

Be not conformed to this world

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Good morning everyone. I want to thank you for taking the time to listen in on the message this morning. I'm going to have to ask you to bear with me just a little bit as I'm once again fighting a little cold issue. This one isn't going to last long - in fact - it's only been a couple days and I'm just about completely over it. But I still have some voice issues that will take a few more days to overcome.

This past week I received the video copy of the trial / debate between Ted and Brent Winters. The first half of the video, Brent's microphone issues were not a whole lot better than what we had in the live stream version. I was able to separate the audio from the video then run it through some audio processing to make it better than it was - then I put it back into the video file. So, it's better than it was. After the intermission, Brent's microphone was really good. So that's been uploaded and you can find it at the original Youtube address by just typing in Constitution on Trial or, you can go to Ted's website at bibleversusconstitution.org and on the right side of the page, there is a link to the Debate you can click on and then there's the option for video on Youtube or, I've added an audio only version as well.

Before we get into today's message on Romans 12, 13 and 14 - and be not conformed to this world...I went back to check in and see what's been going on with John MacArthur at Grace Community, a California corporation, church to see if he was continuing to defy his owners in their attempt to shut down his corporate quote "church."

Now I want you to remember that I've said many many times - that even if those involved in standing against tyranny or standing for what they believe is freedom - even if we don't see eye-to-eye Biblically - I still am encouraged to see someone - anyone - standing for freedom and opposing tyranny.

My main concern is making sure that people who have placed an element of trust in this ministry - I want to make sure they do not just blindly follow - or fall for - what could just be part of the ruse - or part of the deception that men's quote little g "governments" do - to advance their cause. Of course they do that. Of course they create two sides of a controversy knowing that whichever of the two sides they created quote "wins" - whatever the outcome - the state still wins. And the deception continues.

My hope for Grace Community, California Corporation is that there are some true believers there realize the deception and Come out of it - and lead as many others as they can in their coming out - which should be better stated - "Their coming INTO the Kingdom of God."

When I checked in on the situation, I found an online article that was published on Frigate's day, entitled

Grace Community Church Pastor John MacArthur issues blistering rebuke of 'leftists and secular government,' implores houses of worship: 'OPEN YOUR CHURCH'

Let me start reading and I'll make some comments along the way. This is from the website, The Blaze, and it has a subheading - POWERFUL STUFF. Quote:

Los Angeles Pastor John MacArthur's message in a new viral video is crystal clear: Open your churches.

MacArthur, pastor of Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, released a video Wednesday detailing why he believes church is essential and should be opened.

Alright, this stop right here. "Why church is essential." Here is a problem right from the very beginning. This whole concept of quote "essential business" which really began to take a foothold with this bogus covid plandemic - is a little g government scam. Allowing little g government men and women to define what business is quote "essential" and what business is quote "non-essential" is playing right into their scam.

The issue should not be whether quote "church is essential or non-essential" - we should be getting to the root of the issue and that is that a mere man does not have the power to look at another man and say, "Your work is non-essential - therefore you are required to stay home and depend on little g government subsidies to feed your family. The issue is not whether quote "church is essential" the issue is one man telling another man that he can or cannot work. God said, "If a man does not work, neither shall he eat" and for men to interfere with the way God established economy - he is committing an act of rebellion against the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It's not whether or not quote "church is essential." That argument - the only thing it does - is allow men to continue to think they have the power or authority to control a man's labor. He does not. Let's continue.

Grace Community Church reopened for in-person services in July, defying California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom's COVID-19 restrictions.

Stop again. Just listen to the rhetoric - it reopened for in-person services. That makes it sound like - well - exactly what it is - it's a business - just like the barbershop, just like the grocery store - just like the liquor store - just like Planned Parenthood. Well, why not? Grace Community corporation is listed in the same Corporate record book in California - the same one that lists the barbershop, the grocery store, the liquor store and Planned Parenthood. It's listed in the same book. It IS a business - created, owned and controlled by its creator - the state of California. Continuing.

In response, Los Angeles County sought a court order to prohibit the church from meeting indoors. By August, however, a California Superior Court judge said the church could continue to hold indoor services as long as worshippers wear face coverings and practice social distancing.

