

# Christianity and Politics

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This paper got its start one Sunday, during a group discussion, when one member of the group expressed the opinion that “we don’t really need to vote, because God’s plan includes who will be the next President”.

To say that I disagreed would be an understatement. So, I replied that, after all, we have free will and can make decisions. His reply was that the words “free will” are not found in the Bible.

Well, at that point the conversation began to get interesting, and in a good way. I made the following points:

1. If free will doesn’t exist among humans, then the story of the Garden of Eden is meaningless. Why would God be upset with Eve’s conduct via-a-vis the snake, if God had already planned for it to happen? Further, why should God need to bother with the snake and the forbidden fruit at all?
2. As an analogy, I likened God’s word in the Bible as a set of principles, and the history of people in the Bible illustrates what happens when those principles are violated.
3. As a concrete example, think of the Law of Gravity. God gave us that law, but He also gave us the free will to walk out of a fourth-floor window, thus allowing us to experience up close and personal the folly of rejecting God’s plan.

I remember when my class in church was studying Romans. Verse 13:1 reads (NASB) “**Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.**” Now, this verse would seem to validate my friend’s statement. Unfortunately, it leads us into some *reductio ad absurdum* positions, such as the conclusion that the Allies in World War II should never have overthrown Hitler, because he was the leader chosen by God.

So how do we reconcile Paul’s teaching in Romans with the world as we find it?

- One thought is that Paul never knew a government that was not run by a hereditary ruler (king, emperor, etc.). The weakness of this argument is that Paul certainly knew of the Roman Republic, and probably was familiar with the history of the democratic Greek city states.
- Another factor is the existence of Evil, as personified in Satan. There is a reason for Satan, although it may not be clear to us, and we are charged with resisting him.

- We also have the examples of several kings of Israel and Judea who basically turned against God. Why would God establish rulers He later despaired of? The answer seems to bring us back to the existence of free will. God has set out the rules, and punishes those who did not follow them.
  - King Ahaz (approximately 732 – 715 B.C.) was the twelfth king of Judah. He set up the worship of Moloch, including child sacrifice.
  - Although Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, tried to correct the worst excesses of his father, results were not long-lasting.
  - Jeremiah preached during the reign of Judah’s last 5 kings. The period ended with the fall of Judea to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

One need not look very far to find similarities between the kings of the time of Jeremiah and our present “leaders”. They are at war, not just with the Church, but with humanity. If God sent us Jeremiah and Isaiah, and others in the present day, are we not foolish in the extreme to ignore their teachings? We need to take action, not find excuses, or we will someday find Babylon at our gates.