

# Life under the Government of Christ

By

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Human governments have existed as long as history has been recorded. The power of the state resides in governments, and they are necessary for civil order, public safety, national defence and smooth economic activity. Governments are generally considered a force for societal good, although they can be dictatorial and oppressive towards their own citizens.

In Rom. 13 Paul urges believers to submit to the civil authorities on the grounds that governmental powers are instituted by God:

<sup>1</sup> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

<sup>2</sup> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

<sup>4</sup> For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Be that as it may, there is an older perfect government which has always been in power and will always be. It's the universal government of God, invisible yet felt; denied by many, yet holding sway over all. The Psalmist declares in Ps 66:7: "He ruleth by His power for ever; His eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah".

The ruling power of the government of God is a reality that cannot be wished away by even its sworn enemies! Whether one likes it or not, Yahweh is the King of the universe--and by right. He says in Jer. 27:5: "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me".

But so far, this is the broad outline of the universal rule of God in the affairs of men, even when His rule is not acknowledged as such (see Dan. 2:20-21, 4:17, 25).

Our focus in this sermon, however, is on those of us who have willingly submitted to the government of God. What kind of life is in store for us? What special benefits do we enjoy which set us apart from those who live in rebellion to the rule of God yet cannot oust Him as the King of the universe whose will ultimately prevails?

## **Christ, the Lamb, is our King**

The scriptural information that Christ, following His resurrection and ascension to heaven, is seated on His right hand of the Father carries overtones of the great authority He wields in the government of God:

Matt 26:64

Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Acts 2:33-36

<sup>33</sup> Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

<sup>34</sup> For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

<sup>35</sup> Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

<sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ

Phil. 2:9-11

<sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

<sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

<sup>11</sup> And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Peter 3:22

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

He is awesome in power as Lord over all. Yet He's wonderfully gentle towards His saints. He rules over us with the disposition of a lamb and yet with alertness and tenacity of purpose. We read in Isaiah 42:

Isa 42:1-8

<sup>1</sup> Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup> He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

<sup>4</sup> He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law.

<sup>5</sup> Thus saith God the LORD, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

<sup>6</sup> I the LORD have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

<sup>7</sup> To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

<sup>8</sup> I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.

The Father calls the Son "My Servant" because it's the Father's will to which He is devoted, and He came down to earth to perform that will:

John 6:38-39

<sup>38</sup> For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.

<sup>39</sup> And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

The Lord Jesus is the Servant-Son in whom the Father is "well pleased" (Matt. 3:17, 17:5). He is of the same essence as the Father (John 10:30), for the Father declares, "I have put My Spirit upon Him". His mandate is to bring out justice to the nations. He's to ensure justice and equity in the lives of people the world over. He's to compensate the wronged, comfort the oppressed, heal the sick and reinstate the debased.

He will go about His mission in the gentlest of ways. He will not yell at those who run to Him for justice, not even at those who encounter Him casually. He will treat all with kid's gloves!

What a contrast with many of today's ministers who claim to be doing His work and carrying out His mission on His behalf! They not only lord it over the people but also defraud them, enriching themselves at their expense. It's common knowledge that to see some of these so-called 'top religious leaders' in Ghana and elsewhere for "counseling" (*Twi akwankyire*) is no easy task. It usually takes weeks to see 'the great prophet' or to have an appointment for one of his 'special counseling sessions' at a fee. And once you see him, his counsel may entail buying his special brand of anointing oil, his equally powerful lavender to ward off evil spirits and a 'mandatory offering' of a specified amount to complete the spiritual job in hand. The prophecy of the Apostle Peter is now a disconcerting reality:

<sup>1</sup> But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

<sup>2</sup> And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

<sup>3</sup> And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

They reflect badly on the gospel of the gentle Jesus and everybody knows it, but the people still troop to them because they say what they want to hear. They prophesy "deceits"--sugar-coated hollow prophecies and divinations couched in threats and promises of greatness if you follow the *akwankyire*! (See Isa. 30:9-10).

