

One of the most common questions Christians have is this: 'How can I know God's will?' I received a letter over 35 years ago from a lady in Florida while I was living in England as a missionary. She wanted to know how to discern God's will. This led me to do some research on the subject. One author was more rational in his approach while another was more open to being led of the Spirit. In essence, we should be led through the written Word of God but also by the Holy Spirit. As I write this, our country is making a decision about who to vote for as President. As a Bible believing Christian filled with the Holy Spirit, it seems pretty obvious to me who God would have me vote for. However, there are many Christians who seem more ambivalent about the choice or are totally opposite in their views.

In making any major decision, it is important to examine all the useful information available and not to be led by feelings or emotions. It is imperative to have proper perspective, which means to **look at the big picture** and to consider the immediate and long term results of each choice. How would a child or an adult differ in the choice between a **candy bar or a gold bar**? The child would most likely take the candy bar, while the adult would choose the gold bar if they were smart. A 2 ounce snickers bar may cost \$2, while a 1 ounce gold bar is now worth over \$2700. The candy will bring some immediate pleasure, but it is not lasting. The gold will retain and even increase in value over time.

This same principle is true while thinking of government leaders. True statesman and servants of the people have a long term view of what is best for the country and its people. Unprincipled leaders only to seek benefit themselves and appeal to the immediate desires of the people, even if the long term effects may be disastrous. Many of my young readers of these messages would not remember the 1992 election where three candidates were on the ballot: George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. Perot was a businessman and acted accordingly. He brought out charts in his speeches and displayed the financial situation of our government in a clear manner while most candidates only give general platitudes. Some of the best politicians come from the business world, as they understand capitalism and how the economy works best. Many other politicians see government programs as the main source of wealth and growth. Unfortunately, there is little accountability which leads to much waste, bureaucratic duplicity and corruption. Judges, priests, preachers and prophets are often corrupted by bribes and the love of money - Micah 3:11, Luke 16:14-15

### **GOD'S GOVERNMENT**

- **Righteousness and justice** are the foundation of God's throne and rule - Psalm 89:14

(for a more complete treatment of this, go to our Kingdom Intro section)

### **Man's Earthly Government Assignment** - 1 Peter 2:14

- Punish evildoers (those who do wrong / those who do what God hates) pride, lies, hands that **shed innocent blood,** wicked schemers, dissension - Proverbs 6:16-19
- Praise and honor the righteous (those who do right)  
Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God - Micah 6:8b

We can only know what is righteous or wrong if we know God's heart and mind, and that comes from God's Word. In my study of God's will, I discovered there are two main words for the will of God in the Greek: *boule* and *thelema* (we explore these more in our next lessons)

**Boule** God's predetermined ultimate plan and purpose that cannot be thwarted whether man cooperates or not eg. Acts 2:23

**Thelema** God's wish or desire for mankind which requires our cooperation for its fulfillment. eg. 1 Thessalonians 4:3

We know that God **'sets up kings and deposes them'** - Daniel 2:21. While this is true, there may be times when man subverts God's best choice and let's man suffer the consequences.

**'But Israel has rejected what is good; an enemy will pursue him. They set up kings with out my consent; they choose princes without my approval. - Hosea 8:3-4**

In His sovereignty, God has chosen to give mankind the power to choose life or death, good or evil, righteousness or lawlessness, blessing or cursing. What will we choose?

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