

Zahakiel: Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. Thank You for the blessings of this past week and thank You for bringing us together for this holy convocation. We pray for Your Spirit to flood us with spiritual blessings as we come before Your Throne and we thank You for answering all our prayers according to Your will and glory. In YAHSHUA's holy and precious name, AMEN.

Zahakiel: Amen.

.gadriel: Amen, Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Barb: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Kim: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight is Part 2 of the study we began last week, "With a Rod of Iron." We have been examining the characteristics of what makes for the effective government of human beings. I hesitate to use the word "good" because, if done correctly, even people who would not be considered sanctified, or Christian, can still benefit from following the right principles, just as a non-Adventist can be blessed by heeding the concepts associated with the health message. As stated last week, the final and perfect form of government is yet to come.

As we anticipate, Yahshua's return will be as described in the Book of Daniel: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these [previous] kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan 2:34, 35, 44)

Yahshua Himself shall rule this Kingdom, this Theocratic Monarchy, for eternity, being both the King and the High Priest, connecting the Father, who is invisible, (Col 1:15) or at least has a form unlike the physical creation, with His redeemed. One of the points I wished to make clear is that this form of government can only work if He in whom ultimate power is invested is, Himself, perfect. If religious and civil power are combined in a single individual or group, persecution inevitably follows.

This reminds me... Pastor recently posted an article for discussion on Facebook, and I was watching it to see what people would say... not as many participated in the conversation as I would have liked. However, the idea there is that the idea of a complete separation of Church and state was not intended by the founders of the United States; and this is true... depending on how we view the word "separation." Biblically, the Church and state are to "inform" one another. In other words, in a nation of which our Father can approve, the Church determines standards of morality, and acceptable behavior, and the state exists to punish crime. (Mat 18:18, Rom 13:3-4) What must be separated, however, is the authority associated with each of these; that is, the government does not rule the Church, and the Church does not regulate the government. I will return to this idea in a moment, but to complete my summary of last week's study, I identified three key elements that an effective government must possess. These are not the only ones, but are among the most important. They are:

- 1) Freedom of religion and speech, not only for Christians, but for any who are willing to obey righteous laws.

In addition to what I shared with you last week, we may read verses such as, "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." (Exo 12:48, 49) I am not, of course, prescribing the specifics of this law; however, it serves to demonstrate the principle, that there was no distinction made against those who were different than the Israelites in matters related to life, ritual, and liberty, as long as they subscribed to the values Yahweh instructed.

- 2) Property.

This is a larger issue than many might suppose. Property is necessary for freedom – directly, for the loss of one's property forced even the Israelites into bond-service to their countrymen. The Scriptures provided safeguards such as the Year of Jubilee to ensure that the mis-steps of one generation will not filter down to another. This is particularly impressive, since Yah's justice usually does permit the consequences of one generation to affect others. (Exo 20:5) Clearly, then, this matter of property is of great spiritual, as well as civic, importance.

- 3) Purpose.

Yah's people will never be without labors to perform, and objectives to complete. A few months ago, I shared with you a quote from Ellen White, in which she said the following:

"[In Heaven,] every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realized. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. "All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. 'Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God." [EGW. Education p. 307]

(Let me know when you've read this)

Lucan: Finished

Adriel777: F

Peter_Jr_18: f

Elyna: F

Barb: F

Ruthline16: F

Zahakiel: I quote this, not to establish any doctrine, but to share a beautiful thought that is quite relevant to the subject of tonight's meeting. Yahweh is interested in our joy. He is interested in our sense of achievement, and our sense of worth. The world speaks of "self-esteem," but as with all things it creates it is a corruption of a blessed truth. We ought, indeed, to esteem ourselves well, but because – and only because – the Creator of Heaven and Earth considers us valuable. All our gifts, all our skills, all our abilities, if we see them as gifts indeed (for we did not create ourselves, after all) then we can be "proud" of what we can do and what we are, and yet still be humble. This is the mind of Christ in a child of Yahweh. Any effective government, therefore, will give its citizens a sense of purpose and worth. For the remainder of this study, then, I wish to look at several forms of human government, and compare them to these three key elements, to see how they measure up.

