
THE PROBLEM WITH KINGS, QUEENS AND PRESIDENTS

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DANIEL'S PREFACE

I acknowledge that we may be getting into a controversial area, an area of several possible “vantage points.” I don’t really intend to select an issue that will create two polarized sides and divide people, nor is it my intention to finally throw my weight on one side or the other. Really what I am going to do is eliminate both sides of the issue. It will be a disappointment for anyone who is expecting me to favor one or the other.

I bring this issue up, not because I have, as the Bible says, a morbid interest in controversies. There are some supposed teachers of the gospel who have a misplaced excitement about getting into controversial topics and are more than happy to share their opinions. This isn’t my interest at all. I am just interested in teaching the Bible, and especially teaching the Bible as it relates to the whole political arena.

LIVING IN TWO KINGDOMS

People always say that you should never discuss religion or politics at a social gathering. This booklet is about to discuss both at the same time! As with all areas of life, we want to gain wisdom from the Bible, not mankind. The biblical perspective of government is very different than the political view of the Bible and how it ought to be used. So, let's see what the Bible has to say about politics.

If you come to the Bible with an open mind, and let it talk to you about the arena of government and politics, you will find that what it has to say about politics is very different than what the world says.

One of the first things you discover when looking at the Bible is that the kingdoms of this world differ from the kingdom of God in almost every way. These two have at best, an uneasy relationship with one another. The overlap between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God is so partial that if you are not alert, you can be misled; for example, thinking that a certain political agenda is the same as the Lord's. The Scriptures point out how clearly the Bible differentiates between the kingdoms of this age and the kingdom of God.

FREE FROM THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD

We now, having been freed from our trespasses and our sins, having become people that Jesus has forgiven and redeemed, no longer follow a course of life according to the pattern that is in the kingdom of this age." (Reference Ephesians 2:1-6.) This age and this world, as the Bible says, are being ruled over by the prince and the power of the air—a demonic force that rules over things in this world.

We are freed from the course of this world. Colossians tells us that when we come to know Jesus, we are taken out of a domain or kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus, "*in whom we have redemption in the forgiveness of our sins*" (Colossians 1:13-14). This gives us a clue to the primary agenda of the kingdom of God.

CONFLICTING AGENDAS

The kingdom of God is about redeeming, rescuing, and recovering individual people; making a difference in people's lives so they are no longer slaves to unrighteousness, slaves to their own impulses and their own sins. We are freed from these things; we are redeemed and forgiven. The message of the kingdom of God is that *you can be forgiven and you can be restored*.

This statement is not language that lends itself to politics very well. The language of politics is basically, "That guy is a mess, and he needs to get out." The language of the kingdom is, "You are a mess, but you can be forgiven and restored."

For the most part, politics and government are not about individuals, but about a broad sweep of people—whole nations, whole principalities, and whole groups of

people. The Lord doesn't address these whole groups; He offers redemption and forgiveness to individual souls. The issues that plague individual people are what the kingdom of God is all about.

NOT OF THIS WORLD!

John 17 and 18 offer some great perspective. They contain, first, Jesus' high priestly prayer that He offers to the Father. What He talks about in this last, great prayer is first, what His role has been on the earth, and even as the Father has sent Him, He is now going to send people like us. But He makes it very clear when He says,

"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of this world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." John 17:15-18

Then in the next chapter, Jesus is standing before Pilate, the parental authority and ruler of the nation who had the right to either condemn or to liberate Jesus. Jesus barely talks to him. He has no intention of getting into a political discussion with Pilate and ultimately says to him,

"My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus says, "If My kingdom was of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." John 18:36

Jesus chose not to rearrange the whole order of things. He made it clear that His kingdom was not of this world.

SALT AND LIGHT

Our citizenship is with the kingdom of the Lord. But as residents of this world, our responsibility is to be salt and light to the world. The Bible says that when people see the good things that we do, and they understand that why we do them is because of who we believe in, then that causes them to thank God for the difference He has made in their life—even if they don't worship Him.

AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST

We are described in the Bible as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. An ambassador is an official representative from one country who resides and works in a foreign country. An ambassador does two things. One, he or she acts as an example or model of the nation from which they came. Two, an ambassador offers a place of refuge, asylum, or sanctuary for others from their native country. People who need protection can run to their country's embassy, which is considered actual territory of their country, and the foreign land surrounding them has no jurisdiction over them.

In the same way, we are ambassadors of Christ's kingdom. We are His models and examples living in a foreign world. What the world at large knows about Christ is what they see in us. And, as ambassadors, we can provide refuge for one another. The jurisdiction of the world and the things that the world would impose upon us don't really relate to us because we are citizens of another kingdom. The only God that we acknowledge and the only Lord that we bow down to is the Lord God Himself.

One thing an ambassador does not do is involve themselves in the political affairs of the nation they are assigned to. As ambassadors of Christ's kingdom, getting involved in the political affairs of this world is an iffy proposition at best.

AGENTS AGAINST EVIL

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. The way He did this was to work against them spiritually. There is no record of Jesus standing up for any political cause. He knew that no political or social revolution was going to bring peace and change to the world. Rather, He was involved in the transformation of individuals' lives.

We Christians need to be careful as we try to destroy the works of the devil by means that Jesus Himself did not employ. It's good to fight evil, but be sure to separate political agendas from biblical principles. If you look at the pattern of the Bible and what it recommends, you are going to be hard-pressed to find examples of political uprising from God's people.

Whatever the Lord may direct you to do as a good citizen of His kingdom, do it with all your heart. But be careful not to impose your directives onto somebody else unless those ideas are found clearly written out in the word of God.

VOTING THE SPIRITUAL AGENDA

Many Christians feel that they need to exercise their spiritual beliefs by voting. Oftentimes we vote for the candidate that chimes in on the greatest number of moral issues we support. It's very appropriate to do that. But, again, be warned; the agendas of the kingdom of God and the political arena are very, very different.

I am not telling you that you shouldn't be involved in the political arena. I am just saying, recognize that there are two different kingdoms and the overlap between them is not as strong as you may think. Politics deals with a whole lot of issues that are not even mentioned in the Bible (although the obvious social ones that are mentioned are pretty straightforward).

It seems that in every election year groups of Christians try to persuade others that the salvation of this country rests on electing certain candidates with certain political agendas. One year, one of the agenda items was whether or not the Panama Canal should be returned to the Panamanians. The Bible doesn't have a lot to say about the Panama Canal and who its rightful owners are. This was a non-spiritual issue that was nevertheless attached to spiritual values and touted in the political arena.

When you vote for a certain politician you are voting for every item on their political agenda, some of which may not even come to light until months later. The majority of these are not biblical in nature. They are not anti-Bible per se; they are just not addressed in the Scriptures.

So, the political agenda is much broader than the biblical agenda that we have before us.

You could say, "Yeah, that's true, but there are certain moral issues that are addressed by politics, and if we are going to exercise our right of being salt in the midst of a perverse generation, then we need to vote for responsible people that are going to restore the values that the Bible does talk about."

These moral issues and values the Bible does address are often supported by people who have no personal convictions about those issues. Politicians like to go where the votes are. If they choose a particular list of values as a part of their political agenda, more often than not, it is because they are trying to attract a certain demographic. They may be no more driven by personal conviction than they may be by their idea of economics. When you examine the personal lives of

some of the candidates, you very quickly discover that these morals don't necessarily apply.

What about those people who do have personal convictions and they truly want to be in politics for the sake of promoting the things of the kingdom? That's great, but make no mistake, you may be voting for the issues you believe in but every politician is a package deal. You may end up getting stuck with a lot of concerns you weren't counting on. Politicians of high moral character have been known to succumb to the pressures and temptations of a degenerating system. They may end up not representing your voice at all.

