



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 114 Christian & Government – Part 01 Romans 13:1-7

Romans 13:1-7, *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. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will ^[a]bring judgment on themselves. ³ 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. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. 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. ⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.*

Christian's responsibility to government.

This is the most direct, and straightforward passage in all the New Testament on this subject.

The issue of the Christian's relationship to government is a very important issue all through church's history.

Christians have always had to face this issue, and even to struggle with it. Church has found itself in all kinds of places, governments, under all kinds of rulers leading and ruling.

Christians have always had to deal how to respond to the government.

Traditionally and historically in our own country here in United Kingdom we have had less trouble with this than many others. For example, our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in North India, China or behind the Iron Curtain, or in Russia.

Because we have lived in a somewhat Christian influenced society the most compassionate governments. But it hasn't always been that way for Christians as it wasn't for those in the New Testament time when this was written.

Even for the believers in Rome who received this very letter.

Throughout the history of the church, there have been revolutions in the name of Christianity where people decided

that the Christian thing to do was to revolt militarily against the government that's in power and demand their rights. There have even been wars in the name of Christianity.

So, Christians have struggled with this. Sometimes they have rightly understood what their role was, and sometimes they have overturned their God-given role and become revolutionary.

There has been violation of law in the name of Christianity. There have been certain law violations, civil disobedience, subversive attempts to overthrow the powers that be on a local level, a state level, or a national level.

Some cases revolutions led by people who claimed to be Christians, all of this in the name of Christ.

Some Christians have decided that since they have received bad treatment from certain governments, it is justifiable for them to war against those governments.

There are some Christians even today who refuse to pay their taxes, because they feel they violate their freedoms.

Biblical morality as a source of what is right, and we are fast seeing all that kind of thing eroding from nations.

Many Christian leaders are calling for other Christians to leave their present operation, their present ministry, and become a part of a new political Christian lobby to use high pressure, social actions, so forth.

Some are calling for anger, and protest, and a moderate kind of revolution against government.

They say the government is taking churches' freedoms away. It is encroaching on religion.

In an effort to save the freedom of the church, numerous organizations are arising in our country calling for action against the government.

People are selling themselves for something short of that to which the church is called.

The church cannot afford to become just a flag-waving, lobbying, protesting voice for government change. That is not our calling.

I am appalled to note that many Pastors have turned from an emphasis on the Gospel to an emphasis on politics.

From an emphasis on teaching the Bible to an emphasis on coalitions to support particular legislation.

All of this is based upon some ridiculous premise that Christianity's growth, power, and impact is somehow related to the government policy in the country.

C.S. Lewis once reminded Christians live forever, while the state is only temporal.

- To spend your time altering the state when you could be spending your time giving people eternal salvation is a bad bargain.
- To abandon the message which gives to that eternal soul life with God in Favor of temporal change prostitutes and wastes the light.

It would be like a great heart surgeon with a skill to save many, abandoning his life-saving practice to become a makeup artist, and ignore the skill which could save men's lives.

Church needs to use all its power, resources, energy, and forces to convert men and women to Jesus Christ.

This is the only purpose God has called us to do.

The Scripture speaks not at all about Christians engaging in politics. It has nothing to say about it.

Other than the fact that we are to be model citizens, it says nothing. It speaks not at all about Christians engaging in civil change. That is not our priority.

It doesn't mean we are not to be involved as citizens where we can be. It is a question of priority.

In the Old Testament, Israel was a priestly nation. By God's design, Israel was to bring men to God. The nation Israel there were priests whose primary function was to do just that. There were others who could take care of the menial things, and the problems, and the social issues.

But the heart of the matter was the priesthood was the core of life which gave its identity to the whole nation. They could not abandon the role of bringing men and women to God. That was God's design.

The church is the same.

We are a kingdom of priests, not a kingdom of politicians.

Our design in the world is to bring men to God.

Don't you care about change?

Of course, I care about change, but I also know that change comes from inside, not outside.

- We must administrate the things of God.
- We must administrate the kingdom of God.

So, as we approach this whole issue of the Christian's role in government, I want you to understand from the very beginning that what we are saying has nothing to do with politicizing the church.

Has nothing to do with getting involved in those things which are good, but not our divine calling and priority.

There is no biblical mandate for us to spend time, money, and energy in politics in the matters of civil government.

