

Governing Authorities

5-30-21

Romans 13:1–7 (ESV) NO O/H

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

After Chapters 1-12, we are fully equipped servants of Christ. Now, we are given some instructions on dealing with the governing authorities seemingly running this world. As mature believers, we realize that God works through Governing Authorities. In this section of Scripture, we see the Hand of God moving through Governing authorities.

- There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.
- Whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed.
- Authorities are God's servants for our good.
- Authorities are the servants of God.
- Authorities are ministers of God.

Proverbs declares God's sovereignty over Governing Authorities.

Proverbs 21:1 (ESV)

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever HE will.

Jesus totally substantiates this truth when HE spoke to the Roman governor Pilate.

John 19:11 (ESV)

Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."

The Apostle Paul submitted to Governing Authorities.

Acts 25:8 (ESV)

Paul argued in his defense, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense."

This is the norm and the principle we must follow. However, with this norm, we know that the devil has limited authority, and his purpose is to reek havoc on God's people.

1 John 5:19 (ESV)

The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

As believers, we know that the Governing Authorities are not the true enemy, but it is the corrupt influence of the devil.

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, we know that National conflicts reveal greater Spiritual conflicts going on all around us. When Habakkuk told God that he did not understand what was going on around him, God told him to look at the nations:

Habakkuk 1:5 (ESV)

“Look among the nations, and see;

wonder and be astounded.

For I am doing a work in your days

that you would not believe if told.”

God dealing with Pharaoh is one of the many accounts revealing how God works with Governing Authorities for HIS purpose.

Romans 9:17 (ESV)

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

We need to pay attention to the nations and to all our governing authorities at every level. God is doing an astonishing work in our days beyond our belief. One place we should pay special attention is Israel. My personal opinion is that Israel is “God’s time clock” concerning the birth pangs before Jesus’ return. As an example, look at what God said HE would be doing with Israel near the end of time.

Zechariah 12:1–3 (ESV) NO O/H

¹ The oracle of the word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus declares the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: ² “Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples (happening today). The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. ³ On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples (happening today). All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it (in process today).”

As interesting as all this may be, the bigger question is how do we navigate our world situation. How are we to submit to Governing Authorities when they are acting contrary to God's commandments or requiring us to violate God's commandments? We learned last week that Christians are to be peaceful and loving. However, we are not to violate our faith. **Like the early church, we must take a stand.**

Acts 4:18–20 (ESV) NO O/H

¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Later, the apostles restated this truth.

Acts 5:29 (ESV)

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”

The early church leader, Polycarp, he was burned at the stake, because he would not call Caesar God. As believers we have a different world view. Therefore, we look at the nations, and see; we wonder and are astounded. We are amazed but not afraid, because God is working on our behalf. **We have confidence because we are citizens of heaven.**

Philippians 3:20 (ESV)

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

While we are here on earth, we are ambassadors for Christ. As ambassadors we have an assignment.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (ESV)

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

As Ambassadors, we have a message of how to be reconciled to God. We tell people about Christ. Like all ambassadors, once our assignment is complete, we are called home. But while we are here, our message is very clear, direct, and not at all confusing.

Acts 4:12 (ESV)

And there is salvation in no one else (but Jesus), for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.