

ELECTION 2016: A SPIRITUAL ALLEGORY

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As I write these lines, America is still taking in what took place on November 8 (2016). The election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States is monumental in its historical significance. Many are comparing this surprising upset to the vote by British citizens to leave the European Union, a phenomenon known as “Brexit.” It is not my purpose here to offer political insights or commentary, and it is most certainly not to take a political position regarding what took place in the United States on November 8. I am, rather, gripped with the parallels between what took place in this election and what is taking place in the Kingdom of God in our day.

As we ponder the allegorical significance of this election, let us consider just how this election caught this nation by surprise. News commentators were stunned, and left without an explanation as to what happened. All of the polls pointed to an easy path to victory for the establishment candidate, Hillary Clinton. Even the Trump campaign was surprised by the election results in some of the states. Establishment politicians did not take Donald Trump seriously in his bid for

president. No one thought he would throw his hat in the ring. When he did, no one believed that he would survive long in the primary process, let alone win his party's nomination.

Establishment politicians and news commentators had a curious response to candidate Trump upon his successful bid for the Republican nomination. His success was explained largely as due to the large slate of contenders that divided the Republican base to such an extent that Trump's extreme fringe base was able to swoop in and take control. Most of the professional pundits still did not take him seriously as a candidate. He was vilified by his opponents as "unfit" to lead this country. His supporters were dubbed "a basket of deplorables." Donald Trump and his ardent supporters were characterized as a threat to world peace and to the American way of life. Those most strongly opposed to Trump fomented fear that a Trump presidency would bring racial and religious hatred to minority populations, all in an attempt to discourage people from voting for Trump. Those more kindly disposed to Trump were sympathetic in their sentiments for what he was trying to achieve, but regarded his attempts as well-intentioned, perhaps, but misguided or at the very least unrealistic in the face of the power of establishment politics.

There were, however, a handful of voices in the wilderness who saw something taking place in the social, cultural and political landscape that others could not see. These prophetic voices spoke of a groundswell of discontent with politics-as-usual that would take the political establishment by surprise. They contended that the models that conventional polls used to predict the outcome of this presidential race were faulty because they failed to recognize that there were many "secret" Trump supporters out there who were not willing to express their views to pollsters. They would wait to express their views on election day. These prophetic voices were largely ignored or vilified, not unlike true prophetic voices throughout history.

Then came November 8, 2016. The coverage of the election began with all of the projections displayed on large electronic maps. Hillary had most of the electoral votes with a "very narrow path to victory for Donald Trump"—or so we were

told. The results began to come in. At first, there were no real surprises. Then it looked like Florida might go to Trump. Pundits began to scratch their heads a bit. Then it was North Carolina going to Trump. More head scratching. Then voters began to do the unthinkable. They started to penetrate the “blue wall” by taking first Ohio, then Indiana, then Pennsylvania and other rust belt states. Suddenly the demeanor of the pundits began to change. They were at a loss to explain what was happening. More partisan commentators could not hide their dismay over what was taking place. Donald Trump was being elected President of the United States and there was nothing that they could do about it. Clinton supporters were bewildered. Many were seen to be sobbing, wringing their hands. It was all slipping through their fingers. It was not merely that the Republican Party candidate was winning an election. Power was being transferred from an establishment political elite who operated according to familiar rules and procedures to a populist-based movement that represented something that was unknown. How could this possibly have happened? Political pundits will be trying to explain this for years to come.

But what does all of this have to do with the Kingdom of God? Scripture sets forth a principle that I believe is important for us to grasp if we are to appreciate what the events in our nation signify spiritually. That principle is that God will first bring things forth in the natural as a shadow and a type of what He is about to do in the spiritual realm. The apostle Paul writes,

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:44-46; NKJV).

And so it is that the story of the Hebrew people is itself a shadow and a type of the spiritual journey that is in store for the people of God. I have written elsewhere of the ways in which the Israelites’ journey out of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the Promised Land is the story of our own journey out of

Egypt, our wilderness journey, and our own preparation to enter the land of promise that God has prepared for us.¹

Just as the natural experiences of the ancient Israelites speak to spiritual realities even for today, I believe that the principle that Paul sets forth in I Corinthians is dramatized in events our day as well. That is to say, just as He did in days of old, God takes us through experiences today in the natural that point to spiritual realities that are taking place, or that are about to take place. Election 2016 is such an event in our natural world that represents kingdom realities that the Lord would have His sons discern.

The Allegory

The actors that took part in this political election, and the parts that they played, are analogous to what is taking place spiritually in the Kingdom of God today. Let us consider each part of the allegory respectively.

The Hidden Electorate

Neither the political establishment, nor the mainstream media were able to see the growing voter base that was being built around the candidacy of Donald Trump, energized in large part from groundswell of discontent with establishment politics that was growing throughout the country. This was largely a “hidden” support that was developing for Donald Trump; a support that was missed by the most reliable of the scientific polls.

