

I. The Absolute Standard of God's Word

What a great chapter you can begin to see. Last week we laid out the background to our study in Romans 13, and I hope now you can better see and understand why I did that. There is so much confusion and misinformation about not only our own government, but how you and I as Christians are to react to it or respond to it in all the things that go on.

This chapter is a great chapter for a number of reasons, but I think one of the things that it really focuses on, and I try to make this all of the time, but sometimes certain places in the Bible are just easier to see it. I want you to get out of this, if nothing else. I want you to see what is faced with looking at our government, the day and age that we live in, the world that we live in, like we talked about last week. The absolute importance for an absolute standard in your life.

We live in a world that is changing minute by minute. We live in a world where values that 20 years ago were good values are no longer values. We have to have something that never changes, and that is why the world hates the Bible and hates Christians. The Bible is the one thing, somebody said one time, it is the anvil on which all the philosophies and all the ideas of man have been broken, because the Bible never changes. When you learn in your life the absolute standard that it represents, you will have something to judge everything by, and you will never be caught unaware of what is going on around you.

I think that is what the book of Romans does. We have been talking a lot about the word "perspective," and you are going to hear that a lot. We talk about the three P's of ministry: purpose, passion, and perspective. Right now we are focusing on the aspect of perspective. If there is one word that the book of Romans does in our life, in everything, in all four sections, it gives us a perception of what God is doing. That is the absolute standard I am talking about.

It is not a matter of what our country is doing. It is not a matter of what Congress is doing or the Senate is doing. It is not a matter of what some world leader is doing, what France is doing, or what South America is doing, or Argentina is doing. It is not a matter of what Russia does or Cuba does or what happens in the Middle East. The only real issue that you and I have to focus on in history and what is going on in our world today is what God is doing. That is the key. The book of Romans forms our perspective in every aspect, and in Romans 13, as you began to see last week, and I hope you will see even clearer today, we get the perspective of our government.

II. Submission to Higher Powers

Now today we are going to start working down through these verses. Last week was kind of like an introduction and a background. Now you are going to see it go to work.

Let us start reading in Romans 13:1-5.

Romans 13:1-5

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Now Father, we thank you again and praise you for this great chapter, for this great book that is found in this great Bible, our absolute standard. Help us today as we move down through here to give us clearly insight into what we need to see, that we can better have our own perspective of where we are at in relationship to God and our country. Help us to become aware Christians, Father, that we are not in a little box in a little corner, that we do not see outside in what God is doing. Help us not to be caught up with the occupational dominancy that so many people have, thinking that what they are doing is the most important thing in the world and miss what God is doing. Help us today. We will be careful to give you the honor and the glory and the praise in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

III. God's Ordained Institutions and Gentile Times

Now you remember last week I set the scene with giving you some incredible, tremendous truths about how we should approach our government and get the right perspective. First of all, I told you, if you remember, that in the Bible God ordains three institutions.

1. The family and marriage
2. The church
3. The government

Then, if you remember, I took you back through the book of Daniel, and I showed you how Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 give you a complete historical record of the Gentile nations that are going to be on this earth from 606 B.C. right up to the time that you and I are living in right now. I defined for you one of the great key terms in the Bible called "the times of the Gentiles." We saw that the times of the Gentiles is the period of time that God is not dealing with the world through the nation of Israel, but He is going to deal with the world through the nations. We talked about that.

We got a little insight into the fact that we get bombarded all around everything that we listen to and everything that we hear, how our form of government, a democracy, our form of government of capitalism, is such a great form of government. Yet, in the book of Ecclesiastes, we saw that all forms of government are ultimately against God. They may look good; they may stand for

some core principles, but the bottom line is the number one reason all of them are wrong is because every government system, whether it is communism or whether it is democracy in America or capitalism, all take a stand against the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not know how much you get involved in politics. I do not get involved in it. I am not political at all. I told you that we will talk about it here in a minute, and I talked about how you are not in this world, but you are not of this world. But if you watched Obama's State of the Union address this Wednesday night... now, if you are going to be an informed Christian, I know some of you had Bible things going on through the week; I understand that, but that is what they have DVDs and VHSs and eight-tracks and all that stuff.

The bottom line is this: I will tell you what he did not say. He did not get up there and say, "Now folks, and I already know, I did not have to listen to Obama to know what kind of state the union is in. It is in a mess." But instead of getting up there and saying, "You know what, we have some issues, we have some problems, and we have some things we have to deal with, but we are going to get through this because the One that is going to help us through it is the Lord Jesus Christ, and we just have to hang on together as a nation because the Lord is coming back, and He is going to be our real defense." You did not hear any of that. Not at all. No, it was how great all our programs are, what all we are going to do.

Did you ever notice that the presidents, because there is a movement in America of conservatism that wants to have God in their life, they all throw in this little cheap word at the end: "God bless America." You know why you can get away with saying "God bless America"? Because God can be anything in anybody's mind. Some of you, it may be in your time in your life, you were in Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. If you came through some tough time in your life, Alcoholics Anonymous has helped a lot of people. Alcoholics Anonymous started out with you putting your trust and power in God. But as the country fell apart and God fell apart, now you do not hear about God. Oh, you hear God, but God is whatever you want to make God to be. Now God is a higher power.

You will hear the president, the Congress, and they will talk about God, "God bless America," "God bless this," but they will never bring up the name of Jesus Christ. Never will. Never will. You know when Congress goes in session, they always have some preacher come in and lead in prayer. They have a chaplain in Congress. When you want to go, and if they ever invited you to go and pray, that is a big honor for some guys. The thing is, you have to submit your prayer for approval before you ever get there. You know why you have to do that? Because they want to make sure you do not use the name of Jesus Christ. You can pray in Congress and God up one side and God down the other, but you cannot bring in the name of Jesus Christ because God can be anything, but Jesus Christ is the perspective of who God is.

You know why they do not want to hear the word Jesus Christ? You know why they will not let you talk about Jesus Christ? You know why Obama did not get up and talk about Jesus Christ? You know why the government will not talk about Jesus Christ? It is because when you talk about Jesus Christ, you are forced to deal with the fact that He is coming back someday,

Revelation 19, and all these governmental systems are going to go right away. We do not want that. We do not want that at all.

You learned two great verses last week.

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

That is a powerful verse to keep in your back pocket for understanding what God is doing with the nations. Then we learned in Psalm 9:17:

Psalm 9:17

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

I told you, and you learned, three great concepts about you and me as a child of God in this world.

- Ephesians 2:6, which says that right now, if you are saved, you are seated in heavenly places.
- Ephesians 2:19 talked about the day you got saved, your citizenship changed. Now you are a citizen, a fellow citizen with the saints up in heaven, the Bible says.
- 2 Corinthians 5:20 says that your job vocation changed, and now you are no longer an American. Now you are an ambassador whose citizenship is up in heaven. You are seated on the right hand of God with Christ, and now your job down here is to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ, and you are neutral.

I am not a Republican, nor am I a Democrat. I am a Christian. As a Christian, I take a stand not for democracy, not for capitalism, not for the Democrats, not for Republicans. I take a stand for Jesus Christ. If I had one prayer today that God would grant just like that, it would be, "God, come back, wipe this thing out, and set up Your government." That is just where it is at. So you just know where I am coming from.

IV. The Authority of God and the Bible

Now today we are going to begin to work down through these verses, and we are going to see how all of this helps you and me form our perspective because we need to have a perspective.

Look at Romans 13:1 again. It says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God: and the powers that be are ordained of God."

In our lives, there is really, in everything in life, one concept that is going to make us or break us in life, and it does not matter if you are saved or you are lost. It does not matter if you are talking about the church as a Christian or the government. It does not matter if you are a lost person or a saved person. There is one word that is the predominant word when you start to look at governmental systems, and it is simply the word "authority." Authority.

If you are a child of God here this morning, if you are a saved person, the authority that you and I are under is the authority of the Word of God. That authority extends to the church, and you submit yourself to that aspect of authority. God has set up a structure of authority for the Christian, and God has set up an authority structure for the unsaved people, and that is called government.

The church is the body of believers that operate under an authority. The Bible at the beginning, the church itself, and then as it works down through Christianity, we submit ourselves to the Bible. That is why you hear me say this all the time, that the Bible is the final authority in everything that we should do. You hear me say it all the time. I have said it for absolutely years: the Bible needs to be the final authority in everything that you and I do.

You hear me talk about models. You hear me talk about types in the Bible. You hear me talk about principles in the Bible. I personally think that as Christians, we ought to have a principle. We ought to have a verse, a principle, a concept for everything we do in life. It is certainly the major thing that are life-changing events. It has never ceased to amaze me how many, so many of God's people, to use the common term, when it comes to their everyday life, simply fly by the seat of their pants. They do not really have any direction from the Bible. They do not really understand the principles involved on whatever they try to do. They just simply think that if it is the right thing and it looks right, then God must be in it, and if it is a bad thing, then He may stay away from it, and that is simply not true.

You need to come to the point in your life, and many of you are. I mean, you really are, but many of you are coming to the place in your life that you now are cataloging the principles, and you hear me use them all the time. There is hardly anything that we do, if anything that we do in this church, that there is not a model behind it that is based on the Word of God, because I understand that that is exactly how it needs to operate.

My style of ministry is such that I never tell anybody what to do. I never tell you what to do. When somebody comes in and they have marital problems or they have personal problems, I do not tell them what to do. What I do is lay out the biblical options that they have. What I try to do in people's lives individually when they come in to me, and they come in with the various different needs and situations and circumstances, I try to do the same thing one on one that I do in this church. I do not have a right to tell you how to live your life. I do not get into your world and follow you around and see if you have all the I's dotted and crossed all the T's in your Christian life. That is not my job. My job is not to go down inside your family and make sure you are praying with your kids and doing that. That is not my job.

Now, a lot of pastors think that is their job, but that is not my job. My job is one-fold. My job is to stand behind this pulpit, open up the Bible, and teach you what the Bible says about circumstances and situations in life. My job is to show you cause and effect. My job is to show you, "Okay, here is your problem. Here is how you got into it. Here are your options, and here is how you get out of it, but you have to choose. You have to choose." At the end of the day, it is your choice. I never tell people what to do, but in any given situation, I will show you the principles involved and how they operate and will show you the results of what is going to

happen whichever way you go. Obviously, I am going to tell somebody, you obviously, if you are a child of God, need to do what is right, but doing what is right is based on you and what you decide to do.

When it comes down to the end of the day, ladies and gentlemen, we can say whatever we want. I can preach the greatest sermons in the world, and I usually do. I can lay out the Bible for you upside down and inside out, but at the end of the day, life is still about choices, is it not? At the end of the day, with all that I teach and all that I lay out and all the energy I put into everything that I do, at the end of the day, it is still your choice. You have to decide, and some people, it is like I say, some people never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. It is your choice.

You hear me say all the time that I believe the King James 1611 Authorized Version is the absolute final standard for everything in faith and practice in your life. I believe it was that way from when it was put together in 1600, right up to the early 1900s in America and a little bit beyond. We talked about it many, many times. We are not going to get into it today, but let me just say something. You know why Christianity is in such a mess? You know why this world is in such a mess? Many of you have been burned by churches. Many of you have. You have been burned by churches. Many of you have been burned by pastors. Many of you have been burned by a political group within churches, what we call "the system."

Many of you young kids that are in your early twenties now, you were burned by Christian schools. Your parents were led to believe that if they sent their kids to Christian school, that there was a big sign over the Christian school that said, "The devil cannot come in here," and they sent you off to Christian school, and they just followed what they knew at the time and did the best they could. I am not criticizing anybody, but the bottom line is you now know, and we have talked about it many, many times, what a fallacy that was.

Remember I told you last week that there is no such thing as a Christian nation. I have another headliner for you, or anything such as a Christian school leader. Only one thing is Christian, and it is you if you are sitting here this morning. That is all. That is all. That is all.

I told you, I said, "You know what? It is the reason why this country is in the mess that it is in. The reason why churches are the mess that they are in is because there is no final authority anymore." If there is ever one book in the Bible that represents the time that we live in, it is the book of Judges in the Old Testament. Maybe you are not familiar with the book of Judges. I do not know. It is a time when the nation of Israel goes under the rule of men and women that God put over them as judges. It is a very bad time for the nation of Israel. It is a bad time because they keep throwing God's authority off. It is a very bad time because the nation of Israel does not want to adhere to the principles, and they want to do their own thing. So they keep casting off God's authority and going after the world. So God sends them judges when they get into a mess, and the judges deliver them, and then they go right back into the mess again. I think we talked about that in our men's meeting and our ladies' meeting called "The Law of Human Collapse," did we not?

The whole book of Judges can be summed up in the last chapter because it is the verse that puts the whole book into perspective for you in Judges 21:25. It simply says this:

Judges 21:25

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

That is the book of Judges, translation. There is no authority now, and everybody is doing what they think is right. That is the problem in churches today. It is a problem in America today, and that is a problem in most Christians' lives. We are not under any final authority. We do not have anything that we are accountable to. Therefore, we pretty much do what we want to do, and that is the problem we face. That is the problem we face.

V. God's Authority Structure and Satan's Dominion

Now God has an authority structure for the church. He also has an authority structure for government, and these are the things that I want you to see. Look at Romans 13:1 again. "No power but of God: and the power ordained of God."

Let me explain to you, because I want you to fully understand this to be able to grasp Romans 13 and get the perspective that you need to have of the time that you live in. Let me show you what God's authority structure runs like. God is the ultimate authority. We know that. What God has done is He has given His authority to two people, two beings. One of them is His Son, Jesus Christ, and the other one is the devil.

I showed you last week in 2 Corinthians 4:4 how all human government is turned over to the devil at 606 B.C.

2 Corinthians 4:4

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Even today that we are living in 2010, the times of the Gentiles is nothing more than when the devil is running the world through a nation. If you doubted that last week, I want you to take now your Bible and turn to Luke 4. I want to show you another great principle here that you want to put in along with this one in 2 Corinthians 4, and this one pretty much sums it up. You cannot get it from this one; you are probably not going to get it.

