



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: A Nation Under God? – Part 2

Guest(s): John MacArthur

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James Dobson: Hello everyone. This is James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, which is a division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I hope you heard yesterday's program because it was powerful. We featured a recorded message delivered by John MacArthur, senior pastor at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. This message was motivated by the unconstitutional effort by the state of California to virtually shut down this church and many others, and yet there were thousands of people in the church service on that day. There was a huge tent outside that was packed and then a very large crowd in an overflow room. Obviously, there was an overwhelming response. At the beginning of the message, John MacArthur read the 21 orders that were given by the state to keep them essentially from operating. That's the background for what we were hearing. Today, we're going to pick up midstream in that message given by John MacArthur. He didn't spend very long talking about the state. He talked about the scripture as he always does. Again, this message was given two weeks ago at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California.

John MacArthur: I know there are a lot of people who are pursuing political power. That's a dangerous thing to pursue. Dangerous because God has requirements for those in power and I want to share just some of them with you. Because nations are basically formed by those who lead them and by what they demand and what they tolerate, the nation will be defined.

What does God require? Let's go back to Psalm 2. I'm going to give you a lot of scripture so just kind of hang on and listen. Psalm 2, verse 10. "Now, therefore O kings, show discernment. Take warning O judges of the earth." If you're in a position of power, whether you're a king or a judge, governor, president, vice president, congressman, senator, mayor, whatever, "take warning. Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son that he not become angry and you perish in the way for his wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in him. Reject the son of God and you will anger God and his wrath will fall on you."

Listen to Psalm 138:4 and 5. "All the kings of the earth will give thanks to you, O Lord when they have heard the words of your mouth and they will sing of the ways of the Lord for great is the glory of the Lord. By the way, that is not a

prophecy, but a hope in view of what the Lord had done through David and Israel.”

Psalm 47. “O clap your hands, all peoples, all nations. Shout to God with a voice of joy, for the Lord most high is to be feared. A great king over all the earth.” That is a call to universal national worship of the true God. That is a command and not to do that is to bring upon oneself terrifying judgment.

What can we say should mark a ruler? Worship of the true God. Secondly, righteousness. Second Samuel 23:3, during the time of David, says, "He that rules over men must be righteous, ruling in the fear of God." Worship and righteousness go together.

Isaiah 32 opens, the chapter opens, "Behold, a king will reign righteously and princes will rule justly. Each will be like a refuge from the wind and a shelter from the storm like streams of water in a dry country, like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land." There's a third and very closely related characteristic of leaders that God requires and that is justice. Justice.

Psalm 82, “God takes his stand in his own congregation. He judges in the midst of the rulers.” This is as if all the rulers of the world are gathered around and God is in their midst. “How long,” verse 2, “will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Vindicate the weak and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and destitute.” Those are the people who can't bribe the leader. “Rescue the weak and needy, deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. They do not know nor do they understand. They walk about in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, ‘You are gods.’” This is sarcasm, to rulers.

“You are gods, aren't you? All of you are sons of the most high.” That's sarcasm. You think you're gods. You think you're representing the most high. “You will die like men and fall like any one of the princes. Arise O God, judge the earth for it is you who possess all the nations.” God calls together all the world rulers in that Psalm, judges, legislators, kings, presidents, governors, people in any responsible role of leadership and God presides over all of them.

Proverbs 29:4, “The king gives stability to the land by justice, but a man who takes bribes overthrows it.”

Proverbs 8:15, “By me kings reign and rulers decree justice.” “by me,” verse 12, “wisdom. By wisdom, kings reign and rulers decree justice. That leads us to a fourth characteristic of rulers, which is wisdom. Which is wisdom.”

I can't resist going to Proverbs 8 for a moment. There's so many scriptures. I'm just giving you some samples of them. But in Proverbs 8, you could pick it up in verse 12. “I, wisdom dwell with prudence. I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the

perversed mouth I hate. Counsel is mine and sound wisdom. I am understanding power is mine." This is wisdom personified. "By me, kings reign and rulers decree justice. By me, princes rule and nobles, all who judge rightly. I love those who love me." That's wisdom. "I love those who love wisdom and those who diligently seek me will find me and riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold and my yield better than choicest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may feel their treasures."