Again. This is exactly what I'm saying. "You can open your business - as long as you do it the way we say you can." So, again, whichever side quote "wins" - the state wins. The state is the winner when it tells it's businesses what they can and cannot do - and their businesses obey. The game - and that's exactly what it is - it's a game of cat and mouse - the quote "health department" or the quote "governor" are the cats and their businesses are the mice. When the mice decide they don't want to be eaten - then the game ramps up. The quote "health department" and the quote "governor" is more than happy to play the court game and whatever that outcome happens to be - well - fine - that's the way their quote "system" works. The courts decide whether the cat plays too rough or not. Sometimes the courts side with the cat, sometimes they give a little cheese to the mice. But they are all in the same game.

At some point, the mice had better decide to leave the game. But the mice are still too stupid to know that the courts and the cats receive their paychecks from the same place. Continuing.

In Wednesday's widely viewed video, MacArthur argued that churches and parishioners across the country should band together in an effort to take back church amid the COVID-19 pandemic because it should be as God commanded.

I can only hope and pray that maybe the mice will band together and pick up their cheese scraps and quit the game. That's what would be great. If the cats have nothing to feed on, maybe they'll just wither away and die.

In the video, MacArthur — who was recently in the news after local authorities threatened to jail him for holding in-person church services — said that the Bible calls Christians to gather.

No. The Bible does not call quote “Christians to gather.” The Bible calls Christians to assemble. That is a huge difference. Assemble - as in - come together to create Government - capital G. That's what the Bible calls Christians to do. Christians are to Come out from among the little g governments of men and Assemble themselves as the captial G Government called the Kingdom of God, as the nation called the commonwealth of Israel - established in I Peter 2 and named in Ephesians chapter 2.

That's what Christians are supposed to do. The article continues.

"Today's current crop of politicians are trampling on the Constitution and on the resolve of citizens to demand their rights under the pressure of a manufactured fear," MacArthur said. "The reality is that the COVID data just doesn't match the government's COVID narrative."

Alright. Here's the root of the issue. The first appeal for MacArthur to make in telling quote “Christians” they have a mandate to gather - is to appeal to the U.S. CONstitution? I've said this a thousand times - one man will look at this controversy between the cats and the mice and will side with the state - and he'll say that the state has 100% backing of the U.S. CONstitution to do what it is doing. He will cite specific things in the CONstitution that say the state is operating on CONstitutional grounds. He'll cite court decisions to prove his claims.

Then another man comes along and says, “No, the state is not operating according to the CONstitution and he'll cite the CONstitution and various court decisions supporting his argument. It will go to one court which will say one thing. Then it goes to another court that says the opposite. Then it goes to another court that reverses the lower court and so forth. It's an insane, absurd reality that is no reality at all. It's a constant tail-chaser.

Listen to me brethren, if you are going to live or die over a cause - it better be because the fight is the Lord's. His Law, His Word, His Will - that needs to be the only issue that matters. And having done all, brethren, stand. Equip yourselves with the armour of God clearly defined in Ephesians chapter 6 and stand. Claim citizenship in the commonwealth of Israel and stand on that. The commonwealth of Israel does not have

the U.S. CONstitution listed in its arsenal. The CONstitution is the genesis of the problems. Accepting that document as the final arbiter of issues arising among men - is the problem.

The final arbiter between issues of right and wrong between men - must be the Law Word of God - period. And Christians - shame on those people in California who call themselves Christians - and their public appeal is to the U.S. CONstitution. The article goes on.

Without citing any specific research, MacArthur added, "You have a 99.99 percent chance to survive COVID. It's just not what they're saying it is."

MacArthur insisted that what he chalks up to as hype and paranoia is keeping much of the country shut down.

"That absolutely does not warrant shutting down anything," he continued. "But especially, absurdly, and arbitrarily, churches that have a special protection from the Constitution. Oh, and at the same time, leaving open abortion clinics, strip clubs, and marijuana dispensaries."

Again. That language is the trap. It sounds really good, but it's a trap. It's an appeal and an affirmation that the CONstitution is what guarantees quote "special protection for the quote 'churches.'" So again, no matter which side "wins" as long as the people bow to the CONstitution - the state wins. If the cats allow the mice to claim a win - and the mice are still advocating for the game - then the game wins. It simply prolongs the life of the mouse - but eventually - the cat is still going to get the mouse.

The mouse needs to decide it is no longer going to play the game. The mouse needs a different game to play. It needs a different set of rules if it is going to survive. Christians need to leave the game of the CON with its rules, regulations, statues, laws that reach to the moon and back - and grab hold of the Lawbook from the King - the one that can held in one hand - and begin living according to this set of rules.

MacArthur added that Black Lives Matter demonstrations and subsequent riots also don't seem to be considered as "dangerous" as attending church services when it comes to the opinions of health officials.

Totally diversionary. Who cares? Who cares about Black Lives Matter demonstrations in relation to an attack - and even though it isn't an attack on true Christianity - true

Christianity - you can rest assured - IS what the enemies of Christ really want to attack. All MacArthur is saying here is we want to be treated - at least as equally as the cats have treated Black Lives Matters.

"This is obviously targeted discrimination," he added. "Leftists and secular government officials have no tolerance for biblical Christianity, so they're using COVID as an excuse to shut us down."

Well, he has that right - no tolerance for Biblical Christianity - which is the ultimate target. They just use the mice that playing in their own game to try to catch the ones who aren't playing their game.

He impressed the importance of remaining united as Christians, reminding viewers that "the church is essential," and pointed out that parishioners began showing up to his church in person, on their own accord, after a 20-week lockdown because "they didn't believe the narrative the local government and media were giving them."

In the video, MacArthur argued that the need to meet as a church is more important than ever.

Sure. I see exactly what is going on. The United States as most people know it is in real danger of collapse. And those who have propped it up for so long - the "churchians" are needed now - more than ever - to fight to keep it from dying. I've said this before - and I'll say it again - the CHURCH - which is not Biblical Christianity in ANY shape or form - is the religious arm of the state. Neither can exist without each other. The state would cease, but for the quote "church" and the quote "church" would cease to exist but for the quote "state."

The state exists because the "church" and the "churchmen" have told their followers that the state is God ordained. And the people bought the lie - and just exactly as Hosea said, "The leaders of this people have caused them to err - e-r-r - and they that are led of them are destroyed."

"This is a watershed moment in America," he concluded. "We have been granted by God the freedom to meet as a church, and that is protected by the Constitution. We need to be the church, not only because we're free to be the church, but because we're commanded to be the church by the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church. This is a time of all times to meet as the church. Open your church. The church is essential."

At the time of this reporting, the video, which MacArthur shared on his Twitter page, has been viewed more than 475,000 times. End quote.

I have shared with you many times in the past the two influences I had when I first started quote “church” ministry in my early 20s. I served in the quote “ministries” of two of the most influential “churchmen” in America at that time.

One of them was famous for saying, *“We have the God of Heaven above and the stars and stripes below.”*

I would literally cringe every single time I heard him make that statement. Because, instantly, I would think of other Christians around the world who did not have the quote, “stars and stripes below.”

What about other Christians who didn't have a quote little g “government” with a CONstitution that guaranteed religious freedom?

That just seemed to fly in the face to me that some quote “Christians” had it better in the U.S., than say, well, at that time, it was the big bad Russians who were forcing “churches” underground and all that propoganda. Even back in the 80s - Christians who were truly living according to the teachings of Christ - were forced underground in the U.S. Underground? Really? What exactly does that mean?

Does that mean that when they hold their quote “church services” they have to do it in tunnels and caves, for fear of being found out or heard?

No way. That's not what it means. That's Hollywood. That's something the movie makers make money on.

Living underground means you find ways to live outside the banking systems of men. It means living outside of their ungodly labor taxing system. Soon, it's going to mean living without proof of their wicked, ungodly vaccinations. Mandatory? I doubt it. I don't think even their ungodly, CONstitutional justice system can find a way to make vaccinations mandatory. They'll just make it to where the cashier won't do your transaction if you can't prove you've been vaccinated. The grocery store won't let you inside if you can't pass the scanner at the front door without it going off.

