

Issues, Et Cetera: A Biblical Look at the Issues of Today



Welcome to our Bible Class, *Issues Et Cetera*. We are so blessed that you have joined us.

“There is nothing new under the sun”. So declares the writer of Ecclesiastes. Truth be told, all times in history have always been perilous and uncertain. Issues that we face today have always been with us. As we approach election season, particularly this year, many of those issues have resurfaced as if they were new. They are not. In fact, the Bible continues to speak the same clear message as it always has.

Our purpose in this class is to rediscover and discuss the Biblical perspective on many of the issues boldly confronting us through the media, the Internet, and in conversations around the tables in our Country. Many are surprised that the Bible has much to say about how we, the “Called Out Ones” (the literal meaning of the word Church) are to respond to those things in the world that have stolen the passions of many.

Some of the issues we will look at are straight forward. Others may be controversial. That’s ok. The point is we are bringing them to the table and shining the light of God’s Word all over them. Our attitude should not be “we are right, they are wrong.” Rather, we seek to mine what *God* says and then follow Him.

When you were Baptized, you were made a child of God. You are Jesus to the world now. There is nothing more important than spreading His Gospel and His sacrificial love, demonstrated on the Cross, to those who are still “in darkness and under the shadow of death.” Many of the issues out there today are simply signs that the world, dead to Christ, is decaying in front of us. To those without Christ, everything seems good and right. But we know Him and have been made alive in Him through faith. We want everyone to share in this joy.

Our calling is to simply shine light into the darkness and maybe “put a stone in the shoe” of those struggling with what we face as God’s people today.

Secondly, it is meant to assist you when you vote for candidates this November. Do they understand the issues as God wants them to? Do they ignore them. Do they seek a greater good than God?

Our job is not to point out the errors in thinking on the part of people, but to share the Good News of Jesus with them.

The Calendar of Classes follows.

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CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 2

Introduction to Class

Issue 1: The Government: Given to Us By God

Wednesday, October 9

Issue 2: Obeying God rather than Man

Wednesday, October 16

Issue 3. Christian Duty to those in Need

Wednesday, October 23

No Class or Matins, Pastoral Conference

Wednesday, October 30

Issue 4: The Blessings of Childbirth

Wednesday, November 6

Issue 5: Keeping ourselves pure: Sexuality

Wednesday, November 13

Issue 6: Immigration

Wednesday, November 20, Last Class

Issue 7: Artificial Intelligence



CLASS 1: THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GOVERNMENT

1. Read Romans 13:1-14

Points to Ponder:

- What does the word “subject” mean?
- The Kingdoms of the Right and Left
- The Government is instituted by God Himself.
- Resisting the government means we are resisting God.
- The place of “godly fear” of the government in the life of a Christian.
- The role of obedience to governmental laws.
- What does “he does not bear the sword in vain...” mean?
- What is the Bible’s position on capital punishment / death penalty by the government?
- What does it mean that the authorities are God’s *ministers*?
- What does this say to taxation? Does it limit it?
- What does this say about debt in general?
- What does “the debt of love” mean in this section of the Bible?
- What does it mean that “*the hour has come for you to wake from sleep...*”?
- What does “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires*” mean/refer to?



2. Read 1 Peter 2:13-17

Points to Ponder:

- What does Peter mean by “every human institution?”
- What are the titles for governing authorities that he uses?
- What does this have in common with Paul’s writing (above) with the regard to good and evil behavior in society?
- How does doing good “silence the ignorance of foolish people?”
- What does “freedom” mean as mentioned by Peter?
- What do the following mean?
 - + Honor everyone
 - +Love the brotherhood (who is this?)
 - +Fear God
 - +Honor the Emperor

3. Read Luke 20:25

Points to Ponder:

- Who is speaking in this verse?
- What does it mean to “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesars”.
What are they?
- What does it mean to (render) “to God the things that are God’s.”
- What are they?



4. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Points to Ponder:

- What does God command us to do?
- Why does God command this according to 1 Timothy 2?

5. Read Matthew 17:24-27

Points to Ponder

- What does Jesus say about paying taxes?
- Discuss what Jesus says, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?” And when he said ‘from others,’ Jesus said to him, ‘Then the sons are free...’ What does he mean by this?
- What does Jesus provide?
- Does Jesus speak about unjust taxation?

5. Read Matthew 22:21.

Points to Ponder:

- This is a parallel passage of Luke 20:25.
- That two of the Gospel writers included this from Jesus, what does this tell us?

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Notes for Class 1:



CLASS 2: “We must obey God rather than man...”

