

Can Democrats and Republicans Live Together in Peace? — September 3 & 4, 2016
Follow-up Bible Studies

Written by Maggie Baxter

Day One: Isaiah 40:21-26

- What four questions does the prophet Isaiah ask (21)? In asking these questions, what point is the Lord trying to make? How do you feel when you are addressed in such a way?
- Where does God sit (22)? From this viewpoint, how do people appear (22)? What is God's role in arranging "the heavens" (22, 26)? How does he interact with the political world (23-24)? What does this speak to you about God's role in the current American political landscape? Do any of the proclamations in verses 23-24 fill you with hope? What about disappointment? Explain.
- Moving on, Isaiah asks even more rhetorical questions; what are they (25-26)? Many politicians and parties attempt to claim Jesus as their own. In light of verse 25, describe why this is foolish, even harmful. What response does this require of you?

Day Two: Philippians 2:1-4

- How should being united with Jesus make us feel; what five things does Paul say we ought to experience as brothers and sisters in Christ (1)? Which of these attributes do you sense most strongly in your life these days? Which one seems absent? Talk to the Lord: thank him for the surpluses and ask him to pour into what's lacking. Which attributes do you think the body of Christ most needs in this election year? Why?
- If we do experience even small doses of all of these things, it is pleasing to Paul; but what would make his joy complete (2)? What specific examples does he give of what this would look like (3-4)? Do you think it is possible for Christians on opposite ends of the political spectrum to "have the same love" and be "one in spirit"? Why or why not? Remember: nothing is too hard for the Lord. Each day this week, pray that Christ-centeredness, rather than political persuasions, would unite believers.

Day Three: Philippians 2:14-18

- How does Paul instruct us to "do everything" (14)? Why (15)? Imagine Christian politicians and political activists, doing "everything without grumbling or arguing." What do you think this would cause the world to proclaim about Christians? How do you think God would feel about this?
- What does being "blameless and pure" look like (15)? Meditate on the Deuteronomy quote: "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." How is the Lord calling you to embody such a role in this election season? In what specific ways does he want you to swap grumbling for exuding his character? What is the first step you will take to walk this out?
- Additionally, what should we hold close (16)? What will all of this prompt Paul to boast about (16)? Even if a servant role is all that he experiences, how will he feel (17)? How does Paul want us to partner with him in this (18)?

Day Four: James 3:7-12

- Today's topic is likely to generate conviction and discomfort in your heart. Begin by asking the Lord to help you lean into those feelings as you consider the impact of your words.
- What can be tamed (7)? What is incapable of such (8)? Why (8)? Do you agree with these claims? Why or why not?

- In what two ways can speech be used (9-10)? Why is it egregious to curse people (9)? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how you've cursed candidates and their supporters in this election year, both in conversation and on the Internet. Don't minimize the offenses or flee from feelings of remorse or sorrow. Instead, repent. Also ask God for strength to be civil so that you can use your speech to esteem people, not tear them down.
- What is James' assessment of this paradox of speech (10)? What imagery does he employ to support his view (11-12)? If he were writing this letter to American Christians today, in this election year, what specific advice do you think he would give? Would you be able to heed his words? Why or why not?

Day Five: Revelation 5

- Set the scene of this vision (1). What did the angel ask (2)? What appeared to be the answer (3-4)? But then what did an elder say (5)? Summarize what happened next (6-8).
- Considering that Jesus, portrayed here as a lamb, is the *only one* who can open the scroll, what does this reveal about the relative importance of political candidates and issues? Ask God to tell you whether this year's election is occupying too much space in your mind and heart. What is he speaking, and how will you respond?
- Summarize the people's song (9-10). Describe the angels and what they said (11-12). What did every living creature then do (13)? What about the four living creatures and the elders (14)? As you read that those from "every tribe and language and people and nation" belong to the Lord's family, pray for Godly motivation to connect with people who are different from you, even politically.