None of this is meant to discourage you from voting your conscience. It is meant only as a warning. Be alert and diligent at all times. Don't imagine that your vote will bring salvation to the nation. Politicians are as flawed as the rest of us. They are powerless to save us.

If you are truly passionate about certain moral agendas, the best way to address them is outside the political arena. Motivated people who take action outside of the political party system have made a huge positive impact on the nation. A good example of this is Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and what they have accomplished. People, who put themselves out there, rather than relying on a political party to do it for them, have achieved far more results against the evils of abortion, abuse, pornography, etc.

GOVERNMENT WAS NOT GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN

Historically there has never been a successful merger of religion (spiritual perspectives) and politics (political perspectives), in the long run, when leading a government. It almost always breaks down into some kind of distortion in one way or another. Some of the reasons for that are biblical reasons and not just a product of social history. Remember, we are approaching politics from the view of the Bible, not the Bible from the view of politics.

The basic problem with kings, queens and presidents is that they can't really do anything to address the specific ills of sin in a society. No matter who gets elected, sin will continue. Pornography will be published and used. Obscene and vile things will still be produced—all in the name of free speech.

Also, the state of our personal well-being has far more to do with our personal life choices than the choices we make at the voting booth. The issues that we are really

dealing with are issues of sin. When we think the government can do a better job running our lives than the Creator and Sustainer of our lives, we experience one disaster after another.

GIVE US A KING!

From Creation all the way up to the Book of 1 Samuel, the only form of government that existed for God's people was a theocracy. In theocracy, God is acknowledged as the sovereign ruler. Not only was He all over the spiritual side of things, but also over the temporal or governmental side of things. His word was law—both spiritual law and natural law. In fact, there was no distinction between them. They were one and the same.

God appointed priests, prophets, and judges as intermediaries between Himself and the people. Their job was to help people follow God's laws—which He gave to the Israelites as part of His covenant with them. God's law made them distinct, set apart from all the other nations of the earth.

The Israelites eventually came to interpret this difference as a bad thing, or they did not regard His ways. Instead of thinking of themselves as unique, they did not see God's design or purpose. They wanted to be more like the people of the nations around them. They saw that every other nation on the planet had a king, and they wanted a king, too.

What finally pushed the Israelites over the edge was when the priest, Samuel was old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel. The sons turned away from the Lord and became corrupt and perverse. The people came to Samuel and said, "We don't like how this theocracy is going. Look what your sons have done. We want to have a king like every other nation has a king." (Refer to 1 Samuel 8:1-6.)

Samuel was disturbed, and took it before the Lord. And God said to Samuel, "Go ahead and give them what they want. Don't take it personally, Samuel. They are not rejecting you. The real issue is that they have rejected Me. And by rejecting Me as the king over all, they want another form of government. Let's see if they really want what they say they want." (Refer to 1 Samuel 8:7-9.)

GOD'S WARNINGS ABOUT GOVERNMENT

God goes on to tell Samuel to warn the people of three things—three specific warnings God gave to the people of Israel about the form of government they chose—and they explain a lot.

First He warned them; your king is going to establish a whole system of government that never existed before. You're not just going to have only a king, you're going to have several dozen people whose power flows down from the king over you.”

Democracy today, whether it's Republicans, Democrats, Independents or the Green Party, is a system of government. They all have ideas about how much government we should have. Some say more government to take care of the people. Some say less government; let people take care of themselves. But one thing you'll never hear from any of them is *no* government.

The second point that God warned; government is going to cost you. It's going to hit you in the wallet. These leaders need to be paid, and you will be paying for them through paying taxes.

And the third thing God said was; government will be an unalterable fact of life. Because you have rejected theocracy, now all people have to exist under some form of secular government. There is no escaping this reality.

Doesn't this explain a lot? “You are going to get a lot of government, you are going to pay for it, and there is no going back now.” Those are things spoken by God Himself. They can no more be set aside than anything else in the Bible. (Refer to 1 Samuel 8:10-27.)

