

The New Testament Church
Preparing for Change #7 – Self-Government; the Goal of Preparation
 June 9, 2024 - Pastor Paul Jehle

I Preparing for Change – God is bringing a correction, reset, adjustment, to our nation/culture...

- A. There is great change coming and most Americans are aware something must happen...
 - 1. An economic reset is coming, and rising boldness of evil could have tyrannical consequences
 - 2. We have become so polarized, many are concerned for how we could ever unite...
- B. In this series we have considered the early church recipe (Acts 2:42) for changing their culture...
 - 1. In the face of tyranny, *they focused on seeing the eventual triumph of God's Kingdom!*
 - 2. In the face of polarization, *they cultivated koinonia communion, forming a deep covenant!*
 - 3. With no earthly appeal, *they prayed "without ceasing," bringing a measure of heaven to earth!*
- C. We have now considered two of four strategic areas of influence highlighting the tribe of Issachar
 - 1. The "Sons of Issachar" – a unique tribe assembling for battle – 1st Chronicles 12:32 (1000 BC)
 - 2. We have learned that the tribe of Issachar
 - a. Were those content to farm at home, learning *humble wisdom* to give direction
 - b. Issachar also were those who learned to *staying in their sphere of influence*
 - c. Issachar kept *priorities of the kingdom eternity, purpose, character and the common good*

II Self-government – the nature of the Kingdom and the preservation of liberty – (read M. Henry quote)

- A. Tola "crimson worm", 6th Judge, was from Issachar (royal public servant) – Judges 10:1-2
 - 1. His family legacy was Issachar – what is your legacy? (see the positive) – v. 1
 - a. A critical part of Scripture is to always identify an individual with their family legacy
 - 1. Abimelech "my father is king," son of Gideon, not a judge, nor raised up by God
 - 2. For three years he reigned by force as king, killing 70 of his family members
 - 3. This would be a foreshadowing of the people desiring a king like all the nations
 - b. Tola "arose" (called by God) to "defend, or save" Israel – this is the best posture
 - 1. He, as Judge, was to "defend" Israel's right to self-rule, to "save" or preserve her liberty
 - 2. The son of Puah "voice" and grandson of Dodo "his beloved" – bear burdens by serving
 - 2. Tola judged Israel for twenty-three years – v. 2 – 1206-1183 BC
 - a. During these 23 years, and the 22 to follow (Jair), there were 45 years of peace!
 - b. There are no recorded *deeds* of Tola – he did not have to interfere!
 - 1. The gold standard of Scripture is a limited government, maximum self-government
 - 2. The best civil magistrates do not think of new laws to restrict liberty
 - c. There is no indication he *delivered* them – so they were not taken captive due to sin!
 - 1. The interludes of the book of Judges is what we often elevate – going after other gods
 - 2. Straying leads to captivity... we elevate what self-government requires!
 - 3. Crying out to God became a cry to the Judge to deliver them (civil government)
 - 4. Progression from Jephthah, Ibzan, and Elon was corrupt Judges (reflection of people)
 - d. Tola truly sacrificed (crimson) to diligently serve (worm), empowering self-rule
- B. How do prepare? We *practice* self-government in preparation for the responsibility of liberty
 - 1. We check our heart – **conscience** – Acts 24:16 – void of offense toward God and man
 - a. Offense toward God - How do you go on trusting in the midst of difficulty? Why?
 - b. Offense toward others – deal with it quickly in meekness, forgive, and restore relationships
 - 2. We pay attention to our **families** – 1st Tim. 5:8 – provide for our own (help sustain)
 - 3. We get to know our **neighbors** – Hebrews 13:2 – entertain strangers (get to know neighbors)
 - 4. We build covenant in our **church** – Galatians 6:10 – do good to the household of faith...
 - 5. We serve the community – the **city** – Ga. 6:10; Matthew 5:14-16 – do good to all... light world
- C. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231 AD), in the tradition of St. Augustine, taught that self-government and sustaining individual liberty was the best way to resist the enemy's attacks (see quote on back)

Matthew Henry's Commentary on Judges 10:1-5

Quiet and peaceable reigns, though the best to live in, are the worst to write of, as yielding least variety of matter for the historian to entertain his reader with; such were the reigns of these two judges, Tola and Jair, who make but a small figure and take up but a very little room in this history. But no doubt they were both raised up of God to serve their country in the quality of judges, not pretending, as Abimelech had done, to the grandeur of kings, nor, like him, taking the honour they had to themselves, but being called of God to it.

St. Anthony – 1195-1231 AD

We have received from God self-control, forbearance, restraint, fortitude, patience, and the like, which are great and holy powers, helping us to resist the enemy's attacks. If we cultivate these powers and have them at our disposal, we do not regard anything that befalls us as painful, grievous or unbearable, realizing that it is human and can be overcome by the virtues within us.