



## **SHOULD CHRISTIANS VOTE FOR “*THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS?*”**

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Part I & II**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Ever since the discordant presidential election of 1876 between Democratic New York Governor Samuel J. Tilden and Republican Governor Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio, it is doubtful that there has been a presidential election as contentious, acrimonious, divisive, and important as the current presidential election contest between Democrat Hillary Clinton, Republican Donald Trump, Libertarian Gary Johnson, and Green Party Jill Stein. Although these are the four candidates that are competing for the presidency, the primary emphasis is on Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump being the next president of the United States for the next four to eight years.

Sadly, both political analysts and everyday American citizens repeatedly acknowledge that Clinton and Trump are two of the most disliked and distrusted nominees in the history of our Republic. This cynicism is also accentuated by polls that consistently show that two-thirds of the American people believe that America is going in the wrong direction and its future is on the line come November 8, 2016. As a result of the widespread perception that both candidates could be disastrous for America, many voters – Christian and secular – are planning to not participate in the electoral process as it is perceived that it will be

necessary to vote between “*the lesser of two evils.*” This problematic quandary is also compounded by a common viewpoint that is based on the assertion that “*a single vote will not make a substantial difference.*” Interestingly, history indicates this is a false assumption as follows:

- By one vote, Texas was admitted to the Union
- Adolf Hitler won leadership of the German Nazi Party by one vote
- The U.S. House of Representatives elected Thomas Jefferson as President by one vote

Additionally, it is frequently believed that voting decisions in America are made by a majority of the people. This is also an incorrect assumption as voting decisions are made by a majority of those who vote as echoed by Thomas Jefferson who said:

*“We do not have a government by a majority of the people, we have a government by a majority of the people who participate”*

This was clearly on display in the 2012 Presidential election when 25 million evangelicals – who were registered to vote – did not take the time to do so. As a result, the difference in the 2012 popular vote was less than 5 million votes and was instrumental in Barack Obama being re-elected President over Presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

So, should the evangelical community reverse *evangelical withdrawal* and vote for two problematic choices, particularly when evangelical voting history is comprised of the following facts?

- Only about 50% of Christians in America are registered to vote
- Of those, only 50% show up at the polls, meaning 75% of all Christians are not taking advantage of one of their greatest privileges
- If every Christian would register to vote and then do so, candidates who share their beliefs and values would win the Presidency in a landslide

To answer the preceding question, it should be patently clear that if evangelicals vote, they potentially have the power to dramatically tilt an election towards candidates with like goals and viewpoints.

With the aforementioned thoughts in mind, let’s review some key issues that should be considered by secular and evangelical voters as we enter the 2016 presidential election, and begin with a quick review of the powers that are invested in all American citizens.

## THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

The U.S. Constitution places the power to govern America in the hands of our elected representatives, but this power is temporarily returned to the people at regular intervals each election day. It is not limited to just presidential races as ballots can also include initiatives, amendments and smaller statewide political races, all of which affect our lives on a daily basis. Our Constitution discusses the election process at least nine times and its authors set the electoral responsibility squarely on the shoulders of each American citizen. Our founding fathers clearly intended that we should accept this responsibility without hesitation and dutifully exercise it by electing suitable representatives and officers. To ignore this responsibility is to declare to our founding fathers that they should not have been so foolish as to entrust us with the maintenance of our freedoms. Ignoring our responsibility to vote is by default to vote for tyranny. In 1774, our founding fathers wrote the following quote in the Journal of the Continental Congress:

*"It is an indispensable duty which we owe to God, our country, ourselves and posterity, by all lawful ways and means in our power to maintain, defend and preserve these civil and religious rights and liberties for which many of our fathers fought, bled and died, and to hand them down entire to future generations"*

The preceding quote is worthy of significant consideration and also deserves an answer to the following question:

*"Do we the people of the United States of America exercise our right to reclaim our power on the regular intervals established by our Constitution, and are we doing all we can to ensure that the decision makers in Washington and in our state capitols share our values, our vision and our beliefs?"*

## ARE CHRISTIANS MANDATED TO VOTE

While the Bible does not specifically mandate Christians to vote, the Bible does mandate Christians to be a godly influence/example to a dark secular world as outlined in the following well-known verses:

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"*

*Matthew 5:13-16*

If we take the liberty to reduce these four verses to one word, that word would be *influence*. In these four verses, Jesus summarizes the function of believers in the world by giving a mandate to influence a sinful world as whoever lives a godly life will function in the world as salt and light.

