

Must we RESPECT our leaders?

Or can we trash those in authority -- on social media?

December 2015

by Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

Summary:

We're coming into very dangerous times in the last days of this age. Those in leadership positions in the very last days are prophesied to do unspeakable things to God's children especially. Do we have to respect leaders no matter what? What about the president, our governor, congressmen, the police, teachers, bosses and others in authority? Are we allowed by scripture to be rude to them or say disrespectful things on Facebook about them? What if they're acting like criminally or dishonorably? What if we're being wrongfully sued or attacked – what recourse do we have as Christians or believers? Do those in authority first have to EARN our respect before God requires us to give them honor and respect? What does God's word say about all this?

Welcome once again, all you children of God Most High and believers in the risen Son of God, Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ).

OPENING PRAYER... (coming under you, Father, and your leadership, your government. You have ordained government and have much to say about it. Teach us your mind... your will and to be willing to submit to your will.)

This sermon will apply to all of us. We're either in leadership or under leadership, but very likely – both. I'm concerned that those who need this message the most will be the very ones not to listen to it carefully. I hope you will listen carefully. Tough times are coming and those times will evoke a response from some of us that may not always be godly.

I discussed on the audio how we can get so mad at the news on TV – and at the leaders causing the news. And this can lead to us despising those who govern us. We can end up being very tempted to be part of the race to see who can say the most disrespectful thing about our leaders; or who can call them the worst names. I see it happening all the time.

So I'm asking: how should we speak of, speak to, speak about our leaders, or our boss, our husband, our president, our police officers, and so on? Do we have to respect them if we find little respectable about them? Let's find out what Yahweh himself has to say about this – and it's very clear, very direct. I actually had some repenting to do as I prepared this message. I hope you'll give this topic serious thought.

Let me first state: I'm no fan of the present leadership we have. I'm not here to give a defense or attack on government, but I think if we are learning to be more and more like our Creator and to have *his* mind, we should look at this vital topic of how we speak of and interact with those in authority over us.

- **Facebook postings:** There are so many very disrespectful FB posts for the president or Congress. Certainly the politicians give us much fodder to feel that way.

I'm starting to see more and more ministers and friends and believers – crossing the line in what we're told by scripture. Using any of the social media for this kind of thing is like having a worldwide bull-horn!

- **Bumper stickers:** “Question authority”. Is that what the Word says?
- Even the traditional role of **Dad** as head of the house is under attack. Many, many wives are the de facto heads of houses – often because Dad is nowhere to be seen.
- The **police** are being mocked by a segment of the society. But then they complain when or if the “cops” don't show up real fast in a violent and sudden home invasion by criminals.
- **Teachers** are being threatened and totally disrespected in many universities and schools.
- **Bosses** at work are often maligned, ridiculed and are the butt of bad jokes in the lunch room.

Is this what the children of Yahweh should be involved in?

WHY do we need this message reminder? I know you'd rather hear a sermon on prophecy – and those are coming in the months ahead from this website – but FIRST, I think we must be reminded of how we must treat our leaders – especially with the horrors coming soon.

It's prophesied that God's people will bear the brunt of the painful horrors the coming “Beast” system will unleash. It will be very tempting to speak evil of this system and its leaders – if we don't capitulate and give in to that system. We need to know our role now, and be practicing right now how we should respond to the powerful earth-shaking leaders that will appear on the world scene perhaps within the next 10-15 years. Times will get much tougher just before the return of our King of Kings, his majesty the Son of God, Yeshua of Nazareth!! *You and I are going to be painfully tested severely before this is all over with. Scripture promises it. You will want to lash out against injustice, against wrongful imprisonment and much more – especially when it is done to you or your family! But we will have to react the way the Word teaches us!*

The closer we get to that point, the harder it is going to be to obey one of God's commands: “Don't speak disrespectfully of your leaders, but in fact – honor them”, no matter what country you're in right now.

What about Yeshua's own example?

Let's talk about this. **Believers who engage in disrespectful comments of leaders will justify their actions** by saying that Christ himself said some pretty bad things about the Pharisees of his day. Let's address this.

Many over the years have also said, “But what I'm saying **is all true**. So what can be wrong with that?” I ask: just because something is true about a leader, should we say it, if it's disrespectful?