We are to be the conscience of the nation by godly living and faithful preaching.

We confront the nation, not through political pressure, but through the word of God.

That is how we confront the nation.

- We preach against sin.
- We preach against the evils of our time.

But it is preaching and godly living that is our calling.

Look at Christ.

He came into a Roman Empire where slavery flourished.

There were approximately three slaves to every free man. Jesus also came into a world that was dominated by absolutism in terms of rulership. Men were absolutely monarchs, absolute rulers.

After the end of the Roman republic, when the Caesars came in and took power, they ruled with absolute authority. Although **Julius Caesar** was murdered in the **Roman Senate in 44 BC**, this only accelerated the centralization of power.

The Roman Senate declared **Augustus proconsul** and tribune of Rome for life, and he had absolute and total power. He was commander-in-chief of all soldiers, he stood above the senate, and he controlled all civil affairs.

So, Jesus came into a world dominated by slavery and by one man rule, the absolute antithesis of democracy, which we believe to be so dear. All the power of the state was in one man's hands.

We had the same thing in Palestine, where the ruler of Palestine, who was placed there as sort of a puppet king under Rome was a man by the name of Herod.

Herod was an Edomite.

Herod was not a Jew.

That Edomite ruler of Palestine, the king with great power, had the single authority to demand that every single baby in a certain region be massacred. Nobody could stay his hand.

Herod had absolute authority over life and death. He murdered his whole family, his mother, his wife, his sons, and no one held him accountable.

In the time that Jesus came into the world taxes were exorbitant. Those who worked in the taxing process who sold themselves to Rome for money. Exorbitant taxes out of the people were charged.

Zacchaeus when he was converted, immediately said I will pay back everything I have extorted **Fourfold**.

Which was rather typical and tax collectors being extortioners. So, there were unjust taxes. There was unjust rule that heard nothing from the people.

Caesar Augustus decreed that all the world should be taxed and tried to collect an exact from everyone.

Furthermore, Jesus came to His people, the Jews, in a unique situation for them.

- They were personal possession of the Romans.
- They were an underprivileged and oppressed minority.
- They had no voice in Roman government.
- They had to pay heavy taxes to their Roman taskmasters.
- They didn't even know anything about democracy, about voting, about certain quote-unquote "freedoms" that we enjoy.

What did Jesus say?

Matthew 22:21, *They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

- ✓ Jesus did not come with power and force to overthrow the Roman tyranny.
- ✓ He did not seek social change.
- ✓ He did not attempt to eliminate slavery.
- ✓ He did not come with political or economic issues at stake.

They were not the concern of his life and ministry. He did not come to bring new government, to bring democracy, to wave the flag of Judaism, even. His appeal was ever and always to the hearts of individual men and women, not their political freedoms, not their rights under government.

Jesus did not participate in civil rights.
He did not crusade to abolish injustice.
He preached a saving gospel.

Once a man's soul or a woman's soul is right with God, it matters very little what the externals are.

He was not interested in a new social order, but in a new spiritual order, the church.

Jesus mandated the church to carry on the same kind of ministry.

Their problems in those days were far more severe than ours. Even people living on asylum today have cars, TVs, and modern conveniences.

Christians through all the generations of the church have had to deal and struggle with this issue.

What are we called to do and be in this society in which we live?

What is our priority?

How are we to live?

What right does government have over us, and what is to be our proper response to that right?

We live in a tension. There is a tension.

What occupies my mind are the souls of lost men and women.

Does that occupy your mind?

We are not so concerned that everybody be happy, wealthy, and healthy as I am that people be saved.

We need to be concerned not about the external life of people, but the internal soul of the lost.

What is our responsibility to government?

How do we respond in the tension of being preoccupied with the kingdom of God, and yet having to live in this world and wanting to be a good citizen?

1. Everything subject Higher power.

V1, "*Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.*"

2. Pay your due.

V 6, *For this cause, pay your taxes.*

The apostle Paul says two things are required of you as a Christian: Submit to the government and pay your taxes.

Our duty is to submit to the government and pay your taxes. Beyond that, you ought to be busy in the kingdom.

Busy doing that thing which is eternally valuable. It isn't the other things are not important, it is that they pale in importance when compared with the work of the kingdom.

That's what Jesus meant when He said, "render to Caesar."

What did Caesar want?

Submission and money.

