

What does the
Bible say about

Change In Government?



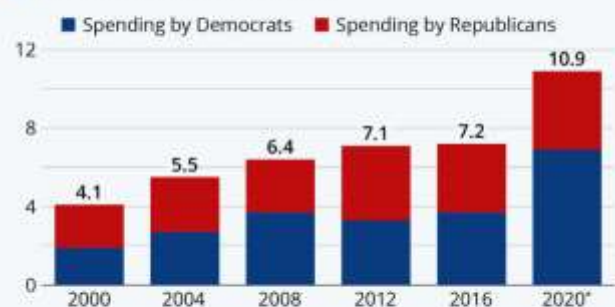
This year in 2024 has been a big year for elections across the world.

Maybe people are fatigued with politics after all this, and also here in this country the UK, it has been all consuming in the media. The

long winded election campaigns, which the various political parties conduct, as they attempt to persuade the public that they are the people to vote for. Huge sums of money are spent, effectively wasted money which could be spent on far better causes than on adverts on side of busses, or by the roadside and in the media with great sweeping promises being made and huge effort being made to undermine and rubbish the opposing parties' leaders and so on.

2020 Election Spending Highest Ever Recorded

Total spending on the U.S. congressional and presidential elections (in billion U.S. dollars)

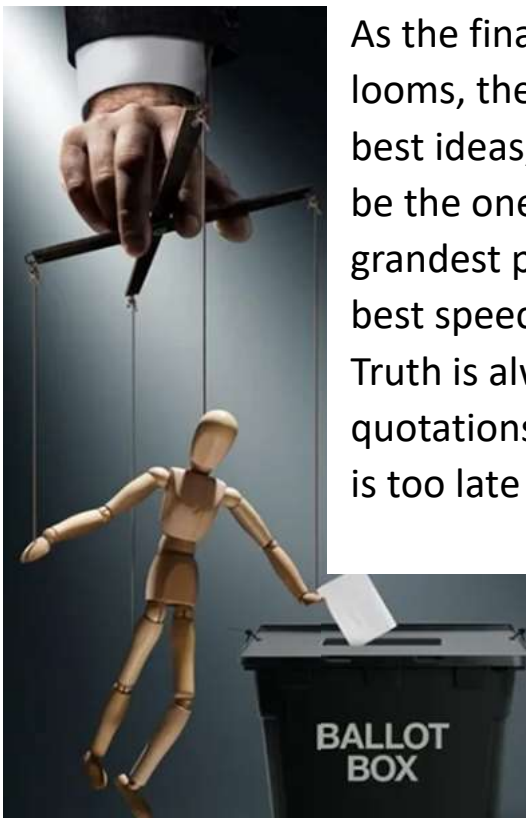


* All filings available as of Oct 25, 2020
Includes spending by presidential candidates, congressional candidates, parties and outside spending. Adjusted for inflation
Source: OpenSecrets.org



This can be seen in the US election campaign as we speak. The news agencies are full of the latest election tricks of the of selected candidates of the democrat and republican parties. The United States the most powerful nation in the world has to choose between two, - supposedly the very best the US can produce, to become the most powerful people on the planet. But the behaviour and frailty of human nature, the weakness of the selection process, has been exposed like never before, as one side a convicted felon, a criminal convicted of fraud, and the other, candidate with supposedly the best possible credentials – being the existing president, resigning from the race, for not being fit to lead after all!

The whole election process exposes the deep divides in society, two sets of ideology, not particularly different in the great scheme of things, instead of uniting a nation, enhances tribal tendencies in a society all trying to protect their own interests.



As the final day of campaigning passes, and election day looms, the leader chosen will not be the one with the best ideas, or the one who is the most moral, but it will be the one who convinced the most people, made the grandest promises, played the best tactics, pitched the best speeches to the right audiences at the right time. Truth is always a casualty, statistics are exaggerated, quotations are mangled, funds are misused but by then it is too late – the electorate have spoken.

