



A  
Political  
Sermon

*by Rev. Rusty Lee Thomas*



# A Political Sermon



I have in my possession a book called the Political Sermons of the American Founding Era. It is a huge volume that begins in 1730 and ends in 1805. The book is chalk full of powerful sermons that cover seventy five years of America’s religious and political history. It demonstrates how much Christianity defined, crafted, guided, and gave birth to America. It reveals to what degree our infant nation relied upon God’s word to forge the liberties that we take for granted today. It teaches to what extent our political and social freedoms were directly entwined with Biblical truth.

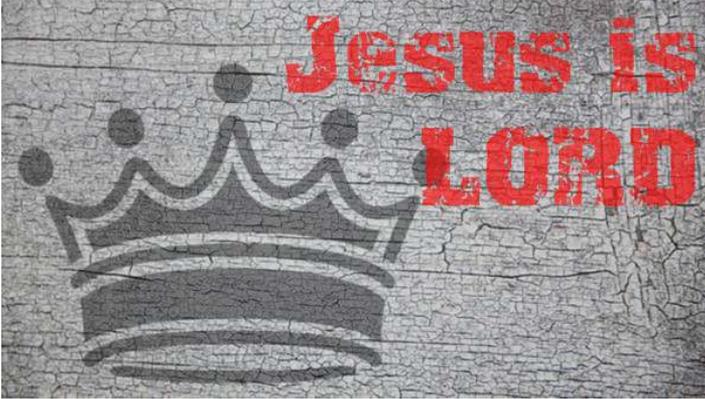
A good portion of these sermons were specifically written, distributed, and preached to civil rulers. Men of God of yore believed they were duty-bound to hold civil officials accountable to “Thus Saith the Lord!” They were convicted by God’s word to disciple civil rulers and inspire them to fulfill their responsibilities as “Ministers of God.” Thus they challenged public officials to uphold God’s laws, precepts, principles, and commandments as they related to the civil sphere.

Today, if politicians make it to Church it is merely for appearance's sake or to garner votes for upcoming elections. Very rare indeed is the statesman that comes to Church to humble himself before the crown-rights of King Jesus, hear His commands, and accept his spiritual and civil responsibilities. There are two reasons for this sad departure from our rich political and religious legacy. Number one, most pastors don't possess the theology that includes a Biblical worldview of civil government. Secondly, they will not touch political sermons with a ten foot pole for fear of mixing religion with politics. Many believe if they did, they would jeopardize their 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. Besides, it is a sermon guaranteed to offend.

On the other hand, most politicians, if they did hear a political sermon, would perhaps grant a pious smile, but would probably decline to apply God's word in the civil realm. Plus, who among them really possesses the spiritual sense to fear God? How many actually believe they are going to stand before God to give an account for failing in their duties as public servants? Thus, many are going to have the shock of their lives come Judgment Day as they chose pragmatism (what works) as opposed to God's principles (what is right) in the sphere of civil government.

Since elections come and go, I thought it proper to recapture the spirit and rich, godly heritage of our founding preachers and write a political sermon for

today. If rarity determines value, then perhaps it will be appreciated by those who receive it. I will be careful not to hold my breath just in case I'm wrong in this assessment.



As we approach this controversial topic, it is interesting to first note that most of the titles that God chose to define His authority in earth are political in nature and not ecclesiastical (church related). Yes, God's word defines Jesus Christ as the "Good Shepherd" and the "Bishop of our souls," but for the most part the rest of God's titles are of a governmental nature. He is known as King, Lord, Ruler, Judge, and Governor of the nations. In fact, the Apostle John, banished on the isle of Patmos and under the boot of Roman oppression and religious tyranny, declared, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Revelation 1:5)."

The Apostle John, though surrounded by tyrants in both the civil and religious spheres, still declared that Jesus Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth. In other words, He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14). Notice this passage does not exclaim that Jesus Christ is King of Pastors and Lord of Bishops.

