



Title: A Nation's Only Hope

Theme: Leaders who are God Ordained to be a Blessing

“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For he is God's servant to do you good. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.” (Romans 13:1-2, 4-6)

Regardless of what you hear and how you feel, God's Word is to have the final say in your participation in the political process

The Word of God tells us a lot about governmental authority. Many people, Christians and non-Christians, have become discouraged in what they are seeing in the political process. Many are convincing themselves that it is not worth the trouble to participate in one of the greatest freedoms that God can give a nation, the opportunity of voting for political leaders.

I would propose to you that regardless of what you hear and how you feel, God's Word is to have the final say in your participation in the political process. Our response toward governmental rule will make the difference between receiving the Lord's blessings on our wonderful country or experiencing the chastisements of God.

Romans 13:1-2, 4-6 says, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For he is God's servant to do you good. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.” (Romans 13:1-6)

What does God's Word say about government and what should be the goal for a nation that desires the blessings of God upon her people?

“Why does a nation that had founding fathers who feared God have laws that openly allow things to go on that are clearly against God’s Word?”

The first question that must be answered is “Why does a nation that had founding fathers who feared God have laws that openly allow things to go on that are clearly against God’s Word?” Ezekiel 20:25 gives us the answer, God said to Ezekiel speaking about the people of God who rebelled against Him by not following His decrees and were not careful to keep His laws. The Lord Almighty says, *“I also gave them over to statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by...”* (Ezekiel 20:25)

We all must understand that back in the time of laying a foundation for this nation there were men who knew Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. How many no one knows.

The foundation of this country is clearly spelled out in the words of William Bradford who became governor of the Plymouth Colony as he described the mission of the Pilgrims. Mr. Bradford said, “They cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying a good foundation... for the advancement of the gospel of Christ in the remote parts of the world...”

It is very evident that the men who God used to lay the foundation of this nation were men who had a fear of the Lord. Listen to these quotations from our founding fathers and other national leaders. Men like George Washington who said, “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

In his farewell speech of 1796 Mr. Washington said, “Of all habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. ...Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.” George Washington was also a man of prayer who could grasp the heart of God. He prayed, “Direct my thoughts, words and work. Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by thy Holy Spirit... Daily frame me more and more into the likeness of Thy Son Jesus Christ.”

The third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson said, “God ...gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis... ...I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever.” Thomas Jefferson knew the need of a nation to walk in reverence before God and to live with a Biblical understanding of what it means to live in the fear of the Lord.

One of America's Revolutionary leaders, Patrick Henry said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ."

We know this to be true because of the heart that was reflected in men who signed the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution. John Witherspoon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence said, "Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the Cross of Christ." Alexander Hamilton, signer of the Constitution said, "I have a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a sinner. I look to Him for mercy."

There have always been attacks on the faith of the men God used to lay the foundation for this nation and even on Christians the Lord is using now to govern this nation. One such man was Benjamin Franklin who has often and still is accused of being a deist. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787 he clearly said, "I have lived long. Sir, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it [possible] that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of [the Tower of] Babel... My views... are the results of life of inquiry and reflection, and very different from the anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity, I am, indeed opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus Himself. I am a Christian in the only sense in which He wished anyone to be; sincerely attached to His doctrines in preference to all others."

These powerful testimonies of great men whom God has raised up to lay the foundation of this wonderful country should set the standard for which Republicans and Democrats lay as the platform of their political agenda. Our early founding fathers for the most part were statesmen who had a reverent fear of the Lord, great knowledge of His Word, and were no shame in seeking God's will in the governing of this nation.

Because of our disregard of what the Bible says about selecting and having leaders who do not fear God, we are seeing laws and ordinances that are based on this world's view. This causes Christians to live by ordinances and laws that are in direct opposition to the written Word of God. Amazingly most church attendees are not aware of it because they have disregarded the Word of God. They would rather watch TV, play games on computers and satisfy self instead of spending painstaking hours of prayerful reading and Bible study before making decisions about their lives. By doing so they willfully shut out the Lord's direction for them and are left to the demise of the flesh, the world and the lies of the devil.

