

Will Politicians Save Us?

Rod Reynolds

Each election season in democratic countries like the United States millions get excited over a new leader taking office, hoping that the candidate(s) they favor will either solve the problems facing the country or pursue policies that will personally benefit them. Will politicians save us from the monumental disasters that loom on the horizon?

Despite the popularity of specific politicians, opinion polls indicate the majority of the American people sense that the nation is “on the wrong track.”

In a poll published by the *Huffington Post* in January, 2016, 65 percent thought the nation was on the “wrong track,” while only 26 percent thought the nation was on the “right track.”

In a similar poll by CBS News and the *New York Times* published in January, 2016, 66 percent of those polled thought the nation was headed in the “wrong direction,” while only 27 percent thought the nation was headed in the “right direction.”

But if you were to ask exactly what is wrong with the direction of the country, you would get a widely diverse set of opinions about what is wrong and how to fix it.

Many would say we need to provide more services, like a free college education to any and everybody. This proposal was actually made by at least one of the people running for President in the current election (2016).

Some would say we need more taxes, others less taxes. Some would say we need to do away with all laws restricting abortion, others would say we need to outlaw abortion.

The reality is that as of April, 2016, more than 94 million Americans are not in the labor force, many because they have lost their jobs and have given up looking for work (cnsnews.com). Many others are employed part time who would like to work full time.

About 45 million are on the food stamp program. Wages have stagnated over the past eight to ten years for the average worker. Less than half the people in the United States have as much as \$1000 in savings (MarketWatch.com).

One problem that many recognize is the massive national debt the government has accumulated by deficit spending. What many people may not realize is that massive debt, national bankruptcy, has led to the downfall of many governments and the decline of nations down through history. National bankruptcy was a major factor, for example, leading to the fall of the Royal French government and the subsequent French revolution. It was a major factor in the rise of the Nazis to power in pre-war (World War II) Germany. Those are just a couple of examples.

According to wikipedia.com the officially acknowledged United States public debt in 2008 was \$9,654 billion (\$9.7 trillion; "History of the United States public debt," wikipedia.com).

In less than eight years the debt had ballooned to \$19 trillion and is still growing rapidly.

"The **National Debt** is the amount of money the United States Federal government owes various creditors due to deficit spending. As of December 31, 2015, the national debt had reached \$18.9 trillion, or, if divided equally among each member of the U.S. population, \$234,000 per family of four, a jump of \$8,000 in the single month of November 2015" (conservapedia.com).

The official national debt has virtually doubled in the past eight years, with an average deficit of well over a trillion dollars a year.

"As of December 30, 2015, the official debt of the United States government is \$18.8 trillion (\$18,825,061,664,536). This amounts to:

- \$58,361 for every person living in the U.S.
- \$151,100 for every household in the U.S.
- 104% of the U.S. gross domestic product.
- 539% of annual federal revenues.

"At the close of the federal government's 2014 fiscal year (September 30, 2014), the federal government had roughly:

- \$7.9 trillion (\$7,932,000,000,000) in liabilities that are not accounted for in the national debt, such as federal employee retirement benefits, accounts payable, and environmental/disposal liabilities.
- \$25.4 trillion (\$25,386,000,000,000) in obligations for current Social Security participants above and beyond projected revenues from their

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payroll and benefit taxes, certain transfers from the general fund of the U.S. Treasury, and assets of the Social Security trust fund.

- \$28.2 trillion (\$28,200,000,000,000) in obligations for current Medicare participants above and beyond projected revenues from their payroll taxes, benefit taxes, premium payments, and assets of the Medicare trust fund.

“* The figures above are determined in a manner that approximates how publicly traded companies are required to calculate their liabilities and obligations. The obligations for Social Security and Medicare represent how much money must be immediately placed in interest-bearing investments to cover the projected shortfalls between dedicated revenues and expenditures for all current participants in these programs (both taxpayers and beneficiaries).

“* Combining the figures above with the national debt and subtracting the value of federal assets, the federal government had about \$74.3 trillion (\$74,331,000,000,000) in debts, liabilities, and unfunded obligations at the close of its 2014 fiscal year.

“* This \$74.3 trillion shortfall is 91% of the combined net worth of all U.S. households and nonprofit organizations, including all assets in savings, real estate, corporate stocks, private businesses, and consumer durable goods such as automobiles.

“* This shortfall equates to:

- \$232,627 for every person living in the U.S.
- \$603,194 for every household in the U.S.
- 422% of the U.S. gross domestic product.
- 2,210% of annual federal revenues."

(www.justfacts.com/nationaldebt.asp).

If you owed more than 22 times your annual income, with little to no hope of ever paying your debt, what would you call yourself? Might you call yourself bankrupt?

Imagine, for comparison, an annual income of \$50,000 and a debt of one million, one hundred thousand dollars (22 times 50,000 = 1,100,000).

Other problems facing the nation is out of control immigration, an ongoing epidemic of drug addiction, widespread crime, including mass shootings, terrorist threats, a general decline in morals and family values, to name a few.

Will electing a new President, a new congress, save us? Can politicians save us?

Leadership Counts

It's certainly true that leadership can make a tremendous difference in a nation. History confirms that, and it is reflected in the history of ancient Israel and Judah as preserved in the Bible.

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan” (Proverbs 29:2).

In Israel and Judah during the history of the period of the kings, most of the kings were wicked. They were not faithful to God, and they led the people into idolatry and eventual ruin.

Jeroboam, who after Solomon died became the king of the northern ten tribe nation of Israel, is an example. Israel was to be uprooted from their land because they followed Jeroboam into the path of wickedness. And Jeroboam himself was to be “cut off,” and his dynasty ended (1 Kings 14:14-16). Note that the nation was to be given over to punishment because of its sins, but Jeroboam was held accountable for leading the nation into sin.

Following Jeroboam's death his son Nadab became king, and not long after a usurper (Baasha) killed Nadab and exterminated the house of Jeroboam, in accordance with God's judgment (1 Kings 15:25-30).

By contrast, under the leadership of their king, Asa, for awhile Judah turned from the path of destruction and were given rest from their enemies, whereas before the nation had been afflicted with “great turmoil” (2 Chronicles 15:1-15).

Similar periods of relative peace and prosperity occurred under a few other kings of Judah who led the people to repentance. These included Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah (2 Kings 20:19; 2 Chronicles 17:3-12; 2 Kings 22:19-20).

God swore to Abraham that he would bless his descendants in the latter days because Abraham was faithful to him (Genesis 22:17-18).

These blessings were passed on through Abraham's descendants to the people of

Israel.

In the latter days, the descendants of Joseph were to become a great nation, and a company of nations (Genesis 49:25-26).

For more than 200 years the peoples of the British Empire and Commonwealth, the greatest and richest empire in history, and the United States, arguably the single most powerful and richest nation in history, have dominated the world economically, militarily and culturally.

But continued blessings of this sort for the peoples of Israel are contingent on our obedience to God. "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 28:1-2).

If we turn away, we were warned that aliens would become dominant over us, and eventually our nations would be overtaken by our enemies and those left alive would be taken into captivity, as happened to Israel and Judah in ancient times (Deuteronomy 28:43-51).

Failure of Character

Our leaders, including our religious leaders, as well as our political leaders, have failed us. They have bankrupted the nation. We have been led into a cesspool of corruption and lawlessness. God's commandments and the very mention of God, except in blasphemy and profanity, have been largely erased from our public life.

But the reason this has happened is because we ourselves as a people have not been faithful to God. The state of our nation is a reflection of our own condition, morally and spiritually.

As God's Church and citizens of the kingdom of heaven, we do not involve ourselves in the partisan politics of the world. But we certainly can and do pray that God will grant us sound leadership, and we should be praying for the leaders of our nation. We can pray for the leaders, and pray for the repentance of our peoples, so that the curses pronounced on our peoples for disobedience to God's

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commandments will be removed, and our blessings be restored (1 Timothy 2:1-5).

When King Solomon had built the Temple for God in Jerusalem, he prayed in the dedication ceremony that God would hear the prayers of his people Israel, as well as foreigners among them, when they turn to him in repentance after having sinned against him (2 Chronicles 6:24-39).

God responded to Solomon's prayer as follows:

“Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: 'I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land'" (2 Chronicles 7:12-14).

The right kind of leadership can make a tremendous difference in a nation. But more important even than that is the character of the nation itself.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

Even wise leaders, by themselves, cannot save us from our own foolishness and lawlessness. Ultimately, it will require the intervention of Jesus Christ to bring permanent peace and salvation to the world.

Jesus foretold of “great tribulation” to come upon the modern descendants of Israel, and other calamities to affect the entire world, in the years leading up to his second coming:

"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

.....

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning

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of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened

.....

"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:12-14, 21-22; 27-30).

Unless we turn to God and repent soon, disaster is looming for our nations, for all the nations of the earth.

But the good news is that God himself in the person of Jesus Christ shall finally intervene to save the world from utter destruction. And so shall salvation come to all nations of the earth.

"Say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns; The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously.' Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth" (Psalm 96:10-13).

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