Most believe these are future titles that He will inherit one day when He returns. Not so, He reigns over all governmental leaders presently. This fulfills the Messianic promise of Psalm 2 which prophecies to the rulers of the earth “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

Most of God’s titles reveal that He is the Sovereign God that rules and reigns in the affairs of men. He sets up kingdoms and He knocks them down. He possesses and dispossesses nations according to the counsel of His own will. He does not have political advisers that He consults in these matters. He is not beholden to any government party or political persuasion. We cannot vote Him out or through a military coup overthrow His governmental authority. No! He is the Supreme authority. And for His glory and mankind’s benefit He has created and established

delegated authorities. They include self, family, church, and civil government. All these governments owe their allegiances to Him for they derive their authority from Him (Romans 13:1).

The Apostle Paul speaking of Christ's position over the earth declared, "For by him (Jesus Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Colossians 1:16-18)."

This may shock some, but God expects His Son, our Lord and Savior, to have preeminence in all things. He is not just Lord over some individuals, some families, and some Churches. He is Lord over all. According to God's word, there is not one iota of this universe that is beyond Christ's jurisdiction and all things that concern His preeminence include government, law, and politics. Jesus Himself verified this bedrock truth. He declared, "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18b)."



Based upon this unalterable reality, A.A. Hodge (July 18, 1823-November 11, 1886) an American author, lecturer, and theologian at Princeton University stated, “A Christian is just as much under the obligation to obey God’s will in the most secular of his daily business as he is in his closet or at the communion table. He has no right to separate his life into two realms, and acknowledge different moral codes in each...The kingdom of God includes all sides of human life, and it is a kingdom of absolute righteousness. You are either a loyal subject or a traitor. When the king comes, how will he find you doing?”

The kingdom of God is one, it cannot be divided...If the Church languishes, the State cannot be in health; and if the State rebels against its Lord and King, the Church cannot enjoy his favour...I charge you, citizens of the United States, afloat on your wide sea of politics, **THERE IS ANOTHER KING, ONE JESUS: THE SAFETY OF THE STATE CAN BE SECURED ONLY IN THE WAY OF HUMBLE AND WHOLE SOULED LOYALTY TO HIS PERSON AND OF OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAW.**

Morally, spiritually, and yes, politically, God shouts from the rooftops to this world filled with little men with proud hearts that seek to become a law and god unto themselves that there is another King, one called Jesus! This is the battle that is raging for the souls of men, the lives of our children, and the future of our planet.

## The Battle is Defined by Two Issues



Acts 17:6,7 states, “And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.” According to this passage of Scripture, the battle comes down to two vital issues. Who is Lord and whose laws are to govern in the affairs of men? Will it be Almighty God or Caesar? Will it be the flawed laws of men, which in many cases legalize evil, or the holy, righteous laws of God that protect the liberty Christ died to secure for the sons of men.

Notice that the accusation against the early Church that turned the world upside down was not “there is another Savior and He has a wonderful plan for your

life.” No, the early Church suffered great persecution and martyrdom because the revelation of the King and the laws of His Kingdom that burned bright through their lives. This was a clear and present danger to the political tyrants and religious oppressors of their day.

We must understand that Rome was not threatened religiously by this new sect called Christianity. They were threatened politically. There was religious freedom under Roman occupation. You could worship the god of your choice. Every land, nation, and tribe that Rome conquered, however, was required to speak a loyalty oath to Caesar. Caesar demanded that every knee bow and every tongue confess that he was Lord. It was a full manifestation of emperor cult worship that flourished under pagan rule.

Apparently, the Jews of the day submitted to this idolatry and heresy. Though the Jews were still free to worship Jehovah in the temple, once they left the temple, they were forced to confess Caesar is Lord! Did they do so willingly? God’s word testifies that they did, especially when it came to the revelation of the Kingship of Jesus Christ. John 19:15 states, “But they cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him.” Pilate saith unto them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

Man is still faced with this choice today. If Jesus is not the rightful Sovereign and King, then men are left with two failed options. The state is therefore king, which has led historically to unprecedented murderous regimes that crushed the people they claimed to serve, or the individual is sovereign which inevitably leads to chaos, confusion, and anarchy.