1. Read Daniel 3:1-24

Points to Ponder:

- The king instituted a legal decree (according to their law) that commanded those under his reign – Verse 4
- Note the word “commanded.”
- Note the severe punishment for not obeying the king’s command- Verse 6
- Can you think of any laws throughout the world currently that bear such force?
- What does it say to us that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego willfully refused the king’s command, knowing the consequences?
- How is your faith in the Lord? Would you be willing to do this?
- Note that when we obey God rather than man there can be severe consequences.
- “Take they our life, goods, fame, child, or wife, let these all be gone, they yet have nothing won! The Kingdom ours remaineth!” *Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress.*
- How does the Lord deliver these men?
- How does the Lord deliver you?
- Is there a guarantee that persecution will not kill you? Explain.
- The Fourth Man in the fire.

2. Read Daniel 6:6-24

Points to Ponder:

- Describe the driving force of a new law that was created by the leaders—excluding King Darius—in verse 6.
- How did they trick the king into signing the new law that no one who prays to any god but the king over 30 days would be cast into the lion’s den.
- Did the king have anything against Daniel? What is the king’s response?
- When the king cannot deliver Daniel, what does he do. What does he say? v. 16
- What does the king do while Daniel is in the den of the lions.



4. Read Matthew 24:1-14

Points to Ponder:

- Some general signs that Jesus is returning soon:
 - Many will come “In [Jesus] name, saying “I am the Christ...”
 - Why does Jesus say to the *believing* disciples, “See that no one leads *you* astray...”
 - Wars/Rumors of Wars
 - Natural Cataclysms- earthquakes, famines, ... Hurricanes?
 - Birth pangs revisited
- Some signs specific to Christians
 - Deliver *you* up to tribulation
 - Put *you* to death
 - *You* will be hated by all nations because of Jesus
 - Many (Christians) will fall away.
 - Betrayal among the ranks
 - Love of *many* will grow cold
- What does this say to you? Satan and the world will come after believers as never before. This will include unbelievers, governments, regimes, etc.
- How are you prepared to meet this?

5. Read Acts 4:1-20.

- Describe the situation of Peter and John
- What did they do?
- What was their punishment for proclaiming Jesus?
- Why did the Sanhedrin let them go?

6. Read Jude 17-25

- Jude reminds us of the warning of the Apostles:
 - Scoffers
 - Divisions in the Church
 - Christians becoming worldly
 - Devoid of the Spirit
- What does Jude say should be our response (v. 20ff)

7. Modern Day Persecution

- Islam
- Countries forbidding or controlling the faith: China, Sudan
- What signs to you see in our world and country today?
- How will you respond to those who attempt to silence your witness?

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Notes on Class 2:



**CLASS 3: “Blessed is the one who considers the poor”
(Psalm 41:1)**

1. Read Proverbs 19:17

Points to Ponder

- Why are we called to be generous to the poor?
- What does the writer mean when he says, “and he will repay you...”?
 - Do we give to garner God’s favor?
 - What is the difference between Christian giving and Governmental support?
 - To Whom does the Lord give the responsibility for caring for the poor?
 - How have Christians done this over the centuries?
 - What systems have come out of the Church?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-3

- What is the Collection to which Paul refers?
- What does Paul suggest for the Congregation at Corinth to do?
- How do we do this today? What resources do we provide?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

- What gift had they “arranged in advance”?
- What does it mean to “sow sparingly”?
- What principle does Paul set in giving?
- What does Paul say in verse 12? What does this mean?

4. Read Luke 10: 25-37

- What is the question being addressed.
- To whom do we have responsibility as Christians?
- What is the irony in this parable of the Good Samaritan?
- What is Jesus’ charge to this young lawyer?



5. Read Matthew 25:31-45

- This is the Great Judgment Scene in the Bible. It occurs on the Last Day.
- Who are the sheep? The goats?
- What was the question of each of these groups to the Lord?
- What is Jesus response to each?
- What does this imply of Christians? Of unbelievers?

Notes on Class 3



CLASS 4: “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made...” (Psalm 139)

A. All Life is a gift from God.

1. Read Genesis 2:7, 18-24

- Why is man created differently than the rest of creation?
- What is the significance of God forming Adam and “Breathing into his nostrils the breath of life?”
- What is so significant about Woman?
- Read Genesis 1:26-27. What is the image of God? How is it described?

2. Read Psalm 139:13-16

- What is the significance of this passage?
- What is the comfort of this passage?
- If my life is a gift from God in this way, is not all life.
- “Wanted vs. Unwanted” – a false dichotomy

3. Read Jeremiah 1:5.

- What does this tell us about life?

B. Barrenness

1. Read Genesis 29:31-30:1-8; Genesis 30:22

- How does Rachel suffer from her barrenness?
- What does she do? (v.3)
- God opens Rachel’s womb in 30:22. Does He do this for all?

