

August 24/25, 2024

"Citizens of Another Place"

Pastor John Dickson



## **SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.**

### **2024 Challenge:** Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

**August:** Read Jeremiah to see how people, situations and events point to Jesus

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## Day 1 John 17:20-23 | Politics and Unity

**My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.** John 17:20-21

The Roman Empire occupies and rules Israel. They do not tolerate any kings or rulers other than Caesar. Yet Jesus *is* king. He clarifies to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world...my kingdom is from another place" ([John 18:36](#)), and Pilate finds him innocent of insurrection. All of Jesus's followers are citizens of Jesus's spiritual kingdom. Therefore, he is king over all aspects of believers' lives, including political beliefs. Jesus wants his followers to be united in him.

In our *Politics and Unity* series, we have learned that although we may have strong political leanings, our allegiance is to God's Kingdom first. Thus, our actions and behaviors toward each other have eternal consequences. Pastor Aaron Buer has five hopes for our church during the current political season. 1) No matter who we vote for, we feel welcome at Ada Bible Church. 2) We see politics through the lens of Jesus and not the other way around. 3) We are genuinely curious why a fellow Christian holds different political beliefs than ours. 4) We invite God to challenge our views. 5) The words of Jesus bind us together as a church.

**TODAY:** Consider the things you are learning in this series that will help you navigate this election season with Jesus as your king. Pray through the five hopes. Ask God to grow you and our church in these areas. If you missed a sermon, you can review it [HERE](#).

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read [Jeremiah 38-39](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider how Jesus lifts us out of the pit ([Psalm 40:2](#)).

## Day 2 Philippians 3:20-21 | Citizens of Another Place

**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Philippians 3:20

Citizenship is a central concern in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. Philippi was a Roman colony that got special benefits from the emperor—tax breaks, land grants for retired soldiers and protection. Everyone living there wanted to be a Roman citizen because of the advantages. Paul is concerned with Jesus followers becoming citizens of their time and place by putting what is culturally desirable first. He tells them they are citizens of a far more powerful kingdom with much better benefits. Paul wants them to view citizenship in heaven as more glorious than Rome and the gospel as their constitution.

Citizenship in the United States also comes with prestige and benefits. Yet our guiding constitution should be the gospel, not the cultural moment of our time and place. During this political season, we are called to conduct

ourselves in a manner worthy of our true citizenship ([Philippians 1:27](#)). This week, we will see that citizens of God's Kingdom should be devoted to the progress of the gospel and the practice of love in our lives. Our behavior should give others a glimpse of what heaven will be like.

**TODAY:** With open hands, pray for a heart that is open to the gospel being the constitution by which you live. Ask God to help you be concerned with standing firm in unity with other citizens of God's Kingdom.

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read [Jeremiah 40-42](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

## Day 3 Philippians 1:1-7 | Progress of the Gospel

**In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.** Philippians 1:4-5

The gospel is the only message that saves people and transforms them. The Philippian church understands this and invests in the spread of the gospel. From the time Paul first preached in Philippi to his imprisonment in Rome (AD 50-60) they have encouraged and financially supported him. These people are his long-distance partners in the message of God's grace.

There is no political message that is more significant than the gospel message. It's easy to think the most important thing going on in America is who will become the next president. Political ads drive that message home. While current politics are important, our real hope is found in the gospel. A good question to ask ourselves is: do we spend more time advocating for the gospel than our politics? If we're more concerned about political platforms and issues, we may be putting national citizenship ahead of citizenship in heaven.

**TODAY:** Consider how important the gospel is to you. If asked, can you tell someone what the gospel is? If you're unsure and need help, watch [The Gospel and Your Story](#) series on Right Now Media. (Get your free Right Now Media account [HERE](#).)

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read [Jeremiah 43-45](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

## Day 4 Philippians 1:12-18 | Opposition

**Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.** Philippians 1:12-13

Paul is under house arrest in Rome when he writes to the Philippians. He was unjustly imprisoned for preaching the gospel and spends two years in a rented house guarded by a Roman soldier. Being imprisoned doesn't quiet him. It appears Paul shares the gospel with whoever will listen—imperial guards and those who visit him ([Acts 28:3-32](#)). He writes, "And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear" ([Philippians 1:14](#)). Paul's example encourages fellow Christians in Rome to share their beliefs in the center of the Roman empire.

Political, cultural and physical opposition to the gospel doesn't necessarily hinder its progress. Often, the opposite happens, as exemplified by Paul's imprisonment. He shows Jesus followers in Rome that even though they are afraid, good things will come from sharing the gospel. We often become afraid of sharing our faith or living out our Christian beliefs when they are counter-cultural. It's just easier to go along with the norm. But we can take our fears to God, like Paul, and trust him to do good things.

**TODAY:** Ask God to remind you of his power and faithfulness as you listen to the Ada Bible Worship Team sing “The Solid Rock.” Focus on the lyrics, “On Christ the solid rock I stand,” and “I wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read [Jeremiah 46-49](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider the plea for a healing balm and how Jesus is the one who heals our sin.

## Day 5 Philippians 1:9-11 | Practice of Love

**And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.**

Philippians 1:9

Paul prays the Philippians will have even more love. It isn't that they don't have love. But he wants them to gain a deeper insight into practicing God's love toward each other. It's possible Paul was remembering Jesus's statement, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples...” ([John 13:34-35](#)). How Christians behave toward each other shows the world something about Jesus.

Our love for God and the gospel will move us to love those right in front of us. Paul's letter warns against putting conviction before compassion and teaches us to live by two divine aspects of our true citizenship: the progress of the gospel and the practice of love. In a previous message, Pastor Aaron Buer taught us three ways to show love to those we may disagree with politically by saying: 1) “How did I come across?” 2) “I forgive you.” 3) “Help me understand.” Treating each other with love and respect shows the world Jesus's love.

**TODAY:** Think about the way you respond to those who disagree with you politically. If you aren't sure how you come across, ask someone you trust. If you see the need for improvement, humbly confess your need to God. Then, ask for his forgiveness and help to grow.

**JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:** Read [Jeremiah 50-52](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider how Jesus said the people were sheep without a shepherd ([Mark 6:34](#)), but he is the good shepherd ([John 10:11](#)).