

Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

An Expository Journey Through 1Peter 1Peter 2:11-25

23- How to Live as Aliens and Strangers- Part 5 Submission to Earthly Authority- Part 2

June 24, 2018

1 Peter 2:11-25

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

16 *Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God.

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

18 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.

19 For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

20 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.

21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

To the Glory of God

Back in what is called "Eternity Past", which is the period *before* God created the Universe, God determined to magnify the Glory of His Grace by "setting His Love" upon a portion of what would come to be called the "Human Race", to save them. And at the time that He did this, there was no earth, and there were no people.

So, in order for the magnificence of His Grace to be displayed and seen and marveled at, God had to sovereignly "cause" or "allow" certain things:

- ✓ God had to *actively* create the Heavens and the Earth so that human beings could be housed and supported
- ✓ God had to *actively* create Man in His Image and in His Likeness
- ✓ God had to actively create the arch-angel, Lucifer, and then *passively* allow Lucifer to rebel in Heaven so He could cast him to the earth
- ✓ God had to *passively* allow Adam and Eve to sin, and then *actively* damn them, which established the *need* for Grace to be displayed
- ✓ God had to *actively* give the perfect Standard of Morality to Man, thus establishing Righteousness
- ✓ God had to *passively* allow Man to fail to live up to that Righteous Standard
- ✓ God *actively* moved on several men to reveal to them the Books of the Old Covenant, and then actively empower them to demonstrate signs, wonders, and various gifts of the Holy Spirit to give those Books "Divine Credibility"

- ✓ God *actively* promised a New Covenant, which would sovereignly give sinners a new nature and a new heart
- ✓ God *actively* took on flesh, became Man, and was born of a virgin
- ✓ God, in Christ, never sinned, thus fulfilling the Law
- ✓ God *actively* imputed all the sin of all those He chose to save (the elect) onto Jesus
- ✓ God *actively* crushed Jesus in Damnation on the Cross
- ✓ God *actively* raised Jesus from the dead on the third day
- ✓ Ten days after Jesus ascended into Heaven, God and Jesus *actively* sent God the Holy Spirit to empower believers and establish the Church
- ✓ God *actively* moved on several men to reveal to them the Books of the New Covenant and empower them to demonstrate signs, wonders, and various gifts of the Holy Spirit to give those Books "Divine Credibility"

And the Purpose of all of this was to establish that all who will be saved and rescued from the Damnation of God against their sins will be saved by what God alone does for them, and *not* by anything they do for themselves. And this will allow God, alone, to receive all the Glory for Salvation, and will magnify the Glory of His Grace. And this is what the Bible means when it says that Salvation is "by" Grace. The "by" of this phrase has to do with the *Origin*, the *Initiation*, and the *Catalyst* of Salvation which is the Grace of God, and *not* the efforts or the decisions or the works of human beings. So, the *Origin* of our Salvation is what God does for us, *not* what we do for God. And even though this is very basic and simple and easy to see, the implications of this are enormous. Because Salvation is "by" the Grace of God, and *not* the works of Man, at least three things are true:

1. Salvation *cannot* be earned or deserved, no matter what we do
2. *All* of the Glory for Salvation belongs to God
3. No human being can boast that something he did brought Salvation near

You simply *cannot* pray hard or long enough, you *cannot* take Communion enough, you *cannot* love God enough, and you *cannot* obey enough to ever *earn or deserve* Salvation. Because, that would make

Salvation “by” whatever it is that you did, and *not* “by” the Grace of God. So, because the Bible clearly says that the Origin and the Initiation and the Catalyst of Salvation is the Grace of God, and is *not* any works that we do, not even good religious works, that means that Salvation is solely and totally *within* the “Divine Prerogative” of God Himself. And that means that two things are true:

1. *Only* those chosen by God will be saved
2. *All* those chosen by God will be saved

Because God chooses those who will be saved, it doesn't matter how bad you've been. Because Salvation is a sovereign Work of God alone, no human being can say that he is *beyond* the Grace of God. No one has the right to *exclude himself* from the Grace of God. Only God can do that. You *cannot* look at your sin or your rebellion or the enjoyment or delight you take in your own wickedness, and then come to the conclusion that you are too far away for God to love you. You *do not* have the right to deduce that your sins are too horrible for God to forgive, or that satan's grip on you is too strong for God to break.

