

## WHERE IS YOUR ALLEGIANCE?

When we profess the Lordship of Jesus Christ, it means that we forsake ALL to follow Him. In the pursuit of a PERSON, we make the choice to let go of other pursuits. Notice that Paul the apostle reduced himself to a SINGLE FOCUS: “That I might know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind...I press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus”; Philippians 3:10-14. When Jesus is Lord of our life, His Kingdom becomes our focus. Kingdoms of men and men’s issues (such as politics, the economy, social injustice, the environment, immigration issues) are no longer our pursuit or assignment. Do we ignore these things? No; we are aware of them and we certainly seek to help the needy and oppressed when we can. But our Lord’s Commission to His Church is clear: preach the Gospel to every creature, make disciples, worship Him in spirit and in truth, cast out devils, lay hands on the sick, prepare for the Lord’s appearing. We are now occupied with a HEAVENLY COUNTRY. Our allegiance is not found in the earthly realm; our loyalty is not given to temporary pursuits, that which is passing away; Hebrews 11:8-16. The kingdoms of this world are all coming down; every man-made kingdom is crumbling at the present time.

The Lord told Abraham to FORSAKE ALL, to leave everything to follow Him, including his allegiance to the country of his native birth; see Genesis 12:1. Disciples are “Abraham’s seed”; his life demonstrates the complete separation that is necessary to be called “a friend of God”; James 2:23. Jesus tells His disciples that we must love Him more than anything and anyone. If we do not carry our cross, we cannot be His disciple; this is “death” to my own preferences, my loyalties, my own interests, my own life. He said that no man can serve two masters; Luke 14:26; 16:13. (Is your nation, your political views, your possessions or any person a “master” over you?). The scriptures remind us that our allegiance must not be to men, to their denominations or to their “parties”; 1 Corinthians 3:3-5. The scriptures reveal that God’s allegiance is not to any “party, tribe or faction” even during times of war; see Joshua 5:13-14.

Jesus never entered into a political debate with anyone; He did not attempt to sway people’s political persuasion or change the order of that day. He spoke of another Kingdom. His allegiance was to His Father, His heavenly Authority, which allowed Him to remain focused upon His assignment: to give His life as a ransom for many, through the sacrifice of the Cross. Jesus said My Kingdom is not of this world (Greek word “kosmos”: present world order); John 18:36. Jesus and the early Church all lived under an earthly oppression from the Romans. The Sanhedrin, the Pharisees, Agrippa, Festus and Caesar were all corrupt, ungodly leaders. But Jesus never told His disciples to devote their energies toward reforming their unrighteous system of government; He never instructed His Church to “overthrow” a wicked world order in an attempt to usher in a “Golden Age”. When Jesus returns with His saints at His Second Coming, He will deal with the rebellious and establish His Millennial Kingdom. We are presently in the Gospel Age of Grace. While it is true we are “salt and light” in the Earth, Matthew 5:13-14, and our present influence (along with the Restrainer) has hindered the full expression of evil, our biblical mandate does not include “fixing Babylon”. God says that Babylon is “fallen”; Revelation 14:8; 18:2, it is coming down.

One day, as Jesus was going out of the temple, one of the disciples said “Master, look at those massive stones and magnificent buildings”, to which Jesus replied: Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another; every one will be torn down; Mark 13:1-2. All that has been built for the glory of man will be demolished. Religious man’s feeble attempts to “transform the culture” or “take over” the systems of government by populating them with Christians is futile. Jesus did not commission us to “solve” man’s dilemmas by building a kingdom through a structured church system with “man-made techniques” to advance the Gospel. An allegiance to the faulty thinking of “dominionism”, a “kingdom now” mentality, or an “emerging, inclusive faith movement” reveals the efforts and strength of the flesh. New programs or “movements” of men cannot change the condition of fallen humanity or save sinners. Only the new birth, John 3:3, initiated by the Holy Spirit through an encounter with the living Christ, is the only means by which a man is transformed. Attempting to “convert society” through human ability, and the efforts of men, however noble they may be, cannot “usher in” God’s Kingdom. Jesus told us that His Kingdom is NOT of this world; if it were, then His servants would fight for Him; John 18:36. At present, God’s Kingdom does not come with observation (visibly); it is WITHIN US, established in the heart of an individual; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 17:20-21. Jesus said: “I pray for them (His disciples); I PRAY NOT FOR THE WORLD (“kosmos” the present world order, kingdoms of men) but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine”; John 17:9.

