

📖 Acts 5:29. **Q.** How did the Apostles respond?

📖 Acts 5:40. **Q.** How did the council react to the Apostles?

### Daniel

📖 Dan 6:7-9. **Q.** What decree did King Darius make? What was the penalty?

📖 Dan 6:10. **Q.** How did Daniel respond to the King's decree?

📖 Dan 6:16. **Q.** How did the King respond to Daniel?

📖 Dan 6:22,23. **Q.** What ultimately happened to Daniel? Why?

💬 Considering the above examples, do you think it is ever permissible to disobey your government? Under what circumstances?

In circumstances where the government passes laws which directly coerce the Christian to behave in a way which is contrary to God's law, the Christian ought to obey God. Notice that while God allowed the Apostles and Daniel to disobey their governments, he did not keep them entirely from the consequences of their disobedience. The Apostles were put in prison and beaten, and Daniel spent a night in the lion's den. These men were ready and willing to suffer the consequences of their disobedience.

### Taxes

Lastly, let's consider the subject of taxes. Should the Christian pay taxes to his government? What if his government uses tax money for ungodly causes?

**Q.** In Romans 13 we are told that the government is ordained of God and that it is charged with our protection. Based on these facts, what does Rom 13:6,7 say we should do?

📖 Matt 22:17-22. **Q.** Considering v21, did Jesus say we should pay taxes?

In answering the Jews, Jesus stated that we ought to give according to God's requirements, *and* according to the government's requirements. Remember that God has ordained our earthly governments, therefore paying taxes is in actuality an act of obedience toward our sovereign God!

Jesus principle of "render under Caesar that which is Caesar's" is a principle that applies to all Christians under all forms of government. The Roman government of Jesus' day was not a moral government, and certainly would have used it's money for immoral purposes, but notice that Jesus still taught that taxes should be paid. If at all possible, every Christian ought to strive to be an example of a good citizen and to obey his government. Or as Rom 12:18 states it, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

## A Christian's Relationship with His Government

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*Developing Renewed Relationships*

How should the Christian relate to worldly authorities? This question is often debated in Christian circles. Some folks believe that the Christian should be a pacifist and remain "under the radar" at all times, while others believe that the Christian ought to be a social activist, protesting the government for the cause of Christ. Some believe that the Christian has the right to withhold taxes from an ungodly government, while others teach that it is the Christian's responsibility to pay taxes. With so many differing opinions on the subject, one may assume that the Bible is unclear on the relationship a Christian ought to have to his government. The exact opposite is true. As we will see in the remainder of this study, the Bible gives us clear instruction in how to respond to our government.

It would be helpful before you begin this study to read 📖 Romans 13:1-10, where we find key principles regarding our relationship to *the powers that be.*

📖 Rom 13:1. In this verse we find two principles that are key to the subject of the Christian and his government.

**Q.** Here God tells *every soul* to be \_\_\_\_\_ the higher powers.

According to this verse God requires that all Christians obey (be subject to) their government. This teaching is consistent with other passages:

📖 Titus 3:1. **Q.** Here Paul told Titus to teach the Christians in Crete to be S\_\_\_\_\_ to the *principalities and powers* and to O\_\_\_\_\_ *magistrates.*

📖 1 Pet 2:13-14. **Q.** How does Peter tell us we should respond to *every ordinance of man*?

**Q.** What are two types of authorities mentioned in v13-14 that we are to submit to?

📖 1 Pet 2:17. **Q.** How are we told to respond to the King?

So the first principle that we see is that of **submission**. God has ordained that all Christian's honour and submit to their government.

**Q.** According to the same passage in 1 Peter mentioned above, what will be the affect of the Christian's submission to the government? (v15)

Submitting to worldly governments is a matter of maintaining a right testimony before the unsaved. Christians are often looked at with skepticism or even

suspicion. When we live as exemplary citizens, obeying the powers that be, we put to silence those who seek an occasion to accuse us. According to Titus 3:2, this submission exemplifies a *meek* and *gentle* character.

### **The King of Kings and Lord of Lords**

A lot of the debate surrounding the Christian and his government comes from the fact that most Christians live under unchristian or even anti-Christian governments and do not feel that their leaders deserve to be obeyed. Does the moral state of our government dictate whether or not we should submit? Let's examine some scripture and establish the next key principle – the principle of *God's Sovereignty*.

📖 Rom 13:1. **Q.** According to this verse, where does all power come from?

**Q.** Who *ordained* (appointed or set up) the "powers that be"?

📖 Romans 13:2. **Q.** If we resist our government, we are also resisting the *ordinance* \_\_\_\_\_.

📖 1 Pet 2:13. **Q.** For whose sake do we submit to *every ordinance of man*?

📖 1 Pet 2:14. **Q.** We are to submit to our governors as ones that are S \_\_\_\_\_.

📖 Rom 13:4. **Q.** Our rulers are the ministers \_\_\_\_\_.

When we submit to our government, we do it as servants of God. There is no power which does not first come from God. He has ordained all the *powers that be*.

📖 Rom 13:3. **Q.** According to this verse, our rulers are to protect us from E \_\_\_\_\_. And to P \_\_\_\_\_ those that do good.

📖 Rom 13:4. **Q.** When should we fear our government?

**Q.** What should our government do with those who *doeth evil*?

📖 1 Pet 2:14. **Q.** What two roles should our government play?

God has given us government for our protection. Proverbs 21:1 says *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will*. Even under the most ungodly governments we must acknowledge that our rulers hold an office which is ordained by God. He has given us our rulers for our own protection and for the judgment of those who do evil. Ultimately God is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and in his sovereignty, he has allowed some ungodly men to wield power upon the earth. Even under these evil rulers we are to follow the principle Paul laid out in

Romans 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

Consider the audience to which Paul is writing in the book of Romans. The men and women in Rome of that day lived in a society which was ruled by an absolute monarchy, one in which slavery was rampant, persecution was common, and taxes were exorbitant. It was to this audience that Paul said *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God*. If Paul so clearly and directly told the Romans to submit to their government, we dare not claim that we are excused because of our ungodly government!

### **An Exception**

Now, after we have acknowledged that it is God's will that we submit to our government as if we are submitting to Him; and that it is our duty to try, as much as is possible, to live peaceably with all men; and that our civil obedience is a major factor in our godly testimony toward the unsaved; we can ask the question; **Is there ever a time when we are permitted to oppose the government?**

First of all, there are some situations in which a government provides legitimate ways to influence who its leaders are, and what decisions they make. In these instances the Christian ought to exercise his right to vote, both in elections and referendums. But what about those situations where the Christian has no voice and is being coerced to behave in a way contrary to God's will?

### **The Hebrew Midwives**

📖 Ex 1:15,16. **Q.** What did the King ask the Hebrew midwives to do?

📖 Ex 1:17. **Q.** How did the midwives respond? For what reason?

📖 Ex 1:20,21. **Q.** How did God respond to the midwives?

📖 Ex 1:22. **Q.** Did the midwives obedience to God stop Pharaoh's plan?

🕯️ If the midwives disobedience toward their King did not stop his ultimate plan of killing the Hebrew babies, why was it commendable?

### **The Apostles**

In Acts 5 we read an account of the Apostles being thrown into prison for preaching about Jesus Christ. After God miraculously delivered them from the prison, they continued preaching. They were recaptured and brought before the council once more, this is the context of Acts 5:27:

📖 Acts 5:27-28. **Q.** What did the council forbid the Apostles from doing?