

Voting and God's Leaders

Commentary for October 15, 2022¹ — Man Proposes, God Disposes

The subtitle of this Commentary accurately describes what takes place regarding the selection and placement of leaders of nations at the highest levels. It is four weeks before the 2022 mid-term elections in the United States. Remember, God chooses and removes leaders when He desires to do so. There is no doubt about this fact (Daniel 5:21).² Contrary to what some religious groups believe, voting is not a sin and not evil. Citizens do play a part in fulfilling civic responsibilities. We are to **"render unto Caesar"** (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25) not just with tribute and taxes, but also with our service, such as voting.

In ancient times local government were "representative" in their own way. In societies where most everyone was married, a man voted within his clan, tribe, or village, and represented his extended family of wife (or wives), children, servants and perhaps parents. Tribal elders represented the families and clans; often those elders were elected. Elders were also on councils where public business was decided by vote.³ Later, under the unified and divided monarchies of Israel, towns and cities had councils with local jurisdiction over everyday affairs. In New Testament times synagogue rulers were elected by the congregation.⁴

Historically there are two modes of voting. One is by visible public voting where everyone sees how you vote. Public acclamation is a form of such voting. This is done today in small groups such as boards and groups contained in one room.⁵ Everyone knows how everyone votes. Legislatures today vote in this manner. The other mode of voting is by secret ballot. This is usually done when the number of voters is large. Only the total count of ballots is known. No one knows how individuals vote.

Both modes of voting are found in Scripture. Several instances of "voting" were done in the *ekklesia*. **"The men coming together"** cast lots (voted) to have Matthias replace Judas (Acts 1:21–26). In Acts 14:23 the word "ordained" and in 2 Corinthians 8:19 the word "chosen" both are from a Greek word which is a common word "vote" to elect qualified leaders (see also 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Titus 1:5). These were public votes in a small group, the *ekklesia*, where everyone raised their hand to select between options. Seven men were chosen to serve the new *ekklesia* in Acts 6:1–6. They were elected by the congregation. In Acts 15:22, 25 men were chosen or elected to accompany Paul and Barnabas to vouch for them.

¹ This is an update of a longer October 14, 2008 Commentary.

² See my October 7, 2004 Commentary "[The Selection of the U.S. President](#)" and the October 15, 2003 Commentary "[Changes of World Leaders](#)," especially the section: "God Decides Who Rules."

³ God chose Moses to lead the 12 tribes of Israel. Several times the leaders and people tried to "unelect" Moses from his position, which ended badly for the rebels. See Numbers chapter 16.

⁴ See Dr. Martin's "[Synagogues and Ekklesias](#)" on the open nature of the ancient synagogue.

⁵ The Sanhedrin voted to condemn Christ by acclamation (Matthew 26:65–66; Mark 14:63–64). Later the people in Jerusalem chose by acclamation to release Barabbas and not Jesus.

Private voting within a larger group was done by dropping a pebble, black or white (black being “no” and white being “yes”) into a container. The result of the secret ballot was counted and announced. Life and death decisions were often done by secret ballot. This is what Paul meant when, as Saul before his conversion, he cast his vote against Christians, members of God’s *ekklesia*, to punish and even put some of them to death:

“And I did so in Jerusalem; I not only shut up many of the saints in prison, by authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote [psephos, a pebble] against them.”

• **Acts 26:10**

Nationally, God chose Israel and separated them as a people from the nations, yet God gave Israel the opportunity to choose (in other words “vote”) to accept or reject God’s covenant. It was a vote by all the people of Israel (Exodus 24:7). God chose Israel’s first king, Saul, and the people acknowledged and acclaimed God’s choice (1 Samuel 9:16–17, 10:24).

King David was anointed three times: **(1)** He was first anointed as king of all Israel by God through Samuel the seer (1 Samuel 16:1–13). That anointing designated David as Israel’s future king. **(2)** David was anointed king by the men of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1–7). **(3)** Lastly, David was anointed king of all Israel by all twelve tribes (2 Samuel 5:1–5).⁶ Each rebellion against David was eventually thwarted, whether rebellion by David’s son Absalom (2 Samuel 15:1–12) or Sheba the Benjamite (2 Samuel chapter 20). They attempted to “*vote with weapons*” to oppose God’s anointed, who the people endorsed by their anointing.

While God chooses our top national leaders, today we can participate in His process by voting. God has us living within the Babylonian system until Christ’s return. See Dr. Martin’s article “[The Prophetic Birth of Our Civilization](#).” Voting is part of that system as it presently exists. Remember, Jewish exiles to Babylon such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Mordecai, Queen Esther, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and Ezra all participated directly at high levels within pagan Babylonian and Persian governments, for example Daniel 2:49.

We are free to participate in our governments. It is honorable to do so at whatever level of authority. After all, we believers are “in training” to judge angels, 1 Corinthians 6:3. Part of that participation is to vote as citizens of a community or country. Will you agree with God’s choice? Do we, like Israel, receive the government we deserve? Why does God choose one man over another? God often raises to power “**the basest of men**” as Nebuchadnezzar, truly a base and horrible man, wrote to all his subjects praising the God of Daniel (Daniel 4:17). In the future God will select a vile man to temporarily rule the world (Daniel 11:21–45).

Study the Scriptures. There certainly seems to be an abundance of “base” people in positions of power today. God tells us what to do in this instance. We are to pray for our leaders, asking God to have them rule so we may have a “quiet and peaceable life” (1 Timothy 2:1–3). God’s choice will prevail, however long He chooses to have that person lead.

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⁶ The anointings by the people of Judah and Israel followed God’s anointing. Their anointings acknowledged and acclaimed God’s decision. Their agreement was a form of voting.