

Pray for Kings - Part 3

by Chip Brogden

Secular authority is established by God, and submission to it is ordered by God, which means we should pray for secular authority to see change in the earth on a global scale.

Duration: 20:38

Scripture: Psalm 103:19

Topics: "Secular Authority", "Divine Sovereignty"

Description

This sermon delves into the establishment of secular authority by God, emphasizing that the earth and its people belong to God, that God rules the heavens but allows humans to govern the earth, that God determines the rise and fall of nations and their boundaries, and that God raises up and puts down leaders of nations. It highlights the importance of submission to secular authority as ordered by God, even in challenging times when governments go astray.

Transcript

So I hope you brought your Bible because we're going to go through a lot of Scripture so that the point is really made not by me but by the Word of God so that you can clearly see first that secular authority is established by God. So four principles. First, the earth and its people belong to God.

The earth and its people belong to God. Now I know that there's a teaching that was popularized back in the 80s, it may be in the 70s, but it's a teaching that basically said that when Adam sinned, or let's back up, it basically says that God put Adam in charge of the earth and then Adam sinned and when he did, the devil was in charge of the earth, and that's how they try to explain the existence of evil. Yet that contradicts Scripture once again.

If you're ever confused about a teaching, just go back to what Scripture says. Psalm 24 verse 1. Turn there and let's read that together. Psalm 24 verse 1. It says that the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness.

There's that word all again. The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. See when the Bible says love not the world or the things of the world, it's not talking about the people of the world because the world belongs to God.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. So the earth is the Lord's, that's principle number one.

Doesn't belong to you, doesn't belong to me, doesn't belong to the government, but the earth is the Lord's and the people belong to God. Isn't that encouraging? Just that right there helps to give you a better understanding of God's relationship to the nations of this world. God is concerned for the nations, he's concerned for its people, he's concerned for everyone on this earth, and that's why he is interested in the governments of this earth, and that's why he holds those governments accountable for the things that they do or the things that they fail to do.

Why? Because the earth and its people, all of its population, belongs to God. The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. So that's the first principle.

Principle number two, God rules the heavens but allows the children of men to rule on the earth. We're talking about the four principles of secular government's relationship to God. I'm telling you it doesn't matter if it's a Christian government, it doesn't matter if it's an atheist government, or if it's a neutral government.

Whatever government exists, exists because of God. God rules the heavens but he allows the children of men to rule on the earth. Psalm 103 19 says, the Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over... there's that word again, all.

His kingdom rules over all. So much for the heaven. What about the earth? Well it says that he is ruling over all from heaven, but when we turn over a few more pages to Psalm 115, we have the answer to our question.

Psalm 115 verse 16 says, the heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth he has given to the children of men. Do you see that? The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth he has given to the children of men. Now the earth still belongs to God, the people still belong to God, but in this sense he is giving the earth to the children of men in the same sense that he tells Peter, feed my sheep.

He didn't give the sheep to Peter and say, okay Peter, now these are your sheep. The Lord still retains ownership of the sheep. He gave Peter a responsibility, or as I like to say, a stewardship, which means you're responsible for taking care of and watching over this person or these people that I am committing to your care.

That's a stewardship, but you don't own them. You can't buy them or sell them or abuse them, and you're going to be held to account for your actions. That's what a stewardship is.

So Jesus did not give his sheep to Peter, and now they belong to Peter. He said, feed my sheep, they still belong to Jesus. In the same way, it says that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein, and he is ruling and reigning from the heavens.

The heavens belong to God, as does the earth, but he has given the earth to the children of men to rule, to live, as God's purpose is slowly worked out. It seems slow, doesn't it? But as his purpose and his intention is being worked out in successive ages on the earth. So God establishes spiritual authority, then he establishes secular authority, and that secular authority has dominion over the earth, over the nations, and over the people of this earth, but only to the extent that God allows, and that's it's critical that you understand that, because that brings us to the third principle of secular government's responsibility in relationship to God.

The third principle is that God established the nations, their rise and their fall, and their boundaries. Just as Benjamin Franklin alluded to earlier, that if God knows about every sparrow that falls, then certainly a nation, an empire cannot come to power without his knowledge and without his assistance, and we see this revealed time and time again in Scripture, but it's really clear if you will look in the book of Acts. Turn over to the book of Acts, chapter 17, and there are multiple scriptures and examples we could use from Scripture, but I'm just trying to give you the basics.

I'm trying to hit the highlights so that you have a reasonable basis upon which you can understand secular authority as established by God, and you can see a timeline. First, it's the understanding that the earth and its people belong to God, first and foremost. Secondly, that God rules in the heavens, but he has given the earth to the children of men.

Third, which is what we are on now, God established the nations, he causes them to rise and to fall, and he sets their boundaries, Acts 17, 24. Says, God who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is he worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, since he gives to all life, breath, and all things. And he has made, here's what I want you to see, he has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord in the hope that they might grope for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring.

Praise the Lord, right? God establishes the nations, he raises them up, he brings them down, and it says that he appoints their times and their boundaries. So when you look in the book of Daniel and you see the rise and fall of empires, first the Assyrian Empire, then the Babylonian Empire, then the Persians, then the Greeks, then the Romans, you see this typified in Scripture and revealed in Scripture, you see the rise and fall of these nations. It shows that God is actively involved in setting up and in tearing down, in establishing their time period, that they should be a nation, in establishing the boundary of their influence, and that frequently in Scripture you see that a nation is judged by having another nation come in and conquer it, and that's what happened with the nation of Israel when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and burned down the temple in Jerusalem and carried the captives away, the survivors, to Babylon.