One of our nation most noted modern day prophets, David Wilkerson, spoke of concern that some day preachers will be put in jail for preaching that homosexuality is a sin. Other men of God are warning of a time when churches will lose their tax free status because they cannot endorse the laws of a nation that allows sin against God to reign in the land. The people of God could very well find themselves put into captivity just like the Israelites did and having to face laws they cannot live by.

According to Dr. James Dobson of "Focus on the Family" our nation is once again in great danger of falling into the hands of political leaders who do not share the views of those who are born again Christians. This nation needs to see conservative voters get out and vote for the best candidate possible. If not, Christians will find themselves facing more laws that are directly against the will of God for a nation who claims to want to live under God's blessings.

The Word of God has directions for a nation that lives under the slogan, "In God We Trust."

When the people of God disregard the Word of God and when a people in a nation despise the decrees and the laws of God, laws will be made that have a negative effect causing everyone to be chastised by the Lord. The Word of God has directions for a nation that lives under the slogan, "In God We Trust." Exodus 18:19-23 says, "Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to Him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times... That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." (Exodus 18:19-23)

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law was priest of Midian and he was a wise, godly man who knew the faithfulness of the Lord. He gave Moses some advice that should be taken note of by all who live in the United States of America.

Let the Holy Spirit of God place this deep within your heart and mind regarding the selection of men or women who are going to lead this nation's governmental affairs. Select capable people from among this nation's borders, servants who fear God, trustworthy servants who hate dishonest gain. Have them serve in political affairs for the people at all times. This will cause the people in the nation to be satisfied.

Jethro told Moses to have these God fearing servants serve as judges. “Judges” (*sapat*) here means to govern. This Hebrew word is much more inclusive than the modern day concept of judging and encompasses all the facets and function of government; executive, legislative, judicial and warfare.

(The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament; Gesenius Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon on the Old Testament; Tyndale Bible Dictionary)

Judges are to have a reverent fear of the Lord and they are to take their charge seriously. Those who serve in political affairs are to have good sense, understand business, be bold and not threatened by frowns and grumblings nor controlled by those who praise them and support them. Their focus is to be as statesmen who have vision for the good of all the people. They are to be servants who believe in God, understand He is watching them and they are accountable to Him. This fear of God keeps them from all temptations that may cause them to become corrupt when handing down judgments. These servants are to be people who love truth, can be taken at their word and relied upon. They are to be noble and generous and unable to be touched by bribery.

It is imperative to note that Jethro does not expect Moses to just move on his advice without consultation from the Lord. Jethro said, “If you do this and God so commands.” (Exodus 18:23) This plan was to be submitted to God prayerfully and so should be the selecting of men and women who will govern the affairs of this nation.

Jethro, a man of God tells Moses that if governmental authorities walk before the Lord in uprightness the people whom they govern will be satisfied, cheerful and contented. They will have confidence in the leadership and respond appropriately. Christians who will utilize their God given strengths to affect their community through governmental affairs are Christians used by God to maintain a nation “In God We Trust.”

The office Christian leaders and non-Christians hold must be shown respect

There is much to be said in the Word of God regarding a Christian’s relationship to his government and civil rule. The office Christian leaders and non-Christians hold must be shown respect. 1 Peter 2:13-14 says, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.” (1 Peter 2:13-14)

At the writing of this passage of Scripture Nero was just coming to the throne as the new emperor. Peter is writing to Christians and telling them to submit to every authority or rather the institutions of man. To honor God who ordained human government, Christians are to observe man-made laws carefully as long as those laws do no conflict with the clear teaching of Scripture.

In Acts 4:19 we read of a time when the Sanhedrin had commanded Peter and John to not speak or teach in the Name of Jesus. Their reply was, "Judge for yourself whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19) Our key purpose for living is to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ and do what is best for His kingdom. Our goal in life is to live as Christ who submitted to those in authority.

Our submission to governmental rule with the right attitude can be every bit as much a witness for Christ as our preaching and teaching of God's Word.

What Peter is writing about is obedience to the institution that creates the law and enforces it. It is possible to submit to the institutions and still disobey certain laws, especially laws that would cause us to break the law of God.

