

# Presidential Election Perspective

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Romans 13:6-7

**Preached on:** Sunday, November 11, 2012

It is my great joy to once again minister the Word of God to you this morning. We find ourselves in Romans chapter 13 and in a little while I am going to unpack the text at verses six and seven as we continue what is really the third part of a series as we have studied this text regarding the Christian's attitude toward civil authorities.

However, given the nature of what has gone on here in our country and the response of so many people with respect to the presidential election, I felt it was necessary for me to give you a biblical perspective of some of these things. Hopefully this will be an encouragement to you. Certainly what you are about to hear you will not hear anywhere else except in churches and pulpits that hold dear the Word of God.

As Christian we grieve over what is happening in our country, the nation that is ultimately the product of the Reformation, founded upon many principles in Scripture. Our founding fathers for the most part understood the utter depravity of man, his capability of doing all manner of wicked things and therefore they rightly feared the potential tyranny of a centralized government. So they set into place or they set into, I should say, place checks and balances within our government, three distinct branches of government that would hopefully prevent a centralized government from coming into power. And, of course, the final check on those powers of centralized government was the right of secession by the sovereign states within the country. And eventually in order to, quote, save the union, Abraham Lincoln violently subverted the Constitution in order to establish a centralized state which was really his agenda all along despite revisionist history. And that war ultimately abolished the right of secession. And ever since then the highly decentralized limited government established by the founding fathers has been replaced by a highly centralized state. And that is precisely the agenda of the Obama administration.

Sadly in this election Americans have unleashed the powers of centralized government that will ultimately shackle us in the chains of tyranny. We are now well on the road to serfdom. It is fascinating to see how more and more people in our country are content to take confiscated money from tax payers in the name of fairness or some contrived social justice narrative which is really nothing more than a ruse to buy votes.

It is interesting that now we have over 100 million people in the United States of America existing on some form of federal welfare. That is not including social security and Medicare. That is basically a third of the population. And these people, as we see, come out to vote in force.

Now from a Christian perspective the results of the presidential election are deeply disappointing, but I might say they should not be surprising to us. The president and other leaders that God has ordained to rule over us, accurately reflect the majority of citizens in the United States, one that is going to continue to grow numerically, an

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electorate ruled ultimately by their lusts, an electorate that wants nothing to do with biblical morality and, frankly, has contempt for the one true God.

From the endorsement of same sex marriage to the murder of unborn infants, politicians continue to show contempt for biblical morality. From government controlled healthcare to the rejection of Israel in favor of Islamists, Christians and all conservative Americans will continue to be forced to endure, frankly, a seismic shift in American alliances and values and freedoms as we become like the failed nanny states of Europe.

Now as irrational and immoral and idolatrous as all of this may be, it is nonetheless, the ominous reality of our day and, frankly, the foreboding course of our future. In the last two presidential elections we have experienced a clash in world views and the secularists and socialists of the entitlement class have won the day. No political party will ever be able to undo these things in my opinion. If the opposing party could not beat an administration with such an abysmal economy, with catastrophic unemployment, with unsustainable debt, with a failed presidency, they will never be able to beat them, unless they become more like them which they will do and the compromise will further accelerate.

Beloved, we are no longer on a slippery slope towards dictatorship and moral and economic ruin. We are in a free fall. This, however, shouldn't be a surprise to any honest student of Scripture. This is what happens when a nation, when a people rejects the one true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the Bible. The apostle Paul has reminded us in Romans one and verse 18:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”<sup>1</sup>

And what truth is that? The truth that God is our Creator and he is to be worshipped and obeyed. Certainly our country rejects that totally. Paul reminds us in that text, as we go on and read it—you may recall our study of it—that when people refuse to give honor and give thanks to our Creator God they become futile in their speculations and eventually God darkens their hearts. They profess to be wise, but they are fools. He tells us that they exchange the glory of the incorruptible God for all manner of idols. When man rejects God, God rejects man. Certainly the party in power in the United States has made it clear that they want nothing to do with God and the other party doesn't really understand who God is either.

It is the policy of our government that our educators teach the theory of evolution, that man is nothing more than sophisticated germ that somehow crawled out of some primordial ooze and became what we are, that we are nothing more than the result of random selection. It is now politically correct to mock Bible believing Christians and try

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 1:18.

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to remove every vestige of Christianity from public discourse and even from public sight. Think about it. Nativity scenes and crosses on military graves are now considered offensive. And yet the most vile, reprehensible, unspeakable, lewd acts of homosexuality is acceptable in gay pride parades.

Like a train going down a steep mountain that suddenly loses its breaks, God has lifted his restraint and he is allowing man to fully indulge his lusts here in this country and around the world and we will continue to pick up speed as a nation, racing towards our demise and divine judgment.

Beloved, this is what is called the wrath of divine abandonment, a terrifying fate that will ultimately lead to eternal abandonment for those who refuse to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, our only hope of salvation.

You may also recall in our study of Romans thus far that in chapter one verses 23 through 32 Paul paints a vivid picture of what happens when a man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness, when he rejects God's revelation of himself in creation and in conscience and chooses, instead to bow down to idols made with his own hands and honors creatures rather than the creator. He tells us in verse 24 of chapter one:

“Therefore God gave them over...”<sup>2</sup>

The Greek term *παραδίδωμι* (par-ad-id'-o-mee), a very strong verb meaning to deliver up. It is used in the New Testament to refer to one who is given into the hands of another to be judged or to be condemned or to be executed, to be tormented, to be put to death. And in this context it describes the wrath of divine abandonment. Beloved, this is where we are in our nation. God has delivered us up. He gives man over to the folly of his sin, to pursue the full extent of his lusts and experience the full consequences of his iniquities in hopes that perhaps he will see the truth of his sin and repent and believe.

And if a man remains indignant towards God, he will eventually cross a line that is only known to God of which he can never return. And when this happens God will abandon him for eternity.

Paul describes three stages of this abandonment, not necessarily found in every individual, but in the collective whole of a culture and with each stage we see a progressive worsening of evil and its consequence.

In that text he describes how he first gave them over to sordid immorality and then, secondly, the shameless homosexuality and finally to shocking depravity. This is a description of our country. And this explains the moral and economic free fall that we now see, because, dear friends, sin always accelerates downward, because sin is a

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 1:24.

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metastasizing corruption it will always lead from bad to worse. It never goes in the opposite direction. The spiral of a man's life will always be downward, never upward apart from Christ. This is what we witness today as God continues to allow Satan to prepare the world for the ultimate deceptions of the antichrist.

Now the good news is that we, as Christians, are in the world, but we are not of the world. You will recall that Peter, for example, reminds us that we are aliens. You heard me say that many times. And certainly people that do not know Christ when they hear me speak, those that will hear this around the world that do not know Christ they will say, "This guy is from another planet." He reminds us that we are also strangers. This is not our home. We are citizens of another kingdom. In fact, Paul tells us in Colossians one beginning in verse 13 that he delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Now before we examine our text this morning, which pertains to our attitude towards civil authorities, I wish to give you some much needed perspective. Beloved, as we watch the storm clouds gathering around us, we must bear in mind that our God is a sovereign God that has ordained the end from the beginning. Nothing is catching him by surprise. In fact, everything is going precisely as he has planned. For this reason in Psalm two the psalmist says

"Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing?"<sup>3</sup>

That is to say, resisting the rule of God is futile. It is utter folly. He goes on to say:

"The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed."<sup>4</sup>

And what is it that they say?

"Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us!"<sup>5</sup>

In other words, let's free ourselves from the rule of God. And what is God's reaction?

"He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them."<sup>6</sup>

In verse 10 he goes on to say:

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<sup>3</sup> Psalm 2:1.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 2:2.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 2:3.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 2:4.

