

GOVERNMENT AND SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

Led by Joshua Cantrell, joshuacantrell@yahoo.com

Submission to Government

In these readings consider the following questions:

- 1) What type of government is being described by these two passages? Does Paul or Peter mention anything about doing evil? About doing good?
- 2) What are the advantages that Paul and Peter give for following the authorities (or masters)? For example, who is pleased by doing so, and how does it relate to those around you?
- 3) Would God sanction your actions if a government (or master) told you to do evil, and you did it? What was Christ's legacy, since Peter says He is our example.
- 4) Why did Christ not answer Herod even though he was the government authority figure? Is Christ disobeying the authority, and therefore "rebellious against God's ordinance?"

Romans 13:1-7 – "Everyone is to obey the governing authorities, because there is no authority except from God and so whatever authorities exist have been appointed by God. So anyone who disobeys an authority is rebelling against God's ordinance; and rebels must expect to receive the condemnation they deserve. Magistrates bring fear not to those who do good, but to those who do evil. So if you want to live with no fear of authority, live honestly and you will have its approval; it is there to serve God for you and for your good. But if you do wrong, then you may well be afraid; because it is not for nothing that the symbol of authority is the sword: it is there to serve God, too, as his avenger, to bring retribution to wrongdoers. You must be obedient, therefore, not only because of this retribution, but also for conscience's sake. And this is why you should pay taxes, too, because the authorities are all serving God as his agents, even while they are busily occupied with that particular task. Pay to each one what is due to each: taxes to the one to whom tax is due, tolls to the one to whom tolls are due, respect to the one to whom respect is due, honor to the one to whom honor is due."

1 Peter 2:13 – "For the sake of the Lord, accept the authority of every human institution: the emperor, as the supreme authority, and the governors as commissioned by him to punish criminals and praise those who do good. It is God's will that by your good deeds you should silence the ignorant talk of fools. You are slaves of no one except God, so behave like free people, and never use your freedom as a cover for wickedness. Have respect for everyone and love for your fellow-believers; fear God and honor the emperor.

"Slaves, you should obey your masters respectfully, not only those who are kind and reasonable but also those who are difficult to please. You see, there is merit if, in awareness of God, you put up with the pains of undeserved punishment; but what glory is there in putting up with a beating after you have done something wrong? The merit in the sight of God is in putting up with it patiently when you are punished for doing your duty.

"This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow in his steps. He had done nothing wrong, and had spoken no deceit. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was

suffering he made no threats but put his trust in the upright judge. He was bearing our sins in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our sins and live for uprightness; through his bruises you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”

Luke 23:6-12 – “When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man were a Galilean; and finding that he came under Herod's jurisdiction, he passed him over to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

“Herod was delighted to see Jesus; he had heard about him and had been wanting for a long time to set eyes on him; moreover, he was hoping to see some miracle worked by him. So he questioned him at some length, but without getting any reply. Meanwhile the chief priests and the scribes were there, vigorously pressing their accusations. Then Herod, together with his guards, treated him with contempt and made fun of him; he put a rich cloak on him and sent him back to Pilate. And though Herod and Pilate had been enemies before, they were reconciled that same day.”

Dealing with Government Laws Contrary to God's Will

In these readings consider the following questions:

- 1) Who are the government authority figures in these stories?
- 2) Paul says to “obey the governing authorities, because there is no authority except from God and so whatever authorities exist have been appointed by God.” Why does God support subversive acts to these authorities if He appointed them? Are these the type of government authorities Paul and Peter are referring to? If not, what makes them different?
- 3) What effect did Pharaoh's cruel slavery have on the message that Moses brought them? Could authorities use similar methods today to interfere with the proclamation of the Gospel?

Exodus 6:1-13 – “Yahweh then said to Moses, "Now you will see what I am going to do to Pharaoh. A mighty hand will force him to let them go, a mighty hand will force him to expel them from his country."

“God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am Yahweh. To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob I appeared as El Shaddai, but I did not make my name Yahweh known to them. I also made my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the country in which they were living as aliens. Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, enslaved by the Egyptians, and have remembered my covenant. So say to the Israelites, `I am Yahweh. I shall free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians; I shall rescue you from their slavery and I shall redeem you with outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgment. I shall take you as my people and I shall be your God. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God, who have freed you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. Then I shall lead you into the country which I swore I would give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and shall give it to you as your heritage, I, Yahweh.' "

“And Moses repeated this to the Israelites, but they would not listen to Moses, so crushed was their spirit and so cruel their slavery.

“Yahweh then said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and tell him to let the Israelites leave his country."

“But Moses spoke out in Yahweh's presence and said, "The Israelites have not listened to me, so why should Pharaoh take any notice of a poor speaker like me?" Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron and sent them to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.”

Daniel 3:8-25 – “Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live for ever! You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no heed to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.”

“Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?"

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.”

“Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he ordered certain mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their mantles, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. Because the king's order was strict and the furnace very hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

“Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." He answered, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.””

Submission in a Godly Relationship

In these readings consider the following questions:

- 1) Who are most important in the submissive situations?
- 2) Is Christ to be obeyed? Did Christ serve?

- 3) Two objectives of becoming leader of people are for power to control others, and to look out for the best interests of those who are led. How would humility, or the lack of humility, effect these two types of authority types?
- 4) If an authority does not have the ability to force its servants to do its will, even though its will may be best, what would happen if the servants were selfish? Would the servants continue to heed the authority? Could we become like this if we lack humility?

Ephesians 5:15-30 – “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

“Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.”

Philippians 2:1-13 – “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

“Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”