

# The final countdown begins

By: Dan Nelson

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We are down to the final few days of this historic election period in our state and country. California is grappling over issues drawing national, even worldwide attention.

Everyone wants to know how we will define marriage since all parties agree on the influence we have over the rest of the United States. Our nation is excited about change as both parties offer significant first-time opportunities to see either a woman as vice president or black man as president. Neither has ever been done before and most say it is long overdue. Both have the chance to provide healing of past wounds and hope for young girls or minorities that never imagined themselves someday aspiring to run for the White House. Most media has already presumed the winner but I will be waiting until after the people have made their choice. I will cast my vote on Tuesday and I hope you will also.

We have been given a lot here in this country. And the Bible says, "To whom much is given, much is required." We have a grave responsibility as we have been used to bring more hope to impoverished people and victims of widespread atrocity than any other nation in the history of the world.

There has never existed a nation that has done as much good as the United States of America. Even with our flaws, I contend that we err when we measure our success by the fleeting opinions of leaders of foreign governments that would never, in their wildest imaginations, think of being as generous and truly helpful in the global theater toward humanity as the U.S.A. What's worse is that the favorite pastime of so many these days is to criticize our own president instead of praying for him. The truth is that both of our candidates know that Americans are fickle and their affection and loyalty are short-lived. No matter whom we elect, a whole lot of "the love" will be gone in four years.

So how shall we assess our success as a nation and in what manner can wisdom be applied in our responsibility on Tuesday? First, we must be aware that answers exist in the Bible that stands the test of time. Second, there should be recognition that we are accountable for our choices.

We are studying the book of Ezekiel on Thursday nights. I think that many people would be shocked to learn how relevant the Old Testament can be to their lives today. We are learning about the rise and fall of many kingdoms and empires that, in their day, enjoyed all of the benefits of being "the big kid on the block" like we do today. Whether Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, or Rome, the principles for their success and failures are the same. More recently we could add the British and American empires and probably a few others. Historically speaking, it was merely yesterday (less than 240 years ago) when the British controlled us and practically everyone else. Today we lead the world. Tomorrow? Only God knows! The Scriptures do tell us a few things that we should be aware of since we are falling right into a common trap that other great peoples have fallen into: placing the wrong priorities first.

Everyone is talking about the economy, health care, and security as top priorities. Although these are important issues that affect all of us that we want to put attention toward, we are foolish when we put them first.

For whatever reason, we get consumed in our

passions and don't consider that people of every generation have been worried about these things. These are motivated in looking after self-interests; inward focused, and will inherently harm us if we don't get our priorities straight. Our study has revealed the connection to whether a people seeks after the things of God such as righteousness, justice, sexual purity, caring for the poor, protecting children, standing for life, genuine worship, honoring God's word, and whether our economic policies, health and security will be effective. In the study, the culture of Israel had put on a pretense of honoring God but their lives proved otherwise.

Bad ideas in Jerusalem led decisions in foreign policy that showed they valued political strategy more than God's direction. God had warned them and they chose foolishly.

In the same way, we are warned that if we are selecting our propositions and laws based on what will appease vocal violators of the basic principles of God in sexuality, in the name of tolerance, then history repeats itself. If we select our leaders based on what they offer us, and not their principles of living and legislating before the Almighty God, then we stand to be judged along with that leader.

The warning is to the watchmen as well as the people. In that culture, the city walls would have a watchman looking out over the darkness outside to spot any signs of danger. If he saw an approaching army, he would sound the trumpet. If the people were warned, accountability for their response is upon them. If the guard did not sound the alarm, the people were still harmed but he is also responsible. Spiritually, this applied to Ezekiel and to us. As a watchman here in this community, I am warning you of inherent dangers in voting according to your human reasoning and selfish desires without prayer and seeking God's wisdom. If you put on a pretense of godliness but still advocate leaders and legislative programs that bring death to the unborn, disintegrate the role of parents, legitimize homosexuality as normal, it will be a decision that is ultimately regretted.

So please vote your conscience remembering Jesus' words, "If the light that is in you is dark, how great is that darkness." It's Halloween season when many celebrate darkness. Let's let a light shine in us.

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2008. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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## **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:30am**  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

## **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View