

The Statesman as Caretaker

Our Creator and Master teaches us that we live and operate within a temporary world before He comes to visibly reign in the person of Jesus. It begins with God's clarification of Jesus' birth 700 years beforehand:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given (Isaiah 9:6).

But following quickly in the same sentence, there is a second promise:

The government shall be upon His shoulder.

This describes Jesus coming into our world twice: first as Saviour for our sins, and a second time as reigning King over the whole world. During this reign, He will put our world back together as God originally intended. It is this reign that we are waiting for. This is elaborated repeatedly throughout God's instruction book:

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32-33).

This is clarified in a further instruction to us:

God will bring this about in His own time. He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15).

There is the clear reality of Jesus' future reign on the earth. In preparation for that day, we have some issues to consider.

The first application is that we should do our best to learn from His rule and seek to emulate His rule to the best of our ability. I was recently reminded that if we would view God's instructions as a love letter, we would take it far more seriously and study more intently every word. In reality, this is what God's instructions are – a love letter to His creation. One of God's spokesmen described it as "the royal law" (James 2:8), convincing us it has application to statesmen. This same spokesman admonishes us to "look intently into the perfect law of freedom and persevere in it" (James 1:25).

Then, it is expected that we will govern in such a way as to achieve a smooth transition, recognizing that the timing of His returning to rule cannot be perfectly anticipated. Hence, we must view ourselves as caretakers until the King returns to take up His visible reign.

In a parable Jesus taught (Luke 19:11-27), He instructed us how to operate while awaiting His exercising His rulership. Paraphrasing:

A nobleman traveled to a far country to receive for himself authority to be king and then return. He called several of his subordinates, gave them specific responsibility, and told them, "Engage in business until I come back." ... At his return, having received the authority to be king, he summoned those subordinates he had given the responsibility to, so he could find out how well they had conducted their responsibility... To one who had obeyed his master and conducted affairs according to his master's wishes, he said: "Well done, good subordinate! ... Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, I will reward you."

Jesus' teaching has clear application to the statesman. The statesman must realistically see that he/she is holding a caretaker role while the King is away and awaiting His return to take up His visible reign.

Interestingly, He also has given us clear directions for how we are to fulfill our responsibilities as we await His return. We are to govern as would the one for whom we are currently substituting.

Hence, our best view of office is as caretaker awaiting the King's return. Then, as a steward, we must seek His instructions as to how we are to administer on His behalf. The best way to do this is to study His instruction book. Then, we must implore Him for His wisdom. God promises that if we, as His servants, will ask Him, He is eager to answer our requests:

Even before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear (Isaiah 65:24).

APPLICATION TO THE STATESMAN:

Do I view myself as caretaker on behalf of the King of Kings over those for whom I have responsibility?

Am I convinced God will hold me accountable for the way I fulfill my responsibility as caretaker on His behalf?

Am I willing to better fulfill my role as caretaker?

May we take our stewardship seriously, expecting the King to commend us:

Well done, good and faithful servant (Matthew 25:21).