

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sermon: God Is the Sovereign Authority, Part 3

Topic: There Is No Authority Except from God (B)

Scripture Text: Romans 13:1–2

1/5/2021

Romans 13:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Today we will focus on the part “b” of Romans 13:1.

Romans 13:1b For there is no authority except from God, Part b

We will pick up here talking about the five levels of governing authorities established by God. We have come to the fifth one.

5. The masters/employer’s authority over those that work for them.

This statement could be condensed as to whom you work for either as a slave in a long-ago era, as a paid servant or as an employee in more current times. Since they are governing authorities, obedience is due them. This is not unlike the Patriarchal governance.

1 Peter 2:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. (Titus 2:9)

Titus 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

It seems that this command is for all levels of authority

*Ephesians 6:5–9 (NKJV) ⁵ **Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;** ⁶ ...*

I must truthfully say that this command is uncomfortable for me, a black person, remembering the history of the slavery of black people.

There is a biblical example in the story of Obadiah. It is a short single chapter book about a runaway slave that Paul told to return to his master. *Obadiah 1–21*

Slave vs Servant

A few things that have helped me to deal with this is understanding the time in which this was written. It was a time when Rome was the ruling Government. For the most part, a person was either a Roman citizen or a slave resulting from Rome’s victory in battles. But besides that, the original Greek word in the passage is oikētēs. I can’t pronounce it either. But it means “servant” most translations translate it that way. (NKJV, ESV, KJV)

During that time there was not safety net for people and often they sold themselves into a form of servitude in order to feed themselves and their families. It is very much like the system of sharecropping.

The application is the same whether a slave, a servant or an employee, we owe obedience to those who govern over us.

As you can imagine slave holders used these verses to their benefit and to continue to subjugate their slaves.

- Later in US history, Romans 13 was employed by anti-abolitionists to justify and legitimize the keeping of slaves; notably around the time of the [Fugitive Slave Act of 1850](#) which precipitated debate as to whether the law should be obeyed or resisted.^[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romans_13#cite_note-Mullen-15

Like always they fail to tell the whole story for the scriptures go on to say in verse 9. *Ephesians 6:9 (NKJV)* ⁹ **And you, masters, do the same things to them**, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Even in Romans 13: 3 there is some enlightenment.

Romans 13:3 (NKJV) ³ **For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.** Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

God's design is for those in authority are to do what is good for the people.

I do not think Paul is saying that a slave should not desire to be free. Even during the Roman rule, a person could buy their freedom or serve out their time of servitude. I believe it was to discourage rebellion and disrespect.

I do not believe it was ever God's will for a slave society and when He allowed it to be, it was only for a short time, often as a form of chastisement.

During the last administration (2016-2020) "doing what is good for the people" was in great question. I had to find peace within myself so not to be overtly disobedient or spend time wishing the administration harm even in light of all the questionable acts they were doing. Many of the leaders in the administration were dishonest, self-serving and without regard for the people.

I know am was to pray for our leaders at all governing levels.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NLT) ¹ I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. ² Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.

How do you pray for those in authority you don't agree with and are proven to be corrupt? The prayers requested by Paul seem to be for us to pray for them intercede on behalf and benefit of the people.

I determined to pray that if there were any leaders that was doing anything that was detrimental to the people, be they Republican or Democrat, they would be **Revealed**, then given the opportunity to **Repent**. If no repentance, then they would be **Removed** and **Replaced** by someone with the best interest of the people at heart.

Is there an exception to this verse, “For there is no authority except from God”, I think so?

This is tricky and I must try to be clear for I don’t want to seem like I am contradicting scripture. I will begin with the question I am trying to address, “Is all authority that has ever been, all authority that is now and all authority in the future from God? My answerer is yes because I believe the Bible. Then how can there be an exception? In the last message (Part A) we look at the five authorities established by God.

We discussed how all authority is from God but that authority may be abused or even granted by someone to another not of God’s choosing. The clearest example was mentioned earlier concerning the power and authority given to Satan and he abused it but also gave some to demons and to the beast in Revelation.

