

The Citizenship That Can Support the Statesman

Citizenship is a powerful incentive in the life of the Statesman. The reality is that there is a citizenship that is even more significant than that of one's birthplace in making one a Statesman.

In God's Instruction to His creation is a fascinating chapter often referred to as the 'faith hall of fame'. In the midst of this description of those with great trust in God is this insight:

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. ... They 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).

What was so special about these giants of faith is that they understood that they had an eternal citizenship which would continue beyond their few short years on this earth. It is this understanding of this heavenly citizenship, which we can enjoy forever after we finish with our temporary citizenship upon this earth, that has the potential to make the Statesman more effective.

One servant of God recognized the need to keep in focus this greater citizenship when he addresses our Creator:

I am a stranger on earth; do not hide Your commands from me (Psalm 119:19).

As Jesus was about to leave this earth, He gave this insight about this citizenship to those who follow Him:

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also (John 14:2-3).

Having this understanding and confidence in our Creator and ultimate King can have great significance for the Statesman. Let us consider the special role that recognizing this ultimate citizenship can have in helping the Statesman to administer nations in the healthiest possible way. Returning to the 'faith hall of fame' with which we began, we have this concluding summary:

*Time is too short for me to tell about [giants of the faith], who by faith conquered kingdoms, **administered justice**, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ..., gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight (Hebrews 11:32-34).*

It is the ability to recognize the need to depend upon God and experience His help and guidance resulting from fully embracing this citizenship that makes this resource so valuable to the effort of the Statesman. Several of the results of this ability to embrace this ultimate citizenship have the capacity to impact the life of the Statesman. Let us consider just one of the consequences listed in this passage: "administer justice". This phrase summarizes what makes the Statesman – the ability to create a society where everyone feels fairly treated and has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential

regardless of their situation – both the heart and the wisdom to create such a just society. This kind of society was described by God as having the highest priority:

Pursue justice and justice alone (Genesis 16:20).

Achieving a just society might seem difficult due to human greed – the corruption of the human heart. And yet, God is teaching us that the best way to achieve this is by accepting our citizenship in heaven – whether we are in Government or civil society.

King David, as Statesman, also expressed that same attitude that we must recognize our ultimate citizenship as being in heaven when he prayed in the presence of his people:

For we are strangers before You, and temporary residents... (1 Chronicles 29:15).

How do we gain that citizenship? Another servant of God reminds us with these words:

Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20).

This citizenship in heaven is available to all of us based on allowing Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, acknowledging His death 20 centuries ago as payment for our sins which prevent us from experiencing this citizenship. In response to Jesus telling His followers that He was soon leaving to enjoy His citizenship in heaven, in advance of them, as we saw above, one of them, representing the skeptical nature within all of us, asked Him:

Lord, we don't know where You're going. How can we know the way [to get there]? (John 14:5)

In response:

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 4:6).

Furthermore, once we have that citizenship, it impacts the way we make our decisions while we are briefly upon this earth. We are guided by a longer-term perspective – our eternal citizenship. As such, we can see how our actions fit into our Creator's longer plan.

Thus, as human beings, we have available to us two citizenships: an earthly one largely determined by our birth and a heavenly one based upon a choice that we can make. The writer C. S. Lewis summed up the challenge we face as human beings in considering choosing this citizenship in heaven:

Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth 'thrown in': aim at Earth and you will get neither.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STATESMEN.

Is my service on this earth guided by citizenship in heaven? Do I have anything to lose by accepting this citizenship? Do I have anything to gain by accepting this citizenship?