Submit to the rules and the laws and pay your taxes.

How does this section fit into this whole epistle of Romans?

Great theological epistle.

All of a sudden, this epistle deal about submission to the government and paying your taxes.

The first 11 chapters tell us about being justified by grace through faith. He describes what it is to be a Christian.

Now that you have all this from God's gracious hand, now that you have received all this, **chapter 12:1**, *Present your body a living sacrifice.*

Give everything you are to the Lord.

Your soul.

Your body.

Your mind.

Your will.

Give it all to Him!

Here is this idea of personal self-sacrifice. Give the Lord everything.

Now the result of that will be a proper relationship to God. You will know and prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

If I respond to the salvation God has given to me by giving everything what I have and going to have a right relationship with the Lord. I am going to know His will and His purpose, and I am going to do it.

Another way, **V3-13**, he says you will have a proper relationship with the family of God.

Use your spiritual gift.
Love people, be kind to them.

V 14-21, he says if your life is presented to the Lord, you are also going to have right relationships with your non-Christian friends, and even with your enemies.

So, the point here is that Christianity impacts every part of life. All the theological lesson he said about salvation is just to get to this.

Knowing what God has done for you, your response needs to be very simple.

Your response to what God has done for you is to give the Lord your life, your soul, your body, your heart, and your mind, to give Him everything you have.

In giving Him everything that you have, you are going to find a right relationship with Him where you will know His good and acceptable and perfect will.

- A right relationship with each other where you use your spiritual gift and meet each other's needs.
- A right relationship to outsiders where even if they persecute you, you are going to bless them.
- A right relationship to people so that if they injure you, and if they seek to harm you. If they do things evil against you, you are not even going to be avenging them.

If you have a life dedicated to Christ, you are not only going to have a right relationship with God, other Christians, outsiders, and enemies.

You will also have a right relationship to civil authorities.
They are an essential part of our life because government is an institution of God.

What Paul is saying here is a committed Christian who is solely given over to the Lord will have a right relationship to civil authority.

How?

By submitting himself to government, and by paying his taxes.

Romans 12:19-21, Has been talking about non-retaliation, non-vengeance. Returning love for hate and good for evil.

Here is one way you do that.

- No matter what the government does, you submit.
- No matter what the government does, you pay your taxes.

You are not violent.

You are not a subversive.

No breach of peace should ever come from a Christian.

Romans 12:18, *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

Christians are not to be those who breach the peace, who make trouble. There is no place for personal vengeance.

If we are injured or defrauded and there is a way through our system to get back what was taken from us, that's fine.

What about someone defraud me in my business?

You have a right to go to the proper authorities to try to get back what has been lost. But you have no right to go beyond that and seek personal vengeance at the expense of the person who did it.

If someone takes something of mine, I can go to the authorities, I am able to and try to get that back if it is justifiably to be gained. But what I can't do is then turn around and try to strip that person bare of everything they possess by a selfish, vengeful lawsuit.

We are not to be those who breach the peace, and not to be those who seek vengeance and retaliation.

Who is going to make it right?

Where is the justice going to come from?

Answer comes in chapter 13.

- Vengeance is not the role of the individual.
- Retaliation is not the role of the individual.

Bringing evil to evil men is not the role of the individual Christian. It is the role of government.

The principle of the Old Testament - an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life - is a principle of government. Not of personal vengeance.

So, we don't retaliate, and seek personal, violent vengeance. It is the role of civil government to deal with those who are evildoers.

This passage shows us that when criminal things have been done against us,

- we return love for hate,
- good for evil, and
- the government will take care of proper recourse.

That is the government's role.

In Paul's day, this was a very critical issue.

The Jews were notoriously zealous for their own identity, their own nation, their own independence, their own freedom, their own God, and their own religion.

So, the Jews constantly rebelled against Roman control.

There were just little fires cropping up everywhere. Even though Roman domination was, for the most part beneficent.

The Roman peace was easy to bear and it was not harsh and unrealistic still the Jews did not like the idea that they were under the yoke of anyone.

When conversing with Jesus, you remember in **John 8**, they said, "We have never been in bondage to anyone," which was a pretty ridiculous statement since they were at that very time under Roman domination.

