

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

EXPOSED

PT. III

May 20, 2012



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. For all Rock Church events, please visit <http://www.sdrock.com/events/>.
2. Let your friends know that they can always live stream the Rock Church Sunday worship experience by visiting <http://www.sdrock.com/live/>.
3. Join other Rock Church small groups in serving San Diego by volunteering for the San Diego Food Bank in the month of May. Go to www.sdrock.com/fooddrive for available volunteer times. You can also RSVP at druiz@sandiegofoodbank.org. Look forward to seeing you there!
4. Our monthly New Leader Orientation is this Sunday May 26th in room 252 from 2-4. If you know somebody in your group that is ready to step up to the challenge of leading their own small group please have them fill out the application and RSVP for the Orientation at <http://www.sdrock.com/smallgroups/lead/>.

MEMORY VERSE

“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.’” (John 18:36 ESV)

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” (Romans 13:1 ESV)

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Use one or more of the following opening discussion starters)

1. How passionate are you about politics? Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (1 not very passionate, 10 most passionate). Explain why you rate yourself that way.
2. Do you believe that political affiliations should play a major role in the life of a Christian? Explain why or why not.



Sermon Review and Introduction

In a democratic society avoiding politics is almost impossible. At one point or another we have all felt passionate about a specific political initiatives and candidates. This isn't a Christian or non-Christian issue, it is the benefit we get as American citizens. Just like any good and beneficial thing, we can overstep our boundaries. But where are the boundaries for the Christian? How passionate is too passionate?

Rather than focus on one select passage, we want to examine the topic of the political world we live in and try to examine it biblically. This can be tricky because democracy as we know it today did not exist in the Bible. So we have to be careful to not create bias theologies while at the same time paying attention to what the Bible does describe our role in a political atmosphere should look like. In order to do this we will look at one Old Testament text and one New Testament text and then review it accordingly.

Let's explore this now...

1. If necessary briefly review the lesson plan from Sunday and any extra notes you may have taken with the group.

A judgmental spirit exposes that we:

Deny the reality of a **Superior** kingdom.

Suffer from citizenship **confusion**.

Overestimate the **goodness** of man.

Add'l Notes:

2. Old Testament (Judges 2): Examine the context of Judges together as a group. A few key things to consider before approaching this lesson:
 - The term "judge" is used as a general designation for the leaders of Israel (cf. 2:16-19).
 - The verb šāpaṭ, "to judge" (NIV, "to lead") is used to describe the activity of four of the primary judges (Othniel [3:10], Deborah [4:4], Jephthah [12:7], and Samson [15:20; 16:31]) and five of the secondary judges (Tola [10:2], Jair [10:3], Ibzan [12:8, 9], Elon [12:11], and Abdon [12:13, 14]).¹
 - The Lord raises up the judges for three important reasons:

Daniel Isaac Block, vol. 6, *Judges, Ruth*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 22.



- I. The source of the judges' authority and power was Yahweh (God).
 - II. The purpose of their appointment was not judicial but soteriological (for the purpose of their salvation).
 - III. These individuals were instruments of deliverance from their enemies, not to settle internal disputes.
- The beginning of the book of Judges starts immediately after Israel enters the long awaited Promised Land.
 - Judges explains to us that the nation was in crisis and in fact they were ready to destroy themselves.
 - In view of Israel's political debacle in the premonarchic era, the narrator's negative evaluation of Israelite society in the absence of kingship, and the circumstances of the demand for a king in 1 Samuel 8, it is not surprising that many scholars, if not most, have understood the Book of Judges as an apology for the monarchy.²
 - In 2:1-5 Israel finally enters the Promised Land but immediately falls into sin by worshipping the false gods of the land and disobeying. They quickly recognize their sin and pursue repentance.
 - In 2:6-10 Joshua, the successor of Moses, dies and is buried. After this, the new generation that never knew the Lord were raised up and departed from Yahweh.
 - In 2:11-15 Israel has completely rejected Yahweh. Because of this God's hand was against them as he warned them.
 - In 2:16-23 the Lord raises up the judges to lead and deliver them. But the people constantly ignored them and continued whoring after other gods. They would start to obey Yahweh, but after the judge died they would turn away from him and turn back to other gods.

There is much more we could elaborate on with the book of Judges to give us greater context and background, but for the sake of our study we can see a very large overarching theme: deliverance. The judge's rule was very specific and under the jurisdiction of Yahweh.

3. Describe the role of the judge as instituted by God? How did the people respond?
4. Review 2:16-23 again. After being led into the Promised Land and the guarantee of protection by Yahweh, why was there constant rebellion and disobedience? Why were all the people still chasing other gods instead of the one true god?
Note: Remember to look at the key purpose for the judge to begin with. Also, do not neglect the perspective of God for his people. This will help put the application in proper perspective.
5. New Testament (Romans 13:1-7): Now examine the context of Romans together as a group. A few key things to consider before approaching this lesson:
 - Romans is written to both Jewish and Gentile citizens living in Rome.
 - Romans could be seen as a biblical theology to understand our original sinful nature then leading us into the repentance available through Christ.
 - Chapter 12 explains the "marks of a true Christian." Now chapter 13 continues this same thought.
 - To "be subject to the governing authorities" is an imperative that means this is a command not an option. They are in control because God placed them in control.
 - The "governing authorities" at this time were the Roman Empire. This would include the governor of the state, but also the Caesar and all other governing officials. Most Jewish Christians were hostile to any pagan system so this is especially pertinent to them. Paul saw this as a way of communicating the gospel to those that rule over them.
 - 13:7 has striking resemblance to Jesus' words in Mark 12:27, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

Daniel Isaac Block, vol. 6, *Judges, Ruth*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 37.



- Look at these other passages that show us our response to “governing authorities”: 1 Tim. 2:1-3; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; cf. Prov. 8:15; Jer. 29:7; Dan. 2:21, 37-38.

6. Is Paul concerned with a political alliance or a living representation to the gospel?
7. List all of the reasons Paul gives for living under submission to the authorities. What are the positives for living submissively and what are the negatives for not living submissively?

Application

Let’s tie these two accounts of political leadership in the Bible to our current political situation.

1. How do you feel about the view of political leadership in the Bible? Does it conflict with your view of politics in 21st century America? Explain.
2. Do you view living as a representative of the gospel much more important than representing a political agenda? Or do you feel they go hand in hand? Explain using the study and context notes provided to state your position.
3. If you were living in either the Old Testament or New Testament period, how do you think you would react to the forceful submission of the political authorities? Would your view change from what it is today? Explain.
4. Read 1 Tim. 2:1-3. How does Paul tell Timothy to treat the ruling authorities in Ephesus? Are you doing the same thing? Why or why not?

Homework

1. Do you have a divisive heart about politics and how it relates to Christianity? Are there some changes do you need to make? Study the supplemental passages listed in this study and pray that the Lord would reveal a proper approach.
2. Who is your allegiance to, a politician or Jesus? Of course, we would all say Jesus, but does your lifestyle and passions reflect that? Take time to examine your passions for each and way the outcome.
3. Pray for **all** politicians, good or bad, it is your duty as a follower of Christ!

