

Authority & Submission
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Perhaps it is simply blood heritage as a decedent of leaders in the Scottish Reformation, several separatist Pilgrim forefathers, and soldiers in the American revolution and the American War between the States that I am greatly tempted to go on a rant about the nation of lemmings we have become as our society follows over reacting government leaders off the cliff of fear and paranoia into pestilential socialist totalitarianism. Our government nannies want to be the ultimate helicopter moms making sure no one is put at risk except those they decide to put at risk by their policies - whether witting or unwitting. Frankly, Governor Cuomo and his administration have blood on their hands in putting COVID-19 positive patients into nursing facilities with the most vulnerable in our population which has had devastating results. Yet, he claims to be so concerned about even just one life. His actions on this issue and in extending abortion to even include infanticide of a baby that lives through a botched abortion absolutely demonstrate he is either a bald-faced liar or one of the most self deceived people on the planet.

However, I will resist that urge because there is actually something that concerns me more, and that is that there have been so many religious leaders that have retreated with hardly a whimper claiming that Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 requires us to obey the government, and besides, we need to do it out of *“love for our neighbor.”* This morning I want to tackle both of these ideas and challenge religious leaders to quit being so timid and appearing as lazy hirelings. Rise up and demonstrate your trust in God to take some risks and lead again. My topic today is authority and submission.

Romans 13

I preached through Romans in 2002-2003 and did an exposition of Romans 13:1-7 and the Christian's relationship with government back then. It is a fairly straight forward passage setting forth both principles of Christian behavior and government responsibilities. In brief, because Christians are people who are to be living and holy sacrifices acceptable to God who are being transformed by the renewing of their minds through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, believers should be the best citizen of any nation regardless of the form of government in every area reflective of what is good and the most resistive in every area reflective of evil. Why? Simply because our lives are given over to God to do His will in everything. A proper vertical relationship with God enables us to have proper horizontal relationships with people. We love one other without hypocrisy in every respect. We humbly use our gifts to build up and serve one another and strive to live in godliness. This character also applies to our response to our enemies in persevering in tribulation, not seeking our own revenge, but following our Lord's command to love and pray for them. Romans 12:9 states we are to abhor (hate, despise, are repulsed by) what is evil while clinging to what is good and even overcome evil with good.

Romans 13 cannot be properly understood without first applying Romans 12. Too often preachers take passages out of context and even Biblical expositors can easily fall in the trap of being so focused on the immediate text they fail to see its near and broader context. This has been a problem in using Romans 13 to claim Christians simply need to obey the government. Let's take a quick look at Romans 13 beginning with the general principle in verses 1-2.

¹ *Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.* ² *Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.* 1 Peter 2:13-14 is similar, ¹³ *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king*

as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

Because Christians submit themselves to God, they will submit themselves to any authority that extends from God. The term subjection / submit, ὑποτάσσω / hupasso, is in the passive voice in both passages and in them mean to willingly submit to governing authorities instead of being forced to obey. Those who oppose with active resistance will be judged guilty and liable to punishment. But please take note this principle of subjection to government is based on submission to God. All human governments are responsible to fulfill their responsibilities before God, and as we shall see, those that resist Him will receive His condemnation.

³ For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; ⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. 1 Peter 2:14 is also specific that government is “for punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.”

The two fold purpose of human government is to promote what is good and punish what is evil. Because governments are run by humans, all of them will fail to one degree or another in this, and therefore subject to God’s correction or even replacement of them. That is clearly described in the warnings and prophecies against nations throughout the Old Testament and the testament of human history. Woe to any government or society that declines to the point of calling what is evil good, and what is good evil (Isaiah 5:20). Again, Christians are to abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. Part of that abhorrence of evil will resist what is evil.

⁵ Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for [rulers] are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷ Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax [is due;] custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Christians do what is right including paying taxes and following proper protocols of respect and honor to those in those positions of authority because it is right before God and not because of fear of punishment. Non-Christians are motivated by fear. Followers of Christ are to be motivated by the pursuit of righteousness.

