

## Pray For Oppressive Rulers

### Commentary for January 1, 2022 — Even They Are the Basest of Men, Daniel 4:17

We are encouraged by the apostle Paul to pray for our rulers, all of them, even if they oppress us and do evil to us, to others, and to the nation. Paul wrote to Timothy:

**“I exhort therefore, that, first of all,**

[1] **supplications** [petitions],

[2] **prayers,**

[3] **intercessions** [pleadings], **and**

[4] **giving of thanks,**

**be made** [to God] **for all men;** [also] **FOR KINGS, and FOR ALL that are in authority;**

[Why do so?] **that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.**”

• *1 Timothy 2:1–2, King James Version*

Yes, we should pray to God for, and on behalf of, **“kings”** and **“all ... in authority”** over us.<sup>1</sup> Then Paul answers another important question of why we should pray for all men, including oppressive rulers:

**“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who WILL have all men** [including oppressive rulers] **to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**”

• *1 Timothy 2:3–4*

Even the worst and most oppressive of rulers in authority over us will be saved. God wills it to be so. It is not a **wish** on God’s part for all men to be saved. It is not a **whim** for God for all to be saved. If God wills for ALL to be saved (as He wills for you, me, and all believers) — it is inevitable that salvation will occur to all men, including the worst oppressive rulers.

### **Examining the Four Things We Should Pray For**

These four things should be included in **our prayers to God** to influence our rulers, and if necessary, follow up with personal appeals to those rulers.

[1] **“Supplications,”** may be better understood if we use a synonym, for us to make “petitions” to God, both on behalf of the ruler, but also to ask God to turn those in authority from a mistaken or an evil decision they have made.

[2] **“Prayers,”** is straightforward, but once again our prayers to God should be for the rulers and for them to make correct and just decisions.

<sup>1</sup> In the United States the definition of who are **“in authority”** over us is nuanced. By the way, we are not subject to **“principalities and powers”** in the spiritual realm, nor are we subject to Satan. Our allegiance is only to God the Father and Christ Jesus. Only to them do we bow (Philippians 2:9–11).

[3] **"Intercessions,"** are appeals that God intervene on behalf of ourselves or others.

[4] **"Giving of thanks,"** should be made to God on behalf of those in authority. This is difficult if they are extremely unjust, harmful, or their decisions are dangerous or even deadly. Nevertheless, we are still to pray to God for them, as well as ask God to rescue us or others from unjust and even evil authorities.

While may not want to pray for those who oppress us, Paul says do so. This is in line with what Jesus told the people (Matthew 5:44–48 and expanded in Luke 6:27–36).

## God's Will

Remember, God arranges all things to ultimately be in accord with **"the counsel"** of His will. This is how God our Father operates. God:

**"works all things after the counsel of HIS OWN will** [and no one else's will]:

[Why?] **That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.**

• **Ephesians 1:11–12**

God operates and works in this way for at least two reasons. He does so to benefit His created beings. For us that means humans from Adam who through Christ will become God our Father's dear children — all of which, and each individually — will become His fully mature children. Each will be like Christ, and each will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). As you read this next passage, note the repetition of the word **"NOW"** in Paul's epistle to the Romans:

**"Let every soul be subject to the superior authorities, for [ultimately] there is no authority except under God. **NOW** those which are [in authority], are set under God, so that he who is resisting an authority has withstood God's mandate. **NOW** those who have withstood will be getting judgment for themselves, for magistrates are not a fear to the good act, but to the evil. **NOW** you do not want to be fearing the authority [because you do evil]. **Be doing good, and you will be having applause from it. For it is God's servant for your good.****

**NOW if you should be doing evil, fear, for it [the authority] is not wearing the sword futilely. For it is God's servant, and avenger for indignation to him committing evil.**

**Wherefore it is a necessity [Why?] to be subject not only because of [suppressing one's] indignation, but because of [your] conscience also. For because of this you are settling [your] taxes also, for they are God's ministers, perpetuated [in office] for this very thing. Be rendering to all [such ministers] their dues,**

**to whom tax, [pay the] tax,                      to whom tribute, [pay the] tribute,  
to whom fear, [you should] fear,              to whom honor, [you should] honor."**

• **Romans 13:1–7, Concordant Literal New Testament**

Paul's statements to Timothy and to the Romans go well together. Basically, we are to pray for our rulers so God will cause them to fulfill their God-given responsibilities to do good, avenge evil (even using the sword against evils), so that believers will be left alone to "lead a quiet and peaceable life." Someday they too will be saved and know God.

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