It was a judgment, and according to the prophets, it was not just a random act, but it was something that was ordained and prophesied and decreed by the Lord. Why? Because he is determining the pre-appointed times of every nation and establishing the boundaries of their dwellings, their sphere of influence on the earth. He controls it, he guides it, he determines it.

He says, I'm going to allow this one to rise, I'm going to allow this one to fall, I'm going to bless this one for a time, and maybe they'll seek me. If they don't, I'll remove the blessing. I mean, this is the rise and fall of nations that God is intimately involved with.

So secular authority is established by God. The fourth principle, God raises up and puts down not just the nations, but their leaders, the leaders of these nations, kings and presidents, prime ministers, government officials. It says that God raises up and puts down these leaders of these nations.

In Jeremiah chapter 18, and there again, Scripture is filled with many examples. If you read in 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, 1st and 2nd Chronicles, you see the rise and fall of leadership, the rise and fall of leadership. God calls a man, he's raised up, God blesses him, he enjoys prosperity, he leads the

nation to victory.

Most of the time, not all the time, but most of the time in his prosperity, he sins, he forgets where he came from, and then judgment is decreed upon him, and his leadership ends, and God raises up new leadership. But you see the rise and fall of leadership, and I'm talking primarily of secular leadership in this message. In the nation of Israel, secular and spiritual leadership were a little bit more entwined, but even there you had a separation.

You had the king, which was the secular authority, and you had the prophet, which was the spiritual authority. So you and I, as kings and priests of the kingdom of God, fulfilled the prophetic role of the spiritual authority in the earth, and then the governments of this world fulfilled the authority responsibility in the earth. So we'll continue to expound upon that, but I trust even in this introduction that you're able to see the difference.

Spiritual authority is related to the Ecclesia, to the body of Christ, to the kingdom of God. Secular authority is related to the kings of this world, the governments of this world, the nations of this world. So Jeremiah 18 7 talks about how God raises up and puts down leaders, and we're going to see another example of this when we get over into Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar.

It's a classic example, but I just wanted to give this little text here. Jeremiah 18 7 says, "...the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it." Now this word and this standard, this principle applies not just to the nation as a whole, but it also applies to the king, to the leader, to the president, to the prime minister, to those government officials who have responsibility for leading the nation.

The secular nation makes no difference. Again, I have to reiterate this. You say, but these aren't Christians, these aren't believers.

I'm saying it doesn't make any difference from the perspective of the kingdom of God. Let me give you those four principles again. The earth and its people belong to God, saved and unsaved.

It says that he causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall on the good and bad alike. So we are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a special people, a set-apart people, but that doesn't mean that God doesn't love the whole world, or it doesn't mean that he loves us any more than he loves the whole world. So the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.

God rules in the heavens, but he allows the children of men to rule on the earth, to govern the earth. He's given them the earth to live and to populate. It says that God established the nations, he established their predetermined times and their boundaries, and in Jeremiah and in other places we see that God decides which nations and which leaders of nations are going to prosper and rise up and which ones he is going to appoint for being brought down, usually as a result of judgment, because they've sinned, they rebelled, or they forgot their roots, they forgot and they drifted away from their spiritual and moral foundation.

Israel is the best-known example when we look in Scripture, but there are many other examples in many other nations, many other leaders, where God is actively involved in the rise and fall of nations, actively

involved in the rise and fall of leaders of those nations. So secular authority is established by God. Again, you're going to think about all the exceptions to the rule, all the examples of bad government, and we're going to deal with that as we get a little further into the message.

First, I'm laying a foundation. So the second part is, we said first that secular authority is established by God. Secondly, submission to secular authority is ordered by God.

Not only does God establish secular authority through the governments and nations of this earth, but he orders us, commands us, instructs us to be submitted to that secular authority. Again, we're talking about secular authority, political, government, national, spiritual authority, and submission to spiritual authority is similar, but it's not quite the same thing. Right now we're talking about secular authority and why you and I should be concerned enough to pray for secular authority if we want to see change in the earth on a global scale, dealing with the big problems, the big issues that confront the nations of this world, that confront the human race.

Submission to secular authority is ordered by God in Romans chapter 13. Romans 13 1 says, 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. Somebody will say, well what about Hitler? We're going to deal with Hitler.

We're going to deal with dictatorships, and it's under a section titled, when things go wrong. When things go wrong, because things are going to go wrong. I'm giving you God's purpose.

I'm giving you God's intention, God's will. Now when things go off the tracks, when government gets out of control, and when you have something like Nazi Germany, or when you have something like any number of dictatorships in the world, or even when you have governments that are maybe not actively persecuting Christians, but maybe they are passively allowing Christians to be persecuted. When you have government that goes off the tracks, there's ways and means of dealing with that spiritually speaking, and that's what we're going to deal with.

But right now, I just want to give you what God's Word says, so that we can recognize what it means when a government goes off the tracks. So that you and I can cooperate, not just as good citizens with God's purpose for the nations, but we can cooperate as citizens of heaven for God's kingdom and for his purpose in the nations. You've been listening to CrossWay, featuring the teaching ministry of Chip Brogdon.

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