That is a very brief explanation of the passage. The question that now arises is whether Paul and Peter are stating principles to be followed or making commands to be obeyed in all circumstances. It becomes easily obvious that this is a principle and not an absolute command when the immediate context and the many examples of godly resistance to governments are examined.

In the immediate context the commands in Romans 12:9 & 21 to abhor evil and cling to what is good, and to not be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good, carry with them an inherent resistance to evil. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Prov. 8:13). Loving good and hating evil requires a pursuit of justice (Amos 5:15). The weak and needy are to be rescued from the hands of the wicked (Psalm 82:2-4). Such commands to do good are not abrogated just because the evil oppressor is the government.

I also must point out that even those who believe these are strong commands to submit to government do not make them absolute for they recognize that a government that requires you to do something contrary to a command of God must be disobeyed and resisted as Peter told the Sanhedrin in Acts 5:29, “We must obey God rather than men.” The question then becomes how do you determine when a governmental edict crosses that line? That is not always an easy question to answer for multiple reasons including the type of government, but I hope to give you some guidance by looking at some of the many examples of the godly resisting wickedness in government even to the point of being used by God to replace a government that will not fulfill God’s purposes for it.

Firm Resolve and a Plea - Daniel 1

The book of Daniel is an informative study on this topic because there are two different types of governments involved and varied responses to the authority of those governments. In Daniel 1, the king appointed a particular diet and education for the captured young Jews being trained for the king's service. However, Daniel and his friends believed the diet would be defiling to them as Jews, so *"Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank"* (1:8). Daniel then made a plea to the commander over them and proposed a test of a different, more simple diet to be given to them for ten days after which the commander would evaluate and *"deal with your servants according to what you see."* The text does not say why Daniel thought the diet would defile him and neither does it say what Daniel would have done if God had not intervened so that the test was a great success with Daniel and his friends appearing better and fatter than all the other youths that had been on the king's appointed diet.

In this case, Daniel made a firm resolve about what he could not do, but then found a way to appeal to the authority over him while relying on God to work out what would have happened. We will get an insight into what Daniel would have done if the test had not been favorable in chapter 3, but next is a request and prayer in chapter 2

A Request & Prayer - Daniel 2

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which the Babylonian court advisors could not tell and interpret, so the king decreed that all the wise men were to be killed. That would have included Daniel and his friends. However, when Daniel heard about the decree, he went to the king and requested time to tell the dream and interpret it for him. This would have been due to Daniel being in the king's personal service and found to be ten times wiser than all the rest by the king. Daniel and his friends then spent that time praying until God granted their petition after which Daniel declared to Nebuchadnezzar what God had done, then told him the dream and its interpretation. God had brought this about to demonstrate that the gods of the Babylonians were false and only He was true God.

Dealing with a Despot - Daniel 3-4

King Nebuchadnezzar was a true despot having absolute power in his realm. He could do what he wanted and acknowledged no authority over him. God would change that.

Daniel 3 gives the history of Nebuchadnezzar's flirt with creating a religion. He had a very tall statue made and commanded that all the officials of his kingdom he had gathered together before the statue were to fall down and worship it when the music played. Those that did not would be cast into a furnace of blazing fire. Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Hannaiah, Mishael and Azariah) were present and refused to bow to the statue. Their answer to the king's threat and declaration that no god could deliver them out of his hands if they did bow and worship was direct. Daniel 3:16-18, *Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷ "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."* Let me emphasize here that these three Hebrew men were resolute in what they would and would not do regardless of the personal outcome to themselves. God was to be honored and obeyed at all costs including only worshiping Him.

You know the rest of the story. The king was enraged and made the fire seven times hotter and had them bound and thrown in, but God protected them so that the king could see them unbound and walking around in the midst of the fire with a fourth man whose appearance was *"like a son of the gods."* Nebuchadnezzar was forced to change his mind and declared that they were servants of the Most High God and commended them for their actions in refusing to worship or serve any god but their own.

He then declared that no one would be allowed to speak against the God of the Jews on pain of tortuous death for no other god could deliver in that way.

