

APPROPRIATE RESPONSE FOR INAPPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT

Romans 13:1-7

Our Statement of Faith: “We believe that the Bible is the God-breathed & plenarily-inspired Word of God, infallible in its original manuscripts. The Bible is **our supreme & final authority in faith & life.**” **REALLY?**

Next few weeks are going to put us to the test.

Do we *REALLY* think Bible is our final authority
–to determine how we act?

We’ll get uncomfortable with it! => “**you can’t live that way!**”

Gospel transforms *every* area of our lives.

It changes our relationship with God;

Also changes *our attitudes & lifestyle.*

Gospel gives us different attitude toward **God, our-selves,
one another, & people outside church**

It even gives different attitude re. our government.

Daniel Webster: “Whatever makes people good Christians makes them good citizens.”

God's children recognize He establishes gov’t

Dan. 4:17 “*The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.*”

God sets up rulers; He removes them, by His plan!

Since we acknowledge God's control of government, we who belong to His family *willingly submit to His authority, & to authority He’s established.*

It’s easy to submit to authority of a just government.

But what about when govt. is corrupt?

Are we supposed to submit to an unjust *pagan* govt?

Nero's emperor—vile tyrant—persecuted Christians

Paul *and* Peter were *both* martyred under his rule.

Nero's ruling when Paul writes this!

If ever govt. gave excuse for *not* submitting, it's Nero's!

What does Rom 13 require in relationship to govt?

Paul doesn't provide easy answers;

he does show us God's will for His family!

Submission Commanded 1a *"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities."*

Another response to what God's done for us

What does it mean to "submit?"

- * Not synonym for "obey"—we may submit & NOT obey!
- * Submission is an attitude—no one can force us to submit
- * **Voluntary** response to authority God has established.

Submission Explained 1b-6 6X tells us why we submit:

We *don't* submit because government is good/just

We submit because of source of authority **13:1b**

*"There's no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established **by God**."*

God established them; authority from God

People who recognize God's right to rule, show it by submitting to authority He established.

No authority exists apart from what's from God

Every govt, even the corrupt, exists because God established it.

When they cease to accomplish purpose, **God** removes them.

Paul understood problem of corrupt govt.!

Examples abound—John the Baptist beheaded by Herod.

Jesus crucified by Pilate's guard

Paul locked up by Roman guards; martyred by Nero

Yet, affirms: govts that exist are established by God!

God used Roman empire, with its cruelty & pagan customs.

Even under them, Paul insists:

no government except what God established.

Principle: God sets up & takes down kings

Just as true for presidents & kings today

Even for *persecuted* church in much of the world:

"Zambia: 3 missionaries thrown into prison—beaten with rifle butts, prodded with bayonets, stripped naked, thrown into cells with human filth. They prayed & witnessed. Others watched.

In jail, they never suspected they were speaking to future Pres. & V.P. of Zambia. Eventually new president publicly confessed sins of the nation, & testified to saving power of Christ.

Corrupt governments still exist!

Want to know if our president is named as God's servant?

It's not based on party—or whether he professes faith in Christ!

If he's in authority over country, he's placed there by God.

People who recognize God's right to rule, show that by submitting to govt. He sets up.

Principle never easy to accept, esp. with unjust conditions!

God never asked us to vote on it!

He asks us to trust Him & obey Him.

Every govt. authority is established by God

Realizing God establishes govt forces logical conclusions

Nature of rebellion 13:2 *“He who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.”*

People who rebel against authority God established end up fighting God.

People who rebel against authority God established will be judged by God

*What do **apostles** teach us about such rebellion?*

Time may come when we have to disobey

How should we conduct ourselves in such a case?

God’s people acknowledge God's sovereignty; trust Him to accomplish what’s best

Doesn’t mean never do *anything*—about injustice

We can use tools God provides: prayer; good works; personal testimony; deeds of justice & mercy.

We *should* try to change conditions which oppress people, without losing sight of *cause* of affliction

Reason for government authority 3-5 *“Rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what’s right & he’ll commend you. ⁴For he’s God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he doesn’t bear the sword for nothing. He’s God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore, it’s necessary to submit to the*

authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.”

3 Xs: Authorities serve God; they’re His servants

Government authority exists to serve God

[may not look like it!]

Govt exists to reward people who do good

Governments exist to ensure welfare of people.

God didn't establish them to create fear among people who obey God!

People who live by His standards don't fear authority

People who refuse to obey worry about government

Govt exists to punish people who do wrong

If it exists for this, how should we respond? 5

We submit to avoid punishment

We submit to keep our conscience clear.

Conscience tells us: obey law; submit to government.

If we don't submit we won't be at peace

We pay taxes because rulers are God's servants

6 *“This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.”*

Christians questioned it then too! –far from reality!

Paul doesn't use argument as pretext *against* submission, but as basis *for* it.

Submission Practiced: How should we respond to govt?

7 *“Give to everyone what you owe them: If*

you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

God's children show submission by:

Fulfilling our obligations faithfully!

**Concerning taxes: reporting honestly;
paying all we owe.**

To people who deserve respect, we give respect

To people who deserve honor, we give honor

Have **we** faithfully fulfilled **our** responsibilities to those God placed over us? **Have we paid all we owe?**

Can tax consultant tell we're Christians?

Question isn't "What does God require of *government*?"

Rather, "What does God require of *ME*?"

What difference should this make in our life?

How should our attitude be different from our neighbors?

We may have to give fresh thought to this in coming years.

God's Word speaks in context of pagan, anti-God Rome.

"Modern Paganization" we may face "Nero's Rome" again

God's children show we submit to God's right to rule by submitting to authority He established.

We *submit*, realizing GOD still sets up & removes leaders!

Good Christians still make good citizens!

Godliness attracts people to God; NOT protest marches!

Can people tell we're children of God who sets up kings?