God will have His people, and nothing can stop that. Not you, not your sin, not your decisions, not satan, and not any circumstance or situation. *All* of those chosen by God to be saved will be saved. And all those saved will be kept by the Power of God and will stand before God in a new glorified body, praising God throughout all eternity for the majesty of His Grace!

But what about the people who are *not* chosen for Salvation? How are they to live and function in this life? Since the only reason this wicked world continues to go on is so that all those chosen by God to be saved will be born and come to develop cognitive reasoning capabilities, so they may *hear* the Gospel, *believe* the Gospel, Repent, and be saved, what about all those who are *not* going to be saved? Does God love them at all?

Yes, He does. The Bible teaches *clearly and repeatedly* that God loves *everyone*, that God is Good to *everyone*, that God demonstrates His Love to *every single human on earth, all the time*. The *difference* lies in the fact that God's Love is not expressed to all in the *same* way.

For example, when God sheds His Grace upon some of the unworthy sinners to save them, His Grace is revealed to be the Wonder

that it is. And those who see the results of God's Grace upon these rebels marvel. And the Grace that saves is called "Saving Grace". So, the Love that God has toward the unworthy sinners that He has chosen to save is called "Saving Love", or "Redeeming Love".

But Salvation is *not* the only way that God demonstrates *the Love that He is*. And so, Salvation is *not* the only way that God's Grace is manifested either. The Bible teaches that the one, True, living God, Who is revealed in Nature and Scripture, is a "saving God by Nature". God *loves* to save unworthy sinners. He *loves* to answer the cries of His children. He *enjoys* blessing those who fear Him. It *delights* God to display His Love and Grace in a thousand different ways on those who *do not* deserve it and who *cannot* earn it. The Apostle John tells us in **1 John 4:8&16:**

... God is love...

... so, it isn't simply that God *loves* or that God is *loving*. No, God, Himself, *is* Love. So, Love is a *part* of Who God is. It is a *part* of His Nature and Character. And every single human being on earth is a recipient of some measure of God's Love and His Grace.

And to understand this properly, we first have to realize that every human, who has ever lived or who will ever live, and who lives right now, is a sinner who is deserving of *nothing* but the immediate and eternal Wrath of God for his blatant and repeated sins. The Bible says that there are no "good people", and that every human on earth repeatedly insults God to His Face. And so, by all rights, God would be Good to end it all right now and eviscerate the earth and all who are on it.

And yet, even though that is true, most people do *not* receive God's Wrath immediately when they sin. Most people live long and fruitful lives. And most people enjoy many wonderful aspects of their lives. To be sure, this world is broken and fallen and full of sin, and yet this world is also filled with laughter and pleasant words and kindnesses displayed in a thousand different ways, every day.

Although it is true that there are far too many wars, and there is far too much injustice in the earth, it is also true that most people on earth today do not fight and die in wars or suffer injustice or sense any immediate repercussion for their sins. We enjoy green grass and blue

skies and barbeque and grandchildren and summer breezes and cool water and air-conditioning. Most people alive today have access to antibiotics and eyeglasses and medicine and surgeries that help us to live better lives, even if they don't care one whit about Jesus. We drive in automobiles, and we insulate our homes, and we utilize plastic in ten thousand different ways.

And all of this is a *form* of God's Love to patently unworthy sinners who transgress against God and His Laws many times every day. Every bit of these amazing blessings are a demonstration of God's Love and His Grace to people, who do not deserve it, and have not earned it.