- Prior to that were under the domination of the Greeks.
- Prior to that were under the domination of the Medo-Persians.
- Prior to that were under the domination of the Babylonians.
- Earlier than that were under the domination of the Egyptians.
- So, they had short memories.

But what they were really saying was not, we were not under domination externally, but what they were saying was, "We have never been dominated in our hearts. We have never accepted that kind of bondage."

They didn't like that dictatorship, and even though they enjoyed exceptional privileges in the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire, which advocated Caesar worship, and everybody was supposed to worship Caesar as a god, allowed the Jews to worship their own God, safe-guarded their right to worship.

The Romans safe-guarded the Sabbath day, the Sabbath laws, the food laws, the prohibition of idols.

The Romans made a law that no one could come into the city of Jerusalem inside the walls with any image of the Caesar, because that violated the Jewish idol law.

They did everything they could. The Jews wanted to kill Gentiles who went into the inner court, the Romans upheld their right to do that. Even though that was nothing to do with Roman law, but only with religious law of the Jews.

So, they were very gracious in a sense to the Jews, and still they chafed under their authority.

They hated the Roman domination.

They questioned its legitimacy.

They fought against it.

Matthew 22, They came to Jesus and said, "You tell us. Do we pay our taxes or don't we?"

This was constantly on their minds. They felt that it was an absolute crime for them to acknowledge Caesar.

Jesus said, "Show me a coin," and they took out a coin with Caesar's image, and of course, that would be in their minds an idol. They despised that. Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

What Jesus was affirming that in spite of what they felt, they were obligated to submit to government. But they irritated so much under that.

Mark 15:7, *And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.*

Barabbas, who had led a rebellion. There were a lot of rebellions. The Romans dealt with them continually.

The Romans did a lot to keep the peace. One time they even put Paul in prison because they thought that Paul would be the cause of a Jewish riot, and Jewish riots could turn against them. They were very cautious in imprisoning Paul, not only for his own protection, but for the protection that they would gain from some kind of riot.

Acts 5:36-37, *For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. ³⁷After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.*

The Romans were constantly breaking up these kinds of small revolutions that were started by these would-be Messiahs who were trying to overthrow the Roman yoke.

The Jews took as the basis for their hatred of the Roman yoke, and the Roman rulership.

Deuteronomy 17:15, *you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.*

They were not going to have a king that was not a Jew.

- Herod was not a Jew,
- Caesar was not a Jew,
- Pilate was not a Jew,
- None of those who ruled them were Jews.

So they used that passage as a defence for their attitude toward the government.

What they forgot was they weren't living under the terms of Deuteronomy anymore.

They had so violated God's covenant that they were under judgment. Those kinds of things had been set aside.

Now also among the Jews were a group of people known as the **Zealots**.

They believed there was no king but God.

There should be no taxes paid to anyone but God, so they defied the government every way.

They wouldn't submit, and they wouldn't pay taxes.

- They embarked, the Zealots did, on violent action.
- They started groups.
- They became murderers, careers of murder and assassination. They were known as dagger-bearers.
- They were fanatical nationalists, sworn to terrorism all their life long.
- They had a great influence on the Jews.

That is why when Jesus came along and the Jews saw His power, they wanted immediately to make him king.

Why?

Because they wanted the ultimate revolt, and they would fight and win against Rome.

Now this kind of constant fomenting attitude against Rome, is ultimately why the event of **70 AD** happened.

Finally, the Romans took all they could take, and in 70 AD they came in and just wiped-out Jerusalem.

They killed a **million Jews**. Massacred them. To stop the incessant revolt and revolution.

This is not a Godly attitude.

This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Paul also meant when he said, "Live peaceably with all men."

- We are not to be concerned with issues of the state and the government as a priority.
- We are to be busy living godly lives as the conscience of a nation, and preaching God's word.

Not starting revolutions and protesting and making trouble.

But Roman law, for the most part, continued even during the life of Paul, in spite of all these things, to be somewhat favourable to Christianity.

They frankly saw Christianity as nothing more than a sort of offshoot of Judaism, a sort of Judaist cult.

Acts 18 where the Corinthian Jews accused Paul of propagating an illegal religion.

Acts 18:12-13, *When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat,¹³ saying, "This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."*

The Romans didn't allow a lot of religion, but they had legalized Judaism. So, they said Judaism is legal.

When Paul came along preaching Christ, the Corinthian Jews wanted to get Paul in trouble with the Roman power. They said that Paul is preaching an illegal religion.

