



# The blessing of government

Edition 1, February 1 - 2010

*Praise* be to the  
**LORD** your  
God, *who* has  
**delighted** in  
**you** and placed you  
on the *throne* of  
Israel. Because of  
the LORD's *eternal*  
**love** for  
Israel, *He* has made  
**you king**, to  
maintain  
**justice**  
and  
**righteousness.**



Alive Ministries South Africa

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Dear friends,

What a blessing to live in a democracy, called the Rainbow Nation. The Republic of South Africa is a colorful nation indeed with all its people in their cultural diversity. What a blessing to live in a free nation after a long period of suppression. What a blessing to have a government with a “Bhato Pele, putting people first” program. What a blessing to have the “Ubuntu” principle in this country. This study is about “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”: a person is a person through other persons, or I am because we are. This study is about a fruitful and blessed cooperation between the Government and the Church, based on mutual respect and added value from both sides. Enjoy it and what’s more: Take your responsibility and position, do the good things and be useful today and tomorrow in your generation. Serve this beautiful Rainbow Nation, **You are the Government, You are the Church, You are making the difference! Serve one another in love!**

## 1. God delights in government.

*Praise the LORD your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king so you can rule with justice and righteousness (1 Kings 10:9).* This verse from the Old testament is also confirmed from the New Testament: *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God (Romans 13:1).* I like these verses. So many is written in just those two verses.

- *“those in positions of authority have been placed there by God”, “he has made you king”, “all authority comes from God”, “and has placed you on the throne of Israel”.* This is all about the order in governing authorities. **God is the supreme boss.**
- *“who delights in you”.* Why do you think God is happy with a government? *“so you can rule with justice and righteousness”.*
- *“Praise the LORD your God”.* These words are coming from the queen of Sheba and she is speaking about a for her foreign God. Why is she praising a foreign God? Through the government of Salomon, she is seeing **a God who delights in governments who are ruling just and righteous.** She is also aware that God’s love is behind this government. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with justice and righteousness from that time forward, even forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).* Cool he, these last verse: The Great Governor, has established His Kingdom of justice and righteousness already more than 2000 years ago, with the coming of the King of Kings, Jesus the Christ, and even forever!
- *“Everyone must submit to governing authorities”.* In next chapter we will see the blessing of these governing order and structure in the Scripture.

## 2. God’s governing rules and structure for us, with a blessing.

There is a very important structure of government God has laid in His creation and He has blessings in stock if you apply them. Just some examples:

- <sup>3</sup> *Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’* <sup>4</sup> *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”* <sup>5</sup> *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:3-5).* Well, there is only one God, He is the great Boss, and if we love and honour Him, blessings are waiting for us.
- *Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness.” (1 Kings 10:9).* The Lord wants us to have governments, He sets them on the throne and removes them if He wants, and

wants us to honour and respect our government and local authorities, and that we keep them in our prayers. Of course there is a blessing: they maintain *justice and righteousness* which is in your benefit.

- *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you (Hebrews 13:17).* This is God's will for the structure in the Church, and again with blessings , *for they watch out for your souls.*
- *Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you (Exodus 20:12).* God's governing rules for the Kids within the family, with a blessing *that your days may be long.*

You know how we call this structure? **This is freedom** within boundaries! And blessings are waiting. Some more words regarding "freedom" in a democracy in next chapter.

### 3. Freedom from biblical perspective.

I want to break free

I want to break free

I want to break free from your lies

You're so self satisfied I don't need you

I've got to break free

God knows God knows I want to break free

Sounds familiar this song of Queen. I want to break free from the selfish behaviour of others. Even God knows. One of the first words of babies is "self", I can do it myself. This is the sin of all sins, **We want to sit on His throne!** Forget it! And we continue to struggle to receive our freedom. As always, God's solutions are brilliant in its simplicity. You want to break free? You can have it! **You are born to be free!** Lets dig in His solution!