And this kind Divine Benevolence toward sinners is called "Common Grace", or "Common Love", and it is given in many different ways to all Mankind, every day. And even those who live under great hardships and who *don't* have many of the luxuries that we do, even they taste of God's Love and Grace. Because, even those people are wicked sinners who deserve nothing but the Wrath of God. And yet, most of them do not experience God's Wrath as soon as they sin.

And one of the ways that God manifests His Grace and Love toward all human beings is in what we call "Human Government". Human Government was *initiated* by God to give people Stability and Order in their daily lives. And even though Human Government is *not* the Church, and should *not* operate like the Church, nevertheless, it is *accountable* to God and should operate "under" the Fear of the Lord. So, Human Government is *not* autonomous and should function as a natural *extension* of the Will of God in the earth. And those in Government would do well to remember that, because they will stand before God and give an account as to how they conducted themselves while in positions of power and leadership.

Now, according to the Bible, Human Government's main purpose for existence is very narrow. It is to protect its citizens from very bad people who would seek to do them harm. And that includes other nations, as well. You see, even though all humans are fallen, we do not all manifest our fallen condition in the *same way*. *Some* fallen individuals are very violent very destructive. And so, Government exists to protect the majority of the fallen people, who are not violent, from the really violent and destructive people. Here is what the Apostle Paul wrote about Government from **Romans 13:1-4**:

1 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.

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

3 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;

4 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 on the one who practices evil.

Here, Paul begins his understanding of Human Government with a statement about the absolute Sovereignty of God, when he said:

... For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

... so, because God is Sovereign and in *total and complete* Authority over all the Universe, those Human Institutions, that have some *limited* authority over us, are actually *outreaches* of God. And that is the *foundational understanding* of Human Government that the Bible teaches; God *initiated* it and God either sovereignly *causes* Human Government to function, or He passively *allows* it.

So, these "Human Authorities" exist only by the *Permission* of God, and they are allowed to function solely under His *Command*, and therefore, they should be held *accountable* to His *Standards*. And then Paul builds on top of that Foundation and goes to the next level by saying:

Therefore [because that is true] whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

So, because it is true that Human Government was God's idea in the first place, and because it is true that Human Government exercises its *limited* authority as an outreach of God's *total and complete* Authority, therefore:

... whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God ...

... and so:

... they who have opposed [Human Government] will receive condemnation upon themselves

... now this "condemnation" *could* mean Divine Condemnation in hell, but it much rather means that those who oppose the laws and statutes set forth by the Human Government will receive "condemnation" or "punishment" from the Human Government. Another way of understanding this is that if you drive too fast, you will get a ticket, even if you're saved.

Now *why* would God be interested in what happens to people and a society, a nation, or a region of the earth that worships a pagan god and that transgresses God's Law on a daily basis? This is where the "Common Grace", or the "Common Love", of God comes in. Jesus said this in **Matthew 5:43-47**:

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Now this may sound surprising coming from a Pastor who puts forth a lot of effort to "get the Gospel right", and who promotes "Doctrinal Precision". But we need to guard against what I call "Pharisaical Christianity". We all know what "Pharisaical Judaism" was. We can see it demonstrated all throughout the four Gospel Records. It was the Pharisees who opposed Jesus the most, who hated Him with a passion, and who moved to have Him murdered.

And yet, none of them considered themselves to be “bad people”. The Pharisees were the people who thought they were the *best*, the *finest*, and the *highest* demonstration of “biblical obedience and adherence” that the world had ever seen. The Pharisees were the “Religious Conservatives” of their day.

For example, the Pharisees are the ones who established “Teaching Centers” or “Synagogues” all throughout Israel, because they thought that the people of God should know and understand the Word of God. Well, I would *love* for those who say they know and love God to study the Word of God. They preached Holiness stronger and harder than anyone else. Well, I try to do that, too. They believed that the Messiah was coming soon, and wanted people to get ready for Him. Well, I do, too.

