

1 Kefa 2:11-17

A Call to Good Works

In my last post, we explored **The Living Stone and a Holy People**. In this post, we learn about **A Call to Good Works**.

¹¹ Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and temporary residents not to give in to the desires of your old nature, which keep warring against you...

Aliens and temporary residents meant not only in the Diaspora but also in the whole world. See Rom 8:3-13 for an explanation of **not to give in to the desires of your old nature**. As **Believers**, we must remember that we are aliens in a pagan environment, but by our conduct, we had the means of leading others to glorify **God**.

¹² but to live such good lives among the pagans (Gentiles) that even though they now speak against you as evil-doers, they will, as a result of seeing your good actions, give glory to God on the Day of His coming.

We must let our deeds be our testimony, as Yeshua counseled in the **Sermon on the Mount**. **Jewish** people in the **Diaspora** always had to be concerned about Gentiles' anti-**Jewish** slanders, their safety, and their witness to the one true **God**. Just as **Gentiles** were more than happy to slander **Jews** living among them, they were happy to slander **Gentile** converts to what they viewed as a **Jewish** sect.

The message of verse 12 should be applied in vv. 13-17 to the question of how **Believers** should relate to a government run by non-**Believers**, in vv. 18-25 to how believing slaves should relate to a non-believing master, and in 3:1-6 to how believing wives should relate to their un-believing husbands [which we will be studying in the next two posts].

¹³ For the sake of the Lord, submit yourselves to every human authority—whether to the emperor as being supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as being sent by him to punish wrongdoers and praise those who do what is good. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that your doing good should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶ Submit as people who are free, but not letting your freedom serve as an excuse for evil; rather, submit as God's slaves. ¹⁷ Be respectful to all—keep loving the brotherhood, fearing God, and honoring the emperor. ~ 1 Kefa 2:11-17(CJB).

From emperor, president, prime minister, governor, or mayor on down, any governmental official, who maintains a just government, must be obeyed, for Believers are not intended to be anarchists. The problems of dishonest or corrupt governments are not discussed in this passage.

Ignorant talk includes the false understanding of Believers spread among outsiders; Roman aristocrats were much quicker to malign minority religions, whose worship did not assimilate to Roman values than to seek to understand them. The Tanakh taught God's sovereignty over rulers (Prov 16:10; 21:1).

Submit as people who are free. Here **Kefa** modifies a familiar exhortation of ancient philosophers: for them, freedom from the world's values meant not only authority to do as one pleased but also the freedom to pursue virtue, freedom from desire, and freedom to do without. For **Believers**, freedom meant freedom to be **God's** slaves rather than slaves to sin; it meant freedom from the state's tyranny and freedom to uphold the state's laws as **God's** servants.

We will learn about **Submission of Slaves to Masters** in 1 Kefa 2:18-25 in my next post.