Although salt is both a preservative and a flavor enhancer, it is commonly believed its use as a preservative is what Jesus had in mind. Until the day that the church and believers are taken from this earth at the Rapture, Christians can have a formidable preserving influence in the world as they can retard moral and spiritual decay and prevent the entire earth from degenerating even faster than it already is. The second portion of these four verses emphasizes the importance of light in this world. Whereas salt is unseen in daily activities, light is obvious as it works openly, particularly in the dark. Light reveals what is wrong but helps to produce what is true and righteous. As a result, light must be visible in order to illuminate and Christians must be a direct and noticeable instrument of light to a dark world.

It must be remembered that both salt and light cannot lose their essential nature but salt can become tasteless when contaminated by other minerals and light can be hidden and become useless. Therefore, believers cannot be an influence in a dark secular world if godly values are compromised and/or godly principles are not on display when voting in a voting booth.

If we apply the aforementioned principles to voting, we can assertively and confidently assume that it is the duty of every Christian to vote (salt and light) and to vote for leaders who will promote Christian principles by minimizing the impact of evil in this world, particularly in government. As a result, Christians should vote as led through (1) prayer, (2) the study of both God's Word and (3) the realities of the choices on a ballot. Candidates or measures that counter biblical commands for family, marriage, faith and priorities should not be supported (Proverbs 14:34).

Only when you cast your ballot to vote do you fulfill your Christian responsibility in government as voting is an opportunity to preserve and protect whatever positive godly influence Christians can have on government. Therefore, when faced with voting between the "*lesser of two evils*," vote for the candidate whose personal principles and platform most nearly agree with your own Christian position based on the Bible. If this is not possible, then vote for the candidate that is most likely to lead this country in a positive direction.

When the signers of the Declaration of Independence signed their names to that document, they were well aware the British could execute them as traitors. As they were that dedicated to the cause of freedom, any less dedication on our part could result in a loss of the freedom for which they and thousands upon thousands of others were willing to die for.

## **DOES GOD USE SECULAR RULERS TO FURTHER HIS PURPOSES?**

Applied to the current election process, can God use whoever is elected – regardless of character and heart attitude – to direct this nation during the next four to eight years? Lets answer this question from two perspectives. First, any governing authority that is put into power (as the following two verses indicate), never surprises God as He controls the universe and its governing authorities:

*“He changes times and seasons; He deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning”*

*Daniel 2:21*

*“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*

Second, it is advantageous to elect Christian leaders (even though the majority of global leaders are secular) as echoed by the following quote:

*“Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty – as well as the privilege and interest – of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers”*

*John Jay, (1745-1829) Original Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court*

The Old Testament has numerous examples of secular kings that were used by God to further His purposes. Several examples are King Nebuchadnezzar who served as God’s instrument of judgment on Judah for its idolatry, unfaithfulness, and disobedience (Jeremiah 25:9), and King Cyrus. King Cyrus is a definitive example of a secular King who was a non-Israelite and idol worshipper that was used as God’ servant as described in Isaiah:

*“Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held – To subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors. So that the gates will not be shut: I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. I will give you*

*the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me"*  
*Isaiah 45:1-4*

As a result of the intervention by God, Cyrus who was a pagan king encouraged the Jewish people to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple that had been destroyed decades earlier by the Babylonians. Not surprisingly, God also used King Cyrus to help finance the endeavor. The moral to this account of biblical history is to vote and "Let God be God," meaning its up to Him to do what He wants to do with the candidates that we elect.

### **OPEN REJECTION OF GOD AND GODLY VALUES**

Although this country was founded on godly principles and values, that emphasis has consistently been in a steady decline to the point that some politicians, organizations and citizens openly and aggressively reject God (remember that many similar words can be substituted for the word reject such as discard, disgust, throwaway, castoff, and distaste). This should be a troublesome perspective for America when God clearly states in Jeremiah:

*"I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me"*  
*Jeremiah 1:16*

Let's summarize four applicable examples of the current American rejection of God:

- The massive murder of infants from abortion is a biblical and secular stain on the heart of this nation. Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court case of Roe Vs. Wade, over 59 million abortions have been performed in the United States from 1973 to 2016. Unfortunately, abortion figures have become so repetitive that they have become meaningless to the point that it is common for politicians (including the current administration) to endorse the pro-choice position and be elected and re-elected by approving Americans. From a biblical perspective, the 1973 legalization of abortion in America was a direct violation of the biblical Sixth Commandment. From a secular viewpoint, the legalization of abortion in America is a direct violation of the United States government definition of a human being. Moreover, since 1973, the right to life has not been considered an inalienable right given by God but a subjective right determined by the U.S. Supreme Court. It must be

remembered that the end result is that God does not honor the abortion perspective as stated in Proverbs and will hold America accountable:

*"This does the Lord hate....hands that shed innocent blood"*  
*Proverbs 6:16-17*

