

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
Paul Gunn, Pastor

LORD, DELIVER US FROM THIS MESS

Various scriptures

November 1, 2020

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**INTRODUCTION:** In two days, we'll have an election. Is there anyone here that did not know this? When our television viewers watch this next Sunday, the election will be over, or at least we think it might be. And we'll know the winner, or at least we think we will. I say these things because anything can happen. We have two candidates that will probably not concede unless the election is a complete landslide.

Along with this election, we have extremists that really won't be happy if their person is not elected. We've had a year or more of election coverage, and I am sure you are as tired of it as me.

In the media, a person will highlight the weaknesses of the candidate they don't like while ignoring the glaring weaknesses of the candidate they like. One news story contradicts another. In one case, I noticed where one news story had been declared a hoax by several networks, but another network was still reporting the story.

We've also had to deal with a rather newer phenomenon in the American election cycle, and that is condemning accusations are taken broadly as fact. In other words, a person is guilty until proven innocent. We seem to be in an era of lies and fake news, partially reported news, exaggerated news, or purposefully omitted news. We have news shows that are anchored by commentators and the masses don't realize they are sharing their opinions. Years ago, you may recall when a news person was giving a commentary, the word "commentary" would appear at the bottom of the screen. The network wanted to be clear that they had changed gears from reporting to commentary. We also have a lot of satire sites, that many people believe are reporting real news.

We have Facebook and Twitter censoring accounts. They may say their censorship is to prevent the furthering of fake news, but who knows?

And we live in a day of fact-checkers. And checkers of fact-checkers. The old fact-checkers use to be the news.

We have foreign interference with our elections and other media. A popular internet video about America and the coronavirus was sent to me by probably twenty people. I was skeptical, and later found out the video was created by trolls in the Philippines. Internet trolls are people who purposefully try to deceive. Wow, what a waste of a life. You were given one life and what a shame to waste it by making up deceptive news.

And today, we have voter anxiety - fear of voter fraud, fear that our votes will not be counted. Some have fear about the pandemic and voting in person. I consider voting so important, that if I had to wear a hazmat suit and an oxygen tank and be taken in an ambulance and carried in on a stretcher, I would do whatever it took to vote in person.

My goodness, we are living in a confusing time, aren't we?

We have an election-saturated society – we are used to it, but just as soon as the election signs come down in a few months there will be another election of some sort. Voting is a privilege, let's not take it for granted. This past week, I spoke with a young man who immigrated from another country several years ago. He is now a U. S. citizen and voted during early voting. He was very, very knowledgeable of the presidential candidates. I was impressed. In fact, I can safely say he was more knowledgeable than almost everyone I know. He was downright giddy over the idea of voting for the person he wants to run the country. He was so excited about voting, he called his mother in his homeland to tell her he voted. She told him she was proud of him. Can you imagine getting your citizenship this year and voting for the first time ever in *this* election? Wow!

On this Sunday four years ago, I said the following: “One thing which stands out in this election is the public’s fear of the candidates,” and by that statement I meant Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. There is a bit of a difference in this election,

however. I believe people are confident in the one they are voting for, but afraid of the one they are not voting for.

I want to tell you what I am going to do on Wednesday morning after the election if the person I voted for wins:

1. I will wake up.
2. I will thank God for another day.
3. I will get cleaned up and ready for the day.
4. I will kiss Susan goodbye and wave as I leave the driveway.

Now let me tell you what I will do on Wednesday morning after the election if the person I voted for does not win. Are you ready?

1. I will wake up.
2. I will thank God for another day.
3. I will get cleaned up and ready for the day.
4. I will kiss Susan goodbye and wave as I leave the driveway.

In other words, I don't plan on stopping my routine. I don't plan on being the woman during the last election on her knees screaming "Noooooo" when the election results were announced.

I've spent a lot of time saying all these things because I want you to hear some hope this morning. If we are people of faith like we say we are, we must remind ourselves that almighty God is in charge of human affairs. This does not mean that man always decides God's best. In the book of I Samuel, the people wanted a king like other nations. It was not God's best for them to have a king, but the people wanted it one so much that God said OK...and King Saul was their first king. He was certainly a character, and while he had some good traits, he showed signs of severe mental illness at times.

When I say that God is in charge of human affairs, what I am saying is that he is in charge – he will definitely allow a person, or even a nation of people, to mess up and he'll still accomplish his will.

Since there is so much fear around this election I want to point out Scripture of hope—God is indeed in charge of human affairs. Here are three points to today’s message:

- God either ordains or allows all governments.
- God accomplishes his will the way he wants.
- Civil society must be supported by citizens who pray and act.

## **GOD EITHER ORDAINS OR ALLOWS ALL GOVERNMENTS**

You know, no leader becomes a leader without God allowing it to be so, even if the leader is not the best in all ways.

