

Reviling Authorities Joseph Herrin (9-9-2001)

Can a person's behavior please the Father if in exercising the gift the Spirit has placed within them they violate authorities? Can the saint ignore the government of Yahweh in their zeal for truth and righteousness and be considered righteous themselves? Does the necessity of addressing or correcting an issue, no matter how serious, overrule the need to show reverence to the authorities God has established by His sovereign will?

Let me make these questions a little more specific. Is it proper for an adult child to offer a rebuke to their parents when they perceive their parents to be in sin, or when they are making unwise decisions? Is it ever appropriate for a wife to contend with her husband when she believes he is walking in sin or error? Should those under the care of a shepherd, elder, or minister of the church take it upon themselves to confront such a one when they are in error? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then in what manner should such correction be given?

I believe there is no greater failing in the church today than that of recognizing and submitting to the government established by Yahweh. The reasons for this failure are many. Some have supposed that the grace of God has absolved the saints of needing to submit to the government of God. This is a tragic misunderstanding and many have made a shipwreck of their lives due to this deception. Others have distorted certain scriptures to support their desire to be free of the government of God and the government He has delegated to man. Others are just ignorant, never having been taught the truth.

Whatever the cause, the church is in danger of suffering great loss and incurring the wrath of God due to the failure to recognize Yahweh's government and to submit to it with the proper respect.

A key point that the church has failed to acknowledge is that the authority and government of God still stands even when those in positions of authority have acted evilly and have abused their position. David understood this truth. When King Saul was acting wickedly, David still understood that Saul was God's anointed and that Saul stood in a position of authority over the people. With this in mind, David refused to raise a hand against Saul.

I Samuel 26:7-11

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him.

8 Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time."

9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against [Yahweh's] anointed and be without guilt?"

10 David also said, "As Yahweh lives, surely Yahweh will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish.

11 "Yahweh forbid that I should stretch out my hand against Yahweh's anointed..."

Saul was clearly abusing his authority and walking in great sin. Saul had even destroyed a whole city of priests. Saul was seeking to kill David because of jealousy, yet David never said, "Saul has abused his authority. He is therefore unfit to rule. I will acknowledge his authority no more." No! David knew that Saul was still Yahweh's anointed and that as Yahweh raised Saul up, He could equally bring him down. David remained respectful of the authority of this wicked king.

It may be astonishing to some, but the saints are not even to revile Satan. Like Saul, Satan was given great authority by Yahweh. Even though Satan has transgressed and set himself to be an enemy of God, until the Father performs all of His judgment against this wicked ruler, mankind is not to revile or to act unbecomingly towards him.

You may ask, "How can one act unbecomingly towards Satan?" David could have acted unbecomingly towards Saul. David could have reviled Saul and have begun to cast insults at him. David could have spoken evil things of Saul in the ears of others. David could have sought to overthrow Saul's authority through his own activities of subversion and rebellion.

On another occasion when Saul's life was within the grasp of David, David's men urged him to strike Saul and kill him. David refused, merely cutting off the hem of Saul's garment, but even this action against Saul caused David to be smitten in his heart for lifting a finger against Saul.

I Samuel 24:1-12

1 Now it came about when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi."

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

3 And he came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave.

4 And the men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which [Yahweh] said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly.

5 And it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe

6 So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of Yahweh that I should do this thing to my lord, Yahweh's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is Yahweh's anointed."

7 And David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.

8 Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself.

9 And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'?"

10 "Behold, this day your eyes have seen that Yahweh had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is Yahweh's anointed.'

11 "Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it.

12 "May Yahweh judge between you and me, and may Yahweh avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you.

What an understanding David had of the government of God! He knew that no matter how wicked the ruler had become, it was the duty of every servant of God to show proper honor and respect toward that ruler. David said, "My hand shall not be against you." David remained faithful to this statement, and Yahweh did judge between David and Saul. How badly the saints need to gain

this same understanding today.

But what of Satan? Is he not an authority that was anointed of God? Do not the scriptures describe him as a ruler? Where did his authority come from? We are told in Romans chapter 13 that ALL authority comes from God. There are many scriptures that describe Satan as a ruler.

Ezekiel 28:14-15

14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you."

Daniel 10:12-13

12 Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.

13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia."

Ephesians 2:1-2

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 3:8-10

8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things;

10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Yes, even the fallen angels occupy positions of authority in the heavenly realms and until they receive their judgment at the hands of God men are not to revile them, even as David did not revile King Saul. Yes, we are told that Satan has already been judged (John 16:11). But Saul had already been judged

when David refused to lift a hand against him. The prophet Samuel had already pronounced God's judgment on Saul and had told him that the kingdom had been torn from him and given to his neighbor who was more worthy than he (I Samuel 15:28).