At their prayer camps, the sick are chained, some whipped and made to undergo all kinds of dehumanizing rituals to exorcise them of evil spirits, in addition to paying for the accommodation and the extortion that goes on all time. Yet you get to see the prophet only a few precious times. He's otherwise engaged! Such is not the ministry of Christ; not when He personally ministered on earth nor when He entrusted it to His immediate apostles. But why complain? The people love to have it so:

A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land;  
The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? (Jer. 5:30-31).

Unlike the false prophets who exploit His name for gain, the Lord Jesus is especially mild and kind to the weak and the oppressed who are on the verge of extinction: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench". He will handle them with care and consideration:

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young (Isa. 40:11).

Yet He will not relent in His mission; He will not falter. He will faithfully bring forth justice to the poor and the oppressed. He will plead their cause and heal their broken spirits and bodies. The people will feel His justice. They will be healed, restored and relieved and comforted. Christ, God's faithful Servant-Son, won't perform an incomplete work of deliverance on you. He will complete it once He begins His good work in you (Phil. 1:6). You can look forward to Him with all confidence.

The law of justice is in His hands: "the islands shall wait for His law". Those who look to Him not only receive justice from His hand but also instruction from His law of justice. They are tutored to live under the gentle and just discipline of His law. This removes at a stroke the major cause of the pain: sin. That is to say, Christ brings restoration and then says to the restored, "Go and sin no more". This is the gentle, justice-dispensing, righteous Jesus we know in this church. He's gentle, and yet firm to deliver and to teach us His righteousness.

He won't relent until He has done right by us. But make sure you remain loyal to the government. That's why we pray, "Your will be done on earth". While the prayer seemingly puts the onus is on God to ensure that His will is done on earth, we are the DOERS of that will. So then, it's a plea to God to help us do His will. As God is a Spirit, His will is also a spiritual thing and so it will take His spiritual help to do it. But we must have a ready mind, a teachable spirit, to be taught His will. Hence "the islands shall wait for His law".

The government of Christ is a government in power. If we subscribe to this government, we must know and perform its constitutional requirements--the law of God. Even if national governments conduct civic education so that their citizens can know and perform their civic duties better, how much more the kingdom of God?

Christ, the Servant-Son of Father Yahweh, has the full authority of the Father, the Supreme Creator and Source of life, to represent His covenant with the nations; He is to be their light, banishing their darkness. How? He makes the blind to see and frees the prisoners from the dungeon of darkness (vv. 5-7).

His glory will not be given to another--not to the false gods, certainly not (v. 8). We are a conduit for His glory; we are destined to reflect His glory and that makes us permanent candidates for His deliverance. His glory cannot be eclipsed and so He will always sustain the glory of His name by delivering us each and every time His glory in us is threatened.

This means gentle, Lamb-like Jesus will not forever take things lying down. If need be, force will be applied to protect the glory of His name which we bear as a people called by His name. He will pounce on the enemy with might and do us justice:

<sup>13</sup> The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: He shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies.

<sup>14</sup> I have long time holden My peace; I have been still, and refrained Myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

<sup>15</sup> I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.

<sup>16</sup> And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

He will flatten the mountains of problems before us and dry up our rivers of troubles. And He will lead us in a completely new direction of hope and prosperity, hitherto unimaginable, nay, thought impossible.

Christ, the King of the saints, is alive to His responsibilities. His present rule is quiet but effective. He delivers us from our enemies so we might serve Him without fear and in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. The father of John the Baptist, the priest Zechariah, who was initially struck dumb for his unbelief in angel Gabriel's announcement of John's birth, praised God for making available to His people His rule of peace and holiness through the Messiah, whom John heralded:

Luke 1:67-75

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup> Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people,

- <sup>69</sup> And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David;  
<sup>70</sup> As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began:  
<sup>71</sup> That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;  
<sup>72</sup> To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant;  
<sup>73</sup> The oath which He sware to our father Abraham  
<sup>74</sup> That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might  
serve Him without fear,  
<sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

Zechariah's prophetic utterance presents a poetic summation of life under the government of Christ. This is the life we share together by His grace in this church. Let us remain loyal to His truth so we will continue to live under His heavenly rule. Amen!