

“A Christian Respect for Government” Romans 13:1-7

13 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. Romans 13:1–7 (NKJV)

I. God is sovereign in regard to who rules over us –

1. Therefore, we are to be “subject” to them –

13 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities... Romans 13:1 A (NKJV)

A. This can be despite indignities and / or inconveniences from them –

⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Matthew 5:41 (NKJV)

In Matthew 5:41 Jesus was referring to a specific Roman Empire law that required his people, the Jewish people, specifically men to carry armor for a Roman soldier, on DEMAND! This typically irked the Jews because this DEMAND could come at any time and required immediately obedience. The requirement was one mile, and you can bet every Jewish man knew how far a mile might be from his home. Yet, Jesus says, “go two!”

Why two miles? Because as followers of Christ, we are different, better.

B. If laws were to be kept even with indignities and / or inconveniences, certainly they are to be kept when they are not difficult to keep.

2. This subjection is because these have their authority FROM GOD –
For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Romans 13:1 B (NKJV)

In what ways are rulers' authority from God?

A. God's providence -

... the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. Daniel 4:25 B (NKJV)

B. God's design –

²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Genesis 1:26 (NKJV)

C. God's laws –

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. Romans 13:3 (NKJV)

*Notice what is said here - **Do what is good**, not do what every ruler **COMMANDS**, even if it is **EVIL**, sinful ...*

II. God gives sinful rulers to sinful people, and sinful people choose them –

**1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. Daniel 1:1–2 (NKJV)**

Are we to obey evil sinful rulers? Yes! Are we to obey them when they command sin? NO!

3. *We have examples in Scripture of God blessing those who DISOBEYED evil government –*

A. *The Hebrew midwives –*

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; ¹⁶ and he said, “When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools, if it *is* a son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live.” ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?”

¹⁹ And the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.” ²⁰ Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. ²¹ And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them. Exodus 1:15–21 (NKJV)

The sin: MURDER

B. *Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego -*

¹² There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.” ¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “*Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?* ¹⁵ Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my

hands?” ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Daniel 3:12–18 (NKJV)

The Sin: IDOL WORSHIP

- *Note that by doing what was right, not bowing, at the end even Nebuchadnezzar judged them as RIGHT and changed the law –*

Before they had to make their stand, they kept lawful laws and faithfully serve Nebuchadnezzar, even in disobedience they were respectful.

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.” ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon. Daniel 3:28–30 (NKJV)

C. Those who do not worship the Beast –

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:9-12 (NKJV)

The sin: IDOLATRY and worship of Satan, also lack of faith in God!

Because God is sovereign, we do what is right, even if a bad man commands it, we resist what is wrong, even if a ruler we might otherwise LIKE commands it -

III. God wants us to pay taxes –

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. Romans 13:6–7 (NKJV)

1. Taxes – Paul is saying the same thing Jesus said!

¹⁷ Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

¹⁸ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius. ²⁰ And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” Matthew 22:17–20 (NKJV)

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.” ²² When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. Matthew 22:21–22 (NKJV)

Christians are not to be tax cheats ...

2. Customs –

“Customs Duty is a tariff or tax imposed on goods when transported across international borders. The purpose of Customs Duty is to protect each country’s economy, residents, jobs, environment, etc., by controlling the flow of goods, especially restrictive and prohibited goods, into and out of the country.” From the U.S. Customs and Border Control Website
I am pretty certain the Roman Empire or the Countries which were part of it had similar “custom” taxes.

3. *Fear, Fear is first due God*

⁴“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! Luke 12:4–5 (NKJV)

This is why we might have to respectfully disobey the most powerful of earthly rulers.

4. *Honor –*

Honor and fear are very similar in this context ...

Honor is a lower level of fear ... we should aim to understand these things in our culture and show respect to whom respect is due.

Our world does not teach this. Often times if a PERSON who is in any kind of position of power in politics is not of the media’s chosen party that person is shown the LEAST RESPECT POSSIBLE!

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. Romans 1:28–32 (NKJV)

It is when children are taught to honor and respect parents, that they learn to honor others in various positions in Government -

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. Exodus 20:12 (NKJV)