*Revelation 13:2 (NKJV) ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. **The dragon (Satan) gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.** (Revelation 12:9) (Luke 8:26–29)*

Now I believe that God’s given authority could be usurped by another. It is still God’s authority but in the wrong hands. God gives authority to kings and rulers and let’s say it is intended to be passed on to their descendants in an established order. If someone comes and tries to beak that order they are considered a usurper (*a person who takes a position of power or importance illegally or by force*) of the God’s given authority.

This is what **Athaliah** did. she became the first and only queen of ancient Israel by usurping the authority and power from the rightful heirs. See *2 Kings 11:1–3*

2 Kings 11:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. ... ³ So he (Joash) was hidden with her in the house of the LORD for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

The authority she usurped was the authority from God intended for the royal heirs of king Jehoahaz

I will give just one more passage of scripture to make the point that even all in God’s authority, like Athaliah, were not put there by God.

*Hosea 8:3–4 (NKJV) ³ Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him. ⁴ **“They set up kings, but not by Me; They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them.** From their silver and gold They made idols for themselves— That they might be cut off.*

Kings, those in power and authority, God did not set them up nor did He approve of them but, for a period of time He **allowed** them to rule as He did in regard to Athaliah.

This is why I say that each and every person that ever was, is or will ever be in authority may not be of Gods approval, yet the authority itself, (*Law of Moses, U.S. Constitution*) remains.

The authority is the standard, not the person.

I pray that my understand is from the Holy Spirit who aids me all the time. This has been one of the hardest series for me to do because Romans 13 seems to be so clear that no matter who or what we must obey those in authority as some have suggested.

For clarity sake I liken this error of absolute thinking on this passage as to the error preached on absolute thinking that “whatever we ask in the name of Jesus will be received.”

This doctrine prompted the name it and claim it heresy. It is true that if you read the following verses it seems to say just that. If I were to say any different then I would be contradicting scripture.

Scripture is the best source for confirming scripture. Let’s quickly look at some of the verse relating to “Name it and claim it and believe it and receive it.”

1. *Matthew 21:22 (NKJV)* ²² *And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.*”

It seem that all we have to do is believe it and we will receive it. (James 1:5–8).

2. *John 14:13–14 (NKJV)* ¹³ *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* ¹⁴ *If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

3. *John 15:16 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

Again, these two seems like Jesus is saying that if **we ask anything** in the **name of Jesus**, we will get it.

But without getting deep into these verses let’s look at a few others.

1. *John 15:7 (NKJV)* ⁷ *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

Here we have the same thing being said but with a qualifier or condition attached. We must abide in Him. That is not a contradiction but sensible. God nor Jesus are obligated to give anyone anything if they are not in obedience to Him

2. *John 16:23 (NKJV)* ²³ *“And **in that day** you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*

In this verse the same concept is said the if we ask in the name of Jesus God will give it. Now, I must say that Jesus is talking **to His disciples** about a **specific day or time period**.

Here is my last example.

Assuming that the meaning is that whatever we asked in the name of Jesus or how about directly to Jesus who gives permission to ask Him. The following verses make my point.

*Mark 10:35–40 (NKJV) ³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to **do for us whatever we ask.**” ³⁶ And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” ³⁷ They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.” ³⁸ **But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. ... ⁴⁰ but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”***

The “Whatever”, was asked to Jesus with His permission but the request was rejected. (*James 4:3*)

James 4:3 (NKJV) ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

This is just one example pointing out that unless we search the whole scriptures, we can come up with erroneous or incomplete meanings

Message Scriptures: **Romans 13:1–2**, *1 Peter 2:18*, *Titus 2:9–10*, *Ephesians 6:5–9*, *Ephesians 6:9*, *Romans 13:3*, *1 Timothy 2:1–2*, *Revelation 13:2*, *Revelation 12:9* (*Luke 8:26–29*, *2 Kings 11:1–3*, *Hosea 8:3–4*, *Matthew 21:22*, *James 1:5–8*, *John 14:13–14*, *John 15:16*, *John 15:7*, *John 16:23*, *Mark 10:35–40*, *James 4:3*)

END