- Back to Yeshua: do we find Yeshua (Jesus) ever saying anything bad about the known *sinner*s of his day – the tax collectors, the Roman soldiers, women of disrepute?
- Do you find Yeshua ever saying disrespectful things about any of the evil and violent political leaders of his day – the Caesars, Herod or Pilate? He called Herod “that fox” – sly and cunning, in other words, but that was the extent of it (Luke 13:32).
- Most of his own strong words were directed at religious people of his day – but not the regular folks and not the top leaders.) Nor do we find him saying harsh things against the civil government of his day.

Here are some examples of what Christ DID say about Pharisees, who were largely self-appointed religious leaders of the people. Some few of them became a part of the Sanhedrin, who had some limited power allowed by the Romans. Most of Yeshua’s comments to them can be found in Matthew 23, where we see his long list of attacks of the Pharisees’ hypocrisy. Yes, indeed, Yeshua was tough on them, and we’ll analyze that.

Matthew 23:3-4—to the Pharisees, self-appointed “more righteous than others” kind of people; Yeshua says they say but won’t do what they preach.

Verses 5-7-- they love to be seen for their good works and love big titles (hey pastors: we don’t need to be called “reverend” or “apostle” unless Christ put you as an apostle. See verses 8-10). We don’t need to have “chief seats” at the front row on padded chairs while old people and mothers with children struggle to find comfortable chairs.

v. 13 -16, 23, 25, 27, 29 – “Woe to your scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” – is repeated several times.

Matt 23:17- 19, 24 - “Fools and blind” guides -- is repeated several times.

Then he levels his strongest language at the end, calling them a bunch of snakes!

v. 33—“Serpents, brood of vipers!”

But let’s remember several things: he’s not saying these things about the civil government leaders, the police, the Roman soldiers, or fathers or other leaders. His comments are aimed at the self-appointed, self-righteous people who were constantly attacking his good works.

Now I have a question for you about this? Did Christ – the Son of God on earth, by whom everything was created, who was and is God and the coming Judge of all the world...Did Christ have a right to say what he wanted to say to the Pharisees?

Are YOU or I God on earth, like he was? Are you or I the coming King of kings? Are you or I the final and ultimate judge of the world? Are you and I his majesty, the Son of God?

So you see, to use his example about religious people – who weren’t even necessarily always leaders, though some were – to use his example in Matthew 23 to justify us calling our president or congressmen or other appointed and elected leaders by awful names, simply cannot be Biblically justified! It’s not a fair or level comparison!

And that applies to me as well. If and where I've said those things in the past, is wrong.

So no doubt you're seeing Facebook pages, Tweets and emails that lampoon our president and elected leaders. I'm so often so tempted to participate in that myself. I am certainly no fan of our present government. I did forward an email recently that listed the pro-Muslim statements our president has made, but with almost no commentary. I simply used his words. I didn't call him anything bad; I didn't even call him a Muslim. I just used his words. And I will not say things about his character or call him a liar or a con man as some would want me to do. You will understand why as we get into the scriptures more.

Why is this so important? Because GOD is clear about how he wants his children behaving in regard to the leaders HE has placed, or allowed to be over us.

Paul's Example

Paul lived a fine line. On one hand, he experienced terrifying beatings, scourgings, even stonings – and being left for dead. He faced a lion apparently (if not figuratively) in the coliseum of Ephesus, where I've also stood and tried to imagine what it must have been like. (2 Timothy 4:17).

But Paul was not timid to speak up when he had a right to do so. But when he crossed a line, he apologized and corrected himself. Here's an example!

Acts 23:1-5

Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, **you whitewashed wall!** For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?" [before a sentence is rendered – Deut 25:1-2]
4 And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"
5 **Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"**

But neither did Paul just take penalties without challenging them, if they were against the law. Christ did just lay down – because His time had come and he had to be the innocent sacrifice for the rest of us sinners. But Paul used his legal right of the LAW when the law was being broken. But he did so respectfully.

While addressing a Jewish mob he was attacked—"rescued" by the Romans from being torn apart – and then the Roman commander thought he would scourge/beat Paul to get to the truth of what was going on. But it was illegal to beat a Roman citizen before he had been tried and convicted in a court of law. Paul was a Roman citizen.

Acts 22:22-30

"And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" 23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, 24 the commander

ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" He said, "Yes." The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." *[He had probably bribed his way to citizenship.]* And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." 29 Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; *and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.*

[Roman commanders could themselves be scourged, jailed or killed for improperly treating Roman citizens.]

30 The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

The lesson: Yes, let's use the law when things are being done wrongfully against us. But if the "law" still decides we must be punished, then we have to submit to it with grace, courage, faith and honor.

