

If He's God's Choice, Is That Always a Good Thing?

This article is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Dec. 17, 2016.

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LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—Is Mr. Trump God's choice for president? Or was he merely the people's choice?

I am one who believes that God does not always intervene in American elections but often just lets us go our own way just as a good parent might do. Frankly, at this point there is no way to know if God intervened in order to have "His man" sit in the Oval Office, and I am a massive skeptic that He did.

But as a practical matter we don't need to know the extent of divine intervention, and, as a matter of biblical history, even if someone is "God's man," that is no assurance that things will end well with him.

The first king of Israel, King Saul the son of Kish, was God's choice (see Samuel 9), but the power of the office ruined him.

Solomon is still one of the most celebrated kings of ancient Israel, a man with whom God visited personally (1 Kings 3: 4-15). Yet his reign ended with a nation steeped in idolatry and near civil war. His fame, power and wealth that could have been used for the realm's good became the ruin of him (1 Kings 11).

King Jeroboam, who was the first king of the Northern Kingdom (the 10 tribes that split from King David's dynasty after the death of Solomon) was a man God selected and appointed through His prophet.

God even made the same promise to Jeroboam that He had made to David—remain faithful to God and His ways and not only would he and the nation be blessed but his dynasty would last as long as there was an Israel (1 Kings 11:34-39).

Here was a man, clearly God's anointed—clearly God's man—yet he so led the nation in a direction away from God that he is mentioned again and again in the ancient annals as the reason for the nation's downfall (see 2 Kings 17: 7-23).

Some legacy for God's man!

If you believe that Mr. Trump—or any other leader, for that matter—is God's choice, understand that this is no guarantee of God's blessing. The blessing depends on what the man does.

If you believe as I do that Mr. Trump is the people's choice, there is no guarantee that the nation will be cursed. The blessing or the curse will depend on what the leader does and what we do.

So as a practical matter, regardless of whether Mr. Trump is God's man or the people's choice, our obligations as citizens of both the Kingdom of God and the city of man remain the same. Those obligations begin with what Paul wrote to Timothy.

1 Timothy 2:1-4—"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Prayer is a good place to start, but there is more we must do. Consider the instruction to the Jewish people of the Babylonian captivity. They would be strangers in a foreign land for a long time, and through Jeremiah the prophet they were told what they needed to do:

Jeremiah 29:4-7—"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.' "

It is certainly important to pray, but also work to make the society of your residence a better place. Seek its peace and prosperity. As a practical matter, whether a leader is God's man or not you have your own responsibilities to live by.