

## THE KING'S OPPOSITION

As I studied the Bible, I found another truth too. There's opposition to the reign of King Jesus, a false kingdom controlled by the evil one. Paul put it this way: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). It couldn't have been plainer. The evil one had his own political system, his own false kingdom, and it stood in opposition to the rule and reign of King Jesus. Those powers influenced so many in the world around us, people who lived as enemies of the cross. What would their end be? As Paul wrote, "Their destiny is destruction" (Phil. 3:19).

I began to understand there was a spiritual war between two competing kingdoms: the true kingdom of King Jesus and the false kingdom of the evil one. And that war was playing out in the world around me, influencing my friends, my family, my community, and my country's politics. As a follower of the true King, shouldn't I do whatever it took to bring the kingdom of God to earth as it is in heaven? Shouldn't I do my best to bring love, life, peace, and spiritual prosperity to a world of chaos and death?

I continued learning about the competing kingdoms, and as I did, I shared with anyone who'd listen. I shared it with my old running buddies, folks like Big Al Bolen, the redneck teacher from Arkansas who'd become an atheist under the influence of his university professors. I shared it with men and women who were down and out, who'd grown so dependent on government assistance that they refused to work. I shared it with women who'd had abortions and the men who'd paid for them. I shared and shared and shared. As I did, I realized just how much the war

between the kingdom of heaven and the false kingdom of the evil one was playing out in everyday politics in America.

- Through the political process the government had removed God from the public schools and given people like Big Al atheism in its place.
- Through the political process the government had legalized abortion in 1973, sanctioning the murder of millions and saddling the men and women who sought them with guilt and shame.
- Through politics America had been given a welfare system that locked its people in hopeless poverty.
- Through politics the government had liberalized sexuality, removing it from the confines of marriage.
- Through politics America had begun to call lawful what the Bible called lawlessness.

The more I paid attention, the more I saw it. The evil one—the power of this dark world—was pushing his agenda down on the American people through the democratic process. The result? We were becoming more ruthless, more brutal, and more lawless. A nation of death headed for destruction.

It all came to a head on a sweltering evening in 1978. Miss Kay and I stood on the banks of the Ouachita River and discussed my political awakening. I hadn't put it all together, but it seemed to me the war between good and evil was being fought in Washington. The battle for America's soul was being waged in the political arena. And if that were true—and I was convinced it was—it was time to understand some things, time to figure out who I was politically.

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“Could you find me a rundown of the political platforms, Miss Kay?”

“You can’t be serious, Phil,” she responded, knowing how little I’d cared for politics just months before.

“Serious as a shotgun,” I said. “As a member of the kingdom of God, I need to see which side lines up more closely with the principles of the King.”

### WHERE IS THE KING IN MODERN AMERICAN POLITICS?

These days, it’s mighty hard to find the King in our political parties, and that goes for both Republicans and Democrats. Our news cycle is dominated by partisan bickering. Both sides spin up millions of dollars through campaign contributions and gin up as much dirt as they can on the opposition. Both sides claim only they can sort out the problems that plague our country. It’s a cycle that continues election after election. But look around. Are things getting any better?

We’re more divided than ever. We’re so divided, in fact, that we choose our news outlets based on whether we’re right-wingers or left-wingers.

We’re more violent than ever, a country that routinely experiences mass shootings at the hands of demonically influenced lunatics.

We’re more immoral than ever, a country entertained by programming that contains illicit sex. (Which is to say nothing of the filth on the internet.)

The family is in decline.

Babies are being aborted.

There are riots in the streets.

What was once called evil is now called good.

And if all of this isn't bad enough, so many of our politicians, the folks who are supposed to be "for the people," fall prey to corruption. Though they're supposed to represent the people, they make a fortune from the business of politics.

What's the problem?

*Listen up, America.*

There's a vast difference between the Supreme Court and the Supreme Being. The King's laws for living supersede the laws of any man-made rules and regulations. What's more, the King's laws have eternity riding on them. But the sad truth is, though we were once a country who did their best to follow the King, we've traded God's laws for laws fashioned in the shape of our own desires. "We the People" have cast our votes for the politics of self-indulgence, self-interest, and self-gratification. We've voted for the very things that steal our freedoms, kill our society, and destroy our country. And we did all these things without checking in with King Jesus first.

Yes, in our delusion, we've decided we're capable of governing ourselves without reference to the policies of King Jesus, policies established in love. And man-made laws based on our finite judgment have only ever led us astray. There's good news, though. As followers of Christ, we've been given the antidote to America's soul sickness. What's the antidote? Jesus Politics.

