

Biblical Views On Election Issues

The Bible speaks to several ethical issues in this election.

Many Americans seek guidance from the Bible for important issues of life, while we recognize that many others do not. With thankfulness for the freedom of all Americans to believe whatever they think best regarding matters of religion and ethics, we offer this statement of our personal understanding of the teachings of the Bible for the thoughtful consideration of all who are interested in how the Bible might speak to ethical issues in the current election.

1. Supreme Court justices: People don't often think of the appointment of Supreme Court Justices as an ethical issue, but it clearly is now because several decisions of the Supreme Court have imposed on our nation new policies on major ethical and religious questions.

A small majority of our current Supreme Court, and lower courts that follow their example, have gone beyond their Constitutionally defined task of interpreting laws passed by Congress and state legislatures, and have in effect created new "laws" that have never been passed by any elected body. By this process they have imposed on us decrees that allow abortionists to murder unborn babies (contrary to **Exodus 20:13** and **Romans 13:9**, "you shall not murder"), that protect pornographers who poison the minds of children and adults (contrary to **Exodus 20:17**, "You shall not covet ... your neighbor's wife; see also **Matt. 5:28**), that redefine marriage to include homosexual couples (thus giving governmental encouragement to actions that **Romans 1:26-28** says are morally wrong), and that banish prayer, God's name and God's laws from public places (thus prohibiting free exercise of religion, and violating **Romans 13:3** which says that government should be "not a terror to good conduct, but to bad"). In taking to itself the right to decree such policies, the Supreme Court has seriously distorted the system of "checks and balances" intended by the Constitution between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government.

It is unlikely that any elected body such as a city council, state legislature, or the U.S. Congress, would have decreed policies like those mentioned above, for such groups are accountable to the will of the people. Not so the Supreme Court, which is appointed for life. And democratically-elected members of Congress and state legislatures are helpless to change those Court-mandated policies unless the makeup of the Supreme Court is changed. We believe the

ethical choice is for a President and for U. S. Senators committed to appointing judges who will follow the original intent of the Constitution and just interpret law and not make it, rather than for candidates who have often voted to block such judges in votes in the Senate.

2. Defense against terrorists: A fundamental responsibility of government is to "punish those who do evil" (**1 Pet. 2:14**) and thus to protect its citizens. We now face a unique challenge, because terrorists who will sacrifice their own lives in killing others cannot be deterred by the usual threat of punishing a criminal after he commits a crime. While Jesus instructed individuals not to seek personal revenge but to turn the other cheek (**Matt. 5:39**), the Bible teaches that governments are responsible to "bear the sword" (**Rom. 13:4**) and thus to use force to oppose violent evil. We believe the ethical choice is for a candidate who will pursue terrorists and, when necessary, use force to stop them before they strike us, not for a candidate who only promises to respond if we are attacked again.

3. Abortion: The Bible views the unborn child as a human person who should be protected, since David said to God, "You knitted me together in my mother's womb" (**Psalms 139:13**; see also **Psalms 51:5; 139:13; Luke 1:44**), and strong penalties were imposed for endangering or harming the life of an unborn child (**Exod. 21:22-23**). We believe the ethical choice is for candidates who believe government should give protection to the lives of unborn children, not ones who believe government should allow people to choose to murder their unborn children if they wish.

4. Homosexual marriage: The Bible views marriage as between one man and one woman, for "a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (**Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31**). Because our courts have shown a troubling tendency to overturn the laws that have already been passed concerning marriage, we believe the ethical choice is for candidates who support a Constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

5. Embryonic stem cell research: Creating more human embryos for their stem cells is making the beginnings of little babies for the purpose of harvesting their parts, contrary to the command, "You shall not murder" (**Exod. 20:13**). There is a good alternative: using adult stem cells for medical research, because this does not destroy the life of the adult whose cells are used. We believe the ethical choice is for a candidate who has decided he will not allow government funds to be spent to create more human embryos just to take their stem cells.

6. Natural resources: God put human beings on the earth to "subdue it" and to "have dominion" over the animals (**Gen. 1:28**). We value the beauty of the natural world which God created, and we believe that we are called to be responsible stewards who protect God's creation while we use it wisely and also seek to safeguard its usefulness for future generations. The Bible does not view "untouched nature" as the ideal state of the earth, but expects human beings to develop and use the earth's resources wisely for mankind's needs (**Gen. 1:28; 2:15; 9:3; 1 Tim. 4:4**). In fact, we believe that public policy based on the idealism of "untouched nature" hinders wise development of the earth's resources and thus contributes to famine, starvation, disease, and death among the poor. We believe the ethical choice is for candidates who will allow resources to be developed and used wisely, not for candidates indebted to environmental theories that oppose nearly all economic development in our nation and around the world.

7. Should Christians speak out and try to influence our nation on these issues? God's people in the Bible often spoke about ethical issues to government rulers. Daniel told the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar to practice "righteousness" and to show "mercy to the oppressed" (**Dan. 4:27**); several Old Testament prophets speak to foreign nations about their sins (**Isaiah 13-23; Ezekiel 25-32, Amos 1-2, Obadiah** (to Edom), **Jonah** (to Nineveh), **Nahum** (to Nineveh), **Habakkuk 2, Zephaniah 2**); and Paul spoke to the Roman governor Felix "about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment" (**Acts 24:25**).

As Christian leaders we agree that the primary message of the New Testament is the good news about salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. But the primary message is not the whole message, and another significant part of the New Testament teaches us how people should live. With respect to issues like these we have mentioned, the Bible also teaches us about what kinds of laws governments should have.

The laws of a nation have a significant influence on the nation's moral climate, for good or for ill. This is because laws can either restrain evil or encourage it, and because laws also have a teaching function as they inform people about what a government thinks to be right and wrong conduct.

Therefore we urge pastors and Bible study leaders to teach on these crucial ethical issues facing our nation. We urge all Christians that they have a moral obligation to learn about the candidates' positions,

to be informed, and to vote. We urge all Christians to pray that truthful speech and right conduct on both sides would prevail in this election. We also encourage Christians to consider doing even more for the good of our nation, such as giving time or money, or talking to friends and neighbors, or even serving in office themselves. Such influence for good on the direction of our country is one important way of fulfilling Jesus' command, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (***Matt. 22:19***).

The signatures of those who signed this teaching can be found at <http://www.azpolicy.org/assets/pdf/EthicalIssues.pdf>