**Being freed from what?** Good question. Don't tell me I am a slave. I am able to handle my own business and not controlled by others. It is popular today to believe that the individual is or should be in full control of him or herself. What a mess we often face when people brake out to be free. Isn't this often selfish and missing real joy, peace and love? In addition it's never satisfied! *They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. (2 Peter 2:19). .....all people, are under the power of sin (Romans 3:9b).* True freedom comes from abandoning your life to God. True freedom is not "freedom to sin", it is **freedom from the power of sin.**

**Freedom without God:** *Don't be misled. Remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it. You will always harvest what you plant!* <sup>8</sup> *Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit (Galatians 6:7-8).* It would certainly be surprised if you planted corn and pumpkins came up. It's a natural law to reap what we sow. It's true in other areas too. If you gossip about your friends, you will lose their friendship. Every action has results. If you plant to please your own desires, you'll reap a crop of sorrow and evil. If you plant to please God and serve others, you'll reap joy and everlasting life. What kind of seeds are you sowing? *With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the ungodly do, for they are hopelessly confused.* <sup>18</sup> *Their closed minds are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him.* <sup>19</sup> *They don't care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways (lustful pleasure). Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed. (Ephesians 4:17-19).*

**True freedom:** As mentioned True freedom is **freedom from the power of sin!** *Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires.* <sup>13</sup> *Do not let any part*

of your body become a tool of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. <sup>14</sup> Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace (Romans 6:12-14). Wow, this one is cool. **We are free to choose!!** You can choose for sin and its consequences and you can choose for new life. Don't blame me! You are **free** to choose! It's your turn and your choice.

Now you are free from sin, your old master, and you have become slaves to your new master, righteous living (Romans 6:18). <sup>22</sup> But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life (Romans 6:22). Some people have always thought that we are no longer bound by the law but are "free" in Christ to act however we like. The Scriptures constantly remind us that following our every desire is not what freedom is. We are free from our former master, sin; but we are still servants. As servants of Christ, though we have the freedom to disobey our master, it is our responsibility to direct our actions to fulfil the purposes of Christ. **Do we have freedom? Yes. Are we free? No.** The Bible affirms that our choices are not determined; we make them ourselves. But it also demonstrates that we are not in total control of ourselves. We live under the ultimate control and direction of a power greater than ourselves. The comforting thing about this is that "in everything, God cooperates for good with those who love God" (Romans 8:28).

***For you have been called to live in freedom, not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love*** (Galatians 5:13). Slavery to God and to one another is voluntary. But it is a product of love and the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it becomes a source of glory to God, and joy, peace, and blessing to yourself and others. Freedom is not the right to do as one pleases, but the power and capacity both to will and to do as one ought. True freedom is never freedom from responsibility, but responsibility not only for choice, but right choices. Freedom is an inner contentment with who we are in Christ and with what we have. It means to covet only heavenly treasure. It means the willingness and ability to allow God to be in control of your life. It means single-mindedness which turns the control of one's life over to Christ which in turn frees us psychologically and volitionally to follow the Lord. It means **the liberty for self-responsibility to both God and man under the grace of God.**

#### 4. Authority of Government.

- God is ultimate authority: *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God* (Romans 13:1).
- God has instituted human government: *For all authority comes from God* (Romans 13:1), *Because of me, kings reign, and rulers make just decrees.* <sup>16</sup> *Rulers lead with my help, and nobles make righteous judgments* (Proverbs 8:15-16) and 1 Kings 10:9 is already mentioned.
- Jesus recognized authority of government: Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22), Pilate (Matthew 26:59; 27:1; John 19:11), Herod, High priest, Sanhedrin.
- Human government answerable to God: They are servants of God as written *"Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do"* (Romans 13:6).
- The authority of government is not dependent on moral character of leadership.
- Form of government: No particular form of government is advocated – theocracy, autocracy, democracy.
- God is a God of order.
- Any form of government better than no government, anarchy, chaos as written *"In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes"* (Judges 17:6).

