

SABBATH THOUGHT 2024-08-31—DOES GOD APPOINT RULERS?

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The upcoming US presidential election this year has “turned the world upside down” to steal a quote from Luke in Acts 17:6. There is an emotional fervor that has laid hold of both the Democrats and Republicans, the likes of which has never been known. At the heart of it all is a man—Donald Trump. He has been the target and recipient of vile lies and deeds by liberals and, yet, is all but worshipped by the majority of conservatives. Many consider him to be the last man who is capable of preventing the fall of the USA, so much so that many believe the recent assassination attempt was thwarted by God Himself. I will not deny that possibility; however, I wonder how much God is involved with the modern nations descended from the Ten Tribes of Israel. Those who believe God’s hand is upon the USA, to whatever extent that might be, usually refer to a couple of scriptures to back their claim. The first is from one of Daniel’s prayers:

DANIEL 2:20-21 Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; **He removes kings and raises up kings;** He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

God has surely done this. Samuel made his sons judges over Israel, but they took bribes and perverted justice. They were just plain evil. This prompted the elders of Israel to demand Samuel give them a king to replace the judges:

1 SAMUEL 8:6-7 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “**Give us a king to judge us.**” So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.**”

God responded by having Samuel anoint a Benjamite, Saul the son of Kish, as king. However, Saul’s continual disobedience against God caused him to be rejected:

1 SAMUEL 15:23, 26 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because **you [Saul] have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.**” ... 26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, for **you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.**”

Being the one to tell Saul that God had rejected him caused great grief for Samuel. Perhaps the elderly Samuel felt somewhat like a father to Saul whose failures just compounded those of his own sons. Whatever the reason, God had plans to anoint a replacement:

1 SAMUEL 16:1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “**How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?** Fill your horn with oil, and go; **I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.**”

To fill the void, God told Samuel to anoint a son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah:

1 SAMUEL 16:13 **Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David** from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

There is no question this is an example that God Himself “removes kings and raises up kings.” King Herod is another example of God removing a king:

ACTS 12:21-23 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22 And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” 23 Then immediately **an angel of the Lord struck him**, because he did not give glory to God. And **he was eaten by worms and died**.

God also raised up the Persian King Cyrus:

ISAIAH 44:24, 28 Thus says **the LORD**, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: “I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things*, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; ... 28 **Who says of Cyrus [King of Persia], ‘He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure**, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” and to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”

God has certainly removed kings and raised up kings both in ancient Israel and the gentile nations. But I think the Bible paints a less than optimistic view of His involvement in the modern Ten Tribes of Israel. Notice what God did to them after the reign of Solomon, David’s son:

2 KINGS 17:18, 20-23 Therefore **the LORD was very angry with [the northern tribes of] Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left** but the tribe of Judah alone. ... 20 And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until **He had cast them from His sight**. 21 For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam **drove Israel from following the LORD**, and made them commit a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23 until **the LORD removed Israel out of His sight**, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So **Israel was carried away from their own land** to Assyria, *as it is* to this day.

God did not just cast the Ten Tribes of Israel away, He also DIVORCED them:

JEREMIAH 3:8 “Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding **Israel** had committed adultery, **I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce**; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

When a woman is divorced, the Law requires she be sent out of the husband’s house:

DEUTERONOMY 24:1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and **he writes her a certificate of divorce**, puts *it* in her hand, **and sends her out of his house**,

The statute does not allow a divorced woman to remain any longer in the same house as the husband for obvious reasons. When God divorced the Ten Tribes of Israel, He sent them away to Assyria. In other words, He cast them out of the "house of Israel," which means they are no longer under the care of her Husband (God). Even though God certainly blessed the modern Ten Tribes of Israel according to the promises to Abraham, they are otherwise truly rejected:

HOSEA 4:6-7 **My people [v. 1—Israel] are destroyed** for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, **I also will reject you** from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, **I also will forget your children.** 7 **"The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me;** I will change their glory into shame.

Obviously, the prophets foretold of a time when God will redeem the Ten Tribes of Israel and join them together with Judah (Ezek. 37:16-27), but that has not yet occurred. Given all this, is God involved in US presidential elections? Is His hand upon Donald Trump? I have serious doubts, mainly due to the word of Hosea:

HOSEA 8:2-4 **Israel** will cry to Me, 'My God, we know You!' 3 Israel has rejected the good; the enemy will pursue him. 4 **"They [Israel] set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them.** From their silver and gold they made idols for themselves— that they might be cut off.

God said this specifically about the modern Ten Tribes of Israel. Also consider this:

HOSEA 8:8-10 **Israel** is swallowed up; now **they are among the Gentiles** like a vessel in which *is* no pleasure. 9 For they have gone up to Assyria, *like* a wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers. 10 Yes, though **they have [sold themselves] among the nations,** now I will gather them; and **they shall sorrow a little [while under the burden of kings and princes] [—Darby].**

So does God setup and remove every ruler? What about the kings of Israel? Nothing in the Bible suggests that is the case. God certainly has the authority and power to do it but most of the time it seems He withholds his hand from doing so. Remember all the kings of the northern Ten Tribes? Starting with Jeroboam (the first), there were 19 kings in succession before they were captured by Assyria and every single one of them "did evil in the sight of the LORD." A number of times the throne was usurped through assassination. The throne of the northern Ten Tribes was one of continual conflict that is very similar to the office of the US presidency since the time of John Adam. Did God raise up evil kings for the northern Ten Tribes? There is no biblical evidence He did. Did God raise up evil presidents for the modern Ten Tribes? I doubt it. But there is one other scripture that is used to suggest that God establishes *all* rulers:

ROMANS 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**

What is authority? It is the *power to make decisions, give orders, and enforce obedience.* What is the purpose of authority in human hands?

ROMANS 13:2-4 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For **rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.** Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For **he is God's minister to you for good.** But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for **he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.**

Verse 1 says that "all authorities that exist are appointed by God" but the discussion turns to "rulers" in verse 2. Rulers exist to do good and punish evildoers:

1 PETER 2:13-14 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by Him **for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.**

The key to this is understanding that God appoints all 'POSITIONS' of authority but not all rulers. NO ruler is "**God's minister**" if he is wicked, although God obviously ALLOWS wicked rulers to continue in power.

It seems that nations that reject God are allowed to CHOOSE their rulers. This is undoubtedly the case with the modern Ten Tribes of Israel because He plainly said so: "**They [Israel] set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them.**" A nation that is humble and obedient to God is blessed WHEN God chooses their rulers as was the case with King David.

All the Ten Tribes of Israel have been divorced by God so they are rejected by Him and cast away from His presence. Hosea said they are "swallowed up" by the gentiles and his prophecy is being fulfilled before our very eyes. That alone is reason enough that they select rulers whom God says He did not choose or acknowledge.

I have reservations about God being involved in the US presidential elections. That means we might have to choose to disobey some rulers because we "ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). At the same time, we are greatly comforted knowing that God has set up His Son as the righteous King who will see to the punishment of evildoers and praise those who do good works. After Jesus Christ is finished, the Most High God will sit upon His throne as the Great King¹:

ZECHARIAH 14:9 And **the LORD shall be King over all the earth.** In that day it shall be— "**The LORD is one,**" and His name one.

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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¹ Matt. 5:35.