

23-1022a Transcript

23-1022a - *The Consolidation of Massive Earthly Power*, Scott Reynolds

Bible Readers: Roger Raines and Mike Mathis

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The Consolidation of Massive Earthly Power

Transcript (0:03 - 29:27)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Roger Raines

Matthew 7:7-8,

(0:03) Good morning. I'll be reading from two books. First, the book of Matthew, chapter 7, verse 7 through 8, and then verse 11, and then James chapter 4, verse 2. (0:22) We'll start off with Matthew.

(0:24) Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (0:40) Verse 11, if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give what is good to those who ask him?

James 4:2,

(0:55) The book of James, chapter 4, verse 2.

You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. (1:14) This concludes this reading. (1:16)

2nd Reader: Mike Mathis

Romans 13:1-7,

(1:21) The second scripture reading this morning is taken from Romans, the 13th chapter, verses 1 through 7. (1:35) Romans 13, verses 1 through 7.

(2:07) Do not resist the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not in terror to good works but to evil. (2:21) Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the saints. For he is God's minister to you for good. (2:37) But if you do evil, be afraid. For he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is God's minister and avenger to execute wrath on him who practices

evil. (2:57) Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes. (3:13) For they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due, taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. (3:37) That completes the reading. (3:38)

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(3:43) Good morning. We've been doing a series of sessions based on a webinar entitled, The Seven Threats of Our Time, by Dr. Del Tackett, who is the author of the Truth Project and the Engagement Project. (4:01) And today, we will cover the fourth session. We've covered the other ones earlier.

They are on our website, on our education page. You go down to where the sermons are, and I do mine every month or so. (4:19) So you can go down there and see the first three threats that we've already covered.

So we are on the fourth of the seven threats called, The Consolidation of Massive Earthly Power. (4:33) And I'll be bringing this session in two parts because there's just too much information to impart in one sermon. So part one is mostly preparatory and that I'll be bringing this morning, and part two, we will dive deeper into the threat of the consolidation of massive earthly power this evening.

(4:58) So they'll begin. We have been discussing the seven threats or storm fronts of the perfect storm confronting Western culture today. There are more, but these seven I see converging, aligning all at one time in our culture.

(5:16) And as we have talked about before, it is important for us as believers to understand the times in which we live, to have that discernment and wisdom as we look at the events around us that allows us then to know what we should do. (5:36) So our first threat that we looked at was the rise of the scoffer and the depraved mind. I'm not going to go back over these in any detail at all except first to talk about how important it is to understand all of these threats because it is the convergence of these that is making it a larger threat than just a single threat itself.

(6:04) So if it is true that God is turning us over, as we read in Romans 1, now to a depraved mind having rejected God for so long as we have, doesn't mean that the depraved can no longer balance a checkbook. (6:24) They can still follow general logical things, but when it comes to the depraved mind, as God talked about giving a people over to that, it's a depraved mind that no longer walks in any sense of rationality associated with right and wrong. (6:42) That passage in Romans 1 even ends with something that sounds crazy or even a little illogical because God says that even people who know these things lead to death, not only do they do them, they continue to do them and hardly agree and draw other people into it.

(7:08) So we need to recognize and understand that the world we live in is most likely, as we see evidence of that around us, that God has been giving us over to a depraved mind. (7:23) And we talked about the ramifications of that, the consequences of that, but it's important as we begin to speak of things today to keep that in mind. (7:35) The second thing, or the second threat rather, that

we looked at what we called the rise of homo deus and how that even affected Christianity, which we called neo-Christianity.

(7:51) We had increasingly, after having for years and years trying to impress each other that it's all about me, it's all about my scripts, it's all about my story, that that has arisen now to almost a divine level, homo deus, where the individual considers themselves almost divine. (8:15) And so as we've said before, if someone declares that they are a woman, that is understood as a divine proclamation. (8:24) And if you speak against that, then you are blaspheming and you will be subject to the blasphemy laws of our culture, which means you will be canceled.

(8:36) You will be called all kinds of evil names and so forth. (8:40) So this is a continual issue that we see over and over again in our culture, and it's driving a lot of things that we've been talking about. (8:51) And indeed, this third threat that we talked about last time, the loss of the noble male and the loss of the virtuous female, the way God that had made her, and the rise of malevolent compassion.

(9:06) And that then led us to look at both how God had made the male and female. (9:14) And we illustrated that the male appears to have been given two engines that drive him. (9:19) The first engine is an engine that seeks truth and righteousness and wisdom.

(9:24) But there is an engine behind that as well, an engine of grace and compassion. (9:32) The female has those same two engines, but they are in reversed order. (9:37) So she leads with grace and compassion, but that grace and compassion is bridled by truth and wisdom and righteousness.