Here is a conversation that the devil had with Jesus Christ Himself. This is not an indirect verse that Paul or somebody wrote this. This is a record of God, Jesus Christ, and the devil having a conversation. This is when He is being tempted.

Look at Luke 4:5-7.

Luke 4:5-7

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

You know what he is saying? He told Jesus right there that all power and glory was given to him. What did he mean by that? Why would God give the dominion, the authority, and the glory of the nations to Satan? That is the verse that shows you right there, and Jesus did not say, "Oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no." The devil has the audacity to say, "Because they are mine, if you will fall down and worship me as God, I will give them to you." You know why Jesus did not do it? You know why Jesus did not dispute it? Because it is a true fact. He does have them. But the reason why Jesus did not bother bowing down or did not argue with him is because Jesus has an authority, and the authority is the Word of God, which says in Revelation 19 that Jesus Christ has got to get them when God comes back. He does not need the devil to give them to Him. He is going to get them.

Now Satan is in charge of this present world, including all the governments. Now take your Bible and turn it over to Ephesians 6, and I will show it to you again. I want to pick it up in verse 12. Now watch the structure of this authority. This is written to the church, me and you. Here is what he says. A familiar passage, you just never put it in the right context to understand it in the light of Romans 13. Well, that is what we are doing today.

Ephesians 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

That will be the devil. That will be the government. That will be demonic horde, the unclean spirit. And spiritual wickedness in high places, there is the demonic activity within government and also within religion. That is the authority structure of how it comes down, and the Bible says that you need to understand that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. It is not the nations that you have to fear; it is the one who is behind those nations trying to accomplish his agenda.

So the top authority structure is God. Then God divides His authority out right now two ways. He gives the governments on this earth to the devil because we are in the times of the Gentiles. But He gives the authority and the structure of the church to Jesus Christ. Your job and my job is to understand that you and I as Christians are in this Satan-controlled government. We are in it, but we are no longer part of it. Now we are an ambassador. Now our citizenship is up there.

Now, do not misunderstand me. I still have a passport that says I am a citizen of the United States. If I would travel to a foreign country waving a Bible in front of their face and say, "Well, I am a citizen of heaven," I am going to get thrown in jail. You still have to give them your passport because you still live here. That is part of Romans 13, that I understand that I am in this country. I am part of this country. Yes, I pay taxes. I have to obey the laws like everybody else, but I understand that the bottom line is, spiritually speaking, I am in this world, but I am not of it anymore. That is why I do not have to get caught up in the Republicans and the Democrats.

As a Christian, the moment you take a side and you say, "Well, I am a Republican," then you cannot win any Democrats to Christ. The moment you say, "Well, I am a Democrat," then you have lost your ministry to Republicans. Your only position is to stand in the middle and say, "I

am neither one of you because you are all going to go into hell, and come to Christ." The only choice you have if you are an ambassador.

Did you ever notice in the Old Testament, maybe you never saw this? In the Old Testament, he is talking about the devil in Ezekiel 31. He is talking specifically about the devil in Ezekiel 31, but you know what he called the devil? He called him Pharaoh. In Isaiah 10, he is talking about the devil, but you know what he called the devil? He called him the Assyrian, that would be Sennacherib. In Ezekiel 28, he is talking about the devil, and he called the devil the prince of Tyrus. In Daniel 10:13, he is talking about the devil, and he called the devil the prince of Persia. Why is that? Why in the Old Testament does God take the devil and he is talking about the devil, but put in the name of a Gentile king? You know why? Because that is the nation that the devil is working through at that time, and God did not want you to miss that.

You have to have a final authority, ladies and gentlemen, and you have to know how to use it. Everything good or bad operates under God's operation. Here is another great verse for you. You do not have to turn to it, but you want to write this down. It says that God is the Father of all spirits. That would be good spirits and unclean spirits.

James 2:19

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

You see, the devil may have the world, and he may be in charge, but he cannot do one thing that God does not permit him to do. Boy, is this going to reform our thinking on what is wrong and what is right in this country.

VI. God's Sovereignty in World Affairs

Last election, we had a real dilemma: who to vote for? And Christians struggled. A lot of Christians did not vote for anybody. We had McCain, who was a conservative and a Republican, and we had Barack Obama, who was a very liberal, and he is a Democrat. And people looked at it, "Well, vote for the one that you know is Christian or stands for Christian principles."

Now, I am not criticizing how you vote because that is your choice, and everybody has got to vote their own conscience. This is probably just me. But if I really want Christ to come back, and I really cannot wait to see Him, why would I vote for somebody who is going to prolong it? Vote for the guy that is going to get it on. Now, I am not saying you should have... I mean, now the downside of that is this: knowing what we know, that you could have put John McCain in, and we could have got to heaven faster than Barack Obama. You cannot trust either way. Until the Lord comes back as King of kings and Lord of lords and sits on the throne, you are not safe with anybody. But you have to have a perspective.

You know, in the book of Job 1, you never see that there is a great example for you. The devil walks into the throne room up there with all the audacity, and the Lord says, "Have you considered my servant Job?" And the devil says, "Yeah, he ain't much." God says, "He loved Me with all of his heart and mind and soul." And the devil said, "Oh, why would not he? Look at all this stuff You have. Well, he has got Ben Cartwright and a Ponderosa beat with all the land You

gave him." The devil... God says, "You mean you are telling Me he just loved Me because all I gave him?" Devil said, "Absolutely." Devil said, "You are wrong." God said, "You are wrong." Devil said, "No, I am not. I will tell you what. You take everything he has got and take it from him, and he will curse You to Your face." God said, "He will not." Devil said, "He would." God said, "He will not." "Will, will not, will, will not, will." Funny. God said, "Okay, do it. Take everything he has got."

Could you just see the glow in the devil's eye? The devil hated Job because Job was a man who feared God and eschewed evil. "Eschewed" is an old English word that means "hated." He hated evil. And boy, once the devil got that word that he could take all that Job had, he is on his way out the door. Yet, as he gets to the throne, he has all kinds of things going on in his mind he is going to do to Job. Just as he gets his hand on the throne door to go out, God said, "Oh, by the way, you can take all that he had, but do not touch his body." You realize when God put that parameter in there, the devil could not touch Job if he wanted to. The devil would have had a million, billion, zillion, billion hordes of demonic forces behind him, and he still could not touch his body because God says, "There is the line; do not cross it."

Now you know Job 2. The devil comes back in again. This time Job is really having some problems because he lost everything. But the devil is not done with him. So they have their conversation again, and this time God says, "He says he loves Me." The devil says, "You touch his body, and he will curse You to Your face." And they went through a little thing again. Finally, the Lord says, "All right, touch his body." You can just see the devil. I mean, he is celebrating, man. "I am going to get him now." And he is walking down there, and just as he got his hand, he heard that big booming voice that said, "Oh, by the way, you can touch his body, but you cannot kill him." The devil could have stayed up all night with all the hordes of hell and everybody that he ever wanted to do, and he could not step over the line that God did.