Is this not the position that Satan is in today? Judgment has been pronounced against him, but it has not yet been fully carried out. David refused to revile Saul or act unbecomingly toward him, and the saints are not to do so towards those angelic majesties that have forsaken their first estate and have embarked on a course of evil. Their judgment has been pronounced and Yahweh will carry it out.

I am sure that this seems like an extreme concept to many, since the church knows so little about God's government, and our proper response to this government. But we are not left without a witness concerning these matters. In the New Testament there were those saints who were speaking reviling things against Satan and other fallen rulers, and they were rebuked for doing so.

II Peter 2:1-12

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment...

9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed...

Jude 1:6-10

6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "Yahweh rebuke you."

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

Is there any doubt what these passages speak of? There were men in the church who were making reviling judgments against fallen angels. Peter states that "angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them." There are holy angels that far exceed men in might and power, yet these holy angels do not make reviling judgments against the fallen hosts of heaven.

Jude gives us further understanding by giving a specific example where the great angelic prince Michael was contending with Satan for the body of Moses. Michael did not berate Satan, nor cast insults at him. He simply said, "Yahweh rebuke you."

How often in churches today do we hear men and women speaking in a reviling manner toward angelic majesties (yes, angelic majesties is what the scriptures call Satan and his fallen host)? How often do prophets and preachers refer to Satan as "an imp," "a worm," "old slough-foot," or some other deprecating title? How often do they go to cast out some demon and resort to insulting and name calling in addressing the one to whom they speak?

Both Peter and Jude conclude that such men are "unreasoning animals" and "unreasoning beasts." Does it seem strange that these apostles should reproach Christians for speaking in a reviling manner towards the one who is the enemy of God? Peter and Jude recognized that it is Yahweh who has

created all beings and given them authority, and it is Yahweh who must judge all of His creation.

Colossians 1:16

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Can there be any greater enemy of God and of the saint than Satan? If we are forbidden to act unbecomingly toward Satan, then does it not follow that man should not act unbecomingly toward other men who are created in the image of God? Man is to in all aspects recognize the government of Yahweh and to show proper respect to those Yahweh has granted authority. The errors or sins of men and women to whom Yahweh has delegated His authority make no difference. The government of God is not to be dishonored by violating authorities.

Among mankind Yahweh has established His government and the saint of God should seek to understand this government that he or she might show respect toward it. What government has God established?

The family is the most basic form of God's government. We are given these insights into the family government.

Ephesians 5:23-24

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

Ephesians 6:1-3

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),

3 that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

I Peter 3:1-6

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

- 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
- 3 And let not your adornment be merely external-- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;
- 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.
- 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands.
- 6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

These are but three New Testament witnesses. There are many more, as well as much instruction in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21

- 18 "If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them,
- 19 then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town.
- 20 "And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.'
- 21 "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear of it and fear."

In these passages we can see that it was a very important matter before Yahweh for people to show proper reverence for the government established in the family. I have seen many grievous examples of saints disregarding the government of God and showing dishonor towards those they were told to honor. A child is to show honor and respect to their parents as long as they live.

Proverbs 23:22

Listen (shama) to your father who begot you, and do not despise (buwz) your mother when she is old.

The word for listen in this verse is Strong's 8085 shama` (shaw-mah'), which means to hear intelligently. The word for despise is Strong's 936 buwz (booz), and it means to disrespect. This verse could accurately be rendered in this manner:

Proverbs 23:22

Hear intelligently your father who begot you, and do not disrespect your mother when she is old.

The heart of this scripture is that honor is to be accorded those who have held governmental positions in our life. Although the young child is called to strictly obey their parents, even an adult child never grows beyond the point where he should fail to show proper honor to a parent. This applies to godly as well as ungodly parents. It is possible to have a parent that behaves as wickedly as King Saul did to David, but never is a child justified in acting unbecomingly to a parent.

David also knew what it was to be rejected by his parents. Psalms 27:10 tells us, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but Yahweh will take me up, He will adopt me as His own son" (Amplified Bible). Even though David's parents rejected him, and they probably blamed him for being driven from their inheritance and having to flee from Saul when Saul was incensed toward David, yet David sought to honor his parents and to provide for them.

I Samuel 22:3-4

3 And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me."

4 Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

In my own life I have at times experienced rejection and false judgment from my parents. On one occasion in particular I responded to an accusation of my mother in a way that I later felt was too harsh. Like David, when his heart was smitten for cutting the hem of Saul's garment, my heart was smitten and I felt that I needed to retract my words and offer an apology. This I did. Since then I have become even more sensitive to the need to not act unbecomingly toward my parents.

My parents do not understand the things I teach, and they have made it known that they do not feel I am called or qualified to be a minister, but this has absolutely no bearing upon the matter of showing respect for them. Whether an authority is correct, or incorrect, proper honor is still to be demonstrated.