## 5. Function of government.

### Administration of justice:

- judge with righteousness: *Help him judge your people in the right way; let the poor always be treated fairly (Psalm 72:2).*
- crush the oppressor: *Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors (Psalm 72:4).*
- rescue from oppression and violence: *He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives are precious to him (Psalm 72:14).*
- avenger who brings wrath on those practice evil: *The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong (Romans 13:4).*
- punishment of evildoers : *For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state,<sup>14</sup> or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right (1 Peter 2:13-14).*
- government has the right and obligation to resist overthrow, punish, defend itself and to use the sword.
- law and order

### General welfare of citizens:

- vindicate the afflicted, care for needy: *Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors (Psalm 72:4).*
- compassion for poor and needy: *He will rescue the poor when they cry to him; he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them.<sup>13</sup> He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them.<sup>14</sup> He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives are precious to him (Ps. 72:12-14) and He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?" says the LORD (JEREMIAH 22:16).*
- bring peace: *The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness (Psalm 72:3).*
- praise of those who do right: *For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you (Romans 13:3), For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state,<sup>14</sup> or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right (1 Peter 2:13-14).*
- to allow for tranquil and quiet life: *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.<sup>2</sup> Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2:1-2).*
- moral standards?
- public health and education?
- philanthropic activities?

## 6. Responsibility to Government.

- Respect and honor toward government: *....., and give respect and honor to those who are in authority (Romans 13:7).*
- Submit to government: *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God (Romans 13:1), Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good (Titus 3:1), For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state,<sup>14</sup> or the officials he has appointed (1 Peter 2:13).*
- Pay taxes to government: *"Well then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." (Luke 20:25), Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are*

*...serving God in what they do.<sup>7</sup> Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority (Romans 13:6-7).*

- **Pray for government:** *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.<sup>2</sup> Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity (1 Timothy 2:1-2).*

### 7. Disobedience of Government.

- Authority of government is not unlimited. Not blind patriotism, "my country, right or wrong". Absolute, unqualified subjection due only to absolute unqualified authority of God.
- Human government usurps God's authority when demands subjection to laws contrary to God's character and expectations.
- Legitimate cause for civil disobedience: *We must obey God rather than any human authority (Acts 5:29)*. We must note that this is between church leaders and apostles and dealing about teachings concerning Jesus and not mere personal disagreement with ideology or policies. Some more biblical examples: Daniel's prayer (Daniel 6), Peter preaching (Acts 5:27-30), Paul (Acts 16:35-40; 17:7)
- Resisting government is resisting God: *So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished (Romans 13:2).*

### 8. A right attitude of the Church.

The United Nations (as governing power under the King of Kings) is taking the lead and their responsibility in the world regarding justice and righteousness. The world leaders promised in September 2000 to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals in the year 2015. This is very good and in line with God's will as the UN is stating: *"Time is short. We must seize this historic moment to act responsibly and decisively for the common good."* The Churches globally are supporting this process by the Micah Challenge: *Micah Challenge is a global coalition of Christians holding governments to account for their promise to halve extreme poverty by 2015. We want to encourage Christians worldwide to deepen their commitment to the poor and to speak out to leaders to act with justice.* This is just one positive example of cooperation between governing powers and the Church. The Church is absolutely taking its responsibility within the society in many various ways.

While studying the scripture and writing all these studies I would love to share something with the Church, and I call it "honest introspection" to improve the cooperation with the government even more.

Justice and righteousness is not exclusive for Christians. People, governments, authorities etc. who are dealing just and right are in line with God's will and blessed! ***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6).*** It is just blessed all those who..... ***He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?" says the LORD (JEREMIAH 22: 15-16).*** These last verse out of Jeremiah is the opposite of what we may be expect. There is not written "If you know God, you are able to do justice", but " if you do justice, you know God".

*Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it.<sup>15</sup> They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right (Romans 2:14-15).* People who do not have the knowledge of the Bible, are also able by means of their conscience to do right. Morality is not exclusive for Christians.

Christians are Kingdom citizens and will not be judged for this (again) on the last day as written: *Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life** (John 5:24).* This is our salvation which is 100% mercy from God's side and 100% faith from our side. However ***faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*** (James 2:17). Therefore **Christians and non-Christians will be judged equal according to their works** as written: *For we must all appear before the **judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).* Christians are not saved by works (Ephesians 2:8-9), but our good works, and the motives from which they are done, will determine our eternal rewards. Therefore, because of this and other reasons, let's adopt Paul's teaching: "Keeping God's commands is what counts" (1 Corinthians 7:19). *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21).* Jesus wants you to be rich with heavenly treasures! These heavenly treasures cannot and will not ever be exhausted or depleted, as earthly treasures are: *Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys (Luke 12:33).* Your eternal stay in the Kingdom is not discussed however, **How rich will you be in God's eternal Kingdom?** You are now determining the answer to that question by your faithful labors for His Kingdom or lack thereof. About the judgment of the works of the Christians is written: <sup>11</sup> *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* <sup>12</sup> *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* <sup>13</sup> *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* <sup>14</sup> *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.* <sup>15</sup> *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).* Jesus, the only foundation for your salvation, and **your works as a Christian are still very important**, however they will not affect your salvation (saved through the fire if your works are burned). The judgment of the non-Christians is described in Matthew 25 and Revelation 20: <sup>31</sup> *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.* <sup>32</sup> *All the nations (Greek = foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans) will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.* <sup>33</sup> *And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.* <sup>34</sup> *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'* So, the following is applicable for non-Christians: You are not bowing down for the King of Kings in this very life. As a result after your death you will stay (your spiritual part) in the Hades (the porch of the hell) until His second coming. Hmmmm, not attractive, a place of *outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 22:13).* At the same time you did good works of justice here on this side of life. Well, you miss also in this life the Kingdom benefits, however you worked on your heavenly treasures. You are rich in heaven! On the final judgment day you will be a sheep, on His right hand and you will receive again the invitation to enter the Kingdom, just on the last day. So, you still have to bow down (enter through the gate, which is Jesus) for the King to finally enter the Kingdom, eternal life. I wouldn't take that risk and wouldn't like to wait for His second coming in the porch of the hell. **Lesson for the Church: our works as Christians are still very important, it is not only about our salvation and Non-Christians are still able to bow down for the King of Kings on the final day.** For more information see our study "God's judgments, the power of His love".

Our message to the world is not only a Savior Who forgave our sins and arranged eternal life by the mighty cross, for many of those who (still) belong to this world have not too much with sin. No, the Church has a message of a King and a (spiritual) Kingdom on earth, **heaven on earth!** And to enter that heaven on earth, yes there we are, we have to **pass the mighty cross of Christ**, the entrance of the Kingdom as written: *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3).* My dear friends don't forget to tell the next step: To penetrate further in the (spiritual) Kingdom already here on earth and to enjoy the benefits already her on earth (on this side) you have to **shoulder your cross**, to give up something as written: *"Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone **who has given up** house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup> **will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come (Luke 18:29-30).** We, the Church, do have a solution already for this earth and this very life!* For more information see our study "The Kingdom".