Jesus answered [Pilate], “*You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.*” (John 19:11)

*For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.* (Romans 13:1b)

*For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you [God] anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.* (Acts 4:27-28)

Not only are human systems accountable to God, but

## **GOD ACCOMPLISHES HIS WILL THE WAY HE WANTS**

I am sure someone here is thinking it doesn’t matter who you vote for because ultimately God decides. Saying that is like saying it doesn’t matter whether you have a healthy lifestyle because ultimately God decides how long you will live.

Voting is like anything else in life – it’s an exercise in stewardship. Absolving yourself of personal stewardship by saying it does not matter what you do because it’s all in God’s hands is a cop out. It is avoiding personal responsibility.

God’s will will prevail, but he holds us responsible for our decisions.

Back to King Saul for a moment - the people wanted a king. It was not God's desire. Instead, he wanted to lead people through the Prophet. But no, the people wanted a king, so he gave them one. Saul. Overall, Saul was an awful king. After Saul, God gave them David. David was not perfect but was a great leader and was a man after God's own heart. No doubt the people loved David because of Saul's failures.

I've shared this with you before but before the kings in the Bible, there were judges. They were not judges like we think of judges today. They were rulers. The roll of the judge was different from a king.

*First judge:* Othniel; 40 years.

*Second judge:* Ehud; 80 years. Ehud said to an enemy king, "*I have a message from God for you*", *drew his sword, and stabbed the king in his abdomen.*

*Third judge:* Shamgar; killed 600 people with an ox goad, basically a cattle prod.

*Fourth judge:* Deborah and Barak; 40 years.

*Fifth judge:* Gideon; 40 years. Led battle with 300 men with clay jars, shofars, and torches.

*Sixth judge:* Abimelech; 3 years.

*Seventh judge:* Tola; 23 years. The Bible mentions the least about this man. We know nothing about his time as judge. Judges 10 gives us some of his relatives' names... his grandfather was Dodo. Can you imagine today's media having fun with this name?

*Eighth judge:* Jair; 22 years. All of his reign was peaceful.

*Ninth judge:* Jephthah; 6 years. This guy was just crazy. He wouldn't win an American election. I certainly wouldn't vote for him.

*Tenth judge:* Ibzan; 7 years.

*Eleventh judge:* Elon; 10 years.

*Twelfth judge:* Abdon; 8 years.

*Thirteenth judge:* Samson; 20 years. He was so disobedient to God.

*Fourteenth judge:* Eli; 40 years. He had two awful sons. Had they been alive today they would have created some great fodder for American media.

*Fifteenth judge:* Samuel. The last judge was Samuel—a good judge.

These people were ordained of God to rule during their day. Some of them were good; some were not so good; some were awful. None of them would have been nominated by any American political party today. You would not have wanted to have most of these people over for Thanksgiving dinner. You would not have wanted to meet them for a cup of coffee.

None of the judges were perfect. None of our leaders are either, so quit looking for the perfect candidate. Every Democrat, Republican, and everyone else: whoever you think the prime candidate is – vote for that person – but realize God might allow someone else to accomplish his will on this earth.

Let's review: God ordains or allows governments. God accomplishes his will the way he wants.

## **CIVIL SOCIETY MUST BE SUPPORTED BY CITIZENS WHO PRAY AND ACT**

Listen to this: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.* (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

The rule of law only works if leaders uphold the rule of law. And voters are the ones who elect people who either uphold the rule of law or elect people who think they are above it. It's also the voters who decide to elect leaders who steer the course of the country for generations to come.

Many of our Christian voices today believe there are three specific Supreme Court rulings which have contributed to the breakdown of a great country: The rulings about prayer in public schools, abortion, and gay marriage.

Engel vs Vitale in 1962 - Removal of prayer in schools

Roe vs Wade in 1973 - Abortion law

Obergefell vs Hodges - 2015 gay marriage

If, as believers, we don't stand up, we'll lose our religious freedoms. Don't think we won't! In the US we have Separation of Church and State, and there is such a misunderstanding of it. People pontificate about it but don't really have the foggiest clue about what it means or how it came about. That could be a lesson for another time, but here's what I want to say about religious freedom: I believe religious freedom is the foundational freedom for all other freedoms. If it were to go, all our other freedoms would be threatened. Remember that and consider that.

**CONCLUSION:** Some day in our next life, if we have the ability to look back, we'll see how God accomplished his will in the most mysterious and unique ways.

But ultimately, our time in the next life won't be spent discussing politics from the previous life. We won't be discussing who Donald Trump insulted this week or how Joe Biden forgot what he was saying midsentence. The next life, at least for believers, will be all about Jesus:

Philippians 2 tells us because Jesus died on the cross: *God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil.2:9-11)*

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Thanks to Jennifer Anderson for her editing assistance.

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