

GOD & GOVERNMENT

Notes

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Romans 13:1-7

1. While there is a time for rebellion and resistance, whenever possible, Christians are to obey the government, promoting civil society – even when it is secular or not Christian.

a. Roman Soldiers who come to faith are not told to leave their profession behind (by Jesus, John the Baptist, or Simon Peter; Luke 7:1-9, Luke 3:14, Acts 10)

b. Joseph – develops policy and builds a government bureaucracy for the pagan Egyptian Pharaoh/king. (Genesis 41ff).

c. Biblical characters, Daniel, Mordecai, Esther, Nehemiah -- each play their part in secular and godless governments.

BUT

d. Moses leads a God-initiated rebellion against the unjust and oppressive government of Egypt (Exodus 3-14)

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; . . .

⁵one must be subject, not only because of wrath/the need for justice but also because of conscience. ⁶For the same reason *you also pay taxes*, for the authorities are **God's servants**, busy with this very thing (Paul now echoes Jesus) ⁷Pay to all **what is due them**

- taxes to whom taxes are due,
- revenue to whom revenue is due,
- respect to whom respect is due,
- honor to whom honor is due.

2. The concept of “Government” is not a human idea, but God's idea, God's tool, instituted by God.

a. God establishes government in the desert as soon as his people escape from the oppressive government of Egypt

(The Ten Commandments are Israel's “constitution”; Exodus 20)

²Therefore whoever resists authority *resists what God has appointed*, and those who resist will incur judgment. ⁴for it is **God's servant for your good**.

But if you do what is wrong, (yes!) you *should* be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain!

It is **the servant of God** to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.

3. Ultimate authority belongs only to God

All human authority is derived and not permanent

a. Remember when you are *in* authority – those who abuse power have a judge!

b. Remember when you are *under* oppressive authority – the ultimate authority is not in the hands of your oppressors, but in God's hands.

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is ***no authority except from God***, and those authorities that exist have been ***instituted by God***.

Jesus does not resolve the issue of church and state, but lives with and teaches a certain ambiguity:

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and render to God the things that are God's” Mark 12:17

The Scriptures call us to live with the same ambiguity . .

- Remembering that Jesus was oppressed by powerful political forces
- But these forces were over-ruled and used by God for God's purposes. . . .

Some Key Verses

John 14:10-11

10Pilate said to Jesus: “Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?”

11Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.

Jeremiah 29:1-14.

⁷ *Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile*, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said: “You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world”

1 Peter 2:16-17

As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. *Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

1 Timothy 2

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ²*for kings and all who are in high positions*, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.