

## **WHY WERE THE APOSTLES NON-POLITICAL? (Part-four of a ten-part study)**

In 1 Corinthians chapter two, the apostle Paul establishes a powerful and clear-cut distinction between the secular and the spiritual, as it pertains to the Christian's relationship toward the lost and fallen world in which we live. In vv1-5, he presents the contrast which exists between the wisdom of this world and the power of God at work in Paul's ministry, on behalf of the individuals he was seeking to reach with the gospel. Then in vv6-9, he wants his Corinthian readership and us to know, that the power of God possesses a wisdom of its own which is beyond the comprehension of the secular world. Specifically, he points to the governing authorities who were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, where we read the following in vv7-8 –

**“ . . . but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. . . ”**

In concluding the chapter in vv9-16, he reminds all of us as followers of Christ, that we have access to this far superior wisdom of God, as a result of the Savior who makes it all possible. Yet what is often overlooked is the phrase which Paul uses in v6 – “not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away.” Without ruling out an occasional exception in the form of a ruler who comes to know Christ, Paul generalizes about ruling authority; declaring that they do not possess the wisdom of God, but are characterized by the wisdom of this world. Furthermore, these worldly-wise governing authorities are “passing away.” That expression speaks of futility; as it pertains to their authority being nullified one day. In other words, they cannot be counted upon for contributing to the furtherance of the gospel and have already proven such by putting to death the Savior of the world. This is how Paul viewed governing authority and places them squarely within the ungodly world system controlled by Satan and his demon host. He also tells us a little later in this epistle that we should be careful how we engage with this evil world system, since it too is “passing away.” Notice what he says in 1 Corinthians 7:31 –

**“ . . . and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.”**

A different word in the Greek is used here. It is more of a generic term that speaks of something that is just passing along and which eventually fades away. Putting the two statements together, we can rightfully conclude that Christians should not be seeking a cooperative relationship with the governing authorities of this present world system, in order to advance the cause of Christ. Why? With an extremely rare exception, those authorities are not in possession of the wisdom of God, they generally demonstrate an animosity toward the things of God, and will be replaced one day when Christ returns to earth in order to establish the Kingdom of God. Their temporary and relatively brief existence serves the positive purpose of maintaining law and order, so as to prevent the societies of this world from completely devolving into chaos. This why Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:1-6 that we should pray for those authorities; for their salvation, since Christ also died for them, and that they would fulfill the purpose for which they have been ordained of God. *But can we agree that these two statements by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:6-8; 7:31, point us in the very opposite direction to which contemporary Evangelical Christianity in America is headed?*