And yet, the Pharisees hold the distinction of being the only group of people that Jesus never said anything good about. So, how did these men become like this? One step at a time. You see, because we are fallen, there is a danger in pursuing Holiness on purpose. And that danger lies in the propensity of all human beings to become self-righteous. And self-righteousness always, always, always destroys whatever Truth you might have.

You see, Truth, Divine Truth, *never* allows for self-righteousness. Divine Truth *always* establishes a connection between any “holding” of Truth with genuine humility, realizing that it would be just as easy for God to raise up a rock than it is for God to use me. So, if a person actually *has* the Truth, he will *never* be puffed up about it, and he will *never* live or speak or act self-righteously without being smitten with conviction. Because *part* of what it means to *possess* the Truth lies in the way we *handle* the Truth. And that is what Jesus is talking about here.

It doesn't take the Power of the Holy Spirit to genuinely love those who agree with you. It doesn't take supernatural Power from on High to give us the strength to fellowship with other believers. And it certainly doesn't take being empowered by the third Person of the Trinity to see where everybody else is off base. That's easy. *Anybody* can do that, even lost people.

But Jesus says here that the measure of our spirituality is understood in how we treat those with whom we *disagree*. Those who are genuinely wrong, and even those who are truly lost, and even those

who are actively engaged in hurting you. Because if we genuinely love them, if we earnestly pray for them, if we work hard to be kind to them, that is truly a miracle, and proof that God is working inside us.

So, "Pharisaical Christianity" is taking the precious New Covenant, that gives hope to the worst of sinners, and using it as a hammer to beat people into submission, or to win an argument, or to prove a point, without any regard as to their soul. It is manifested when we justify self-righteous aloofness as just being "separate from sinners", or when we become apathetic to our lost and sinful neighbors and co-workers and friends. Pharisaical Christianity would rear its ugly head when we rejoice unendingly that God saved us, and yet not exhaust ourselves in the pursuit of preaching the Gospel to the lost. It would be to be completely unconcerned that half the world is on fire, and that people we rub shoulders with are heading to a devil's hell. It would be when we ignore any imposition of our plans or any interruption of our lives by the needs of wicked sinners by a simple waving of our hands and saying, "*Well, that's what happens to lost people*".

So, one of the reasons why there are lost people on earth, who make our lives much harder is so that we will always return to our roots of genuine humility and brokenness. We must constantly be reminded that the only reason we love God is because God set His Love upon us first, the only reason we understand the Bible is because God allows us to, and the only reason we are going to Heaven is because of God's Grace and Mercy. We are *as* sinful, or maybe even *more* sinful, as those whom God has not chosen to save.

So, there is no room in New Testament Christianity for human arrogance, pride, and self-righteousness. None. *Nobody* can say that the reason God loves them is because of what they're doing for Jesus, or because they love God so much. God loves us for one single reason:

Before the foundation of the world, before we were born, before we did anything good or bad, God decided to "set His Love upon us".

... so, God loves us, because He loves us. And we are the ones who have been chosen to be the recipients of God's "Saving Grace and Love". We are the ones who will be used by God to demonstrate how magnificent God's Grace really is.

So, God periodically allows evil people to enact wicked and violent and unjust and horrific acts upon His Own people so that, as we suffer without complaint, as we endure hardship as a "good soldier of Jesus Christ", as we genuinely "love" and "pray for" and "do good" to those who torment us the most, Jesus will look magnificent, and the Glory of God's Grace will be seen and marveled at!

And this evil and fallen and sinful world will *continue* to exist until all those chosen for Salvation are born and come to Christ in Repentance and Salvation. And so, to preserve Order among both the righteous and the unrighteous, God created and maintains Human Government. Other than that, we would have anarchy and chaos.

So, when trying to understand what God has revealed concerning Human Government, there are two concepts that we must comprehend:

1. Order/Chaos
2. Authority/Subjection

1. Order/Chaos

The Goal of Human Government is "Order". And this is *why* God put it into the minds and hearts of people to enact things like "Laws" and "Rules" and "Commandments" to establish and maintain Order, so that this world will continue on until all of God's elect are saved. And then Jesus will come back and present to Himself His Church, in all her splendor, as the crowning achievement of His Grace, Mercy, and Love.