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Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!<sup>7</sup>

And by implication, how cursed are those who don't.

Dear Christian, remember this the next time some politician or some political pundit spouts forth something that causes you to bristle with anger. My friends, they are dead in their trespasses and sins. They are deaf and blind to the gospel of grace. They have no capacity to discern spiritual truth and be saved apart from saving grace, apart from the regenerating work of the Spirit. The things of God are foolishness to them. They have given over to a worthless mind to pursue their lusts and experience the full consequences of their sin.

Beloved, we should pity them, not hate them. We should love them, not curse them, because unless they repent they will perish in their sin. That should be the attitude of the Christian.

When I watch the arrogance of our president and others of his ilk, I see two things. One I can see a man in desperate need of Christ who, unless he repents will one day bow before the Lord and confess with his mouth that he is the Lord, because every knee is going to bow. And I also see a man that unless he repents as well as his family and others, he will one day stand before a great white throne of judgment. The heavens and the earth will have passed away and they will see the Lord I all of his glory, not as Savior, but judge. They will be cast away to eternal darkness and to an eternal hell. They will be eternally isolated from every creature, forever separated from God, blaspheming God for eternity, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth in unimaginable torment. This is what I see. This is what we should all see. And it should burden our hearts to pray for these dear people.

Dear Christian, don't get preoccupied with politics or the inevitable destruction of this nation which is not our home. This world is passing away. Be preoccupied with the gospel, Christ. This is our mission. This is our sacred calling. See the eternal fate of sinners and cry out to God on their behalf that he will be merciful to them and save them, as he has us, because were it not for his grace, we would be right there with them. This should be our attitude toward all men who reject Christ, who remain under his wrath.

Beloved, we are to pray for our president. May I encourage you to do that? Pray for our president. Pray for his family. The apostle Paul instructs us in 1 Timothy two beginning in verse one:

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<sup>7</sup> Psalm 2:10-12.

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First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.<sup>8</sup>

Beloved, pray that God will be merciful to him and to his family and change his heart by the power of the gospel, that he and those that serve with him might experience the forgiveness of sin and be reconciled to the one who gave himself as a ransom for all who believe.

Now I have much to say to you this morning. I believe the Holy Spirit would have me help you understand this election and the current state of affairs in our country in light of God's plan for the ages. So bear with me for a few minutes.

You will recall back in Romans nine, 10 and 11, Paul digressed from his great revelation of the doctrine of justification and he explained Israel's election, Israel's defection and Israel's salvation in those three chapters respectively. A salvation that will happen when the Messiah King will return in all of his glory and he will ultimately fulfill his purpose I choosing Israel I the first place. You will recall that God declared through his servant Jeremiah in Jeremiah 13:11.

“...that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise, and for glory.”<sup>9</sup>

Now understanding what God has promised to do with his covenant people Israel is the key to understanding Bible prophecy as well as understanding where we as a people are at historically in God's plan of redemption. May I remind you, if you go back to Deuteronomy chapter 30 verses one through six God predicted what he had predetermined. And what was that? That Israel would one day reject him, that they would be banished into foreign nations because of their disobedience and because of his great compassion he would eventually restore them to their land and redeem them unto himself according to a new covenant. And all through Scripture we see how God is supernaturally and providentially intending all of human history to accomplish these things.’

For example, you don't need to turn there. We read from Daniel a few minutes ago, but may I remind you of the prophet Daniel? In the book of Daniel the prophet describes the course of Gentile world history of which in the United States are still a part. God revealed to Daniel the successive stages of Gentile domination over Israel throughout the centuries, a domination that will occur until the King of kings and Lord of lords, the ultimate conqueror, the Messiah returns to defeat all of the nations who oppose him, when he will return to raise his covenant people Israel to their promised place of blessing

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<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah 13:11.

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and preeminence in the world in his glorious millennial kingdom, a time when we, too, will reign with him.

