

Decisions are Life Changing

Decisions! Decisions!
 Decisions!

We make them all the time. Some are good, some are bad and some we would rather forget.

I think of a young man who purchased two theatre tickets so that he could invite this pretty girl to accompany him, which led to 50 plus years of fulfilled married life. Of this Scottish lady who invited me to come and listen to a speaker, which introduced me to the Real Jesus of the bible. My turning down a job offer in London when I was made redundant, because I thought God would provide a better one for me here which led me in new and interesting directions that I wouldn't have even thought of and a very recent public one of Angelina Jolie who underwent surgery to prevent cancer which I am not in a position to comment upon..

Each decision was a change in direction.

Our decisions are what make us and each time we defer a decision we surrender some of our God-given talents. In 1981 I voted 'outside the box' and was surprised to find that I had voted in the first SDP member

of Parliament, Shirley Williams and she has continued to serve this country well ever since. It was a 'brave decision as I had been brought up to vote in a particular way as many were in those days.

Whilst politically we may be more 'open' now, there are still many areas of our life that we have fixed ideas, simply because we cannot be bothered to investigate further. I had been brought up as a 'Christian', but this involved ritual and doing the right things. I am forever grateful for that Scottish lady inviting me to listen to a speaker explaining the bible to me. Hearing this and other Christian speakers opened my mind to what the scripture were actually saying to us and enabled me to come to the point of making the most important decision of my life which was a real life changing experience which I have never regretted.

We are being asked at this crucial time in history to decide who will lead the country for the next five years and this needs thought and research to find out who will serve us best.

- YES
- NO
- MAYBE



There are sources of information to help you with this and some web links are available on our web site, but the more important question is the one Jesus asked of Simon Peter, "Who do you say I am". Simon Peter's answer was a revelation – "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". It is a question that Jesus asks us today and the answer can lead to the most life changing decision in your life. Can you answer it? Have you explored the facts that will show you the real truth of the gospel message?



John 7:24

"Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

NIV

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she accidentally caught the next car and scraped the side doors.

Honesty

Recently our youngest daughter, Joanne, had been to the hairdressers and returned to her parked car. As she was leaving a parking space, she accidentally caught the next car and scraped the side doors. The driver of the car she scraped was not around. Therefore, Joanne returned to the hairdressers and asked for a pen and paper and left a note on the damaged car windscreen with her contact details. The people in the hairdressers could not believe that she was so honest.

Joanne received a telephone call some time later by a man who owned the damaged car. He had arranged for a mobile scratch repair company to look at the damage only to be told that it was too extensive to repair. Consequently, he said he would take it into the local dealership for a full assessment of the cost to repair the side of his car.

Our second daughter, Andrea, had a friend that had his own mobile repair company. Joanne asked the owner of the damaged car if this friend could look at the damage before involving the dealership.

When the friend assessed the car, he found no real damage and what was thought to be a scrape was a mark left by Joanne's car paint that was easily removed. The owner of the car in question was pleased with the work and accepted the repair as satisfactory. When Joanne asked the friend, how much he wanted for carrying out the repair, he said that it did not take long and as she was honest in 'owning up' he would not charge her.

The Bible states: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."- (James 4:17).

It also states: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." - (Phil. 4:8).

Perhaps we should think on the fact that 'our actions are determined by what is in our hearts' and 'our actions have an impact on others'.

Joanne's honesty, although not intentional, appears to have had a positive impact with the people in the hairdressers, the owner of the car that she bumped, and the friend who owned the mobile repair business.

'An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips'

Prov 24:26 TNIV

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.....**Acorns**

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You think you're too small to matter. If so you have never been in bed with a mosquito.

The best Biblical type of governance is democracy. However democracy only works well when leaders and people follow Biblical practices. Democracy gives freedom for all to express their faith, protects personal and corporate integrity and religious freedom. What happens when national faith declines and democracy weakens? Does God control the affairs of men under all circumstances?

God is absolute, eternal, infinite and the supreme ruler of all. In contrast modern philosophies, such as post modernism, say there is no objective truth. Then what can we hope for?

In modern times disasters such as tsunamis and earthquakes are multiplying, terrorism grows and family problems become more serious. Public biblically based explanations for these events seem to be mostly absent. Has the church at large become misguided, light and shallow, even frivolous in its public statements?

The Bible says, "God removes and sets up kings and The Most High rules the Kingdoms of men and gives them to whoever He wills". Reference Daniel chapter 2 verse 20 and 4 verse 17. In contrast Psalm 2 verses 2 to 4 says "the kings of the Earth and the rulers take counsel together and set

themselves up against The Lord but He who sits in the Heavens laughs".

When rulers follow their own way and ignore God He allows them, and their supporters, to suffer the consequences until such time as something changes or ultimately local judgement follows. When the whole World comes under Global governance and The Lord is ignored then Worldwide judgement will follow. God is never ultimately mocked.

Scripture is full of examples showing the rise and fall of

Does it matter if we vote in the this election? What has the Biblical God got to do with elections?

nations, empires and individuals. The Divine principle is that people are judged or in some cases tested or matured by God in accordance with the degree of knowledge of the Truth they already have or could have had if they had searched for it.

In relation to empires the Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and future end times Global Empire are prominently featured in Scripture. The books of Daniel and Revelation in particular, amongst others can be mentioned. In modern history, both Napoleon and Hitler had worldwide ambitions but were thwarted because God had a different plan.

Israel is prominent in history because. God raised them up to demonstrate his nature, ability and power, through them, for the rest of the world to see. They failed and during the Church Age following the

Our Pastor writes

Resurrection of Jesus, Israel has been side lined, suffering under Divine discipline. However as we approach the end times (when Jesus will return) God is bringing Israel back into their original land. Unfortunately they are in 'unbelief*' and much hardship lies in store but they will ultimately be blessed by God.

The book of Job provides one example of how God interacts in individual lives. Two human atrocities and two natural disasters (a lightning storm and a hurricane) were used to deal with Job.

It is often said that a nation gets the leaders it deserves. This principle occurs throughout scripture.

What about us today? Should we go out and vote and if so who should we vote for? (We are not answering this second question.)

Romans chapter 13 verses 1 to 7 indicates that Christians should yield to authority, where it does not directly conflict with God's word (Acts 5 verse 29). However in a democracy Christians are part of the authority, hence both yielding to authority and wielding it.

Our minds are frequently diverted by one of two extremes. Either misery and suffering make us think that there is no good God worth trusting or pleasure and prosperity make us think we have all we need so that God is irrelevant. However James chapter 4 verse 14 says, "You even do not know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes".

The wages of sin is death but



the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans chapter 6 verse 23.

As we still have democratic rights we should exercise them. Was it Burke who said something like "the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is when good men do nothing" This is very similar to Psalm 12 verse 8. "The wicked proul on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men".

"Many are the plans in the mind of a man but it is the purpose of The Lord that will stand". Proverbs 16 verse 33



* Unbelief—Israel has become a secular state and largely ignores it's biblical origins.

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Equipping Christians for the General Election

engage15 is an initiative
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active engagement in the
General Election. It provides a
range of resources to enable
Christian thinking about im-
portant issues and voter par-
ticipation.

www.engage15.org.uk/

One potato, two potato, three potato, four...

Does the prospect of voting in a General Election seem a bit like the old playground method of selecting team members? We often hear comments like these:

"It's a waste of time voting."

"Politicians are all the same; they are only in it for themselves."

"My vote won't make any difference."



Unlike the USA we do not get to vote for a president, the outcome of which party gets to govern is hard to predict and is largely effected by marginal constituencies where there is the possibility of a change. I would like to suggest, though, that there are some very good reasons why we all should vote.

1. Universal suffrage is a hard won right that should be valued. One only has to look at the queues at polling stations in newly democratised countries to see that it is a privilege not to be taken for granted.
2. We are all ready to complain and criticise; our vote is at least one opportunity to participate in the process.
3. A higher turnout would give a truer picture of the people's view and the winning party would have a stronger mandate.
4. Recent examples of abuses of privilege by MP's have probably resulted in cynicism, but many of our representatives are committed to public service in a costly way. Opting out of the democratic process will do nothing to improve accountability.
5. First and foremost an MP is a representative for the local area, most do valuable work in helping their constituents, both as individuals and as a community.

If you are weary of politics, and much of the posturing and rhetoric is wearisome, you can at least look at your local candidates and see who seems to be the best person to represent your area. If you have concerns about specific issues the voting records of sitting MP's can be seen on websites such as;

[They Work for You.com](http://TheyWorkforYou.com).

If, after considering your options, you cannot in all conscience support anyone you can always write "None of the above" on your ballot paper. Those who advocate not taking part in the Election are promoting a counsel of despair; whatever may be lacking in our political system is far outweighed by its advantages.

Winston Churchill is reported as saying:

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the other forms that have been tried."



REFLECTIONS ON ELECTION RESULTS. LESSONS FROM HISTORY.

United Kingdom. Turnout in UK fell from 77% in 1992 to 71% in 1997 to 59% in 2001. Turnout rose modestly to 61% in 2005 and 65% in 2010 with Conservative percentage at 36.1%.

Some key Elections. 1906. Conservative to Liberal.
1945. Churchill to Labour. 1979. Labour to Thatcher.
1997. Conservative to Blair. Major shifts occurred in all these cases.

Germany 1928-1932. Turnouts were about and often exceeded 80%.
1928. Nazi percentage vote =2.6%. 1930. Nazi percentage vote=18.3%.
1932. Nazi percentage vote=37.3% . (July). 1932. Nazi percentage vote=33.1%.
(November)

Prior to the final election Hitler was made Chancellor and set about making far-reaching changes which despite the fall in support from July to November in 1932, he was unable to be stopped from achieving his objectives of total despotic control.

How easy it would be to lose our democratic rights and freedoms.

<http://www.engage15.org.uk/>