And, at that time, King Jesus will answer the prayer that He told us to pray:

Your Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven

And the Way that Jesus will answer that prayer is by *abolishing* all Human Government throughout the entire earth by sovereignly *imposing* God's Will. Many people rejoice at the notion that, when Jesus comes back He will end all wars and all injustice, and there will be no more sin and no more evil in the world. But they may not have considered that the Way Jesus will bring about this Paradise is by forcefully *removing* all unrepentant sinners and those who seek to live contrary to God's Will from the earth and casting them into a devil's

Hell, and then by so radically changing the saved ones, that no one will even *desire* to live contrary to God's Will. And then Jesus will rule and reign as "King" of all the other kings of the earth, and as "Lord" of all the other lords in His Kingdom.

So, the world must continue on until that happens. But as fallen people, who love darkness rather than light, if God left us to ourselves to "live as we see fit" and to "do what is right in our own eyes", we would *annihilate* ourselves in short order. So, one of the reasons that God told us not engage in certain behavior is because that behavior does not honor God and it insults His Righteousness. But *another* reason why God told us not to engage in certain activities is because we make our lives infinitely harder by doing those things. And because God loves us, He wants us to enjoy life.

We must understand that entire civilizations completely ceased to exist because of things like "war", and "man-made famine", and "disease". For example, it is true that sexual sins dishonor God. But it is *also* true that sexual sins hurt us as well. And so, to preserve the ancient Jew so that Jesus could be born as a Jew, God told the Jewish nation that one, naturally born man should marry one, naturally born woman, and stay married for as long as they live. God also told the Jewish men to circumcise the foreskin of their flesh. And the punishment for transgressing these Laws was immediate death. And many people today think that this Punishment was overly harsh. But, when examining ancient history, we see that by stabilizing the home, Order was created, and that the Jewish women had the lowest instance of cervical cancer of any women among the ancient civilizations.

So, *besides* the very important spiritual and moral implications of these different Laws and Commands, God was also moving upon the Jew, lovingly and graciously, to keep them from annihilating themselves. And so, to *preserve* Mankind until all of the elect are saved, God *imposes* Order through the concept of Human Government on the earth.

And this is the main difference between what is called "Civilized" and "Uncivilized" people. *Civilized* people are those who live *under* the Order that is created by Human Government. Uncivilized people are those who are "free" to live and do anything they choose. Another term used to describe uncivilized people is "barbarians". And the *way* that Human Government creates that Order is by *restricting* the behavior of

its citizens. All that Laws and Rules and Commandments are really *limitations* of what people can do. So, they say, “*You may do this, but you may not do that””. And Human Government has the authority and the power to *enforce* those Laws, Rules, and Commandments on its citizens. And the Bible says that Human Government received that power and authority from God.*

Now, even though the so-called “Absolute Freedom” that uncivilized people say they have may sound great, it really isn’t. We must understand that, because of the Fall, the default setting of all human beings is selfishness, not selflessness. It is rebellion, not conformity. And that is why all through the 6,000-year history of Mankind, those groups which had no Order didn’t last very long. So, the *absence* of Human Government allows for Chaos to flourish, which quickly develops into violence and destruction. It wasn’t long after Adam abdicated his responsibility to protect his wife from deception, and they both sinned, that brutal tyrants rose up to impose their will on other people. And the strong have been seeking to overthrow the weak ever since. And so, it is impossible to study Human History without also studying the many wars and other efforts of one group seeking to subjugate another. Because without Order, all we have left is whoever has the biggest gun. And this is *why* the Apostle Paul said:

Romans 13:2-4

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

3 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;

4 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 on the one who practices evil.

