

# The King of the United States

Back in the late '50s and early '60s, there was a kids' TV show on WGN TV, channel 9, in Chicago, at, I think, about 5:00 in the afternoon, called *Garfield Goose & Friends*. The eponymous Garfield ("Gar") was a puppet, appearing on a puppet stage, attended by the emcee, one gentle, kindly Frazier Thomas, who sat on a stool beside, arrayed in a magnificent Prime Minister's costume. Garfield (a white goose), under the massive, and apparently contagious, delusion that he was King of the United States (silly goose), wore a gold crown (and, I think, some kind of neckpiece) and could "speak" by means of clapping his ample beak together; his Prime Minister could understand him, but the audience, of course, could not. This gentle children's pretension was relieved by the frequent cartoons introduced, and by certain other puppet subjects of Gar, such as Romberg Rabbit, and some others as escape my memory.

So, you may ask, what has this to do with me today, especially as a Christian? Jesus is the eternal King over all that exists, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But temporally: have you ever considered who IS sovereign in the United States? It is We The People, for it is We The People who established the Constitution of the United States, the highest law of the land, and we, the citizens of today, are the current generation of We The People. In a very real sense, we are what passes for a King in this country. And we too frequently forget this.

Now, from what you have read in history, or parts of the Old Testament, or even fairy stories (that's probably a more influential source than we wish to admit), you might be led to believe a king has hereditary plenary power, and is all about having things, having servants, and commanding people to do his bidding, for his pleasure. If you think of Belshazzar as recorded in Daniel, well, that may be the picture. (Recall it did not go well with him.) But the fact is, kings have responsibilities, and they generally don't last so long as kings (or even as live bodies) unless they tend to their Sovereign responsibilities. Well, in the United States, sovereignty rests with us, We The People, and it seems manifest that we aren't tending to our responsibilities so well.

Howcum? Well, partly because We The People don't generally understand that we HAVE responsibilities of government. Too many of us think the government should take care of us, when it is we who should take care of the government. For this we may partly thank the attitude "Let George do it", forgetting "George" was an English king whom our forefathers found unsatisfactory. Also partly to blame may be the "education" too many of us have received from **government** schools (your tax dollars at shirk). In the very last week (as I write this in June 2022), a remarkably sensible Supreme Court affirmed that a) we DO have a Constitutional right to keep and bear arms, and b) we do NOT have a Constitutional right to kill babies in the womb. However, these facts, fairly plain to those of us who have actually READ the Constitution (and if you have not, it is likely printed in the back of one of your larger dictionaries, and is certainly available online; a reader of average speed can cover it in perhaps an hour), have apparently escaped somewhere around half the adult population.

In fact, if you regard the Presidential elections as being a rough bellwether of the sentiments of the voting population (that being the election most likely to garner the attention and participation of a randomly-chosen citizen), you can see that elections at least back as far as Bush v. Clinton feature platforms and candidates poles apart on moral issues – and that (no matter whom you argue "really" got the most votes in each) the electorate was approximately split down the middle on each. The reasonable conclusion, and, remarkably, it's valid no matter which position you think "right", is that approximately half of our voters don't know the difference between right and wrong, or don't care.

According to the Constitution, We The People exercise most of our sovereign rights and responsibilities of government through the agency of our elected representatives. Yet we can directly exercise quite a number of rights, and, indeed, it is our responsibility in many cases to do so. We have the right to free speech, and we have some derivative rights proceeding from it, which some argue to include equal access to what we might call "common carriers" of said free speech. We have freedom of religion and religious expression (albeit not to the point of human sacrifice and certain other practices as infringe on the rights of others). We have freedom of the press, including the media (which often displays "free dumb" in its practices). And free association, etc.

We have the right to keep and bear arms, which, the recent SCOTUS decision notwithstanding, is still massively infringed in a number of states. This right is important, because it gives teeth to many other of our rights. The Founding Fathers

had recently completed the War of Independence; they saw that they could not have prevailed without effective arms. And the cause of independence, it may be remembered, was at least partly that the previous Sovereign did not wish to comply with the very laws of his own government; read the Declaration of Independence for understanding. (Further, independence could have been accomplished with little or no bloodshed had said Sovereign reckoned his own misfeasance instead of applying arms to assert his dominance.) In any case, the Framers clearly intended that the People could depose governments failing to represent them after the manner set forth in the Constitution.

Now it is the among the responsibilities of a Sovereign to secure the safety of its people, AND THEIR RIGHTS, according to the law of the land. If We The People are the ultimate (temporal) Sovereign in our land, when we work to secure our own rights, we equally work to secure the rights of all others. This is a place where our rights merge with our responsibilities, because even if individually we don't care, or use, one or more of our rights, we have a measure of civic duty to secure them for others. Though I do not presently own a firearm, I am determined that those who choose to should not have that right infringed. And it is in my interest, as well as my duty, to support the right of abortion advocates to speak freely their foolishness. (I do strenuously object to the disproportionate media coverage they get. Their speech is heard much more freely than mine.) I should be willing for Muslims, even radical jihadists, to freely practice their religion, though not their jihad. I have a duty to support accurate counting of votes. Etc.

How, then, can I, individually, fulfill my responsibilities of government?

- I can pray, both for wisdom for myself, and for the Sovereign of the Universe to intervene in the affairs of men, unto His glory and our benefit, and I can encourage others to do the same.
- I can acquaint myself with godly Biblical positions on moral issues.
- I can learn the Constitution (it hardly takes even an hour to read) and some of the huge body of Federal law, and the common abuses. (There are LOTS.) The same for my State. I can't become a lawyer, but I can learn more than I already knew.
- I can attempt to be informed about the issues of the day. Several responsible Christian organizations are willing to send me email to supplement the slanted, filtered major media outlets. There are grass-roots voter organizations who will help me keep up on issues, candidates, and their positions and performance. Currently, there are LOTS of postings on YouTube – about which one should be discerning. But there is valuable information there.
- I can use my freedom of speech to say something about this issue or that, appropriately to the time, place, and participants in the conversation, preferably moderated by wisdom. I can hear what godly Christians say. I can learn to parse and state rhetoric, e.g. “Abortion is not about women's rights, it is about children's rights. A woman already has a right to choose; a pregnancy is an evidence of her choice.” I can keep my cool, so I can use what influence I have instead of losing it.
- I can communicate in writing to my elected and appointed representatives, advocating for correct positions on many issues. I may be able to call or visit their offices. When I request or recommend something, I should consider any vulnerabilities of my request to infringement upon the genuine rights of others.
- In some cases, I can participate in the actions of a political party to choose good candidates.
- I can do the necessary research to vote wisely. And then, actually VOTE. In every election, ESPECIALLY the primaries. Sometimes, I may simply have to choose the “better rascal”. (I think I prefer the Rascal party to the Scoundrel party – meaning that the Rascals may be more variable, but the Scoundrels will without regard for principle vote as a bloc and thus cause more damage.)
- Perhaps I might even feel called to run for office. (I myself do not, presently.)
- If I am called and fit for jury service, I should willingly accept it.

Most of the above is not onerous. Note I didn't say a word about giving to any party or cause. Nor about participation in a church. That's because I'm talking about the individual's responsibility as part of the **government**.

Christians should care about these responsibilities. We need to remember what is the first and greatest commandment and the second which is like unto it. Although the imposition upon our lives is minimal in respect of our individual part of governance, it is our opportunity to honor God by restraining evil and doing good to our fellow man.