



"It is not that God should be on our side, but that we be on His."
—George Washington

20-Aug-04

Who Gets Jesus' Vote?

On Wednesday morning, news outlets carried the story of the Texas [Faith](#) Network conference in Austin attended by "religious leaders" on Tuesday. The Associated Press reported:

James Moore, co-author of "Bush's Brain: How Karl Rove Made George Bush Presidential," drew laughter and applause when he offered his view to the moderate to left-leaning crowd of about 250 clergy and lay leaders.

"If ever there were a bleeding-heart liberal, it was [Jesus Christ](#)," Moore said at Congregation Agudas Achim synagogue. "I think the carpenter from Galilee was the original Democrat."

Obviously, this was intended as a laugh line in Moore's speech, but "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" ([Matthew 12:34](#)). Partisans on both sides of the political aisle claim Jesus' support for their policies, but as far as can be told, none of them has truly studied Jesus thoroughly and honestly enough to determine what initiatives He would indeed support. The article quotes a handful of clergy regarding their views of Christ's "political ideology":

- Timothy Tutt, pastor of United Christian Church in Austin: "As I read the Scriptures and as I understand faith, God's side is the group that's feeding the poor, caring about children, making sure that people have enough food to eat—not killing others."
- Michael Jinkins, a pastoral theology professor at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary: "Based on my reading of the Gospels, I think Jesus might surprise us all on his voting record. He was far less 'religious' than the people who criticized him most."

One says He was all about social responsibility, another opines that He was less fundamentalist and more secular than the Pharisees, who were by all accounts conservative and nationalistic in their politics. Yet, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Franklin Graham, and other conservative ministers would point to Jesus' moral teachings and claim He would support life (anti-abortion), virtue (pro-morality), freedom (patriotic and pro-Democracy), and strength (pro-business and pro-war, particularly Iraq and the War on Terror).

What side would Jesus endorse? Neither.

The article surprisingly ends with a proper conclusion on this point:

In fact, Jesus might not support Bush or Kerry or anyone else, for that matter.

"Jesus was not one to take sides on political issues," said Derek Davis, director of the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University in Waco.

While there were obviously no Democrats or Republicans during the time of Jesus, different groups vied for attention, including the fundamentalist Pharisees, the aristocratic Sadducees, the spiritually devout Essenes and the revolutionist Zealots.

"Interestingly, Jesus never sided with any of these groups but remained above such earthly disputes," Davis said.

Jesus never said anything remotely political. The closest He came was in His adroit answer to the Pharisees' crafty question regarding paying taxes to Caesar: "Why do you test Me? . . . Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to [God](#) the things that are God's" ([Luke 20:23-25](#)). To paraphrase, He tells us to give government its due—but God or religion is an entirely different matter. The politics of [this world](#) and the true religion of God do not mix well.

At His trial before Pilate, the Roman procurator asks, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ([John 18:33](#)). Jesus replies, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (verse 36). Jesus' Kingdom is still not of this world, as its King remains in heaven at His Father's right hand until the appointed time for His return. Therefore, His servants still should not be involved in the political battles of this world either.

It is interesting to notice that when Jesus returns, He does not join the "right" or "correct" political party, but "in righteousness He judges and makes war. . . . Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" ([Revelation 19:11](#), 15).

It seems clear that Jesus does not think highly of any human government of any political stripe. In fact, He seems to be for, in today's terms, total war, worldwide imperialism, and installing Himself as benevolent dictator for eternity. The question, then, is not, whose side is He on, but who is on His side?

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

Why We Do Not Vote

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Events indicate that this nation is rapidly deteriorating because of unrighteousness and vile, pernicious liberalism. As tempting as the prospect appears, voting by Christians does not fall into the category of righteous judgment. We have been called out of this world with its political institutions, having no meeting of the minds with those not having God's Holy Spirit. Our citizenship in the Kingdom of God makes us pilgrims in the physical country in which we live. Like ambassadors of a foreign government, we cannot participate in the politics of another country, which would distract us from our spiritual duties.

From the Archives: Featured Article

Can Theology Define God's Nature?

by Earl L. Henn

Matter interacts with energy in a different way at the atomic level than it does at the macro level. Earl Henn show that in a similar way human reason and logic are practically useless as tools in determining the nature of God. Only the Bible gives a complete revelation of God.

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