In the church this is little understood. I have witnessed a wife of a pastor publicly criticize and correct her mother in a very disrespectful manner. I have witnessed this same woman come to a meeting of church ministers and publicly rebuke and correct the male ministers of the body. A Christian writer and minister once told me that he was driving down the Interstate one day with his family and his father was in the car. His father made a critical remark and the man responded by openly criticizing and correcting his father, and then he stopped the car and made his father get out. Since then he has had nothing to do with his father.

Such things should not take place. It is not seemly, nor appropriate for a child to offer a harsh rebuke to a parent. Even if a person is not a parent, if they are older they should be treated with deference and respect. Paul gave Timothy instructions for such occasions.

I Timothy 5:1-2

1 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers,
2 the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Never is it appropriate to speak in an unbecoming or unattractive manner to those who are in positions that demand honor. Demonstrating proper honor has nothing to do with the behavior of the person being addressed. They may be acting very dishonorably themselves, but honor must be shown to them.

There are many in the body who have discernment and even prophetic giftings. Never let such an one think that because they have discerned truth or obtained knowledge about another that they can speak to them with no consideration for the person's status. An adult child should not speak roughly to a parent, nor a young man or woman speak harshly to an older adult. A wife should not berate her husband. Let everything be done with the proper honor and respect.

This is a most serious matter in God's sight. God will not honor those who act unbecomingly in such matters. Solomon's son Rehoboam lost the rulership of 10 of the tribes of Israel because he spoke harshly to the older men who came to him. Rather than appealing to them, he offended them by not showing the honor that was due.

I Kings 12:6-14

6 And King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer this people?"

7 Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, will serve them, grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

8 But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.

9 So he said to them, "What counsel do you give that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?"

10 And the young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!' But you shall speak to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins!

11 'Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'"

12 Then Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, "Return to me on the third day."

13 And the king answered the people harshly, for he forsook the advice of the elders which they had given him,

14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."

Rehoboam failed in two points. He did not listen intelligently to the advice of the older men, and he spoke harshly to the people. His dishonorable actions did not result in good fruit. Neither will good fruit be born from similar actions today.

It is the path of humility to choose to show honor to those to whom honor is due. For a wife to remain silent and respectful when her husband is acting like a fool takes tremendous humility and trust in God. For an adult child to speak respectfully to parents, even when the parents might have misjudged them, or they might be making errors in judgment, takes humility. For a person who is gifted with insight to show restraint in their communication with others, speaking in a manner that demonstrates reverence to those who are older or to whom honor is due, requires humility and patience.

It is not enough to merely speak truth. I have had people come to me and share how they had spoken some truth to another in a blunt and even harsh manner, and their attitude has been, "I sure gave it to them, didn't I?" Such behavior does not warrant praise, for it is shameful.

I could go on to share about the government God has established in church and in civil governments. The principle is always the same. This is revealed in the following verses.

I Timothy 5:19

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders, and submit to them for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Romans 13:7

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.

Titus 2:2-8

2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

4 that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;

7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified,

8 sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

The scriptures are full of admonitions about how we are to talk to one another. It is never sufficient to simply speak truth. We are to speak the truth in love, and we are to not violate the authorities the Father has established. Those who

do so will bring condemnation on themselves even while they are claiming to be doing the Father's will.

I have observed in Christianity today that there is little regard to honoring those to whom honor is due. If it is such a serious thing that men should not even revile fallen angelic majesties, then how much more should we be careful to address all those we encounter with the grace and reverence due to them? If David would not lift a finger against King Saul, then is it right for adult saints to speak harshly to their elderly parents? Is it appropriate for a child to correct a mother or father?

In Isaiah a curse is spoken against the people of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 3:4-5

4 And I will make mere lads their princes and capricious children will rule over them,

5 And the people will be oppressed, each one by another, and each one by his neighbor; the youth will storm against the elder, and the inferior against the honorable.

It is an unsightly thing in Yahweh's sight for the young and immature to rule over the elderly. It is a thing to be cursed for the young to storm against the elderly.

In other articles by this writer it has been shown that the principle of God is that those under authority are not to correct those in authority over them. To do so leads to rebellion. The principle of the kingdom is that authority must be corrected from above, not below. This is demonstrated in Peter's admonition to the wife who has a disobedient husband. If she will remain silent and respectful, looking to God to correct the error of her husband, He will do so. If she takes matters into her own hands and seeks to confront the husband with his error and to agitate and press for change, then Yahweh will delay in correcting the husband, for rebellion is in the house.

It is a much more serious matter with God to rebel than it is to sin in some matter of trespass. Rebellion is a matter of principle and it touches the lives of all involved in profoundly negative ways. It is possible to be zealous for the truth and to speak words of correction to an individual and to do so in a manner that violates the authority of God's government. This latter grievance is likely more serious than the error or sin that was being addressed.

May Yahweh open the eyes of His saints to perceive the truth of these words.