



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

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**Sunday – October 17, 2021**

## **Heart to Heart...**

The letter written to the Romans (58 AD) was to brothers and sisters in Christ living in Rome. Nero was the emperor. Nero was a vile, ungodly and unjust emperor and displayed publicly his depravity. He murdered many a saint, and used many as entertainment in being mutilated in the Coliseum. Scriptures were written to these brethren (and us): ***“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”*** (Romans 13:1)

How can an evil government be established and be a servant of God? (Romans 13:4) Many wonder how God’s purposes are fulfilled with such vile and ungodliness. I had a brother in Christ once told me that when the government does good for the people, they are God’s servants but when it does evil, they are not. How we need to read and be humble in our study of Scripture. Too many ‘pick and choose’ what they want to believe and that is what leads to false conclusions.

It doesn’t take much time to read the life of Joseph, how mistreated he was by governing officials and his own family. (Genesis 37-50) In the end, Joseph was elevated in this wicked government to spare Israel and Joseph stating to his brothers: ***“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring about the present result...”*** (Genesis 50:20) Just because people, rulers or other authorities intend to do wickedness, that does not mean that God doesn’t use them as His servants. The Assyrians were a corrupt government and killed men, women and children of other nations yet in Isaiah 10 God speaks they are His servants, His staff. That’s difficult for many to believe.

Paul did not tell the Roman brethren they should do evil if the government does evil or tells us to do evil. In fact, Paul speaks to the saints to have good behavior while submitting (Romans 13:3) The line is when the authorities tell us to do evil, going against God. That's why we are called to pray for our governing authorities so we can *“lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”* (I Timothy 2:2) Those of us in Christ are not to be troublemakers. In that first century, the government commanded the people to bow to Caesar, worship him and worship the Roman gods or face martyrdom. What did the saints do? Chose death rather than to dishonor the Lord. How would you react?

We live in a day when we don't have an emperor or dictator. We have a Constitution along with a Bill of Rights. (I'm not giving a history lesson.) But what many brethren fail to recognize is that the Constitution is not our governing authority. If we keep in mind, this Constitution was put in place to govern our government. In that, our governing officials can take on the powers of the Constitution and exceed that authority. To many this might surprise you but the Roman government had similar limits and Paul appealed to those laws to continue to carry out his preaching/teaching of the gospel (Acts 16:35-40/ Acts 22:25-29/ Acts 25:10-12).

We need to be thankful for this country. Be thankful for such a Constitution. But our focus is not the government and our rights but the Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father. Our government reflects some of the evil from many governments past such as Rome and Babylon. Nations governments do not alter the authority of God and His will. We will disagree with officials but rebellion is not something we are to be accused of. ***“Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.”*** (Romans 13:2) Let's look for the Lord's return while trying to reach out with the Gospel of salvation. That's our mission! Listen to God. Think about it!!!

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