

Government has been in existence for a very long time. Perhaps the most influential government in history was that of the Romans.

That was an empire that spanned several hundred years.

- 8th century BC and into the 5th century AD

The Romans believed they were to rule the world

God established Government because man's heart

- is so deceitfully wicked and needs to be governed

No government is ideal.

There are and will always be evil people in government,

In fact,

- sometimes people in high positions are worse

There are **several reasons** why **Christianity and civil government** might be at odds with one another.

One of the reason is because we don't belong to this world

- and civil government is secular in nature
- while Christianity is Spiritual in nature.

Phil 3:20

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

We've got dual citizenship!

A second reason we may be seen as being at odds with the government is competition.

The highest authority a person has is God Himself,

- a secular world doesn't want God as an authority figure.

The Romans had their god, Caesar:

A third reason the government may see the Christian at odds:

- Believers are at times required to
- **obey God** rather than man.

This section of scripture, verses 1-7

- have caused a lot of reason for debate among Christians

Christians sometimes have to make difficult decisions, God or government!

Jesus said in Luke 19:13 to stay busy until He returns. In fact, Jesus prayed for us in Jn 17:15 He said, 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

We don't want to neglect what the Lord has entrusted us with on this earth,

The political background of the NT was not a democracy. It was an autocracy (governed by one person with absolute power).

There was only one governmental power in most of the world at that time, at least the world we're dealing with and that is the Roman world.

Rome had been a republic and had now become an autocracy

Caesar was in command:

Caesar in Rome became so arrogant,

- demanded respect
- and worship and loyalty
- every citizen in Rome and
- throughout the known world
- had to publicly swear allegiance to him
- and say that Caesar is Lord.

By now Israel had been conquered by Rome,

- it was now part of the Roman government.

In most cases when a place is overrun and taken over,

- the form of government changes.

In the case of the Jews,

- they were allowed to keep their own language
- and even some form of government.

Herod was appointed as king.

- Herod was called the king of the Jews,
- the king of Judea, a self-appointed name.

Herod mandated

- every male child two years and younger
- be slaughtered in one section of Judea

Rom 13:1-7

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.

2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will 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, honor to whom honor.

So, what should our relation to the human government be?

- 1) According to verse one we are to be subject to the governing authorities. The word is used in the NT to mean obedience, and to submit.

Titus 3:1

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

1 Peter 2:13-15

13 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 -

The English word "submit" is derived from the Greek word *Hupotássōe* - **means to place or arrange under:**

So Christians and any non-Christian alike are to

- help carry the burden of government
- by submitting to it.

So why would Paul say to be subject to the governing authorities?

- When people act different
- they are viewed as suspicious.

Paul thought it best for the Christians not to stir the pot,

- but to be model citizens

Caesar was the emperor at the time,

- a very cruel man.
- His name was Nero
- He's the very person that would eventually have Paul beheaded

Paul speaking of this very person in verse 1.

He was telling everyone to be subject to governing authority knowing that Nero was a very evil man.

Nero starts fire:

Sometime in AD 64 some 6 years after Romans was written,

Nero Builds Race Track:

History says that at some point Nero began to fantasize of racing his chariot the only problem was there was no place to race.

Human Torches:

Nero uses Christians as human torches

So part of our role as a believer is

- to be a good model citizen to the government and to others

Rom 13:1-7 Chapters about our relationship to the government

1 Let every soul be subject (hupotássœ - hupa means under, so if we're under the government then we're under it. Tassœ means to line up.) to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Paul was writing to these young believers in the Roman empire.

- The great persecution of Christians had not yet started

Christianity was still considered part of the Jewish sect

And during these early days of Christianity the Jewish religion was still approved in Rome.

So the Pharisees and Herodians tried to put Jesus on the spot regarding Caesar!

Mark 12:13-17

13 Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. 14 When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are

true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?

Pharisees

- cannot stand the Romans
- did not want to pay taxes to the government.

Highest Bidder collected Taxes:

Herodians hated the Pharisees

- and thought that the Pharisees should pay taxes to the Roman government.

But one thing they did have in common with the Pharisees was their hatred of Jesus. Together they plotted against the life of Jesus in Mark 3:6.

In Mark 8:15 Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the evil influence of the Pharisees and Herodians.

Mark 12:15 the Pharisees and Herodians asked Jesus:

15 Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" (speaking of taxes) But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it."
16 So they brought it.

And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's."

17 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

We must have the Lord inscribed in our heart!

In Acts 4 and in Acts 5:29 Peter and John were imprisoned for preaching the gospel and when confronted they said that they need to obey God rather than man.

Why have governing authority anyway?

We have government for the common good of man.

We're seeing a taste today,

- a taste of what a godless society with no government would look like.

We know from scripture that God appoints the Kings.

Don't always agree with leaders:

Paul says, we are to be subject to the governing authorities.

Peter said, in 1 Peter 2:17, fear God and honor the king.

Jesus said something similar in His good confession. 1 Tim 6:13 says:

- that Jesus witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate

and we know from Jn 19,

- that Jesus only spoke 3 times in front of Pilate,

but we also know from

- John 18 and 19 the first thing Jesus said was
- that His kingdom is not of this world.

The **second thing** Jesus said

- everyone who is of the truth hears His voice.

And the third thing Jesus said,

John 19:9-11

11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above."

The reason Jesus said that was:

- because Pilate was saying that he had authority to kill Him.

Daniel in chapter 4 said that

- the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,
- and gives it to whomever He chooses.

Joseph

- was placed in a position of authority
- because of his God given ability to interpret dreams.

2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will 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.

Is there a time when you can resist government because it is evil!

When William Tyndale was told that he was not allowed to print bibles

- he left the country so that he could continue printing bibles.

John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress from prison

- this was during his 12 year sentence for preaching on the streets.

When was government set up initially? Gen 9:5,6. The government will have the right to serve capital punishment, to deal with capital punishment.

4 For he is God's minister (to serve) to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword (means execution) in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

Gal 6 says whatever you sow, that you will reap.

5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

Ok, we must be subject to the authorities, to the government. And part of the reason for that is for conscience sake.

1 Peter 3:16-17 speaks of the conscience:

16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Is there ever a time for us as believers that civil authority is negated?

Yes!

- when we are told to disobey God,
- and instead we are told to obey government,

Example: Joshua 2 - Rahab directly disobeyed a command from the king of Jericho to produce the Israelite spies.

Example: In Dan 3 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to a golden idol in disobedience to Nebuchadnezzar's command.

Example: In Exodus 1 Pharaoh had given a command to two of the Hebrew midwives that they were to kill all of the newborn male Jewish babies. They disobeyed the Pharaoh because they feared God.

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, honor to whom honor.

One of our responsibility to the government is to pray. 1 Tim 2

1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications (δέσεις - pronounced "d ay sais" to declare or to bind legally. Basically, to go before God and declare what is lawful and not lawful); , prayers (προσευχή; pronounced "pra su kus" which is turning to God and having a conversation of what is going on. So we take things to God in prayer and ask Him to take care of it), intercessions (ἐντεύξεις; to fall in with,) , and giving of thanks (εὐχαριστία - gratitude) be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God wants us to have good government and He wants us to pray for government.

Jer 17:12 says, 12 A glorious high throne from the beginning
Is the place of our sanctuary.

God always desires obedience before work in the ministry.
Obedience is better than sacrifice.