Daniel 4 recounts the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. The king had a dream which Daniel interpreted and warned him that God would judge the king's pride. However, a year later, the king took glory for himself in building Babylon and God made him insane so that king Nebuchadnezzar ate grass like a cow and lived out in the fields drenched with the dew. At the end of seven years God restored his sanity and the king declared, *"I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation."*³⁵ *"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"* (Daniel 4:34–35). Authoritarian government officials such as the blasphemous Governor Cuomo should take the story of Nebuchadnezzar to heart.

Rebuking the King - Daniel 5

In Daniel 5 King Belshazzar, a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, holds a feast even while the Medo-Persian army has surrounded Babylon. In utter arrogance he and his officials are drinking from the vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem while praising the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone. The king sobered up very quickly when the fingers of a man's hand emerged from the wall opposite the king and began writing. The king offered great reward to anyone that could interpret the writing. Eventually the elderly Daniel was called. Daniel turned down the offer of the king's reward and gave him a stern rebuke for his failure to learn from the history of God humbling Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon was captured and Belshazzar was killed that night.

The history of the Israel as recorded in the Old Testament is filled with prophet after prophet rebuking kings, giving warnings and pronouncing God's judgment on Israel, Judah and the nations surrounding them for all sorts of offenses against God and His laws. Every Bible teacher and preacher has a responsibility to recount that history and to give applicable warnings of sin and encouragements to righteousness. While the specifics in Israel's history will not apply, the principles certainly will, for as Proverbs 14:34 succinctly states, *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."* That is a warning to Governor Cuomo and every official great or small like him. God will not continually ignore your arrogance and blasphemy. Repent before God brings His wrath upon you. In addition, every Government official should take heed that according to the pattern in Romans 1, God's judgment of sin is often removing His hand to allow man to pursue greater sin, and our policies are that sin. You should be calling on those in your districts to days of fasting, repentance and prayer for God's mercy instead of arrogantly thinking your policies will save the population. They will not and in fact they are doing the exact opposite and are more dangerous than the virus. The decline is in spite of your foolish policies, not because of them.

Law & Kings - Daniel 6

In Daniel 6 there is a change in government and the king is no longer a despot, but one who is under the authority of the law himself (Daniel 6:15). Daniel's enemies use that fact to manipulate king Darius to make a foolish law that no one could make a petition to any god or man except the king for 30 days on penalty of being thrown into a den of lions. After Daniel knew about the law, he simply continued his normal practice of going three times a day to his roof chamber with the windows open toward Jerusalem and praying and giving thanks to God. Daniel's enemies then used this against him, and despite the king's best efforts, he could not change the law after it was made and so Daniel was thrown into the den of lions. King Darius was confident that Daniel's God would deliver him. Nevertheless, the king spent the night awake and fasting.

When the king went to the lion's den in the morning, Daniel told him, *"My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."* We will come back to this statement in a moment. Daniel was removed and his enemies were thrown in, and the lions immediately *"overpowered them and crushed all their bones."* King Darius then made a decree that all within his realm were to *"fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 "He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."*

Going back to verse 22, note carefully that Daniel states unequivocally that he had was found innocent before God and had *"committed no crime."* Daniel had indeed violated the decree of the king and was thrown into the lion's den because of it, but the law of God supersedes any law of man so that Daniel was in fact innocent and had committed no crime. The actual crime was manipulation of the king to make the foolish decree, a crime for which those men and their families paid for with their lives.

This is an extremely important principle which I will be expanding on in the next two sections of this sermon, but I also want to point out that there is no command in Scripture that Daniel had to pray three times a day with his windows open toward Jerusalem. Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem in keeping with Solomon's petition at the dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8, but that temple had been destroyed. Daniel could have prayed in secret or at least closed his windows. Daniel disobeyed the king's edict, and did so openly though not defiantly. Why? Simply because he knew it was right before God and it would be an affront to God for him to change his normal practice out of fear for his life. Daniel would trust God for the outcome of his effort to demonstrate that trust by continuing his normal practice of prayer and worship to God.

Notice as well that Daniel did not run away nor did he resist being cast into the den of lions. Like Hannaiah, Mishael and Azariah, he accepted the evil consequences for his righteous actions and would trust God to deliver. Daniel and his friends are great examples of faith and proper resistance to ungodly government edicts. We would do well to emulate them in our own lives.