They called in the pro-consul, Gallio, to tell him that this was an illegal religion. He paid absolutely no attention to their accusation at all, which indicates to us that he thought of Christianity as nothing more than a few Jews disputing with other Jews about some element of theology.

Because of that attitude that Christianity was just sort of an offshoot of Judaism, it gave Paul freedom in the Roman Empire to continue to preach the gospel of Christ.

Over the next ten years his ministry could continue due to this perception. Even though Christianity truly, if understood, was not a sanctioned religion.

But looking at it from another angle Christianity was to be watched. Even though they tolerated it they knew that it needed to be watched.

After all, the Romans knew that the founder of Christianity was one Jesus Christ. In one reference He is called Christus.

That founder was basically killed because, as far as they knew, he was claiming to be a king and offered a rival to the Caesar.

So, they knew there was a potential within Christianity for trouble, and so even though they tolerated it, they watched it.

There were some Christians no doubt in some places who posed a threat to some Roman authorities. Some of them were thought to be subversive, some of them were assumed to be real troublemakers.

Acts 17:6-7, *But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. ⁷Jason has harboured them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus."*

The idea that their founder was a rival king sort of followed them. But even in spite of this, there was real tolerance for Christianity.

But Paul is very careful in what he says, because he doesn't want any trouble.

It is possible that if they pushed a little too hard at their freedoms, if they didn't know how to respond to the Roman government, they could really be in trouble.

The Romans were watching them, even though they had some freedom. The best thing for them to do was to continue to live peaceably and honourably as citizens in their society.

They were not to be associated with the Jewish mentality of insurrection, rebellion, and revolution, all of that.

Paul writes this to remind them of their duty as citizens, to establish exemplary conduct, like Christ had shown.

- Christ had shown.
- Like the apostles had shown.
- Like the believers in the earliest part of the church had shown.
- They wanted to separate Christianity from insurrection as to Judaism.
- They wanted to affirm that Christians are good citizens.
- Christianity and good citizenship go together.

Good citizenship isn't just a question of not committing crimes, it's also a question of honouring, respecting, and giving dignity to those in authority over us.

V 1, *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.*

Civil government, in whatever form or under whatever ruler or rulers, is to be obeyed and submitted to by Christians.

A Christian has the duty to his nation, even if his ruler is a Nero or a Hitler.

Peter.

Peter is writing to some believers who are right at the edge of a major persecution. He is encouraging them to be ready to face what they are going to face.

1 Peter 4:12-15, *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

If you suffer for a Christian, don't be ashamed.

Get ready. You are going to suffer. The Spirit of God gives him insight to know that the persecution that's already beginning on an individual level is going to become wholesale.

Peter is writing then to some saints who are living in a time of persecution. The wholesale persecution hasn't yet broken out,

but there is some persecution that's already started. They need to be ready to handle it.

How do you handle it?

1 Peter 2:12, *having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

They may speak of you as evil, but let it be a lie.

How are you going to do that?

How are you going to live in a society that wants to persecute you so that they see your goodness?

1 Peter 2:13-17, *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

Foolish men are looking for something to criticize, and your lack of good citizenship and obedience to the civil authority will give them their reason.

There are people on the television from time to time who curses at the leaders of the state, who uses profanity.

I don't think they have never ever read this passage, or if they have then they have just ignored it.

- We are not free to do that.
- We are not free to be malicious.
- We are to honour all men.

Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

1 Peter 2:18-21, *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.* ¹⁹*For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.* ²⁰*For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.* ²¹*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

Accept it and obey your authorities.

Christians in any society who are willing to obey the laws and submit to those laws will find it to their benefit, as we shall see later in **Romans 13**.

We have a serious responsibility to live out our justification by grace through faith.

Our self-sacrificing to the Lord, as **Romans 12:1-2** describes it, should make us model citizens of our nation.

- We should not be known as protestors.
- We should not be known as those who lambast, criticize, and demean people in authority.
- We should speak against sin, speak against injustice, speak against evil, speak against immorality, fearlessly and without hesitation, but give honour to those who are in authority over us.

This is a biblical pattern for every age, and every nation, and every Christian.

Has nothing to do with Britain or America or India or China or Russia.

Some of these nations didn't even exist when this was written, obviously.