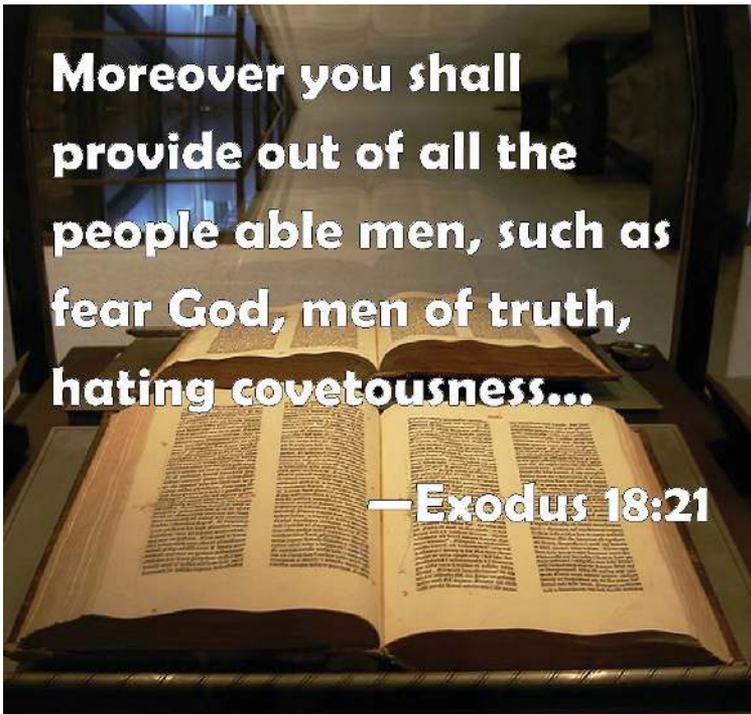
Only One Nation under God can secure the delicate tension between authority and liberty. Only One Nation under God can provide a proper social order on one hand with maximum individual freedom on the other hand. There is no other worldview or faith that can accomplish this in our poor, fallen world.

Christians historically knew these truths, believed them, and acted upon them. I wish I could say the same for the modern church, but I cannot. Our Christian forefathers and mothers knew there was only one Lord and King and it certainly wasn't Caesar. Thus, when confronted with this same tyrannical dilemma and Caesar's demand to affirm the loyalty oath, Rome was dismayed to find a little band of nobodies (Christians) resisting this idolatry. Many watched their children devoured by beasts, suffered horrible deaths, and yet sang praises to their King as they courageously faced the worse that demonically inspired rulers could afflict upon them. Ultimately, their sacrifice changed the course of history.

Since then, the Christian faith has served to de-

centralize power and place checks and balances upon governmental authorities. Based upon the revelation that man is sinful and that power corrupts, Christian nations overthrew the pagan notion and doctrine of the so-called “divine rights of kings.” It is this heritage that has provided the freedoms, liberties, and blessings that stand in jeopardy in our day.

### **Biblical Requirements for Civil Magistrates**



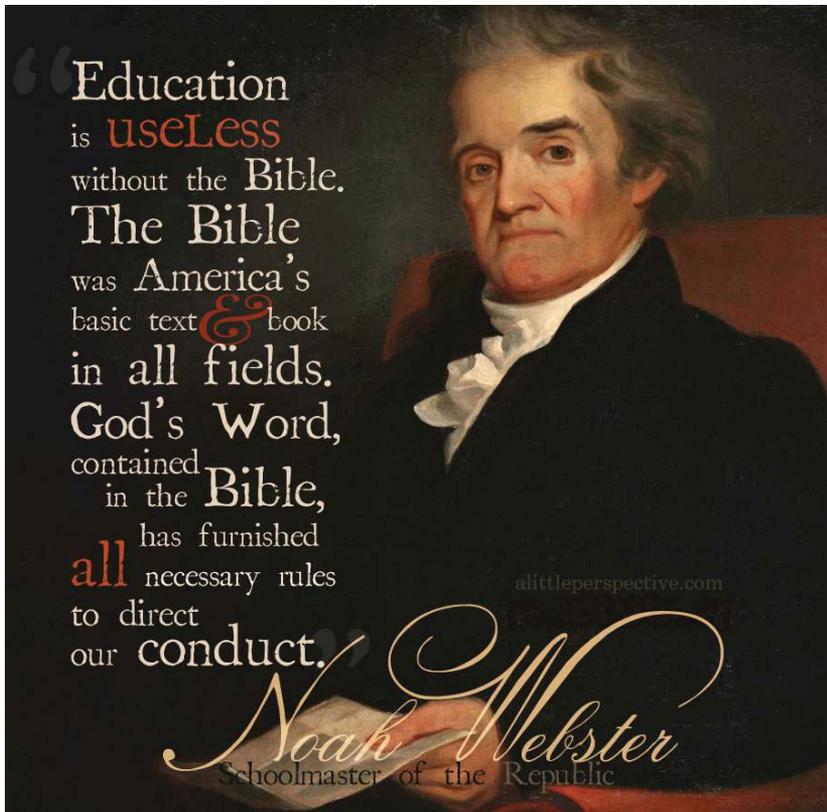
Next, we will turn our attention to the Biblical criteria that God’s word prescribes for civil rulers. Just like there are Biblical requirements for Church leadership, there are also Biblical requirements for those