- On June 17, 1963, the Supreme Court ruled that reading the Bible and prayer in public schools was forbidden even though they had been included in America's schools since the founding of this country. By the 1990's the deceiving viewpoint of "*separation of church and state*" had successfully removed God from public schools and most governmental institutions
- The phrase "America Vs. the Ten Commandments" summarizes the on-going effort to remove the Ten Commandments, Nativity Scenes, and Christmas Carols in schools, courthouses, and other public places and has been responsible for the deepening anti-God secularization of America
- An unapologetic and brash example of rejecting God was publicly exhibited during the 2008 and 2012 National Democratic Party Convention platform approval process. In the platforms, the affirmation of open sex, government provided contraception (i.e., Sandra Fluke during the 2012 convention), approval of abortion (murder), and the removal of God from the platform have characterized the current Democratic Party as the "anti-God" party

Although murder by abortion, removal of the Bible and prayer from public schools and the removal of the Ten Commandments from public places are clear examples of an escalating anti-God trend, the open rejection of God by a major political party raises an important question as applied to our discussion on voting considerations:

*"How can an evangelical Christian who supports godly values vote for a Democratic candidate who supports the current Democratic platform?"*

**November 4, 2016**

**Part II**

## **ABSOLUTES**

As we previously discussed in the Introduction, the common perception that Clinton and Trump are two of the most disliked and distrusted nominees in the history of our Republic has resulted in widespread cynicism in American voters who are faced with two morally problematic choices that elevate the degree of uncertainty of casting a ballot for *the lesser of two evils*. As a result, it is remarkable that many voters are voting *against a candidate* instead of voting *for a*

*candidate*. When evaluating the prospect of choosing between two problematic candidates, a voter should consider three basic principles.

First, in the American voting system, citizen is an office that shoulders the responsibility for the actions of our government. In a democratic republic, citizens are responsible for the placement of candidates into office as well as holding accountability (through voting) over government. In each voting cycle, voters delegate authority to members of government to represent the people of this country. Therefore, voters are also charged with the responsibility to vote informed and with wisdom.

Second, voters are not voting for a minister or Sunday school teacher so any election forces a voter to choose between *the lesser of two evils*. However, overlooking and/or tolerating human depravity does not negate our sense of responsibility as this election will have a dramatic impact on who specifically sets policies and determines the future direction of America. The emphasis of every informed Christian (and secular) voters is voting to minimize the evil in the world, by minimizing the evil in our government. If Christians refrain from voting, the devil wins by default.

Third, a voter can become preoccupied with statistics, watching the news media analyze current trends and polls (that constantly fluctuate), being influenced by the latest “October Surprise,” evaluating countless political experts and numerous other factors that can mask the core issue of the voting process. The core voting issue can easily be defined as “*vote for issues not personalities.*”

Although voting for Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump may or may not be pleasurable, the selection of either candidate will not only have a dramatic affect on this country but a potential affect in the stability and long-term relevance on the global stage of politics and power. This prognosis is easily predictable, as these candidates have publically outlined their vision for America that consists of diametrically contrasting views on governing this country. Therefore, as listing the viewpoints of each candidate could fill several pages, it seems fitting to briefly compare ten key considerations that can be classified as what many voters would consider as “*absolute/non-negotiable items.*”

The following chart makes it easy to see each candidate’s worldviews. The viewpoints are listed in no particular order (except abortion first and the Supreme Court second and were clearly on display during the last debate).



*Note: The following chart was primarily derived from the 2016 Values Voter Presidential Voter Guide from the Family Research Council, the Washington Times and public statements from the candidates.*

| <b><u>ITEM</u></b>   | <b><u>TRUMP(R)</u></b> | <b><u>CLINTON(D)</u></b> |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Abortion</b>  | Oppose                 | Support                  |
| <b>Supreme Court, etc</b><br>(appointing originalist judges)                 | Support                | Oppose                   |
| <b>Planned Parenthood</b><br>(support or oppose supporting with tax dollars) | Oppose                 | Support                  |
| <b>Military</b>  | Rebuild                | Status Quo               |
| <b>Open Borders</b>  | Oppose                 | Support                  |
| <b>Religious Liberty</b>   | Support                | Oppose                   |
| <b>National Debt</b>   | Reduce                 | Increase                 |
| <b>Obama-Care</b><br>(support or repeal)                                     | Repeal                 | Support                  |
| <b>Taxes</b>   | Bracket/Reduce         | Increase                 |
| <b>Trade</b>   | Renegotiate            | Status Quo               |