V 1, "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.*"

The principle is unqualified, unlimited, and unconditional.

The emphasis is on the individual, every individual person.

Let us be subject is the verb.

Hupotassō, is a military term, means to line up to take your orders.

Let everyone of us get in line in submission to those who are commanding us.

Who is that?

The higher powers.

Literally means the authorities which are over us.

Authorities who have authority over us. The supreme ruling power. They are called in **V3** “rulers.”

The text makes no distinction between good rulers, bad rulers, fair laws, and unfair laws.

In fact, it is the obedience of Christians to unfair laws, the obedience of Christians to unjust rulers in the early years of the Roman Empire, the obedience of Christians through the persecutions that brought tolerance, acceptance, and finally Christianity to that same empire.

We are called then to submit.

They rightly represent divine truth.

They are changing fast, but we are to submit.

There aren't Christian nations.

There are only Christian people.

1 Timothy 2:1-3, *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*

God our Savior wants us to live a life that is peaceable.

- We make peace, we don't make trouble.
- We make peace, we don't protest.
- We live quiet, peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.
- We affect the society from the inside by changing the hearts, not the structure.

Titus 3:1-2, *Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.*

Peaceable. Loving. Gentle. Meek.

It bothers me to see people in the name of Christ running around doing tirades on the leaders of nation. No matter

whether we feel they are adequate, inadequate, just, unjust, fair or unfair.

This is repeated in the Scripture.

We see it in Peter.

We see it in 1 Timothy.

We see it in Titus.

Are we submitting to everything?

Everything without limitation?

No, there is one limitation.

Acts 4:13-17, *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."*

So, we will just tell them they can't speak again.

They called them, commanded them not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus.

Now this is the government.

This is the ruler.

This is the authority.

Even though it's the religious authority, it's authority.

Acts 4:19-21, *But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge."²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."²¹ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.*

A real conflict.

God, in the form of Jesus Christ, said to them go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Now the authority says don't preach.

Now you have cross commands.

So, Peter says you tell us, who shall we obey?

You or God?

The one time we have a right to disobey the authority and the government is when the government commands us not to do something God commanded us to do.

Or when the government commands us to do something God commanded us not to do. When it invades that domain.

For example, if all these laws that are supposed to be being made for the rights of homosexuals come to the point where they make demands on our Church to perform homosexuals, that's where we say sorry, you have just told us to do what God forbids us to do.

We will not do that.

Those are the only places where we have justification.

If it comes to that, we have the opportunity to speak loudly and clearly as to why we stand with the truth of God.

Acts 4:31, *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

They weren't quiet at all. Not at all.

Same thing happened in the second persecution in chapter 5.

They were told again to be quiet, to say nothing.

Acts 5:28, saying, *“Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”*

They didn't obey. That accelerated their efforts.

Part of their message was that the Jews were responsible for killing the Messiah. Peter said the same thing, along with the other apostles. We ought to obey God rather than men.

That's the only time a Christian comes to the point of tension where he must violate his government.

There is no such thing as a Christian government.

There has never been such thing as a Christian government, so don't assume.

Paul is not writing this with a Christian government in mind.

Certainly, the Roman one wasn't. There never has been one. The only Christian government that will ever be is the Millennium. The millennial kingdom. But until then, all governments are flawed.

We have been privileged in our country, and I thank God for the privilege of living under the best, one of the best of human governments in the past. We are grateful for that. That is a great privilege.

God has given these 500-plus years to the United Kingdom in this time of redemptive history for one specific purpose.

Do you realize why United Kingdom has been the primary source of missionaries for the world?

Now there is a change coming.

The mission's emphasis of the world is turning to be a world mission emphasis.

Other countries now taking the high-profile lead in sending out missionaries.

In God's economy to be that nation that supported by sending and by financing, of course, that American church money for the most part financed the last 200 years of world missions. Our time may be done. God will bring up a new people to send those who will reach His world.

It isn't just us. We have been there for our time.

Now we all have come as reverse missionary to this country.

We are called to submit, if our government changes its form, as governments do, to be model citizens who not only obey, but who have a spirit of obedience.

Give honour to those who are in authority over us, that the name of Christ might not be evil spoken of.

The critics who are looking for ways to condemn Christians, if they are going to condemn us, please, let it be for our faith, not our political viewpoint.

So, we submit.