We are not called to labor from the perspective of “human sympathy” (which pleads for immediate relief for people from suffering or affliction), but from the perspective of “divine compassion” (which is true mercy, seeing the bigger picture, with God’s ultimate purpose to bring lost humanity to its knees). Our Father does not willingly afflict the sons of men; Lamentations 3:33, but He knows how to deliver us from our afflictions; Psalm 34:19. Our assignment is not to attempt to spare humanity from its suffering and afflictions which arise from living in a fallen world; these things can and do serve a purpose; see Psalm 119:67; Hebrews 5:8. We are not told to “fight” against social injustice, but for SOULS. Jesus did not engage in, nor did He advocate public protests against the civil injustice of Rome; He never attempted to force Kingdom principles upon a godless society through “Christian activism”. On the contrary, it was written of Him: “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously”; 1 Peter. 2:23. There is a great need for God’s people to hear His voice, to have His perspective, to understand His ways. Psalm 103:7 tells us “He (the Lord) made known His WAYS to Moses (His friend and deliverer; Exodus 33:11), His ACTS unto the children of Israel (the nation who professed faith in God). There are two basic strategies that the enemy is utilizing as an “all out assault” against God’s people: DECEPTION in many forms (within the church and without), and DISTRACTIONS (things of the world, issues of men) designed to turn us from pursuing the Lord Himself, prayer, worship and the Great Commission. Zealous individuals within the Church have become so absorbed with “good causes” that they have lost their fervor for saving souls and discipleship. The scriptures have recorded instances of civil uprisings, but it does not advocate that God’s people initiate “demonstrations” or “social upheaval” in an attempt to advocate justice and morality. In His messages to the seven churches of Revelation, Jesus never indicted the churches for their lack of “rising up” in protest against the “loss of their rights” or because of the

oppressive behavior of the state. He rebuked them for abandoning their “first love”, for tolerating heresies, idolatry, immorality and spiritual adultery. JESUS NEVER INSTRUCTED HIS DISCIPLES TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVISM AS A MEANS TO RESTORE OR HEAL THEIR NATION. However, we are instructed to pray without ceasing; 1 Thess. 5:17. Deviant civil authorities and godless leaders who impose tyrannical legislation, do so because they are of the world, because they desire to lord over the people. Any attempt on the part of God’s people to utilize coercion and pressure through carnal methods to enact reform “for the sake of the people” does not change the condition of the human soul. THE FOCUS MUST BE THAT PEOPLE HEAR THE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE AND THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL! As always, the preaching of the cross and obedience to its message is foolishness to the natural mind. But it is wisdom on the part of God that He would direct His people toward a single pursuit: to press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ; to maintain a separation from other “allegiances” for one end: to obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; Philippians; 3:14, so that when He appears, those whom He has “governed” shall be qualified to be a partaker of the restoration of all things, to rule the nations with a rod of iron; Rev. 2:26-27. All creation is groaning, waiting for God’s sons to be manifested; Romans 8:19-22. It requires much diligence and obedience on the part of those who choose to forsake all other allegiances to be loyal to Him; to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, for Whom we suffer the loss of all things and do count them as dung, that we may win Christ; Philippians 3:7-8.

May God give us the grace to discern the false movements, prophecies and the persuasive individuals who seduce the people, by convincing them to give their allegiance (and money) to their ministries, believing they are uniquely qualified to speak for God as His “appointed” apostles and prophets. These claim they have a mandate to convert the kingdoms of men. “Mountains” of religious denominations, political and economic structures shall crumble down. “High in the mountains live the wild goats”; Ps. 104:18; wicked men may occupy their “mountains and hills” (places of idolatrous worship), but Jesus is absolutely victorious over them all. It is He Who comes “leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills”; Song of Sol. 2:8, 17. He has triumphed over every obstacle, over kingdoms of men. He is sovereign over all history and human rulers. The seduction of the present age is subtle: charismatic leaders have gained a following of believers who crave signs and wonders, who look to men to facilitate societal reform, to inaugurate a kingdom of equality, acceptance, tolerance and inclusion. The Lord’s disciples were not (and are not) a part of the ruling elites of this present age. Upon His return, King Jesus will overthrow the wicked rulers of nations; He alone will establish His Kingdom upon Earth. He warns us that many will come in His name and will sway the multitudes to follow them and their “new structure”; false leaders arise to appease the cries of “unfairness and injustice”. Jesus warned us that many deceivers will appear prior to His return; Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24. MANY WILL GIVE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO A FALSE SAVIOR because they have not had an encounter with THE TRUE SAVIOR. “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ”; Matthew 23:8-10.

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