Avenger of God's Wrath

Brent Moody · Romans 13:1–10

INTRODUCTION

- This is always an incorrect way to view biblical text, to just proof text it, pull a few phrases out, and start making assumptions and interpretations.
- These are not just random thoughts that Paul has about government. This is something that actually is important to these Christians, these Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.
- How do you claim to be in God's kingdom with Christ as your king and still operate within the Roman Empire where you are under an emperor who claims to be the Son of God and his king?

1 God Is the Ultimate Authority

Romans 13:1–2; 1 Peter 5

- God is the ultimate authority. He has what's called inherent authority. He is the creator of the world. He did all of this, and therefore he has all authority.
- No human individual or group of people has inherent authority in any ultimate sense. They only have it in the sense that they have been given permission by God to act in whatever capacity they work.
- God has appointed specific realms of authority, and he has done so for his reasons, and who am I to challenge them?
- None of these authorities are unlimited. They're all under God's authority.

2 Paul Is Not Naive

- Of all people we read about in scripture, he's probably pretty aware of the realities of government corruption. He dealt with it almost everywhere he went.
- He's talking about the way it is supposed to work and giving us some insight about how things are supposed to be.
- Seneca is trying to guide Nero toward an atmosphere of peace, and not the kind of peace that you gain through the sword.
- This is not some commendation of the fullness of the Roman Empire.

3 God's Servant to Punish Wrongdoers and Praise Good

Romans 13:3–7; 1 Peter 2

- The rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.
- If you don't want to be afraid, then just do good.
- He is a servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.
- They are to punish wrongdoers, and they are to praise those who do good. That is the role that they are to fulfill. They are not to run my home or your home. They're not to run the church.

- God says, submit yourself to the governing authorities. This is what he tells us to do.

4 God's People Are Not Called to Be Insurrectionists

Romans 12:18–21

- God's people are not called to be insurrectionists. We are not called to revolt.
- All that is asked of the readers is that they do good, pay taxes, and honor and respect those in power.
- Just because we do good and we pay taxes and we respect and give honor to those who are empowered doesn't mean we now fully commend the things that happen in civil affairs.
- If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Never avenge yourself. Repay no one evil for evil. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

5 Love Does No Wrong to a Neighbor

Romans 13:8–10; Leviticus 19

- He calls us all back to the most important thing, which is that love does no wrong to a neighbor.
- If the government is expecting me to do things that mean I'm not loving my neighbor, loving my neighbor is a higher law and a higher authority than anything the government says.
- If I want to avenge myself, what am I tempted to do and how am I tempted to act? Is it unbiased? Or is it based off in an emotion and how I feel in the moment?
- We are under their charge when it comes to civil affairs. And that remains the case unless they overstep their God-appointed role, or unless they want us to violate the law of love.
- Is this something I just don't like, and so I just don't want to do it? Or is it really violating God's authority and loving my neighbor as myself?

THE CHALLENGE

If you're not a Christian, we invite you to join us on this journey, which is way more important and way more valuable and way more impactful and way more influential than any other sort of thing that you can join in our world.

MY NOTES