

## The Sovereignty of God over the rule of man

Government originated as an ordinance of God. It is, in one sense, God's response to the nature of the people themselves. While it cannot redeem the world or be used as a tool to establish the kingdom of God, civil government does set the boundaries for human behavior. The state is not a remedy for sin, but a means to restrain it.

CHARLES COLSON (1931–)

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I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To his care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

—Farewell address at Springfield, Illinois, upon leaving to become president

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809–1865)

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Daniel 4: 28 – 37

### 1) The Rule of Man

- When God put Adam in the garden of Eden He intended him to work it and take care of it with Eve being his helper.
- It was through sin that caring moved to become a rule of power.
  - Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. (Genesis 3: 16)
  - The sin of the Garden was the sin of power. Richard J. Foster (1942– )
- Since then we have seen that man's rule – man's governance – on earth has been about power.
- It is also about pride.
  - Satan tried to rise up in power against God
  - Isaiah 14:13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain
- When a man full of pride and a lust for power rules there is no end to the wickedness that he will bring upon his nation and people.
- History, including Biblical history, is full of political leaders who have followed their own ways and brought destruction to their nations.
  - Hitler
  - Idi Amin
  - Saddam Hussein
  - Robert Mugabe
- There are many wicked leaders who also built their nations to boast of the what they could do as did King Nebuchadnezzar – “Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Daniel 4: 29 – 30)
- They aren't always content to only rule their own countries but desire more and more and extend their rule to become an empire – Nebuchadnezzar being the example in this as well being Babylonian emperor.
- There are many, like Saul and Solomon, who start off well wanting to lead under the authority of God and then go off the track as they take their eyes off the Lord and start serving themselves

- This is something that every believer needs to watch out for whether they are leaders or not.
- Romans 13: 1 tells us that “there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”
  - Does this mean that wicked rulers like those already mentioned have been established by God?
  - If so, how can a good God establish something that is wicked?

## 2) The Sovereignty of God

- Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was invincible as did most emperors. The Roman Emperors considered themselves to be god and demanded the subjects of their empire to worship them.
  - God soon showed Nebuchadnezzar that he was not sovereign and that God truly was the sovereign Lord.
  - Herod was dealt with severely by God when he received the praise that ought to have been for God alone.
  - Acts 12: 21-23 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.
- Many kings of Israel were wicked but that doesn't mean that God endorses wickedness
  - He allows wickedness as he chooses not to override the free will of man. But each time he dealt with the wicked kings
  - He also deals with the nation when they stray from Him by allowing wickedness to rule to bring the nation to repentance.
- God raises up all types of leaders for His overall purposes to be accomplished on earth
  - Romans 9: 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth
  - Jeremiah 27: 6 – 7 Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.
  - God also put godly leaders in place in ungodly nations such as Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon.
- God is Sovereign over all the earth and is no respecter of man.

## 3) Submission to God or man?

- We are called to submit primarily to God but we are also called to submit to human authority.
  - Romans 13: 1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.
- We need to carry out our responsibility to see godly leaders being put into place and once we've carried out our responsibility leave the result to God – trust in His Sovereign choice.
- We also have a responsibility to pray for our government.
  - 1 Timothy 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.