

The Midterm Elections

“Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”
—II Peter 1:10

THE 2022 UNITED STATES midterm elections will be held on Tuesday, November 8. This year’s elections are commonly called “midterm” because they take place at the middle point of the current

president’s term of office. Hence, there will be no presidential election this year. However, the results of this election will have much influence on the carrying out of the current president’s agenda during the final two years of his term in office. It will also likely serve to influence who may, or may not, choose to run for the presidency in the 2024 election.

During this midterm election year, all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate will be contested. Thirty-nine state governorships and thousands of other state and local elections will also be held. According to recent statistics, political ad spending for this year’s races has already broken a record for

midterm elections and is now expected to exceed the all-time high of \$9 billion spent on the 2020 presidential contest.

GOD'S ELECTION

In contrast to the above, for the past two-thousand years, God has been conducting his “election” of faithful Christians who have followed in the footsteps of his son, Christ Jesus. This work of God especially commends itself to our attention since the Bible’s testimony is that before the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth God would send forth his angels to “gather together his elect.” This elect class will become joint-heirs with his beloved Son, Jesus, in the grand and glorious kingdom, designed to bless all the families of the earth.—Matt. 24:31; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:8,16,27-29

We will examine a few similarities, and numerous differences, between the election of one running for political office in United States, and a Christian’s winning God’s election. Becoming co-laborers with our beloved Master in the kingdom will undeniably be the most wonderful privilege ever offered to anyone. It is indeed the greatest election to be won which can be imagined!

What are some of the measures we must take to ensure that ultimately we will become members of this elect class? How can we win our election to be of those described as the “called, and chosen, and faithful?” (Rev. 17:14) Let us examine numerous points to help in seeing the distinctions between the election of one running for political office to serve in that capacity for a few years, and the election of the class which will be “born in ... Zion,” to be

associated with Jesus Christ in the work of his kingdom, and to reign with him forever.—Ps. 87:5; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 11:15; 20:4

THE INTENTION TO RUN

For the political aspirant, great fanfare takes place at the time when his or her name is given to the news media. A press conference is likely held so that the general population can hear the announcement of the person's intention to run for public office. From that time until the election occurs, it is necessary to keep the nominee's name in the news in a positive way. They must maintain a high profile so that people will become familiar with their interests and aims. Ads are prepared and run in the media extolling their qualifications, as well as their plans once they are elected.

The Christian's decision to enter the spiritual race is quite different. We receive God's call, or invitation, to run for the office of being "joint-heirs" with Christ. We have been called to strive for this high office based on our desire to seek after righteousness. We are dissatisfied with our present state. We feel a lack of ease with our sinful condition, and we turn to the Lord for help. We begin a reverential study of God's Holy Word, and we find that the Biblical truths satisfy our hearts as nothing else can! After having made the personal decision to present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God and to do his will even unto death, we then testify our consecration to serve God by water baptism, as a public witness to others that we are now part of the class who are seeking the heavenly way.—Rom. 12:1,2; I Pet. 2:9,21; Rom. 8:17; Acts 2:38,41

THE CHRISTIAN'S OPPOSITION

The political candidate has many opponents. Everyone and anything which would stand in the way of their attaining the office to which they are seeking is the opposition. Initially the focus is on eliminating all the contenders within their own particular party. Once that has been accomplished, energy is devoted to defeating the standard-bearer of each opposing party.

The opponents of God's people are clearly defined in the Bible. They are the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Paul admonishes us not to be "conformed to this world," but rather to be "transformed" by the renovation of our minds, that we may prove what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.—Rom. 12:2

We are encouraged by the same apostle, through his words and by his example, to war against another strong opponent, our fallen flesh. He stated: "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."—I Cor. 9:27, *New King James Version*

The Apostle Peter indicates that the great Adversary, Satan, is the Christian's most formidable opponent. He uses both the world and our fallen flesh as his tools. The apostle said, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (I Pet. 5:8) We must never underestimate this wily and crafty foe, for unless we trust in God's almighty help, the Adversary will conquer us, for we are no match for him in our own strength.

Unlike political candidates who see as their chief opponent other candidates running for the same

office, we battle against the world, the flesh, and the Adversary. We have as our major task the keeping of God's will in a position of ascendancy, and our old will dead. We are to mortify the deeds of the flesh by the power of God's Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:13) Paradoxically, one of the unique features of our running for this race is that we are assisted in making our "calling and election sure" by helping others toward this same goal! Political hopefuls, on the other hand, have little thought of assisting anyone other than themselves.

SCOPE OF THE CAMPAIGN

The scope of the political candidate's campaign is the length and breadth of the state, district or municipality which they hope to represent and in which their voters reside. The organizational plan is that the candidate might personally reach and influence as many people as possible in the short period of the electoral race. In addition, one or more headquarters are established by a network of supporters to persuade the people of that region to vote for their candidate on Election Day.

