

# A Lamb among Donkeys and Elephants



**Isaiah 33:22**

When I was a kid, I loved to go to my Cousin Kenny Bogard's house. I think one of the main reasons I loved to go to Kenny's house was because I was reared in the country, and Kenny lived in the city. When I got to go spend the night or the weekend with Kenny, it was just neat to get out of the country and go to the big city of Murray, KY. When I went to church with them on Sunday, I thought wow because their church had a balcony! Kenny and I would sit in the balcony during worship service. Kenny and I would get on our bicycles and ride all around and there were numerous other kids we could play with there in the city. I just loved going to Kenny's house! Now, I will never forget that the last thing my mom or dad would say before they pulled out of Kenny's driveway when dropping me off in the city was "You better mind." You know what that meant. I don't know why, but it seemed like every time I would be dropped off, Uncle Ralph would be there. As soon as we pulled in the driveway, Uncle Ralph would come out the door and hear that and my mom and dad would say to Uncle

Ralph, "And you better make him." Immediately, I knew I wasn't supposed to mind Kenny, my cousin; I was supposed to mind my Uncle Ralph. It was as if my parents, who had authority over me, gave their authority to my Uncle Ralph while I was there. Because I was under the authority of my parents who had given authority to Uncle Ralph, I was now to be under his authority. I never had a problem with that because Uncle Ralph was cool. I liked being at Ralph and Eva's house. I never feared their authority in my life, but honestly, I was a kid who minded, most of the time. I really didn't need my mom and dad to tell me what they did every time, but they always told me I better mind. I can't ever remember a time when I had a problem minding my Uncle Ralph. As I got older and looked back on it, I really believe the only time I should have not minded would have been if Uncle Ralph had told me to do something that I knew my mom and dad would not have wanted me to do, or he forbade me to do something that I knew my mom and dad would want me to do. Other than those two instances, my mom and dad meant what they said, "You better mind." They meant what they said to Uncle Ralph. "You better make him mind."

Do any of you find it strange or coincidental that we have a nickname for the government of the United States of America, and it is Uncle Sam. We are blessed to have a government that's been so good to the majority to us as citizens that we affectionately call our government Uncle Sam. We love those political cartoons with him in his hat with his beard. He always has that red, white, and blue clothing on. I think not only are we proud he's our uncle; I think he's proud he's our uncle.

Let's open to Isaiah 33. This will be our last Sunday to talk about politics. Beginning next Sunday, we will begin to end our sermon series 20/20 vision in 2020. This morning, I want to talk to you about our uncle because I think there's a misunderstanding by many Christians, as well as non-Christians, about who our uncle is and the responsibility he has to us, and the responsibility we have to him as Christians. According to the politics of Paul and Peter, God has given His authority to our Uncle Sam. Unless he is commanding us to do something God has forbidden, or forbids us to do something God has commanded, God would tell us as Christians, "You better mind him." I think God would say to our uncle, His deacon, His

servant, "You better make them mind." In talking about our uncle, I want to remind you of who we are. We are Christians. We are under the highest authority of the universe, and that is God. As Christians, we must understand Scripture and understand why God gives His authority to our uncle. I can't talk to the church in Iraq, Iran, China, Russia, Canada, Mexico, or Israel; I can't even talk to the church in America, because I'm just a pastor, your pastor. I feel strongly that I must share our responsibility as a Christian living under the authority in the house of our Uncle Sam. I'm choosing Isaiah 33:22. This does not talk about America. It does not talk about our uncle. It talks about what you and me believe because we believe in the complete revelation of God, both the Old Testament and the New Testament. This is what the prophet Isaiah said to God's covenant people in the Old Testament Israel. We know today that Israel is not God's covenant people; the Church today is God's covenant people, Jews and Gentiles together making up the body of Christ. Here is what Isaiah said.

## **Scripture**

**"For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver;  
the LORD is our king; he will save us."**

If you believe this, say amen!

