INTRO: Why did God allow evil men like the Herods & the Caesars to rise to power in times past? Why does He allow men like Momar Kadaphe, Fidel Castro, etc., to exercise power today. I don't know. I won't try to second guess Him. I only know that they rule because He allows them to do so.

We hear much about rights today: human rights, civil rights, property rights, states rights, women's rights, minority rights, animal rights, etc. About the only rights we hear relatively little about in our modern society is God's right to command His creation & to bring it into judgment. For the next few minutes, think with me on the subject of rights.


II. MAN ENJOYS CERTAIN *DELEGATED* RIGHTS.
A. Since God has ALL rights, the only rights others have are those that God sees fit to grant them. The framers of our constitution spoke of inalienable rights with which God has endowed us, among them, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Let's think about that for a moment.

1. Life. The fact that God has given us life indicates that we have a right to live until God deems otherwise.

2. Liberty. All have certain liberties; none have absolute liberty. Some of our forefathers owned slaves, even as they wrote the Constitution & the Bill of Rights.
   a. Some parents grant their children more freedom than others. Recall Paul Bolton & Dr. Spook. The rule is still "Children obey your patents in the Lord" (Eph 6:1). Exception: in the Lord. Some parents are not doing their duty, & are
leaving their children spiritually &
morally crippled for life. "Little Johnny,
full of glee...

b. Some governing authorities grant more free-
dom to their citizens that others. The
rule is still, "Submit yourself to every
ordinance of man for the Lord's sake"

3. Pursuit of Happiness. I agree that all people have the
right to chase happiness, but I have observed
that those who chase it most constantly seem to
seldom catch up with it, while those who do
their duty, mind their own business & live in
harmony with God's laws frequently enjoy
happiness as a by-product of their godly
lifestyle.

Solomon pursued happiness, sought to find
meaning in life, in worldly knowledge, earthly
possessions, personal achievements, wine,
women & song--but he finally concluded:  "Fear
God & keep His commandments, for this is
man's all. For God will bring every work into
judgment, including every secret thing, whether
good or evil." (Eccl 12:13-14).

B. The Jews had certain rights given them under the Law of
Moses, in matters of land ownership, inheritance,
protection from the unlawful, etc.

C. Christians have certain rights granted to them because of
their obedience & faithfulness to Christ.

1. Those who believe the gospel & receive Christ as
revealed therein, have the RIGHT to become
children of God in a special sense, John 1:12.
2. Those who work "full time" in preaching & teaching
God's word have the RIGHT to be supported
financially by those who learn from them,
2 Cor. 9:3-14.

3. All Christians have been granted the RIGHT to an altar that Jewish priests, even the High Priest, had no access: the benefit of the sacrificial death of Jesus.

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. (Heb 13:10).

NOTE: Of course, many of the Jewish priests did gain the right to that altar, but only by becoming obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Acts 6:7.

4. But of all the blessings, rights, & privileges that we may be partakers in the here & now, the ultimate privilege, the ultimate blessing, the ultimate right is reserved for us in heaven: "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, & may enter through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14).

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