Now the “**evil**” in view here is not *necessarily* “moral evil”. It isn’t *necessarily* the one who violates God’s Law and sins. This is talking vary narrowly about those who act contrary to the Laws, Rules, and Commandments of the Human Government. So, in that sense, the Human Government will “**bear the sword**”, or will enact punishment on the one who “breaks the law”. And, normally, those who modify their

behavior to live *within* the restrictions imposed by the Laws, Rules, and Commandments, these people will “**have praise from the same**”, meaning the Human Government will consider them to be “good citizens” and will *not* punish them.

2. Authority/Submission

The second Concept when discussing Human Government is “Authority/Subjection”. Because God is Sovereign, He had “total and complete” Authority over *everything* in the Universe. And from that *absolute* Sovereignty, God demands and expects “total and complete” Subjection to what He said, and the Laws and Commandments He issues. So, because God is “Morally Perfect” and has no faults or flaws, everything He does and everything He says is, also, Perfect, and has no faults or flaws either. So, for example, when James wrote:

James 4:7
Submit therefore to God...

... that level of Submission is *absolute*. There are no exceptions to this Command, no *nuance*, no “grey areas”. None. *Whatever* God says is what is expected and demanded by God on every soul who seeks to be in “right standing” with the Lord. Departure from the Command is rebellion; always and in all ways. The refusal to obey is the very definition of sin.

But all other Authority that exists anywhere on earth has a “human element” involved in it, and is, therefore, *not* morally perfect. All Human Authority contains *some* degree of fault or flaw. And because that is true, the level of Subjection to that other form of Authority is *not* to be absolute either. The level of Subjection or Submission to any other form of Authority besides God should *not* be absolute, precisely because the Authority itself is fallen and imperfect.

For example, God the Holy Spirit “moved along” the Apostle Paul to say to Wives:

Colossians 3:18
Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

So, all Wives, are commanded by God to “**be subject**” to their Husbands. And those who do not are rebels. And rebels, by definition, *cannot* bring Glory to God or honor Him. So, the Wives who function in the Home in direct opposition to the authority of their Husbands are sinning and need to repent.

But the Command for Wives to “be subject” to their Husbands doesn’t stand by *itself*. It is built upon the “Divine Order” that God sovereignly established at Creation: that Men are to struggle against the lusts of their flesh, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, to be humbly and joyfully submitted to the *absolute* Authority of God, in their daily life, all to the Glory of God, by lovingly leading and governing their homes after the Ways of God. And this is the Will of God in creating “Order” that glorifies God and eliminating ungodly “Chaos” that does not.

And since God’s Authority is absolute, He has the Right to *supersede* any other opinion about the matter, and may *overrule* any humanly initiated logic, law, or custom, and *impose* this Standard on the Wife. So, *part* of the Wife’s struggle to please the Lord involves the ongoing struggle against the lusts of her flesh, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to the absolute Authority of Scripture in her daily life, all to the Glory of God.

But notice that there is a *caveat* at the end of this verse that says:

... as is fitting in the Lord

... which should be understood in two ways:

1. It is “fitting in the Lord” for all godly Wives to be subject to their Husbands
2. The level of Subjection to the Husband is *limited*

... and the level of Subjection is *limited* because there is a “human element” involved. You see, unlike God, Husbands are *not* morally perfect. Husbands are sinners, just like the Wives. And *everything* the Husbands do and say and desire has *some* degree of fault or flaw in it. And that means that the authority of the Husband is *not* absolute. It is *never* absolute. It is *always* “limited”. And so, the “limited authority” of

the Husband in the Home is *always* subject to the "Absolute Authority" of God.

Now we must understand that the authority of the Husband in the Home is very important and necessary to create "godly Order", and to eliminate "ungodly Chaos". Husbands *not* leading, or Wives that overrule the authority of their Husbands in the Home, make the Home to be "ungodly" and out of the Will of God. For example, even though this is almost universally suppressed or ignored by many in the modern church, God the Holy Spirit "moved along" the Apostle Paul to teach that when Husbands do not lead, and when Wives dominate their Husbands and are not subject to them, that this *disqualifies* that man from leading in the Church, when he said:

1 Timothy 3:4&5

4 *He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity*

5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

... and this disqualification is true, no matter how much of the Bible that man may know. So, whatever level of importance we may or may not place on this issue, we must agree that God has a great interest in it. Because violation of this one issue is grounds for disqualification of any leadership position in the House of God.