First, there are secular dictatorships. Here, a powerful individual assumes command of a nation, and "dictates" most aspects of its citizen's lives. In this arrangement, all three critical elements are missing. The citizens are not free to speak and act according to their consciences without being punished. Property is generally seized by the state, and given as rewards to loyalists or portioned out according to the will of the dictator. A sense of purpose is often difficult to find when life is being carefully controlled through restriction of access to information, and penalties for disobeying (often arbitrary) laws are harsh.

Next, there are Kingdoms. We might look at kingdoms as limited, spiritual dictatorships. Now, this is not, necessarily, a negative thing despite the connotations of that last term. One person does have the highest degree of power; however, kings are often seen as

ruling by divine appointment, and are therefore at least nominally accountable to the Creator. In addition, kings tend to value advisors and specialists to a greater degree than dictators, imposing a form of self-correction lest things become too oppressive for the population. In truth, since the concept of a Kingdom was directly inspired by Yah, and in fact He established the first one in Israel, it must have some merit. We must balance that, however, with the knowledge that even the Father Himself made it clear that this was not the ideal form of government, since it would necessarily be under the leadership of a flawed, human mind... not Yah Himself through his direct agents: prophets and judges.

What we find, then, are that Kingdoms do possess all three critical elements, but to a lesser degree than would be best. The people may be free, if their king is a kind one. They pay taxes on their property, but generally get to keep them... at least, such property as the king allows them to maintain. They often do have a sense of purpose; however Yah warned about specific restrictions and cautions, as follows: "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. "And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. "And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and Yahweh will not hear you in that day." (1Sam 8:11-18)

Ultimately, then, Kingdoms may be effective, or not, based on the character and quality of the king. This is the reason why it works with Yahshua at the head, but does poorly according to the flaws of anyone else who would assume that role.

Another common one, though less common these days, is communism. Communism does, actually, place a lot of value on "purpose." The people are often indoctrinated to work diligently on behalf of the ruling party, and some may find a sense of worth through this work. Where it fails, however, and obviously so, is on the matters of freedom and property. Like a dictatorship, a ruling party in a communist country assumes ownership of property, and divides it "fairly" as it decides what fairness looks like, while (of course) maintaining the best for itself. The Scriptures clearly do not support such a system, which is why Judaism and Christianity do not generally flourish in countries that follow this model.

The last one I want to look at tonight is Democracy, and to spend some time here, since this is the western model with which most of us are familiar. This is actually a Greek idea, coming from *demos* (the people) and *kratia* (rulership or power). The people, through elected officials, rule themselves. Now, some Bible teachers I've read and heard have criticized this concept to a degree, claiming that it tends to degenerate over time... the powerful and charismatic rise to the top and they will – because of the flesh – inevitably abuse their power and become dictators. While I acknowledge that this does happen, like the concept of a Kingdom, it has a strong basis in Biblical principles, and can be good IF the right procedures are followed, and the right people are elected.

Of course, a Church and the world will have very different ideas of who the "right" people are... but in principle, we know that Yahweh invites His people's cooperation. He has given us instructions on electing leaders, saying in one place, "Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." (Deu 1:13) Yah honors the people's choices; in fact, since statements such as this came before the many and dire warnings about kingdoms, one might even understand this to be Yah's preference above a human-headed monarchy.

In addition, we are given Gospel Order in Matthew 18, and the organization of the New Testament Church was given to inspired committees of individuals rather than a "pope" as the Catholic Church now enthrones. Of course, such an arrangement only works for effectively running a Church if the Holy Spirit indeed "inspires" the committees and organizations.

This brings us, then, to a "split" in the consideration of democracy. We have democracy with Yahweh, and without Him. Recently, Giselle shared with me a quote she found online...it was allegedly from Thomas Jefferson, and it read something like, "It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible." Now, it turns out, the source of this quote cannot be positively identified. It is not certain, perhaps even likely, that Jefferson actually said this; however, as Christians we would certainly agree with its meaning. After all, the Word is quite clear on precisely this point. We read, for example, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh..." (Psa. 33:12)

If a people of any nation, regardless of initial spiritual state, genuinely turn to Yahweh, their country will prosper. It is a promise from the Most High, (2Ch. 7:14) and we have seen it with Nineveh, and many times with Israel. When Yah and His principles are respected, countries prosper.