A GOVERNMENT OF FLAWED PEOPLE

Interestingly, we eventually rejected kings, too. Some of us have ancestors from Western Europe who decided that the monarchy wasn't working out for them. They left Europe and came to America so they could run things their way—they wanted a democracy.

To sum things up so far, in the beginning there was theocracy, God was the ruler over both the spiritual and the secular side of things. We rejected God and opted

for a human monarch to rule over us. Then we rejected the monarch and opted to rule over ourselves.

Judges 17 brings up an interesting point. It says,

“When there is no king in the land, everybody is going to do what is right in their own eyes.” Judges 17:6

I expect this next statement to be seriously misinterpreted, so please try to read it with spiritual eyes. In my reading of the Bible, a democracy is the least biblically sound, form of government. First, there is no evidence in the Bible that democracy ever existed or was recommended. Second, consider what democracy is—a government run by the people. We know that all people are inherently flawed, so what does that say about the government? Even churches that run by a democracy don't work—at least not on the spiritual side of things.

So, is democracy wrong? Of course not! After all, our democracy was established on faith in the Lord God and the undisputed truth of His word. But over time, moral decay has set in, as it does in every society that pushes the Lord away. Our government has largely rejected God, yet again. What remains is a bunch of sinful people doing as they see fit.

And it doesn't stop there. Eventually people just started complaining against the democratic form of government. If you approach it from a biblical standpoint, it puts things into perspective. God established secular government because of our rebellion against His rulership. What we must understand is that once He has established this, we are not free just to remove it at whim.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GOVERNMENT

So, what does the Bible say about our responsibilities with regard to government?

Pray for Our Leaders

First, we are told to pray for our leaders. It's not just a general call to prayer, but 1 Timothy, specifically says,

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in

authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” 1 Timothy 2:1-2

The purpose and result of such prayer is so that you and I, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, relatively free from the constant distraction of all these other issues, can devote our time and attention to reaching people for Jesus.

One of the common misconceptions about government is that its purpose, and what we ought to pray for, is that America would prosper financially. The American dream is to be rich and happy ever after. Right? Well, currently our nation is facing one of its greatest economic crises since the Great Depression. Hundreds of thousands have lost their jobs and homes. I hear it often said, “Our country is falling apart.”

Forgive me for being blunt, but that is a statement of such arrogance, that we as Christians imagine all is lost if our standard of living drops down about seven or eight notches. We are frustrated and upset, and adopt righteous vigor because our standard of living is no longer what it once was. There are millions of desperately poor people in impoverished nations all over the earth. God loves them, too. Many of these have come to know and follow Jesus. They will never even know what it's like to have three meals a day, and yet they rejoice in the Lord their Provider.

Instead of praying for our leaders to fix this financial mess we're in, pray that people would turn to Christ for wisdom and guidance. Besides, praying for our leaders isn't so much about their actions, as it is about attitude. We pray for our leaders because it is what God wants so that we have a tranquil existence, so we can do God's work, so that the gospel can be spread!

SUBMIT TO OUR LEADERS

The second thing the Bible says about our relationship to government is to submit to our leaders. 1 Peter 2 is all about submitting to governmental leaders whose job it is, the Bible says, “*to punish evildoers and reward righteous people.*” And it says in 1 Peter that if you submit to these leaders, “*you will silence the critics.*”

In that day and age, Christians were being persecuted as much for political reasons as for spiritual reasons. They were being accused of wanting to set up another form of world government; they were being accused of disloyalty to the emperor of that time. So Peter was saying, “Hey guys, we don't want to get involved in all this political fighting; we want to be people who focus on bringing redemption to other

people. Submit to the rulers who are over you so that we can silence the critics who are saying things about us that aren't true." (Refer to 1 Peter 2:13-17.)