It is the voice of the people, this is the leader they have chosen, and who has been voted for. But what choice did they really have? It is in the end, an expose, of a cynical electorate who have seen that politicians do not have the answers and cannot solve the problems

which society faces.

In one of our recent presentations we looked at the Bible and democracy. Democracy is the type of government the people want. To be ruled by the people. People want accountability, and a choice, to choose their own leaders to lead as they require. People do not want to be stuck with a ruler they cannot influence, or for the ruler to have too much power – take Kim Jong Un of North Korea for example. As time passes, fashion and ideas change. Society decides it wants to relax standards, requiring changes in the law, hence new ideas are adopted by politicians who want to please the people to get voted into power. Ultimately in a democratic society, politicians are just a product of society. How the society behaves is how politicians behave, although hypocritically, people expect their public figures to somehow behave to a higher standard than them. Society is always changing and shifting. The majority of nations in the world have adopted some form of democratic government. But whether people like it or not, rulers whether kings, sheiks, ayatollahs, oligarchs, tyrants, presidents, prime ministers all are human, failing, feeble, mortal, and subject also to change. If society has decoupled from a set of laws and values which stand the test of time, such as the Bible, change is very frequent, and subject to the whims of fashion, or the ideas of a few or even one person. This is because society can never get away from human nature. This flighty nature of human beings who like to govern themselves is described in the Bible – as being

Jude 1:12-13...clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And in James we can read that those who are without faith are those who are

James 1:6 like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed around by the wind. And an angry sea is not easy to control. In Isaiah we can read - Isaiah 57:20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

The shallowness behind the decisions of the electorate, those who have voted, is often reflected in their own selfish reasons, but sometimes even for silly reasons: what candidates look like, or if they can pronounce their

surname, their skin colour and so on. Sometimes people vote tactically for someone simply to stop someone they really dislike getting elected. But one common answer seen in electoral surveys is “I voted for change”. When this is thought about, it is also a silly reason. In fact quite crass, as if change for its own sake would alter anything! Change for what? For the worse? Just roll the dice. That is in effect what politics has become. Indeed, it was one of the Labour parties main catch phrases to the population during their election campaign... Vote for Change!



But no real change

We recall what we read in Proverbs 24:21: *My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:*

As if somehow shuffling out the mouthpiece politicians, for another set of puppets can in anyway alter the way society has developed, which is manipulated by big business, the media companies, fashion and the mega corporations.

The man on the street has no real choice at all. The Lord Jesus talked about change. In line with the modern saying – a new broom sweeps clean – The Lord Jesus told a story in Luke 11: 24-26 how a man suffered unclean thoughts, after effort in expelling them, seven times more unclean thoughts filled the space, because the head was not filled with a replacement - good uplifting thoughts. It is all very well and good having a big clear out, but if the change is not for the permanent better, and replaced with a concrete set of radical courageous steps taken in a statesmanlike way, it will not be a case of “things will only get better”, which was the Labour party’s anthem a few years ago, instead things will only get worse.

The maximum term of Parliament in this country and in many other countries is just five years, to ensure this accountability and choice. However, this instils a system of short-termism, where policies are based on five year cycles, and with no long term strategy, this is a clear disadvantage. There are promises of new directions of radical change, but what really do people get?

