

UNDER GOD'S POWER

By

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It takes great faith and courage for one to say, as did the apostles, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Such faith is derived from an understanding that “Power belongs to God” (Psalms. 62:11).

When man fail to recognize God's sovereign power over the world, he becomes subject to all the fears the evil powers of men can generate, as demonstrated in the fear and despair of our age. Suicide has become one of the greatest problems among teenagers because they are continually subjected to a barrage of pessimism and defeatism. The music they hear and the drama they view on television and in the movies preaches one thing: “There is no final authority, no purpose, and life is not worth living.”

The same climate of despair exists in the rest of society. We are told repeatedly that we are only a push-button away from a war that will destroy us all. There is a general feeling of uneasiness everywhere in the world. Evil men are in high places of power and conspiracies of even worse men are threatening what freedom and morality is left.

Many people live in a kind of quiet panic, awaiting some terrible unknown catastrophe to fall upon them. They are afraid to listen to the evening news and afraid not to listen. They fearfully cast their ballot at the polls, not sure which leader will be able to resist the threatening force of evil.

The spirit of the age is void of foundation. It rests on nothing, swept along with every wind of doctrine, because there is no authority. No one is in power, so the world supposes.

The sovereignty of God is either ignored or denied, yet it is one of the chief subjects of the Bible. God has revealed Himself, by His own power. It is His express purpose that men subject themselves to Him willingly by obedience to Jesus Christ, the One God has set upon His throne. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matt. 17:5). Peter preached, “Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall you hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:22–23). One either subjects himself to Christ as Lord or he is destined for destruction.

The essence of Christ's teaching is that He is Lord — all men must give account to Him (John 5:28–29). Many argue against His rule on the basis that there is so much evil in the world. But rebels can only rebel against authority. The fact that there is general rejection of Christ is all the more evidence of His reign. David sang of His rule as King in the words, “Rule thou in the midst of your enemies” (Psa. 110:2). The tighter the reigns of His power, the more violent the rebellion by the wicked.

All that is not in harmony with His rule is destined for failure, for He will ultimately have His way. The closer we get to the time of this final and eternal accounting, the greater the intensity of resistance to it.

Christ is not only Lord; He is also Judge. “(God) has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained, whereof he has

given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). In the eternal sense, that judgment is yet to come, but in another sense it is taking place all the time, in that He judges nations, systems and even churches, through various means, to demonstrate His sovereignty and to bring repentance by those who acknowledge Him as Lord. The terrible chaos, warfare, economic stress and suffering throughout the world is not merely the result of the rejection of the righteous leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. The nations, including our own, are filled with sin, from the poorest ghetto to the richest suburb. Drunkenness, adultery, homosexuality, cheating, lying, rejection of responsibility by husbands, wives, and children, greed, abortion, and evil thoughts are found everywhere. Not that everyone is guilty of all these, but that all these evils are accepted and tolerated by the majority and many of them even paid for out of the public treasury. How can such a nation, especially one with a heritage so filled with Christian teaching and tradition, expect to escape the judgment of the Lord?

The judgment is already falling, by successive strokes, on our society, but most people are too concerned with their personal pursuit of happiness to recognize it. They see it all as some tragic but natural phenomenon or some strange coincidence of the result of bad political decisions. The eyes of faith see it as the sovereign power of the Lord, calling men to repentance.

The judgment cannot be held at bay by a majority vote for good things, nor by summit meetings, nor by veto power, nor by military superiority. What God requires is man’s total allegiance. Not reform. Not a promise to do better, Not mere charity. Nor more arms for defense. The Lord is not afraid of guided missiles nor particle beams. What He wants is a contrite heart. He said that one must deny himself and follow Him. Without that, all the rest is still rebellion against the sovereign power of God vested in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What then? Back to Christ. To count life of value only in relation to the righteousness of God and His sovereignty. The very hairs of your head are numbered. Not by a government bureau of statistics, but by the Lord.

Christian faith means to align one’s self with the Lord Jesus Christ, and to rely upon Him rather than upon men. If the church is to do its work in making true disciples, it must stop accommodating itself to the current worldly culture. It must give up its methods of promotion and administration which are patterned after the sick society around us. In short, we must see our society as ripe for judgment and then we must stand on the side of the Judge and not decry nor fear His judgment.

We begin to trust the Lord when we take up the cross to follow Him. This is the way of security. It is true that evil men are in high places of power in all the nations of the world, but it is also true that Christ has power over all of them. Let us live in bold faith, not in the worldly spirit of fear, but in the spirit of self-control and power, knowing the truth of what Jesus said: “All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.”

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