

Jesus For President

Matthew 4:1-11; John 8: 42-45;

September 20, 2020

Welcome to our show this morning. My name is Hardly Biased and I'm your host, and we're here to discuss the upcoming election. We'll go over the history of the contest so far, and bring you right up to date.

By now I hardly need to remind you of the two candidates. Jesus of Nazareth and Satan of the Abyss are well known to everyone from the debates held earlier and from their vicious attack ads.

It's been a tough campaign and there's a lot at stake, including the future of the souls of our country.

No one was predicting this level of competitiveness, least of all the Demon Party and their all-star candidate, Satan. Everyone thought he would have an easy victory six months ago.

Satan seemed to have all the issues on his side. He was for rampant greed and free sex and moral self-centeredness, and those seemed to be winning positions. They have always been extremely popular all over the world.

Jesus, on the other hand, came out early for generosity, self-control, and putting others first. The pundits remarked that this was a serious error. None of these positions has ever been popular alone, and together, the polling said they were toxic.

But somehow Jesus managed to make them seem attractive. Jesus' own lifestyle, so marked by these policies, was one that many people wanted to imitate. Jesus promised that acting like this would lead to a better life on the spiritual level, and assured his followers of rewards in the next life if they would be his true disciples.

Satan's aides just laughed at this, saying they were convinced that most people would prefer a better *material* life to a better *spiritual* life, any day of the week.

Satan then proclaimed his party the "Party of Now," emphasizing the immediate gratification voters would get from his policies, and downplaying their long-term implications. "Live for this life," Satan said, "and get all you can."

Satan's red Live For This Life hats proliferated everywhere, and the crowds always cheered wildly at this point in his stump speech.

Jesus' campaign, on the other hand, was slow to start drawing crowds. Jesus preferred working quietly in his home state of Galilee. His announcement of his candidacy went very badly. In a disastrous beginning, he was booed out of the synagogue he grew up in when he claimed that he was the candidate predicted by the prophet Isaiah, and that he would preach good news to the down and outs.

But eventually Jesus started driving out evil spirits and healing people, and followers started to jump on the bandwagon. Still, there wasn't much of a groundswell. Five months ago, everyone was saying it was over.

Analysts all agreed that Jesus' teachings were profound, but they pointed out that he couldn't seem to capture the imagination of the crowds.

That all changed when Jesus realized the power of sound bites and began including human interest stories of average families in his speeches.

The mainstream media played his very popular “blessed are the poor” sound bite seemingly endlessly for weeks, though Satan accused Jesus of pandering.

And I’m sure there’s not one of you who could forget the moving tale Jesus told about the father he met on the campaign trail, whose youngest son had asked for his inheritance early, and then wasted it all on prodigal living.

There was never a dry eye in the house when Jesus told how that father had accepted his boy back just as God accepts repentant sinners back when they come home.

Satan’s and his campaign countered with many stories of people who had sold their souls to Satan and gone on to achieve money, fame and power, but somehow he just couldn’t match Jesus in the happy endings to his stories.

Satan decided that he had to go negative, and his early campaign ads pointed out that Jesus was born to a woman who was pregnant before she was married, and that Jesus grew up without much input from his father, who disappeared from the family sometime after Jesus’ twelfth birthday.

They made a big point of characterizing Jesus’ family background as sketchy. “How could Jesus claim to represent moral values,” they asked, “when there are rumors that Jesus was really the son of a Roman soldier named Panthera who raped his mother?”

In reply, Jesus’ campaign team pointed out that his mother was betrothed to Joseph when she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit and that they lived in a small town far from the Roman garrison.

The Roman soldier story, while found in the Jewish Talmud, was made up entirely of whole cloth and was clearly contradicted by Jesus’ official biographers, Matthew and Luke.

Those early Demon party ads pointed to Satan’s exalted origin as an angel in heaven, and that seemed like a slam dunk compared to Jesus’ humble beginnings, until the National Enquirer brought to light the inconvenient fact that Satan had rebelled against God and been thrown out of heaven.

Satan’s quick response team immediately claimed that he was the victim of a slanderous attack and admitted that, while it was true that he had had a dispute with God, it was only because God was hogging all the power and glory.

Satan had asked for a more democratic division of things, and God insisted on being a dictator. Satan claimed he was only doing it for the people, to set them free from God’s tyrannical control.

“It’s the freedom of the people to do whatever they want to without moral restraints that I’m after,” Satan was reported to have said.

His subsequent series of ad buys featuring this campaign theme was very powerful. Pretty soon people were wearing: “Just Do It, You Know You Want To” shirts and hats.

Often these were abbreviated to “Just Do It,” until lawyers from Nike stepped in threatening to sue Satan on trademark issues.

Satan’s lawyers claimed that he had had the idea first, and pointed to his well-recorded work in the Garden of Eden when he had first suggested to Adam and Eve that they not listen to God, but seek the freedom to decide for themselves what was right and wrong.

“Why take God’s word for it” Satan asked , “when with my kind of reasoning you can make anything seem right?”

In sworn court testimony, Satan claimed that he had told Eve to “Just do it,” years before Nike had ever come up with the slogan. As you know, Nike still got their injunction, though final settlement of the case is pending.

Polls showed Jesus trending downward with Satan’s charge that God was a dictator, as Jesus had always been closely associated with God. Satan said that Jesus was the establishment candidate, and pictured himself as the insurgent who would bring some much needed chaos to the world.

Jesus’ team responded by pointing to an almost endless series of blessings that God had brought upon the earth, and to God’s gift of free will, the very gift that makes freedom possible.

They claimed that God was no dictator but a loving parent, and that God’s commandments were meant to guide people into the very best way of life.

