

ASSESS THE CANDIDATES

Contributed by Jim Jordal
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By Jim
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The God of Israel said, The Rock of
Israel spoke to me: One who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear
of God, 4 [He shall be] as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, A
morning without clouds, [When] the tender grass [springs] out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain. 2 Samuel 23:3-4 WEB

Now that the 2016 political season is in full
swing and pundits actively measure candidates and their popularity through
interviews, polls, and what have you, perhaps it's time that we did the same.
The "experts" use humanly-derived measurements; we'll use God's qualifications
and a bit of sage advice from an expert on the wisdom of history, Professor J.
Rufus Fears, now deceased, but formerly multiple award-winning teacher of
Classics at the University of Oklahoma, who comes to us courtesy of The Great Courses of Chantilly,
Virginia.

Prof. Fears
assesses the characteristics of great leaders like Julius Caesar, Winston
Churchill, and Abraham Lincoln using four major strengths or attributes. First
is that they possess bedrock principles that cannot be shaken by political
reversal or public approbation. Second, they have an accurate moral compass to
chart the possible direction that might arise as new ideas and new political
charmners move into prominence. Third, they have a broad world vision able to
perceive far-reaching effects of current political actions. And lastly, these
favorable attributes still may not be enough to achieve greatness unless the
leader also has the ability to build even among enemies a personal respect able
to create a political consensus sufficient to carry the vision into fruition.

Professor Fears
cites Woodrow Wilson as an example of a leader great in strength and stability
of belief, having an accurate moral compass and a vision of One World at peace,
but not able to achieve the coalition-building necessary to pass his plan for
world peace, the League of Nations. So the offended powers of Congress refused
to pass the entry resolution, resulting in the League assuming power without
its strongest potential member.

As you

consider the various candidates, think seriously about these attributes and how seriously the various candidates seem to take them. Consider also what Moses says in the reading above. What does it mean to rule righteously in the fear of God? Does righteous rule include pushing for further accumulation of wealth by those who already have more than enough? Does it mean slashing social security and other retirement options? Does it mean allowing Wall Street unbridled power to continue its "casino" capitalism betting on obscure, shaky options and derivatives that threaten once again to bring down the entire economy? Does it mean ignoring the cries of ghetto dwellers having no hope of ever reaching even the first step on the ladder to economic success? And does it mean continuing the rampant rape of nature and indigenous peoples in the name of more profits?

And how

about what it might mean to rule in the fear of God. Fearing God ought to mean paying studious attention to what he says. It means subordinating the god of the free market to what is right and just. I'm highly suspicious of anyone who seriously defends free markets as they exist today. They quote Adam Smith in support of their views without ever understanding or publicly admitting that the founder of free markets believed in government regulation to control potential evils of the free market system. Actually, there is no such thing as a really free market today because if the market is free then anyone with enough power or money can subvert it to their own purposes, as happens with great regularity today.

Keep these

things in mind as you think about candidates. I'll have more to say on this as things heat up.