

HAVE YOU VOTED?

Often we hear the cry that we must get involved in the decisions which directly affect our lives. So, we are told, "Don't forget to vote!" While most would agree that the elections of this world are important, there is another "election" going on which is by far more important. It is more important than any "presidential" or other election held by man. This election is much different from those in which most are accustomed. The results of this election deal not with some earthly position but with eternity—they deal with YOUR salvation. While in the elections of this world, there are many votes cast. In this one there are but three votes.

The First Vote Is God's

He has voted for your salvation. His vote has been cast throughout all eternity (Ephesians 3:11). It was made known to man when God revealed in the garden of Eden that He would put "enmity" between the serpent and the woman (Genesis 3:15). He has reaffirmed His vote many times, for He is "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). When we read in the New Testament of Jesus, the Son of God, who came to this earth and gave His life for you and me

(John 3:16), we see His desire— His "vote" for our salvation (John 3:16).

The Second Vote Is Satan's

He also voted long ago. Instead of wanting your salvation though, he votes for your damnation. We see his vote when we read of his successful attempt to persuade Eve to disobey God's commandment (Genesis 3:1-5). In this text, we read that Satan is "subtil." It is easy to see the deceit in his arguments as he twisted what God had actually said. Notice, also, that the change he made in what God had said was not very great at all. He just added the word "not"—"... ye shall not surely die" (verse 4). We need to be careful not to think he has ceased from this type of activity. Peter tells us that "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). His vote is being cast repeatedly as we see those who will not accept the plain statements of the Word of God. Instead, they change them to fit their own ideas.

The Final And Deciding Vote Is Ours

God has given us all we need to make the proper decision (2 Peter 1:3; John 3:16) but the decision is ours. We need to ask though, "How do we vote?"

"When do we vote?" The answer is given in God's Word. Paul stated,

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11,12).

This passage makes the time for our "voting" plain—"in this present world." It is during our brief stay on this earth (James 4:14) that we cast our vote as to whether we will stand with God or Satan.

Also, plainly given in the above scripture is the way we vote. The way to vote for salvation is to "live soberly, righteously, and godly." This means we are to do the will of God—to follow what He teaches us through His Word. In the example of Eve, we spoke of earlier, we saw how she voted. When Eve decided to follow Satan's words instead of God's, she voted against her salvation. This is not surprising since the Word is to be the instrument of our judgment (John 12:48). In the decisions we make each day we are "voting" and Satan is still trying to influence our vote just as he did within the Garden of Eden. Remember how we saw that Satan needed to make only small changes in the Word of God to deceive man? Even today, some passages are being changed in the same way. How we react to these and others will determine how we "vote" regarding

our salvation. Will we vote with God by obeying His Word for our salvation? Or will we vote with Satan by following what men say and, thus, assuring our damnation?

God Has Made Plain What He Wants Our Vote To Be

God has said we must believe, but nowhere in His Word do we find Him telling us that we are saved by "faith only." In fact, God has said just the opposite. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Satan needs to make only small changes to bring about one of the most common false doctrines in the world—"Ye see then how that by works a man is NOT justified, but by faith only." Which way do you vote?

God has said we must repent. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Satan again makes only small changes to bring forth the idea that we can be sincere and stay as we are. Which way do you vote?

God has said we must confess His Son before others. ". . . with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Satan again denies the plain words of God when we are told confession is not necessary. Which way do you vote?

God has said we must be baptized.

"Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21). Satan needs only to change one little word to make this say "baptism doth also not save us." The Lord Himself said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Satan easily deceives many by simply saying, "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved." Which way do you vote?

We see how easily one can be deceived as were Adam and Eve. But it doesn't have to be that way. Each of us is able to respond to the grace of God in the proper way—by following His will. We can read and understand such plain passages as those above (John 8:32). The way we respond will be our vote. It will be our vote whether we stand with God or Satan ... our vote as to whether we will be in heaven or hell. Have YOU voted? Yes, you have. You have either looked to God's will, believed and obeyed or you have not. It is that simple. You and God know what your vote was. You know what it should be.

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contact the
39th Street Church of Christ
15331 East 39th Street
Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA
www.39thStreetChurchOfChrist.org

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by
Jack H. Williams

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