As the new Government comes into power, there is a level of expectation, people expect change to take place soon, and always of course for the better. The example in the Bible of this is found in the Old Testament. Written some 3000 years ago, the events are still relevant to today. Solomon was the most illustrious king who ruled over Greater Israel, a territory which extended across Lebanon, Syria, into Jordan, and down to Egypt, vast wealth flowed into the country, the government was supposedly a monarchical theocracy. In practice it wasn't. God warned that being ruled by men, would be worse than being ruled by Him, Solomon who though so wise, was also worldly wise, and used taxation as a powerful tool. He took advantage even of his own people. When he died, there was a sense of relief and expectation that there would be an opportunity for change, for improvement. The leaders of the people negotiated with the heir incumbent, the new anointed king Rehoboam. The opportunity for improvement was there, a compassionate and benign rule was there to be taken. Instead human nature triumphed. Rehoboam instead of taking the opportunity to change life for his subjects for the better in the end made it a lot worse, to cater for his own ego, his own profligacy, and greed. Instead of lifting the tax burden he made the promise instead to greatly increase it. 1 Kings 12:11: *My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.* As a result, the kingdom split, the territory he ruled over greatly shrunk, and ten of the tribes decided to choose their own separate ruler, a man similarly named Jeroboam. This was a dramatic change in government, and hopes were high. But the glory days were behind them, Jeroboam proved to be worse than Rehoboam, who led his nation to catastrophe. The nation soon became a vassal state to larger neighbours, and tribute and tax were levied as never before. "Be careful what you wish for" is a modern saying, and holds true. To this day, the names Rehoboam and Jeroboam are familiar in certain circles, a testimony to the truth of the history in the Bible. They are today used as a measurement for champagne, a very expensive luxury drink, for the rich, also a testimony to the profligacy and extravagance of rulers of long ago who lost their kingdoms due to human misrule!

This clear example of bad to worse is a scenario oft repeated in history, and it can be clearly seen in the recent revolving door of Prime Ministers of the UK, 6 leaders in 8 years, where parliament has struggled to keep up with changing policies and ideas, and new legislation. This is the tacit admission that people are not satisfied with their leaders, or that they are suitable to govern, and that their solutions to the problems society faces simply do not work.

As the majority of our members are found in East Africa, it is interesting that the incumbent Kenyan president – William Ruto, won his shock election victory in 2022 based on grand sweeping promises, to make the poor the centre of his economic policy. He promised to fix the economy strangled by entrenched corruption. Now half way through his term, his promises do not look like being kept. Instead, the tax burden on the poor have increased, so



much so that he was forced to cancel his latest policy due to widespread social unrest and rioting. According to Transparency International Corruption 2023 Corruption Perceptions

Index Kenya is number 126 out of 180 countries listed in the Index. Bribery and nepotism shows no signs of abating. It is reported that the levels of violence and unrest, caused by price rises and the cost of living hikes are the worse they have been since Kenya's Independence in 1963! This is not unusual: - of over promising and under delivering, it is a basic human weakness, which few prove to overcome. But when governments do it, and presidents and rulers, it exaggerates this weakness to such an extent, that it becomes stifling, and suffocates the original ideals behind democracy, and undermines trust. The Bible sums it up quite simply.

Exodus 20:16 *Thou shalt not bear false witness.*

Because of this common trend, people become greatly disillusioned and feel let down by the political system. It is not surprising that voter numbers turnout is steadily declining down from 85% in 1950 to 60% in 2024. It is no surprise that local elections attract an even lower turnout... Politics has become a fringe interest, much the same as religion. Pretty much for the same reasons. Corruption and lies and broken promises

Broken Promises

Most people don't think parties keep their manifesto promises anyway. There is widespread public cynicism about parties keeping to their election pledges. Just one in five (20%) believe that winning parties generally keep to all or most of their manifesto promises. Fully half of Britons (53%) think that parties go back on most of their promises, and 22% believe they go back on all or almost all of their pledges.

People do not always get what they expect, it has always been like that as we have shown, especially when they come in with power such as a large majority, even though the government will have no mandate, they will still push through on their ideology.

What do we as Christians think About The change in government?