2. Read Genesis 18:9-15

- Not only was Sarah barren, but she was elderly and passed the age of childbearing.
- What is Sarah’s reaction to the message the Lord sent to them?
- The name Isaac = “laughter.”



3. Read 1 Samuel 1:1-9

- What does “barren” mean?
- What does Peninnah do to Hannah? Why?
- What suffering does Hannah experience? (see v. 9-11)
- How are we called to care for those women who are barren?
- Read Hannah’s prayer after giving birth to Samuel, 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Does this sound familiar?
- What does the name Samuel mean?

4. The barren of today

- What can we do to help women today who are barren?
- Do we recognize their suffering?
- What are some careless things that we say to them?
- PRAY for those who are barren. LOVE them. EMBRACE them.

C. Abortion

1. For Christians, abortion is a *spiritual* issue, not a legal issue.

- This is hard to discern in today’s society.
- It is not a right in the Lord’s eyes
- **It is not an “unforgivable sin”.** Some of the strongest proponents for life are women who had abortions in the past and experienced it’s repercussions
- Post-Abortion syndrome is real and can last for years.
- It can lead to “moral injury” – the unbiblical idea that includes 3 categories: “I took a life.” “I cannot be forgiven for taking a life.” and “Since I cannot be forgiven, God no longer loves me and seeks to punish me.” It is understandable that this can be a reaction. But it is totally false. There is no sin too great for God to forgive. God never withholds His love or healing from His children.

2. Abortion is nothing new. It existed in OT times as well as during the time of the early Church.

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From the *Didache* (“The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” ca. 70AD):

The second commandment of the teaching: You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not seduce boys. You shall not commit fornication. You shall not steal. You shall not practice magic. You shall not use potions. You shall not procure [an] abortion, nor destroy a newborn child.”

Didache 2:1–2 [A.D. 70]

3. What does it mean to be “Pro-Life?”

- To be repentant : Read Psalm 51:1-12
- To share Jesus’ love with all: Matthew 28:18ff
- To be supportive of those who are pregnant who may abort
 - Provide alternatives to them
 - Provide medical care for them
 - Provide for physical needs
 - Pray for women in this circumstance
 - Encourage life-preserving choices
 - Vote for candidates who support life
 - Comfort women who have gone through this with the Gospel.
 - Treat all with the love of Christ
 - ?? Feel free to add to this!

Notes on Class 4:



CLASS 5: “You are not your own” Human Sexuality

A. Sexuality is created by God

1. Creation

- Read Genesis 1:27
- What is the image of God?
 - What does it say about human sexuality?
 - How do deviant sexual relationships and practices mock this image?
 - Deviant sexual practices display a disregard for the order of creation and thus is an attack against God’s image.
- Re-read Genesis 2: 18-25
 - Note Adam’s response to Eve
 - What is the significance of the word, “wife” in v. 24? Why not “spouse?”
 - Read verse 28. What is one of the chief reasons for marriage given here?
 - How does sexual deviancy fail in this regard
 - What about “IVF” or surrogacy (a woman outside of the relationship being impregnated by a man in the relationship). What if those who practice sexual deviancy do this to have children?

2. Sex

- Read Genesis 4:1. This is the first recorded human sexual act in the Bible.
 - What is the significance about the word, “knew” ?
 - What is the outcome of this physical relationship?
 - Note Eve’s response 4b.
- Read Genesis 18:20-33; 19:23-29
 - What was the sin of Sodom?
 - Some churches interpret this in a way that does not included homosexuality.
 - Read Jude 7. Scripture interprets Scripture. What does this say?



- Read Leviticus 18:22
 - While part of the Levitical laws that no longer bind us, why is this an “abomination to the Lord?”
 - Why does the Lord have to give this law?

- Read Romans 1:24-32
 - There are some who say that once the Levitical laws ended that homosexuality is no longer a sin. However, Paul writes in the New Testament (frequently, as we will see) about such practice.
 - What are the “dishonorable passions?”
 - What do the words “God gave them up” mean?
 - What else does Paul identify as sin in v. 3?

- Read 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11
 - Note that this is one of the sins listed by Paul
 - What is the implication of verse 11?

- Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-20
 - What does it mean that our “bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?”
 - What does the term “one-flesh” mean
 - Why does this text tell us to “flee from sexual immorality?”
 - What does it mean that the “Sexually immoral sins against his own body?”

3. Forgiveness

- Read John 8:1-11
 - Explain the scenario
 - Read Leviticus 20:10 (The Law of Moses)
 - Was this woman guilty?
 - What is Jesus’ response?
 - Is there any sin too great for God to forgive?
 - What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the forgiveness of sin?

Notes:

