

## The Citizenship of the Statesman

Returning to the foundational truth:

*God is King of all the earth. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne (Psalms 47:7-8).*

There is a special benefit for the Statesman that results from faith in the One who designed the system in which they serve. Therefore, it is beneficial to look at the implications of that faith. The Apostle Paul discussed giants of the faith in an interesting passage:

*These all died in faith without having received the promises, but they saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them (Hebrews 11:13-16).*

God was referring to the giants of the faith as being “foreigners and temporary residents” within nations upon the earth while living as a part of a greater kingdom and while looking forward to that greater kingdom. God, speaking to His obedient servants, tells us “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20).

What difference can this make for the Statesman?

While discussing this issue with a small group of U.N. Ambassadors in a Bible study, one Ambassador explained that his foreign ministry, while briefing him before his assignment, cautioned him not to allow himself to become attracted by the allures of the culture where he would serve, rather always keeping his eye on his own country until he could return. Our God reminds us to take the same approach as we serve in His creation: not to allow ourselves to become attracted by the allures of the culture where we serve, but rather always keeping our eye on our ultimate home as we await our return.

The Statesman faces the allure of many challenges due to the authority he or she wields. There is the accumulation of power. Jesus’s warning addresses the issue of our ultimate citizenship:

*What will it benefit a man if he gains the whole world yet loses his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? (Matthew 16:26)*

While serving, we must resist the temptation to accrue the benefits of exercising power.

Then, there is the issue of material possessions. As civilization began to move toward centralized governments, God provided the following guidelines:

*The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself ... He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold (Deuteronomy 17:16-17).*

— *his heart will be led astray* from the ultimate kingdom to which he will return.

This proceeds to instruct how the leader is to protect him- or herself:

*When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read*

*it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow [citizens] and turn from the law to the right or to the left (Deuteronomy 17:18-20).*

It involves continually focusing one's mind on and focusing our heart on our citizenship in our ultimate Kingdom and our accountability to our Master at its head. This does so by focusing on the Law of that Kingdom which supersedes our earthly kingdom.

The application here seems relevant. While serving in an earthly kingdom, there seems a certain irony in a Government leader being a citizen of a kingdom other than his/her own nation.

I would submit to you that because of being a citizen of that higher kingdom – God's Kingdom, I believe God is telling us that one can better serve the nation's interests. God contrasts those whose ultimate citizenship is not in heaven:

*Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself (Philippians 3:19-21).*

The Statesman who knows his or her citizenship is in heaven has the valuable resource that keeps him or her from giving into the temptations faced by one who holds power in our world system. Hence, we are admonished:

*Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth (Colossians 3:2).*

We are admonished to continually focus our minds on the eternal Kingdom to which we will ultimately return after our brief service on this earth is completed.

***Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.***

Let us keep our minds focused on that Kingdom within which we look forward to spending eternity with our ultimate Master and Saviour. And may this help us to make our maximum contribution while on this earth!