Lesser Magistrates

Though out the Scriptures we find different types of government and various levels of government magistrates that have lines of authority extending upward and downward. Depending on the type of government, lesser magistrates may have to follow implicitly what their superiors decree, or they may be able to resist due to a greater authority residing in someone or something else. Daniel's enemies held the king accountable to the law which was a higher authority than the king. Daniel himself disobeyed that law because he was obligated to a higher authority, namely God himself.

Paul is a great example of a person who knew how to use his rights as a Roman citizen to advance the kingdom of God. In Acts 16 he is illegally beaten and thrown in jail, but he does not bring up his Roman citizenship until the magistrates wanted to release him and Silas in secret and leave town. Paul called them to task on what they had done and did not leave until he returned to the newly planted church meeting in Lydia's house and encouraged the brethren first.

In Acts 21-22, after Paul was arrested in the Temple by the Roman commander, Paul again made use of his Roman citizenship in order to speak to the people before going to the Roman barracks. He then used it again to prevent being unlawfully scourged. That also allowed him to escape the plot to murder him and be under heavy Roman guard (Acts 23). It was also a factor in remaining in custody with limited freedom in Caesarea for two years instead of being turned over to the Jews. And it was the basis of his appeal to Caesar when under Festus it appeared he would be sent to Jerusalem. In each of these cases, there was a higher authority than the local magistrate who may or may not have followed the laws regarding Roman citizens.

These are important points in understanding that Paul's directions in Romans 13 to submit to the governing authorities have limitations. A particular governing authority might legally or illegally treat you horribly, but such authorities cannot take away your rights as a citizen of your nation, and your obligation of obedience is always to the highest authority, which is God. That is why prophet after prophet disobeyed kings and lower magistrates in carrying out God's commands to them. Jeremiah's counsel would even be considered treasonous. David became an outlaw under Saul's rule, and in David's case, who was the "governing authority"? Saul, who had the reigns of power, or David, who had been anointed by Samuel to replace Saul?

Natural Rights

In the formation of the United States, much was based on the ideas of "*the Laws of Nature and Nature's God*" for they are the basis for self-evident truths such as "*all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights*" such as "*Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" The idea of natural law comes from this truth that man's greatest obligation is to God, his Creator, and therefore God's laws and commandments are the highest authority which no human government has the right to abrogate or usurp. The fact that God is the ultimate authority means that there is a limit to human government and man's obligation to that government. Good governments seek to understand what God has declared about any given subject and then craft their laws to reflect God's will on the matter.

The rights and obligations that extend from Natural Law are based in God's commands and are contrasted to Legal Rights and the obligations that extend from that which arise from human government. However, what a government can grant, it can also take away, which is why the American system of government was founded on Natural Law coming from the Creator instead of human law established by government. You can violate human law without violating natural, God given law as did Daniel and therefore still be innocent in the court that counts - God's. You can also violate God's law while keeping human law and be guilty in the court that counts - God's. That is why Jesus became a man and paid the redemption price so that we can be forgiven of our violations of God's law through faith in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*"

The American System

There are those that use Romans 13 to disparage the American Revolution. That is usually because such people have succumbed to the idea commonly but incorrectly taught in schools that it was over "*taxation without representation.*" A simple reading of the Declaration of Independence should eliminate that idea since taxation is point number 17 of 28 specific indictments against the king for "*repeated injuries and usurpations*" of their rights under both natural law and as English citizens and therefore rightly labeling him a tyrant. The document could rightly have been called *A Recognition of Independence* in light of the multiple instances of his waging war against them as if they were a separate nation. The "divine right of kings" was limited and has always been limited for no king except Jesus is God.