Next verses out of the scripture is also making us relaxed, and looking away from our own Church dogma's. **This is the message and role of the Holy Spirit:** *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>11</sup> of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged (John 16:8-11).*

- First, we Christians do not have to convict others of sin, righteousness and judgment, but the Holy Spirit will do that. And have a look at the content of His message:
- **sin**, because they do not believe in Me. Man, is it that simple? What a manmade theory and doctrine have we made (including myself) around sin in our own lives, within the Church, and specially in our message to the world (those who don't belong to God's Kingdom). Jesus has come to save the world and not to condemn. He loves us so much that it is a sin to miss the Kingdom of God, he wants all humans on board!
- **righteousness**, because I go to My Father. You know why Jesus had to leave the earth? To sit on His throne, for He established His spiritual Kingdom on earth to reign with righteousness as written: **"The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever."** <sup>17</sup> *And they said, "We give thanks to you, Lord God, the Almighty, the one who is and who always was, for now you have assumed your great power and have begun to reign (Revelation 11:15-17).* We have a Kingdom message for this world. In Christ heaven and earth are reconciled!! More information in our study "The Kingdom of God".
- **judgment**, because the ruler of this world is judged. Are you still with me? Judgment, because Satan is judged when Jesus took the victory. A guarantee of the absence of evil on the new earth. That's it. I really have to change my own way of thinking regarding this topic and how I look towards others. More information in our study "God's judgments, the power of His love".
- Last but not least: The Holy Spirit is convicting the world (those who still belong to this world). This is not mend for the Church, for we are strangers in this world and are partakers in Gods Kingdom as written: *We are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God in the spiritual Kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:18-22). We are the People of God, already seated "with Him in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6).*

My dear friends, the Church, have a honest look with honest introspection towards our own sometimes manmade doctrines.

### 9. A warning for the government.

*For this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone he chooses—even to the lowliest of people (Daniel 4:17).* This is about

the spiritual Kingdom of God on earth and its citizens are respecting the government in their country. The growth of this Kingdom is not dependent on whatever political system. Its citizens seem to thrive in both dictatorships and democracies. Its borders are open and all asylum seekers (refugees) may enter. Its victory is certain because God himself is the founder.

*And the LORD says, "What sorrow awaits Jehoiakim, who builds his palace with forced labor. He builds injustice into its walls, for he makes his neighbors work for nothing. He does not pay them for their labor."<sup>14</sup> He says, 'I will build a magnificent palace with huge rooms and many windows. I will panel it throughout with fragrant cedar and paint it a lovely red.'<sup>15</sup> But a beautiful cedar palace does not make a great king! Your father, Josiah, also had plenty to eat and drink. **But he was just and right in all his dealings. That is why God blessed him.**<sup>16</sup> He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?" says the LORD.<sup>17</sup> "But you! You have eyes only for greed and dishonesty! You murder the innocent, oppress the poor, and reign ruthlessly."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah: "The people will not mourn for him, crying to one another, 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!' His subjects will not mourn for him, crying, 'Alas, our master is dead! Alas, his splendor is gone!'<sup>19</sup> He will be buried like a dead donkey—dragged out of Jerusalem and dumped outside the gates!<sup>20</sup> Weep for your allies in Lebanon. Shout for them in Bashan. Search for them in the regions east of the river. See, they are all destroyed. Not one is left to help you.<sup>21</sup> I warned you when you were prosperous, but you replied, 'Don't bother me.' You have been that way since childhood—you simply will not obey me!<sup>22</sup> And now the wind will blow away your allies. All your friends will be taken away as captives. Surely then you will see your wickedness and be ashamed.<sup>23</sup> It may be nice to live in a beautiful palace paneled with wood from the cedars of Lebanon, but soon you will groan with pangs of anguish—anguish like that of a woman in labor (Jeremiah 22:13-23). I have to note this is a story out of the Old Testament where the work out of punishment for evil during our lives differs from the New Testament, however it describes the way of thinking of our Lord regarding government.*

### 10. Final word.

It is a real blessing to be aware of the good works and added value of all humans, from all races, religions and backgrounds on whatever position in society. Be proud and take your responsibility you mother, president, teacher, young adult, plumber, police officer, white, football player, pastor, unemployed, poor, addicted, business lady, black, dentist, criminal, old ..... **human, God's favorite!** We need each other. "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu": a person is a person through other persons, or I am because we are.

### Proudly South African!

Yours in His service,

Kees

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