You have to get your perspective. The devil may be in charge of the nations. He may be in charge of governments. But within that, he cannot do one thing outside of what God said. You need to understand that. You need to realize that this thing, when the Bible says that there is no power but of God, all powers are ordained of God. He is telling you that the devil may have this whole concept in the world, but the devil has it under God's authority.

You know what that tells me? That tells me that God is using the devil for one purpose. The devil is using... God is using you and me through Christ as one authority to win people to Christ and to establish a church. He is using the devil through the nations to set up the nations for the second coming of Christ, and the devil does not even know. Oops, I just told him, and the devil does not even know it. God's people are so off the beam on things like this. What are you worrying about what is going on in the world? Everything that is happening is happening for one reason, ladies and gentlemen. You are at the end of life on planet earth by a very short measure.

Now I know, I know, when you start talking like this, I am going to close my eyes because the sick feeling on your face when I start talking about the Lord coming back gives you away. But everything good or bad operates under God's authority. I tell you all the time, you have a front row seat to the end of the world. What are you missing that for? I talked to the people yesterday,

the ladies yesterday, I talked about how that you need to get on the inside of ministry, that most churches, people are on the outside of ministry. They do not have a clue what is going on. That is why you do not know who got saved or you do not know what happened in people's lives. You need to get on the inside of ministry. What I am telling you, in the same respect that you and I have, you need to get on the inside of history and see what is going on to get the right perspective. It is incredible. Once you see and understand God is really in charge, and nothing happens without God letting it happen, it changes your whole outlook on government, United States, and the world.

Now God has set two systems in play. He has set the governmental structure run by the devil. The devil cannot step one inch outside of what God allows him to do. Then He sets the spiritual side through His Son, which is the church, and through Christ, the church is to call out a body of believers to make the bride of Christ. God has the nations then through the devil to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ and the established nation of Israel.

Do you know why there is a devil? I mean, you think that the devil... we get the idea sometimes that God is up there in heaven, and He is kind of watching the world on big screen TVs, and He is sitting up there, and He is watching all around the world, like a big old grandfather up there. And then suddenly, somebody runs in and says, "Your Majesty, oh God, Your Majesty, you are not going to believe this, the devil just did this!" God says, "Oh, now what am I going to do?" We get the idea that God goes through life like we do, from disaster to disaster, and then He is going to be the devil. God is totally in charge of everything that goes on, and it is all part of God's plan.

The Bible tells you in Proverbs 16:4:

Proverbs 16:4

The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of judgment.

You know what that purpose is? The day of judgment. You know what that day is? Second coming of Christ. The devil is out there running around thinking he is going to stop the world, and God says, "Go ahead and do your little thing. You have a little string on. Go ahead there, like walking your dog, one of them long elastic things. I love those. The dog can get out as far as you want. You can just stand there, and he can go wherever he wants. And then, if your dog has been mean that day, you can always get even with him. He thinks he can run out nine feet. You put that little lock on, and he gets forward, pull him back."

You see, the dog gets used to having that 20-foot tether. He runs out, comes back, runs out, comes back. He gets used to it. But when you want to show who is the boss, you just put the lock on. I have been places where there is a cat over there, and my dog sees it behind over there in the bush, and he has enough line on it, he can get to it. And he knows that my dogs have two things. Your dog probably does too. I do not know how they have them. I do not know where they have them, but they have two things. First of all, they have a watch because they always know what time it is to eat. I do not know what time I should be up. Second thing, they have a little measuring stick someplace because they always know how long that tether goes, and he knows

he can get that cat because he has got enough line on this. But I am in charge, and I do not want him to kill the cat. So what I do is I lock the thing down. He is only got three feet now. He is so stupid, he does not know it. So he goes after that cat full force, and when he hits the end of that thing, I am prepared because I know what he is going to do. So I get myself, because this dog weighs 100 pounds, so I get this thing braced here. He goes out there, and the next thing I know, it pulls him right on his back. He is down there in the thing, and he cannot get the cat.

That is what God does with the devil. He has him on a leash. He has him on a leash. He has him on one of those long leashes like you take your dog for a walk, and there are times that He will let him get all the way out to the end of that. The devil is saying, "Oh, look at me, look what I can do!" And he gets so used to being able to do that that he forgets that the One that is powerful over him still has the control leash. So he will run out here to do something to you, and God will put that thing, lock that thing down. He will just bust his neck. God is in control. That is why the Bible says, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." That is why the Bible says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." The key word is authority. Authority for you and for me, authority against the devil and his crown.

Perspective. I said you have a front row seat to the end of the world. You are living in the last moments of the last minutes of the last seconds of the end of time. Yet, because we do not have perspective, we are living our lives like we are going to be here and live to be 80, 90, and live for 200 years. Again, I know when you start talking about this, you get that real sick pit down in your stomach. "Okay, let us sing a song here. This is my favorite song, and he is going to like this one. Let me find it here. Here we go, and I opened it to it. Here we go: 'My Jesus, I love Thee, but do not come back right now. I have got some great things happening, so come back in a while.'" That is us. That is us where we are at.

Jenny, do not put this tape on the internet because when people hear it, I do not want to be bombarded by a million people to go on American Idol. I am famous enough. When you get the right perspective, ladies and gentlemen, you can better understand what he is saying in Romans 13:1 when he says, "All powers are of God." All powers come from God, but for His purpose, and the devil has to work within that confine. Once you understand that, you do not have to be afraid of anything because, wow, what new life that gives.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

When you grasp the reality, get the perspective of what I am saying, what are you afraid of in this world? What can happen to you that can befall you that once you get this, that you understand that God is not the author of it and in charge of it?

Job did not like what he went through, and if you would have talked to Job when he was on the ash heap, and you would ask him, he was in deep misery. But the Bible says after it was all over, he was twice as good as he was before. You see what we do not want to happen, but this is where we are at as American Christians. We do not want to happen... oh, we want Jesus to come back.

We just do not want to go through any discomfort for it to happen. If we had our way, we would just go to bed tonight and pull the covers up around us and just go into a deep sleep, and then Jesus would just come in the middle of the night. No heartache, no tribulation for us to go through as far as pre-tribulation stuff. Oh, it would just happen. It would all be so nice. It is not going to happen that way. There is probably a price that you and I are going to have to pay before that comes, at least I hope so.

VII. Damnation and Christian Responsibility

Romans 13:2 says, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Now let me explain what this means. There are two kinds of damnation in the Bible. I touched on this last week. There is a damnation of an unsaved person who dies and goes to hell. You will find that in Matthew 23:33, where it says:

Matthew 23:33

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

See, that is for an unsaved person. So that is your first kind of damnation in the Bible.

Then there is a damnation for a Christian that has nothing to do with your soul but has to do with the damnation of your body. We find that over in 1 Corinthians 11:29, talking about the Lord's Supper. Remember that? Where he said if you take the Lord's Supper unworthily, without unconfessed sin, without judging yourself, the Bible says:

1 Corinthians 11:29

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Now that does not mean you are going to go to hell if you are a Christian. It means damnation to your flesh. In fact, in the next verse, he shows you the three types of damnation: somebody is weak, somebody is sick, and somebody has physically died. So you need to understand that there are two kinds of damnation, but the Bible says that if you resist the power, there comes a damnation with it.

