

## Heaven Rules

Dare to Vote Like Daniel

KSBC 08.31.08

Daniel 4:24-37

**Intro** It is time to talk politics. While politics has a usage of calculated uses of power and strategy to gain power or influence, it's primary definition is the activities associated with governing. We have endured or enjoyed, depending on your perspective, one political party convention with another one coming in a few days. We are being hammered with messages about the economy, taxes, health care, foreign policy, energy, defense and education and the notion that we as the American people deserve better. The message is clear; we can overcome any problem by electing the best person for the job, enacting more legislation and growing our economy.

As followers of Jesus Christ, it is more important than ever that we make clear the radical distinction between biblical Christianity, on the one hand, and the American culture and political system, on the other hand. To quote John piper in a talk given in 2003 . . .

*They need to know that Jesus Christ - crucified for sinners, risen from the dead, and reigning as God from heaven today – was accomplishing his purposes, gathering a people for himself from every culture, and building his church before America ever existed, and will be omnipotently doing the same centuries from now, even if America becomes a footnote in world history. Christianity and American culture are radically distinct. It is possible to be a faithful Christian under any regime in the world – and may be easier to be a radical, cross-bearing disciple of Jesus in regimes less prosperous than America.*

The question this morning is not how can we as Christians help preserve and protect the values, prosperity and freedoms of our country, but rather how can we advance the rule and lordship of our great King and Savior, Jesus Christ! With certain and heroic exceptions, Christians are often viewed as fanatically rude, selfishly lazy or blindly loyal when it comes to American party politics and issues related to national debate.

As Christians we need help, encouragement and a clear example of how we should think and live in this culture where we have been strategically placed by God. The prophet Daniel provides the help we need. The message of the book of Daniel as well as his life is that even in the midst of a world and nations ruled by power politics, egomaniacs, jealousy and greed – God is in control, heaven rules. Faithful lovers of God are encouraged to have hope, actively participate, take risks and persevere because God is the benevolent controller of all things including nations, presidents, economies and wars.

Who will you vote for? What do you believe is the best response to nationally troubling issues such as the economy, education, energy, environment, health care and national defense? Let's look at Daniel's life and message; he pleased God for over 60 years in a high level political career spanning three powerful Kings and empires. He lived everyday in the challenge that a pagan culture presents to a living faith.

(Review Daniel's story chap.1 and theme/flow of visions – God is in control/building his kingdom)

**Daniel 4:24-37**

Explain/establish truth of God's control 4:25, 26, 32, 34-35, 37; Psa.103:19; Rom.11:36  
 Daniel's life and example teach us three basic ways to live out our faith in a changing and challenging political environment. Knowing and believing that heaven rules, we live, as Jesus taught us, as lights that reveal the glory of the one true and coming kingdom.

Knowing that heaven rules even in our pagan culture, Christians . . . dare to vote like Daniel:

**1. Get involved in connecting truth to culture.** 4:19; 2:24, 28

Daniel was presented with key opportunities to engage directly or back away into the backdrop of others who did not have any answers. Engagement in our world, participation in the public square for the glory of God is expressed in many ways. Voting, serving, volunteering, adopting, foster parenting, being a big brother or sister, coaching, teaching, giving, writing, feeding, downsizing . . . and many more are all ways of participating in the issues and needs of our day.

Get involved . . .

- Knowing that God uses your participation to accomplish his objectives.
- Knowing God requires your respectful submission to human authority.
- Knowing God rewards your courageous, risk taking sacrifice. Hebrews

Illus w/Daniel 3:16-18, 26, 28      5:21,23      4:19-26  
 Hebrews 10:32-35      11:10, 16      11:26      13:11-16  
 CS Lewis on democracy      Piper T4G radical sacrifice

**2. Cultivate personal holiness.** 1:8; 6:4

The obvious source of Daniel's courage and influence was his commitment to personal holiness. Daniel and a few of his friends refused to adopt the lifestyle and point of view of the world they were being help captive in. Daniel's example teaches us two significant habits that contributed to his God-centered, distinctive lifestyle.

- Purposeful application of God's words to your life. 1:8

Resolved – purposed in his heart; laid upon his heart Isa. 42:25; 47:7;  
 57:1,11

Cf. Psa.119:57-61

Illus prosperity, consumerism – what was at risk for Daniel?

- Intentional development of spiritual disciplines. 6:4, 10; 9:2

Prayed as he had done even with his life at stake.

Cf Jeremiah 29:1, 12      w/Dan 9:2      Illus. power/trust in gov't

### 3. Plead with God in prayer.

9:1-3, 17-19

According to the scriptures, the greatest power known to man is the influence God allows to happen in heaven when his people pray. Daniel's commitment and practice teaches us the absolute necessity of prayer in any approach to politics and the activities associated with governing people and nations.

- Biblically informed prayer 9:2
- Radically fervent prayer 9:3
- Humbly specific prayer 9:17ff

Illus Matt. 6:9ff

**Conclusion** . . . Jesus teaches from Daniel Matt 24 and applies readiness and watchfulness v.44

#### Take Aways

1. Determine to 'take to your heart' these truths.
2. Repent of your sinful response to engaging the affairs of our culture and nation.
3. Consider what radical, high risk/reward involvement God is calling you to.
4. Continue to learn to pray with your whole heart, 'your kingdom come.'