According to the Bible we are supposed to submit to leaders. We are to submit to them even when we don't like who is in office. The kind of leaders that the early church were told to submit to were not exactly known for their values. No politician today is as vile as some of the Roman emperors were in their day.

PAY OUR TAXES

Third, we pay taxes to the government. The Lord warned us long ago that it was going to cost us "through our teeth." But people wanted a government, and now we are paying for it.

"For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing." Romans 13: 6

HONOR AND RESPECT OUR LEADERS

And the fourth biblical mandate is to honor and respect our leaders.

"Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to fear; honor to whom honor." Romans 13:7

If you owe taxes, you also owe respect and honor. You don't have to agree with them, you just have to give them honor and respect. It is the biblical thing to do.

WHAT THE BIBLE *DOESN'T* SAY ABOUT GOVERNMENT

Now, there are a lot of popular mandates that well-meaning people will tell you are biblical. They are good advice and common sense, but they are not in the Bible.

Doesn't Say, "Vote"

Nowhere in the Bible does it tell you to vote for anybody or anything. I do personally vote and I strongly encourage all of you to vote. It's a part of living in this nation and it's what makes democracy work. We ought to make use of the system that has been given to us. Women should know that many of their foremothers suffered great ridicule, abuse, and punishment to secure their right to

vote. So, we ought to vote according to our conscience. Not because the Bible says so, but because it's a good thing to do.

Doesn't Say, "Be a Patriot"

The Bible doesn't say anything about being a patriot. Remember the Bible was written to the whole world. No matter what the situation, no matter what the economic or political arrangement is anywhere in the world, the Bible still works. The Bible says that *apart from Christ we are aliens to His kingdom* (reference John 3:3). But when we accept Christ we become citizens of Christ's eternal kingdom. God's interest in the world is not at a national level or even at a global level. His interest is in the redemption and forgiveness of each individual heart.

Being a patriot is a good thing. But don't put America and God in the same breath, unless you are praying for His blessing for us and are willing to pray for His blessing on all the other nations of the earth. The Bible does say *whatever land or city you live in, you ought to pray*. God is not an American and America is not the Promised Land. Please don't hold up the Cross and wave the flag at the same time. Those are completely different symbols.

Doesn't Say, "Rebel Against Government"

Nowhere in the Bible does it give you any mandate to change or correct your government. You may want to but that's not a biblical mandate. There are some people who say, "Yeah, but I have got to obey God and not man. That gives me the right to rebel against the godless governing authorities."

What does the Bible say? The Book of Acts is full of accounts of people sharing Jesus Christ with others. They were told to stop, but did they stop? No. Did they start an uprising to overthrow the government and change the laws of the land? No! They went right on witnessing and were punished for it. They were thrown in jail, beaten and executed. They didn't resist or revolt.

If you feel the Holy Spirit leading you to witness, go ahead and witness, but be prepared to face the consequences. Paul and the disciples did and you will too. This is not about: *the freedom to do whatever I want in God's name and forget the government*—there are consequences to following Christ, He was pretty clear about that.

ESTABLISHED BY GOD

This brings us back to Romans 13:

“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. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them; tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.” Romans 13: 1-7

SUBMIT TO YOUR AUTHORITIES

Remember, human government is established as a mandate from God. It is a part of His redemptive order. The reason that it is part of His redemptive order is because things got messed up when we chose to walk in rebellion. We violated the original commands of God. We chose not to submit to Him and now we think we can choose not to submit to a ruler?

It is disobedience that brings destruction, so God gives us opportunities to submit to things, even when those things aren't right. The pattern of the Bible is to submit. When you submit to the governing authorities, you are really being submitted to God.

It was the lack of submission that got us into trouble, and God redeems us through the process of submission. That's why the Bible says of Jesus, “then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will’” (Hebrews 10:9). Jesus came to obey God. He submitted to all God placed before Him. We're told in the Book of 1 Peter 2:21-23 that Jesus endured all sorts of persecution. He was horribly treated when He was brought before the worldly authorities but He didn't revile them. He didn't speak out against them. He was willing to endure whatever came His way because He knew it was more important for Him to submit than it was for Him to correct the authority over Him whom He knew to be wrong. By submitting to the authorities, Christ was really submitting to the Father.