(9:48) So, in the culture that we live in, when we attempt to do away with the meta-narrative or the self-referential narrative of God, the truth of God, (10:00) then the male no longer has anything for which he protects and defends beyond himself. (10:08) And he descends into either the buffoon or the brute that we see in many cultures as well. (10:15) And the buffoon that we see on TV and in much of our entertainment today.

(10:20) But the loss of the noble male, if we don't want truth and we don't want that kind of nobility, then the only way the male can be significant, (10:30) and the way that culture now tells the male that the only way you can be significant in this culture is if you are more feminine. (10:40) In other words, if you reverse your engines, do away with the engine that seeks truth and righteousness and lead with compassion, (10:50) then you will be significant in this culture. (10:54) We talked about what happened when we pursue compassion without the bridling of truth and righteousness and wisdom.

(11:03) I labeled it malevolent compassion. (11:06) It means that not all compassion is right and good. (11:13) And it's something that we need to kind of school ourselves in, (11:20) because we have a tendency to believe that any time someone talks about being compassionate, (11:26) we automatically think that that is good and righteous.

(11:31) Well, it may not be. (11:34) And as we looked at the passages earlier and God says, (11:40) if a man won't work, then neither let him eat. (11:45) That today would be considered to be hateful and uncompassionate and so forth.

(11:50) But from God's perspective, it is compassionate to have that kind of approach to someone. (11:57) Why? Because they need that toughness. (12:01) They need the balance of grace and compassion with truth and righteousness, (12:07) understanding how God has designed things.

(12:12) So this malevolent compassion, the reason I call it that, because compassion can be evil. (12:22) Starr Parker has written often about how she was trapped. (12:26) An African-American woman was trapped by malevolent compassion.

(12:31) That found its way into policy. (12:34) Welfare policies that she would say has destroyed the black family. (12:40) All of that is done under the guise of being compassionate.

(12:46) And so that is where we were going the last time together. (12:51) And then we ended with this statement that Del says he did with a little bit of fear and trembling (12:57) that we'll talk about more tonight. (12:59) And that is that malevolent compassion, I believe, (13:05) is the modern day harlot drawing from the words and imagery that we see in Revelation (13:11) about the harlot that rides the beast.

(13:15) So again, I should say, as we now turn our attention to the fourth threat, (13:23) the consolidation of massive earthly power, (13:25) that I want to assure you that I am not laying out anything that is connecting us (13:31) to the series of events that are laid out in the book of Revelation. (13:36) I'm not talking about eschatology or the end times here. (13:41) What I'm talking about is we are drawing on the biblical imagery (13:46) that we see in the book of Revelation and the symbolism that is given to us (13:50) about the power, an earthly power, which rides a harlot.

(13:56) And I think that symbolism that we see there in Revelation (14:00) is remarkably similar to what is going on here today. (14:05) And a lot of these things have similarly happened in the past. (14:09) I'm not trying to say anything about tying this symbolism in Revelation (14:15) to our day to day, but I think it is important for us to look at that (14:20) because I think God has given us those things, that symbolism, for a purpose.

(14:27) So I want to first of all talk about God's modus operandi, (14:33) or his mode of operation. (14:36) And to do that, we're going to go back and lay a little bit of groundwork here (14:40) and talk about, first of all, how God is the one who has not only created man, (14:49) as we talked about last time, both male and female, in the image of God, (14:54) but he then created an entire universe as well, (14:58) as human beings and living creatures, in systems. (15:03) We call, for human beings, we call those systems social order or social systems.

(15:09) God is the one who has designed those. (15:12) That's what we read and was read by Mike in Romans 13, 1-7. (15:19) Right from the beginning, that God is the one who instituted the civil government.

(15:25) He instituted it. He's the one who instituted marriage. (15:29) Not us.

We're not the ones who can define what marriage looks like. (15:34) We're not the ones who can actually define what the church looks like. (15:38) God has designed those institutions.

(15:43) So, all of the social order that God has designed is important for us to understand (15:48) because it is the design that we need to continually move toward. (15:56) That's the benchmark for how we should live our lives. (16:00) Well, in that social order that God has created, each of those spheres, (16:04) each of those social systems, carry the notion of authority, (16:10) carry the notion of submission, (16:12) carry the notion of roles associated with who you are in that social order.

(16:19) So, for example, in the state, we're going to look at that today, (16:23) citizens are to be subject to the civil magistrate. (16:27) We are to submit to them. (16:29) The civil magistrate has

been granted authority, as we read again in Romans 13.

(16:35) He has the authority to punish evil. (16:39) And so there are roles that are described for these. (16:43) If we looked at the family, and I know this is extremely controversial today, (16:49) but if we look at how God has designed the family, (16:53) that there are authority roles, there are submission roles.