Yet the authority of the Husband is *not* absolute. It is *never* absolute. God's Authority is perfect, and therefore, it is absolute. Therefore, Submission to God's absolute Authority must also itself be absolute. But the Husband's *limited* authority is *always* to be measured against the *absolute* Authority of God and His Word.

So, for example, if the Husband teaches or promotes false doctrine in Family Devotions, or if the Husband not only engages in sin himself, but commands the Wife to join with him, the Wife is *not* obligated to obey her Husband. She may willfully and knowingly *refuse* to obey, and she may categorically rebel against the wishes of her Husband, and still be in "right standing" with God.

So, the *overall* Authority for Husbands to lead is absolute. And therefore, overall Subjection by the Wife to this Authority should also be absolute. And this is true because the Authority stems from God's

Will to create and maintain godly Order in the Home, and eliminate ungodly Chaos. And this Order is so important that it holds true, even if the Husband is not saved.

However, *individual* commands or wishes of the Husband may be rejected and disobeyed by the Wife precisely because the *limited* authority of the Husband is always measured against the *absolute* Authority of God. Yet, even in her refusal to obey, the Wife should engage in this refusal *in such a way* so as to not *undermine* the overall authority of her Husband to lead and her overall Command to submit to her Husband's Leadership. And that is the logic behind how we, as believers, should always view Human Government.

Another way of looking at this is to say that, as God's people, we are *obligated* to obey all Laws, Rules, and Commands of Human Government *unless and until* those Laws, Rules, and Commands *require* us to *disobey* the clear Commands of God. And that is because all Human Institutions are flawed and tainted with sin, whereas God is perfect and pure. Yet, even in our refusal to obey, we should disobey *in such a way* so as not to *undermine* the overall authority that God has given to that Human Government, and the overall Command that we have to submit to it.

Now there are a number of examples of this in the Bible, but two stand out the most:

1. After he knew that a law had been passed that forbade a citizen to pray to any "god" other than the king, Daniel blatantly and publicly *disobeyed* the law (**Daniel 6**).
2. After being *commanded* by the Government to not preach "in the Name of" Jesus, the Apostles blatantly and publicly *disobeyed* the law (**The Acts 4**).

Now there are several things that are very interesting about these two cases. First of all, in both cases, the *limited* authority of those Human Institutions had commanded something that would have *forced* the believer to *abdicate* God's *absolute* Authority. In Daniel's case, it was Man's law for believers to *not* pray violating God's Command for all believers to pray. And in the case of the Apostles, it was Man's law that forbade the public preaching of the Biblical Gospel after Jesus had specifically given them license to do so.

Secondly, in both cases, the believer knowingly and willingly, blatantly and publicly *disobeyed* the *inferior* law of Man, only to the degree that he could faithfully obey the *superior* Law of God.

Thirdly, in both cases, the disobedience of Man's law, in pursuit of obedience to God's Law, resulted in punishment for the believer, proving that the logic that many give today that "obedience to God always leads to peace and prosperity" is a faulty logic. But notice that neither Daniel nor the Apostles disobeyed God based on their fear on what the Human Government might do to them. They fearlessly obeyed God, without regard to what that obedience might bring to them personally. And then, after they were punished, there was no complaint about the punishment.

And the Apostle Peter spoke specifically about this kind of suffering when he said,:

1 Peter 2:20

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 3:14-17

14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,

15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

17 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.

Now there are many other things to discuss about what Peter called "Human Institutions" before we move on to the next Passage, so, Lord willing, we'll pick this back up next week.

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.