By contrast, the scope of the Christian's campaign is, simply stated, to know and daily do God's will to the best of one's ability and to walk in the footsteps of his Son, Jesus. (Luke 9:23) As a "little flock" of the Lord's followers, we should be anxious to follow his example in thought, word, and deed. (Luke 12:32) We read, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." —Heb. 13:12,13

Though we live in this present world, we are not to be partakers of its spirit of pride and selfishness. (I John 2:15,16) We further recognize that although we must perform our service to God in connection with spiritual things, nevertheless, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” (II Cor. 4:7) Thus, daily we are in contact with things of the world and of our fallen flesh which would defile us. If we are faithful in carrying out our sacrificial course, resisting the influences of the world and the flesh, then we will be pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

Sacrifice and devotion regarding our election may bring reproach upon us. Laying down life itself in God’s service will not be appreciated by the world of mankind. Often they will think that ours is a foolish, wasteful life. Yet we know that these same reproaches fell upon the Master, in the same manner, and for the same reasons.—Luke 6:22; I Pet. 4:14

TIME OF GOD’S ELECTION

Candidates for political office must declare their intent to run within a specified time limit governed by the laws of the jurisdiction in which they are running. In contrast to this, the Christian is told that the entire Gospel Age, since the Day of Pentecost, is the acceptable time to run the race for the high calling. (Phil. 3:14) Each of the called ones, of course, is limited to the span of their own lifetime. It is during this period that we may seek to make our calling and election sure as joint-sacrificers with his beloved Son, who first walked this way nearly two thousand years ago.

Just as Jesus was spoken of prophetically by Isaiah, we too are anointed by God's Holy Spirit. It was said of Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."—Isa. 61:1,2

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CANDIDACY

Would-be aspirants to political office have very specific eligibility requirements which they must meet. These may vary by state, district, or municipality, but generally include minimum age, citizenship, and residency requirements.

Requirements as candidates to the High Calling are also specific. They are not, however, along the lines of age, place of birth, or residency. The church has been "redeemed ... to God by [Christ's] blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5:9) Hear the words of Jesus concerning the conditions of candidacy: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16:24,25) These requirements must continue to be met throughout our entire lifetime since this electoral race ends only with the taking of our last breath.

REWARD FOR A SUCCESSFUL ELECTION

We know the candidate who wins election to political office often receives great honor from the people. He or she will be considered leaders in their

community, state, nation, or even internationally. They will perhaps be sought out from their constituency for counsel and wisdom, as leaders at every level of government seek solutions to the many perplexing problems which beset our planet.

However, it will be demonstrated that any newly elected government officials, as members of the fallen human race just as their predecessors were, do not have power to improve the current world scene to an appreciable degree. The “present evil” order is under the domination of the “god of this world,” and no real answers can be found for the problems which afflict mankind without God’s help. Therefore, we will find that as long as Satan continues as the prince of this world, and despite new aspirants stepping up every few years and declaring that they will solve the still-continuing, ever-increasing problems of mankind, no lasting solutions are forthcoming.—Gal. 1:3,4; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2

We read about the overcoming saints: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) This will be the portion of the candidates who make their election sure. The glorious results of the new government are vividly described by John the Revelator. He tells about a “new heaven and a new earth” which will be the real solution to world problems. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”—Rev. 21:1-4

The wonderful privilege of administering this grand government in conjunction with our Lord Jesus Christ will be the reward of Christians who are faithful to the end of their earthly sojourn. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!” (Rev. 2:10) The “crown” of life will include the wisdom to guide an administration such as the kingdom of Christ, as well as the power to enforce the changes necessary to accomplish the goals of our platform as outlined in the foregoing passage quoted from Revelation 21:1-4.

ASSISTANTS TO THOSE ELECTED

Those newly elected to office have a “cabinet” or other staff to assist them in carrying out their governmental responsibilities. Individuals with particular talents in varied fields are placed in key positions to expedite changes and reforms, and to carry out day-to-day functions.

In the case of our beloved Head, Jesus, who will be the chief leader in this new world order, it will be similar. We quote these prophetic words: “The king’s daughter [the elect church class in glory] is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions [a great multitude] that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king’s palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes [the ancient worthy ones] in all the earth.”—Ps. 45:13-16; Rev. 7:9-15; Heb. 11:1-40

The great multitude, the “companions” of the elect church class, as well as the “princes in all the

earth,” the ancient heroes of faith, will not be idle during the thousand-year reign of Christ. They will share a part in the administration of the government which will educate, minister, guide, assist, and lift mankind back to perfection during the “times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:21

STRATEGY TO GAIN THE VICTORY

The successful candidate for public office must speak and proclaim those things which sound good to the ear. They must convince the widest spectrum of the electorate that there is something in their ideas that will benefit them personally. When the ballots are cast and the votes are counted and certified as accurate, the candidates who have garnered the highest vote totals will be declared the winners of their respective elections. Once inducted into office, however, quite often the victorious candidate does not feel compelled to actually carry out the promises upon which they based their election campaign.

