



Lesson 98

The Sunday Law in 2014 part 1

- **The United States Government**
 - Purge of moderates
 - Obama's judges
 - Hobby Lobby court case
 - HERO Act
- **United States and World Crises**
 - Flint water crisis
 - Climate change turning point
- **Information War**
 - Cambridge Analytica
 - Russia hacks a US Department
- **SDA and Baptist Churches**
 - Views on transgenders and women

The next waymark that will take place in our history is the Sunday Law. We just passed the Midnight Cry in 2021, and after the two little waymarks (Increase of Knowledge and Formalization), the Sunday Law will arrive. In order to understand our Sunday Law, we have to look at the Sunday Laws in the past. 2014 was the Sunday Law for the Priests, so if we understand 2014 we will understand what the Sunday Law will look like. In part one of this two-part series we'll look at some significant events in 2014 that show us what to expect at the Sunday Law.

The United States Government

Purge of moderates

Twenty-fourteen was a midterm election year- which is when people vote for some Senators and all of the Representatives. The elections were held on November 4th. The Democrats lost badly: they lost their majority in the Senate; 36 seats in the Senate were up for election and the Democrats ended up with 10 less Senators than the Republicans (there were also Independents at the end). In the House of Representatives, Democrats went from having 33 less seats than the Republicans to 59 (the Republicans only lost two seats). But that is not the only thing that happened in the midterm elections, the Republicans also changed. Because of events in the recent past (like the creation of the Tea Party movement) the Republican party had moved further to the right, or more conservative. Several members of the Tea Party that had been elected in past midterms kept their seats. The moderate Republican House Majority leader Eric Cantor lost to a more conservative Republican (Dave Brat) that no one had heard of in the primaries. Brat beat a Democrat in the midterm election to actually become a Representative and the more conservative Kevin McCarthy took over as Republican House Majority leader. Cantor was not the only Republican to lose to a more conservative person. In other words, moderate Republicans lost their seats or were purged. So after the 2014 midterms the Republican Party had control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and they were also more conservative.

Obama's judges

When Republicans won control of the Senate in 2014, under the leadership of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Republicans began to hamper President Barack Obama's efforts to appoint judges to the courts. Before Republicans won control, 90% of Obama's judge nominees were confirmed. After, less than 30%. According to the Los Angeles Times, "President-elect Donald Trump will take office with a chance to fill more than 100 seats on the federal courts, thanks mostly to an extraordinary two-year slowdown in judicial confirmations engineered by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. ... The vacancies reflect a long-term goal of McConnell and other leading Republicans to tilt the court system toward conservatives." The most notable of the judges that McConnell refused to even consider was Merrick Garland, who is now the Attorney General of the United States. Obama nominated him to fill the vacant seat in the Supreme Court. The reason that McConnell didn't want to consider Garland was because, according to him, the people should decide when the next president was elected. That next president, of course, was a Republican, which aligned perfectly with McConnell's actual goal of filling the courts with conservatives. Being a federal judge is a job without a time frame, meaning they could work from when they were confirmed until the day they die unlike

other federal jobs like the president or congress members. That is why McConnell was, and still is, focused on the courts- because they outlast any one president and their laws last for even longer than they do. All of this began in 2014 when McConnell gained control of the Senate.

Hobby Lobby court case

In 2014, the Supreme Court case *Burwell v. Hobby Stores, Inc.* was decided. In March of 2010, the United States' government passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). One part of this act was a regulation that required companies with 50 or more employees to provide insurance coverage for birth control methods approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In 2012, a family that owned a company called Hobby Lobby sued the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The court case was called *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*- the Secretary of HHS Kathleen Sebelius being named as the defendant. The family argued that the PPACA violated two laws; the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) which prevents the government from burdening someone's practice of religion, and the First Amendment which guarantees freedom of religion. They said that the birth control mandate promoted abortion (which we know conservative Evangelicals are strongly against). The case moved around in lower courts before it was taken up by the Supreme Court in 2014. It was combined with another court case called *Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp. v. Sebelius*, which was another very similar court case. The combined court cases were called *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*- Sylvia Burwell, the new Secretary of HHS being named as the defendant. On June 30, 2014 the Supreme Court ruled in the Evangelicals' favor, stating that businesses can be seen as a single person, whose religious beliefs make them exempt from some of the PPACA mandates. As a Movement, we know that this was a bad ruling, and since it was in 2014 it shows us what the court rulings at the Sunday Law will look like.

