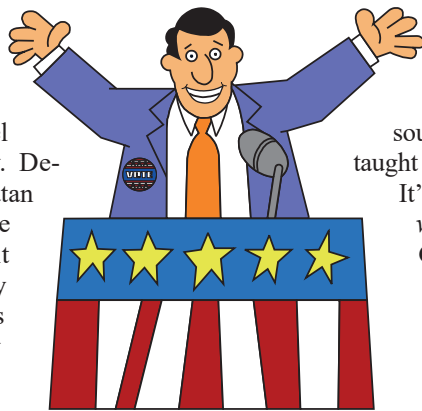
"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..." (Isaiah 53:6 KJV). God calls us sheep. And sheep

constantly look for a leader, a shepherd to guide them. Sheep are not deep thinkers, they're followers! Therefore, human sheep choose a spokesperson, and if what that individual says sounds good, they will follow him. Nevertheless, Jesus taught us not to depend on our human wisdom or emotions.

It's because "...the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God..." (1 Corinthians 3:19 KJV. Also, see 1 Corinthians 2:13-14). We are taught instead to, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV). If we receive our nourishment from the Vine of Christ (John 15:4-6) we will

grow good fruit for Him (Galatians 5:22-26). But those who put too much faith in the leaders of this world, end up following the god of this world, Satan. When we drift away from the "straight and narrow" (see Matthew 7:13-14) and stop looking to God for direction, Satan will always be ready with a "hireling" (John 10:11-15) to fill the void. He will teach God's children to rely on politics, morality, and good works instead of relying on Christ. Please understand, there is nothing wrong with good works. But they are not enough to get you to Heaven! (See Ephesians 2:8-9 and Isaiah 64:6.) If you love and serve Jesus Christ, good works should be a natural outcome of that (James 2:20, 26). However, many people try to take the wrong road to Heaven by trusting in their own righteousness (John 10:1-9), and that's where politics enters in. Is it wrong for a Christian to become politically active? In most cases I believe the answer is yes. By this I'm not talking about voting, or discussing one's preference for a certain political choice. But politics can become a tremendous stumbling block to the child of God, or even to clergymen, because it centers around man instead of centering around Christ!

Obviously we need good, moral, righteous men and women running the government. Nevertheless, politics can become highly addictive, even for the Christian, because it is a magnet for idolatry. And idolatry is when you put anything in your life before God! Many Christians make the mistake of rationalizing this away by itemizing all the great things they believe that they can do for the Lord by getting involved in politics. Unfortunately, that is the problem. It causes



you to focus on yourself and all the good fruit that you believe that you are producing for God (Genesis 4:1-13). But the only good fruit that God wants out of His children is the fruit that He Himself plants, waters, cultivates, and grows! And He can't do that in a self-centered person. He can only do that in you when you are Christ-centered! Paul wrote, *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power"* (1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NIV). Politics is intoxicating because of its strong spiritual pull. It's human nature for all of us to want powerful leaders to move us in the right direction and make this a better country. We want a Superman, a hero that we can put up on a pedestal and cheer. However, for the Christian, the only Superman that we should look to for direction is the God-man, Christ Jesus! Yes, we need politicians running the government, but it is important for the Christian to get his or her priorities straight first (see Matthew 6:33). I firmly believe that if Jesus Christ were running for President in the United States today, He couldn't get elected! That's because the hearts of most Americans have become self-centered (2 Timothy 3:1-5), proud, and filled with idolatry.

I'm not saying that we don't feel terrible pain in this nation. There is plenty of suffering going around. However, the public has been looking for a solution in humanity instead of in God! Sure, there's plenty of lip-service to Jesus (see Matthew 15:8-9). It's politically popular these days to quote, or misquote, isolated scripture and attempt to twist it to fit one's point of view. Personal endorsements are a large part of getting elected. Everyone wants to feel that they have God on their side, and that's precisely the point. We should not be looking to move the Lord over to our point of view. We should be seeking His direction and His wisdom on each issue! I can just feel the thinking going on, "Yes, but God surely is against abortion. And He's also against special rights for gays and lesbians." All of this is true (Isaiah 49:1, 5, 13:18, 2 Kings 8:12, Hosea 13:15, Amos 1:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:26-27). However, most Christians are going about it the wrong way. For it is *"...Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts"* (Zechariah 4:6 KJV). I don't care how righteous the church tries to be, or how hard it fights against immorality, or how many good deeds it does, only God can fix the mess this nation has fallen into because of sin! Therefore, as Christians, *"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds"* (2 Corinthians 10:4 NIV). This involves the most important aspect of serving Christ, faith (Hebrews 11:1)! I said earlier that even Jesus couldn't get elected in America today. Can you imagine what they would say about Him? "He said He'd destroy our temple and then build it again in three days" (Mark 14:58 and John 2:19-21), "He's a racist. Some poor Canaanite woman came to Him for help, and He called her a dog" (see Mark 7:27). "He's a revolutionary who wants to set up His own kingdom" (Luke 22:29-30). And Jesus would definitely be called homophobic! (See Matt. 5:17-18 and Leviticus 18:22-29, 20:13.)