Our Uncle Sam to us is really old. According to and based on other government systems around the world, he is still relatively young. I don't know for sure yet if he's come to full maturity or not, because when you compare him to other governments, he's still kind of new at this. As a matter of fact, when he was birthed, he was called the great experiment. I want to make sure you understand some principles about our uncle.

- **Uncle Sam is not a pure democracy; he is a republic.**

Do you understand this? If we went back to when he was conceived and was born, he was founded by a group of people who had people in leadership representing him and they had fear. Their fear was tyranny because they had faced tyranny in the other land. They feared mobocracy.

They feared the rule of the majority of the people. So when Uncle Sam was born, he was never created so that the majority of people who live in this land could rule the minority of the people who lived in this land. In America, we are not ruled by people, nor the will of the people; we are ruled by law, law that is founded on the constitution of the United States of America. Do you understand that? We have a constitution. Our laws must be consistent with and not contradict our constitution. Our constitution guarantees the same rights to every citizen in this country. Because Thomas Jefferson especially feared the majority of fifty-one percent violating the rights of the other forty-nine percent, when Uncle Sam was created, he was created with a system of checks and balances. Why? Because Thomas Jefferson, in particular, feared mobocracy. So our founding fathers established Uncle Sam with three equal branches, three equal parts in his being. You can see this clearly in the articles of the constitution of the United States of America.

### **Legislative Branch**

Uncle Sam was created for us to have a legislative branch so that he could legislate laws in accordance with the constitution of the United States. The legislative side is divided into two parts so there would be a check and a balance. When you go back and study the writings of the ancient fathers and the constitution itself, you see they feared the will of the people, so they didn't establish a pure democracy. They established a republic. They did this in the sense that we used a democratic process of each citizen voting and electing a representative who represents us in making laws based on the constitution. They divided that power between a House of Representatives that was elected by the people from the different districts of the US based on the population of each state. Therefore, a state that has more people has more representatives in the House than a state like Kentucky. That house is called the house of the people because the local districts elect somebody to represent them to make laws under the constitution.

But, the founders feared the House of Representatives. They feared the majority ruling the minority, so they established a Senate. The reason they did this was to balance the power and will of the people with the power of

the state. Because our constitution has been amended, we, in each state, elect senators. Each state, no matter how many people live in the state, a large state or a small state, gets two senators so each state has an equal voice in the Senate. In the beginning of our nation, the people didn't choose the senators; the states chose the senators. Do you see this? Uncle Sam has a system of checks and balances. It was never the intention of our country for the people who live in the populous states to have their will imposed on people of less popular states. That's why Uncle Sam was created the way he was created. That's so important for you to understand who our uncle is. He legislates. Those two groups of people, elected locally in districts and statewide, must get together and agree. They must compromise so that the ruling majority can't take away the right of the constitution to the minority. I'm probably going to throw you a curve here, but for the last twelve to sixteen years, we have gotten so tired of the gridlock in Washington DC. Do you know what that proves? It proves our government is working the way the founders intended for it to work. You hadn't thought of it that way, have you? One group can't impose their will on the other; that's the way the founding fathers set it up.

### **Executive Branch**

Here we clearly see the founding fathers feared mobocracy. It is not the will of the people who elect the president of the United States; it's the will of the states. Our president is not elected by a popular vote nationwide; our president is elected by the people of the states. The way Uncle Sam was created is each state would get electors based on how many representatives they have in the House and how many senators and they would add those two together, and that's how many electors they have. It takes two hundred and seventy votes by the states to elect the president of the United States of America. Why did our founding fathers set Uncle Sam up this way? It was because they feared a migration of people to large population centers called cities, and those cities would have the majority of the people, and then the majority of the people could impose their will on the minority, even at fifty-one to forty-nine percent. So they set up a system of checks and balances. This is why in the last few US elections, you can watch an election map and there will be a distinct color

on the coast, on the other coast, a few places in the middle of the country, and then the rest of the country is another color. One of those colors represents the elephants and the other the donkey. The majority of the country will be lit up in a color, but numerically, it will actually be the minority.