Teresa read something to me from Menard's website where they were telling their workers that if they helped people who were in the store without a mask on - they

could be fired. Wow. How is it that businesses make so much money that they can just turn potential buying customers away? I'm telling you, back in the spring when Trump had his big white house meeting with all these huge corporate presidents, I smelled a rat. It was obvious as the day is long that Trump was making deals with these businessmen - if you just go along and help us with this - we'll make sure you are compensated for your help.

Teresa and I walked into the Hong Kong Inn restaurant last week in Springfield. Nearly the second we walked in, a masked girl asked us if we had masks. Of course we said "No." And she said, just as casually as if she was saying "Hello" - "I can't serve you if you don't have a mask." So, we turned to walk out.

There were literally TWO other people in the entire restaurant. TWO. And you will not believe what they were doing. They were sitting there eating - WITH THEIR STUPID, FILTHY FACE DIAPERS ON, and they would hold the diaper up and take a bite. Then drop the diaper back over their mouths while they chewed. Then, raise it up again to take another bite, then drop it while they chewed. With all due respect to this elderly couple - you are total idiots. Plain and simple. Total idiots.

So we went to another restaurant and when we got there, we told the manager we were there because they did not turn us away because we refused to wear a mask. And we'd be back. The manager let us know how much she hated the mask herself and was very kind to us while we were there. I asked her to tell the people above her the story we had shared with her and she said she would.

That generation - the idiots sitting there pulling up there diapers between bites - and my generation also - are exactly the reason we are in the shape we are in. Eighty years old and still don't have the sense God gave a goose. When the supposed elders - those who have lived long enough to have developed some common sense - are that stupid - well - young people - I'm telling you - you are going to have to rise up - right now - and take your generation back from these idiots and begin to make change right now. It is your responsibility to change YOUR generation for the King and Kingdom. And yes, that means affecting the generation you are on the coat tails of right now.

Winning your generation for the Kingdom of Christ right now - will have an affect on my generation. People my age have failed. My parent's generation has failed. You have to identify the ways they have failed and correct it right now in your generation - in your life.

The CONstitution is a failure. Men creating their own governments is a failure. Working 9 to 5 jobs as an employee is a failure. If you are in that situation, actively look for something else to do. Get out of that rut as soon as you can. Do it while you are young because I'm telling you - the older you get - the harder it will be to break free. Church is a failure. The quote "system" that we have all seen - when compared to the Word of God, the Perfect Will of God - is a colossal failure. Come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and I will be your God and you will be my people.

Alright. Romans 12:1-2. Please turn there with me this morning and we will try to wrap up this series.

[1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

[2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I want to remind you that the word "world" here in verse 2 is aion. It is the same Greek word found in Matthew 24:3 when the disciples were asking Christ concerning the end of the world - the end of the Jewish age. Be not conformed to the Jewish age, be not conformed to the Old Covenant age. That's what is being said here.

The principles here go way beyond and have application for all generations - but considering the time, the place and the people to whom the text was written - Paul was telling those first century saints not to conform to the manner of judgement according to the Old Covenant World. He was telling them that Government and the way of Government was changing and they were to conform to the new method - even though the old method had not fully come to an end.

I had a friend contact me this past week and say that this concept was a bit confusing. So, let me try to clarify again. The first century was the end of the Old Covenant age. And, it was the beginning of the New Covenant age - the New Covenant World.

Hebrews chapter 8 - and we went there last week to look at it - talks about the end of the Old Covenant age as a vanishing. Yes, there was a final, cataclysmic event that signaled the official end - and that of course - was in AD70 at the destruction of the temple. Christ told His disciples in Matthew 24 - that the end of the world would come when not one stone was left standing upon another. That happened at AD70 with the

destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

But, Hebrews says the passing of the Old Covenant was a vanishing. It wasn't necessarily an instantaneous event. It took a little while for it be completely over and done with. John the Baptist had to first come and prepare the way for the Messiah. John the Baptist taught the people that they were in the days prophesied by the prophets. Then they had the birth of the King, the life of the King, the ministry of the King. The King taught - every single day of His ministry - that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

He taught that THIS generation would not pass away till everything had been fulfilled. And we know that He said those things somewhere around the year AD30 - give or take - doesn't matter how precise - and then approximately 40 years later - it all happened - just like He said.