DON'T BE A REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

One of the great mistakes that people make is thinking that by rebelling against an errant governing authority, they are standing up for what is right. They think it is their duty to correct a particular wrong in the government, but when they do, they pay a greater price. They have walked in rebellion and thereby incapacitated themselves for being redeemers. You cannot be an agent in the kingdom of God by acting as a rebel against the authorities that God has placed over you. You sacrifice one for the other.

Now, should we just lie there and take it? Never stand up for what is right? No, I am not saying you can't stand up for what is right. I am saying we have to be careful that you don't *in the name of our self-righteous agenda* end up having no fear of authority.

Here is what happens. If I decide to choose to whom I will submit on the basis of whether or not that authority is correct, then I'm walking in my own sense of what is right and wrong. I comply with one authority because I agree with them; I discard another authority because I don't agree with them. I'm no longer walking in fear of authority.

Paul was horrified when he says, "You don't want to live without fear of authority!" (Refer to Romans 13:1-7.) Because once you live without that fear of authority, there is no end to what you'll choose to do. Remember Judges 17:6, "Every man did what was right in his own eyes."

ENDURE

The kingdom of God is not about you or me avoiding suffering. It is not about you or me being agents of political change that get society and all the people in authority to "get their acts together" and do what's right. My responsibility is between God and myself. We live and exist in a dimension and in a kingdom that has very different ground rules than the world has.

We will not make a difference in this world by rebelling, but we will make a difference by enduring when we are unjustly treated.

"Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable, for this

finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.” 1 Peter 2: 18-20

Peter says that it doesn't accomplish anything spiritually if you get corrected for something you did that was wrong. You deserve it. He says the only kingdom currency or value for the things of God is when an authority treats you unjustly or harshly when you've done absolutely nothing wrong at all.

And the Bible says, “

“For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.” 1 Peter 3:17

Will we submit to situations that we don't like? Will we submit to situations that aren't what they should be? When we do submit, the Lord capacitates us for great redemption.

The church today has really made a mistake by missing the point here. So many say, “It's my job to decide what is right or wrong and then I will decide if I will obey my government.” But the pattern of the Bible and the way that God works is that you live your life in submission and God will take all of the unjust treatment that you experience and use it to capacitate you as His instrument of redemption in the lives of other individuals. That's what the kingdom is all about—individual people making a difference in the lives of other individual people.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Having said all this, I don't think our country is quite at the point where we have to fear punishment and persecution for doing what is right. Compared to many other nations where Christians are being martyred daily, we still enjoy a blanket of freedom to worship and serve God any way we are led. The government may have a lot of policies we don't like, but so far they are not killing Christians for sharing the gospel.

Probably all of us could talk at great length about the things in this country that we think are not the way they should be. But you do not fix things in God's economy by rebelling and doing anything you want. If we are aware of something

in our government that is violating the things of God, then I think we have a responsibility to obey God and accept the consequences.

I recognize many people whom I respect and trust do not necessarily share my vantage point. I don't offer my standpoint to try to be different than anybody else. I *have* tried to understand why, in my own soul, I have such ambivalence toward politics. And when I read the Bible, it explains to me why I don't really expend a lot of energy worrying about which political party is doing what. I think if you examine their platforms it would be pretty clear to you which platform lines up a little bit more with the Bible. But I am also not foolish enough to think that voting for people who share my perspective is necessarily going to accomplish what I hope it will.

The Bible says Jesus gave us an example that we should follow. That example He gave is to submit, even when unrighteous, ungodly things are being done in the name of that government. Submitting to authorities is submitting to God. Submit, and God will greatly increase your capacity for doing His redeeming work in your life, and in the lives of others.