And this, of course, was a source of great encouragement to the exiled Jews in Daniel's day as it has been to all believers since that time. And because of the promises revealed to Daniel in Daniel chapter two verse 20 we read this.

Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. To Thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For Thou hast given me wisdom and power."<sup>10</sup>

Now what was it that God revealed to Daniel? The answer in a nutshell is this. That God has sovereignly allowed Gentiles to dominate Israel and will continue to do so until the second advent of Christ when the Lord Jesus will return in power and great glory to reconcile them unto himself and establish his millennial reign upon the earth. God revealed to him the domination of actually six great empires. We read about it a few minutes ago in our Scripture reading in Daniel seven. He told him about Babylon. And then the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, the Roman Empire. And even then a future Roman Empire. Frankly, one in which the United States is a part and will be more so. And then finally the millennial kingdom of the Messiah King.

Now we know from history that as God predicted to Daniel he raised up the Babylonians. He raised up the Medes and the Persians. He raised up the Greeks and he raised up the Romans. And he also tore them all down. Likewise, God revealed to Daniel that he would raise up a revived Roman Empire of which America will ultimately be a part a 10 nation confederacy under the rule of the antichrist. Again, as you read in Daniel seven and as it is expanded much in the book of Revelation. This will be a final Gentile empire made up of an amalgamation of all the previous empires that survived and were absorbed into the final Gentile empire that will gain ascendancy, one that will be ruled by the antichrist, one that will seek to once and for all destroy Israel, but one which Christ will destroy in violent abruptness at his second coming. And then he will establish the millennial kingdom.

And in light of that Daniel says in chapter two verse 44:

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel 2:20-23.

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“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.”<sup>11</sup>

And in chapter seven beginning in verse 13 Daniel is given a vision of what will transpire and here is what he saw:

I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven  
One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of  
Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion,  
Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every  
language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be  
destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

Beloved, no wonder Jehovah God sits in the heavens and laughs at those who scoff at him and how plot against him. You can go to Daniel chapter nine and there you will read the chronological framework from Daniel’s time to Christ’s kingdom as we have studied in great detail before.

Beloved, the point is this. Everything that God predicted, everything that he has foreordained, everything that he sovereignly superintends by his providence is happening precisely the way he said. Thus far all of the prophecies that were to be fulfilled in history have been fulfilled literally, which leads us to believe that all of the rest will be fulfilled in the same way.

Now think of these concepts I Daniel of which I have just hit the very surface and link them to the truths that Paul gave us in chapter 11 and verse 25. He tells us that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and, thus, all Israel will be saved.

You may recall in our study that this basically means that in the secret counsel of God’s will he sovereignly ordained to harden the hearts of the vast majority of the chosen people of Israel due to their unbelief and we see this today with the Jewish people, but also that he has preserved for himself a remnant of those hardened hearts out of ethnic, national Israel, branches that have been broken off, branches also that will be saved en masse. And this will occur after the fullness of the Gentiles has come into the Church.

By the way, prophetically, this will happen after the Jews are back in their land according to Isaiah 11:11 and 12. Well, where are the Jews today? They are back in their land. I might add just a portion of the land that God has promised them.

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel 2:44.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel 7:13-14.



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Amos sounded Israel's hope in Amos 9:14. He says:

“I will restore the captivity of My people Israel.”<sup>13</sup>

And in verse 15 he says:

“I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them,’ Says the LORD your God.”<sup>14</sup>

What an amazing thing to see how out of the ashes of the Holocaust God has once again brought his people to the very center of everything that is happening in the world. Israel has returned to the land in unbelief. And that is why Paul said in verse 25 of chapter 11 that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and, thus, all Israel will be saved. What does this mean? It means that God has set a limit on his judgment until—the word until denotes a specific moment in time—until what? The fullness, the idea of completion, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. In other words, until the full number of elect Gentiles are saved. All Israel will be saved when the last Gentile in the Church has come in, he says, εἰσερχομαι (ice-er'-khom-ahee) in the original language, a very Jesus often used to describe entering into the kingdom of heaven, entering into eternal life.