(16:58) Children are to submit to their parents, the wives to submit to their husbands, (17:03) and the husband has authority. (17:04) He needs to love his wife as Christ loves the church. (17:09) He has a role to play in carrying out that authority.

(17:12) And he and she both have a role to play as they carry out their authority (17:19) as parents over their children. (17:23) So every one of these social systems has been created by God (17:26) to carry the notions of authority and submission and roles. (17:31) But there are limits upon the authority and limits upon the submission (17:36) as well as there are limits upon those roles according to God's word.

(17:43) So, for those of you who have been through the Truth Project, (17:47) you'll recognize that I believe there are six social systems (17:51) or institutions that God has created for man. (17:56) The last institution you'll see is about the prime social system, (18:02) and that is God himself. (18:05) He is the God who is socially complex.

(18:09) He is the triune, three-in-one God. (18:13) And it should not surprise us, therefore, that the triune God, (18:18) who is socially complex, created a universe of systems, (18:23) of diverse pieces and parts that all work together for some higher good. (18:29) That comes from the triune God.

(18:32) And so in studying the scripture, there are the six that I believe God has instituted. (18:38) The family, state, church, the sphere of labor we would understand as business, (18:45) the social order of God and man, which is our relationship to God. (18:51) And there are clear biblical expressions of authority in that social system, (18:56) the submission or roles that we play.

(18:59) And then the final one is the sphere of community, (19:02) and that is how we are supposed to be engaging our neighbor. (19:07) So this is kind of the beast leading up to God's modus operandi (19:13) in that it appears that God has created, equipped, empowered, (19:21) and then he delegates authority and responsibilities to his creatures (19:26) to operate within those social systems (19:30) so that even the smallest creature may flourish and bear fruit, (19:36) and that fruit brings glory to God. (19:40) We see this also in the inanimate part of the creation.

(19:45) Psalm 19 says, (19:46) The heavens declare the glory of God, and that means that the sun, when it shines, (19:52) the sun is being fruitful, and that fruit brings glory to God. (19:57) The stars twinkle, and when they twinkle, they bring glory to God. (20:01) The stars also provide for us, and the sun and the moon provide for us seasons.

(20:06) And when they do, they are operating according to God's design, (20:12) and that fruit brings glory to God. (20:15) Jesus also talks about how we glorify the Father. (20:20) The only time that Jesus tells us how we glorify the Father (20:26) is in John chapter 15, verse 8. (20:30) And he says that we glorify the Father by bearing fruit, (20:34) bearing much fruit.

(20:37) So this is the modus operandi of God, (20:40) where he delegates authority so that the smallest creature (20:44) might bring forth fruit, and that brings glory to God. (20:48) One of the

most fascinating aspects of God's nature (20:53) is that he delegates authority and power. (20:57) And we see this from the very beginning of creation (21:00) when he grants the plants and animals and human beings (21:04) authority and responsibility to reproduce, to be fruitful, (21:08) to multiply and fill the earth.

(21:11) He delegates to man the privilege to ask God's hand to move such that (21:17) if he does not ask, he will not have. (21:24) As Jesus said in Matthew 7, 7-11, and also James chapter 4-2, (21:29) which was read for us, it says, (21:31) you do not have because you do not ask. (21:36) Even the inanimate creation has been delegated the power to operate (21:42) according to the capabilities God has granted them.

(21:45) Electrons orbit, heat transfers, earth rotates, gravity pulls, (21:50) clouds rain, tides ebb and flow. (21:54) The whole of creation has been equipped, empowered, and delegated (21:59) authority and responsibility granted by God (22:02) to fulfill its divine purposes. (22:06) I have increasingly come to believe that this is the modus operandi of God (22:11) because it is the deep reflection of his true love and grace, (22:15) seeking the fruitfulness of his creatures, (22:19) fruit that in turn brings glory to God.

(22:23) But alas, in a fallen world, true love and delegation of authority (22:28) is not always executed with righteousness. (22:34) Electrons and tides obey God, but man does not. (22:39) One of the most consistent acts of evil is when man defies God (22:44) and consolidates power to himself well beyond what God has designed.

(22:51) King Saul did so and lost his throne. (22:54) Nebuchadnezzar boasted of his excessive power (22:57) and found himself in a pasture eating grass like a cow, (23:02) and King Uzziah tried to assume authority beyond his bounds (23:06) and ended up with leprosy. (23:09) Here we have the contrast of God's nature and Satan's purposes.