For example, when Daniel and his three friends refused to obey the king's dietary regulations, they disobeyed an ordinance; but the way they did it proved that they honored the king and respected the authorities. In Daniel 1:5 we read that the "...king assigned a daily food and wine from the kings table." In Daniel 1:8 we read that "...Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way."

Daniel and his three friends had the courage to observe the laws of the Torah (Leviticus 11: Deuteronomy 14) which forbid the eating of foods that may have been sacrificed to the gods of Babylon (Marduk, Nebo and Ishtar; Expositors Bible Commentary). Therefore these foods would have been unclean for them to eat. Daniel did not lead the whole group into a rebellion, but they stood their ground and God granted them favor and sympathy with the official. (Daniel 1:9)

Peter and the other Apostles faced a similar challenge shortly after Pentecost. (Acts 4-5) The Jewish council commanded them to stop preaching in the Name of Jesus, but Peter pointed them to his only authority and they did not deny the authority of the council. They submitted to the institution and did not physically assault them nor start a rebellion yet they still preached even if it meant going to jail.

Christians can still respect the office even though the person holding the office is not respectable. As much as possible, we should seek to cooperate with the government and obey the law, but we must never allow the law to make us violate our conscience or disobey God's Word.

Years ago Jack Lockwood was in China passing out Christian tracts. One night the law enforcement came to the motel and arrested him and those with him. They went down for questioning without a fight or argument. After their interrogation the police decided that they would hand out the tracts through a local church. Jack and those with him were still obeying God's Great Commission and at the same time respected the authority of law enforcement in China at that time. Christians must be led of the Holy Spirit so they can walk in full obedience to the written Word yet at the same time show respect to the institutions that God has ordained in any certain town, state or country.

Christians must be faithful to pray for those in governmental authority

Christians can walk in respect and obedience to an institution put in place by the Lord and at the same time fulfill God's ordained purpose for them. They also must be faithful to pray for those in governmental authority.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 says, "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4) Proverbs 21:1 says "The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it like a watercourse wherever, He pleases."

God's Word affirms that the decisions of the king are under the Lord's control. God moves the king to do as he pleases. As the farmer channels the water where he wants and regulates its flow, so does the Lord with the king. No human ruler then, is supreme. (The Expositors Bible Commentary) God determines the results of his reign and how long he reigns as the king or in America's case, governs as president.

We read in the Word of God, time and time again of the Lord raising up a king, good or bad, to achieve the purposes He so desires. There were times when he raised up a bad king to chastise the nation Israel for her disobedience and when Israel would cry out to Him, God would raise up a king to bring a deliverance of some kind. First and Second Kings demonstrate conclusively the necessity of believers keeping God's covenant obligations. The children of God have obligations to the Lord, their families and government. Therefore, Paul's admonition, "I urge" (*parakaleo*) means that it is an urgency that we be faithful to pray for those who are in governmental authority over us, both those who are serving in office right now and those whom we would like to see put in office.

First and Second Kings record the history of those who are responsible in governing the people of God, kings and prophets. Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers are to be doing what Moses did, "Teach [the people] the decrees and laws, [or rather the whole council of God's Word]. Those who have been appointed into governmental positions are to serve the people of this nation in reverent fear of God.

Christians need to be praying for statesman and ask the Lord to override political party fights and control. They are to be asking the Lord to raise up statesmen who fear God and make decisions according to the written Word of God.

Christians are to be asking the Lord to give everyone in office an opportunity to hear the divine inspiration that God gave Solomon, "So be strong. Show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in His ways, and keep His decrees and commands, His laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go..." (1 Kings 2:2-3)

Our country has only one hope

Our country has only one hope. Christians need to pray regularly for the Lord to raise up men and women of God to run for political office who walk in step with the Holy Spirit of Christ. Even though it appears to us right now that good candidates are hard to find we are to stay faithful to our nation and intercede for her. We can pray to the Lord who controls the king's heart like He does the water courses of the world. We can pray, "Lord, move our congress to make and maintain laws that are pleasing to you and good for Christians to live by. Lord, make us willing and able to obey the laws of the land for the sake of Jesus Christ and Lord, help us to pray regularly for those who you have placed in office for our own good."

Let us Pray!

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