So when the last Gentile is saved during the church age, Israel's judicial hardening will be removed on that portion that God has elected to save that remnant and what is left of that remnant which here is called all Israel will once again enjoy its covenant fellowship with God as the prophets have promised.

Now, my friends, today we live in the times of the Gentiles, a time when a vast number of Gentiles are being saved around the world as the Old Testament prophets predicted. And when the last Gentile of the Church age is saved, the Lord is going to snatch away his bridal church and what is called the rapture. We read about this in 1 Thessalonians four, 1 Corinthians 15, John 14, that amazing event for which we now anxiously await.

And then at that point God will once again focus his attention in Israel and what is called Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. This will be the final seven years of judgment, many times called the pre kingdom judgments upon Israel. These are judgments upon Israel, not the Church. Daniel 9:24 describes this in great detail. Again, it is also know as the seven tribulation. And Daniel's prophecy in Daniel nine verse 24 and following reveals the fact that 69 weeks of years of judgments have already been completed on Israel, but there is one more week of years that remains. That is Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. And this I might remind you is a distinctively Jewish context pertaining to God's covenants with Israel. They cannot be

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<sup>13</sup> Amos 9:14.

<sup>14</sup> Amos 9:15.

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describing anything in the Church age. This will be a time when Israel enters into—according to Jeremiah 30 and verse seven—the time of Jacob’s trouble, a period of unprecedented oppression for Israel. The context there describes her final restoration just before her Messiah returns as described, for example, in Revelation six through 19.

So in summary, where are we? Well, the world today is being prepared for a revived Roman Empire that will be ruled by the antichrist. According to Revelation and other passages we see that this will be a time where there will be a one world ruler. And we can see the world clamoring for that today. It will be a time where there is a one world government, a one world economy and there will be a one world ecumenical, apostate, false religious system, the great harlot church. And Israel right now and the events of the world is being prepared of these pre kingdom judgments of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, but first the Church must be removed. And I believe that this could happen at any moment. And when the saints are removed, imagine what will happen in the United States of America. It will be catastrophic destruction.

But, before the Lord’s return Jesus said in Matthew 24:9 that you, referring to Israel, will be hated by all nations on account of my name. All nations would include the United States. The prophecies reveal that eventually Jerusalem will be surrounded by a great army made up of all nations of the world. It is fascinating that in Ezekiel’s prophecy, in Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39 there is description of an alliance of Islamic nations that will swoop down on Israel from the north and the prophet tells us that they will be defeated on the mountains of Israel. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, the holy one in Israel. And we can see that being prepared right before our eyes today.

Today we see Iran and all the other Islamic nations—by the way, they make up 1.3 billion people and they are aligning themselves against tiny little Israel. So prophetically all the nations of the world will eventually come against Israel. And in the hour of their greatest peril Jesus will suddenly return to save them both physically as well as spiritually according to Zechariah 14 and Isaiah 59 verses 20 through 21.

So, again, my friends, we see this stage set for these things right before our eyes as all of the nations of the world increasingly believe that Israel is the cancer of the world, the one that needs to be removed.

So where does this place us in God’s historical plan? Simply this. We, as a nation, see ourselves along with the rest of the world being prepared for the rule of the antichrist, the one world economy and so forth, the one world government, unprecedented persecution against Christians and Israel. So the stage is set.

I find it fascinating by the way that our president is very popular in all of the nations of the world except Israel where he enjoys an approval rating of less than 10 percent. Plus it is interesting that the current administration is far more sympathetic to Islam than to Christianity and certainly than to Israel. And you will see this develop more and more.

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So, my friends, we await the rapture of the Church. 1 Thessalonians four verses 16:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.<sup>15</sup>

Now I ask you. Are you ready to meet the Lord? This election is simply one more domino that has fallen in the direction of divine judgment. The time of judgment when the Messiah king will return I unimaginable majesty and power and wrath and justice to establish his millennial kingdom upon the earth, which, by the way, is the consummating bridge between human history and the eternal state. And I the rapture you will recall that he comes for his saints, but in the second coming he comes with his saints. According to Colossians 3:4:

“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”<sup>16</sup>

And so many other passages that attest to these amazing truths.

