

## Violence in Washington D.C. - Now what?

Many people were hopeful that 2021 would be a better year than 2020. So far – I’m not convinced. Just two days ago, protestors turned into rioters, attacked the capitol building itself, and at least four people were killed. Allegations of government corruption and voter fraud float around social media like a poison fog and it is honestly difficult to know what to think. Seriously! One side of the argument screamed relentlessly for four years that the 2016 election was rigged and now that side is suddenly confident this election was pure as the new-driven snow. The other side crowed about the lack of evidence of Russian collusion in the 2016 election but believe beyond doubt there WAS computer collusion in the 2020 election. And after years of the mainstream media refusing to report on stories like Benghazi and showing obvious signs of political bias, it seems the networks and newspapers have turned from impartial journalism to propaganda so yellow it would make William Randolph Hearst turn green with envy. Is it any wonder that many people don’t trust what the talking heads are saying? American adversaries on the world stage roar with unsuppressed glee at our distress and too many average citizens may be whispering sedition in the wings. Both sides of the political divide are angry, many people are fearful and since there are no nationwide voter ID laws many Americans have no confidence in our election process and some folks are seriously disgusted – or enraged. That’s kinda scary if you ask me...

And I’m in the mix, whether I want to be or not. I’m the pastor of a church – not so small that no one notices, but not so big that politicians worry about us. I have already been questioned. Some folks assume that since I openly said I did not vote for Joseph Biden and that I’m a conservative, evangelical scholar I must be an advocate for restarting the American revolution (I’m not). Others think I should stir up fears that the new administration is sure to start concentration camps for Christians (don’t think so) and call for fire to come down from the heavens (it’s not on my prayer list)

...Sigh...

Yeah...and I’ve already seen some social media aimed at pastors saying that if we don’t do these things then surely we are traitors or cowards or...worse...secret progressives wearing evangelical costumes.

Well, I do not for one second believe that EVEN if there was election fraud it in any way justifies the violence we witnessed in our own capital just a few days ago. That is absolutely and in every way I can think of – unjustified, unwarranted, unacceptable, wrong, evil, bad, low-class, no-class, stupid and otherwise malignant. So no – I do not think pastors should stir up fears. I do not think we are traitors in calling for calm and I do not think we are cowards for trying to find the Biblical way through this maze.

Was I clear enough?

What I do think is that God allowed us to exist in such a time as this and since it is God who controls the destiny of reality itself, we really need to ask the right question.

That question is not “what if” but “what now.”

You see, we can “what if” ourselves into depression. What if there was election fraud but no one can prove it? What if there wasn’t any fraud, or not enough to change the outcome – and...gasp...that means a majority of Americans wanted Joe and Kamala over Donald and Mike? You need to remember that voting always creates division – because someone is going to lose. Not everyone wants the same thing so what if the new administration (scary music here) tries to do things differently and that IS what a whole lot of folks in America want??? Darn...what if dinosaurs suddenly pop out of a crack in the ground in Kansas and attack Nebraska?

Just wondering...

Yeah – we can “what if” until we go crazy about conspiracy fears of dinosaurs romping about the Midwest. “What if” yourself into depression changes NOTHING. Let’s face it - you and I, dear readers, are not Senators or Congress-peoples (gotta be careful with the gendered words these days). We have one little vote and that’s all used up now that we’re past November 2020. Even if by some incredible miracle a real Senator or Congress-personage reads this blog (not counting on it) – well sir or madam or Martian or whatever - you ALSO only have one eensie-weensie-teensie little vote. The fact is – we are where we are!

So, the question we need to ask is "what now?"

To answer that – I'm going to look to my Bible. Yeah – it's a pastor thing. So – I'm reminded of Daniel. You know, Daniel was only a teenager when a very, very corrupt government overpowered the corrupt government of HIS country. It's true! In the 6th century B.C., the government of Daniels' country (Judah) was attacked and defeated by Nebuchadnezzar the super-corrupt megalomaniacal king of Babylon. There was no vote – not voting machines – and no protests either. Uncle Neb showed up, all bets were off, and Daniel and his friends ended up being deported.