(23:15) God delegates authority down to the lowest level (23:18) so that the smallest creature may flourish and bring him glory. (23:23) Satan's modus operandi is the opposite. (23:28) Satan consolidates power at the top, increasingly enslaving people, (23:32) making them dependent and destroying their desire and incentives to be fruitful.

(23:39) I do this in the Engagement Project and I do it again here. (23:43) I'm going to repeat this because it is important for us to understand (23:47) what's going on around us. (23:49) And not only just today, but what has been going on around us for a long, long time.

(23:57) God creates his creatures. (23:59) He then equips them, empowers them, (24:03) and then he delegates authority to them down to the smallest creature (24:06) so the smallest creature might flourish and bring forth fruit, (24:11) and that fruit brings glory to God. (24:15) Satan consolidates power at the top, (24:17) making them dependent, destroying their fruitfulness, (24:21) and Satan hates the glory of God.

(24:23) And this is one of the prime ways in which he attempts to destroy the glory of God (24:28) by destroying the fruitfulness of creatures. (24:33) And he has done that oftentimes through the consolidation of power. (24:39) So now, let's look at this, (24:41) modus operandi of God and Satan (24:43) from the standpoint of what happens when we are obedient to that, (24:49) when we reject that, and the consequences associated with that.

(24:54) And in order to do that, we'll look at the state, first of all, (25:00) and talk about God's design. (25:03) Again, for those who have been through the Truth Project, (25:06) this will all be very familiar to you. (25:08) But very clearly in the Scriptures, (25:11) when God talks about the state, (25:13) God himself is a member of that system.

(25:18) He delegates authority to the king, (25:20) but the king is in submission to God. (25:23) The citizens have a dual submission. (25:26) They are to submit to the king, but they are also to submit to God (25:30) in such a way that if the king requires them to do that (25:35) which is disobedient towards God, (25:38) we are first to obey God.

(25:41) So that social system that God has created, (25:45) when it is done properly, when it is done right, (25:48) there is a fruitfulness that comes to the citizenry of the state. (25:53) When it is not done well and is not done right, (25:57) there are consequences that come to both the citizens and to the authorities. (26:03) I've used this phrase, the king and the state, (26:06) and that just simply represents the governmental form.

(26:10) That can be any governmental form, (26:12) but it's easier just to write and use the word king. (26:17) So the first example of the state that you are familiar with (26:21) in God's design from man's perspective is Nebuchadnezzar. (26:25) And there are many, many examples of this in Scripture.

(26:29) I just like this one because there's a lot of visuals associated with it. (26:33) So Nebuchadnezzar got a little bit too big for his britches, (26:37) and he went on the roof of his palace talking about how (26:40) he is the one that has put all of Babylon (26:45) and everything in the empire together (26:47) by his might and his power. (26:51) Well, God immediately taught Nebuchadnezzar a lesson, (26:55) and Nebuchadnezzar found himself out in the pasture (26:57) eating grass like a cow without his senses.

(27:00) And the Scripture says he remained there until he came to his senses, (27:05) and then he acknowledged that God is the one who is sovereign (27:10) over all the nations, and God gives power to whomever he wishes. (27:16) It's a great declaration by Nebuchadnezzar, (27:18) and I often have wished that God would do that today (27:22) to those who have attempted to usurp the authority of God. (27:26) In due time, I guess.

(27:28) Well, the other two examples of kings usurping God's authority (27:33) that they'll present are Saul and Uzziah. (27:37) And these two examples require us to then talk about (27:40) the design for the church, because both King Saul and King Uzziah (27:45) usurp the authority of the priests. (27:48) They overstep the limits God has placed on the king (27:51) and the government.

(27:53) And we're going to break here, (27:55) and tonight we will begin with Saul and Uzziah. (27:59) Through the history of their disobedience, (28:02) we're going to learn about the notion of sphere sovereignty (28:06) and what God thinks about those who usurp his design. (28:12) Then in turn, that in turn rather will lead us (28:16) into a discussion about statism, (28:18) where the state assumes authority over all the other social institutions (28:23) that God has created.

(28:25) We will learn that statism is the usual way (28:28) man has consolidated power from God to himself. (28:33) However, today they'll point out that something unique (28:38) is happening that hasn't happened before in the history of man. (28:44) The sphere of the state and the sphere of

labor (28:47) have combined along with five powerful sub-entities (28:52) of this sphere of labor to form what Bell calls (28:56) the consolidation of massive earthly power.

(29:00) He uses the imagery from Revelation (29:03) to represent this power as a seven-horned beast (29:08) and how they are all driven by malevolent compassion. (29:13) And we will look at all seven horns (29:15) and the rider of the beast tonight. (29:18) So at this time, the invitation is being extended (29:23) to anyone who is subject to it.

(29:25) Come, as together we stand and sing.