Yes, Christians need to care about their government and promote morality, compassion, and the laws of God. Even so, it doesn't matter how talented, wise, and God-fearing (2 Samuel 23:3) a politician may be, America's trouble did not originate on Wall Street, or in Hollywood, or Washington DC, or any other part of this country. It originated in the human heart! Our problem is not something that we can reach out and touch. It is spiritual, and that's why it requires a spiritual solution. And that solution is not found at a political rally. It is found at an altar! When God's children are rushing off promoting

one particular candidate or another, it is not pleasing to the Lord. He has previously told us, *"If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV). Frankly, I believe it is too late for that now, and we have to walk with Christ on an individual basis and wait for Jesus to return. The problem is, when Christians start putting human beings up on a pedestal, and take their eyes off of Jesus, it becomes idolatry, even though it starts out as simple loyalty to a candidate or political party. Christ has said, *"I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from Me there is no Savior"* (Isaiah 43:11 NIV). If enough people in America love and trust Him, He will provide us with godly leadership! However, that isn't going to happen when His children keep looking toward human power instead of Holy Spirit power. The mistake that too many Christians have been making is to seek all the good things God can bring us, without seeking Him! Because *"...Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain"* (Psalms 127:1 NIV). People, we, as Christians, can't heal this nation for God. We have to forget about politics as a solution and humble ourselves before our Creator. Many Americans will say, "I do that anyway." The whole nation has seen Christians praying in Churches. It's often been on the evening news. The Lord's people will be singing hymns before Him, hands will be extended in the air, and eyes may fill with tears. Often the

only reason it gets on the news is because some candidate running for office is getting ready to speak at the pulpit! Sometimes the candidate will also be an ordained minister. But Jesus said, *"No one can serve two masters..."* (Matthew 6:24 NIV). You either look to political power, or you seek out God's power. Christianity is not a Chinese restaurant! You cannot take one from column A and one from column B selectively, a little prayer here, a political rally there, a plate of hymns and a side order of electioneering. Jesus said, *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth"* (Revelation 3:15-16 NIV).

Most folk think that this world is broken down into two different groups, the good, and the bad. The keywords in the preceding sentence are "this world." Remember that *"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. ...My kingdom is from another place'"* (John 18:36 NIV). This world system is run *"...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"* (Ephesians 2:2 KJV). He is otherwise known as Satan! Even most Christians tend to see all human conditions in terms of good and bad. Nevertheless, in this world system, Satan is the ruler of the entire world we are living in, although he only has a little bit of time left (Revelation 12:12). So it's not a matter of good against bad, it's a choice of evil against evil. It's Communism vs. Fascism, Corporate Greed vs. Union Greed, Atheists vs. False Prophets, etc. Of course that can change if, and when, we put Christ totally first in our lives and our nation. But in order to be saved, we have to go to the Cross of Calvary, and set our minds and hearts on Jesus. In other words, Christ has to be our complete spiritual sustenance (John 6:53). We can't depend on politics, morality, good works, or anything human to survive in Satan's evil realm. We have to be so close to Jesus, that we see ourselves as we really are before Him, *"...hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh"* (Jude 1:23 NIV). It's natural for citizens to work themselves up about one particular candidate or another. Nevertheless, remember what **(Continued on Page 4)**



Jesus said to Pontius Pilot, the Roman governor, when the Lord was on trial. Pilot became irritated with Jesus when He wouldn't respond to his questions. *"Do You refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't You realize I have power either to free You or to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above..."*" (John 19:10-11 NIV). What Jesus was saying is that even though Satan is running this evil earthly system, God is still involved in what is going on. Therefore, God wouldn't have allowed Pilot to become governor if it had not been according to His will and strategy. Obviously, a godly ruler wouldn't have crucified Jesus. However, the Lord loves to manipulate Satan in order to achieve His own purpose. Case in point, do you remember how God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21) so that he wouldn't let the Jews leave Egypt? If Pharaoh had given in too easily, God wouldn't have been able to perform all the miracles He worked through Moses. Satan constantly tries to prove how powerful he is, but God only allows him to go so far! Moreover, the Lord loves to work what the police call a "sting operation" on the devil and his demons. He loves to set traps for them. That's why even when someone evil is strong for a time, and people are afraid of them, God tells us to simply trust Him. He has everything under control (Psalms 37:7-13).

Earlier I mentioned an account stated in the Bible, where the prophet Daniel had been fasting and praying for many days. God had dispatched Gabriel to deliver a message to Daniel, but Gabriel had been prevented from reaching him by the "Prince of the Kingdom of Persia." Gabriel went on to discuss with Daniel important events that would occur on earth. *"So he said, '...Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come... (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince)'"* (Daniel 10:20-21 NIV). Gabriel was talking about the different spiritual rulers of worldly empires that would come into being. When Daniel was first taken captive, it was under the Babylonian empire, which was run by Nebuchadnezzar. He was King from 605-562 BC. After the Babylonian empire came the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. It was initially ruled by Darius the Mede, who came into power about 539 BC, and Cyrus II, the Persian, who became a king in 550-530 BC. Eventually the Greek empire emerged, under Alexander III (356-323 BC). He was also known as "Alexander the Great." He became the king of Macedonia (336-323 BC) and conqueror of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia. His reign marked the beginning of the Hellenistic Age. These were real flesh and blood, human kings. However, nothing happens in this world that has not been directly orchestrated by the unseen spirit world! The Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece were powerful demonic spirits who had been given great authority by Satan. One thing to remember is that, while Heavenly angels have solid bodies (Genesis 19:1-11, Joshua 5:13-15, and Hebrews 13:2), demons do not. It was one of the punishments that God gave to them after they rebelled against Him. That's why they are constantly looking for a warm human body to invade. Jesus cast many demon spirits out of the bodies of people (Matthew 8:16). So did Paul (Acts 16:16-18). However, demons do not necessarily always have to possess the body of a human in order to manipulate his or her life. Have you noticed how swiftly some entertainers become popular? And how they seem to stir up the emotions of a crowd to a frenzy, especially rock singers! It happens because demon spirits either inhabit the bodies of the human idols (see Luke 4:8 and Acts 14:11-15), or they have a powerful influence on their direction. The same thing occurs in religion

and politics. Look at the hold that the Ayatollah Khomeini held over Iran. Even now that he is dead, Iranians do not have freedom because the demon "prince" of Iran is still in control. Therefore, the population is forced to live under the fierce bondage of the Iranian branch of the Moslem religion whether they like it or not. As is often the case, the religious and political structure of the government is woven together.

In the case of the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece, spoken of by Gabriel, the angel goes on to discuss a battle he would soon become involved in. You see, God only lets the devil go so far. Just as the owner of a piece of land may make certain rules about the limits of his tenant's authority, God often does the same thing. When speaking to Daniel, Gabriel refers to Michael as "your prince." Michael is one of God's top angels (Jude 1:9 and Revelation 12:7). He often fights for God on behalf of His people. Gabriel was also telling Daniel what was going on behind the scenes in the spirit world. God allowed the "Prince" who presided over Persia, to have control for a specified period of time. But it was not in the Lord's plans for that demon to keep control of his empire beyond a certain time frame, because the Prince of Greece had to take power on schedule, in keeping with God's plan of events. That doesn't mean that God approved of the Prince of Greece. It just means that He planned to manipulate events in Satan's worldly realm so that Christianity would eventually be able to take hold in Greece

and the Greeks would be ready for it. The Lord also knew that Christianity would not spread, according to His will, if the Prince of Persia remained in control. Make no mistake, "Alexander the Great" was a vicious, ruthless despot. He no more lived for God than did Pontius Pilot. But Alexander's influence was in Western culture, as opposed to the Persian culture of the East. And it was apparently God's will for Christianity to be spread through Western culture. That's why God, through the ministry of St. Paul, was able to bring so many Gentiles to salvation.

Paul spent a great deal of time in Rome and Greece. However, if God had not prepared the foundation of Western civilization by sending His angels to fight on the side of the "Prince of Greece," everything would have been different. You and I may never

have heard about Christ, and all the nations that were won to Christianity through Western civilization may have also been doomed eternally. We may be living under some oppressive religious form of government, such as that in Nepal, or even Iran. What's more, consider the original name of Iran before it was changed in 1935. It was called Persia, the same Persia spoken of in the book of Daniel! The spirit realm on earth works through human beings! We don't have phantom spirits meeting at the United Nations and talking to mortals. Demon spirits gain control over individuals through several methods of influence, the strongest being demonic possession, where they rule or engage in their choice of activity through the warm human body or bodies that they inhabit (Matt. 12:43-45). The Prince of Greece was a demon spirit, but he was able to gain control over humans by influencing and assisting "Alexander the Great" (356-323 BC). What Gabriel told Daniel was that God was going to allow certain kingdoms to come to power in Satan's earthly realm. Remember that the devil has a legal claim on this world system since he gained control of it from Adam. That's why we Christians have to depart, spiritually, in our thinking, from the kingdom of this world, and become part of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33, Mark 10:15). As Christians, we are not to become purveyors of hatred and idolatry. Therefore, *"...Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's"* (2 Chronicles 20:15 KJV).