“Serving God is perfect freedom,” Jesus’ spokesperson, Paul of Tarsus, said. “You have to serve someone, either God or Satan, and God’s benefit plan is much better.”

Later, in a policy handout, Paul clarified that people who follow Satan’s sinful ways and get involved in sin are like slaves to sin. Once you get started, it’s like an addiction and very hard to stop.

Only Jesus can offer true freedom – freedom that leads to eternal life. “Sinning isn’t freedom,” Paul said, “it’s the real slavery.”

Soon Jesus had filled the streets with followers wearing his own new line of apparel, SonWear. The slogan, “The Truth will set you free” was on everyone’s t-shirt, and on everyone’s lips.

Of course, then came the debate. There, things looked pretty rocky for Jesus. Because Jesus insisted on being himself and wearing no make-up, he looked as though he had been fasting for forty days; Satan, on the other hand, looked fresh and bright as his team had had a lot of experience in making him up to look like an angel of light.

Satan went on the offensive immediately and asked Jesus some pointed questions. “If you’re ready to be President of people’s hearts,” Satan had said, “show us that you will fulfill their every wish – as I always promise people – and turn this stone into bread.”

Jesus’ quickly responded that Satan’s *promises* weren’t worth the paper he flushed them on, that they were the same old lies he always tells people to make his evil ways seem good, for he is the Father of Lies. “If Satan’s lips are moving,” Jesus charged, “he’s lying to you!”

Jesus refused to turn the stone into bread, citing Scripture. Satan crowed about this failure of Jesus, though after the debate Jesus’ spin team pointed to Jesus’ obedience to God.

Satan’s spokespeople later tried to make the point that Jesus couldn’t take care of people and wouldn’t supply them with bread, but after Jesus fed five thousand people on a few loaves and fishes, Satan’s team had to back down.

They could only say that if people had listened to their plea for gluttony, Jesus could never have done it.

Back at the debate, Satan shocked the crowd by offering Jesus the Vice Presidential position if Jesus would only agree to become his running mate and would bow down to him and worship him.

To many pundits, this seemed like a very generous offer, an offer that could unite the world and break from the acrimonious politics of the past between the God party and the Demon party, but Jesus turned Satan down right away, sticking to the familiar refrain that people are meant to worship and serve God alone.

‘There is no place for sin in God’s coming kingdom,’ Jesus proclaimed, “and since serving you would be sinful, I’ll have to turn you down.”

Satan just rolled his eyes at that, and claimed that a glorious opportunity had been missed because Jesus wouldn’t give up his judgmental attitude about sin. Jesus replied that he was quite ready to forgive sin, but that he would never accept it as normal.

Finally, Satan challenged Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah, and told him to throw himself off the top of the Temple so that everyone could see if the angels would save him. Again Jesus refused, citing Scripture about not putting God to the test.

Satan remarked that he and his people put God to the test all the time and that’s why he was leading in the polls.

As the election progressed, and Jesus’ campaign workers spread out throughout the smaller villages and towns, they managed to cast out Demon party representatives everywhere.

When they came back to headquarters, Jesus was happy to tell them that he had seen Satan’s poll numbers plummeting from heaven and back to earth because of what they had accomplished. Their names would be written in the Book of Life for sure.

The election seemed to be turning in Jesus’ favor when he entered Jerusalem and thousands of people greeted him waving palm branches. Satan was definitely on the defensive by this time, his early lead having evaporated.

But Satan proved a wily politician, and through a series of dirty tricks convinced the people to cry out for Jesus’ death.

After Jesus was crucified, Satan seemed sure to win. In fact, he had already declared victory before the election could even take place. But when Jesus appeared alive again on the third day, Satan was stunned.

A spokesperson for the Demon Party claimed that no one could have predicted this stunning comeback, though Jesus’ director of communications later showed how it had all been predicted years before in the words of the prophets.

Satan’s recent West Coast swing has been in the news lately, setting everywhere he went on fire with his campaign, but people soon realized they’d been burnt by Satan’s lies, and have turned back to Jesus.

And that brings us pretty much up to date to today. Today is the day you have to decide who will be President of your life, Jesus or Satan.

The Satan campaign has sent a final statement over to us. Let me read it to you now:

“In this election, think only of yourselves. Put greed, lust, money, and power first. They have always been winners and they will always be winners.

“Satan has the best promises and the showiest campaign ads. Jesus offers you nothing but hard work and persecution. Satan offers you laziness, self-indulgence, luxury.

“Jesus offers you the iffy promise of future blessings. Satan offers you the secure promise of looking out for yourself now. You know what you want. Vote Satan and make him the President of your heart.”

That was quite a powerful statement. Jesus’ campaign has also sent over a final message:

“Jesus is asking for your vote because he has your best interests at heart. He gave his life for you on the cross, and he promises you eternal life, too. Satan only wants to tempt you to evil with his false promises, promises which will ultimately turn out to be an illusion.

“Jesus has shown that he can come through for you with wisdom, healing, and blessings from God. If you’ve voted for Satan in the past, Jesus offers you amnesty and won’t hold that against you if you vote for him this time.

“Sure Jesus will ask for a change in lifestyle. Sure he demands that you put others first, that you give your heart and mind and soul and strength to God. Of course he asks that you love others as yourself. But doing so only prepares you for God’s kingdom and for everlasting joy with God.

Satan can make no such promises. He may have declared his party the Party of Now, but Jesus belongs to God’s Party, the Party of Forever. Vote Jesus for President of your heart, and save your soul.”

There you have it, friends, the final words of a long and hard fought campaign. But of course, as in every election, the last word belongs to you. Satan of the Abyss, or Jesus of Nazareth? A lot is hinging on this election, so which will it be? The choice is up to you.