In this age, naturally, as the Spirit of Yah is withdrawn from the rulers and the citizens alike, we see a decline. We see moral values openly mocked. We see Bible-based religions ridiculed, and those whose opinions are most highly sought embracing atheism and secular thinking. In the name of tolerance, the views of those who reject the love and worship the

Son of God are encouraged, and the Gospel is treated as just one more ancient myth. The world celebrates progress, while it sacrifices its godliness to obtain it. And yet, for all that, the problem is not with the model. The problem is not with the form of government, but rather the distance between that government and the principles of Heaven, those given first to Israel, and then shared with the rest of the world.

Should we look at several more models of human government, the conclusions we draw would be the same. While some forms are clearly closer to the Biblical ideal than others, and more strongly embrace the principles of freedom, property, and purpose, the ultimate factor determining the effectiveness of that governmental structure will be the closeness of the leaders to Yahweh.

It is for this reason that the Apostle wrote, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1Tim 2:1-4)

As I said at the end of last week's meeting, my first objective in this pair of studies is for Yah's people to understand our responsibility as the preservers of the nations in which we live. For ten righteous, Yahweh would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah. There are less than ten of us in any country on earth as things now stand... how much more earnest, then, must our prayers be? And should we not seek out others who are of the Mind of Christ, that we may establish nations that Yahweh can properly bless?

Let there be congregations in diverse places, and Yah will yet bless His children, and all with whom we come into contact, if we will do this. Let there be such gatherings, and the servants of the Most High will be sealed, and quickly, for the times to come.

This brings us to my second objective, which was for Yah's people to appreciate the coming Kingdom of Yahshua. This is an easier thing to accomplish, perhaps, than in times past. Even the best of governments, Kingdoms and Democracies, are as nothing compared to the glory to come. Yahshua comes with great glory and power... we read that He comes as a Boulder to smash the statue representing human governments, and as a King with a rod of iron with which to rule.

Let, indeed, the Law of Yah, the perfect Law, be found engraved in every heart that lives in that Kingdom, for only Yahshua as King, and only a Law-loving citizenry, can found and maintain the promised inheritance for all eternity. Yahshua's shall be a Kingdom that shall never decline, and shall never decay. It will become neither corrupt nor decadent. It will forever consist of a perfectly free people, who are safe to entrust with freedom. It will forever give its people resources over which they are given charge, each according to his ability and talents. It will forever give its people a sense of high purpose, through

which their loftiest ambitions and goals will be met, opening doors we never knew existed for greater and greater experiences.

Truly, eye has not seen, nor can mere mortal minds imagine, the wonder of this everlasting Kingdom. It is something that, perhaps because it is so unknowingly excellent, we do not speak of enough. But let us consider, in the coming holy hours, the Kingdom to which we are going. Let us pray for our current, incomplete and imperfect leaders, that we should leave lives of relative peace, at least until the tribulation that precedes the return of our Savior. Let us, above all else, seek to share this vision with our fellow humans, that they should accompany us on our journey, worshiping with us in our congregations, and pursuing and receiving everlasting life with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Lucan: Okay, stepping in as temporary moderator...Does anyone have any comments or discussion on the topic presented thus far?

Elyna: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Elyna: I did not understand clearly the last point starting with "In the name of tolerance..."Zahakiel: In the name of tolerance, the views of those who reject the love and worship the Son of God are encouraged, and the Gospel is treated as just one more ancient myth." Oh now that I have pasted it and read again, I see what it is saying. End

Lucan: Okay. 😊

Pastor Chick: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Pastor Chick: I am looking forward to where this series of studies will lead us and whether we can have some robust discussion regarding the principles. END.

Lucan: Will the rest be pasted on Facebook? I suppose we will see where it is pasted tomorrow. 😊 I'm also interested in what the conclusion of the set is. Are there any other comments to share tonight?

Alright, let us pray. Dear Father in heaven. We thank you that the principles of truth and error are evident in the natural world as well as the spiritual. As we consider the rulers of this world, in theory and in prayer, we are reminded that it is not the organization, or the country, or even the method of rulership that defines a group. Rather, it is their character before you, and their submission to your will. We know that both kings and priests are judged according to the righteousness you have made freely available to all. As we have seen nations and churches rise and fall, we ask for the wisdom and discernment of your

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Spirit to learn from their errors, and stand firm in righteousness unto the soon coming end of all such earthly systems. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

.gadriel: Amen, Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Kim: amen