But during that time - we had the most monumental occurrence ever to happen in the history of mankind. And that was the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Even though that event was the most monumental thing to occur in human history - it still did not bring the final end of the Old Covenant age. The temple was still there. But - Christ DID become the final sacrifice - there is no question about this. But, so that the prophets of old would be fulfilled - the daily sacrifice in the temple did not end - until the temple was destroyed.

So, after the resurrection of Christ, there was a very real transition period where it was okay to continue offering sacrifices in the temple - but - it was also okay - NOT TO. For those who had fully understand Moses and the prophets and John the Baptist - and ultimately Christ - it was perfectly fine and acceptable - and encouraged I would add - go ahead and forsake the Old Covenant World and embrace the New Covenant World - even though the official demise of the Old Covenant World did not happen until AD70.

Let's go to Acts chapter 21 this morning and see if we can validate further these claims that I'm making. Acts 21, verse 1.

[1] And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

[2] And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

[3] Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

[4] And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

[5] And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

[6] And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

[7] And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

[8] And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

[9] And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

[10] And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

[11] And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the [nations].

[12] And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

[13] Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

[14] And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

[15] And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

[16] There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

[17] And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

[18] And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

[19] And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the [nations] by his ministry.

[20] And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

[21] And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are

among the [nations] to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

Hmm. Now isn't that interesting? Seems like Paul was consistent here in what he was teaching from Romans 13 regarding the things that could be - for lack of a better word - "prosecuted" in God ordained Government - the Ekklesia.

[22] What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

[23] Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

[24] Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

[25] As touching the [nations] which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

[26] Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

There is no controversy regarding Paul and these other disciples participating in the temple rituals. They were still living in the Old Covenant World. It was okay. If a man doesn't understand the passing of the Old Covenant World and the establishing of the New and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, then yes, these things are going to be confusing. And then, you're possibly going to end up with people saying things like, "Paul's writings should not be in the Bible." When the reality is, the writings of Paul are some of the most pro-Kingdom - pro-Kingship of Christ available to us in the Bible.

But if a man doesn't understand fulfilled Bible prophecy and what those transition days between the Old and the New were - he is going to be confused.

So Paul participates in temple rituals. We assume a sacrifice - and I personally do not see a reason not to assume that - but even while Paul is doing that - the context is going to reason with us that he was telling them that their sacrificial system was coming to an end. Everything they had known for hundreds of years - the system that came directly by Yahweh through Moses - it was ending. Look at verse 27.

[27] And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on

him,

[28] Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

During this time period, it was perfectly fine to sacrifice in the temple - and it was perfectly fine to begin relying solely on the finished sacrifice of Christ. The two were coexisting for a brief time during this vanishing away.

Now that we are on this side of AD70 - it is NOT okay for us to continue participating in the ceremonial ways of the Old Covenant world. Those days ended.

Even as Paul was in the temple - and - participated in temple rituals - he was still telling the people

And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the [nations] to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

The times were coming to an end.

So, back to Romans 12. Be not conformed to this world was a specific challenge to those Romans Christians that - even if it was just specifically to them - the example they were to have for the rest of the people of that time - their charge was to begin Government - not like the Old Covenant World - but like the way Government would be in the New Covenant World. That's what the Roman Christians - according to Romans 12 were commissioned to do. They were charged with showing the New World to come how it was supposed to be done.

I just don't believe this is confusing if we really think this through.

We have to remember, if you put yourself in the shoes of those people. For instance, and I think I alluded to it last week as well, John the Baptist earthly father was a devout follower of Moses - which was a good thing. It was not a bad thing. He was being obedient to the teachings of Moses in the best way that it could be done.