Jesus—God with Us—came in the midst of an ancient political quagmire. He made his home with the Jewish people, a people who were under the left thumb of godless political rulers (the Romans) and the right thumb of God-forgetting religious leaders. In that

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broken political system, he announced the truth. He was the King, and aligning ourselves with his ways would lead to peace, prosperity, and a full life, even in the middle of so much brokenness. That's not all, though. Jesus also tasked us to pray that his kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. And in addition to praying, he asked us to bring the kingdom into the world around us through every means possible, including, if possible, political means.

In this book, we'll explore the problems facing America and the King's policies as to each of those problems. I'll offer the King's declarations about those problems and the declarations that make up his Kingdom Manifesto. Then I'll share how you can use your vote to advance the Kingdom Manifesto.

## AMERICAN POLITICS ARE NOT JESUS POLITICS

In 1978, Miss Kay brought me a stack of papers on the policy positions of Democrats and Republicans. I studied them and tried my best to determine which party might advance the policies of the King, promote the policies of the King, and protect the policies of the King. I knew there were good Democrats, of course, men like President Carter who proclaimed himself born-again and taught Sunday school. But as I examined his party, I noticed how so many pushed hard against the Scriptures, how they relied on the government more than God. They wanted the King out of the public schools, and they wanted to replace him with an atheistic philosophy. They promoted the liberalization of sex and treated the orgasm as the pinnacle of the human experience. The doors to abortion on demand had been opened by the Supreme Court,

and many Democrats vowed to protect the right of a mother to terminate her child. Sure, some were more conservative on the issues of morality and sexuality, but for the most part, they were described well by the Scriptures as “God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil” (Rom. 1:30).

Then there were the conservatives, folks who believed in smaller government and personal responsibility. They weren’t interested in taxing me to death, though I was dirt-poor at the time and didn’t have anything besides beans and appaloosa catfish to tax. Republicans seemed to promote religious liberty and moral living, and a great number of them pledged allegiance to King Jesus. They hoped to overturn legalized abortion. They held to biblical standards for what constitutes a family. The conservatives wanted America to remain rooted in the ideals this country was founded on, namely, ideals of faith, freedom, and family. To be fair, they weren’t perfect. Many didn’t have a great track record of caring for the poor. More than a few were greedy or immoral in their own right. Some were a little too cozy with lobbyists and special-interest groups. But as I began to understand the direction of their party, I was convinced.

After reading through the party platforms and stewing on them for a few days, I told Miss Kay, “Well, I guess I’m a Republican.” She nodded. She’d read those platforms and made up her mind days before.

“I guess I am too, Phil,” she said.

In the years that followed, I did my best to understand the goings-on in American politics. I kept up with the party platforms and weighed them against the principles of the kingdom. Best as I could, I voted in alignment with those principles. And truth be told, I never thought my opinions about politics would count for

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much in the public square. I figured I'd live my life as a quiet river rat, scratching out a cornbread living as a duck call salesman, and doing my best to influence the direction of American politics from the grass roots. I didn't expect I'd be on a television show that'd become a worldwide phenomenon. I didn't know people would give a rip about my thoughts on politics. But as a result of our family's success through *Duck Dynasty*, the unthinkable became a reality. The King gave me a platform to share about his kingdom. As a result, I've spoken at certain political events, such as the Conservative Political Action Conference, and stumped for some Republican candidates. Each time I speak, I make it clear: I'm more interested in advancing policies that align with the kingdom of heaven than I am in advancing the agenda of any political party.

So no matter what side of the political aisle you choose, know this: *if you are a member of the kingdom, King Jesus makes demands on your life.* This includes the political candidates you support, the political groups you give your money to, and the votes you cast. So as for me and my house, we:

- Donate to prolife and pro-religious liberty policy groups
- Cast our votes for those who side with and advance the politics of the King
- Share the good news of the King with the people in our lives in the hope they might become members of the kingdom and might use their voices and votes for King Jesus

Will you join me in advancing the policies of King Jesus? In order to do it, we'll have to know and understand King Jesus' positions on the issues of the day. Do you know them?

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In this book, I'll share what I've learned in seven decades of kingdom living. I'll share how we can turn from the politics of self-indulgence, self-interest, and self-gratification—namely, the politics that have dominated our democracy for the majority of my lifetime. We'll see how the followers of King Jesus have the antidote for the political ills of our country. And what's that antidote? *Jesus Politics*.

So come with me as we look at the problems facing America and explore how we might address them as members of the kingdom. Explore a new way of thinking and acting, a way that follows the declarations of the King. Adopt Jesus Politics as your manifesto. If enough of us do, maybe we can turn this country around. Maybe we can live to see a country that once again proclaims “In the King we trust.”