God doesn't want to hold anything back, but His blessings are in the path of righteousness, not for a governor to announce that they've lessened the consequence for predatory homosexuality on a minor. That is not walking in righteousness.

The prophet Jeremiah, chapter 22, verse 1, "Thus says the Lord, 'Go down to the house of the king of Judah and there speak this word and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, O King of Judah who sits on David's throne, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates. Thus says the Lord: do justice and righteousness and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan or the widow. Do not shed innocent blood in this place, for a few men will indeed perform this thing, then Kings will enter the gates of this house sitting in David's place on his throne, riding in chariots and on horses, even the king himself and his servants and his people. That if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself,' declares the Lord, 'this house will become a desolation.'"

Under your leadership innocents are slaughtered, you will pay. The most innocent of all are the babies in the womb being murdered. Wisdom comes only from God, as Nebuchadnezzar found out. And that leads to a fifth characteristic of a ruler, honesty. Honesty.

Proverbs 17:7, excellent speech is not fitting for a fool, much less lying lips to a ruler. Are you not weary of lying people in power?

There's a sixth characteristic of a ruler, morality. And that is in the final chapter of Proverbs, Proverbs 31 suffers a little bit because everybody starts with verse 10 about the wife. And that is an incredible passage. But if you start at the beginning, you're going to learn about what God expects of a ruler. "The words of King Lemuel, the oracle, which his mother taught him, 'what, O my son-' This is a king, Lemuel, 'What, O son of my womb and what O son of my vows, what would you like to know?' What do you want to know from your experienced and wise mother? 'Do not give your strength to women or your ways to that which destroys kings,' immorality. 'It is not for kings, O Lemuel. It is not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to desire strong drink, for they will drink and forget what is decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.'" Warning against vices, immorality with women, overindulgence, indifference.

There's another characteristic of rulers that God honors and this is powerful. It's humility. Go back to Second Chronicles, chapter 33, "King Manasseh," who followed Hezekiah in the southern kingdom of Judah, "was 12 years old, When he became king and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the Lord." How did he do that? "He built the high places, places for worshiping idols, which Hezekiah, his father, had broken down. He erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim," a kind of a deity, "worshiped all the host of Heaven, worshiped the stars, built altars in the house of the Lord of which the Lord had said, 'My name shall be in Jerusalem forever.' He built altars for all the host of Heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord." This is unbelievable, Manasseh is putting idols in the temple.

"He made his sons pass through the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, that is to say he burnt up his children as sacrifices to Baal. Practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery, dealt with mediums and spiritists. Did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people and they paid no attention. Therefore, the Lord brought the commanders of the army of the king Assyria against him and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains, took him to Babylon. When he was in distress, he entreated the Lord, his God, humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. When he prayed to him, he was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem, to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God." And what did he do? Verse 15, "He removed the foreign gods, removed the idols, set up the altar of the Lord." It was too little too late. The people still sacrificed, verse 17, in the high places. Although they pretended that it was a sacrifice to God.

James Dobson: This is James Dobson, again. Let me interrupt just to tell you that you're listening to Family Talk and we've reached the midpoint in our broadcast. You're listening to Pastor John MacArthur speaking two weeks ago at his own church, Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. Speaking directly from the scriptures, which we all love. Let's continue now for the balance of this message.

John MacArthur: If you keep reading these accounts, this keeps popping up. "He did evil in the sight of the Lord." "He did evil in the sight of the Lord." "He did evil in the sight of the Lord." That is the epitaph of all the kings of Israel, the northern kingdom and of the kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. "He did evil in the sight of the Lord." "He did evil in the sight of the Lord." It was a breath of fresh air with Josiah, but the rest is the story of evil.

Numbers 12:3 says, "Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth." Humility, a willingness to acknowledge sin, repent and turn before it's too late. God expects that out of evil rulers. We need to call rulers who are doing evil to repent. Fall before God, cry out for forgiveness and mercy through Christ. There's no mystery about what God requires. Let me just suggest two other things. Protection. Protection. We just read it.

Proverbs 31:8 and 9, open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously. Defend the rights of the afflicted and needy. He's a protector.

Habakkuk 2:12, the prophet said, "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with violence. They're to be protectors."

Psalm 94 speaks to this, just a few verses, verses 20, 21 and following. "Can a throne of destruction be allied with you, one who devises mischief by decree? They band themselves together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent to death." All I can think about when I read that is abortion. "But the Lord has been my stronghold and my God, the rock of my refuge and He has brought back their wickedness upon them and will destroy them in their evil." Our Lord will destroy them. I don't know a more devastating warning to rulers who tolerate the death of innocents than that.

And finally, courage. Courage. Rulers need courage. Courage is hard to come by. To be a virtuous ruler, to lead a nation that God will bless, a leader must worship the true God, must conduct his life and his affairs on behalf of the country or the nation with righteousness, justice, wisdom, honesty, morality. He must be humble. He must be a protector of those who need protection. And finally, he must have courage.

That is so beautifully expressed in the opening of the book of Joshua. And we talked about this a few weeks ago, so I won't make a big point out of it. But as Moses hands the baton to Joshua to be the leader, Joshua 1:6, "Be strong and courageous for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous." Now, what does this mean? What's the basis of that courage? "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. Then you will make your way prosperous. Then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous do not tremble or be dismayed for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go."

People say to me, you have a lot of courage because you're doing what you're doing. No, I'm thankful the Lord has given me resolve, but I don't tremble and I'm not dismayed, no matter what comes, because the Lord God is with me because I'm following his word. I'm following the book of the law and it does not depart from my mouth day and night. I want to do everything that's written in it and then the promise of God is your way will be prosperous and you'll have success. "Do not turn to the right or turn to the left."

These are the characteristics of leaders and rulers that God blesses. A man who has character, conviction, virtue, righteousness, wisdom, honesty, will be very

Careful with power. And the first thing he'll do with his power is to make sure he honors God and the church of the Lord, Jesus Christ. He will be a strong advocate for everything that honors God. He will submit himself to God's commands and to all of God's demands for him as a ruler. There is no other way to distinguish a good ruler from a bad ruler. It's not personality. God's standards are the only way to distinguish a good ruler from a bad one.

Is there any hope? Is there an ideal king? You know the answer. Is there an ideal king? We're waiting for Him, aren't we? The King of kings.

Listen to what Isaiah said in Isaiah 33:17, "Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feast. Your eyes will see Jerusalem in undisturbed habitation, a tent which will not be folded. Its stakes will never be pulled up nor any of its cords be torn apart. But there the majestic one, the Lord will be for us a place of rivers and wide canals on which no boat with oars will go and on which no mighty ship will pass, for the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our law giver. The Lord is our king. He will save us." Love that. He will save us.

Back to Daniel. Very frustrating because I have a lot of other scriptures but I only have another half hour. No, no. Daniel chapter 7, verse 13. Daniel says in chapter 7, verse 13, "I kept looking in the night visions and behold with the clouds of Heaven one like a son of man was coming and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. To Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

Is there an ideal King? The Lord Jesus Christ. He's coming back to establish His kingdom. He comes in the Book of Revelation, riding on a white horse, King of kings and Lord of lords. The Psalmist said in Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as your possession." The Father saying that to the Son, I'll give you the nations.

Psalm 22:27, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the earth will worship You."

Psalm 102:15, "so the nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth will fear Your glory." A King will come who will reign righteously and He will establish His kingdom. None other than the Lord, Jesus Christ. We're waiting for Him, aren't we? We're waiting for Him. As we wait, we have hope. And that is a realized hope. We already cling to it firmly because it's promised in the word of God.

Let me close with Psalm 67, "God be gracious to us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us. That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the people praise You, O God. Let all the nations praise

You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You will judge the people with uprightness and guide the nations on earth. Let the people praise You, O God. Let all the people praise You. The earth has yielded its produce. God blesses us that all the ends of the earth may fear Him." The Psalmist is saying, "If we are a blessed people, let the world see it." It's why we're here today. Regardless of what we're supposed to do by the world's evaluation. We're here because we want the world to see God is a God who blesses His faithful people.

Roger Marsh:

A meaningful message about why this nation needs to return to its biblical roots. This is Family Talk and on yesterday's and today's broadcast, you've been listening to a sermon from Pastor John MacArthur of Grace Community Church in Southern California. Visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org for more information about Pastor MacArthur, his church and his ministry. That's D-R jamesdobson.org.

Well that's all the time we have for today. Be sure to tune in again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Have a blessed day, everyone.

Announcer:

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