There is a parallel spiritual movement emerging today which has also been largely hidden. This movement is comprised of a growing body of believers who have been called of God to a Kingdom purpose that defies understanding by those who are immersed in an old wineskin paradigm of the church age, and are devoted to a religious system. Despite the fact that they are not understood by the religious establishment, some of these hidden believers continue to function within institutional church structures, even as they are misunderstood by fellow congregants and church leaders. They are misunderstood because the message

¹ Charles Faupel, “The Wilderness.” http://www.wordforthebride.net/Writings/The_Wilderness.htm. 2015 .

that has been birthed in them is of a kingdom found *within* the true temple of which they are, wherein, Christ and Christ alone is Head. Their ultimate loyalty is only to Him, and because of this, these post-church age believers cannot blindly follow any human leader. These do not comfortably fit in a programmed church structure, but must be responsive to the Word of God that has come alive within them. For this reason, they are often seen as troublemakers by those who do not have spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear the Spirit of God Who is being manifest through them. They are often regarded as nuisances at best by those who are responsible for the operation of the bureaucratic church system.

There are also many, however, who have been called out of the organized church system altogether. These who have been called out have also been greatly misunderstood. Just as the motives for Trump supporters were maligned, so have the motives of those who have been called out of institutional Christianity. Often, it is a mistaken belief that they have been disgruntled for some reason and have left their churches in hurt and anger. Some have even questioned the salvation of these called-out-ones, believing that to leave the church (i.e. organized religion) is to abandon their relationship with Christ. For those who have been truly called to the Kingdom agenda that God is now bringing forth, nothing could be further from the truth. My experience tells me that most of those who make up this true *ecclesia* (called out ones) have a deep love for the fellowships from which they were called out and often experience deep sorrow in leaving those fellowships, even as they know that they are being obedient to the Lord, and can do nothing else.

Donald Trump

The figurative leader of the political movement culminating in the 2016 election is Donald Trump. Donald Trump is not just another presidential candidate. His successful candidacy did not represent merely a shift in power from Democrats to Republicans. Donald Trump represents a major challenge to the entrenched political establishment in Washington. Indeed, Trump represents a challenge to the agenda of the *global* establishment that has been asserting itself over the past half century at an amazing pace. He was a man whom the hidden electorate

could get behind, support, and call their leader. Their loyalty is not to a political party. It is to Donald Trump, and the policy agendas that he represents.

Similarly, the true ecclesia of God have a loyalty only to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom agenda. Their loyalty is not to a denomination, nor even ultimately to a local church fellowship. Indeed, they have and are willing to suffer persecution at the hands of the religious establishment, just as their Master said they would. Jesus and Him alone is their head—their commander-in-chief.

The Political Establishment

The final actor, collectively, that I want to consider is the political establishment. Establishment politicians, both Democrat and Republican, grew increasingly uncomfortable with Donald Trump. Indeed, they became overtly hostile to him when he won the Republican nomination. First, they began to minimize his plausibility as a candidate. Then, when he won the nomination for the Republican party, they began to distance themselves from him. Some, who were in fear of their own “down ballot” candidacies, openly repudiated him. Democratic establishment candidates were even more openly hostile, charging both Trump and his followers as being racists, bigots, intolerant and, yes, *deplorable*.

The established, organized church system is no less dismissive of the emerging, though still largely hidden, ecclesia of God. Organized religion is desperately seeking to retain its false and misleading hegemony over a religio-cultural enterprise that it dares to call “the body of Christ.” Because of its need to dominate, it cannot recognize the true ecclesia of God, whose allegiance is only to Christ Himself—whether they are functioning within the church system or have been called out of it. The religious system of our day has slandered this remnant that I am calling the true ecclesia of God in much the same way Trump the establishment slandered supporters of Donald Trump. These called-out-ones have been called troublemakers, disturbed, deceived and even heretics because they do not align themselves with the religious powers that be. They have been dismissed and written off. In a very real sense, they have been “left for dead.” I would argue that, indeed, they *are* the embodied “dying seed” of this vision of God’s heart.

In Conclusion

God is not deterred by the failure of the church system to recognize those whom He has chosen to fulfill his Kingdom agenda on the earth. He is moving among these faithful ones without the benefit of paid clergy, comfortable churches and pews, or sophisticated church programs. He is moving among a people who are connected to one another in the Spirit, often communicating only through email, telephone, or possibly in and among what they would call worldly venues or maybe only through indirect communication through mutual friends and connections. Formal organization is not necessary for these called-out-ones to recognize that they are connected with one another to make up a living organism with Christ as their Head and Commander-in-Chief.

Oh yes, dear friend, Christ is forming His body, and the body that He is forming does not fit within traditional religious “boxes.” God is now moving this body to speak forth His Word and act in obedience to that Word. As this takes place, we who are part of this living organism that is coming into maturity will become ever more threatening to the religious establishment out of which many of us came. But this is a Movement that cannot be held back. He, whose resources are far more vast than a Donald Trump—or for that matter, more vast than the global (religious) elite that would come against His people—is orchestrating a Movement that will ultimately change the world.

Please understand that I am not suggesting that the political movement ushering in the presidency of Donald Trump *is* this move of God. And I am certainly not suggesting that Donald Trump, who is the representative leader of this contemporary political movement in our time, can be compared morally or spiritually to our Head, King Jesus. This political movement which has culminated in the totally surprising election of Donald Trump as president of the United States is but a picture—an allegory—for what God is doing in the spiritual realm. As significant as this historic election might be in the political history of the United States, the real story is the Kingdom drama that is unfolding through the underground ecclesia of God in our day.