If we say we are Christians, then we declare that we follow Jesus. It is therefore a contradiction and hypocrisy to declare allegiance to any other ruler. By choosing Christ Jesus, we have made a decision based upon observations that these politicians raised up by men, are not suitable for the job! Therefore Christians should not be political in the sense that they should show support to this party or that faction. In fact, The Apostle Paul clearly teaches that a separation should be made in these aspects: 2 Corinthians 6:14: *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

If you believe that the Lord Jesus is your leader why follow after another? There are many commentators across the political spectrum who sometimes appear to seem to speak a lot of sense at times, and one can get caught up with their rhetoric, people such as Jordan Petersen, Nigel Farage, Douglas

Murray, Christopher Hatton, Owen Jones to name a few. But a lot of what they say is plain wrong. It is therefore imperative that Christians do not put their name to any form of populism, or get carried about or *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, and cunning craftiness*, Ephesians 4:14. If we are convinced that Jesus Christ is the one to follow, then we should first obey him. The first act of obedience is baptism, a simple but deeply symbolic process, whereby we declare that our allegiance is to him. We become by faith citizens members of another country, a state in waiting to be established, Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*: This does not mean that the government and its rules should be ignored. Just because we accept Jesus Christ as King, and God as the final authority, we are therefore fine to break the speed limit when we choose. But instead: Romans 13:1-7 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour*. It is therefore the duty of Bible believers to accept the outcome of any government run election, that they will be subject to, and not to enter into any protest or social unrest, or disagreements. If they are ordained of God we could be found to be fighting against God. 1 Peter 2:13-17. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well*. We recall how the Apostle Paul reacted in Acts 23 when he, Paul was speaking and making his defence, the high priest commanded that Paul be punched in the mouth. Of course such an action was shocking and Paul reacted *Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for you sit to judge me after the law, and command me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Do you dare insult God's high priest? Paul replied: I did not realise, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, You shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*.

That is the example we have been given in the Bible about how to treat rulers and leaders in power. Similarly in another place 2 Peter 2:10-11 *But chiefly*

them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. If we bad mouth or speak evil of the rulers in power, we will find ourselves on the wrong side of God. Therefore with regards to our opinions, and viewpoints of politicians and the governing authorities, it is best to hold our peace, and maintain the laws of men, until such time as they contradict the law of God, as Peter said Acts 5:29 We ought to obey God rather than men.

As far as the governments are concerned, they are to be no real concern of those who highly esteem the Bible. Human governments come and human governments go. Change happens, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Democracy is clearly not the answer to the global unrest the world is facing, and the perfect storm of international migration, polarisation, food shortages, competition over the decreasing world resources, and of course, the biggest problem of all, the Middle East, and the status of Israel and Jerusalem at stake.

The Bible teaches about change in government. There is an example in the Bible, which took place many centuries ago, but which is often overlooked. We actually talked about this last Sunday. But the example is useful, and helpful on this topic. We will zoom in as it were into the incident, and then zoom out, with the lessons learned.

This episode is found in Isaiah 22. God instructed the removal of one man from office, Shebna, and to replace him with another, Eliakim. There was to be a change in government. This was 2600 years ago, but these were real people, and archaeological evidence proves both men existed and that the Bible is true of course



What does this matter for our lives today? Because in this small example, the Gospel of hope is preached of how a New Government will replace all other Governments, on a manifesto of real and radical change for the better, and that all promises made will be faithfully delivered.

What happened was a real life situation, but it was chosen to be a parable for the nation, and is therefore useful for us today as a parable. Shebna is deposed, and Eliakim replaces him. Eliakim is told that he will be God's chosen servant, he will govern his people well, he will be secure on his throne. Shebna represented the ruling and political classes of the time, Eliakim represented the faithful ruler who would replace them all – even Jesus Christ.

It isn't possible to appreciate what God is saying about this Eliakim, and the new government until we go back a few verses and consider what God has first said about Shebna. Look at verse 15; there Isaiah is told, *Go, proceed to this treasurer, to Shebna, who is over the house*. This was a very high rank indeed, it was the chief steward of the king. He was over the house, he was therefore like a deputy prime minister. He decided who was allowed to go in to see the king. He collected revenue and paid out expenses. He made decisions about building projects at home, and diplomacy abroad.

The king Hezekiah was on the throne of the Lord, given to David and his descendants and were expected to display the justice and righteousness of God through all their character and conduct. So a steward, if he was faithful, could serve that great cause. Or by his wickedness, he could hinder it.