I am going to give you a great example. Most of you were not alive during the Vietnam War. Contrary to belief, I was not alive in World War One, but the Vietnam War was my war, as it were. Some of you older guys, the Vietnam War was a very unpopular war. It was a time when probably this country, as far as patriotism, had gotten to the lowest level that it had ever been. There is some reason for that. We lost... we won World War Two. We won World War One and we won World War Two. When we went to Korea in 1950-51, that was a stalemate. We did not win; we did not lose. They drew a line at the 38th parallel, called a ceasefire, and the war was never over. In fact, that ceasefire is still in effect. There has been no end to that war. That is why we keep so many troops on Korea in the 38th parallel.

When Vietnam came along in the early 60s, we took it over from the French. America was not ready for another war. America did not want a war. This war was very unpopular because it was not our war. We were trying to stop the communists from coming into Indochina and taking over the world. They had already... it had already fallen in Europe. Hungary, Czechoslovakia... the countries in Europe were falling like dominoes and around the world, and we felt like we had to stop communism because they were going to go into Indochina just like they went into Korea, and we basically got suckered into doing in Vietnam what we got suckered into doing in Korea: go fight somebody else's war. Very unpopular.

Add to that, we had the hippie movement coming on. The flower child type thing. You do not know who hippies are anymore, but they were around when I was there, and they were the people who were against war. "Peace, love, peace," were the big... they were anti-establishment from what they were. They let their hair grow long because everybody had short hair. They never took a bath because everybody else did. They wore goofy looking clothes because everybody looked normal. In other words, everything that they did, they tried to step aside from the mainstream of society and say, "Look at me, I am different. I am against the establishment." It was mostly in the colleges and universities.

When I was in the army, it was right at the time, and most of you do not remember this, that the Kent State massacre of Kent State, Ohio. If you know anything about that, you know what happened. Kent State University was a state university in Ohio. I spent one semester at Kent State, and then decided it was not for me. But on the college campuses, this is where, and this is where it always happens, this is where all the dissidents were forming. It starts out in California with Berkeley and those places, and this is where all the anarchy begins to form up and shape up, and it spread through all of the different universities.

At Kent State, they were rioting against the war in Vietnam, and they were not just out with a little sign. They were burning down buildings, burning dormitories, turning over cars, setting them on fire. They were doing some heavy damage. The National Guard was called in to protect it, and they would stand there with their flak vest on with their M1 rifles out there, and the flower children would come down and put little flowers in the barrel of their guns. "Peace, peace, peace." I never got to do any of those, but I wanted to be... I would slip a real round in that thing. But the time he put his finger in that barrel, I would pull that thing off. "Whoops, excuse me, I will get them for you."

Well, Kent State University, they had a riot, and the National Guard guys were being pelted with rocks, beer bottles, just all kinds of stuff, and they had retreated because they were greatly outnumbered, and they retreated up to a little mound up there where they would try to hold them off. All they had was rifles and bayonets and tear gas, but they were throwing rocks; they were throwing everything at them. In a melee, when they started to get attacked, some of the National Guard guys turned into the crowd, fired, killed what, five or six of them. Oh boy, that was it, man. The riots were off.

I was stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, at that time, and I was stationed up there, and they surrounded our fort, and they had all kinds of stuff out there, and they had all kinds of

things going. They are not too smart. I was stationed when I was stationed in the 10th group at Fort Devens with the 10th group. They had up there what was called the ASA, which was the Army Security Agency, kind of a science thing or the CIA. These guys were so stupid. They are out there chanting and having their rallies, and they actually took our guys, dressed them up like hippies. They could not tell them apart, and they infiltrated. They knew every plan they were going to do, and they knew that they were going to come in, they were going to crash the south gate, which was the weakest gate. So the commander, he was an old World War Two guy, and he did not think too much of hippies. He got about 200 Green Berets and gave them night sticks, and they were waiting around the thing here, and let them come through that gate. When those hippies came through that gate with their signs, he turned those 200 guys, 100 on each flank, and boy, they would... and they just beat the fire out of those guys, man. It was great to see. Moved my heart.

But anyway, all across this country, and it was because of the war, and this whole country got inflamed. They put the guys on trial. I mean, that is how bad it was. Of course, the whole concept, the reality of that is this: the Vietnam War was an immoral war, but every war is immoral, was it not? Just the Vietnam War.

Now, how do you, as a citizen of this country, and here is a great lesson for you, how do you deal with a situation like this? Say you live back in the 60s and the 70s, and back then they had a draft, and you got drafted into the army, and if you got drafted, you were going to Vietnam. Bravo 211, you were on your way. They took these guys and put them in the army, and they went over there, and we have all seen movies about the stories about it. A lot of people went to Canada. Canada was a sanctuary. We called them draft dodgers. There were people burning their draft cards, and they went to Canada because Canada would let them in. They did not have to serve in the military. That was the big thing with Clinton later on. Clinton, who was a draft dodger himself, put amnesty to bring them all back. It was a very unpopular war.

Now the principle is this: it is not your job, based on what I am just telling you, it is not your job or my job to judge if a war is moral or immoral. It is your job to obey your country and go fight for your country in that war. We already know that God judges nations like He does individuals. He will hold the country accountable if it was an immoral war, and He will bless you for obeying your country. That is how it works. That is how it works.

If I was a saved person, I had to go into a war today, and I did not think the war was right, or I was against the war, I did not want to go into war, I would obey my country, and I would get my perspective. You know what it would be? "I am a saved man. I have a Bible. I believe the Bible. God is sending me someplace. Wow, the government is sending me to be a missionary, and they are going to pay my whole expenses for it." What would I do? But that is only if you have the right perspective. See, you have to have the right perspective.

He says, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Well, you know what the damnation of that thing was? Because this country allowed that to happen, because this country embraced those kind of things, you know why this country is in the mess that we are in right now? Because the same

guys that were the hippies back there in the 60s and the 70s are the same guys that are in Congress and president and all right now. That thing comes back to haunt you. We are having what we have in this country today of the liberal movement because of the liberal movement that this country embraced in the 60s, except the hippies back then, they were smoking dope, they were not... they did not have any power. Now they have grown up. They went to those colleges and universities. They got their degree. They got into politics, and now they are the leaders of our country. That is why it is where it is.

You are not going to change it, man. Get your big old thing of popcorn, a couple things will pop, and sit out and watch this thing self-destruct. I think it is great. The last president we had that was a military president was George Bush the Senior. We will not have any more because they are all dead or they are dying. You will see a distinct mark in our country in the downfall after George Bush the First. I am not saying he was a great president, but I am saying he was a World War Two torpedo squadron flyer and fought World War Two. He had a perspective. It is hard. How can he be a commander in chief of all the military if you have never been in the military? I am asking. I do not know. Do you go to school to learn that, or maybe you get one of those Nintendos? "Oh man, battle cry!"