The American system of government was built off Natural Law and the inalienable rights that proceed from it. Governments, at both federal and state levels, were designed to be limited with just governmental power arising from the consent of the governed. Law would be the authority instead of government officials and the law itself would be limited by the restrictions established in the national Constitution and the individual state constitutions. Government cannot legally suspend the Constitution even in an emergency, though it often has done so by sheer weight of its police power. That is the condition in which we find ourselves at the present time

Constitutional rights under the First, Second, Fourth and Fifth amendments are being usurped based on a declared medical emergency without parameters of what actually constitutes the emergency. That is why the goals have been switching from flattening the infection curve to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed, to infection and death numbers below ever changing target numbers, to testing abilities, to some unknown vaccine to be produced sometime in the unknown future. Governments are getting away with it because the media has created fear and paranoia in the people who are then willing to give up freedom for a nebulous promise of protection from sickness and death.

While the initial restrictions may have had some basis in reality and caution could have been considered wise, the draconian orders shutting down “non-essential” businesses and entities and “stay at home” rules for healthy people crossed the Constitutional line from the very beginning. As more data has come in demonstrating the computer modeling was absolutely wrong from the beginning, people are becoming less inclined to continue to allow those constitutional rights to be usurped. We have the right to free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, to peacefully assemble, to bear arms, to be secure from unreasonable searches and seizures or deprivation of life, liberty or property without due process of law and compensation.

Let me remind those in the military and law enforcement that your sworn allegiance is to the constitution, not any government official. If your commanding officer gives you an order contrary to the constitution, it is an illegal order and you are obligated to disobey it even if it means that you may lose your job or be subject to court martial.

To every Christian, your first allegiance is and always will be first and foremost to God and carrying out His will. Any command given to you by any human entity that is contrary to that must be disobeyed in favor of carrying out the principles and precepts of God’s word and honoring Him. Keep in mind the example of Daniel. You do not have to have a specific command. It was enough for him that to change his practice of prayer and worship would be considered dishonoring God in favor of man. He was innocent. He had not committed any crime.

Loving Your Neighbor

The final issue I need to address is the claim that we are love our neighbors and therefore we must support the government shut downs and stay home except for when we have to go out. Love of your neighbor should always make you cautious about your personal actions, and I also hope that people will remember that in the future with any communicable disease they pick up. At the beginning of this crises there was some wisdom in using some extreme caution such as spatial distancing and restricting mass gatherings since there was still so many unknowns. We now know much more and that the original models were not just wrong, but fraudulent. SARS-CoV-2 is a nasty and deadly virus, but it is not pneumonic plague or anything that can justify the continued draconian restrictions.

Love for my neighbor will make me sensitive to others including their fears, but such love does not mean I must join them in their paranoia. It also does not require me to ignore my own training and a plethora of contradictory information that demonstrate the current government protocols are doing the opposite of their intended purpose. Not only are they destroying the economy and emotional and mental well being of people, but they also put their health and life at greater risk by blocking people from medical resources by fear and fiat. The very policies of isolation, staying indoors and wearing face masks result in a decline in the immune system creating a population at greater risk of serious epidemic from multiple sources.

If you truly love your neighbor, you will sacrificially help those who are at great risk in any way you can, while speaking the truth to those not at such risk and encouraging them to move past the media hyped fears, take reasonable precautions as should always be done, and go out and live life to the glory of God.

Conclusion

The conclusion of lines of authority and submission is this - God is the sovereign Creator who will hold accountable every human for their obedience to Him. He establishes governmental authority to carry out His purposes in promoting what is good and wrath upon those who do evil. God removes failing governments by many methods. So called Natural Law actually refers to the rights and responsibilities God places on all men to obey Him first and foremost. A Christian's submission to God is the priority and then to the legal authority of government until it requires or promotes something contrary to God's will. In the United States, the legal authority is the law and especially as established in the Constitution. Government officials that require something contrary to the Constitution are to be opposed as illegal usurpers of the law and proper governmental authority. Christians who run afoul of legal authority while obeying God's commands are innocent before God, but they will suffer for the sake of righteousness at the hands of those who are evil. You are to maintain a humble and godly attitude when suffering while trusting God for the final outcome.