who would aspire to hold civil office. Exodus 18:21 states, “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” This model of governmental leadership reveals that Israel was a Hebrew Republic. It consisted of a representative government similar to our own.

Notice the caliber of men and the characteristics demanded by God for those who would dare to serve in civil government. We take these requirements lightly today. But when one considers the dangerous world we live in and the threats that surround America, should we neglect God’s model for leadership? Our nation is suffering moral rot from within (abortion, homosexuality, pornography etc) and our enemies without (Islam, Communism) smell our vulnerabilities and the weakness of our moral fortitude. This emboldens them while our nation’s leaders serve to empower themselves at the expense of our nation’s welfare. Doesn’t our current crisis cry for leaders that God’s word insists upon? King David stated, “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God ( 2 Samuel 23:3).”

Our Founding Fathers understood these truths and the need for godly, principled leadership. George

Washington stated, “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” John Jay, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, on October 12, 1816 stated, “Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.”



Noah Webster, the father of American Education, in 1823, wrote an article entitled, “Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education.” It was published in New Haven, CT. He wrote:

In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide....It is alleged by men of loose principles, or defective views of the subject, that religion and morality are not necessary or important qualifications for political stations. But the Scriptures teach a different doctrine. They direct that rulers should be men who rule in the fear of God, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. But if we had no divine instruction on the subject, our own interest would demand of us a strict observance of the principle of these injunctions. And it is to the neglect of this rule of conduct in our citizens, that we must ascribe the multiplied frauds, breeches of trust, peculations and embezzlements of public property which astonish even ourselves; which tarnish the character of our country; which disgrace a republican government; and which will tend to reconcile men to monarchs in other countries and even our own... When a citizen gives his suffrage [vote] to a man of known immorality, he abuses his trust; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor, and he betrays the interest of his country.

Noah Webster promoted God's principles as a primary consideration in choosing elected officials. Political party associations have to be a secondary consideration. The reason for this assessment centered on the fact that Noah Webster was Biblically literate. He recognized that "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34)." He firmly believed, "When the righteous are in authority, the people

rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn (Proverbs 29:2).”

## **God Judges and Restores Nations Based Upon Leadership**

The sobering truth is that God judges and restores nations based upon its leaders. If our sayings and doings are against the Lord, He turns us over to weak, inept, and wicked rulers (Isaiah 3). If we cry out in repentance, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways, He will raise up fierce, godly men who will drive out evil, establish righteousness, and heal our land. The book of Judges reveals this pattern time and time again.

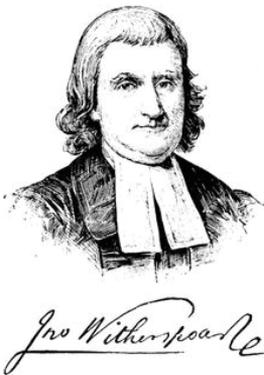
As we look on the horizon and contemplate the precarious future of America, we need to consider what is at stake. There are many challenges that literally call into question our ability to survive as a nation. From the study of history, however, it is clear that God moves history forward by working through His covenant people. It is vital, therefore, that we recognize our spiritual and civic duties before God. We must give Him a reason to show mercy to our nation that stands at the precipice of God’s greater judgments.