But in verse 15, Isaiah describes how Shebna had been out for his own glory instead of serving for the good of the country. He'd been spending lots of money on himself, driving around Jerusalem on his "glorious chariots" (v 18), and thinking about how he'd be remembered in future generations. He'd even been building himself a sepulchre (v 16), a fine tomb cut out of rock, so that when he was dead, people would still be impressed by him.

Archaeologists today think that they have found the inscription of his tomb in Silwan outside of Jerusalem, which they describe as the Royal Steward inscription, which has part of his name on it.

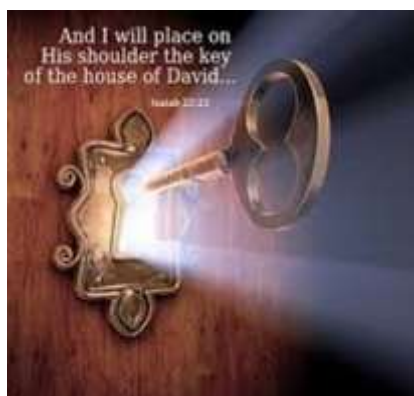
In short, Shebna was faithless. He was the kind of politician who ends up in scandal for some scheme to enrich himself, through misuse of funds, corrupted by power and fame. Self-serving, unstable, a disgrace to his office—we have seen enough of them. Shebna was typical, of the people he was supposed to govern. Judah as a nation was like that, self-interested and forgetful of the Lord's commands. Later in the writings of the chronicles and of Isaiah, we find that Shebna is described as the scribe. No longer the chief steward. Change in government took place as God promised. He was replaced by a more faithful man.

So it would be that like a new broom sweeps clean- not actually a modern saying, but from the Bible Isaiah 14:23, where God describes sweeping the system of government with the besom of destruction. A besom is an old-fashioned word for a broom! God would sweep away all the rulers of Israel, and replace with another who is represented by this Eliakim. In the chapter we read that the trappings of office were taken from Shebna and given to Eliakim 20-21: *I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.*

God will take the official garments away from Shebna and He'll give them to Eliakim. Here we can perhaps picture something like the chain of office that a mayor will wear—that ornate band worn over the shoulders which marks someone as holding authority. Eliakim will be given the insignia for his authority, so that there's no doubt about his position. All of Shebna's power will be taken from him and placed into the hands of a man more worthy to receive it. For Eliakim will be a steadfast leader: a dependable man, as loving and wise as a father, and highly esteemed.

In the grand sweep of Judah's history, this change wasn't a moment that would stand out as very earth-shattering. As we zoom out and away from that small piece of history, it shows something about God, who was behind those events, and has ensured that this book of Isaiah and the whole Bible has been miraculously preserved for many centuries for our benefit.

The clue about his character is in the name. It is symbolic as one would expect in a parable. Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. This name means – who God



will raise up. Hilkiah means *portion of Yah*. Who did God raise up, and who is the son of a portion of Yah? Jesus Christ. Israel's rulers were swept away. Even today the government of Israel has proved to be unfaithful to the ways in which God has shown them. The time will come when they will also be removed.

God promised in this chapter that this Eliakim representative – *And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. 23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place;* Jesus Christ will be given the key to Government, is described as a nail in a sure place – unmoveable. He promised that he would be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. Eliakim was not those things, as Hezekiah soon died, and was replaced by Manasseh a wicked king for 50 years, so clearly God was not referring to this in Isaiah's prophecy. Instead, it is the Lord Jesus the Son of David the Son of God, who is spoken of in these terms, who will replace all other governments.

Isaiah 9:6,7 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, [the Mighty Warrior] The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* The Lord Jesus has been promised from well before he was even born as the Son of God to be as a father to his people, and lead them. This then is the message of the Bible. He will replace the rulers of nations who are unfit to rule.