As I was contemplating these things over the course of this week, my heart went to Charles Wesley’s great hymn where he said this:

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,  
Once of favored sinners slain,  
Thousand, thousands saints attending,  
Swell, the triumph of his train.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah God appears on earth to reign.

Now while we confidently and we patiently await the Lord’s return what should our attitude be towards rulers, the rulers that God has placed over us? Well, thus far, we have learned in chapter 13 that we are to be in subjection to them for the sake of the gospel, because God has ordained governments for our good and his glory.

Now Paul is going to expand upon this in our text this morning that we will look at for the remaining few minutes of our time together.

Notice he says in verse six:

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

<sup>16</sup> Colossians 3:4.

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“For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.”<sup>17</sup>

Now I know it is hard to think of the IRS serving in the capacity of God’s ministers, but here we see that, indeed, that is who they are and why he has given them to us.

Now I would also add they certainly don’t understand that in the final analysis they owe their authority to God to whom they are ultimately responsible. However, because of this, we are to honor them as they perform their duty. Of course this would have been a hard pill to swallow for the early Christians most of which were Jews, because the ancient Jews were well acquainted with the excessive taxation from a pagan, despotic and merciless Roman government as well as others that they had endured in days gone by. But, again, that government, like all governments was ultimately God’s ape to accomplish his purposes.

It is also important of you to understand that God instituted and established a very detailed tax system for the nation of Israel and the theocracy of Israel. First there was a 10 percent tithe required to support the Levites. They were the priests and it also supported the civil leaders. You read about that in Leviticus 27:30 and Numbers 18:21-24. And this was basically a tax that funded Israel’s theocratic government. And then, secondly, there was a second 10 percent tithe that was to be given to support annual festivals and sacrifices and the tabernacle, late the temple, a tax for cultivating social and cultural life, for promoting national unity, those types of things. You read about that in Deuteronomy 12 verses 10 through 19. It essentially funded the national religious life of Israel. Then there was a third 10 percent tithe collected to fund social welfare, shall we say, to help, quote, the alien, the orphan, the widow who were in your town, who shall come and eat and be satisfied in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all of the work of your hand which you do, Deuteronomy 14:29. I might add that this was only collected every third year so it really amounted to 3.3 percent tax per year. Then there was a fourth tax which was an annual half shekel tax that was levied on every male Israelite according to Exodus 30:14 that was 20 years old and over and it was to be a contribution to the Lord. And then, finally, there were two more indirect taxes under the Mosaic Law, one that required them to leave a small portion of their crops unharvested to be gleaned by the poor. We read about that, for example, in Leviticus 19 and verse 10.

I might add that the poor had to do the work of the harvesting, ok? That is an important thing to underscore. They just didn’t sit at home playing video games and watching television and playing with their phones and so forth and wait for a government check. They had to get out and do something, but there was something provided for them. And then, finally, the second indirect tax required that every seventh year the land was to lie fallow, meaning that it was not to be cultivated. And whatever crop would come up, then

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<sup>17</sup> Romans 13:6.

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the poor were allowed to harvest that crop and livestock were allowed to eat from that crop and so forth.

And so under God's system, the total of all these six mandatory forms of taxation amounted to about 24 percent a year. Boy, wouldn't that be nice today?

Now under the Roman rule the theocratic tax structure was disbanded, but the Romans did allow the Jews to collect certain religious taxes. You will recall, for example, how the tax collectors in Capernaum required Jesus and Peter to pay the two drachma temple tax which ultimately, interestingly enough, went into the coffers of the high priest and the chief priests in Jerusalem that would eventually crucify the Lord. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 17:27:

"But, lest we give them offense, go to the sea, and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a stater. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."<sup>18</sup>

By the way, the fishing deal doesn't work today, ok? So the Lord is our example. Think about it. As the Son of God he was under no obligation to pay a temple tax. But he did so to avoid offending the civil authorities and also to be an example to his disciples, because, beloved there is something much greater at stake. That is the gospel, the kingdom. Jesus didn't come to reform government. He came to save sinners.