With the church, it is different. The psalmist tells us, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” (Ps. 24:3-5) The development of purity, honesty, and all the other fruits and graces of the Spirit is essential if we are to be accounted worthy of God’s election.—Gal. 5:22,23; Phil. 4:8; II Pet. 1:5-8

DO NOT CEASE TO RUN

In the case of the candidate for public office, no adverse consequences result if they drop out of the election race. In fact, this is a common occurrence. The reason may be a lack of funds for political ads, or perhaps the understanding that there is little, if any, chance that better known and more established competing candidates can be beaten when the ballots are cast.

For the Christian, however, there should be no thought of ceasing to run the race. We must persevere despite all obstacles, even amid persecution, hardship, or trial. It is a difficult, strait, and narrow pathway we follow, but the Apostle Paul avowed, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Rom. 8:38,39

Knowing this, we are not to “cast away” our confidence in his saving power, because “if any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.” However, Paul continues, “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition [Greek: ruin or loss]; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”—Heb. 10:35,38,39

RESPONSE TO ATTACKS

Almost universally, when candidates for local, state, or national offices are verbally attacked by their opponents, they respond in kind. Often, the attempt is made to portray the opposition in a still more unfavorable light. In reality, many candidates

will do almost anything they deem necessary to gain the victory. Publicly they might indicate that they would not stoop to the level of their opposition, but privately they give tacit approval to their advisors to develop demeaning advertisements to draw a negative image of the opposition. “Truth squads” or “fact checkers” might be organized. These are teams which follow the campaign of opposing candidates and listen to their speeches. They then inform the press of the many things the opposition has said which they claim to be false.

How are Christians to conduct themselves in their race for the prize? Certainly not in the manner described above! Rather, they are to follow the Master’s example. We read of Jesus that he “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” (I Pet. 2:22,23) As footstep followers of Jesus, this must be our course. We must not, and cannot, speak evil of anyone. This is especially true of our brethren, those who likewise have entered the race. Paul states, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:1) All are covered with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, which hides defects and blemishes. We never need to respond in kind to any accusation made against us, because, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?”—vss. 33,34

As we draw to the close of this study, we must remember that the accomplishment of any earthly goal requires an evaluation at regular intervals of

the progress attained thus far. In this way plans can be altered which need adjusting, so that the ultimate goal will be attained. How important this is to the child of God! It is necessary for us to take inventory of our status, to determine how well we are succeeding in carrying out the principles of truth and righteousness which we have embraced, and thus how we are progressing toward making our “election sure.”

Each day, perhaps at its beginning, we need to assess how much spiritual growth is taking place in our lives. Ours is not a “talking” campaign; it is a “doing” campaign! Thus, before we offer our prayers to God, read our devotional studies, and begin our day’s activities, we must take stock of our hearts and minds to determine the direction we are going and the progress we are making along the way.

With the above in mind, we offer a few questions on which we might ponder on a regular basis and answer honestly. Are we moving in the right direction, standing still, or are we possibly experiencing regression? This sort of introspection will assist us in bringing our course in life more into line with what would be pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Do I demonstrate an increasing ability to redeem the time, spending a larger percentage of it upon spiritual activities?

Has my faith in God’s plan grown stronger as I apply the lessons to my life which God permits?

Am I experiencing greater purity of thought, evidenced by a life of increased holiness?

Have I rid myself of any unnecessary “weights” which formerly I carried?

Is my motivation for doing good solely from a

desire to be a faithful, righteous servant of God, rather than for approval from my fellow Christians?

Do I habitually approach God for guidance in the small affairs of life, as well as my large concerns?

Have I grown in patience? Do I make allowances for others' seeming faults?

Is my love for God, the Lord Jesus, the Word of Truth, and my fellow brethren in Christ growing stronger, as evidenced by deeper spiritual-mindedness?

Have I taken the initiative to do good unto all people as I have the opportunity, and especially to those of the household of faith?

Am I spending more time in prayer?

If our answers are affirmative, we can feel certain that we are on the right course. Our campaign has a firm and good platform on which to run. With faith in God, and our hands in his, we will surely win our election. If we continue to trust in him to the end, we will be granted the glorious privilege—with our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus—of inaugurating an everlasting government of peace, health, life, joy, and righteousness. (Ps. 72:8-11; Isa. 9:6,7) His kingdom will bring blessings to all people, and glory to our great God. To him be praise forever! ■

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name.”

—Revelation 3:12