

Respecting God's Authority

Intro:

1. Acquaintance reported of Mercedes employee in Germany; new job, perks, etc. Drunk, cussed and threatened bosses three times before reprimand. Fair, generous treatment does not ensure respect.
2. Country suffering from general lack of regard for authority: teachers beat up, policemen shot, contracts dishonored, children out of control of parents, etc.

1. Respect for God/Christ

- A. As Creator, Sustainer - Lord of heaven and earth - Ac 17:24-28. God is Absolute Sovereign by virtue of His transcendent power and life-giving substance.
- B. As Judge - There is no fear of the American judicial system because its power to punish has been greatly curtailed. Not true of God - Rom 14:10-12.
- C. As manifested in the Person of Jesus - Parable of vinedressers/son - Mt 21:37-39; Jn 8:42; 1 Jn 4:15; 5:1.

2. Respect for God's Words

- A. Respect for God leads to respect for His words, since His words are a true reflection of His character and will:
 1. Words are spirit/life - Jn 6:63, 68-69.
 2. Words will judge - Jn 12:48 ("rejects **Me**, and does not receive My **words** ...).
 3. Love/obedience, Jn 14:21, 23-24; 15:10, 14.
- B. The position, teaching of the apostles:
 1. Jesus made Father's words known to apostles - Jn 15:15; further commanded through the H.S. - Jn 16:13-15.
 2. To receive apostles/words is to receive Jesus - Mt 10:40; Jn 13:20.
 3. Thus, Paul makes the following affirmations: 1 Cor 14:37; 1 Th 4:8. The apostles commanded with equal authority as Jesus (see Mt 18:18).

- C. The **only** insight we have into God's mind/will is through His expressed words. We must, then, approach that word carefully, reverently, and diligently. **Illus.** Seeing the manuscripts in the British Museum: Lewis Carroll, handwritten copy; music by Handel; poetry by Keats, Shelly, Wordsworth, etc. *But how much more* the Magna Charta, written by King John in 1215 which guaranteed certain individual rights and limited absolute power of the monarchy.

3. Disrespect for God's Word

A. Various abuses, infringements:

1. Charismatics - Written word set aside for imagined revelations (feelings).
2. Modernists - Scriptures wrested to own destruction in defense of women exercising leadership roles in churches, legitimizing homosexual behavior, disregarding Jesus' teaching on divorce - and even voting to reject the genuineness of Jesus' teaching in the gospels (the Jesus Seminar).
3. Institutionalists who feel too restricted by the principles of precept, approved apostolic example or precedent, and necessary conclusions and have adopted a "new hermeneutic" which gives them free rein.
4. Conservatives who no longer know the difference between what is traditional/expedient and what is law; lazy, muddled thinking that has been fostered by an unwillingness to be pushed and challenged to learn. Some want it quick, easy, and effortless, but *nothing* is learned that way.

- B. Paul's admonition to Timothy is timeless: "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the word of truth*" (2 Tim 2:15). The word means to cut straight, as tent-cloth (Rob.) or stones.

- C. **Conclusion:** "*See that you do not refuse Him who speaks ...*" (Heb 12:25-29). God is a consuming fire; He will shake all things into oblivion and the only thing which will remain is His kingdom. Are you in that kingdom?