Now I might also add that the New Testament does not require believers to tithe any amount. We are not under the law. We do not live in a theocracy. We are under no obligation to give a specified amount to our heavenly Father. But Paul does advise us to give regularly. For example 1 Corinthians 16:2.

"On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper."<sup>19</sup>

And in 2 Corinthians nine beginning at verse six he went on to warn that:

"...he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver."<sup>20</sup>

So, again, Paul says:

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<sup>18</sup> Matthew 17:27.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Corinthians 16:2.

<sup>20</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.

## Presidential Election Perspective

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Romans 13:6-7

**Preached on:** Sunday, November 11, 2012

“For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.”<sup>21</sup>

And he says:

“Render to all what is due them.”<sup>22</sup>

In other words, all the civil authorities that collect taxes, all that is due them... What does that refer to? Well, all. Well, what is all? Well, that is the IRS. That this state taxes. That is sales taxes, property taxes, what? Inheritance taxes, capital gains, all of those things.

Well, that is not fair. Well, of course not. We are in a fallen world. But the issue is not about us. The issue is about what God is doing. Our role is to obey for the purpose of the gospel.

He says:

“Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”<sup>23</sup>

You see, the idea is this, friends. You don't pay your taxes begrudgingly as if you have been sorely mistreated, all right? That is not the way we are to do this. We don't write our check to the tax collector, to the IRS and say to them, so to speak, ok, here is your stinking money. Now get out of here. That is not to be our attitude. That is what Paul is telling us, because, remember. They are a minister of God to you for good, verse four. They are rulers, servants of God, verse six. So God is using them to benefit you. So trust him, obey him. Remember all along that you're just a stranger in this land. You are just passing through, because, once again, folks, the bigger issue is the gospel and living for the glory of God that others might see Christ in you, the hope of glory.

I might add as we bring this to a close this morning, that I have never seen a professing Christian who constantly complains about the government, who is constantly belly aching about taxes who is also passionate of evangelism and discipleship. Instead, they are preoccupied with the things of this world. They are just way too attached to the things of this world. And if this is you, if you are honest with yourself, the real issue is you are worried about losing your stuff. You are worried about somehow losing your freedoms and your personal rights. And, beloved, all that I can say to you is that none of that matters in God's economy. This isn't our home.

I pray that this election will help loosen our grip on this world and cause us all to cling to

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<sup>21</sup> Romans 13:6.

<sup>22</sup> Romans 13:7.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

# Presidential Election Perspective

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the Savior who is coming soon to snatch us away. You know, as Americans we, frankly, we are spoiled rotten. I have been all around the world. You just have no idea how spoiled we are. Even some of the poorest people in our communities live better than ancient kings ever could have imagined. Too many of us, unfortunately, live as this ... as if this world is our home.

By the way, they are easily recognized. Those Christians will look like they are having a gall bladder attack as a result of the election. Folks, get over it. God is at work. Trust him. Watch what he is going to do.

So may I challenge you to live consistently with the priorities, the standards that God has given us in his Word. Have a right attitude toward the civil authorities and be excited dear friends. Jesus is coming again. And he is coming soon. And I just pray that he will find each of us watching and waiting, excited to see him face to face faithfully devoted to serving him in whatever post he has placed us.

Let's pray together.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths. Thank you for the hope that we have in Christ. And for those that do not know you as Savior, oh, God, will you move upon their hearts with such overwhelming conviction that today will be the day that they will repent of their sins and cry out for undeserved mercy that they will receive so rich and so free. We thank you and we praise you and we ask that you would come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.*

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