Oh – and castrated. People forget that part of the story. Daniel was turned into a eunuch. Yikes.

But Daniel made up his mind to trust God. Since he really believed God was in control, he purposed in his heart not to defile himself. He decided to be a blessing to the government of the conqueror because that was the Godly thing to do. In fact, Daniel 1:19 says "And the king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service."

They entered the king's service – of a corrupt, illegitimate government!

And Daniel didn't have to put up with that for four or eight years. No – he was in that situation for about fifty years. Then, the ultra-corrupt government of the Medes and Persians overthrew the corrupt government of the Babylonians when he was an old man. Again – no votes, no "will of the people," no dominion voting machines to think about. Nope – just "we're here. Do what we say or we'll kill you." So, what did Danny-boy do? Start an insurrection? Get all "protesty." Nope..."In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be of assistance and a protection for him." (Daniel 11:1).

He rose up to be an assistant and a protector for the corrupt, usurping tyrant who routinely ordered the skinning alive of his enemies - cuz that's what a prophet of God does my friends. Neither Joe Biden nor Donald Trump has anything on the cruelty and despotism of the kings of the ancient Middle East.

I think we're starting to see a pattern here. You see – Daniel and his pals drew the line when Uncle Neb said they had to worship an idol - so they got tossed into a furnace for defying the king and God had to bail them out. And when Darius was dumb enough to let his minions convince him to pass a law saying everybody had to worship him for 30 days, that was the same sort of line Danny wouldn't cross. He resisted that too and got tossed into the lion's den for his decision. Once again, God rescued him.

We can see the same sort of thing with Moses too. When God told him to protest the confinement of God's people to a very corrupt government, Moses didn't start a grass-roots war of sabotage (contrary to that awful Exodus movie that came out a few years back). No – brother Mo let God do the judging. God zapped Egypt with ten seriously good reasons that the king should have responded to – blood and hail and gnats and so on. Even after the Passover, after the angel of death took the firstborn from every house that didn't have the blood of the lamb on its doorposts, Pharaoh didn't have to feel the pain. I mean, it wasn't Moses' fault that he drowned. After all, if you saw the Red Sea split in two after seeing all sorts of miracles in Egypt – would you go in??? That's on Tuthmosis the IVth.

In all these cases – it is God who did the judging. We need to remember that and let God be God. Daniel told us in his book, in chapter 2:20 that "It is God who changes the times and the periods; He removes kings and appoints kings." So – our current political situation does not concern God nor does it surprise Him – He engineered it no matter who thinks they were pulling a fast one at the voting booth.

So – what now??? Well...let's be Daniel. Let's be Moses. Let's work to be good citizens. Let's lead great churches that help people make positive Godly changes in life. Our government says it supposedly recognizes our freedom of speech – something Daniel didn't have – so we should use it – but never violently. We should "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks (us) to give an account for the hope that is in (us), but with gentleness and respect" (1 Pt 3:15). We should "love (our) enemies and pray for those that despitefully persecute (us)" (Mt 5:44). We need to obey our God and pray "for kings and all who are in authority...this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior (1 Tm 2:2)"

And we need to remember and trust that there is a sort of unwritten commandment we can deduce from the Scripture as a whole. It is, more or less, "Thou shalt not get away with it." Remember that God judged Nebuchadnezzar and God took care of Egypt's corrupt king. Remember that if you trust in Jesus who said, "I am the

resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies.”

Yes – if our government by law or force tries to compel us to do or say or support something that contradicts the clear teachings of God’s Word – we should and we will resist that just as Daniel did. And we might have to deal with furnaces or dens of lions too. But until that day, we would do well to listen to God’s voice as he spoke through Amos the prophet in Amos 5:12 during a time of a very corrupt government full of unrighteousness and bribery. God said,

For I know your offenses are many and your sins are great, You who are hostile to the righteous and accept bribes, And turn away the poor from justice at the gate. Therefore at such a time the prudent person keeps quiet, because it is an evil time. Seek good and not evil, so that you may live; And so may the Lord God of armies be with you, Just as you have said! Hate evil, love good, And establish justice in the gate!

Just something to think about...