Uncle Sam was born with the thought of the fallenness of man. They had seen the fallenness of man in Europe, they had seen constant war, they had seen their rights constantly taken away from them, so when they began to create a government, they wanted there to be checks and balances so the rights of the people under the constitution of the United States could not be taken away. Our founders never wanted the majority to rule on national or statewide issues. As a matter of fact, we've only amended our constitution twenty-seven times, and that last amendment has been there for over two hundred years. Do you know what happens if we decide to amend our constitution? It takes two thirds of the House and two thirds of the Senate. Can you imagine getting two thirds of either to believe the same thing? No way...therefore, we don't have to worry; our constitution is not going to be amended anytime soon. But, if two thirds of the House and two thirds of the Senate agree on a constitutional amendment, it would have to go to all fifty states, and three fourths of the states have to be in agreement. Uncle Sam was set up to where if we're going to change the constitution that gives right to each citizen, it takes a super majority of people, not just a plain majority of people. The founders of Uncle Sam were wise.

Here is our problem. Living in Western Kentucky, you and I have never really been in the minority. We've never had Uncle Sam oppress us. There are people who live in the United States of America that Uncle Sam wasn't as kind to as he was to us. There was a time in Uncle Sam's life where he was kind of prejudice. He was really racist. Every person born here or who came here willingly or unwillingly didn't have the same rights. There were some laws Uncle Sam made that were not just laws; they were unjust laws. But the founders prepared for that.

## **Judicial Branch**

There was not only a legislative side and an executive side to Uncle Sam. Our presidents are supposed to see that the laws our legislative branch pass are carried out, but who determines if those laws are just? Who determines if those laws are consistent with the constitution of the United States of America and do not deprive any citizen of their rights? The founders set up the judicial branch. Isn't it amazing that we, as Christians, believe God is our judge, we believe God is our lawgiver, we believe God is our King, and we love that because He is righteous and just. He's holy, holy, holy. Yet, the founders of our nation understand the fallenness of man was not going to let any one of those branches go to the same group of people, so they divided power in Uncle Sam equally. You and I the people do not get a say in electing the judicial branch. Yes, we do, but not by vote. The person the states elect as president of the United States nominate the judicial branch, the judges, but he can only nominate. The founding fathers decided it wasn't wise to let the president choose the judicial branch; he had to do it in cooperation with the legislative branch. The two had to work together, but not both sides of the legislature; it was only the Senate side. When the president nominates as the executive branch, the Senate must advice and confirm.

What is the purpose of the judicial branch? They are to be experts in the constitution of the United States. They are to be experts in the laws of the United States of America. If there is ever a dispute between me and the state, me and the federal government, or states against states, I can appeal a decision I feel is unjust by taking it to the court, ultimately to the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

Let me tell you what happened about ten years into Uncle Sam being our government. Don't think all those men who got together agreed one hundred percent. They didn't; they had to compromise. When Uncle Sam was about ten years old, we became a two party system in electing our Representatives. There were the Federalists and the Anti-federalists. Eventually, the Anti-federalists became the Democrats and the Republicans, one party, but they quickly divided. Now in 2020, we primarily live in a country that has a two party system, illustrated politically by a

donkey and an elephant. Therefore, I'm telling you that in America, the donkeys and the elephants want to influence who Uncle Sam is and what he does. They have the biggest influence in who he is.

If you've sat under me for very long, you know that I do not believe a Christian should have an undivided loyalty to either the donkeys or the elephants because our ultimate judge, our ultimate lawgiver, our ultimate King is not our government; it is our God. We recognize our God has given His authority to Uncle Sam, and He tells us we better mind him. Are you listening to me? You better mind him...unless, he does something in commanding us to do what God forbids, or forbids us to do what God commands. God says to Uncle Sam, 'as My servant, you better make them mind.' As a Christian, I have been proposing for years that our loyalty is not to the party of the donkey or the elephant; our loyalty must be to the party of the Lamb. As Christians, my loyalty must first be to God, but in recognizing my loyalties to God, I understand I am to be a good citizen of His Kingdom. In being good citizens of His Kingdom, I will be a good citizen in this world system that I live in because God has given His authority to Uncle Sam. He has ordained him to bring about good and ultimately punish evil.

Now, I want to clear up a misconception about Uncle Sam. Uncle Sam does not forbid us as Christians to participate in public policy. As a matter of fact, Uncle Sam took it on himself to say to Christians that I will not, I cannot get into your life and tell you what you should believe and how you should worship God. I'm going to stay out of your business. It's called separation of Church and state. Never does Uncle Sam tell us as Christians that we can't influence who he is and what he does. Uncle Sam can't influence what we do, or who we are as Christians, but he encourages us to influence who he is and what he does. I want to make sure we understand that as citizens living in America, we must participate in public life, and that is what politics is. It is about public life. In the Church, you're part of something bigger than you. We are also a nation, and the constitution does not forbid any citizen in this country to not participate who Uncle Sam is and what he does, especially based on religion. I'm going to read a quote, but know that this is not an endorsement of the



person who said it. "Secularists are wrong when they ask believers to leave their religion at the door before entering the public square. Fredrick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, William Jennings Bryan, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, indeed great reformers in American history were not only motivated by faith, but repeatedly used religious language to argue for their cause. So to state that men and women should not inject their personal morality into public policy debates is a practical absurdity! Our law is by definition a codification of morality, which is grounded into Judeo-Christian tradition." AMEN! Do you know who said this in 2006? Barrack Obama, a man who ascended to the highest office of this land, tells the secularists they are wrong. It says to we Christians; don't believe what they're telling us.

Let me share with you our platform. I pray you will go online and read the platform of the donkey and the platform of the elephant. Why? Because according to history, eighty percent of the time, the people elected to office based on being a donkey or an elephant vote consistently with their platform. You may never know what they actually believe themselves. We are a country that, because of newsprint, TV, radio, internet, and 24/7 cable news, is buying into personalities at all levels, but eighty percent of the time, the people elected are following the platform of their party.

What is the platform of the party of the Lamb? In my opinion, here is what it would be, and I am not in any way suggesting that we should become a political party. Don't hear me say that, but as a Christian under the authority of God, what is my platform? What influences me when it comes to public policy? I think there are three things.

### **1. We are a party of divine revelation, not human philosophy.**

We have something greater than the constitution, and it's called the word of God. This is not the work of a founding of man; this is the very word of God. It's inerrant, infallible, it's inspired, and it is our ultimate authority, God's Word to us. My loyalty is first to the divine revelation of God. Because it's the divine revelation of God to me, my beliefs, my ethics, and my morals are going to be based on God's Word to me and you. Therefore, there will be a lot of times I will sit down at a table with a donkey or an

elephant, and as a Lamb, I'm going to seem out of place. Why am I out of place? It is because I do not look at the world through a Republican lens or a Democratic lens. I look at the world through God's revelation of His Word to me. I will never apologize for that! Therefore, in the United States of America, as great as our uncle is, we're going to be different than some of his other nephews and nieces. It's because our loyalty is to the Lamb of God.