One Final Change

Unlike the forever changing governments of the nations, of this country, where things do not seem to improve, but rather society declines, God does not change. Of God we read in James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

The Bible is the manifesto, the policy of the Government of God in waiting. Every promise made in this book has been kept, or will be kept. It is impossible for God to lie. He is the Rock, sure and steadfast. The Lord Jesus is the nail in the sure place, even as he was nailed to the cross to secure a way of salvation to all those who trust and believe in God. The Bible clearly shows that God has given an opportunity to men to do good or do evil. Man has rejected God, and chosen to rule himself but it is rapidly ending in calamity, as people are seeing, as it is increasingly obvious. The forever changing governments are no solution, but just compounding the problems, decreasing any semblance of stability there is. Time is fast running out for these governments of chaos, who sanction violence in war, who glorify selfishness, protectionism, corrupting the earth, in the endless quest for economic growth, - the God of this world – unrighteous mammon, the love of money which is the root of all evil. There is no other alternative. Man has had thousands of years to work out a solution. He is where he is. If you think that the nations can peacefully resolve their differences, and bury their hatred by themselves, and cease pollution, corruption, violence, then fine, what are you reading this for? But if you have realised there must be another solution – it is here right here. Every prophecy in the Bible made so far about Israel and the nations have been fulfilled on schedule on time, in extraordinary accurate detail. Why doubt the few still to be fulfilled?

The Kingdom that will never be destroyed

For example: Daniel 2:44 *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.* This is the change that people are really waiting for. Security and peace free from oppressors, high taxation, endless wars, and merry go round of broken promises.

The Bible promises a time when there will be – in a comparatively short time, a world central government based in the city everyone is arguing about, but is the place which God has chosen to place His Name. Jerusalem. A city which will be changed beyond recognition, where all remnants of false worship and past glories will be swept away with that besom of destruction. Once Israel

has been rescued and calmed, and the invading aggressive enemies overcome, slowly and surely the Kingdom of God will be established right across the earth.

World Central Government



Psalms 72:2, 1-20 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. ...He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. ...He shall have dominion also

from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. ...Yes, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight...

There will no longer be elections, and party political broadcasts, no more liars and perjurers, as the Gospel, the truth of the Word of God will be taught in every city. There will no longer be continual change but a sure and steady reliable ruler ship, as we can read in Hebrews 13:8 ***Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.***

... His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

No longer will a change in government be required. But instead to get there, a Change of Attitude will be required from the general populations of the world, if the world is to be a better place. In the same way John the Baptist was sent to the Jewish nation to prepare them for a great repentance, so also will many of those judged faithful in this life, be given the work of preaching to all nations, to teach them, and show them the truth of the gospel, and

educate as described again in Isaiah 52:7: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publishes peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publishes salvation;*. This will be a special work, and will be among the first tasks given to those who will be like Eliakim and be of that class, men and women who have been found to be faithful stewards, good servants of the God, good citizens in this life now, and being found to be faithful, will be rewarded in this amazing work of helping make the world a better place.

Change from within

If we believe this, and would think, yes I would like to be there, but I am not worthy, you are not thinking right. You have been given one vote – use it. No one is able to judge who is more or less worthy. God calls. He knows what we are capable of, he forgives all sins, when they are confessed. When we say we are unworthy, we are saying that God is not compassionate, kind, or merciful enough.

So we see, real change for the good cannot be by looking or comparing ourselves with others. Real change comes from within. The way, is to be humble and accept that we make mistakes, if we want to make the world a better place, we must start with ourselves. As Paul explains in Romans 12:1,2 *I beseech you therefore, ... by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

To be part of the new government can be right now, if you start in your mind, by deciding to trust God once and for all. We have had to put our trust in the new Government elected in last month don't we? and we know they will let us down. God will not let us down. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* If we admit this, and agree and believe this, and obey him, then we become a citizen of

the heavenly kingdom that will soon be established on earth as stated by Paul 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* There is no time to waste, we must do this together.

Dartford Apostolic Ecclesia

4th August 2024