Then, after living a blessed life of obedience, someone comes along and tells him, "Okay, you've been an obedient follower for all your life, you've lived exactly the way God wanted you to - but it's all changing." You want to talk about confusing? What do you think must have been going through his mind? And others like him? But, because he knew the writings of Moses, he knew the writings of the prophets - he was able to discern the times in which he lived - knowing that Moses and the prophets had foretold of the coming of the Messiah Who would bring about monumental change - he was ready for it and embraced it - and did the right thing.

Back to Romans 12 for our summation. We found in verse 8 an office that seems to need the most amount of explanation. Of course, determining and settling disputes among people is extremely important. That's why Paul spent so much time on that single office.

In Romans 13, beginning in verse 8-9, Paul begins to put limits on what the Godly ruler is allowed to even make judgements on. It's seem very clear to me. It seems very obvious what Paul is doing. He is limiting the office of ruler - the one tasked with measuring the actions of the people according to the measuring stick of the Law Word of God - he limits the judgement to actions where victims are involved.

After last week's message, I received an email from Michael with some thoughts about what I had preached. He made some great points and I'd like to share them with you. I'd offer them as a second witness to what I was saying. Michael wrote:

First off, I wondered if whether this message was spawned by some of what may have gone on (or was talked about) in the conference? Like the question of whether or when to "stone each other" for said infractions of the Law... We talked before about this I know (especially regarding the Sabbath), but was that an issue you heard there? Because you are absolutely right that if we can't get that figured out we're just as much adrift as the rest of the world—without knowledge.

I thought before that we cannot legislate matters of the heart or conscience—even if it WAS done in the Old Covenant. We don't have the temple or the temple rituals, or the priests, or even the genealogies to be able to follow such as what me and you would call "ceremonial law". (Remember one of those head-scratching "sundry laws" in Numbers 5...the 'adultery test'?) Anyway, I know there's always going to be dispute over exactly what was considered ceremonial, vs. moral, but for the most part, it's not really that hard. Now I think your "discovery" (if we want to call it that) regarding Romans 13:9 is highly relevant. We live in the New Covenant world and are in a different dispensation of law—that is obvious. But what does that mean here on the ground? I think too that this is exactly what Paul was addressing. From Chapter 12-14, he maps it out. We just need to understand it...and I think you've come as close as any.

Even in the OT, there were sins which only God would (or could) judge, because by nature they were "secret". (Don't have any examples off the top of my head, but they're there).. Well, a murder which went unsolved still had a murderer out there somewhere. God is aware of it and will deal. And even Paul says in the NT, "but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge" (Heb 13:4). Some sins are hidden from others. God sees, however. And some sins are sins for me but not for thee—for ex., "he that knoweth to do good, but doeth it not, to him it is sin"... Here our personal knowledge of a thing may separate two believers between sin or no sin. This is one reason, I think, why many

Christians really don't want to know the truth sometimes—because then they will be responsible for it. Know what I mean?

So there are things in the Kingdom which just cannot be prosecuted. That I think is established. Just what are they is the question... Now if the first 4 Commandments (and their respective statutes—case law) are towards God, and the second six are towards our neighbor, it stands to reason it is those 6 which would be “prosecutable”. As there is a mortal (earthy) victim. (Btw, I'm not certain that 4/6 breakdown is exactly right, I'm just going with the convention for sake of discussion). Well, ok, if the 5th Commandment is ALSO towards God, then we have an even 5 and 5 which would make more sense for the two tablets. Maybe not honoring one's parents is not honoring God primarily and it is first and foremost a sin towards Him. While it's true that cursing one's parents does harm them, I think it's fair to say that any actual, physical or financial harm that is done to one's parents is also covered in all the last 4 Commandments as well—along with their required judgements. So there might be an argument to be made there. Moreover, despising one's parents in your heart is more often what occurs, and it is this inward sin which cannot be outwardly prosecuted. No matter, God has a remedy for that too:

The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

No stones or stoners necessary.

So there's a case of God reserving judgment of someone for Himself. Another example is the young (children) who mocked Elisha in Bethel and God sent a bear to devour 42 of them. Yikes. Might not be a specific command against mocking a prophet, but I wouldn't do it if I were smart. Especially if there are bears around. End quote.

Thank you for that email, Michael. There's great insight there.

When I wrote back to him, I told him I knew of several cases off the top of my head where hidden sins were dealt with swiftly God - one was the case of Achan in Joshua 7 and Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts.

When we got into chapter 14 and Paul was, in my opinion, continuing his argument about quote “prosecutable offenses” in God ordained Government, in respect to days and food, in verse 4, Paul says - and I believe this is very clear:

[4] Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

And this is in direct regard towards eating meat or not eating meat. And, I guess I was clear last week, because no one asked - but Paul is talking about clean meat here. Unclean meat according to the Laws of God - is not to be eaten. The discussion is about

food - meat - meat that can be eaten according to the Laws of God. There are folks out there who teach today - that God commands vegetarianism. This is what is covered in Romans 14. God does neither - He neither commands vegetarianism - nor forbids eating clean meat. It's not to be a matter of judgement. That's what Paul is saying. Where is the victim if a man believes he should only eat herbs? Where is the victim if a man believes he should only eat clean meat? There is no victim - you don't judge those matters - there is no matter to judge.

Then, the same thing is discussed regarding days. One man esteemeth one day, another man esteemeth another day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Then verse 10.

[10] But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Paul is saying these are not matters of judgement. These issues are not allowed in the Government of God. Romans 12-14 is the Government of God. It's as I have been asked several times since the Conference - it's the nuts and bolts.

For lack of a better word, "prosecutable offenses" in the Ekklesia are adultery, murder, theft, bearing false witness, coveting - the other issues are not to be judged.

Does this mean we should not have discussion for the sake of unity? Of course not. Well, maybe I should rethink that. I know that in my own life, where I have disagreements with the brethren concerning some of those issues, I've never thought for one second that I should punch someone in the mouth because they don't agree with me - but I'll tell you this - I've sure seen other times in my life where men disagreed on issues exceeding the scope of Romans 13:9 and I thought punches might get thrown.

And don't get me wrong on this either, there's by no means laws stretching to the moon and back in the Bible, but each of those five listed sins in Romans 13:9 have case Law and statutes that apply.

In closing, I want to say this. In regards to the office of ruler - or judge - or one who settles disputes according to the Laws of God - by focusing so much on that issue - I believe we can lose sight of the task that is before us today. And that is being the called out Christian community of believers.

Finding and joining ourselves with true believers - those who are seeking Ekklesia - those who want to turn their generation to the Kingdom of Christ - do we really think our first act of business is to set up rulers to solve disputes? I sure hope not. I'm not looking for Ekklesia, hoping for Ekklesia, longing for Ekklesia - thinking that the first act of business is how do we settle disputes. Is that what we've come to? Is that what we

have been conditioned to think in the lives we have all been in for so long? That as soon as we obey the command to Forsake not the Assembling of ourselves together - we need to come up with an arbiter to settle disputes? Brethren, that's a said commentary for us.

I think we need to really take a close look at Romans 12-14 - each of us in our own studies - and ask God to help us shake off the things that we have come to know and even accept as quote "government." The Government of God, the Kingdom of God for the commonwealth of Israel is so radically different from the little g governments of men.

Let's pray for understanding. Let's pray for unity of the believer. Let's pray for coming together in Ekklesia.

Yes, the model is there in Romans 12-14. It shows us how it is to be implemented. But I guess we are so conditioned in our lives today to see controversy everywhere, fighting, disputing, disharmony all around us - if we would focus on our King and His Commission to us - which first and foremost - Paul said it in Romans 13:8 and again in Romans 13:10

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

[10] Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

This admonition was clearly written during some of the most volatile times in the history of mankind. After Paul's admonition to love the brethren, he added

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

[12] The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

[13] Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

[14] But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Surely we can all see the principle here, how applicable it is for us today.

knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep:

Keep preaching. Keep posting. You know, I never was into Facebook. Ted kind of got me thinking about changing my mind on that thing. At the Conference he encouraged us to get in there and take dominion over Facebook. I think he's onto something there.

Keep on talking. Keep writing. Keep sharing. You may think you have no voice - but I'm telling you that any voice for truth - is better than no voice. The more you speak, the more courage you'll get. Keep preaching the present day reality of the Kingdom of Christ.