*Note: Because there has been a noteworthy amount of interest in the subject of candidate positions and viewpoints, lets continue and focus on the race for Governor of Oregon as their viewpoints are also diametrically opposed. The following has been taken from the Voters Guide, Oregon Family Council, General Election, November 8, 2016.*

|   | <b><u>Bud Pierce(R)</u></b> | <b><u>Kate Brown(D)</u></b> |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Life</b><br>(restricting abortion)           | Yes                         | No                          |
| <b>Gambling</b><br>(oppose)                     | Yes                         | No                          |
| <b>Parents Rights</b><br>(parents notification) | Yes                         | No                          |

|   |            |                |
|---|------------|----------------|
| <b>Religion</b><br>(supports exemptions)                                  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b>      |
| <b>Minimum Wage</b><br>(oppose mandated wage increases)                   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b>      |
| <b>Marriage</b><br>(oppose courts overturning one man/one woman marriage) | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b>      |
| <b>Education</b><br>(supports open enrollment in online charter schools)  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Unclear</b> |
| <b>Taxes</b><br>(supports tax kicker)                                     | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b>      |

## **AMERICA AT THE CROSSROADS**

Parallel with the fact that the current presidential election is divisive and contentious are voiced phrases such as *“this is the most important presidential election in many years, America is at the crossroads, this election will determine the future of America,”* and so on. Not surprisingly, when over 66% of Americans believe that this country is going in the wrong direction in combination with the dissimilar visions for America of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump; it is easy to see why the aforementioned phrases are often used to express a real concern over the future direction of this country. However, if we stop for just a moment and unambiguously apply the past records and stated objectives of Clinton and Trump it becomes convincingly clear what the two candidates stand for and how they view the future of America. As an example, from a secular and very important perspective, we could spend a significant amount of time on polls, statistics and political commentary discussing the rising national debt, apparent corruption in government and political leaders, our shrinking military, the imploding Affordable Care Act, immigration and open borders, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, the Clinton Foundation, religious freedom and so on.

However, lets look at the spiritual condition and health of this country. To begin, it should be stated that although this country was founded on godly principles and ethics, the spiritual condition of America has been on a steady downward trajectory as exposed in a recent 2016 nationwide spiritual condition survey of Christians and non-Christians alike by the respected George Barna Group who recently published the following results:

*Note: The complete survey is available at The Cultural Context for the 2016 Election; which is excerpted from the forthcoming book – America at the Crossroads; Explosive Trends Shaping America's Future and What You Can Do About It.*

- *“Americans are losing faith in all aspects of their Christian heritage and commitment. During the past decade alone, there have been huge declines in the proportion of people....who claim to have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ*
- *Fewer than one in five adults believes that absolute moral truth exists and is defined in the Bible*
- *The unchurched population is growing like cancer, now approaching half of the adult public. The dropout rate continues to climb because half of the unchurched say the churches they have attended do not add sufficient value to their life*
- *Americans were once proud of their country and their government but those days are long gone. Less than one out of every five adults has a great deal of confidence in the legislative branch, the executive branch, the judicial branch, the various agencies and departments of the federal government, or in their state government*
- *Only one out of three adults believes that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches. A minority of Americans say the bible contains everything a person needs to know to live a meaningful life, which helps explain why only half of the country wants the Bible to have a greater influence on American society*
- *The nations morals and values are a mess. More than seven out of ten adults agree that the nation is greatly divided when it comes to the most important values. Our moral behavior is appalling. A majority argues that co-habitation, sexual fantasies, sex outside of marriage, giving birth outside of marriage, divorce, doctor-assisted suicide, homosexual relations, same-sex marriage are morally acceptable endeavors. Within the next decade, we expect a majority to add pornography and profanity to the list*
- *People have less hope for the future of America. Two-thirds argue that the government will never change for the better. Never!”*

The preceding summary of the current American culture underscores the cultural context for the 2016 battle for the White House, control of Congress and defines why *“America is at the Crossroads for her Future.”* By comparing the candidate's views in the preceding chart, it should be obvious who will support the pro-life viewpoint, make Supreme Court appointments that will support that view and enhance religious liberties!

**Only if you vote do you have a part in determining the future of this country!**

## CONCLUSION

As we have previously discussed, the voting process not only politically empowers citizens but also grants them the right to voice their opinion to agree or disagree of the actions taken by stewards of the public trust who were put into office to represent the American people. This country has existed for more than 200 years and during that time countless numbers of men and women have fought and died to ensure that Americans have the right to vote for every political office from school board member to state legislator to congressional representative to president of the United States, as well as on a host of state and local matters. It is a duty that each eligible voter should feel obligated and proud to perform. Prior to each election process, it is imperative that each voter:

- Pray
- Become informed on the issues
- Vote
- Hold elected officials accountable

To summarize the powers that are invested in each American citizen, consider the following quote:

*“The people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness, and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities. If the next centennial does not find us a great nation, it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces”*

*Rev. James A. Garfield, (1850-1937), United States President, Minister of the Gospel*

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