



# The Kingdom Perspective

## King on the Law

Hello! This is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective!

The biblical and Christian understanding of the limited nature of human authority has been nowhere better and succinctly stated than by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In April of 1963, he had been imprisoned for protesting his opposition to the overreach of government in their laws mandating the segregation of races in the Jim Crow South. In his famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail” he was responding to mainline White clergy who had criticized his tactics in fighting these “unjust laws”.

King responded with gracious but pointed truth, deeply rooted in the biblical Christian tradition. Listen:  
“One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that ‘an unjust law is no law at all.’”

Dr. King goes on to raise the question:

“Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law.”  
(King, Martin Luther Jr. “Letter from a Birmingham jail.” In *Why We Can’t Wait*, 1963.)

A human law and the application of that human law are only valid to the degree that they square with the law of God. All human authority is established by God (Romans 13) and therefore is accountable to His Word.

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, saying, ‘We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.’ But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.’”

~ Acts 5:27-32 (NASB95)

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