

# Paul's Teaching on Christians & Government (Romans 13:1-14)

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# Christians and Government

Humanity has had government since the early days of humans on the earth, when the number of people and establish of cities and nations that it has taken form. Much of the time it has been under rule of an oligarchy or a monarchy, but we in America have been blessed by God with a government that is governed with the consent of the governed (WE THE PEOPLE), but ultimately it is necessary to recognize that whether it be a rule by king or by elected representatives of the people, it is ultimately a government under the Creator. Powerful rulers tend to become dictatorial and evil: “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Lord Acton, late 19<sup>th</sup> cent.

# American Law Prohibits Government Action over Religion, Neither Creating State Churches or Prohibiting Religious Viewpoints and Activities

James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution, said in the Federalist Papers that individuals within the state were authorized to reject laws of the Federal government when they violated the laws of the state.

Madison, for the most part wrote the Bill of Rights. The pertinent one for our consideration is the First Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The intent is to prohibit the federal government from having power over religious expression, beliefs, or activities.

# Christians and Government— The Declaration of Independence

- **In Congress, July 4, 1776**
- **The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.** When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the **Laws of Nature and of Nature's God [Sir William Blackstone, Oxford]** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. The founders were people who had high respect for law and when the monarchy in England did not honor agreements and treaties, finally they saw the need to create a new government, a **republic** rather than a monarchy.
- We hold these **truths to be self-evident**, that all men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

# The Christians Civil Duties

## Be subject to the civil government (Romans 13:1-5)

### 1. Be subject to the civil government (13:1-5)

#### a. Because of its divine ordination (vv 1-3)

##### (1) Both church and government are ordained by God

(a) “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. (v. 1)

(b) This was said during a time of wicked tyrants in Rome, such as Nero (time of Paul and Peter), Caligula, Domitian (time of John, author of Gospel, epistles and the Revelation), Diocletian, etc.

(c) How would Paul deal with the Holocaust? The acts of Corrie ten Boom and family probably saved over 800 people.

##### (2) The state uses the sword as an agent of God

(a) “Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.” (vv. 2, 3)

# The Christians Civil Duties

Be a supporter of civil government (Romans 13:1-5)

1. Be subject to the civil government (13:1-5)

b. Because of its beneficial purpose vv 4-5

(1) It is ordained to promote righteousness

“For he is God’s minister to you for good.” Some government can be much better than anarchy (like BLM, etc.)

(2) It is ordained to repress evil

“But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore, you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake.(vv. 2, 3)”

## The Christians Civil Duties

### Be a supporter of civil government (Romans 13:6-7)

#### 2. Be a supporter of civil government (13:6-7)

##### a. Support it by revenue (vv 6-7a)

They are in God's service

**“For of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.”**

**How many like to pay taxes? Not many but despite corruption, this is necessary, even agreed to by Jesus and Paul.**

## The Christians Civil Duties

### Be a supporter of civil government (Romans 13:6-7)

#### 2. Be a supporter of civil government (13:6-7)

##### **b.Support the servants of government by respect v. 7b**

**“Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, "customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”**

**Jesus said: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” (Matt 22:21; Mk 12:17) Everything is God’s and He permits “Caesar” to govern some areas of life.**

## WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

### The Christians Civil Duties

Be law-abiding to civil government we show  
Christian love (Romans 13:8-10)

### 3. Be law-abiding because of love (13:8-10)

Charles Finney's definition of *agape* (αγαπη) love:

“Seeking another person's highest good”

- a. **Love is a debt we owe the world**
- b. **Love actually fulfills the law**
- c. **Love turns the law into a delight; it changes motivation**

# Additional Considerations Regarding Christians and the Government

- **Important Considerations: The State is NOT God (has limited authority under God as His servant)**
  - We are to use the areas of government to require it to act consistent with the governing documents of the federal and state governments, both to act consistent with the moral laws of God, and to avoid wrongdoing against the use of law. The government is not God (absolute authority), but a servant of God, so when the state fails to abide by its responsibility under God, there are principles to consider concerning being obedient to the government. Such was argued by James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution regarding federal and states power regarding law in *The Federalist Papers* (James Madison, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton).
  - Paul exercised his rights as a Roman in the Antonia Fortress by the Temple Mount when he was going to be scourged. He also used his rights as a Roman Citizen to appeal to Caesar, which he did before King Agrippa II and Governor Felix.

# Biblical Examples of Incidents of Believers Being Disobedient to the Government

Following are two principles for Christians to consider in how to deal with government: **We are to disobey government** when it commands us **not to do what God commands** or **commands us to do what God forbids**.

## Old Testament Examples

Hebrew midwives (Ex 1)

Moses' parents (Ex 1)

Rahab (Josh 2)

3 Hebrew Men and Daniel to eat forbidden food (Dan 1)

Hebrew Men to bow before statue of a god (Dan 6)

## New Testament Examples

The Magi (Matt 2)

Jesus' refusal to answer or perform miracle for King Herod (Lk 23:6-12)

Apostles refused to stop preaching (Acts 4:13-22) by the temple elders, who were the Jewish authorities over the temple

# Biblical Examples of Incidents of Believers Being Disobedient to the Government

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## Old Testament Examples

Daniel praying (Dan 6)

Esther going before the king (Esth 5)

## New Testament Examples

John the Baptist (Mk 6), preaching against Herod

Antipas on his wrongful marriage

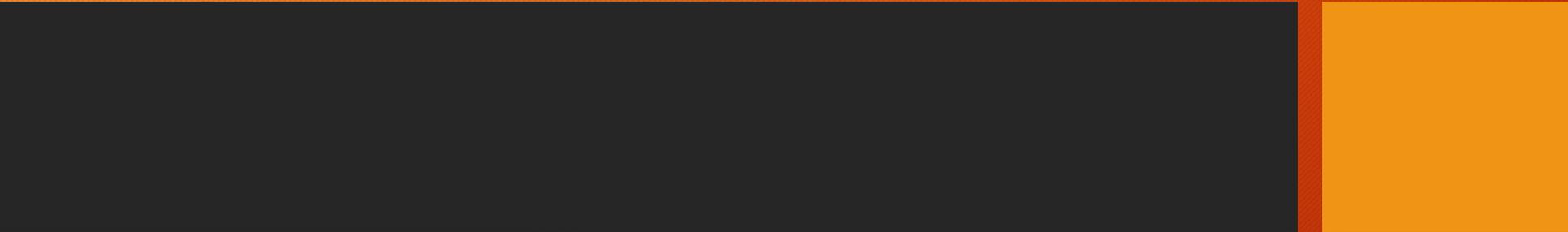
Peter and John to to preach (Acts 4)

Apostles refused to stop preaching (Acts 4:13-22) by the temple elders, who were the Jewish authorities over the temple

Peter escaping from prison (Ac 5:17-21; 12:5-19)

# The Big Idea

- The Christian has **duties to the government**, since government is ordained by God to promote righteousness and repress evil, and a duty to God to **obey the laws** of government when it is **consistent with the laws of God** and to **disobey any laws** that **cause the believer to disobey God**.
- Christian's Civil Duties
  - Being subject to the civil government (13:1-5)
    - Because of its divine ordination vv 1-3
      - Both church and state are ordained by God
      - The state uses the sword as an agent of God
    - Because of its beneficial purpose vv 4-5
      - It is ordained to promote righteousness
      - It is ordained to repress evil
  - Being a supporter of civil government (13:6-7)
    - Support it by revenue vv 6- 7a
    - Support it by respect v 7b
  - Being a law-abiding citizen because of love (13:8-10)



STOP HERE

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