

**Introduction:**

- *"Above all, you must **live as citizens of heaven**, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, ...I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News."* (Philippians 1:27, NLT)
- *"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior."* (Philippians 3:20, NLT)

**I. Citizens of Heaven - In The World But Not Part Of It**

## A. Citizen defined -

1. Merriam Webster: "is a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country. A person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to rights and protection of that country."
2. Biblical: Gr. *polis*-a fortified place; *polítēs*-one who shares in the fortified place; *politeúomai*; *politeía*-citizenship, political activity; *políteuma*-political acts, acts of government, etc. Walled Cities were first consider places of citizenship. Yet even high walls cannot protect the *pólis* against God's judgment (Dt. 28:52). The city of Babel in Gen. 11 with its lofty tower represents the ungodly arrogance of the human race. Unless the Lord keeps the city, the watchman stays awake in vain (Ps. 126:1). Kittel.
3. To be a citizen of a country meant **your allegiance** was to that country and that you were to be **protected** and granted **rights** of that country. In America we have the Bill of Rights (<http://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/bill-of-rights/>)

## B. Believers Are Citizens of Heaven. Lets look at this and see what it is to mean to us. I want to remind us in this election year that if you are born again you are a citizen of heaven. Therefore, we ask, 'how does that affect how I live here in the earth?' We are going to look at a number of scriptures that begin to give definition to that.

1. First of all, we are a part of a kingdom that is not of this world. Therefore we are always looking towards home. Ie. When abroad, I am always looking to see what is happening in America-family, church, news, to weather, to sports.
  - a) Hebrews 11 reveals the nature of what it means to be a citizen of heaven.
    - (1) *"Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God."* (Hebrews 11:10, NLT)
    - (2) The patriarchs *"All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth."* (Hebrews 11:13, NLT) *"But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."* (Hebrews 11:16, NLT)
    - (3) What are you looking for in this life? Are you living to see Trump be president? Are you living to see Hillary be president? Since you are a citizen of heaven, you

are part of a kingdom that is not of this world. Seeing from a distance means we walk by faith. Walking by faith sets your heart and eyes upon a kingdom that is greater than this world.

- b) When before Pilate, "Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36, NLT)
  2. Secondly, being a citizen of heaven makes us strangers, aliens, foreigners. "*For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.*" (Hebrews 13:14, NLT)
  3. Third, it affects how we live here. As a citizen of heaven, I can't get entangled in the matters of this world. I have a different priority. And it also reminds me that I belong to another culture that is way different than this world's culture. *le. When I travel to different countries I am reminded that I am a stranger there. My customs are odd to them. My taste of food is different to them. When I am there I am subject to the laws of that land (whether I know them or not). I do not get involved with their politics because I am not a citizen of that country. I am just passing through!*
  4. As a believer I live as a citizen of heaven in this world. This must be priority.
    - a) "*Above all, you must **live as citizens of heaven**, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, ...I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.*" (Philippians 1:27, NLT)
    - b) Before I was a believer: "*In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.*" (Ephesians 2:12, NLT)
    - c) "*So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.*" (Ephesians 2:19, NLT)
  - C. "*But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.*" (Philippians 3:20, NLT)
  - D. As citizens of heaven I am not to get entangled in worldly desires. "*Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.*" (1 Peter 2:11, NLT) Alien - a person who comes from a foreign country and does not owe allegiance to that country.
  - E. As a citizen of heaven I am not be involved in this worlds affairs but to be involved in the Kingdom of God and in its advancement. So that creates questions and tension for us. It sounds rather passive. The scriptures and Jesus give us some great input on how to do this.
- II. Citizens of Rome - In The World And Part Of It. Acts 21:39; 22:25**
- A. Paul a citizen of heaven also exercised his rights as a Jew and as a Roman.