I found that most of the issues that Christians get upset about are not really issues at all. They just do not have any perspective, and we waste so much time worrying and fighting and fussing over things that really do not mean any deal. I remember back in 1962, all the churches were in an uproar. The Supreme Court banned prayer in schools. Now, what is the problem with the Supreme Court? Is that the Supreme Court is going to be banned in schools? That is not a problem. I do not care about prayer in schools. Now, I am the first one to understand that I think a nation's reverence to God and understanding to God is a good thing. But at the end of the day, if you really knew your Bible, did you know that someday prayer is going to be banned in school? If it was going to come to the end someday, you know what? I do not care about prayer in school. I could care less. Both of my kids went to... you know why? Because I am not worried about prayer in school. You know what the real issue is? No prayer in homes. That is the real issue.

God's people get it all backwards. You are so upset about the fact that they are not going to pray in school, but most moms and dads will not take 15 minutes a day to get on their knees with their kid and pray for them, with them, about what is going on in life in their world. But boy, we are upset about prayer in schools, are we not? Can we get it backwards? Let me tell you something. They say you cannot pray in school. Really? Wow, how do you stop that? Oh, you mean you cannot... oh, okay, I did not know that was praying. I thought praying was just you talking to God whatever you want to. Somebody says, "Why, we are going to ban all the Bibles." Oh, I do not really want you to do that because I have got 50 years of notes, but if push comes to shove, and you take all the Bibles, I guess it is okay because that word I hid in my heart, then I may not sin against Thee. I will walk around with Book of Eli, be the Book of Bob.

Somebody says, "Well, I think it is terrible that they will not have Bible studies after hours at school." You have a park nearby in the summertime. Go have it there. Go to somebody's house. Nothing, nothing that we get upset about. My point is, we get upset about things that you think

the government stops you from doing with God. Nobody stops you from doing anything. You know who stops you from doing anything with God? You. But we like to blame it on everything else and everybody else because that is the way we are. "Well, I cannot witness because of my job." Really? They will not let me witness at work. Really? Boy, the people in Russia, Communist Russia, they found a way to do it. People in Red China, where you get your head cut off for witnessing, they found a way to do it. People in Cuba that got hung up and strung up and skinned alive if they did it, they found a way to do it. Why is it that we cannot find a way to do it? We are all backwards in the words.

I mean, as simple as that. I mean, I look at this abortion issue, and the government passes a rule, a law that abortions are illegal, and God's people just go ballistic. Now let me just tell you something. My personal view on abortion is simply this: I think it is ungodly. I think it is sin. I think it is going to bring down God's judgment on a nation. I think the taking of an unborn life out of a womb and killing it because you want to have a good time and you do not want the consequences, you want to go and have another one, I think it is the blight on society and this country. That is my personal position on it.

But you know what bothers me about some of God's people who take such a stand for it and would rally for it? You go down the street and you see churches with 3,000 little white crosses in their front lawn, and they put a little sign there, "This is for the 3,000 babies that were aborted in Kansas City." It is a terrible thing. But you know what bothers me? You know why I have no more respect for you than I do the abortion people? It is because you will march for abortion and you do all the things, but you would not walk across the street to win somebody to Christ who is dying and going to hell. You are big on the abortion issue, but you just let the spiritual babies die and go to hell. You let the young people out there that you ought to be witnessing to. I am telling you, we have got it all backwards. We have got it completely backwards.

Let me ask you a question. I am not saying this is true, but let me ask you a question: What if God has to allow abortion and put up with abortion because that is the only way He can get those little babies into heaven because you and I are going to drop the ball and not win them to Christ? You say, "What, God would not do that?" You do not know very much about God, do you? You do not get out much, do you? Because you live in America, and you are right here, and you are all cozy. You look at something like abortion and you say, "Well, God would not do that." Really? How do you think He got all the babies in Genesis 6 into heaven when the world was all wicked? He drowned the babies. When Sodom and Gomorrah happened, and the whole place got burned up because of its wickedness, how do you think God balanced it out and by getting people into heaven out of there? The babies burned, but they went to heaven. You do not know very much about God, do you?

I mean, you think when the atom bomb and Hiroshima dropped in a godless country that did not have a God there, God was an emperor in Tokyo someplace? You think God does not have a balancing out to get people in heaven that they would never get to heaven because we failed a job? You know, at the end of World War Two, MacArthur went into Japan, and he was the Provost Marshal and the governmental guy whose task was rebuilding Japan. President Truman said, "What do you need? Tell me what you need, and we will get it to you." You know what

MacArthur asked for? He said, "Send me 10,000 missionaries." What he asked for. You know what he got? He got Benny Goodman. He got baseball. He got hot dogs. He got the Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy from Company C. He got all the things that the world had, but they never got the missionaries.

Let me tell you something. You really believe that statement that God would not do something like that? You need to get on your knees for about four hours and pray over Isaiah 57:1-2. You will be surprised what God allows.

Isaiah 57:1-2

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

I will tell you something, man, and I will tell you this is why I told you guys in our meetings next year, look for somebody that God will put in your life that you can minister to and help get come to Christ. I gave you great examples of people who know far less than you do, who God uses. It is never about your circumstances; it is always about your perspective. God will use you wherever you are at. God will use you wherever you are at.

You know what, we all have dry periods in our life, and I know if you are a young Christian here, and I am not saying you ought to be able to, but I am saying as you go through these levels, we all have dry periods in life. But let me, can I just be honest? If you have gone five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten years, and you have not won somebody to Christ in some way or some fashion, can I be honest? I would get alone someplace and check out what might be wrong. You know what the tragedy is? When you go through those times in your life, you do not even know where to go in the Bible. When you go through a time like that, that you pray and claim for God, there are all kinds of... there is one great model in the Bible when you get into a dry period in your life and you are not winning people to Christ, and it begins to bother you. Ah, I think I just solved my problem. Maybe that is the key. Maybe it just does not bother us. There is a place which you can go in the Bible, and you can get on your knees and get a hold of God, and you can cry that prayer till God answers it. You do not even know where it is at, but I bet you have got your abortion banner all filled out, do not you? I bet you have got your Christian school banner, and you have got all your political things lined up, do not you? You would be surprised what God would do when you and I do not do the job.

We have no perspective. We live in America where your biggest decision is you are going to a store, you have 600 colors of lip shade to gather shoes from. Our biggest decision is when I go in to buy a pair of shoes, my God, there are 600 pair here. That is our big dilemma. Our big dilemma is when we go someplace into a restaurant, the menu is endless. So we get all those things in our life, and then we come to a church, any church that is an authority structure that has... and you are so used to picking what you want off the menu. Oh, do not tell me about it. I know exactly where it starts. I have been there. The rule of thumb is, the longer you are saved, the harder it is to win somebody to Christ. The harder it is to keep that burden. The longer we are

saved, the harder it gets. You know why? Because you become calloused. You become professional.

You young Christians have just got saved, you have not learned how to be deceptive with God yet. We will have a class on that down the line: how to deceive God and keep your testimony, how to deceive God and still look good. You have not learned to do that yet. You are still innocent and honest. You still just believe what God says, and you want to do it, and you are burdened by the little things in your life that you just cannot deal with yet, and you want them out of your life. You have not learned to be professional yet. You have not got Baptist slick yet. You have not got to the place where you learn how to use the system and still look good. You have not got to the place where you do not have to be in the Bible at all, and yet you can still put off the air of being what God wants you to be, all except in the area of the Holy Spirit of God using you to touch somebody else's life.