Out of love, each of us is to consider our neighbor more important than ourselves, but not as important as God. We are to seek their best interest even at our own sacrifice, but never at the sacrifice of our obedience and worship of God. While being sensitive to the fears of others, we never yield to paranoia and do things contrary to the truth. We seek to encourage the fainthearted and help them overcome their fears and to trust God. We speak the truth in love even when it contradicts political correctness.

Finally, while every church situation is different and therefore the response to SARS-CoV-2 will be different based on demographics, logistics and government oppression, the effort of all Christians is to worship and honor God to the greatest extent possible. Pastors are to lead in that effort so that if possible they might even be able to expand ministry while being oppressed. If God could do that in the early church, He can certainly still do it now. Those that are fearful need to grow in their trust in God. Pastors that are acting like hirelings need to repent or remove themselves from their positions for they are detrimental the cause of Christ and to God's people. Every Christian is to look for every opportunity to proclaim the gospel and our hope in Christ demonstrated by a calm and peaceful spirit that trusts God and serving those who are in true need.

As for this church, as logistics allow, our single focus on where and how we meet will be the inclusion of the greatest number of people in the active worship of our great and glorious God whether it is inside or outside the church building.

Sermon Notes - May 17, 2020
Authority & Submission - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Governor Cuomo's government has caused the _____ of nursing home patients & put all NY at risk

Romans 13

Christians should be the best _____ in every area reflecting what is good & the most resistive to evil

A proper vertical relationship with _____ enables proper horizontal relationships with people

Romans 13 will be misinterpreted unless properly understood by first applying _____

Because Christians _____ submit themselves to God, they submit to authority extending from Him

The God given _____ of government is to promote what is good and punish what is evil

Christians do what is right toward government because it is right before God, not out of _____ of government

Immediate context & Biblical examples show Romans 13 is _____ and not absolute commands

To abhor evil and cling to what is good carries an inherent _____ to evil

Acts 5:29 - government must be _____ if it requires anything contrary to God's commands

Firm Resolve and a Plea - Daniel 1

Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's _____ - & then made an appeal

God intervened and the test was successful allowing the _____ diet to continue

A Request & Prayer - Daniel 2

Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the wise men to be _____ for failing to present and interpret his dream

Daniel appealed for _____ to pray - and God granted the dream & interpretation proving He was true God

Dealing with a Despot - Daniel 3-4

Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch, and he commanded the statue he made to be _____ or death

Daniel 3:16-18 - the three Hebrews _____ to worship the statue regardless of the outcome

The enraged king cast them into the fiery furnace, but God rescued them proving He was the _____

Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream & warned him about the danger of his _____

God did judge and the king was _____ for 7 years - eating grass like a cow

Daniel 4:34-35 - Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God to be the Most High and _____

Rebuking the King - Daniel 5

Belshazzar was drunk and blasphemous, but _____ when the hand writing on the wall appeared

Daniel turned down the offered reward and sternly _____ the king for his failure to learn from history

Prophet after prophet _____ kings, warned nations and pronounced God's judgment

Modern wanna-be despots should learn the lessons from history before they are _____ by God

Law & Kings - Daniel 6

Darius was king, but he was restricted in his actions by _____

Daniel knew about the new law, but continued his _____ practices of prayer, and was thrown to the lions

God protected Daniel while the same lions crushed his enemies - and _____ glorified God

Daniel was innocent and committed _____ - though he had violated the king's foolish decree
There was no Scriptural command for Daniel to pray as he did - he simply continued his _____ practice
Like his friends, Daniel did not run away or resist the punishment received - he _____ God for the outcome

Lesser Magistrates

All lesser magistrates are responsible to the highest authority in that government type and ultimately to _____
Paul _____ those who violated his Roman citizenship and used it to advance the gospel
Romans 13 must be interpreted in light of Paul's use of his _____ - rights still exist even if violated
Prophets and lower magistrates disobeyed the commands of kings in order to obey _____ authority & God

Natural Rights

"Natural Law" is based on the truth that man's greatest obligation is to God as the _____ authority
Natural law / God's laws _____ the authority of human government and man's obligation to it.
"Legal rights" extend from _____ government, and what it gives, it can take away
Keeping Legal law (man's) but violating natural law (God's) makes you _____ in God's court