HERO Act

In 2014, some states in the United States didn't have state laws prohibiting discrimination against LGBTQ+ people; one of those states was Texas. Cities in Texas had to enact their own laws- and many big ones did- but one big city: Houston, did not have one of these laws. In 2014, that was sort of changed. The city council in Houston passed the "Houston Equal Rights Ordinance" or HERO on May 28, 2014. It was backed by the mayor: Annise Parker. She is a lesbian, one of the first openly homosexual people elected to be mayor of a major city, and at that time Houston was the largest city to have done that. HERO banned discrimination over a lot of issues from race to national origin to military status to gender identity (and other LGBTQ+ issues) in things like employment and housing (but it did not include churches). LGBTQ+ rights caused all of the trouble with conservatives because they started to think the law would allow transgender women to use women's bathrooms- a part of the bill that specifically allowed this was taken out, though. People, including pastors, started to speak against the bill; the pastors also started a petition to stop the bill. While all this was going on the mayor, Parker, temporarily suspended the bill from going into effect. The petition was 5,200 pages long, and it was looked over twice (by two different people)- the first person thought there were enough valid signatures, but the second person concluded that there were not enough valid signatures to stop HERO. Of course the city officials (including Parker) were sued. In 2015, a jury ruled in the officials' favor, but then the conservatives went to the Texas Supreme Court which said the first count (where enough signatures were

found) should have been kept- so HERO had to be voted on by the people of Houston in the December 2015 elections. Unfortunately, it was overturned in that election. But still in 2014 the city of Houston tried to pass HERO.

United States and World Crises

Flint water crisis

The Flint water crisis began in 2014 when the city of Flint, Michigan changed its supplier of water from Detroit to the Flint River to save money. Long before the 2014 crisis, the Flint River was used essentially as a sewage canal for all kinds of careless companies. It was so bad and had so much trash in it that it had caught fire- twice. Flint, however, hadn't always been in such a condition. It used to be a booming city, but when oil prices skyrocketed in the 1980s, about half of its population moved away, leaving a majority of African Americans, which was a contributing factor in the water crisis. In 2011, Flint fell into a \$25 million debt, which led city officials to decide to change the source of water in 2013. The change began in April of 2014 and residents began to immediately complain about the terrible quality. The following year, researchers from Virginia did a test and found that the lead levels in the water were so high that it was the job of the federal government to step in. But lead levels weren't the only concern. The flint water caused the third largest outbreak of a form of pneumonia in the United States from 2014-2015. To fix the problem, the city dumped more chlorine in their water, which led to people getting cancer from all the chemicals. In early 2016, Flint residents sued the city. In November, a federal judge ruled that bottled water should be delivered to all Flint residents without a water filter. In March 2017, the city was ordered to replace all the infested pipes but by October 2018, hardly anything had been done with only 7,500 pipes being changed. As of June 2021, the city says that nearly everyone should have clean water, but after what they did, the residents are wary to trust them.

Climate change turning point

A turning point in climate change took place in 2014. That year, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) on the world's climate. Their last report (AR4) was done back in 2007. The fifth assessment had three working group reports, and a final synthesis. The first group stated that the world is definitely warming up, greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere have reached unprecedented levels, and that humans have been the main cause of global warming between 1950 and 2010. The second group stated that there is an increasing likelihood of "severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts" due to global warming. The third group stated that without efforts to stop climate change, the average global temperature will rise 3.7 to 4.8 °C by 2100 (relative to pre-industrial temperatures). That is not all those three groups found, but those are some main points. So, 2014 was a turning point in climate change. The world had official clear and concise evidence that the earth was warming up, and that governments needed to act immediately to reduce their impact on the environment.

