



Politicians: God’s Priority

Part II: Selected Passages

TO: LEGISLATORS

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Last week we examined the first in a two-part series the importance of sharing the gospel with fellow political leaders. Wherein last week we examined this emphasis as it exists in the Church Age, this week we will examine the emphasis throughout the other major epochs of Scripture.

II. EXPANDING THE MANDATE

In the Old Testament, Israel was meant to be a beacon of Yahweh’s glory shining forth unto all the nations. She was even meant to testify of God to the political leaders in Gentile nations. Jesus exemplifies this God-ordained pattern in the New Testament, and the Apostles Paul and Peter embody it as well in their respective ministries. Even after the end of the Church Age, believers during the Tribulation will have a ministry to unbelieving kings. The ministry of reaching political leaders runs prominent throughout all of Scripture. States one of God’s choice servants in Psalm 119:46, “I will also speak of your testimonies before Kings and shall not be ashamed.”

III. EXEMPLIFYING THE MANDATE

The proposition that today there exists a missing mandate in modern missions can be demonstrated from the following epochs of biblical revelation. These passages indicate an historic thread of emphasis near to the heart of God that is woefully underemphasized in today’s Christian Missiology.

A. THE MINISTRY OF OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL

God promised Abraham he would one day receive land, have numerous descendants, and be blessed by God (cf. Genesis 12:1-3). Four centuries passed as Abraham’s descendants grew from one family into 12 tribes and finally into the nation Israel. The Lord called them out of the world to be His “own possession,” “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6). Extrinsically, Israel was called to proclaim the excellencies of God to all the surrounding nations.

God intended for His people to become a light to the Gentile nations in a general sense; and more specifically, He expected His people to be a light to the leaders of those nations.

And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising (Isaiah 60:3).

Isaiah 49:6-7 along with 62:1-2 suggest the same type of ministry. The Lord expected Gentile leaders to take notice of Israel. Yet, the only way this would happen is if Israel pursued some form of evangelistic ministry to them. However, in an overall historical sense...

ISRAEL FAILED IN HER MINISTRY TO THE FOREIGN NATIONS AND THEIR LEADERS. HOWEVER, THE OLD TESTAMENT DOES PROVIDE SEVERAL EXAMPLES WHERE GOD’S PEOPLE ACTUALLY OBEYED.

First, consider the Queen of Sheba’s visit during the reign of Solomon (cf. 1 Kings 10:1-9). The queen had traveled a distance of 1,400 miles to see the city of Jerusalem in all her splendor and did not leave disappointed. 1 Kings 10:5 says that as a result of the visit “there was no more breath in her.” The queen was overwhelmed and proceeded to praise the Lord (cf. 1 Kings 10:9). Luke 11:31 infers that during this time, she was converted. Solomon’s testimony (up to this time) proved compelling as he evangelized this foreign leader.

Second, when Solomon finished the temple, he gave thanks to God. During his thanksgiving prayer he reminded Israel that the Lord blessed them for a purpose, “so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no one else” (1 Kings 8:60). The temple itself even included a court for the Gentiles to worship Yahweh in keeping with the purpose of proclaiming God to the nations. As the nations saw Israel’s light, the hope was that they would come from afar, led by their kings, to worship the God of Israel.

And your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession (Isaiah 60:11).

God’s desire was for Israel was to evangelize nations and their political leaders. This is further illustrated by the prophetic ministry of Jonah. Though a reluctant Jewish



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minister, Jonah eventually (in a round-about way) went to the Gentile city of Nineveh and called upon them to repent of their wickedness. Many listened, and soon Jonah had the opportunity to call the king to repentance. He, too, listened and then ordered the entire city to follow suit (cf. Jonah 3:3-9).

Israel had a great calling to reach the nations of the world with Yahweh's glory and an important aspect of that was to reach the leaders of those Gentile nations.

B. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES

In addition to the previously-seen mission illustrated by Paul and the Old Testament nation of Israel, when Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples, He told them they would be "brought before governors and kings for [His] sake as a testimony to them..." (Matthew 10:18). Accordingly He sent His disciples out with a charge to evangelize political leaders.

C. THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES

As a crescendo to the various politically-related conversions in the book of Acts as mentioned last week, Paul sought to minister to Caesar and his household by visiting Rome. And in magnum opus fashion, He desired to visit Spain to preach the gospel to leaders residing there (cf. Rom. 15:23-24). Therefore Paul's subsequent patent charge to Timothy (1 Timothy 2:1-4) and Titus (Titus 3:1) act to underscore the importance of carrying forth this mandate today in the Church Age. Paul however was not the only Apostle embedded with a passion to minister to kings; Peter had the same aspirations, albeit evidenced not quite as directly.

In 1 Peter 2:12, Peter exhorted his audience to live exemplary lives amongst the Gentiles for one purpose: that they may "glorify God in the day of visitation." This Petrine language is his way of saying that he desired that they be saved, to see Gentiles come to know Christ. He knew that poor conduct in the church would lead to a poor testimony in the community and stand in the way.

Verses 13 and 14 expand upon this idea with respect to political leaders. Simply and summarily stated, evangelism to Gentile kings and governors will only be effective to the degree that believers humbly submit to them and the laws they enact.

D. THE MINISTRY OF TRIBULATION SAINTS

During the Olivet Discourse in Mark 13, Jesus taught on events that would unfold during the tribulation. Wars would erupt, natural disasters would occur, and persecution would be common for Christ's followers (cf. Mark 13:7-9).

IT IS INTERESTING THAT AMONGST THE LIMITED DETAILS JESUS PROVIDED REGARDING THE TRIBULATION, HE MADE SPECIFIC MENTION OF EVANGELIZING POLITICAL LEADERS.

Mark 13:9 states that believers "will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them." Thus, the thread of ministry to those in the political arena continues even during this future epoch of great upheaval.

E. THE MINISTRY OF MILLENNIAL SAINTS

Subsequent to Christ's Second Coming, God's people will no longer minister to kings for they will become kings themselves (cf. 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10, 20:4, 6). Those who have been redeemed will be given the privilege to rule on earth. When Christ returns and His physical Kingdom has arrived, He will grant believers the governing positions similar to those who hold them today. Believers will then rule with perfection, a characteristic lacking to some degree in all the prior political leaders governing in a fallen world (cf. Gen. 3).

The type of ministry will change—from one of pursuing to one of being—but God's priority for politicians will nonetheless remain intact even during the Millennial Kingdom.

IV. APPLICATION: ENGAGING THE MANDATE

The Great Commission includes a specific, and I believe strategic element of emphasis in reaching political leaders throughout the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This insight becomes quite evident and important from the passages examined in this study. Consider how you can increase your personal ministry to reaching your fellow political leaders with the gospel: Such is biblical.