It is imperative that we pray, believe, and work to reform ourselves, the family, the church, our culture,

and government. In the arena of our civic duty Howard Phillips stated, “In politics, your vote is the currency of your virtue.” Surely, every Christian needs to be registered, exercise their civic duty, and vote. We must use God’s word, His principles, and become informed voters.



Beyond that, the Church needs to expand our limited vision and begin to train godly statesmen that are steeped in a Biblical worldview, have a firm grasp of history, and send them forth into the civic sphere. How can we prefer Christian rulers, if no Christians will run for public office? Surely, out of all the millions of confessed born-again Christians in America, the Church could produce Congressmen, Senators, Judges, Mayors, Governors, and the like.



Historically, the Church in America performed this vision and mission. Since then, we have lost our way. Case in point is John Witherspoon (February 5, 1723-November 15, 1794). William Federer, author of *God and Country*, records the following concerning Rev. Witherspoon:

He was an American Revolutionary patriot and clergyman. He was born in Scotland, being a  $\neg$ -descendant of John Knox on his mother's side, John Witherspoon's influence as an educator was widely felt in America. He signed the Declaration of Independence and was a member of the Continental Congress. He was a primary proponent of separation of powers insisting on inclusions to check and balance the power of government. He served on over 120 Congressional committees, including: the Board of War, the Committee on Secret Correspondence, or Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Clothing for the Army.

As president of Princeton University, 1768-94, he graduated 478 students who directly shaped America, including: James Madison, who served eight years as Secretary of State and eight years as U.S. President; Aaron Burr, Jr., who was a U.S. Vice-President; 3 U.S. Supreme Court justices; 10 Cabinet members; 13 state governors; 21 U.S. Senators; 39 U.S. Representatives; and 114 ministers. Through his students, John Witherspoon's views were reflected in our Constitution, as 9 (one-sixth) of the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention were graduates of Princeton University: Gunning Bedford Jr. of Delaware; David Brearley of New Jersey; William Richardson Davie of North Carolina; Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey; William Churchill Houston of New Jersey; James Madison of Virginia; Alexander Martin of North Carolina; Luther Martin of Maryland; and William Paterson of New Jersey.

On May 17, 1776, the same day the Continental Congress declared a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, Reverend John Witherspoon delivered a sermon at Princeton University entitled *The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men*. He stated:

While we give praise to God, the Supreme Disposer of all events, for His interposition on our behalf, let us guard against the dangerous error of trusting in, or boasting of, an arm of flesh....If your cause is just, if your principles are pure, and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of opposing hosts.

What follows from this? That he is the best friend to American liberty, who is most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I scruple not to call him an enemy of his country.

It is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier. God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both.

This was one faithful pastor who exercised tremen-

dous godly influence upon the formation of our civil government in America. He is dead and it is our turn now. Let us seek to reclaim the rich, godly heritage Rev. Witherspoon and others like him, have bequeathed to us, his posterity. If not now, then when?

Our nation is being tossed upon the raging seas of political, moral, and spiritual turmoil. We are facing extreme challenges. This is not new to our history. The only difference is we do not seem to possess the courage to act on our faith, especially, in the civil realm. We are supposed to be salt and light and that includes politics. We desperately need the moral fortitude and the spiritual resources that sustained our nation through the wars, threats, and dangers previously experienced by our forefathers and mothers.

It is time Church to give our lives to provide these much needed resources in our day. Future generations will either curse or bless our memory based upon how we respond to God and our nation's need in this desperate hour. Let us not fail in our sacred, moral, spiritual, and civil responsibilities in Jesus' Mighty and Holy name!

IN KING JESUS' SERVICE  
Rev. Rusty Lee Thomas

**Elijah Ministries**

P.O. Box 3126  
Waco, TX 76707

Email: [rusty@elijahmin.com](mailto:rusty@elijahmin.com)  
Websites: [www.operationsaveamerica.org](http://www.operationsaveamerica.org)  
[www.elijahmin.com](http://www.elijahmin.com)  
[www.lessermagistrate.com](http://www.lessermagistrate.com)