Can I just say something here? I say this strictly as a pastor and only to Hardin Baptist Church. I get frustrated sometimes when Uncle Sam makes the law, someone disputes that law, and it goes before the judicial branch, the Supreme Court rules five to four, and the five voting were all liberals or they were all conservatives. I like those nine to zero votes. It happened in 1954 with Brown vs the board of education of Topeka. Nine to zero, the Supreme Court said that states in America couldn't have law that forbids people with different colored skin to go to our public schools. Uncle Sam has been racist at times. He's been prejudiced before. To be honest, my Uncle Ralph was kind of prejudiced toward us nieces and nephews too. Why? Because we are fallen. Even we Christians still have sin in our flesh that can cause us to be self-centered rather than God-centered. Even after the Supreme Court spoke, ten years later there were places in America still saying no, not in our neighborhood. Why do I say that? Wouldn't it be awesome if this morning all over the United States of America, every church speaking about this issue were all speaking about it in unity. I promise you there is a church somewhere today that is preaching on salvation of God preaching a principle of salvation by grace through faith alone, and the next church down the road is preaching about the same salvation, except they're interpreting salvation by grace through works. If we can't be the United Saints of God, how can we expect us to be the United States of America? If our churches are divided, is it any wonder that our nation is divided? Who would ever have thought that something that we can't see, a virus, would divide us into blue states and red states? We already knew we were divided as a nation, but this is also revealing we are divided as a Church, and as Christians. We are the party of divine revelation. We have to put aside what, self-centeredly, we want to happen for us, and we've got to put the greater good of God's Church and God's

society in its proper place. We cannot come to the Bible as Christians a conservative judge or a liberal judge comes to the constitution. Don't think you don't have prejudices toward the Word of God. We don't want a modern day judge to believe what someone said a hundred years ago about a certain decision, yet, many of us still hang to what our granddaddy, great-granddaddy, or daddy taught us about the Word of God because we will not check it out for ourselves. That's why when we go to the workplace, you can't quote what your granddaddy said, or your daddy said; you've got to quote what God said. Many of us can't do that. We've got to get back to being the party of divine revelation.

## **2. We're the party of relationships.**

Look at the cross behind me. We didn't put a steeple topped with a cross on this church; we brought our cross inside. Every Sunday, we are reminded of our platform as a Christian. We're a party of relationships. There's a vertical part of that cross and there's a horizontal part. Because of Christ, I have been brought into a right relationship with God. Because of that right relationship with God, there is a horizontal responsibility I have, and that is for me to be right with my fellowman, not just those who believe like I believe, but even those who don't believe like I believe. I have been called by God to be part of a group of people that influence those who don't believe the way we believe. At the core of our party, we ought to understand other people, because until you get in this right relationship with God, you're not going to be right in these other relationships. Therefore, in the Church, the best public policy we have is to desire a government that makes it possible for there to be calm and order, so that the Church can do what we've been called to do, and that's be about the business of preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. But we have to live this out! I can't just be right with God; I've got to be right with my wife, with my kids, with my family, with my church, and with those people I work with. It's all because of my right relationship with God, and that's what we should desire for all those who live as citizens of the United States of America that they be in a right relationship with God, and then they can come in a right relationship with the rest of society.

### **3. We're the party of righteousness.**

Unrighteous, unjust people are not going to make just and righteous laws. In the Church, we cannot separate conduct from character. You know character by conduct. As the party of the Lamb, we not only want to be right with God and right with people, we want every action of Uncle Sam to be right and just. How can he be right and just if the ones who are right with God, the ones who should have just actions, sit on the sidelines and not influence who Uncle Sam is? I believe the Church has lost its voice, and our vote is taken for granted because we've pledged loyalty to a donkey and an elephant rather than the Lamb of God. Being loyal to the Lamb of God, I've got to say it to the donkeys, you're wrong on this. When they ask me why they're wrong, I don't scream, yell, or argue. I talk and have a conversation where I treat the person who believes differently than me with respect and honor. Even though he or she may be an unbeliever, according to Scripture, they are still made in the image of God. Their soul is worth saving. Would you listen to someone preach the gospel after being berated, yelled or screamed at? Of course you wouldn't. We've got to quit debating in the workplace, and we've got to start talking. We've got to call out the other side to say how can you, as a party, believe what you believe. When they want to know our reason, we say because of the Word of God. In a reasonable manner, we let our values speak and we let our voice speak. Then, we go vote. When you go into that voting booth or ballot in the mail, don't vote as an elephant or a donkey; vote as a party of the Lamb. It's our responsibility to help Uncle Sam be the best uncle he can be, not just to us, but to every citizen of this country.