Remember Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego? They submitted to being thrown into the fire. And countless thousands of our spiritual forefathers were crucified, thrown to the lions in the Roman Coliseum, burned at the stake, tortured and martyred – all for the name of his majesty, the Son of God.

What the WORD says about respecting our Leaders

1 Peter 2:13-19, especially verse 17

"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king (Nero?) as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men — 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 HONOR ALL. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. HONOR THE KING"

(This is said after we are to fear God, who gives these commands. The king was Nero. Discussed honoring Nero – and some of the vile things Nero did).

Romans 13:1-7

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. (repeat)

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is

God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for **he is God's minister**, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. **7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.**

Is there any ambiguity about those verses? Especially the first two.

When Israel rejected their leader Samuel, to be their judge – YAH said the nation had not rejected Samuel, but they had rejected God himself. What can we learn from that?

1 Samuel 8:1-8

“Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. **3 But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.**

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to YHVH. ***And YHVH said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them”.***

Samuel’s sons were not honorable men. But *still* – Yahweh says the men who rejected them actually were rejecting the One who allows our leaders to be in office. Imagine that!

So when you see these Facebook disrespectful postings about our leaders – how is it honoring those over us to say very rude, mean, degrading or disrespectful things about them – in public, on social media? I see very vile and rude statements plus name calling against the leaders God himself allowed to be there or even PUT there himself for his purposes (**Romans 13:1-2**). I see some postings calling our leaders “liars” or worse.

Children of God, this should not be. Instead, we should be reminding ourselves that we want nothing to do with that kind of approach. Let’s obey God on this. Let’s obey God. God says -- HONOR the king and our rulers. That is not ambiguous.

Exodus 22:28

“You shall not revile God, ***nor curse a ruler of your people.***”

These 2 concepts are put together because cursing the ruler of the people – placed there by God – was akin to reviling God himself. We have a choice. We either obey God on this matter, or we don't. Which will it be for you?

David’s EXAMPLE

We have David’s example when he was being wrongfully hunted down by Saul. David had the opportunity to kill Saul when the king actually came into the big cave at En Gedi to

relieve himself – but that happened to be where David and his men were hiding. David could have easily captured and killed him, but he did not. You can read the whole story in 1 Samuel 24. It is very educational to read this. David was guilt-stricken when he showed disrespect for cutting off part of Saul's robe... maybe it was the part showing the tassels. Often those tassels were made specially fine for royalty – and by cutting those off, it could be seen as a direct assault on Saul's position as king.

1 Samuel 24

Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)

4 Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which YHWH said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5 Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

6 And he said to his men, "YHWH forbid that I should do this thing to my master, YHWH's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of YHWH." 7 So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.

8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that YHWH delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is YHWH's anointed.'" 11 Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12 Let YHWH judge between you and me, and let YHWH avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14 After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? 15 Therefore let YHWH be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

16 So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17 Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18 And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when YHWH delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may YHWH reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 Therefore swear now to me by YHWH that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house."

22 So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.”

From David we hear no mean words, no name-calling, no listing of all of Saul’s many misdeeds and lies. No such thing. This is the example.

More scriptural teaching on this

Let’s understand there is no middle ground here. Let’s read a few more scriptures.

2 Peter 2:10-11

“...and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. **They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels**, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.”

Ecclesiastes 10:20

“Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich [who were often leaders], even in your bedroom...”

Jude 8-9

“Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, **reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. 9 Yet Michael the archangel**, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The LORD rebuke you!"

But there’s even more:

1 Timothy 2:1-4

“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, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Yes, Abba wants all people to be saved – even the rude, the harsh, the mean and the cruel. He wants to lead them as well, to repentance and salvation. So we are to actually even be giving thanks for them, it says.

When was the last time you prayed for President Obama. I know, I know... I don’t like his policies at all either. But the more we give thanks for our leaders, the more we pray for them and even have supplications for them, apparently the more likely God will bless us with a quiet and peaceable life. Please – be sure to pray for your leaders today.

But “supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving thanks for all people, for kings and all who are in authority” – and as we do, we are more likely to lead the fruit of that: a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence!

What did Yeshua teach? Yeshua said this to us: love, be kind, pray for – everyone. Everyone. There's a school of thought out there that somehow really believes we are to pray only for fellow believers. That's simply not true.

Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
44 ***But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*** 45 ***that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;***
[repeat] for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

We can read how Yeshua prayed for all sinners – and those who were spitting on him, slandered him, hurling insults at him and hitting him. Remember what he said on the cross? "Father, forgive them". There is no hint of him calling them out, or hurling insults back at them. And as you and I practice this, we too, shall be recognizable as different, as being real children of God.

Let's wrap up by a reminder of this:

God is the one who set up government. God the Father is head over all. The head of Christ is God the Father. They are not co-equal. The head of the wife is the husband, whose Head is Christ.

But you seldom hear that being preached anymore in this age of feminism. So let me let God's word tell us:

1 Corinthians 11:3

"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

The words for man and woman in that verse are the same Greek words for husband and wife.

Husbands are to be respected by their wife. No more name calling. No more rudeness against your head. But what do we see? We see ridicule of dad or of the husband, on TV and everywhere we look. We see rampant divorce. All this too is all part of this topic:

Our wife is to be honored, so that our prayers not be hindered. **1 Peter 3:1-7**

We husbands are the head – but we are to serve and give of ourselves to our wife – just as Christ did and does for HIS wife. **Ephesians 5:21-31**

Respecting government over us at all levels needs to be restored and practiced in the lives of the children of God.

Children are to obey and honor your fathers and mothers, for this is the first commandment with promise – that they may live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:1)

And fathers, Ephesians 6:2-4 goes on to say that we must not take advantage of our position. We must not anger and frustrate our children. Which father has never done that? I've had to repent of some of that myself. But again, restoring respect for leaders must start with you and me – and then in the home – and then in our schools.

Ephesians 6:1-4

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

When was the last time you heard these concepts preached in your church about having profound respect and honor for our bosses, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, elected officials, police or teachers.

Let it be known that God's children are civil, polite, respectful, humble, obedient and – honoring – and -- obedient to all these scriptures I've read today too.

Do leaders first have to EARN our respect?

There's a teaching out there that honor and respect must first be earned, or else we have no need to be respectful. That *sounds* right, but it's not what scripture says. God's word says even if the one over us is not *earning* respect but is still over us – we are to honor , pray for, and respect them anyway.

Fathers and mothers are to be respected – simply because they are our father and mother. The Bible does not say, "IF your dad is a good dad, than honor him". It simply says, cleanly and simply – "Honor your father and mother". No caveats. It doesn't say you can honor your dad - - but not if he's in jail, or a drunk. Scripture keeps it simple: Honor your father and mother. No "if this" or if that. In very critical cases of danger to you or your children you may have to honor from a distance, but there should always be an attitude of honoring.

All the other verses I read to you do not give caveats either. And in terms of workers honoring their bosses (or "masters"), it says even to honor those who are abusive!

1 Peter 2:18-20

"Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God."

In Ephesians 6:5-9 we're told to work for our boss as if he or she was Christ himself – from the heart, "as to the Lord and not to men". Ephesians 6:7 and also Colossians 3:22-25, which again reminds us that our true Master is Christ, and He is seeing how we treat those HE has put over us – whether it is our parents, our husband, our boss, our president, the police, the teacher ... whoever it is.

I hope this is still being preached where you worship. Well, you've heard it from God's word.

When the really rough times begin here at home – as it truly has in parts of the Middle East and elsewhere – we will be so tempted to lash out at the government that will not be doing anything to stop it. In fact, government will be the one unleashing horrors against God's children. It will be tough, very tough – but even at that time, we are to remember Christ's and Paul's and David's examples – and honor those over us.

If we do, God will give the kingdoms of the earth to his children – according to Daniel 7 and 8 -- and we will at that time show people what truly godly leaders can be like. But we start first by recognizing we ourselves are under authority and must honor and respect that office over us – wherever we come across it. In fact, if we can just learn to honor and respect all people –regardless of their behavior –it will be so much easier.

Yahweh is going to let us experience some of the harsh consequences of bad leadership so we can give a profound contrast for the world to experience when we, God's children, are put in charge.

Let's honor those over us. For this is what the children of God do, whether those leaders over us deserve it in our eyes or not. We do it, for God is watching us on this to see if we will obey him here too.

So don't participate in the lunchroom gossip about your boss, or the Facebook postings about our national leaders, or anything that goes against God's teachings on this vital topic.

And someday, the one we really want to honor will be here in front of us. Who? His Majesty, Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of God – will be here very, very soon, probably within 15 years and he will say to you – “Well done, you good and faithful servant. Come inherit the kingdom prepared for you”.

Let's be there together. Let's hear that together. I'd like that, dear brother and sister in Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER....