

The Biblical Convictions of a Citizen of Heaven On Earth

Romans 13

We are witnessing the most publicized, the most expensive, and perhaps what believers may one day look back at as a turning point election, in American history.

Yet we must always step back and look at each part of life from the perspective of God's Word.

The fact that we have any liberties to exercise our personal convictions and live as we do is such a gift from God.

There is no assurance that we always will have such freedoms. Most believers, for most of history have not had what we have enjoyed here in America and other parts of the world, for so long.

But as believers, when we face our opportunity to vote, we do so remembering that any time we vote it should be as a reflection of the convictions we have, based on God's Word.

This morning we need to consider the question: ***"What are the Biblical Convictions, of a Citizen of Heaven, on Earth?"***

If I were to apply the whole of Scriptures to answer that question, especially as it relates to the current climate in American society, I would say that the God of the Bible has clearly revealed His convictions in His Word:

- **GOD is Pro-Life**—God is absolutely opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia.
- **GOD is Pro-Marriage**—God is eternally opposed to Gay and Lesbian Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.
- **GOD is Pro-Justice**—God is constantly opposed to murder, violence, discrimination, prejudice, and any abuse of the weak, the poor, and the unborn; God is the One who invented and commanded capital punishment, and expects all societies to have a just legal system.
- **GOD is Pro-Work**—God is equally opposed to indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and every form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

So we begin this morning with:

Point One—

***Biblical Convictions start with the Bible*, Because we are Citizens of Heaven—Living on Earth**

Our starting place for Biblical Convictions is Romans 13.

As Paul sat to write perhaps the clearest words to frame the Biblical convictions of a Citizen of Heaven, living on earth—he was sitting in Corinth. Looking down across the city must have grieved his soul. Paul lived around gymnasiums filled with nude men who were wrestling, boxing, and sprinting.

In the distance, seeing the men and women going into the bath houses, brothels, and heading up the trail to the shrine prostitutes up on the acro-corinthus, must have even more grieved his Spirit filled heart. Just as it grieved the Lord He served.

Just a couple of days by ship from Corinth was the center of the Earth in Paul's day—Rome. Swarming with soldiers, citizens, slaves, and commercialism, Rome reigned over nearly the entire known world of Paul's day.

How were Christians to live in the world of the New Testament? Especially in the capitol city of Rome--rife with homosexuality, abortions, gambling, infanticide, slavery, oppression of the poor, egalitarianism, and every form of the occult?

Paul sits down to write to that very city where saints had to live, work, and vote.

He writes to them seven verses that summarize their responsibilities of citizenship on earth.

We often forget that the Roman World had much citizen involvement. There was a long history in Rome of elected bodies that variously guided, counseled, and at times legislated the Roman World. Although there was an Emperor who ruled, there was still much about daily life that was determined by a very advanced and regulated representative government. Some of the arenas of power during various eras of Roman life were: [1 The Centuriate Committee](#); [2 The Committee of the Tribal Peoples](#); [3 The Council of the People](#); [4 And the most enduring, known, and powerful – The Roman Senate](#).

So into this advanced and thriving world of nearly worldwide power—what were Paul's instructions? Look with me to Romans 13. This passage has long been regarded as the ultimate statement of the Biblical Responsibilities for a Christian and their relationship to whatever government they are under.

Stand, read Romans 13.1-7, and pray.

Believers are Good Citizens

Now for the shocker, Paul, the voice for God, writing God's Word down on paper for us the first of our Biblical responsibilities as citizens, he said **be subject** to the leader of your land in which you live, whenever it is in the future, where ever you live on the planet.

That was quite a sweeping Word from God Paul gives us. But even more shocking is to step back and look at the man whose shadow fell across Paul's world—it was Nero's.

Nero was a public sodomite who paraded his male slave Florus around in public as his wife. He was debased, depraved, defiled, and deliberately an outspoken advocate of the homosexual lifestyle. And Paul said to be subject to him? Yes, and he says the same to us whatever administration comes to wherever you live, whenever you live.

Does that mean fatalism, uninvolved and withdrawal from society? Not at all.

No one was more involved than Paul. He preached, prayed, wrote, and lived against sin in every form, at every level. As a citizen you can be sure he voted in any manner he was allowed because that is just the type of believer he was—INVOLVED. Paul was involved in his culture, in his country, and in the lives of all who would let him in. But he had no delusions that he could ever change society. His only hope was to change individuals one at a time.

Now turn with me to Ephesians 5:11. Paul most likely wrote this letter from Rome where he sat in prison. What does a citizen of Heaven do while being subject (even to the point of being in prison) to the powers that be? In Ephesians Paul adds the second element of our responsibility as believers—**expose sin**.

Believers Expose the Evil Around Them

So--the responsibility of a Biblical Christian is to **be subject** to government and to **expose evil**.

Of all people on earth we should have the most consistent, loving advice—**abstain from everything that is evil**. We should have the most compelling reason—**it doesn't please God**.

That is why we should engage our culture and point out that there are absolutes. Let me repeat again some current issues that touch upon our Biblical convictions, we will look at briefly this morning.

- **GOD is Pro-Life**—God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia.
- **GOD is Pro-Marriage**—God is opposed to Gay and Lesbian Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.
- **GOD is Pro-Justice**—God is opposed to murder, violence, discrimination, prejudice, and any abuse of the weak, the poor, and the unborn; God is the One who invented and commanded capital punishment, and expects all societies to have a just legal system.
- **GOD is Pro-Work**—God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and every form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

But what if we do not see the culture heading the right way as is the case even this morning? That takes us to our second point—

Point Two—

Biblical Convictions start with the Bible, ***Because we are Citizens of Heaven***—Living on Earth

The clearest word for us as we face on election day in the USA, is when God's Word speaks to us.

- **This world is only my temporary home.** Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*
- **God rules over every part of this world.** Daniel 2:20-22 *Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; **He removes kings and raises up kings**; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him.*
- **God selects the rulers of this world.** Daniel 4:17, 25, 32, 34-35-35: *'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the **Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.**' 25 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, **till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.** 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the **Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.**" 34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and*

praised and honored Him who lives forever: **For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.** 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. **No one can restrain His hand** Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

- **God allows the rulers of this world to continue in power.** Daniel 5:18-23 O king, **the Most High God gave** Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19 And **because of the majesty that He gave him**, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, **till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.** 22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.
- **God gives them any temporary success rulers may have for a purpose within His plan.** Psalm 75:6-7 **For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.**
- **God picks the rulers by His standards.** Jeremiah 27:5, 8 'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, **and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me.** 8 And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the Lord, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.
- **God allows rulers to do what is perceived by us as evil (crucifying Jesus) to accomplish the larger purposes of God (the redemption of sinners).** John 19:11 Jesus answered, "**You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."
- **God tells us our primary responsibility is to PRAY, that is how we influence the outcome of any current political situation.** 1 Timothy 2:1-3 *Therefore I*

exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, **2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.** **3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,**

- **God tells us the outcome in advance.** Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, **and the ruler over the kings of the earth.** To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

Point Three—

Biblical Convictions start with the Bible, because we are Citizens of Heaven—**Living on Earth**

How do we live out those Biblical Convictions about God's revelation of what is right and wrong? How do we reconcile living on earth with all this evil and all of the sin that surrounds us? To answer that let me just address three areas of current controversy. There are countless other areas I could address from the Scriptures, but this morning let me limit this to just these three:

Remember the responsibility we have to expose evil? Here is how we do so, using God's Word!

Open with me to Ephesians 5:11 *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them"*.

Paul tells us that we have a personal responsibility to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"*. That means 'avoid, stay away from, have no contact with' evil. But that doesn't mean isolation, it means a personal commitment to consecration. But the verse goes on to say that we have a public responsibility, one that we often have forgotten—we are to expose evil.

The Greek word 'reprove or expose' means to point out in a public way those things that are in opposition to God's Word. Here is the dictionary definitions of **elengcho**: "to convict, refute, confute; generally with a suggestion of shame of the person convicted; by conviction to bring to the light, to expose; to admonish, reprove, to call to account, show one his fault, demand an explanation."¹

So how should we respond to abortion since **GOD is Pro-Life**—God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception. All human life is His personal act of power as the God of this Universe allowing another human in His image to be conceived.

We should be Exposing

¹ *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

The Dark World of Abortion

*"Abortion is one of the darkest works of the human race – **it is child sacrifice.** And the only way it can survive is for darkness to survive. Wherever the light of truth and love comes, darkness flies away. Therefore it is one of the great callings of the followers of Jesus to let their light shine in both ways: to live a holy life and to expose darkness. The aim is partly negative: reveal the error hidden in the darkness, but mainly positive: to bring people to love the light and be made light in the Lord Jesus."²*

So what do we, as Christ's children, need to expose in our world as His salt and His light to those around us?

We need to expose the World to Christ's Powerful Gospel Hope

To anyone who has had one or more than one abortion, here or somewhere else—Christ's words are for you. If 43% of all women in America have a child they are carrying killed by abortion, then doubtlessly some here this morning have felt that horror to their soul. If you know the pain and guilt of being a murderer of your very own child, listen to these:

"great climactic words of the apostle Paul, heralded to sinners in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13:38-39: "Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man [Jesus Christ] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and in him everyone who believes is justified from everything from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses" (my translation).

"There is forgiveness – all sins wiped away, even abortion, and there is justification, the declaration of righteousness, over against every kind of sin you have ever done. How can this be? The life and death of Jesus Christ, God's Son, pardons all debts and provides all righteousness for everyone who believes. Those who have been forgiven much, Jesus said, will love much (Luke 7:47). Oh, how sweetly the post-aborted women and men in this church should love Jesus Christ!"³

Secondly, not only is GOD is Pro-Life—and opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception; God is also Pro-Marriage. God is opposed to Gay Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.

Remember the responsibility we have to expose evil? Here is how we do so, using God's Word!

² John Piper in <http://www.desiringgod.org/library/sermons/92/012692.html>

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Exposing the Grave Errors of Homosexuality

Finally, GOD is Pro-Work—God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and every form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

Remember the responsibility we have to expose evil? Here is how we do so, using God's Word!

Exposing the Grave Errors of American Gambling

We have become a nation selling hope for money from people who can not afford to buy it but are offered hope that is unreal, impossible, and destructive. Lotteries like drug addiction, and drunkenness offer what only God can give freely!

So, as believers, when we face our opportunity to vote, we do so remembering that any time we vote it should be as a reflection of the convictions we have, based on God's Word.

This morning we have considered the question: ***"What are the Biblical Convictions, of a Citizen of Heaven, on Earth?"***

We have applied the Scriptures to answer that question, especially as it relates to the current climate in American society, I would say that the God of the Bible has clearly revealed His convictions in His Word:

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- **GOD is Pro-Work**—God is equally opposed to indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and every form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

And those should be our convictions we hold as we expose sin and evil in our society, world, and culture around us.