

Bible Questions and Answers



Pastor Matt Postiff, Ph.D., Th.M.

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Fellowship
BIBLE CHURCH

Authority of Government



- ✧ In the New Testament, we are told to respect authority and to pray for those in leadership.
- ✧ Is the same message specifically stated in the Old Testament? I know there are examples we can follow that shows it such as Joseph with Pharaoh or Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar but is it specifically stated?
- ✧ The examples mentioned above are excellent. Imagine the potential compromise when serving under an ungodly leader like Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar. But these men honored the king.

Review NT passages



- ☞ Obey governing authorities: Rom. 13:1, Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13-14, 17.
- ☞ Pray for government leaders: 1 Timothy 2:1-4.
- ☞ Obey spiritual leaders: Hebrews 13:17, implied in 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Thess. 5:12.
- ☞ Caveat: obeying God rather than men, when men are commanding you to sin or preventing you from serving God, Acts 5:29.

What about the OT?



- ❧ Focus of OT is on obeying God as the ultimate governing authority.
- ❧ OT has very little epistolary literature with explicit, propositional teaching. Much of it is narrative and lessons are most often to be learned by applying the narrative to contemporary situations.
- ❧ OT does have quite a bit of legal (law) text which does have explicit teaching on this subject.

Rebellion is Sin



- ✧ A son who is a rebel is to be punished with death. This is the law of Deuteronomy 21:18-21.
- ✧ God hates rebellion, even if it is “just talk.” Consider Numbers 12:1-15 regarding Aaron and Miriam.
- ✧ Numbers 16:1-40 records the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They rejected Moses’s leadership. With them God was not pleased, and they died a spectacular death.

David and Saul



❧ The godly young man David considered it a serious sin to rebel against God's anointed king. He refused to kill or harm Saul, despite his men encouraging him to assassinate Saul, and there being a justifiable cause that David could have used.

❧ 1 Samuel 24:4-13

❧ 1 Samuel 26:9

Consistent Teaching



✧ Across Jewish and Christian teaching, the Bible is clear that dishonoring God's appointed leader is a sin even if the leader is a wicked person.

Modern Application



☞ With the complications of lack of information and thus “answering the matter before hearing it,” lying sources and media, the work of Satan to deceive on a global scale, and the general desire of all men to make themselves look good, modern politics makes it easy to jump to conclusions, and jump on the bandwagon of hatred for leaders that you (think) you don’t agree with. You must take great caution about your attitude, because you can be in deep sin and not realize it.

Modern Application



- ❧ If you are to love your enemies, what do you suppose you should do for your president, governor, mayor, etc.?
- ❧ See Matthew 5:44, Exodus 23:4, and Proverbs 25:21. In modern politics, you don't get the idea that the participants would do that toward each other.

COVID-19 Outlook



- ❧ What is the outlook for us meeting again as a church?
- ❧ We haven't made a final decision as yet, but I want to lay some groundwork because there will undoubtedly be differences of opinion and some controversy if we meet before certain authorities desire us to do so.
- ❧ The question requires wisdom. Let's think about it.

First Authority



- ☞ God, Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- ☞ There is no footnote on this verse, like:
¹ Does not apply in cases of pandemic or other fearful situations.

Second Authority



- ✧ Michigan constitution: Every person shall be at liberty to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.
- ✧ There is, again, no footnote here.

Third Authority



- ✧ Michigan Executive order 2020-42: “Consistent with prior guidance, a place of religious worship, when used for religious worship, is not subject to penalty under section 17 of this order.”
- ✧ Section 17 specifies violation of the order is a misdemeanor.
- ✧ A plain reading indicates that the penalty does not apply to churches. There is a recognition here of both the state and national constitutions.

Third Authority



- ✧ Thus far, most churches have voluntarily complied with the *request* of the Michigan state governor and the spirit of the law, seeing that it is prudent to avoid the spread of COVID-19 during this critical period.
- ✧ We have happily done so, in the main, but as the weeks wear on and the numbers show improvement, our patience is slowly being replaced by eagerness to return to somewhat of a normal life.

Fourth Authority



- ❧ Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or **prohibiting the free exercise thereof**; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; **or the right of the people peaceably to assemble**, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
- ❧ Neither the executive nor courts can make law. Therefore, no law can be made to violate this basic right recognized by the Bill of Rights.

Evaluation



- ❧ Our situation in Michigan is more lenient than in other states. You have read in the news of state governors (like in KY) who are crossing the line into persecution of those churches that decide to meet.
- ❧ We may question the prudence of those churches, but it doesn't appear that we can question their right to choose freely to worship even during a pandemic.

Evaluation



- ❧ We cannot exist in the suspended state for months or years because of fear of death. Our higher authorities recognize our right to worship corporately (the constitutions and executive order) and indeed demand that we do so (God).
- ❧ We cannot be paralyzed by fear and uncertainty.
- ❧ We cannot guarantee the safety of every citizen or every church-goer. It is impossible in this world that is full of death.

Evaluation



- ❧ Christians are not (supposed to be) fearful people.
- ❧ But if you listen and read too much typical news these days, you will get a heavy dose of doom and gloom.
- ❧ We live with sound mind, taking in account all the facts, best practices, and the fact that God is in charge.
- ❧ I believe when the end of April comes, it is time to gird up the loins of our minds and show the world that we live in faith. We recognize that we cannot live in a risk-free world.

Evaluation



- ❧ Our “testimony” is two-sided. The emphasis of many Christians lately has been “let’s not give the world a reason to frown upon us” by meeting.
 - ❧ That only can work so long, because the Christian church is in a constant state of being frowned upon.
 - ❧ Also, because God commands us to gather.
- ❧ The other side of our testimony is that we must show the world we are wise yet do not fear. We can worship without spreading disease.

The Numbers



- ❧ The number of deaths is sad.
- ❧ However, the case load is decreasing. The most influential model of deaths and resource shortages has been revised downward drastically. The number of deaths projected is about half of what it was.
- ❧ The concern to avoid a W-shape curve is important.

Example of Luther



- ❧ Martin Luther, 500 years ago, wrote as he hunkered down during the Black Plague of 1527:
- ❧ *I shall ask God mercifully to protect us.*
- ❧ *Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence.*
- ❧ Notice his emphasis on normal means as well as prayer.

Example of Luther



- ☞ If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others.*
- ☞ If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above.*
- ☞ Notice that He believes God is in control. He fears God. He is not foolish and he does he 'tempt' God.*

Evaluation



- ❧ I will likely recommend a staged approach, much like we did on March 15, in order to protect the vulnerable.
- ❧ Strict quarantine upon the sick is a Biblical notion. Here's where the quite unknown book of Leviticus comes to our aid: Leviticus 13, 14:38 and 46, and 2 Chronicles 26:21 help us.
- ❧ Quarantine of the well is not a Biblical idea.

Evaluation



- ☞ Therefore, if you have symptoms of illness, you need to stay home, period.
- ☞ Personally, during March-June I often have allergy symptoms. I recognize the difference between them and something else and make a decision accordingly.
- ☞ I haven't said everything that could be said here. You may have questions. Let me know those via email or WhatsApp and I'll see if I can answer them.

Matt. 27:51-53 Resurrection



- ❧ Who exactly are these resurrected “saints” and where did they go after the brief episode recorded only by Matthew?
- ❧ We could desire more detail in the text! It may be that when Jesus died and went to Paradise (Luke 23:34) that he emptied out Paradise and sent its residents to the third heaven. He proclaimed to the lost, particularly to those who lived during the days of Noah, that He had won victory over sin and death (1 Peter 3:19).

Matt. 27:51-53 Resurrection



- ✧ Continuing our supposed reconstruction: Before the resurrection and appearance of these saints, a violent tremor opened up the graves and tombs of some people.
- ✧ Some of the Old Testament saints were raised into glorified bodies. They appeared in the city after the resurrection of Christ. Christ was the firstfruits, so they did not rise before Christ did.

Matt. 27:51-53 Resurrection



- ☞ Subsequently, they were taken up into heaven with the Lord and remain there.
- ☞ Since there is no record of them “sticking around,” it appears that they must have left the earth, and ascension to heaven is the most plausible scenario. It seems unreasonable to suppose that all of them went back into their graves, as if they were zombies at sun-up or something.