Information War

Cambridge Analytica

In 2014, we can also see information warfare. In 2013, a company called Cambridge Analytica was founded. It was a sub-company of Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL). SCL is a company in England that uses personal data to make profiles of people so they can manipulate them for political reasons. SCL claimed to be able to do sophisticated psychological things to change people's opinions, and even though their techniques have not been proven, they have worked secretly in several countries on elections, and similar things, for different people. They use methods like targeting only small groups of people with certain types of propaganda, discrediting opponents (like trying to get them to take bribes), and starting the spread of disinformation on the internet (then watching it grow). Cambridge Analytica was founded to do that job primarily in the United States. Steven Bannon, who later became the vice president, was very influential in the forming of Cambridge Analytica. He got a wealthy man: Robert Mercer and his daughter Rebekah, who both donated millions of dollars to conservatives to fund the founding of Cambridge Analytica. A man named Alexander Nix became the CEO. In 2014, they got to work; Cambridge Analytica got data on tens of millions (87 million) of Americans through a Russian-American researcher in England, Aleksandr Kogan, who made a quiz app. The app worked on Facebook and it took people's information who took the quiz, including their friends' information. Cambridge Analytica then got this information which they used to make profiles that could be used to target people. After this they began to prepare for the 2016 presidential election. They worked a little in the 2014 midterms for Republican candidates, but their main job was in 2016.

Russia hacks a United States Department

In November 2014, Russia hacked the United States Department of State. The State Department is responsible for the United States' foreign policy and international relations. "Over a 24-hour period, top U.S. cyber defenders engaged in a pitched battle with Russian hackers who had breached the unclassified State Department computer system and displayed an unprecedented level of aggression that experts warn is likely to be turned against the private sector." The Washington Post. Over the 24 hours, the United States kicked Russia out of the servers multiple times, only for the hackers to breach them again moments later. During the hack, United States' officials hacked into the hackers' computers and gained access to their cameras so they could watch the hackers hack them. Government officials said that the hack was all a part of Russia's plan to influence the 2016 Presidential election.

SDA and Baptist Churches

Views on transgenders and women

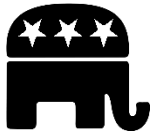
In 2014, two churches took a position on gender and LGBTQ+ equality. In June of 2014, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was held in Maryland. In a document published by the convention, there is a statement about transgender identity. In the document the SBC plainly stated that changing your gender is against Bible teaching, and that a person can't determine their own gender identity. They claimed that transgenders are the result of "human fallenness" and that they oppose efforts to validate transgender identity. Of course, they tried to make the statements seem less offensive by saying that transgenders shouldn't be treated badly, but their statement against transgenders conflicts with this. In October of 2014, the Bible Research Institute, which is a SDA institution, followed the example of the SBC when they published statements on "transgenderism". In the statement, the SDA church condemned transgenders, saying they have a psychological problem that is the result of sin. Additionally, they claimed that people who are considering becoming transgender need to learn to live with their conflicting gender identity with God's help. The document also presents the willingness of transgenders to join the church as a problem; saying that they should be allowed to join if they are committed to God's will- as if being transgender is against God's will. Lastly, they condemned transgender marriage as something the church doesn't approve. Also in 2014, we can mark a discussion of gender equality in the SDA church. Women's ordination was a popular topic in the SDA church. At the SDA Annual Council in October of 2014, the leaders decided in a 243 to 44 vote to ask 2,600 delegates to vote on women's ordination at the General Conference meeting in 2015. We know that the official vote was in 2015, but the issue can be placed at a major waymark (on the Priest's line)- 2014.

In summary:

Sunday Law Events

The United States Government

In 2014, moderate Republicans were replaced with conservative ones- the party was “purged”.



In 2014, Republicans began to block Obama from appointing judges to courts.



In 2014, the US Supreme Court sided with Hobby Lobby- allowing them to refuse to provide birth control methods.



In 2014, the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) was passed but later repealed.



United States and World Crises

In 2014, the city of Flint in Michigan changed its water supply, causing a contamination crisis.



In 2014, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released AR5- warning the world of the effects of climate



Information War and SDA & Baptist Churches

In 2014, Cambridge Analytica began to work by collecting people’s information to manipulate them.



In 2014, Russia hacked the US’ Department of State to influence the 2016 election.



In 2014, both the SDA and Baptist church condemned transgenders, and the SDA church voted to vote on women’s



New official Youth Prophecy Group website!

youthprophecygroup.org

If you have any questions or comments on any of the material contact us (YPG) at:

youthprophecygroup@gmail.com

Find all our YPG lesson videos at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQRL-o2XOq_g

Link to YPG Zoom meetings which are at 10:00am Pacific Time on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170293849>