The American System

The Declaration of Independence documents the tyrant king's many _____ of both legal & natural law
The American system of limited government was built off of natural law guaranteeing _____ rights
Government cannot legally _____ the Constitution even in an emergency, though it will by police power
Governments usurp rights & keep changing the goals & get away with it due to media hyped _____
The unknown gave some basis in reality to _____ restrictions, but increased data show they were wrong
In America, the first allegiance of law enforcement & military is the _____ - don't obey illegal orders
The first allegiance of every Christian is to _____ - don't obey legal orders contrary to God's will (Daniel)

Loving Your Neighbor

Love of neighbor seeks what is best for others, speaks _____ & encourages, but it does not cater to paranoia
Current policies _____ Constitutional rights, the economy, mental & physical health, & kill people
If you love your neighbor, sacrificially help those at risk & encourage all others with _____ & go live life

Conclusions

All lines of authority trace back to our sovereign God whom we obey even when it means _____ man
When Christians run afoul of man's laws, we _____ for righteousness trusting God for the final outcome
Out of love, we to consider our neighbor more important than ourselves, but not as important as _____
Reactions to COVID-19 will necessarily vary, but we are to honor & proclaim God to the maximum extent
As logistics allow, our single focus is to include the maximum number in the _____ worship of God

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up. 2) Count how many times the word "authority" is mentioned. Talk with your parents about God's authority and the importance of being obedient to Him.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Why should believers be the best citizens of any nation? Why do totalitarian nations consider Christians to be among its worst citizens? Why is it critical to understand Romans 12 in order to properly interpret Romans 13. What is the actual basis for a Christian to be submissive to governing authority? What are the two God given purposes of government? Why is it important for Christians to properly respond to government out of conscience instead of fear? Are the commands of God abrogated by the evil rules set a government? Explain. Why did the Apostles disobey the commands of the Sanhedrin in Acts 5? Why did Daniel resolve not to eat the king's food? What solution did he find for his dilemma? How did that glorify God? What do you think Daniel would have done if he had been still told to eat the king's food? How did Daniel handle the threat to be executed in Daniel 2? How did that glorify God? What was the answer of Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego to the king's edict to worship the statue? What were the immediate consequences? What were the eventual consequences that glorified God? What warning did Daniel give to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4? How did God humble the king? How was God glorified in it? Why did Daniel rebuke Belshazzar in Daniel 5? What other examples of prophets rebuking / disobeying kings can you think of? What warnings should modern Bible teachers and preachers give to people based on these examples? In Daniel 6, why did Daniel continue his practice of openly praying instead of at least shutting the window. Why was the king bound by his own edict after he changed his mind? What did Darius do? How did God protect Daniel? How did that glorify God? Why could Daniel claim to he was innocent and committed no crime when he clearly defied the king's command? Who must lesser magistrates obey in a human government? Who must they always obey regardless of the type of government? How did Paul use his Roman citizenship to further the gospel? How do his actions shed light on what he teaches in Romans 13? What are natural rights as compared to legal rights? Why does natural law trump human legal systems? What happens to someone that obeys government commands but violates natural law in doing so? Why did the Americans declare independence from England? (It was not taxation without representation). Did King George have a "divine right" to do what he wanted? Why or why not? Why is the American system built on natural law? Can the Constitution be suspended due to an emergency? Why or why not? What constitutional rights are being usurped by current government executive orders? What is the basis / goal for the current medical crisis continuing to shift? Should a police officer or military personnel obey an order that is contrary to the Constitution? Explain. To whom is a Christian to give first allegiance? How does love of neighbor direct our actions toward the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic? How can that be balanced with God's commands of a priority on worship of Him? How does love deal with someone who is paranoid?

Sermon Notes - May 17, 2020
Authority & Submission - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Romans 13

Firm Resolve and a Plea - Daniel 1

A Request & Prayer - Daniel 2

Dealing with a Despot - Daniel 3-4

Rebuking the King - Daniel 5

Law & Kings - Daniel 6

Lesser Magistrates

Natural Rights

The American System

Loving Your Neighbor

Conclusions

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

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