1. Paul had rights as a Jew. He used those rights to address the Jewish people. *“No,” Paul replied, “I am a Jew and a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, which is an important city. Please, let me talk to these people.”* (Acts 21:39, NLT) When his preaching almost starts a riot he whisked away to be arrested and beaten.
  2. Paul appeals to his rights as a Roman citizen that he could not be whipped until tried and proven guilty. *“When they tied Paul down to lash him, Paul said to the officer standing there, “Is it legal for you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been tried?”* (Acts 22:25, NLT) Paul was a Roman citizen by birth.
- B. What Jesus had to say. Here is what citizens of heaven are to do:
1. *“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? ...”* (Matthew 5:13, NLT) The passage literally reads “If salt loses its saltiness it becomes foolish.”
    - a) Salt adds flavor to whatever you add it to. It goes through the whole food.
    - b) Salt also is a preservative. It keeps things from rotting/corrupting.
    - c) When Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth. He is saying that we as believers/disciples are called to influence the world with the kingdom that we carry. Bring heaven to earth! Everyone likes salt. It flavors and holds off corruption.
  2. *“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.”* (Matthew 5:14, NLT) Everyone loves light unless your deeds are evil then you like darkness because what you do then is hidden. Hiding and darkness go together really well.
    - a) The Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.
    - b) “Those living in darkness have seen a great light.”
    - c) Light provides navigation. It is hard to navigate without the sun moon or stars. Where there is light people can find their way. You are the light of the world. You are to bring the light of the kingdom to those who live in darkness. Politicians cannot do that. It is not in their job description unless they are truly born again.
    - d) When Jesus speaks of us being light and salt he is speaking of us being influential in this world. When Jesus speaks of us being salt and light he is speaking of us being responsible in this world. Many lights brought together like that of a city have greater impact. vs. 17. Our main objective as Christians above all others is to bring kingdom influence into the earth.
- C. As citizens we are to be responsible to the best of our ability and to influence our nation for God by being salt and light. How do we do that?
1. One we do it by being great Kingdom citizens/disciples of Jesus Christ. That means keeping our focus on the Kingdom while we live and interact in this world.
    - a) We have to know the government of the Kingdom of God. Found in the word.
    - b) We live as citizens of that world and not of this one. What is o.k. here is not necessarily o.k. there. Things encouraged in the kingdom are most generally not encouraged in this world.

- c) We pray like our life depends on it. Luke 18:1 Men ought always to pray. 1 Tim 2:2 we are to pray for those in authority that we may lead peaceful lives.
  - d) We bring heaven to earth through kingdom character/conduct, through signs and wonders, through loving the way the Father loves.
  - e) We bring the kingdom to earth by leading others into a vibrant saving relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - f) We bring heaven to earth by bringing the wisdom of God into every area of our lives here on earth. I.e. The seven mountains: Government, Media, Religion, Family, Arts & Entertainment, Business, Education. These 7 spheres/mountains control all culture. And it is the top 3% of people who are at the top of these mountains that have the actual control. Therefore bring God/kingdom culture to the top of these mountains.
2. Two, as a Christian citizen of a nation I am called to exercising my rights as a citizen of that nation.
- a) Vote - what an honor and a privilege given to us by our Republic. And what a serious responsibility. By my vote, I am given opportunity bring righteous influence into my nation on issues affecting my nation. By my vote I am either building my nation or tearing it down. America is where she is because the church either did not vote or voted without listening to her moral compass provided by our faith.
  - b) Open your eyes as you go to vote this year. In 38 years of voting I have never seen our nation change so rapidly for the worse than right now. God has slowly been removed from our government, our schools, our courtrooms. We have been left with no plumb line with which to orient ourselves. Is 33:5-6 Fear of the Lord, wisdom and knowledge are the stability of our times.
    - (1) I have never seen the democratic party so far away from her original roots.
    - (2) I have never seen the republican party so far away from her original roots.
    - (3) The reason there is so much chaos and uncertainty is because of the choices elected people are making both democrats and republican
  - c) What is at stake?
    - (1) The next President of the USA will potentially appoint 3-5 Supreme Court Justices. They will either be liberal or conservative. Our current president has appointed nearly half liberal Federal judges all across America. What does this mean? In 2012 at the democratic national convention it was said that the convention 'bood' God. That is not quite the story. "In drafting the original platform, Democratic leaders had removed references to God (and to Jerusalem as the capital of Israel). They didn't merely forget to mention God; in updating previous party platforms, they made a conscious decision to remove Him." So to select a president from from the midst of the democratic party will further take God out of our culture. Do you remember the White House lit up with rainbow? Have we forgotten that the family was redefined as no longer being one man and one woman?

(2) With liberal judges not only do we face seeing God taken out of our country at deeper levels but we will see the constitution changed in ways that will continue to weaken our nation. Who would have dreamed that a confessed socialist would run for president. What that mean is that America is embracing big government. Government controlled business, education, healthcare etc. As that increases it takes control out of the hands of the people and those certain unalienable rights that were given to us will begin to disappear.

(3) Our nation in seven years double its debt to 19 trillion. We have not seen a budget in America for quite some time. You and I would never be allowed to operate like that.

D. You are citizens of heaven if you are born again. You have an allegiance to the Kingdom of God. You are called to be salt and light in this world. And as citizens of the US you have a God given responsibility to vote and to stand for righteousness to the best of your ability.

**Conclusion:**

- Two weeks ago. Give us King. 1 Sam 8-12. The people were afraid and uncertain of their future and they grasped at straws and rejected God and embrace a king. Samuel exhortation was to draw near to God, worship Him, and reject idols.
- Last week, Give us a King pt 2. We spoke of discerning Jesus in drastic times. It requires we look for Him and allow ourselves to be empowered by Him. Especially as we move into this election, the remainder of this year and beyond.
- The goal for today was two fold. To see yourself as a citizen of heaven and that your eyes would always be set on advancing the Kingdom of God. Two, that as an American citizen you be responsible to bring the light of God and righteousness to the voting booth.