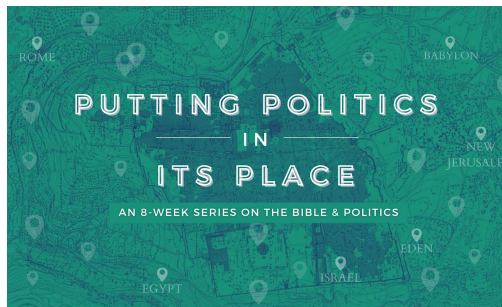


# Putting Politics in Its Place: Eden (Week 1)

## Discussion Guide



You can use this discussion guide on your own, with your family, or with your discipleship community (virtually or in-person). To watch or listen to this week's sermon, visit [bellevuechristian.church/sermons](https://bellevuechristian.church/sermons), subscribe to the Bellevue Christian Church podcast on your preferred provider, or watch our weekly service at [youtube.com/bellevuechristian](https://youtube.com/bellevuechristian).

## Introduction

We're in an 8-week series called *Putting Politics in its Place* that will take us all the way to week of the election. In a time where it feels like politics has forgotten its place, we want to be a church where we put politics back in its place. And, we believe that the best way to do that is by exploring political life in specific places throughout the Bible—places like Eden, Egypt, Israel, Babylon, Rome, & New Jerusalem. *This week we're exploring the political implications of Eden (Genesis 1-3), and we're focusing on the facts that we're made to rule and we're longing for Eden.*

Since political conversations tend to be particularly volatile in our cultural moment, we want to go over a few guidelines every single week that can shape we talk with one another:

1. **Seek to understand before you're understood.** This means that we're practicing active listening, not just thinking about how we'll respond. Before you counter what someone is saying, try your best to repeat back what the person is saying—to *their satisfaction* ("Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying").
2. **Hold the Bible tightly and your political opinions loosely.** Instead of trying to forcefit the Bible into our preconceived political opinions, we want to approach the Bible with humility that says, "God, I give you permission to reshape any of my opinions in light of your Word." If we're not careful, it's easy to let our political opinions shape how we read the Bible—instead of the other way around. This also means we want to keep our discussion centered around the text we're actually studying.
3. **Love the person even when you don't love their idea.** And, just because someone doesn't love your idea doesn't mean they don't love you. In the end, Jesus says that people will know we are his followers not by "the uniformity of our political opinions" but by our "love for one another" (Jn. 13:35).

## Questions

*It's okay if you don't get through all the questions. These questions are nothing more than a launching point for moving toward everyday life like Jesus. Feel free to add additional questions of your own.*

- Everyone here might not know each other. Let's fix that. **Can everyone say their name, how long they've been going to our church, and something you care about more than the average person?**
- Before we jump into our texts for this week, let's get a reading on how engaged everyone is with politics in our cultural moment. **On a scale of 1-10 (1 = "Wait, it's an election year?" and 10 = "I start every day by reading about politics"), how engaged are you with politics right now?**
- This week we're exploring the political implications of Eden. **Will someone read our first text from Genesis 1:26-28?** Then, let's consider the following questions together:
  - **What are some things that stick out to you from this text—especially, but not limited to, things that might have relevance for our politics?**
  - **What might it mean to be made in the image of God—according to this text?**
  - On Sunday, Austin summarized being made in the image of God as being made for *creative rule* in every area of our lives, which means drawing out the underdeveloped potential of God's world. **Can anyone give an example of how we do that (and not just in our political lives)?**
  - **What might being made in God's image have to do with our politics?**
  - **As followers of Jesus, what are some reasons why we can't just write off politics?**
- **Will someone read our second text for this week from Genesis 3:1-24?** Then, let's consider the following questions together:
  - **What are some things that stick out to you from this text—especially, but not limited to, things that might have relevance for our politics?**
  - **What difference might it make that we're *not* doing politics in Eden anymore?**
  - On Sunday, Austin said that we're not Eden anymore but we all have a *longing* for Eden. That means that in most political visions you can catch a glimpse of something *good* from Eden (even if you might disagree with how they're going about it).
    - **What's something *good* you can see in the democrat / progressive vision?**
    - **What's something *good* you can see in the republican / conservative vision?**
  - The problem is when these good things become *god*. This is what's known as an ideology (or what the Bible calls idolatry). **What problems can happen when we take something good and make it into a god we serve at all costs?**
- **What was your biggest takeaway from the sermon or discussion this week?**

## Prayer

*Spend some time responding to this week's discussion in prayer—especially for this political season. Pray the Lord reveals any political idolatries you have and helps you see glimpses of Eden in your political opponents.*