I do not have time to get into this morning, but you know anything about the... I told you about the times of the Gentiles. There is another concept in there called "the fullness of the Gentiles," and God is going to get that filled with you or without you, but He is going to get it done. "God would not do that." You are an idiot. I just complete... God would do that. No, you do not believe God would do anything. "I do not believe God would do that." No, you would not believe that because God is not doing anything with you. You hope that God is not true.

Boy, you know something, and I am not saying he is, but I am just saying it as an example, would not you hate to get to the judgment seat of Christ when you marched on all the abortions and took a stand on it, preached a thousand sermons on it, passed out tracts, gave money to it, get on board with every day... "Hey, you know the guy that killed the abortion guy last week? What was his name? He killed Tiller. His name was... what was it? Lee Harvey... what? Who was not... boy, boy, did that end well. I am happy for that. He is going to play the part. 'Well, I just had to kill him because it is against God in the Bible, and I was just was moved that, and I had to kill.'" What a jury saw through that. What was it? 20 minutes in deliberation? First degree murder. 37 minutes? First degree murder. Amen, buddy. Amen, amen. It is never wrong to take a life. I do not care who it is, unless he is breaking down your back door, and then I would say, "Hey, you know what, enter into the kingdom of the joy of the Lord."

There is a model for everything, folks, even when we go through the dry spells in life. But I would hate to get to the judgment seat of Christ and find out that all of this thing about abortion, all this thing about the things we were so fired up, was all because of the fact that you and I failed to do our job. Let me stop. I cannot fathom a child of God going through their Christian life and never having an impact on one person's life. I just cannot. I do not know even where to begin. I do not know how you can even look yourself in the mirror in the morning. I am not a great soul winner. I am really not. But boy, I will tell you what, when I do not, when I go through a dry period in my life, I know where to hit my knees, and I know where to go in that book to get out of the dry spell. I cannot believe you have been saved five, 15 years, you do not know where that spot is at. That bothers me. It bothers me a lot.

I will tell you, this is why I want you to have some things. We are going to change these are the goals that you now have to have in your life. Let God use you. You see, once you see God always in charge, and whatever happens, good or bad, is by His hand and His power, boy, it changes your whole perspective. I am not saying the thing about abortion is what He is doing, but I am saying this: you need to understand what God has done down through history. You need to understand that your responsibility, my responsibility, is "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." Winning people to Christ, bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The truth of the matter is, some of you get mad about what I said this morning, and you will carry it out of here, and you will walk about it and talk about it with your wife or your friends at lunch someplace, and you will get mad and gruff about it, and the bottom line is, you will miss the whole point. You are more angry at what I said, and you still do not have any burden for lost people. When is the last time you wet your pillow with tears over somebody lost, dying, and going to hell? When is the last time you wrote down in your... why did I have to tell you to start a journal to put down people who are lost and pray for them? Some things to me just seem like they ought to be there. I do not know.

VIII. Biblical Examples of God's Control

Now, once you see God is always in charge, the truth of the matter is, most of the things that go on in this world, once you realize that, they do not affect you and me, good or bad. I have seen down through history one thing: any nation, no matter how worldly, how wicked, or how bad they were, they never stopped God's work or God's man. I am telling you, there are some great examples of that in the Bible.

How about Joseph? Through no thought of his own, all he wanted to do is love God, and he was the apple of his father's eye, and his brethren got envious and sold him into slavery, and he goes into Egypt. He is falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and he winds up in jail. Here he is, God's man, in the most wicked, vile nation at this time that is being run by the devil. What does God do? God puts the right people in his world to get him right where God wants him to be. In every circumstance in life, ladies and gentlemen, your perspective comes in two formats: long term and short term. Short term, God got him down into Egypt. Long term was to get the nation down there sometime later, forge him for 400 years, and send him back out as a strong nation. Can God use Joseph in a wicked nation to do it? A nation that hated God, a nation that had nothing to say about God that was good, a nation that had 6,000 gods of themselves. Yet Joseph has perspective, perspective.

It says in Genesis 39:2, right in the middle of this whole mess:

Genesis 39:2

And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

The LORD was with Joseph. No matter what this world tried to do to you, you have to get the perspective that you are here short term to let it rule because long term God is going to do something with it. You have to hang on to the great principle that God was with Joseph. Joseph had perspective. He had understanding. After it was all said and done, and his brethren are coming up, and they are apologizing, and they are saying, "Oh, I am so sorry, we were so wrong, we did all these terrible things to you." Joseph saw the short term and the long term. As I tell you guys all the time, Joseph never took it personal because he always saw that whatever he was going through and whatever persecution he was getting, it was because God was using him. He said in Genesis 50:20:

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Are you willing to go through some tough time in your life so God will put you in a position to be able to win somebody to Christ? Are you willing to go through this world, let it do to you what it wants to do? If God is going to bring this world to an end, then times are going to get rough. Are you willing to go through those rough times and lose what you have got to lose, give up what you have got to give up, because you see the short term versus the long term, or are you more concerned about our comfort? I am just telling you. I am just telling you.

How about Daniel? In Daniel 1, here is another example. Daniel was required to take of all the filth of Babylon, and the Bible says that Daniel is of the king's seed. He is in the line of Christ. Now you know what the devil wanted to do, did you not? The devil put him down there in Babylon because the devil knows that he is in the line of Christ, and the devil wants to destroy that seed by mixing it with the filth of Babylon. Ah, but what does it say that Daniel did when he saw what Nebuchadnezzar wanted to do, when he understood the vileness, but he understood who he was with God? What did Daniel do? He did the same thing that you and I should do when we are faced with a decision that is going to turn away from God or let the world use you. He looked inside himself, and his Bible says:

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

So you know what God did? God put him two men in his life: Melzar, who was the guy that worked under the eunuch, and the prince who was the prince of the eunuchs. You know what God did? There was a law. The law was, "You have got to eat this stuff and take this filth and worship the gods of Babylon." Now here is a case where Daniel did not obey the law. He still worshipped God, and he got out of it what God wanted to do. But how did God do it? God took two men in his life that he went to and said, "Hey, look, I know the end result you want. You let me do it my way, and I will make you really, really popular with the king." You know what the Bible calls that? "Wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." It is using the world system against

itself because you have perspective and understanding and the principles. Wise as serpents and harmless as doves. And sometimes six serpents to two doves, but nevertheless.

You know what happened? At the end of 30 days or whatever the time period was, they brought him back, and the Bible says that the Hebrew children were 10 times better. God gave him a way in a wicked nation to get past all the laws without breaking them. Oh, but you have to be smart enough and have the principles involved to understand it.

Now I will show you another one. What happens when you get busted? What happens when you cannot get around the laws? Here is a good story in Daniel 3, the three Hebrew children.

