

Giving Thanks for Obama



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*I exhort therefore, that ... giving of thanks, be made for all men;
for kings, and for all that are in authority ... (I Timothy 2:1-2).*

God is at the center of all human activity – including human governments – for,

HE is the great King over all the earth (Psalms 47:2).

Therefore, whoever has authority is whom He has placed in power, for He

Rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will ... (Daniel 4:17, 25);

For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God (Romans 13:1).

Not only is whom He has chosen in power, but He directs their very heart as well, for,

*The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turns it wherever He will
(Proverbs 21:1).*

Therefore, for example, in the United States Obama is God's chosen vessel at this time. He is God's instrument, and our divinely ordained attitude towards him, as with Bush and Clinton before him, is to pray and give thanks for him:

*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be
made for all men; for kings, and for all who are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peace-
able life in all godliness and honesty (I Timothy 2:1-2).*

Interestingly enough, Paul wrote these words in the context of perhaps one of the most evil, corrupt, brutal rulers who ever lived.

Concerning the Roman Emperor Nero, James Stalker wrote,

He was a man who, in a bad world, had attained the eminence of being the very worst and meanest being in it – a man stained with every crime, the murder of his own mother, of his wives and of his best benefactors. – *Life of St. Paul*, pages 142-143

H.I. Hester, elaborating in his work *The Heart of the New Testament* (1964), wrote,

Rome had several tyrannical and corrupt emperors but Nero was the worst. He was immoral, vicious, selfish and despotically cruel. He came to the throne in A.D. 54 and ruled for fourteen years ... He will go down in history as one of the most despicable men ever to rule over a people ...

Historians are generally agreed that it was Nero who burned the city of Rome. He labored under the delusion that he was a genius in music and that his compositions would become immortal if only he had sufficient inspiration. Feeling that a great conflagration would provide the inspiration he had the city set on fire. It is said that he sat on an elevated porch overlooking the city and attempted to play the violin [lyre] as he watched the city burn. This fire broke out on July 19th in the year 64 and raged for six days. Much to the surprise of Nero there was a violent reaction among the people and he hastened to attach the blame for this on the Christians. Immediately thereafter serious persecution broke out against these Christian people. It took real courage to be a Christian now as they were granted no protection by the law. These Neronian persecutions were unspeakably horrible. Christian men and women were burned, were cast to wild beasts in the amphitheater to entertain the populace. “Nero lent his gardens for the purpose of exhibiting the tortures of the wretched victims, and at night he illuminated his grounds by the flames of burning Christians” – Foakes-Jackson, *Rise of Gentile Christianity*, page 50. (page 330)

This was the context of Paul’s remarkable admonition to Timothy:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all who are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (I Timothy 2:1-2).

Paul was exhorting that the saints give thanks for Nero! Absolutely amazing! Yet, when we think about it, why wouldn’t this be what Paul encouraged them to do, for did not Paul instruct them to give “thanks always **FOR all things**” (Ephesians 5:20)? Would this not have included Nero?

Paul clearly presents a spiritual attitude of thanksgiving: not just for “good” things, but for **all things** – and not just *IN* all things, but *FOR* all things. When we understand the great truth that “**all things are of God**” (II Corinthians 5:18), this is easy. When we embrace the fact that “*of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things*” (Romans 11:36), then we have no option but to thank Him “*for all things.*”

Thanking God for “*all things,*” surely includes “*all men.*” This is what Paul told Timothy, that the “*giving of thanks [should] be made for all men.*” Then, Paul is specific not to exclude, but to include “*kings, and all who are in authority.*” What does Paul then say that the results of such a disposition of thanksgiving would be?

That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Paul here is not speaking of civil or social peace. The issue here is not that there would be national peace, but that *our hearts* would be aligned with God and His purpose, thus bringing quietness and peace to our hearts, and to the disposition of our lives.

No matter in which national system we find ourselves, we can remain calm, peaceful and happy, knowing that Father is in absolute control. *THIS* is godly living. *THIS* is honest living – living in the truth that Father is completely in charge of all things. *THIS* “*godliness and honesty*” alone allows us to “*lead a quiet and peaceable life.*”

Many believers live in the turmoil created by the misjudging of the true source of “*all things.*” Government and politics are no exception. The political pundits agitate their spirits – displacing them from their God-given “*quiet and peaceable life.*” Do not give way to such a snare!

ALL MEN

Listen to some of what Paul taught concerning “*all men.*”

- We are to Love “*All Men*”

*The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward **all men**, even as we do toward you* (I Thessalonians 3:12).

- We are to be Gentle to “*All Men*”

*The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to **all men** ...* (II Timothy 2:24).

- We are to Show Meekness to “*All Men*”

*To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to **all men*** (Titus 3:2).

- We are to Give Thanks for “*All Men*”

I exhort therefore, that ... giving of thanks, be made for all men ... (I Timothy 2:1).

Our disposition towards all men really reflects our disposition toward God. Paul could give thanks for Nero. Why not start by give thanks for Obama today? If it is heartfelt, it will bring a change of quietness and peace to your life.

That’s what the verses say.

Taken from the *Bible Student’s Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed)

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Study Shelf, PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
1-800-784-6010 / www.StudyShelf.com

B I B L E S T U D E N T ’ S P R E S S [™]
W i n d b e r , P e n n s y l v a n i a

