

Rise Up And Build

"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

August 30, 2020

The Most Important Election of All

Read the newspaper, listen to the radio, watch the daily TV news, and you are bound to hear or read about the up-coming general election, on Nov. 3, 2020. Different commentators describe the approaching election as “the most important election in our lifetime,” or “the most important election in the history of our nation.”

As an American citizen, I do not want to minimize the this-world importance of the up-coming election. For good or evil, we are affected by the character of those who serve in the different levels of government. Solomon expressed it this way: *“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan”* (Prov. 29:2). A Biblical example which illustrates this principle is set forth in 2 Chronicles 28, wherein we read of Ahaz who succeeded Jothan as king over Judah. Regarding Ahaz, the record states that *“he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord,”* and that *“he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals,”* (2 Chron. 28:1-2). What was the effect of Ahaz’s character and conduct upon the people over whom he reigned as King? The text says that *“the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the Lord”* (Prov. 28:19). In view of these scriptures, I conclude that it is very foolish (and unbiblical!) for one to say that “character doesn’t matter” as it relates to the governing authorities! Character is very important — especially in the hearts and lives of those who rule in the civil realm!

However, notwithstanding what has just been stated, I state that the up-coming general election in November of this year is **not** “the most important election of all!”

Generally, it seems, that when we hear the word “**election**,” we think of politics; we think of elections which are arranged by human beings, by various people who hold elective office. I do not want to minimize the importance of these elections. I am thankful to be able to live in what has been described as a “free society,” and that I, as a citizen, can still express myself at the ballot box. And I am thankful for the countless heroes and heroines who sacrificed their very lives so that I, and others, can enjoy this freedom. And I should continually remind myself that great privileges necessarily infer the existence of **great responsibilities**. Regardless of the arena (whether physical or

spiritual), I must remember that “*to whom much is given, from him much will be required...*” (Luke 12:48).

The “*election*” to which I am herein referring is **God’s** election! This election is referred to countless times in the scriptures, a few instances of such are as follows: In Col. 3:12, the saints at Colossae were referred to as “*the elect of God.*” In I Thess. 1:4, with regards to the members of the “*church*” at Thessalonica, Paul addressed them, saying “*knowing therefore brethren your election by God.*” In Titus 1:1, Paul mentioned “*the faith of God’s elect.*” In 2 Tim. 2:10 Paul said “*I endure all the things for the sake of the elect.*” The epistle of I Peter was addressed to those who were described as the “*elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...*” (I Peter 1:2). In Rom. 8:33 Paul asked the question, “*who shall bring a charge against God’s elect.*”

Clearly, in view of the preceding scriptures “*election*” is a Bible subject, and one which is exceedingly important! It is much more important to be among “**God’s elect**” than to temporarily be elected to public office by mere human beings!

But what does “*election*” mean? “**Election**” is a noun and it is translated from *ekloge* (Geek) which “denotes a picking out, selection, then, that which is chosen” (**Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, by W.E. Vine). With this thought in mind, in writing to the “*elect*” (I Pet. 1:2), Peter said “*you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His Own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (I Pet. 2:9). You will please note that these “*elect*” (I Pet. 1:2) were people that were “*chosen*,” a people whom God “*called...out of darkness into His marvelous light*,” who were further described as “*the people of God*,” a people who had “*obtained mercy*” (v. 10).

Sadly, the topic of “*election*” has been badly perverted by countless religious people! For example, John Calvin (1509-1564) in “**Institutes of the Christian Religion**,” set forth five major tenants, namely: (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of Saints (acronym TULIP). The whole system stands or falls upon the first tenant, **Total Depravity**. Supposedly, every new born infant was “totally depraved” at birth, having inherited the sin of Adam, a doctrine which is clearly contradicted by such Scriptures as: Ezek 18:20; Matt. 18:1-2; Matt.19:14, etc. Hence, this doctrine is false; however, **if** it were true, **then** such persons would be incapable of making any good decision regarding their own destiny, so that necessitates the conclusion that God’s “*election*” is unconditional, meaning that one can be a part of God’s “*elect*” without having met any conditions whatever! That, my friend, is patently false! Jesus, in the famous Sermon on the Mount, clearly said “*Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven*,” Matt. 7:21. To be saved, one **must** do “*the will*” of God, which necessitates a choice on the part of the one who wants to be as part of God’s “*elect*” (I Pet. 1:2), or a part of His “*chosen generation*” (I Pet. 2:9).

Amazingly, the fact that certain ones would be a part of God’s “*chosen*” people was conceived in the mind of God “*before the foundation of the world*” (Eph. 1:4)! It is not that God foreordained that certain ones would be eternally lost and others eternally saved, and that the ones so foreordained would have no choice in the matter of their destiny. The point is God foreordained a plan, the Gospel plan of salvation, and pre-determined that those who obey the gospel will be saved, and all who refuse to obey will be lost. Each person must choose to “*come*” to Jesus (Matt. 11:28-30). And once one has obeyed the gospel he must still take heed to his or her course of action; hence, Peter admonished the “*elect*” (I Pet. 1:2) to “*give diligence to make*

your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). The church at Thessalonica was described as God’s “*election*” (I Thess. 1:4); hence, they constituted His “*chosen*,” or His called out, and they were “*called*” by the “*gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thess. 2:14). Worded differently, the Lord’s church (*ekklesia*) consists of the “*called out*,” and they are “*called*” by the gospel. Members of Christ’s church are therefore God’s “*elect*,” or His “*chosen*.” And there can be no greater honor or blessing than to be a part of **God’s** called out, a part of **His** elect, or His chosen ones, and to therefore enjoy “*every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ*” (Eph. 1:3), and the “*hope of eternal life*” (Tit. 1:2) in that heavenly city, that prepared place for a prepared people!

God’s plan is far better than any system of human origin. Only one person at a time can be President of the United States, but **every** accountable person who submits to, and obeys, the gospel of Jesus Christ can be a part of God’s elect — which is far more important than being a temporary President of a particular nation! Amazingly, however, there are many who are working night and day to elect a flawed human being to a temporary office, while giving no thought whatever to the importance of **themselves** being a part of God’s “*elect*,” a part of His “*chosen generation*!”

In New Testament days God’s “*elect*” were those who obeyed His gospel, which is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16). They obeyed the gospel by hearing the word which produced faith (Rom. 10:17), by believing the gospel (Mark 16:15-16), repenting of their sins (Acts 2:38), confessing their faith in Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 8:37-38), and by being “*buried*” in the waters of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4), “*for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27). Those who so responded became God’s “*elect*,” His “*chosen*” people, who then were to give “*diligence*” to make their “*calling and election sure*” (2 Pet. 1:10). It is so sad that millions of people are working night and day “to get out the vote” for someone else, but are giving no thought to the importance of **their** being a part of God’s “*elect*.” How foolish! How sad! Friend, are you a part of **God’s** “*elect*?”

—Bobby Witherington