Daniel 3:13-18

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well:

But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Wow, no way around that. And there may come a time in your life when there is no way around that. So what do you do? Put your tail between your legs and run out the door? What do you do? Fall down and worship the world of God? No, no. They went into the fire. You know what they knew? They knew what we do not know. They put them in that fire down there, and that thing was so hot. They threw them in that fire, and the king put them in there, and they are burning in there, and they are in there. The king, after a while, he says, "Well, I guess we showed them." And he said, "Yeah, let us take a look and see the burning cinders of these guys who would not worship me." And they opened the door, and then he said, "Hey, King, you need to see this. They are walking around here going, 'Oh man, look, it is freezing in here.'" And the king looks down, he says, "Whoa, I see three men, but now there is a fourth one, and the fourth one is like unto the Son of God." They are right to go into the furnace when God goes with you.

There is an old sermon, it is a song now, but it was a sermon way, way, way back, a great sermon about the three Hebrew children, and it is a song you probably all know, little kids sing it all the

time. But it was a great sermon when I heard it many, many, many years ago. It simply says this: they did not bend, they did not bow, and they did not burn. Yeah, be afraid of this world who cannot do a thing to you that God does not let it do. And if they do do it, then God is going to get you through it. That is why when you read Fox's Book of Martyrs back there, you find some of them Christians that tortured, they got burned in the Inquisition. They put them up there, and they are going to burn them, going to torture them. You know how they go out? They go out singing songs unto God. I wonder how we go out. I wonder some sunny morning if they broke in the back doors here, and the whole world turned upside down, and they lined everybody up, and they put it around here, and a guy came up with a nine-millimeter pistol and put it to your forehead, and he said, "Deny Jesus Christ," and you say, "Uh, no, I am not going to do it." He squeezes off a round, and blood, brain, and tissue goes all over the next 10 people down there. By the time they get to you and me, we probably would be babbling like we had lost our minds.

So what happens when you get busted? Daniel 6. Here is the story that Daniel is doing well, but the people hate him. They hate him because he is in a world system that hates God, and he represents God, much like you are going to find yourself in life. Daniel has God's favor, and they cannot deny that. So what they do is they conspire against him, just like they conspire against me, like they will conspire against you. Here is what they say: "Let us pass a law because we know that Daniel prays off and on all day long, and everybody knows it. We want to get Daniel. Let us pass a law that says for the next 30 days, you cannot pray to any king but the king of Babylon." They said, "That is a great idea."

Now, I do not know if you know it or not, but you have probably heard the term over the years, "the laws of the Medes and Persians." That term simply means that once the Medes and the Persians put a law, you could not revoke it. That is why it was such a stern thing. It is called the law of the Medes and the Persians. Once they put a law in effect, nobody could change it. The king himself could not change it. So these guys knew once they got the law, if Daniel continued to pray to his God, they got him. You know what Daniel did? He continued to pray to his God, and they got him. They brought him into the king, and he brought him into the king, and the king says, "Well, I do not know what I am going to do." Daniel, he is faced with a real issue here. He continues to pray, and you know the rest of the story. They take him and they throw him down in the lion's den.

These lions, this is the way they did it, these lions had not eaten for months or weeks or days, and they would rip... in fact, when they finally throw these other guys down in there, the Bible says that they get torn apart and killed before they hit the ground. Here is Daniel. They take Daniel, they bring him over, and they open up that pit, and there are about nine or ten big old lions around there, and they are roaring and growling, and they are all laughing and snickering, and the people that set him up are saying, "Oh yeah, we did this." They are high-fiving everybody. They are all stopping. Finally, throw Daniel down there and cover that thing up. Daniel gets to the ground down there, and he gets up, and just a little bit of light coming in. The lions are all lined up looking at him. But over in the corner, he sees a lion that he had not seen before. This lion looks at the other lions and says, "Boys, I want you to eat my man Daniel." "Well, Daniel is my man, and I know we are not in the millennium yet where you are all friendly,

and right now you are likely to tear him apart, but the bottom line is, you know what, I know you are all lions, but I am the Lion of the tribe of Judah. You take care of my man down here, and do not you hurt him."

You know what? When you read that story, when you go back through there, the king who put him in the lion's den, he had the worst night in his life. Could not sleep, worried, anxiety, burping all over the place, indigestion. He could not wait to get down in the morning. I bet you Daniel had the best night's sleep he ever had. You know, I just know a little bit what it is like. I have got two big dogs, and they are one about 100 pounds, one about 90 pounds, and nothing better in the afternoon just curling up on the couch and have one around your back, one around your front, and just feel that warmth coming off their bodies and listen to them sigh and listen to them snore and listen to them... one of them has a dream that he is chasing something, he is going like this, and you know, you just like, "I know what the dream is. I just know who you are chasing." And you know, nothing. But you know, imagine, we all like to go to the zoo. How many times have you seen that big old masterful African lion? You just like to go up and put your arms around him and jiggle. "Oh, he is so cute." They are all beautiful. They are cute. I cannot wait till the millennium. You can have one walk around with all you want. Do not try it now, but you can do it then.

He throws them down there, and those lions just kind of all make a nice big old bed for him. He gets down there, and that purring and that thing going on, he probably had the best night of sleep in his life. Moral of the story is this: he did not obey the government. He obeyed God, and he got busted for it, and he threw him in the lion's den. Let me say something to you, ladies and gentlemen, do not ever be afraid to go into the lion's den when the Lion of the tribe of Judah goes with you. This old world is going to have some things, and you are going to have to get your perspective. You are going to have to realize where your position is with your government.

IX. Rules for Christians and Government

I never advocate revolt. Never advocate trying to overthrow a government. You never hear me in a white ring, a right wing, or a militia group, never trying to overthrow anything that God does. I believe this government, as rotten and lousy as it is, you are still under the power of God's authority for the purpose of bringing about the second coming of Christ, and we have got to go through it, then learn to enjoy it. It is just that simple.

Now here are the rules based on what we have learned today, and then we are done.

- When it comes to government, recognize it as God's authority over you, and a Christian shall obey what his government says. That is simple.
- You have the power in this country to change what you do not like through the voting process. If it works, fine. If it does not, fine. Keep your perspective.
- When what the government says comes into questionable areas, try to go along as far as you can, but look for the avenue that God has provided for you to put people or circumstances, situations like the models in the Bible, that you can not obey the law but not get busted for not obeying the law. We already saw the example.

- If and when a government commands or makes a law that clearly violates your structure of the New Testament church, not the side issues, not the issues that do not change anything about you, not the issues that God allows to happen because you and I are not doing the job, real issues, learn what they are. Then the rule is given by Peter in Acts 5:29, and this is what he says:

Acts 5:29

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

And you let the chips fall, knowing that whatever happens, God is with you, and whatever happens is going to be exactly what God wants to happen.

Quit getting your focus off of what you lose or what you have to go through or what you have to give up, and start focusing on the fact what God has put you somewhere to do with you in that situation, what He wants you to do. Those examples I gave you went through some of the toughest, hardest times you ever saw in your life. They never lost their focus. They never lost their perspective. They never let the circumstances dictate and override the perspective that they were God's ambassador, and they did not fear the king no more than you should fear the king, because the King that we serve runs any king down here.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus.