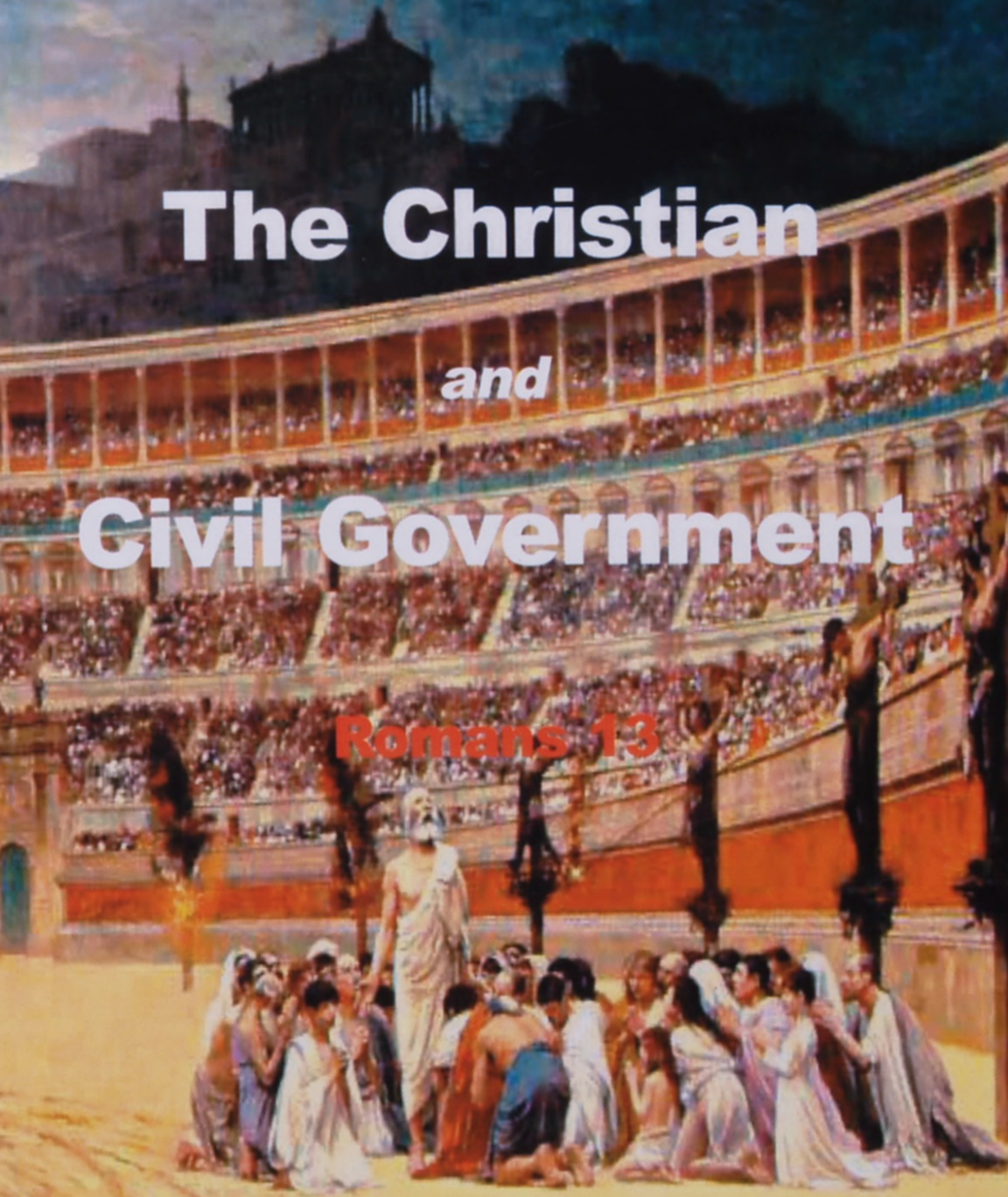
The Christian and Civil Government

Romans 13



By Pastor John Weaver

THE CHRISTIAN AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT



Pastor John Weaver is a native of Georgia, and a graduate from Bob Jones University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology and attended graduate school.

Pastor Weaver is married, has four children, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He has been in the Christian ministry over 61 years and has helped plant several churches and Christian schools around the country. Pastor Weaver has traveled across America preaching and lecturing in churches, colleges and conferences.

John Weaver is an expositor of God's whole Word. His preaching style is in the tradition of those early American pastors whose pulpits were the cradle of America's Christian liberty.

weaverbiblecollege.com

The Christian and Civil Government

The Christian and Civil Government

John Weaver

With a foreword by Robert McCurry

The Christian and Civil Government
This edition includes a table of contents, Scripture index, and topical index.

Study Guide

A companion for personal or group study, with chapter questions and space for written responses.



Scan the code or visit
books.weaverbiblecollege.com/civil-study

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all those who have given their lives, liberty and sacred honor in obedience to the principles of Holy Scripture. We lovingly and gratefully remember the men and women of the American Revolution and the price they paid to secure our lives and liberty from the clutches of tyranny and despotism. Likewise, we recognize and acknowledge true patriots since that time who have suffered and given their lives, freedom and possessions in order to maintain our liberty and freedom.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks and appreciations are given to the many individuals whose encouragement and prayers made this book possible. A special note of thanks goes to the proof readers, and especially to Mr. Robert Novak who not only proofed the book but also gave many helpful and constructive suggestions. Also, grateful thanks are extended to Mr. Richard Linck, Mr. and Mrs. Henri Klingler, Tony Adams, and Anita Thomason for their help and suggestion. Thanks are also extended to Mr. David Jay who designed the cover of the book. Of course, special thanks are given to my wife whose patience and sacrifice enabled me to complete the book.

FOREWORD

By Robert McCurry, Pastor
Heritage Baptist Church
Sharpsburg, Georgia

The thirteenth chapter of Romans—at least the first few words of verse one that say, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" is a favorite section of Scripture appealed to by those who allege that Christians are obligated by God to render unquestioned obedience and submission to every law, ordinance, rule, regulation, edict, and decree promulgated by civil government.

But is this *really* what is being set forth in this chapter? Could God's Word contradict itself? If we are commanded *here to* blindly submit to all of the civil magistrate's laws, decrees, and temporal powers and surrender to him as our earthly sovereign the ultimate control of our actions, then were the exploits of the great heroes of faith throughout Scripture violations of God's Word and orderly way? What of the Hebrew midwives, Rahab, Daniel, the three Hebrew children, the Apostles, and the early Christians who refused to obey civil authority? And what of the Pilgrims and the Puritans and other Christians who refused to bow to and obey King George? Are these, and others of their faith, spirit, and conviction to be considered disobedient rebels and used as examples of those with whom the Lord is displeased?

It is evident that the Scriptures mean far more concerning obedience to civil government than blind, mindless, spineless, unqualified obedience and submission that is being so carelessly promulgated today. The major emphasis of this book, however, is not disobedience to civil government rather, obedience to God, His Word, and His orderly way.

This crisis hour in America's history demands more than an academic reaction to or superficial concern with this subject of our responsibilities to obey God and civil authorities. Ignoring the issue will not diminish its impact on our lives. God's people must know and they can know how to live in obedience to His will, lordship, and orderly way in this real world, in all things according to the Scriptures.

One of the most severe judgments that God can pronounce on a people and a nation is His silence. And one of the certain indications that God has not passed by or abandoned a people and a nation is that the voice of His true preachers has not been silenced or withdrawn.

God has neither passed America by nor abandoned her! Pastor John Weaver's ministry and this book are evidence of this blessed fact.

Pastor Weaver sounds the "certain sound of the trumpet" in the pages of this book by dealing with the heart of Romans 13 and by clearly showing just what the Christian's responsibility is regarding civil government. He provides a scriptural definition and delimits the responsibilities, authority, and powers of the civil magistrate. He explains that this scripturally limited responsibility, authority, and power of civil government is derived from God and is both subordinate and subject to Him. He further warns that unqualified obedience and submission to civil government is idolatrous statism and a violation of God's Word and orderly way.

The Scriptures are clear. All men, regardless of their position or function, are commanded to obey and serve God. The Lord's redeemed people, whom He makes willing in the day of His power, indeed *do* obey and serve Him. He is their Lord, their Saviour, and their life. They know His voice and another they will not follow. Their allegiance is to Him. *All* of life is subject to His authority and lordship. His will is their supreme desire. They *must* obey God rather than men. Pastor Weaver shows that our obedience and submission to civil government must *always* be in keeping with the supreme sovereignty, authority, and will of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The Christian and Civil Government is God-honoring, Christ-exalting, and scripturally sound. It is refreshing, stimulating, informative, challenging, encouraging, and instructional. It is must reading for those who desire the strong meat of God's Word and are thirsty, hungry seekers of truth.

A word of caution. You will never be the same after reading this book. It leaves no room for neutrality. You will be compelled to embrace or reject its message. Reading this book will also make you more responsible and accountable to God. Remember, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48).

Contents

Dedication ..... **v**

Acknowledgment ..... **vii**

Foreword ..... **ix**

Introduction ..... **xv**

1 The Institution of Government **1**

Government as the Servant of God 4
Government Religion and Law 5
The Limits of Delegated Authority 6
Forms of Civil Government 8
Qualifications for Civil Rulers 10
The Ministerial Duties of Rulers 15

2 The Covenantal Nature of Government **17**

Two Covenants of Government 17
Covenant Oaths and Conscience 20
When a Covenant Is Broken 21
Covenants Between Rulers and People 25
The American Colonies and King George III 26
The Declaration and the Constitution 29
The Responsibilities of Rulers and People 30
Public Sin and National Judgment 31

3 The Purpose of Government....37
Justice Charity and Education....37
The Limits of Constitutional Power....38
The General Welfare Clause....40
Negative Law and Limited Government....41
The Standard of Good and Evil....42
The Punishment of Evil and the Praise of Good....44
Punishment and the Protection of Society....45
Mala in Se and Mala Prohibita....46

4 Are We Bound to Obey Government When it is Contrary to the Word of God?....49
The Question of Civil Disobedience....50
Rulers Who Remove the Bounds....50
Interpreting Romans 13....51
Elijah and the Kings of Israel....52
The Hebrew Midwives and Moses....54
Rahab and the Spies....56
The Three Hebrew Children....57
Daniel and the Decree....58
The Apostles and Obedience to God....59

5 Is Usurped Authority Legitimate?....61
The Meaning of Tyranny....61
Lawful Authority and Romans 13....62
Preserving Life and Escaping Persecution....63
The Limits of Authority in Every Sphere....64
Resistance and the Ordinance of God....66
The Office and the Person Who Holds It....67

6 The Degrees of Resistance to Tyranny....69
VERBAL RESISTANCE....69
FLIGHT....70
VIOLENT SELF-DEFENSE....73
The Scottish Covenanters....74
Mattathias and the Siege of Malta....76
Nehemiah and the Defense of Jerusalem....78

7 The Pastor as Magistrate....81
Public Authority and Private Self Defense....82
The Biblical Terms for Authority....84
MAGISTRATE....84
POWERS....88
GODS....89
RULERS....90
Spiritual Leaders and Civil Duties....91
Pastors in the American Revolution....96
The Responsibility of Spiritual Magistrates....99

8 Statism is Idolatry....101
Treason and Idolatry....102
The Claims of Statism....103
Kings Who Promoted Idolatry....104
Why Governments Turn to Idolatry....105
The Moloch State....107
The Fear of God and the Fear of Other Gods....108
The Statutes of Apostate Rulers....110
Sin Under the Color of Law....111

9 A Friend of Christ or Caesar?....113
The Meaning of Friendship....116
The Persecution of the Innocent....117
Persecution Through Mala Prohibita Laws....119
Speaking Against Caesar....122
The Refusal to Tolerate a Rival....125
The Rejection of Christ as King....128
The Requirements of Friendship with Christ....130

About the Author....133

Scripture Index....135

Topical Index....141

Study Guide Link iv

Introduction

For the Christian, the most important document is the Word of God. The Bible is to be our “law-word," our full and final authority. Everything must be viewed, measured and understood in light of God's finished revelation, the Bible. It is amazing how often Christians profess this truth and how little they practice it. Our philosophy of economics, family, education, government and every other subject must be in conformity to the Word of God.

The emphasis of this study will be to use a double-edged sword, that is, one that will cut two distinct ways. The first edge of the sword is the Word of God and the second edge is the historical perspective.

Today we are living in a land of ignorance - ignorance of the Word of God and ignorance of our Christian heritage. Ignorance is conducive only to slavery and destruction. Our Lord says in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Hosea 4:6 declares, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." If we are to be a "free people," we must understand and apply truth. There cannot be any "self-government" without knowledge and responsibility. It is the desire of the author to equip each reader with knowledge in order that he may become a mature, knowledgeable and responsible individual, both biblically and constitutionally.

The author has relied upon two very basic presuppositions. The first is that the Lord Jesus Christ is the King of the world. He is not only King of the church - He is King of everything! He is King of economics, education, government, family, and every other sphere. Our Lord Himself assures us that this is true. In Matthew 28:18 He declares, "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Truly the apostle Paul was correct when he wrote in I Timothy 6:15 that Jesus Christ is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The second presupposition that the author relies upon is that the entirety of the Bible is the Word of God and is applicable for us today. It is true that many ceremonies, types, emblems and shadows have been abrogated, but only as they were fulfilled in Christ. We now have the substance of those types; therefore, the essence or reality of those types is with us and the principle is still true. When Paul spoke in II

Timothy 3:16 concerning the fact that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," he was referring to the Old Testament. Of course, that portion of the New Testament that was written at the time of his utterance would have been included, as well as that which was yet to be written. It is still plain that the Old Testament has not been abrogated. We do not have two Bibles, we have one Bible. Scripture affirms in Psalm 119:89, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The Word of God is to be our guide and final authority in every area of life. We will either submit to the mind of God or the minds of men. When men deny the Word of God, it is then replaced with the words of men. God's word is true, authoritative and final!

The source materials used in this study are recommended for your own perusal. First and foremost, the Bible is the final authority in all things. Second, three historical - biblical books will be most beneficial for your study: 1) *Lex Rex*, (The Law is King) was written by Samuel Rutherford in 1640. Rutherford denies "the divine right of kings" and establishes very clearly that the prince, the ruler and the government are under the Law of God. Rulers are accountable and responsible for their actions. 2) *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, or A Defence Of Liberty Against Tyrants, written by Hubert Languet in the early 1600's, is an excellent treatise demonstrating the lawfulness of resisting those who would destroy both the church and the state. The 1689 edition is in print today. 3) Thomas Cobbett's *A Christian View Of The Civil Magistrate* was written in 1653. It is a biblical view of the role of the magistrate or civil ruler.

Our founding fathers were familiar with all of the above mentioned books. Their philosophy and theology were framed by the Word of God and those books that applied the Word of God in the governmental sphere. They were indeed on biblical ground in their resistance to King George III. We need a "fresh awakening" to the truths that gave our forefathers intestinal fortitude, character, discipline, morality and courage. May the Lord Jesus be pleased to open the eyes of His people to truth.

Chapter 1

The Institution of Government

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Romans 13:1-2

All government is ordained and instituted by God. It does not matter whether it is church, family, self or civil government. Paul gives us clear and concise statements concerning all authority and power. It is God who ordained government! It is God who instituted government! There can be no denial of this plain truth. God is the Author of all government.

Since God is the Author of all government, it follows that He alone is the Sovereign and the Source of all power and authority. God reigns by virtue of His own authority and right; all others rule and reign by derivation. Any ruler, whether church, self, family or civil ruler, must of necessity derive his authority and power to rule from God. If God does not delegate or give authority, then no one can exercise any lawful rule. All men are dependent upon God for lawful authority. In Proverbs 8:15-16, the Lord Jesus, who is Wisdom personified, says, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Psalm 75:6-7 informs us, "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." It is evident from Scripture that God is the Author of all authority.

Daniel taught the same truth in chapters 2 and 4. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar in 2:21, "And he [God] changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." In verse 37 of chapter 2, Daniel plainly declares,

"Thou, O king, a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given 'thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." The only reason that Nebuchadnezzar had a kingdom, and power to rule over that kingdom, was because the Sovereign God of heaven had delegated to him that authority and power.

Nebuchadnezzar, like many politicians, did not want to acknowledge God as his sovereign. When men deny the One True and Living God, it is so that they may enthrone themselves as gods. One who claims sovereignty must of necessity deny others who claim sovereignty. There can be only one ultimate, one sovereign and one final authority. Nebuchadnezzar in his pride, arrogance and rebellion denied, defied, and sought to dethrone the One True God. God, on the other hand, decreed to teach His defiant vassal a lesson. God changed the heart of Nebuchadnezzar from the heart of a man to the heart of a beast. This change was to last for seven years. During this seven - year period of insanity, Nebuchadnezzar was to live like a beast. His hairs were grown like unto eagle's feathers, his nails like unto bird's claws and he ate grass as an ox. Scholars have designated this type of insanity as "insania zoanthropica" or "boanthropy."

Now the question remains to be answered: Why did God thus afflict Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 4:17 gives us the answer. God said that this was to befall Nebuchadnezzar "to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." The truth is repeated for emphasis in verse 32: "And' they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." God is on the throne. He alone is the Source of all authority and power.

Nebuchadnezzar certainly learned his lesson. Look in Daniel 4:34-35: "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the

inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Nebuchadnezzar learned one very important lesson: that God is absolutely sovereign. God is on the throne. All power is derived from God; all authority is derived from God. If God does not give an individual authority, then he does not have any authority.

God reigns by His own proper authority. Kings or governments reign by derivation. God reigns from Himself; kings reign from God. God has a jurisdiction proper and kings are His delegates.

Since all kings and governments rule by derivation, it necessarily follows that God alone is sovereign. The jurisdiction, the authority and the power of God have no limits. But every delegated authority has certain limits. Delegated authority has certain boundaries. The power of God is infinite. All authority that is delegated from God is finite; it is limited; it is confined. There is absolutely no boundary to God's authority, but there are boundaries to the delegated authority of man. God alone is sovereign. All kings, all princes, all governments are his vassals, his delegates.

God Almighty has not resigned His throne. God Almighty has not abdicated His position. God Almighty has not laid aside His power. And God Almighty has not given over His earth or His people to a handful of petty gods or to a house full of senseless bureaucrats to trample under their feet or to do with as they please. God has not given over His people to be destroyed by those who despise His glory, hate His law and seek to destroy His church. God is still on the throne! God has not abdicated His power nor will he do so. God is God!

God has instituted and ordained authorities, and therefore by the very nature of delegated authority, every authority that exists is accountable and answerable to God. They are limited. That means they can go only as far as God has ordained. They are responsible; that is, they must answer to God. They are accountable, therefore God will judge them.

Government as the Servant of God

Now to demonstrate the fact that all governments are responsible and accountable to God, let us take a close look at the word descriptions that are used in Romans 13.

First of all, in verse 1, government is referred to as "higher powers, power or powers." The Greek word is *exousia* which literally means "authority" or "jurisdiction." There is no authority or jurisdiction apart from God. He ordained it all.

In verse 2, once again government is referred to as "power" and then as the "ordinance of." The Greek word is *exousia* and means "power" or "authority." However, the word for "ordinance" is *diatagei*. It simply refers to a "disposition, an arrangement, an ordinance." Once again we see clearly that God is the Author of all government.

In verse 3, government is simply referred to as "rulers." "For rulers are not a terror to good works..." The word "ruler" is from the Greek word *arcontez* which means "the first ones, the chief ones, the leaders, or the power."

Read verse 4 carefully: "For he [that is, the government or the king], is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Please note in verse 4 that there are three names for government. Two of those names are identical. Twice in verse 4 the government is called "the minister of God." Would you like to guess what the Greek word for "minister" is here? The word is *diakonos*. Our English equivalent for *diakonos* is "deacon." In fact, our English word "deacon" is merely a transliteration of the Greek word. It is brought from the Greek to the English letter by letter. The translation of *diakonos* or "deacon" is "servant." Government is the "deacon" of God. Government has been ordained by God to be His servant. Government is to carry out God's law, put into effect God's will, and thus honor God as an obedient servant. Now read verse 4 again: "For he [the government] is to be the servant of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the servant of God..."

In verse 4, government is called "a revenger." Now, that is a very interesting term. The word "revenger" in the Greek is *ekdikos*. It is made up of two Greek words: *ek* which simply means "out of" or "from," and *dikei* which is "righteousness." Literally, the word "revenger" means "an exacter of righteousness." Government has been established and instituted by God to be a minister of justice. In other words, government must exact God's justice and execute God's righteousness. Government is not just simply a power; it is not raw power; it is not "might makes right"; it is that power that has been ordained by God to be a servant of God, an exacter of righteousness.

In verse 6, government is once again called "God's ministers." However, the word is not *diakonos*. The Greek word is *leitourgos*. It is the source of our English word "liturgy." A liturgy is a form of public worship. Government has been ordained by God to be His public worship. In biblical Greek, *leitourgos* had reference to public prayers and sacrifices. Government is responsible not only to be Christian, but also to be biblical in every sphere of its function. It is to be God's public worship.

Most people today are willing to admit that government is power. Everyone is willing to admit that government is authority. But how many are willing to go as far as God goes, and say that, yes, governments have power, and governments have authority, but they only have that power and authority from God? God has ordained and instituted government to be His deacons, to be His servants, to be His exacters of righteousness, and to be His public worship. You see, if government is "a deacon," if government is "a servant," then it must obey. The question is asked: whom must it obey? The answer obviously is the one who ordained it; the one who set it up. If government is to be an exacter of righteousness, whose righteousness is it to exact? God's! Who determines righteousness? God! Not men.

Government Religion and Law

Government is a theological issue. It is impossible to have a separation between government and religion. You can and you must have a separation between government and church, but you

cannot have a separation between government and religion. Since government deals with justice, since government deals with right and wrong, since government deals with good and evil, since government deals with moral values, it has to be religious. It may be the Christian religion or it may be a humanistic religion, but all government is religious. Every law that is passed is a religious law.

Whenever anthropologists study any ancient culture, one of the first things they study is the culture's law. Why? Whoever determines your law, whoever is the source of your law is your god. If your law emanates from your mind, then you are pretending to be god. If your law comes from nine black-robed justices, then they are your gods. If, however, your source of law is the One Eternal and Unchanging God, then God is your God and the God of your society. But, if the Supreme Court, or the state legislature, or man's reasoning is the source of your law, then man's reasoning or the Supreme Court is the god of that society. It is that simple.

We must not have a state church and there must be a separation between church and state. Government and religion cannot be separated because all government is religious in nature. We will have either a Christian government or a pagan religious government simply because government is religious in nature. God has ordained and instituted government to deal with justice and righteousness; it is to be the servant of God.

The Limits of Delegated Authority

The subjection and the obedience that is demanded in Romans 13:1-2 is conditional. It is conditioned upon the authorities being the ministers of God as mentioned in verses three, four and six.

It is a principle of Scripture that when any authority transgresses and leaves its lawful sphere of authority, it loses its jurisdiction and authority. Whenever governments leave their lawful spheres of jurisdiction, they have absolutely no authority to bind the conscience of any man.

Let me give you an illustration. God has ordained three basic institutions. He has ordained and instituted the family, which is the ministry of education; the church, which is the ministry of

grace; and the state, which is the ministry of justice. Here are three separate spheres; all three are under God's dominion; all three are under God's jurisdiction. God has given them their proper spheres of authority. If the church leaves the sphere of authority that God has given it, then it has no authority, so to speak. If the state leaves the sphere of authority that God has given it, and tries to bind the consciences of the people, it has no biding power.

Let me expand the illustration further. Suppose I went into your home and began ordering your wife around. I instructed her to wash the dishes, sweep the floor and clean up the bedrooms. I then turned my attention to your children and ordered them to take out the trash, rake the yard and pull the grass out of the flower bed. It would not be long before you said, "Wait a minute, that is my wife and these are my children. If anyone is going to tell them what to do, it will be I. I am the head of this house." I would respond, "But you do not understand. I, too, am a husband and a father; therefore, I have authority." You might respond, "Not in this house you don't. If you want to order someone around, go to your own home where you are the head."

It should be obvious that simply because I have a lawful, legitimate authority in one sphere, that does not give me authority in every other sphere. I do have authority. But if I leave my proper sphere of authority, and come into some other man's sphere of authority and try to bind his wife and his children to what I say, they have every right in the world to look me in the eyes and laugh in my face. And the husband and father has every right in the world to jump up and say: "If you don't get out right now, I'll kick you out. You don't have any right to come over here talking to my family like this. You have left your sphere of authority."

Likewise, when the state comes into the church and says it must be licensed, it must pay taxes, it must be incorporated, and it must not preach against public policy, the state has left its proper sphere of authority. It has absolutely no jurisdiction; it has no authority!

I hope you can see the foolishness of wicked preachers who admonish their audiences to obey governments that are contrary to God and His Word. Can you imagine Jesus Christ on earth today saying, "Now look folks, your government said that abortions are

legal, so you just go ahead and have them. Also, I know that I taught that sodomy is wicked and deserves the death penalty, but, after all, your government says it is not a sin, so go ahead and support sodomites." Can you imagine Christ saying that? I don't believe He would!

God is sovereign and God has delegated the spheres of authority. When an individual leaves his proper sphere of authority, he has no authority. One must discover the proper sphere of authority that God has given to the government. The Bible certainly gives us that information. It is amazing that everybody likes to quote the Bible and declare, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's..." Yes, the Bible does declare that truth; but blessed be God, the same Bible that makes that statement also tells you what belongs to Caesar. If you allow Caesar to tell you what belongs to him, he will claim everything you have.

Forms of Civil Government

There is no specified form of civil government demanded in the Word of God.

It is customarily stated that America is a democracy. America may have been turned into a democracy, but it was not fashioned or framed to be a democracy. America is a republic. Do you remember how history records that as Ben Franklin came out of the Constitutional Convention, someone asked him, "What kind of government have you given us?" He replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." When you pledge allegiance to the flag, you do so "to the republic for which it stands." America was founded as a republic, not a democracy. The word "democracy" literally means "mob rule." In a republic we are to be ruled by law, not by the majority, but by law, by principle.

The question is whether it is lawful to have a republic? Does not the Bible record the rules of monarchies in the Old and New Testaments? Yes, it does. The Bible, however, does not necessarily demand that a country have a certain type of government such as a monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy or a republic. It does lay down guidelines, prerequisites and qualifications concerning rulers.

In I Peter 2:13-14, God says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." Now, is He saying that we are to obey every bill, every piece of legislation that comes out of Congress? Is He saying we must obey every demand, every edict of government without hesitation and without question? No, he is not saying that.

The word "ordinance" is the Greek word *ktisis*. It has reference to "the act of founding, creating, and establishing." Peter is not speaking of the source of authority, but rather its form. Peter is demanding obedience to whatever form of government that is instituted by man to carry out God's law. Obedience is not demanded in the abstract, but in terms of obedience to God's law - "the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." It does not matter whether the government is a monarchy, aristocracy or a republic. The important thing is that it must function under God and His law.

Governments do not differ in nature, that is, they do not differ theologically; they only differ politically. Now in Romans 13:2 you will recall that government is called the "ordinance of God." In I Peter 2:13 government is called the "ordinance of man." Because government is called the ordinance of man in I Peter 2, it does not mean that it is no longer the ordinance of God. Government, viewed from its source of authority or institution, is indeed the "ordinance of God." However, viewed in light of the fact that it is man who sets up or runs the government, it is called "the ordinance of man." There is no contradiction.

It would be absurd for one to say that because the civil magistracy is ordained by God, therefore it cannot be called the ordinance of man. That would be the same as saying because God ordained the temple in the Old Testament, there were no masons or carpenters who built it. And because God ordained the golden instruments in the Old Testament, therefore there were no smiths who made those snuffers and all of those other instruments. No, of course God ordained civil government, but He also ordained human instruments to exercise delegated authority to set up and run the civil governments.

Likewise, it would be equally absurd to suggest that because the civil magistracy is called the ordinance of man, it therefore cannot be the ordinance of God. God has ordained government, but it is men who set up government. It is the responsibility of men to set up government in obedience to the Word of God.

England has a constitutional monarchy. Did you ever see the scepter of the kings and queens of England? At the top of the scepter is a round ball, which is symbolic of the world. On top of the ball is a cross. Pictorially, the scepter teaches us that Jesus Christ is the True King of the World. The scepter is to be a constant reminder that each king and queen must answer to Him who is their rightful King and Source of authority. It is to remind the king and queen that they are to rule in obedience to King Jesus and His Word. Can God bless and use a constitutional monarchy? He did so in the Old Testament.

Did you know that for years our presidents took their oath of office with their hands upon the Bible, and that the Bible was opened to Deuteronomy 28? That chapter deals with the blessings and the curses of the law as they relate to national obedience and disobedience. Our presidents were indicating that they understood they were to rule under God. Can God bless and use a republic? He has most certainly done so for many years.

The Word of God tells us that God has ordained government, but men set it up. Whatever type of government men set up, its purpose should be to carry out the law of God. Why? The answer is because government has been ordained by God to be His servant, to be His deacon, to be His exacter of righteousness, to be His public worship. So, government is the ordinance of God objectively, and the ordinance of man subjectively. God ordains it, but men set it up; therefore it is called the ordinance of man as well as the ordinance of God.

Qualifications for Civil Rulers

There are individual qualifications given in the Word of God for those who are chosen to be civil rulers.

Let us examine the biblical data concerning individual qualifications demanded by God for those who are to be in the

positions of leadership and rulership. Deuteronomy 17:15-20 demands:

> "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

First of all, the ruler had to be one whom God chose. Since rulers are to represent God and rule under God, it necessarily follows that God must be the one who initially chooses.

Second, he had to be "one from among thy brethren." The ruler that represents God must be a believer in God, one who is in a covenantal relationship with God. This requirement would preclude unbelievers from ruling over a Christian nation. When our country first began, one of the requirements for holding public office was that a man must be a believer. An atheist or agnostic could not hold public office. The requirement was not that a man must be a member of a particular church, rather, that he simply be a believer.

Third, "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee." It was imperative that the ruler be "home born." He could not be a foreigner. He must be a man who was a believer, was born in the land, and one who was well known, as we shall see later.

Fourth, there was a limitation on "war machinery." The ruler was not to "multiply horses" unto himself. Horses were the "fighting machines" in Old Testament days. The confidence of the

civil ruler was not to be in his standing army, but in the One True and Living God. Proverbs 21:31 declares, "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord." Likewise, Psalm 127:1 affirms, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Fifth, the civil ruler was not to "multiply wives to himself." He was not only to be unquestionably moral, but also fearful of idolatry, for in the multitude of (foreign) wives lay idolatry. Witness how Solomon disobeyed and was carried into idolatry by the wives whom he married in I Kings 11.

Sixth, the ruler was forbidden to "greatly multiply to himself silver and gold." His heart was to be on ministering, serving, and obeying and not on mammon. He was to be God's deacon and not one given to corruption, graft and fraud. It is not necessary to point out the gross violation of this principle in our government today.

Seventh, the main qualification for a ruler was that he possess his own personal copy of the law of God. He was not simply to read the law, but understand and apply the law as well. He was to "fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them." His obedience to God was a means of preventing pride and arrogance. He was not in any wise to think that he was "superior" to his brethren. He was not to hold the "might makes right" philosophy. He was not to be a proud, arrogant, power-mad maniac. He was simply to be obedient to the Lord his God. Finally, the length of his days and the extent of his rule depended upon his obedience.

Compare Exodus 18:21 with Deuteronomy 1:13. First, Exodus 18:21 declares, "Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." Now, note that they had to be able men; that is, they had to have ability. Moreover, they had to be men of truth and haters of covetousness. We no longer have any statesmen. We have politicians. Humorously, but sadly, someone has determined a way to ascertain whether or not a modern day politician is lying. The test is simple. Watch his lips

very closely, and if they move, he's lying! Think about that statement for a while! Jimmy Carter said, "Trust me; I'll never lie to you." And yet, he did. And so do all politicians. It has been reported that in the liars' hall of fame they now have four presidential portraits. They have a picture of George Washington because he never told a lie; they have a picture of Richard Nixon because he never told the truth; they have a picture of Jimmy Carter because he didn't know the difference; and finally, they have a picture of Ronald Reagan because he forgot both of them. We laugh about those things, but is not that pathetic? Able men, men that fear God, men that hate covetousness, men of truth - these are qualifications for civil rulers.

I recently talked with a congressman and he told me the going rate to have any bill passed in Congress is twenty dollars. He said if you want a bill passed, the customary thing to do is put that bill on a congressman's desk with a $20 bill, and he will sign his name to it, take the twenty, and never read the bill. It is unlikely that our congressmen could ever read all the laws that are passed in this land; much less take the time to determine their constitutionality. I am sure that as time passes, the price increases.

Now look at Deuteronomy 1:13. Scripture says, "Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." Observe. Rulers must be wise men, men of understanding and men that are known. Rulers must be men of proven reputation, men of proven character. Today, the cry from politicians is, "our personal, private lives are our own." That statement is not according to the Word of God. A man who will cheat on his wife will not hesitate to cheat you or anyone else. A man who is dishonest in his personal finances will not flinch at stealing millions from his constituents.

II Samuel 23:2-3 teaches, "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." David is claiming direct inspiration for his utterance. It was God the Spirit who spoke through him. What is the subject of this divine revelation? Civil rulers! What does God require? God requires just, honest, upright, righteous men and men that fear God. He that ruleth over men must be just! How do

you determine who is just? God explains that a just man is one who rules in the fear of God. There is no justice except God's justice. There is no righteousness except God's righteousness. If you let men determine what is just, if you let men determine what is right, they will give you abortion, euthanasia, sodomy, theft, adultery, and every other vice that depraved human minds can imagine.

When God determines what is right, there is an entirely different set of values. Justice and righteousness must be determined by God's standard. Man is incapable of objectivity, justice, or righteousness in and of himself. Job 28:28 declares, "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." If a just man is one that rules in the fear of God, that ruler will be one who continually departs from wickedness and all that is contrary to God.

Psalm 72:1-11 tells us that biblical civil rulers do homage to Jesus Christ, who is indeed King of kings and Lord of lords.

Psalm 2 is most informative. It instructs us that the kings and rulers of this earth wish to "break their bands and cast away their cords." Unhappily, it is the bands and cords of God and His law they wish to break. Thus, they unite in rebellion against the One who ordained and established them. The admonition given to such rulers is: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Isaiah 49:23 and 60:10 inform us that civil rulers are to be the "nursing fathers and mothers" to the people of God. Moreover, they are to be ministers to God's people, building them up and establishing them in righteousness. True civil rulers, such as Joshua, David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah and others, were indeed ministers and nursing fathers to the people of God.

The collective descriptions of civil rulers given in the Word of God illustrate their ministerial function as well as their qualifications.

The Ministerial Duties of Rulers

First, civil rulers are referred to as "ministers" or "deacons" of God in Romans 13:4.

Second, Psalm 78:70-71 indicates that civil rulers are counted as "public shepherds" who are to feed and guide the people of God. Civil rulers have a public responsibility not only to maintain personal integrity and honesty, but also to lead the people in personal morality.

Third, in I Samuel 10:1 and II Kings 20:5, a civil ruler is designated by God as the "captain of his people." As our captains, civil rulers must lead and defend us. They are to be for our benefit and blessing, not for our doom and destruction. They are to bless us, not betray us.

Fourth, Psalm 47:9 refers to civil rulers as the "shields of the earth." A shield is for protection. We shall see as we continue our study in Romans 13 exactly how we are to be protected by our civil magistrates.

Fifth, Romans 13:4 states that civil rulers are the "avengers of God." They are to carry out His justice and execute His punishments against the wicked.

II Samuel 5:12 summarizes the truth concisely. The Word of God states, "And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." God ordained government for our benefit and blessing. When government becomes a curse, a means of slavery, thievery and fraud, it is not in the will of God.

God has ordained the family. God has ordained the church. God has ordained civil government. Each has a responsibility to be biblical and godly. We must bring our families and our churches into greater conformity to the Word of God. Likewise, we must endeavor to bring civil government into submission and obedience to the Word of God. Christ is King over the family, church and civil government. In fact, there is no sphere or area over which he is not King.

One cannot deny the conclusion that government must be biblical without denying the Kingship of Christ. Christ Himself said, "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Jesus Christ has authority over civil government. We must take seriously the requirements for which, and the reasons why He instituted government. Not to do so is, in essence, to deny Christ.

Chapter 2

The Covenantal Nature of Government

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Romans 13:1-2

Since civil government is called the "ordinance of God" in Romans 13 and "the ordinance of man" in I Peter 2, it necessarily follows that government is covenantal in nature. Many past scholars and historians have recognized and taught this concept. Hubert Languet in *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* states it thus:

> "By the same reason the people are always called the Lord's people, and the Lord's inheritance, and the king is governor of this inheritance, and conductor and leader of the people of God, which is the title given to David, to Solomon, to Hezekiah and to other good princes; when also the covenant is passed between God and the king, it is upon the condition that the people be, and remain always, the people of God, to show that God will not in any case despoil himself of his property and possession, when he gives to kings the government of the people, but establishes them to take charge of, and well use them; no more or less than he which makes choice of a shepherd to look to his flocks, remains, notwithstanding himself, still master and owner of them."

Two Covenants of Government

The Bible speaks of two distinct covenantal forms of civil government. The first covenant is between God, the ruler and the people. In this covenant, the king or ruler agrees to be God's ruler. He recognizes God's sovereignty, bows to His authority and

confesses himself to be God's vassal. The people equally recognize that God has instituted government and bow to God, agreeing to be God's people.

The second covenant is between the ruler and the people. In this covenant, the ruler agrees to rule justly, faithfully and biblically. The people agree to obey, submit to and honor their ruler as he honors and obeys God.

Notice carefully how Scripture distinguishes and emphasizes both covenants. In II Kings 11:17 the Word of God reveals, "And Jehoiada [Jehoiada was the high priest] made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people." Please note that there are two covenants mentioned. The first between the Lord, the king and the people; that is, the king was to be God's king; the people were to be God's people. The second covenant was between the king and the people. The king covenantally agreed to rule according to the Word of God, and the people agreed to obey and to submit to him according to the Word of God.

I Samuel 12:24-25 teaches us very clearly that both the rulers and the people are responsible and obligated to obey God. If each, in their respective capacities, do not render due obedience to the Sovereign God who established them, judgment will fall. Samuel warns, "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." This responsibility and accountability stems from the covenantal nature of government.

In II Samuel 5:3 the Scriptures inform us, "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel." The Hebrew word for "league" is the common Old Testament word for "covenant."

In fact, the companion passage in I Chronicles 11:3 translates "league" as "covenant." "Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel."

David was chosen to be king by God Himself. David knew that God had anointed him to be king. In fact, David is most often described as "a man after God's own heart." All of this did not negate the fact that David was chosen mediately, that is, through the will and recognition of the people. David and the people had made a covenant with God. Now they were making a covenant with each other "before the Lord." David was not only accountable to the Lord who had chosen him, but also to the people with whom he had made a covenant. It is important to grasp the fact that both parties entered into the covenant. It was not simply the king's covenant or the people's covenant; it was their covenant, that is, one between the king and the people. Both parties were answerable, accountable and responsible unto the Lord before whom they made the covenant.

In II Chronicles 23:2-3, Scripture affirms, "And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David." Note that all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. Now look down to verse 16: "And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD'S people." Jehoiada, the high priest, as the representative of Jehovah, made the covenant between the people and the king. The people were not given to the king. The king was given to the people. He was to be their king, ruling under God. The people forever remained the people of the Lord. The king was to be the Lord's king as well.

In Joshua 24:1, Joshua called all the elders, heads, princes, judges, and officers of Israel together and they "presented themselves before the Lord." What was the purpose of this presentation? The purpose was to enter into a covenant. Verse 25 declares, "So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem." The people were covenanting together that the Lord was to be their God and they would serve only Him. He was their Head. He was their King. The earthly king was only a vassal, a representative of the True

King. The earthly king represented God only as he ruled faithfully and obediently. He, too, was covenantally obligated to God.

Covenant Oaths and Conscience

It is almost impossible to understand certain Scriptures without comprehending the covenantal nature of government. For instance, in Ecclesiastes 8:2, Solomon advises, "I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God." The oath refers to the one given at the entering into of the covenant. It is that particular oath that stated that the people would be obedient to the king as long as the king ruled justly, faithfully and biblically. Solomon is simply stating that the people have a covenantal duty to be obedient to biblical government.

Likewise, in Romans 13:5, we are told that we must be obedient to biblical government for "conscience sake." What does that mean? The Greek word for "conscience" is *suneidesis* and it is made up of two words. *Sun* is a preposition which means "with" and *eidesis* means "to know." The English word "conscience" is exactly the same. *Con* is a preposition which means "with" and *science* means "to know." Your conscience is that which "you know with." It is "your mind, your understanding." Now why should we be subject to a godly, lawful government? Two reasons are given. The first is for wrath's sake; that is, government has the power of the sword. God has ordained government to punish those who violate His law. The second reason, "for conscience sake," declares that we recognize and understand the oath given in establishing government. In a simple statement, it means our minds comprehend the covenantal nature of government. Therefore, "for conscience sake" we must be in submission to biblical, lawful government.

It is a common assumption among Christians that we should pray for our leaders in civil government. When asked why we should do so, the answer is naturally given: the Bible tells us so. I agree that the Bible commands us to pray for our civil leaders. However, the question still must be asked, "Why are we to pray for them specifically?" I Timothy 2:1-2 answers this question. In this passage, Paul exhorts as follows: "I EXHORT therefore, that, first of

all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

The command to pray for our rulers is for our benefit. We must pray that they will be biblical and allow the continued ministry and worship of the One True and Living God as He is revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Quietness refers to "freedom from inner fears" and peaceable refers to "freedom from outward harassment." It is for the purpose of a quiet, peaceable, unhindered and unhampered life in the ministry of our God for which we must pray that God will either regenerate or restrain our civil rulers.

When a Covenant Is Broken

IN BIBLICAL COVENANTS, WHEN ONE PARTY VIOLATES OR BREAKS THE COVENANT, THE OTHER PARTY IS LOOSED FROM OBEDIENCE TO THE COVENANT.

This simple truth operates in every sphere of life. It was true in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and it is true in life today.

First of all, this truth is applicable in covenants or contracts between men. In Courts of Equity, when one party violates the contract or covenant, the other party usually sues for "breach of contract." If you and I covenant together in a business venture and you do not keep your part of the agreement, then legally speaking, I am not obligated to keep my part of the covenant. I must either then drop the agreement or sue in order to force you to perform (in the manner for which you have covenantally obligated yourself).

In the Bible, covenants of this nature were common. Consider the covenant (with its stipulations) made between the spies and Rahab. In Joshua 2:17-21, we read, "And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy

brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it..." The covenantal agreement was simple. There were the two parties: the spies and Rahab. The stipulations of the covenant were as follows: first, Rahab must get her family into her house and display the scarlet cord in order to be saved from destruction; and second, all of Rahab's family must remain in her house during the battle. Third, if anyone ventured out of her house, the Israelites were not to be held accountable, and this person's blood would be upon his own head. He would have taken his life into his own hands by venturing out into a battle area. Fourth, if anyone in Rahab's house was harmed, the Israelites would be accountable for they would have violated the agreement to spare all who were in her house. Fifth, if Rahab uttered or made known any of the secrets, then the Israelites would be free to destroy even those in her house.

It is evident that the operating principle is that if one party violates or breaks his end of the covenant, then the other party is loosed from performing his part of the covenant. Covenantal disobedience or violation on the part of one covenanter frees or looses the other party from his duty or obligation.

Not only is this principle true in the least of covenants, that is, covenants between men, it is also true in the greatest of covenants, those covenants between God and men. When God entered into covenants with men, if those men violated the covenant, it loosed God from performing His end of the covenant.

Deuteronomy 28 is an excellent illustration of this truth. In that chapter, God lists the blessings that will follow obedience to the covenant and then lists the curses that will follow disobedience. In other words, God is not obligated to bless. If His covenant people violate their oath and trample under foot their covenantal obligations, God is freed or loosed from fulfilling His covenantal

blessings. Instead, He curses and destroys those who violate the covenant.

II Kings 17 demonstrates this truth. God had entered into a covenant with Israel. However, Israel repeatedly violated that covenant. God sent prophet after prophet to warn Israel, but she would not listen nor repent. In fact, beginning at verse 13, the Bible specifically states:

> "Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin for the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day."

Now Israel specifically violated her covenant with God many times. Finally, God, instead of blessing Israel, cursed her and delivered her into captivity. Was God obligated to continue to

bless Israel although Israel turned her back on God and broke the covenant in every way that is conceivable to man? No, God was not obligated to bless them. Israel's violation of the covenant loosed God from His duty and obligations to the covenant. God was thus free to curse, judge and punish those whom He had formerly agreed to bless and protect.

Practically all of the Major Prophets and Minor Prophets refer to the fact that God's judgments and the withholding of the covenantal blessings were a result of the sins of the people.

Amos 4:6-11 lists a number of judgments that befell Israel for her continued violations of the covenant. These may be referred to as restorative judgments, for God was using this method to bring Israel to her senses. Watch carefully as Amos unfolds these judgments:

> "And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered into one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD."

One simple fact remains painfully obvious. When Israel violated the covenant, God was not obligated to honor His end of the covenant, and He did not; rather, He judged Israel. Take the time to read the book of Hosea; ponder Isaiah 58 and meditate upon the book of Jeremiah. You will observe this truth over and over.

Covenants Between Rulers and People

The operating principle is this: when one party violates the covenant, it looses the other party from obedience to his part of the covenant. If this principle is true in the least of covenants, that is, covenants between men, and it is true in the greatest covenants, that is, between God and men, it would most certainly be true concerning covenants in between, that is those in the middle, such as covenants between governments and men. Samuel Rutherford in *Lex Rex* enunciates this principle very plainly. Rutherford was writing against the divine right of kings and was proving that rulers and those in governmental authority were as much under the law as anyone. He states:

> "...When the king defendeth not true religion, but presseth upon the people a false and idolatrous religion, in that they are not under the king, but are presumed to have no king, so far, and are presumed to have the power in themselves, as if they had not appointed any king at all; as if we presume the body had given to the right hand a power to ward off strokes and to defend the body; if the right hand should by a palsy, or some disease, become impotent, and be withered up, when ill is coming on the body, it is presumed that the power of defence is recurred to the left hand, and to the rest of the body to defend itself in this case as if the body had no right hand, and had never commissioned any power to the right hand... If therefore he (the civil ruler) defend not religion for the salvation of the souls of all in his public and royal way, it is presumed as undeniable that the people of God, who by the law of nature are to care for their own souls, are to defend in their way true religion, which so nearly concerneth them and their eternal happiness."

Now consider what Rutherford said. When the king, that one who has been set up to defend and bless the people, turns upon the people and presses upon them a false and idolatrous religion such as humanism, when he harasses them and endeavors to force them to go contrary to the Word of God, it is presumed that the people have no king or government. It is as if there was no established government. The power of government reverts back to the governed. They must exercise a special form of self-government.

Rutherford emphasizes the right of the body to defend itself. Consider his illustration. If your body has given power to the right hand to defend the body, and that right hand becomes impotent or paralyzed, when harm is coming to the body the left hand automatically defends the body. The concept is a valid one. Why? All governmental power is derived from the consent of the governed. If the people have given power to the government to defend and the government refuses to use that power to defend the people, then the power automatically reverts back to the people. In so doing, they defend themselves the best way they possibly can.

The American Colonies and King George III

Our country was founded upon this very principle. When the colonies were established, each colony had a covenant with King George III of England. He was king of Georgia, king of Virginia, and king of all the colonies. The colonies were self-governing. They were never under the authority or control of Parliament. Parliament did not govern the colonies. The colonies governed themselves under the king.

Do you remember the cry of the colonists? It was "no taxation without representation!" Who was attempting to tax the colonies? It was Parliament and Parliament was attempting to tax the colonists without any lawful right. The colonists refused to pay the tax. Although the amount of the tax was insignificant, the colonists, upon principle, refused to pay even the minutest amount. Pastor Samuel West, in his annual election sermon of 1776, said, "Reason and equity require that no one be obligated to pay the tax that he has never consented to." Suppose Canada passed a law that all Americans must pay to the government of Canada five cents on the dollar. Would you be willing to pay the tax? What lawful right does Canada have to tax Americans? The Canadian government has no control, authority, or right to impose such a tax. No American would be obligated to pay such a tax.

When King George III, allowed Parliament to pass such intolerable acts, he was in essence abdicating his position as king over the colonies and violating the covenant that he entered into

with the colonies. He was acting as a tyrant and seeking to reduce the colonists to slavery.

Our founding fathers recognized and understood tyranny and despotism. They perceived the ultimate end of the king's actions. Thus, they besought George III to relent in his persecutions and implored him to uphold his covenantal agreement.

In July of 1774, our forefathers met in Fairfax County, Virginia, and considered ways of forcing Great Britain to redress American grievances. George Washington, Charles Broadwater, and George Mason were the instrumental agents in drafting what has come to be known as the "Fairfax Resolves."

The "Fairfax Resolves" is dynamite! It exposes the intentions, purposes and designs of George III and the British Parliament to subject the colonists to slavery. Ponder for a moment Resolves five and six:

> "Resolved that the Claim lately assumed and exercised by the British Parliament, of making all such Laws as they think fit, to govern the People of these Colonies, and to extort from us our Money with out our Consent, is not only diametrically contrary to the first Principles of the Constitution, and the original Compacts by which we are dependant upon the British Crown and Government; but is totally incompatible with the Privileges of a free People, and the natural Rights of Mankind; will render our own Legislatures merely nominal and nugatory, and is calculated to reduce us from a State of Freedom and Happiness to Slavery and Misery."

> "Resolved that Taxation and Representation are in their Nature inseparable; that the Right of withholding, or of giving and granting their own money is the only effectual Security to a free people, against the Incroachments of Despotism and Tyranny; and that whenever they yield the One, they must quickly fall a Prey to the other."

All of the Resolves are loaded with bullets that explode against a tyrannical and despotic government. The "shot that was heard around the world" on Lexington green was loaded in the "Fairfax Resolves." How can one make that statement? After pleading with George III to uphold his covenantal agreement and after seeking for a redress of grievances, the "coup de grace" is plainly stated in the twenty-third Resolve:

> "Resolved that it be recommended to the Deputies of the general Congress to draw up and transmit an humble and dutiful Petition and Remonstrance to his Majesty, asserting with decent Firmness our just and constitutional Rights and Privileges, lamenting the fatal Necessity of being compelled to enter into Measures disgusting to his Majesty and his Parliament, or injurious to our fellow Subjects in Great Britain; declaring in the strongest Terms our Duty and Affection to his Majesty's Person, Family and Government, and our Desire to continue our Dependence upon Great Britain; and most humbly conjuring and beseeching his Majesty, not to reduce his faithful Subjects of America to a State of desperation, and to reflect, that from our Sovereign there can be but one Appeal."

In simple terms, the Resolves offered George III two obvious choices. One was to fulfill his covenantal obligations and be the king and ruler to the American colonists that he had agreed to be, or second, to prepare for war. George III was asked to "reflect upon the fact that if he did not keep his end of the covenant, there could be but one appeal!" Americans would fight for their freedom. They would not be the miserable slaves of a tyrannical monarch or a despotic government. May God once again allow the fires of freedom to burn in our hearts as in days of old! May the words of Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death," become our watchword.

Someone may object and say, "Those are revolutionary words and ideas." They were revolutionary in 1776. They are revolutionary today. The principle is the same. The principle that is being enunciated is that if our government does not keep its end of the covenant, if our government does not obey the Constitution and if it makes laws contrary to the Constitution, the citizens are not obligated to obey those laws. They are freed from obedience to the government in such cases. If violations of the covenant continue, they are free to overthrow, alter, change or abolish the usurping bureaucracy or government.

One might ask, "Where did such thinking come from?" The answer is simple: first, from the Bible; second, from the Declaration of Independence; and third, from the United States Constitution.

The Declaration and the Constitution

Ponder carefully the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence:

> "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall most likely effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light or transient causes, and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

That is the Declaration of Independence. Our founding fathers understood covenantal principles. America is in existence today because of their understanding. If our forefathers had not believed that when one party of the covenant violated his part of the agreement that it freed the other party from obedience to the covenant, we would not have an America today.

They placed the same principle in the Constitution of the United States. Our government was literally to be "bound by the chains of the Constitution." Article VI, paragraph 2, declares:

> "This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land, and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of the State to the contrary notwithstanding?"

America is a republic. America was to be ruled by law, by the Constitution. Every judge is bound by the Constitution and if any law is passed that is in conflict with the Constitution, the conflicting law is null and void. It deserves no recognition and does not merit any obedience. If one party violates the covenant, the other party is loosed from obedience to the covenant.

The above principle is enunciated in Scripture; it is enunciated in the Declaration of Independence; and it is enunciated in the Constitution of the United States. The same principle is true today. We, the people, have the right to alter, abolish, change or overthrow any tyrannical or despotic government and institute a government that will secure our safety, establish our freedom and carry out the divine purposes for which God instituted and ordained government. When our government ceases to be biblical and constitutional, we, the people, are loosed from obedience to our government.

The Responsibilities of Rulers and People

IN BIBLICAL COVENANTS, ALL PARTIES ARE RESPONSIBLE TO CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE FULLEST AS UNTO THE LORD.

Samuel Rutherford in *Lex Rex* states the following:

> "The king and the people are each of them above and below others in different respects: the people, because they create the man king, they are so above the king and have a virtual power to compel him to do his duty; and the king, as king hath an authoritative power above the people, because royalty is formally in him, and originally and virtually only in the people, therefore may he compel them to their duty."

Government is to rule "from the consent of the governed." However, simply because we consent to be governed does not mean that we are relieved from our responsibilities. Likewise, simply because a man is elected to a position in government does not mean that he is relieved of his responsibilities. Rutherford points out the responsibilities of both the governor and the governed in his statement. Since it is the people who elect their king, ruler or representative, they are above him, that is, they have

the power to establish or remove him. Therefore, they are responsible to compel him to do his duty. On the other hand, once the ruler is established, he has authority and power; thus, he may also compel the people to do their duty. It requires two parties to enter into a covenant. Each party has obligations, duties and responsibilities; therefore, both the governor and the governed are accountable and responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ to carry out their parts of the covenant to the fullest.

Public Sin and National Judgment

Because of this truth, there is a vital principle that affects each individual. If you understand this principle, you will be able to discern the reason for so many judgments of God in our land. Here is the principle. Whenever a governmental agent, a civil magistrate, or governmental officer sins individually, that is, as an individual, he is judged individually. He alone is responsible for his personal and private sin and he alone bears the penalty and judgment of that sin from God. But whenever a governmental officer, a public person - whether president, senator, governor, judge, (or another) - sins in a public way and transgresses the law of God publicly and the people do not stop him, not only is he judged, but also the people of the land are judged with him. The reason is simple. The people have a covenantal responsibility to stop the public official from sinning publicly for they have a virtual power over him. In other words, when we allow our congressmen, judges, and presidents to violate God's law, persecute innocent people, overthrow justice and generally ignore righteousness and holiness, we are judged along with our public officials. Why? We had a covenantal responsibility to stop them and we did not.

Do you remember when David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband, Uriah the Hittite, with the sword of the children of Ammon? Through the prophet Nathan (II Samuel 11 and 12), God told David, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house..." David was king, but his sin was a personal and private one; therefore, David alone was judged by God. David had sinned as an individual and therefore David bore the brunt of His judgment.

In I Chronicles 21:1-17, David decided that he was going to number the people. There was no war to fight. He simply wanted to glory in the number of trained fighting men. Likewise, he did not receive the half shekel ransom for each man when he numbered them (Exodus 30:12-13). Scripture makes it clear that David's numbering of the men of war was in rebellion to God. When he announced his decision to the rulers of the people, no one opposed him. No one endeavored to stop him. The rulers simply went along with their king. Joab, the captain of the host, remonstrated with David and told him that his order was a trespass. Yet, when David's word prevailed over Joab's objections, he meekly submitted and began numbering the people. His attitude was, "I'm just following orders, and I'm just doing my job." The same attitude is prevalent today when officers of the law violate the constitutional rights of citizens. They do so under the color of law. They excuse themselves by stating that "they have a job to do and they are just following orders." It is time Christians and Americans have the character and courage to resign and find another job, rather than violate the law of God and the Constitution of the United States.

Joab continued to number the people until his actions became so odious and abominable that he could no longer perform his task. At that point, God spoke to David through Gad the prophet. In no uncertain terms David was told that he had sinned against the Lord his God. God not only judged David but the people also. In fact, seventy thousand of Israel died in the plague of judgment. In verse 17, David asks, "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done?" The answer is simple. They had a responsibility to stop their covenantal ruler from committing public sins and did not do so. Their silence and submission to David's ungodly legislation was their acquiescence to his unbiblical conduct and law. The people were judged with their ruler.

II Samuel 21 describes a three-year famine in the days of David. The famine was, of course, affecting every one in the land. After three years of starvation and suffering, David determined that something had to be done to remedy the situation. David then

inquired of the Lord concerning the reason for the famine. The answer the Lord gave is a very revealing one. "It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites" (verse 1).

Scripture cannot be any plainer. The famine was the result of the actions of King Saul and his administration. The entire land was being judged for something that a leader had done. Saul had purposefully murdered the Gibeonites. In Joshua 9, the Israelites had entered into a covenant with the Gibeonites. It is true that the Israelites were deceived by the Gibeonites. It is true that they failed to consult with the Lord their God. But because they had entered into the covenant, God demanded they keep it. Every Israelite knew of the covenant. Every Israelite knew that the Gibeonites were not to be slain. The Gibeonites had not violated their part of the covenant, so the Israelites were duty-bound to maintain their part of the covenant.

King Saul in his zeal to please the children of Israel and Judah mounted a campaign to slay the Gibeonites. He did so in direct violation of the covenant. Neither Israel nor Judah stopped him. No one attempted to remind him of the covenant. Everyone was silent. In their silence and submission to the acts of King Saul, the people consented to and acted in his dastardly deeds. Hence, God judged the people for the public sins of their ruler. They had an obligation to check him, rebuke him and stop him, yet, they did not; hence, they were justly punished for their rebellion to the God of the covenant.

Another example is found in I Kings 17. A three-year drought was pronounced against the land by Elijah the prophet. The pronouncement was made to Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab and his wicked wife, Jezebel, hated God and had persecuted and destroyed the prophets of God. The drought was because of their sins. I Kings 18:18 makes it exceedingly clear the drought was brought upon the land because of Ahab and his house.

The drought did not affect Ahab and his house only; it affected everyone in the land. Even the animals were dying (I Kings 18:5). Crops were gone, animals died, and families were destroyed, all because of the sins of the rulers. Alas, the people had sinned as well. How? They allowed Ahab and Jezebel to remain on the throne, and refused to overthrow them. They obeyed their ruler's

wicked edicts and laws and allowed them to go unchecked and unhindered. We, who elect our representatives, have the responsibility to remove them when they sin publicly and openly. We have the responsibility to do right even when our leaders do wrong. We do not obey those in office simply because they are in office. If we allow our leaders to sin openly and publicly without any rebuke, reproof or reprisal, then we are judged with them. We are part of their rebellion.

Pilate in Matthew 27:22 asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" The answer shouted back was, "Let him be crucified." Again Pilate asked, "Why, what evil hath he done?" Again the resounding cry was, "Let him be crucified." When Pilate had washed his hands and declared that he was "innocent of the blood of this just person," the cry was, "His blood be on us, and on our children." And so it was. The people did not escape the judgment of God for the sins they allowed their leaders to commit. Yea, the people were just as guilty and were judged by God for their participation in the death of His son. In 70 A.D. Titus destroyed Jerusalem and most of the population was destroyed. The rulers may have delivered Christ over to Pilate, but the people had a responsibility to control and remove corrupt leaders. When rulers and leaders sin openly and publicly, the people are judged with them.

The principle having been documented, it would seem that no other corroboration would be needed. Yet, if there were no other Scriptures to rely upon, Jeremiah 15:4 would be sufficient to establish the principle that the people are judged for the open and public sins of their rulers. God says, "And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah for that which he did in Jerusalem."

Ahab was the most wicked king in the Northern Kingdom and Manasseh was the most wicked king in the Southern Kingdom. God said that he would cause the people to be removed into all kingdoms for that which their king had done. Why? The people did not stop their king. They did not remove him. They allowed him to sin openly and unchecked. His ungodly laws, edicts and "regulations" were obeyed willingly by the people. God, therefore,

justly judged the nation because they would not stop their wicked ruler.

Government is covenantal in nature. Each party, the governed as well as the governors, is answerable and accountable to the God that ordained and established government. Government is to be God's government. God's people are to be God's people. We may have a heavenly home and we may have an eternal citizenship in heaven, but the fact is that we are still citizens here and Christ said "occupy till I come." We have a responsibility to stand for truth, righteousness and the Word of God in every area of our life!

The reason the people did not stop Manasseh was because they enjoyed all of the wickedness and sin that he promoted and established. That is the real reason any wicked ruler stays in power. People were not interested in the plight of the Christians being thrown to the lions because they enjoyed the Roman circus. And we are no different. The reason we do not cry out against the corruption in Washington, D.C., and all the corruption in our state capitols, is because we enjoy the sin. We like the confiscation of the property of others for our benefit. If our leaders are guilty of immorality, they cannot condemn our immorality. We have a nation of wicked rulers because we have a nation of wicked people. When the judgment of God comes down upon our rulers, do not think for one moment that we are going to escape.

In I Samuel 12:25, God says, "But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." Do not take the attitude that "When the judgment of God comes, bless God, I won't be here." There are historical judgments in time and in history because of covenantal faithlessness (Job 19:29). Did you know that Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations? Did you know that he was viewing the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's army as he wrote the book? Do you think that the godly always escape persecution? How do you think Daniel got into Babylon? How do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego got there? How do you think Ezekiel got there? The righteous do not always escape persecution. Think of all the Christians recorded in Hebrews 11 who died in the faith. Read Fox's Book of Martyrs. Remember the Covenanters of Scotland and the Huguenots in France. Do not forget the Christians down through the ages that

have suffered and given themselves for Christ. The Bible says, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:37-38). Even Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who sat and watched the cream of Judah taken into captivity while the rest were slain, was taken into Egypt by wicked men. As far as we know, that is where Jeremiah died.

My question is this: Are we better than the Christians who have suffered in times past? Are we better than the prophets of God? If we do not stop our rulers from wickedly disobeying God, do you think that we will escape the judgment of God? We have a responsibility to be biblical in every area of our lives. If we sit back and let our rulers continue promoting and performing abortions, euthanasia, sodomy and other kinds of ungodliness and wickedness, do you think that we shall escape the righteous judgment of God as a nation? If we continue to allow our rulers to murder the church of God, destroy God's people, trample under their feet the Word of God, and despise and hate Jesus Christ, do you think that we shall escape? The Word of God says, "Ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king" (I Samuel 12:25).

We have a responsibility to stop wickedness in high places. We are God's people and government is to be God's government. If you and I do not take a stand in this land, if we do not study and discern our responsibilities as Christians and as citizens, we are going to awaken one morning and find that the devastating judgment of God has destroyed our nation. Government is covenantal in nature. Each party is answerable and accountable to the God who has ordained and established government.

Chapter 3

The Purpose of Government

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves dam-nation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Romans 13:1-4

It may surprise many to find that the Word of God summarizes the purpose of government under two simple heads: 1) the punishment of evil doers and, 2) the protection and praise of those who do good. If rulers are to "terrorize" evil works and workers, then it is obvious that the evil must be punished. Likewise, if government is to "praise" good works and workers, they must be protected and promoted. The God who established and ordained government also sets the limits and boundaries for the government.

Civil government has most certainly gotten out of hand. It has blossomed like a wild plant, running in every direction, seemingly uncontrolled. It was George Washington who compared government to a fire. Fire is very useful and helpful when it is in the fireplace. However, once it leaves its proper sphere, it becomes a raging, uncontrollable tyrant. A truer illustration of civil government out of control could not be found.

Justice Charity and Education

Civil government was never ordained by God to be a provider. There are absolutely no scriptural grounds for a welfare state.

Government was not ordained for the ministry of welfare. It was ordained for the ministry of justice. Welfare or charity is the ministry of the church; it is the ministry of believers. Our country was founded upon this truth. It has been only in recent years that America has functioned almost totally as a socialistic state.

Churches and Christian societies carried on the deeds of charity across our nation. There were tithe agencies everywhere. When the immigrants came to America, they were met by Christians; they were housed by Christians; they were taught the English language, and they were taught how to work and function in America, all by churches and Christian agencies. There were even tithe agencies for injured railroad workers. It should be obvious that the reason the civil government is in the welfare business today is because families, Christians and churches have failed in their responsibilities.

Civil government is not a ministry of education. Although it is involved in education, it is a "Johnnie-come-lately" to that field. Christians and churches have been involved in education for centuries. It has always been the duty and responsibility of the family and church to educate their youth. The first "public school" was begun in 1845 in Massachusetts. Many, if not all, of the founders of the public or "common" school movement were Unitarians and anti-Christian. One need only read R. J. Rushdoony's *The Messianic Character of American Education* for documentation.

Civil government is to be a ministry of justice. The church is the ministry of grace and the family is the ministry of education. God has limited government to the punishment of evil and the protection of good.

The Limits of Constitutional Power

The Constitution of the United States limits the government. It does not limit the government as closely as the Word of God does, but, while making 80 grants of power to the federal government, it levies 115 prohibitions against it. It gives to the federal legislative authority 20 grants of power while at the same time placing 70 restraints against it.

The Constitution is known as an "express powers" document or a "limited powers" document. It means that our federal government is limited to only the powers that are expressed in the Constitution. Any power or authority that is not spelled out in the Constitution does not belong to the federal government. It is limited, bound by the chains of the Constitution. Read carefully the ninth and tenth Amendments to the United States Constitution:

"The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." Article IX

> "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Article X

Our Constitution states that if "we the people" have not given specific powers to the federal government, then those powers are reserved to the people. Now the interesting thing is that the Constitution of the United States is designated as the supreme law of the land. All judicial officers, in fact, all officers, whether governors, senators or local police officers, must take an oath that they will support the Constitution of the United States:

> "This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof and all treaties made or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land, and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding." Article VI, Paragraph 2

In America, when you and I go into a court room, whether it is a state court, federal court or city court, every judge is bound by the Constitution of the United States. Yet, in recent years, there have been many Americans in courtrooms where judges have refused to allow the Constitution to be read. They have refused constitutional arguments and motions. Many such motions have been labeled "frivolous."

Check your own state constitution. No doubt it will read along these lines:

> "Legislative acts in violation of this Constitution or the Constitution of the United States are void and the judiciary shall so declare them." Georgia State Constitution, Article I, Section 2, Paragraph 5.

There are limitations on civil government. State and federal constitutions prescribe boundaries and are the only grants of power the civil governments have from the people. Therefore, any law, statute, regulation or ordinance that is in conflict with the Constitution is null and void. It has no power, no binding influence and no effect. It is not to be obeyed or recognized as law. It is unlawful from its inception. It is to be declared unconstitutional by the judiciary.

The Word of God limits civil government. The United States Constitution limits American civil government. Civil government is a ministry of justice. It is not a "provider government;" it is not in the "welfare ministry."

The General Welfare Clause

One may object and say, "But there is a general welfare clause in the Constitution." The welfare clause is found only in the Preamble and it Article 1, Section 8, paragraph 1. The Preamble reads as follows:

> "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

It should be pointed out that a preamble is merely an introduction. It is a preliminary statement of purpose or intent. It does not convey any power or authority. It is a simple statement as to why the document was being written. Article 1, Section 8, paragraph 1 merely repeats the phrase “provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare” explaining why Congress shall have the power to tax.

Second, and more importantly, The Federalist Papers, written in defense of the Constitution by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison, verifies that the phrase "promote the general

welfare" is connected with and explanatory of the phrase "provide for the common defense." In other words, the phrase has nothing to do with "welfare checks and food stamps." These men should know what the phrase means - they wrote it! Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Madison is called "The Father of the Constitution." He was secretary at the Convention and was responsible for the note-taking and records. John Jay was a jurist and statesman. He was also the first chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Civil government is limited by the Constitution. More importantly, for the Christian, it is limited by the Word of God.

Negative Law and Limited Government

Look carefully at Romans 13:3: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil...do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." Civil government has nothing to do with any citizen as long as that citizen is doing "good works." It is to terrorize those who work evil. It should not cause fear in any citizen unless that citizen violates "the good works."

God's law is couched in negative terms. Have you ever noticed how many times God says, "Thou shalt not"? Rousas J. Rushdoony, in his book, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* says:

> "Of the ten commandments, eight are stated in negative terms. The other two, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and "Honor thy father and thy mother," are undergirded by a number of subordinate laws which are all negative in character. The sabbath commandment is negative: "thou shalt not do any work (Ex. 20:10; Deut. 5:14), so that, in their full form, nine of the ten commandments are negative."

Scholars often talk about "the negativism of the law." Why is that important? Why does God say "thou shalt not?" First, a negative law deals with a particular evil. If God says, "Thou shalt not steal," the particular evil being dealt with is theft and its many and varied forms. The negativism is plain and simple. Anyone can understand it. Second, a negative law limits and confines civil government. If one is not violating a negative law in some fashion, the civil government has no right, power or authority to interfere

in his life. As long as the citizen does "the good work," the state has no right to meddle in his life, for the civil government is a ministry of justice. Third, positive law leads to tyranny and totalitarianism.

The Roman legal principle, "the health of the people is the highest or chiefest good," is an excellent example of positive law. Civil government, under positive law, may enact all kinds of legislation "for our good." It is supposed to be "for our good" that we are forced to wear seat belts, drink chlorinated water, receive immunization shots, and generally do what we are told. Why are many harmful chemicals in the city drinking water? Did you determine they were beneficial to your health? Did you have anything to say about their introduction into the water system? No, it was determined for you by your civil leaders. Remember, the "public safety officials" in France, under the leadership of Robespierre and Marat, led a reign of terror and the French Revolution, all for the good of the people. Any time civil government usurps responsibility for individual welfare, rather than the individual assuming his own responsibility, the result will always be tyranny and totalitarianism. Whenever civil government denies self-government and personal responsibility, despotism is in the driver's seat.

The Standard of Good and Evil

Consider for a moment the implications of Romans 13:3. If the purpose of civil government is to punish the "evil work" and protect and promote the "good work," who defines what is evil and what is good? What is the standard by which good and evil are determined? It should be obvious that a standard must exist or "good and evil" will become the subjective opinions of fallen man. What is good in one man's eyes may be extremely evil in another man's view without an objective standard. Thus, confusion and anarchy will reign without an objective standard.

The objective standard is the Law - Word of God. God is the determiner of good and evil. Isaiah 45:7 declares, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things."

Now it is very obvious that God is not the author of evil. He did not make, infuse, or instigate evil in the sense that "God made us sin." James 1:13-15 forbids those thoughts when James teaches, "Let no man say when he is tempted [inward solicitation to commit evil], I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We are responsible for our sins. God did not force us to sin. How then may it be said that God is the "creator of evil"?

The answer is that when God ordained, decreed and declared that which was "good," at the same time evil was created, in the sense that whatever was against, contrary to or not in line with "the good" constituted that which was evil. God, the Creator, the Lawgiver, the Sovereign is the sole determiner of good and evil. Good is what God says it is. Evil is what God declares it to be. It is not in the prerogative of man to be the determiner of good and evil. Fallen man, corrupt man, humanistic man loves to "play god" and endeavors to determine good and evil for himself (Genesis 3); however, he is only deceiving himself. God alone determines good and evil; and in the final analysis, God is the only One who can enforce His definitions with eternal punishment.

Civil government is therefore responsible to "protect and promote the good" according to God's evaluation and determination of good. Likewise, civil government must punish and put away the evil according to God's determination of evil. Civil government is not the determiner of good and evil. God is. Civil government can only be a ministry of justice as it carries out God's law. Anything else will make it a ministry of injustice.

There is no alternative. We will be ruled either by God's law or by man's capricious whims. If we deny God's law, the only thing left is humanism, pure and simple. Man will never be as merciful, benevolent or as just as God. Consequently, man's law will always be harsh, inhumane and unjust. Tyranny and totalitarianism are always the result of man's attempt to replace God and His law.

The Punishment of Evil and the Praise of Good

I Peter 2:13-14 teaches the same truth as does Romans 13:3-4. Peter declares, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

First, the word "ordinance" is the Greek word *ktisis*. It refers to "the act of founding, establishing, or building," hence; it refers to the thing created. Peter is not saying that we are to obey every law that comes from man; rather, he is saying that we are to submit to every kind of institution of civil government that is designed to carry out God's law and purpose. The constitutional monarchy of England is just as much responsible to carry out God's law as the republic of America. The form of civil government is not as important as its function.

Peter, therefore, rightly admonished Christians to obey the king (a monarchy) or his representatives when they are sent by him to protect the good and punish the evil. The purpose of civil government, regardless of its form, is simply to punish those who violate God's law and protect those who obey God's law.

Let it be emphatically stated that it is impossible to separate civil government and religion. All government is religious. Behind every law and every regulation is a determination of "good and evil" and "right and wrong." The religion may be pagan or it may be Christian, yet it is religious nonetheless. You may separate the church and the state, but you can no more separate religion from the state any more than you can separate it from the church. Government is an aspect of God's kingdom as much as the church. Government must give an account unto God for its ministry just as the church must.

It is not the prerogative of the church to rule over the civil government any more than it is the prerogative of the civil government to rule over the church. Each is a separate sphere of jurisdiction. Each must answer to God for its own ministry. The church may preach to and teach the state, but not rule over it. The state may enforce God's law (death penalty) against individual

church members who violate that law, but it cannot rule over the church. Each jurisdiction is accountable and answerable to God.

Punishment and the Protection of Society

A second implication is found in Romans 13:4: "For he [that is, the civil government] is the minister of God to thee for good." Do you realize it is for our good that evil is punished? It is for the good of the church, it is for the good of society, it is for the good of the family, and it is for the good of individuals that evil is punished! Over and over when God told Israel to punish the wicked and the evil, He would always include this phrase, "So shalt thou put evil out from among you."

It is "for our good" when civil government executes a murderer, rapist, or kidnapper. The principle is simple. Either the wicked die or society dies. When the wicked are not punished by civil government, then the wicked will continually punish the righteous and the innocent. How many citizens have been raped, robbed and murdered by felons who were either out on bail or parole? Rightly does the Word of God teach in Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

This author was preaching in a northwestern city and was visiting in the neighborhood with the local pastor. During our visit, we met a man who was recently divorced. He was extremely bitter and resentful; he was full of hatred toward his ex-wife. He was not interested in hearing God's Word, but he was interested in telling us all about his problems. As he talked, he became full of anger. In his rage, he blurted out, "I should have killed her! If I had killed her like I started, I would have had to serve seven years and then I would be released. Now I have to pay alimony all of my life!" In his eyes, he would have been better off to murder his wife because he knew that in seven years he would be out of prison. According to God's law, if he had murdered his wife, civil government would be responsible to take his life (Genesis 9; Numbers 35:31). His thinking was humanistic, not biblical. It would indeed change attitudes concerning murder if the murderer knew for certain that he would lose his life as well.

The Word of God says, "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." For what reason would a sword be used other than to punish evil? The Bible is clearly teaching capital punishment. And the Bible is clearly teaching that it is the responsibility of civil government to carry out that punishment.

Mala in Se and Mala Prohibita

A third implication is that civil government is to punish only those crimes that are termed *mala in se*. *Mala in se* is the Latin term that refers to "acts that are morally wrong in themselves, acts that are evil in themselves." *Mala in se* crimes are crimes that are in direct violation of the law of God. Murder, theft, kidnapping, rape and many other crimes are designated mala in se crimes.

Mala in se crimes are directly opposite of *mala prohibita* crimes. *Mala prohibita* is defined by Black's Law Dictionary as:

> "Prohibited wrongs or offenses; acts which are made offenses by positive laws, and prohibited as such. Acts or omissions which are made criminal by statute but which, of themselves, are not criminal. Generally, no criminal intent or mens rea is required and the mere accomplishment of the act or omission is sufficient for criminal liability. Term is used in contrast to mala in se which are acts which are wrongs in themselves such as robbery."

Mala prohibita crimes are crimes that are so constituted by man's positive law. They are crimes that are not evil in and of themselves and require no criminal intent. Laws that make it a crime for "failing to file a form" are *mala prohibita* laws. One can simply "walk on the grass" or "park in the wrong place" unknowingly and unintentionally and be charged criminally by mala prohibita laws.

It is reasonable, logical and biblical to assume that when God ordained civil government for the purpose of punishing the evil works, the punishment was for those works that He constituted evil. Otherwise, man "plays god" by constituting something evil when, in reality, it is not evil. God is the determiner of good and evil.

It is by means of *mala prohibita* laws that godly men are harassed, persecuted, prosecuted and suffer the loss of life, liberty and property. When wicked men in positions of power and authority cannot find a legitimate reason to dispose of a godly ruler such as Daniel, they connive to have a *mala prohibita* law passed that will enable them to "legally" dispose of the one who stands in their way. So it is in our civil government today.

Many Christian men and women are suffering and languishing in prisons today because of *mala prohibita* laws. They have not committed any evil; they have not committed any crime that was morally wrong; they simply, for conscience sake, could not perform in the way civil government demanded they perform. Hence, they are judged, punished and treated as the most wicked and vile criminals that have existed. Prison does not distinguish between *mala in se* crime and *mala prohibita* crimes. It is not easier on the non-violent than it is on the violent. Unhappily, our system seems to treat individuals worse who are seeking to rectify wrongs, expose wickedness and exalt righteousness. It is extremely rough on those who wish to expose the corruption and wickedness of "the establishment." Any crime can be tolerated except the crime of "Christian convictions."

Civil government, according to the Bible, is to be a "revenger," that is, one who executes and exacts God's righteousness by punishing evil. When a civil government punishes the righteous and that which is not evil, it is no longer "an exacter of God's righteousness;" rather, it is an evil totalitarian system that has elevated itself above God. Likewise, when a civil government protects, coddles, and fails to punish the wicked, it is no longer "an exacter of God's righteousness"; it is an evil totalitarian system that has exalted itself to deity. It becomes that which God hates. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD" (Proverb 17:15).

Chapter 4

Are We Bound to Obey Government When it is Contrary to the Word of God?

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Romans 13:1-2

Are Christians and citizens bound to obey every law, statute, ordinance or legislation that comes from our governments? Most have never honestly faced the questions: What must I do when man's law is in contradiction to God's law? Whom do I obey? Can I in good conscience violate man's law in order to keep God's law? What does God demand? Unhappily, most have never considered the questions because most do not know God's law.

If one does not know what is required of him by God, he cannot know when he is being led or forced to go contrary to what God requires.

Having read the previous chapters and comprehended the Scriptural teaching, the above questions should be superfluous. When one understands that God is the originator and author of civil government, that God has limited and defined government, that government is covenantal in nature and that God has clearly and definitively set forth the purpose of government, no further clarification should be needed. Nevertheless, let us turn directly to the Scriptures for a closer examination.

The Question of Civil Disobedience

Let us consider one important fact before we begin. Civil disobedience is a presuppositional truth; that is, every one believes in civil disobedience. The subject is not one on which most people contemplate, yet, every one concurs that civil disobedience definitely has a place in our lives. The point of controversy or disagreement is at which point and in what degree do we begin to disobey. As the Declaration of Independence observes:

> "...all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed..."

Everyone has his boiling point. Everyone has a place at which he will draw the line. Everyone has a limitation. Everyone comes to the time at which he will say, "No more!" The issue is not whether or not civil disobedience is lawful; the issue is: "When and in what degree will I disobey?"

Rulers Who Remove the Bounds

In Hosea 5:10-11, God says, "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment." The princes or rulers of Judah were boundary movers. They were not moving the "boundary line" between Judah and Israel. No, for that boundary was never appointed by God. Rather, they were moving the boundaries of right which had been determined by God, an example of which is found in Hosea 4:15, whereby the rulers were participating in idolatry, the guilt of Ephraim. By their acts of legislation and personal participation, the rulers had removed the boundary between Jehovah and Baal, that is to say, between the one true God and idols.

The rulers had no authority to commend that which God condemned nor did they have authority to condemn that which God commended. They did not like the bounds placed upon them by the God that ordained civil government. Therefore, they

presumptively and rebelliously usurped the prerogative of God and acted independently of their Creator, Author and Sovereign. God will therefore judge them accordingly and pour upon them His wrath. There is no ruler, prince or individual in authority who has the right, power, authority or prerogative to violate God's limits and bounds that are placed upon him by God in Holy Scripture. E.W. Hengstenberg states, "If he who removes his neighbor's boundary is cursed, how much more he who removes the border of his God!" (Deut. 19:14; 27:17).

Note carefully Hosea 5:11: "Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment." The Hebrew word for commandment is tsav. Tsav is a human statute; it stands here and in Isaiah 28:10 and 13, the only other passages in which it occurs, as an antithesis to the word or commandment of God. God oppressed and judged the people of Ephraim for willingly obeying statutes promulgated by their civil government when they knew they were contrary to the law of God. There is a time when people should not obey their rulers. We merit only destruction and judgment when we obey those over us who are ruling contrary to God and His law.

Interpreting Romans 13

It is an interesting fact that each time a bureaucrat wants a Christian to submit to a piece of ungodly legislation or a regulation, he will always respond with, "Haven't you read Romans 13?" He is simply indicating that if you are a "good Christian" you will do what you are told and keep your mouth shut. He is your authority and you must obey him without reservation or equivocation.

Our church was in a battle with the state over licensure and regulation. We received a very demanding letter from the state and were threatened with a lawsuit if we did not submit immediately. As pastor, I responded with a letter outlining our biblical and constitutional objections to the demands placed upon our local assembly. I wanted to be kind, yet firm. I wanted our "bureaucrat" to know that we could not in good conscience submit to his demands because they were a violation of Scripture.

Naturally, he wrote back and said, "Being a Christian myself, I am sure that you are aware of Romans chapter 13." I responded to his letter and stated how thankful I was that he had brought up Romans chapter 13 and that he confessed that he was a Christian. Since he was a Christian, I knew that he would want to be in submission to the totality of the revealed Word of God. It took about five single spaced pages to give him a summary of Romans 13. Needless to say, the next letter I received was from a different bureaucrat in the same department.

It is amazing how simplistic and unbiblical many are in their pronouncements. They interpret Romans 13:1-2 as a "blanket submission" to civil government. Any time government legislates ungodly laws, we are told that we must obey them because of Romans 13. Do you know who wrote the book of Romans? Paul the Apostle. Do you know who wrote Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon? Paul the Apostle. The books of Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon are commonly referred to as "the prison epistles." Do you know why? Paul was in prison when he wrote them. Paul, the author of Romans 13, is the one who 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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." That same Paul the Apostle was in prison on numerous occasions for violating the edicts and laws of the land. Do you actually think that if Paul had meant that we were to obey every law regardless of how it conflicted with and was contrary to God's law, that he would have turned right around and violated the very words that he wrote? Of course not. The truth is that Romans 13:1-2 has no such meaning. It should be very obvious from Paul's conduct, as well as his teachings, that he was not advocating a blanket submission to civil government. He should know. He wrote the book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Elijah and the Kings of Israel

Consider the prophet Elijah. In I Kings 17 and 18 there was a controversy between the wicked king Ahab and the godly Elijah.

Elijah said unto Ahab, "...As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (17:1). After these words were spoken and the drought began, God hid Elijah by a brook, and when the brook dried up, God sent him to Zarephath in Zidon. Wicked Ahab had sent soldiers throughout the country looking for Elijah. He had even sent soldiers into other nations hoping to find Elijah and extracted an oath from them that Elijah was not hiding there (18:10). Now Elijah knew that Ahab was looking for him. He also knew the reason. Ahab wanted to put Elijah to death. Ahab wrongly assumed that Elijah was responsible for the drought (18:17-18). Do you imagine that Elijah spent a great deal of time worrying about whether or not he should "turn himself in?" Do you think that it caused a great deal of consternation to Elijah that he was hiding in violation of the king's wishes and edicts? Not in the least. Elijah knew that he did not owe any allegiance or submission to a wicked ruler who was violating the law of God. Elijah refused to cooperate or show himself unto Ahab until God commanded him. Had he submitted to Ahab, he would have been guilty of self-murder as well as rebellion against his God. He refused to obey his civil ruler and obeyed his God.

II Kings 1 is another striking example of Elijah's refusal to obey a civil ruler. King Ahaziah was sick and he sent messengers to the god of Ekron, Baalzebub, which literally means "the god of filth or the god of the flies," in order to ascertain whether or not he would recover from his disease. Elijah met the messengers and told them to return unto their master and tell him that he would most surely die. Ahaziah was distressed with the news and asked the messengers who gave the message to them. They did not know who Elijah was, but after they described him sufficiently, King Ahaziah knew immediately that it was Elijah.

Ahaziah believed the old dictum, "if you don't like the message, kill the messenger." Consequently, he sent a captain with his fifty men to arrest Elijah. When the captain came and ordered Elijah to come down from the place where he was sitting, Elijah responded, "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty" (II Kings 1:10). Immediately God destroyed the men with fire. Not only did Elijah disobey his civil

ruler, but also, through his intercession, he was responsible for the deaths of the governmental agents.

Some people never learn. Ahaziah was not content to lose fifty-one men. He was so angry he did not care how many men he lost. He then sent another captain and his fifty to arrest Elijah. The second captain decided that he would be rougher and more authoritative than the first. Upon his approach to Elijah, his order was, "O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly" (verse 11). Again Elijah prayed and fire came from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty. Now Ahaziah had lost one hundred and two men.

A third captain and his fifty were sent by Ahaziah to arrest Elijah. The king may not have learned anything, but his captains had. The third captain approached Elijah with these words, "O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight" (verses 13-14). Elijah, at God's direction, arose and went with the captain.

Elijah certainly did not believe that civil rulers must be obeyed at all times. He was God's prophet, God's man; and in his submission to God, he disobeyed his civil ruler. God honored his disobedience. In fact, one could say that it was God who enabled Elijah to disobey the civil ruler in I Kings 17 and in II Kings 1. It was God who sustained His prophet in I Kings 17 in defiance of the king and it was God who sent the fire that destroyed the captains and their fifties in II Kings 1. Civil rulers are not "gods." They are men who are accountable and responsible to the God that ordained authority.

The Hebrew Midwives and Moses

There are a multitude of Scriptures that give accounts of godly men and women disobeying ungodly, totalitarian rulers. Take Shiphrah and Puah for an example. In Exodus 1:15-22, we have their adventure: "And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of one was Shiphrah, and the name

of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive." The king had ordered the midwives to perform aborticide or, more to the point, murder. They refused to obey their civil ruler because they feared God. In other words, they knew that the king's law was in contradiction to God's law. They were forced to make a choice. They obeyed God.

Can't you hear some bleeding heart crying at this moment, "Shiphrah, Puah, you must obey the powers that be. They are ordained of God. If you resist them, you are resisting God." The only one who was resisting God in this story was the wicked ruler who issued a law that was in contradiction to God's law. Shiphrah and Puah refused to participate in murder. It did not matter to them that it was "the law of the land." God's law is above the king's law. We must obey God rather than men.

The king wanted an answer why his law had been disobeyed by the midwives. "And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them." The midwives lied to the king plainly and simply. It is obvious that if the Hebrew women were delivering without the aid of midwives, then the midwives for all practical purposes were out of a job. Did God condemn the midwives for lying to their ruler? Did God condemn them for disobeying their ruler? Look at verses 20 and 21: "Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses." Now I ask you this question: Were those women holy because they obeyed God and disobeyed the king or were they unholy because they obeyed God and disobeyed the king? You know the answer.

Pharaoh would not give up. He wanted the male Hebrew children murdered. When the mid-wives would not help him, he issued a law that placed the responsibility of murdering children

upon each of his subjects. Since the Hebrew slaves were considered "his subjects" as well, he was in actuality ordering parents to murder their own children. "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." The fact that this command, if carried out, would necessarily have resulted in the extermination of Israel, did not in the least concern the tyrant. He simply wanted his ruthless law obeyed. He maintained that "he was a law unto himself." His attitude was that everyone was answerable unto him, but he was answerable to no one.

Did all of Pharaoh's subjects believe they were obligated to obey their ruler? Scripture states in Exodus 2:1-4, "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." Amram and Jochebed (Numbers 26:59), the father and mother of Moses, refused to obey the law. Instead of murdering the child as the law required, they did everything in their power to disobey and save the child. Are parents obligated to murder their own flesh and blood at the whim of a wicked despot? Were the parents of Moses unholy because they disobeyed the king? Would not obedience to God, in this instance, require disobedience to the civil ruler? Their disobedience to tyranny was obedience to God. They were holy, godly people who honored the law of God above the law of man.

Rahab and the Spies

Rahab the harlot, in Joshua 2, was placed in the same conflict. Should she obey God or her king? She came to the realization that God must be obeyed. Consequently, she not only lied to her king, she also personally hid the spies and gave them directions as to how to escape capture from her civil ruler. Politically speaking, she was guilty not only of rebellion, but also of treason. She was helping to overthrow her own tyrannical government. Was her

attitude, "I cannot resist tyranny, I must submit to my king and be a partaker in the murder of innocent men?" Thankfully, that was not her attitude. She knew that God was sovereign and that He had given the land to the Israelites (2:9). She would no longer help those who were in disobedience to God; rather, she would stand for God's law and His people.

I Samuel 2:30 declares, "...for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Rahab honored God rather than man and God honored Rahab. He not only saved her by His infinite grace, He also placed her among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Moreover, He placed her in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). That act was quite an honor for someone who was known as "the harlot."

The Three Hebrew Children

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego found them-selves in quite a quandary. Not only had King Nebuchadnezzar made an image in the plain of Dura (Daniel 3), but he had also issued an order that everyone must bow down and worship (3:4-6) or face a burning fiery furnace. Although the consequences were grave, these three young men refused to be intimidated by the king. His law was in direct violation of the law of God and they knew it. Not only did they disobey the king's law, but also, when confronted by the king personally, they boldly stood and refused to obey him to his face. Angered, he shouted, "...but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Their answer was a classic one. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee 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 thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up" (3:15-18).

They recognized that God could deliver them. He was most definitely able to do so. They confessed His omnipotence and His sovereignty. However, they did not know that it would be His will to deliver them. Their attitude was, "If God delivers us, wonderful!

If God does not deliver us, wonderful! We will not bow down." Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were determined to obey God regardless of the consequences. Their obedience might be the occasion of their death.

God did deliver them! He did so mightily. He did so in such a way that wicked Nebuchadnezzar declared, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God" (3:28). Did God not honor these men for disobeying their civil ruler? Did not even Nebuchadnezzar, after he had seen the truth, commend them? Most definitely. How is it then, that today many well-meaning people believe that civil government is to be obeyed regardless of the unbiblical and unconstitutional nature of most laws? The truth is most do not know the One True and Living God or His law!

Daniel and the Decree

Daniel was a man in government. He was an honest, hard-working and God-fearing man. Certainly he was an exception to the rule. Political intrigue was prevalent in those days as well. When those around him could not bribe, intimidate, corrupt or control him, they sought to get rid of him. The only problem was that they could find no occasion or fault in him (Daniel 6:1-4). Therefore, "Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (6:5). They purposed to throw Daniel into disfavor with King Darius by creating a conflict between the law of the Medes and Persians and the law of God.

A law was quickly passed stating that "Whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions" (6:7). Quite a piece of legislation! It was not designed to honor the king; rather, it was designed to destroy Daniel. How? Those men knew that Daniel would not cease praying to his God. He was an upright and faithful man. Laws are often designed to control or destroy a politician's opponents.

When Daniel knew that the petition was signed, that is, he knew that it was "the law of the land," he prayed three times a day as he did aforetime. When his enemies found him, they found him praying (6:10-11). They caught him in the act! You know the rest of the story. God delivered Daniel from the lions and the wicked men were then thrown to the lions.

The important point is: Daniel obeyed God rather than man. He did not believe in a blanket submission to civil government. Whenever man's law conflicted with and was contrary to God's law, he obeyed God's law.

The Apostles and Obedience to God

The New Testament bears out the same principle that the Old Testament does. After the leaders had threatened and forbidden the disciples to preach in the name of Jesus, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). God's Word is preeminent.

As citizens of the United States, we should obey our Constitution as long as it is not in conflict with the Word of God. Our civil rulers have no authority to legislate any laws that will conflict with the Word of God or the Constitution. If they do, we must understand that any law, statute, regulation, or ordinance in conflict with either is null and void. Civil government is under law. It is under God's law. We must obey God rather than man.

One may object and say, "With that attitude, you will end up in jail!" Why were Christians thrown to the lions in Rome? Christians were not put to death in Rome simply for being Christians. In Rome you could believe anything you wanted to believe - as long as you swore by the genius of Caesar. All you had to do was say, "Caesar is Lord!" Christians refused to offer incense to Caesar. They refused to acknowledge his lordship. Instead, they confessed that Jesus Christ was Lord! Their liberty and freedom came from Christ, not Caesar. Caesar was just as responsible to Christ as the Christians were. Christians were put to death in Rome for being traitors and individuals treasonous to the government. They refused to cooperate with the civil government in that area. They chose to obey God instead.

In Acts 5 the religious rulers rose up and threw the disciples into prison. They forbad them to speak in the name of Jesus Christ. However, in verse 19, God sent His angel and opened the door of the prison and commanded them to stand in the temple and preach. God Himself acted to over-throw the orders and decrees of the rulers.

The same thing happened in Acts 12. King Herod had thrown the apostle Peter into prison and was planning to kill him. God sent His angel and opened the doors of the prison (12:6-11). If Romans 13:1-2 means that we must obey every law of man without equivocation or reservation, is it not strange that God Himself enabled men to overthrow the laws and decrees of kings and governments? Yea, that God Himself actively participated in the overthrow of the laws. One thing is certain. If we are thrown into prison for righteousness' sake, we know the God Who is able to open the prison doors!

Now the question should be answered. Must we obey every law that is legislated by our civil governments? The Bible gives us a resounding "NO"! We must obey God rather than men. Godly men and women often suffer persecution for their obedience to the Word of God. Our consciences must be held captive only to God and His Word.

Chapter 5

Is Usurped Authority Legitimate?

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Romans 13:1-2

We find from studying the preceding chapter that usurped authority is not binding upon anyone. The examples of Paul, Elijah, the midwives, Rahab, the three Hebrew children, and many others testify that usurped authority is illegitimate. Acts 5:29 plainly states that, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Nevertheless, lest some still do not understand the principle, let us examine the question more closely in Romans 13.

The Meaning of Tyranny

A quick perusal in a good dictionary will reveal certain truths concerning the definitions of a tyrant. First, we should understand that a tyrant is not necessarily a cruel and oppressive individual. That is the usual mental picture we get when the word "tyrant" is mentioned. However, Webster's *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* defines tyrant as follows: "1. an absolute ruler; one who seized sovereignty illegally; a usurper. 2. a cruel oppressive ruler; a despot. 3. one who exercises his authority in an oppressive manner, a cruel master."

It is possible for an individual to be kind, benevolent and have good intentions; yet, if he does not have lawful authority to act, he is still a tyrant. Those who exceed their lawful authority, whether in the home, church, or state, are tyrants in the strictest sense of the word. They are endeavoring unlawfully and unbiblically to impose their wills, plans, ambitions and desires upon others. An

individual does not have to be cruel and oppressive in order to be a tyrant, but even so-called "benevolent dictators" usually become so when their wills are thwarted.

Since God is the Ultimate Authority, and since He alone is Sovereign, He alone sets the boundaries and defines the limits. Therefore, a tyrant is one who rules without God and in rebellion to God. In simple language, when any ruler exercises authority apart from God, apart from Scripture and apart from God's law, no matter how kind or benevolent that individual is, he is a tyrant. We normally think of a tyrant as a man who seeks to impose his will upon others through the use of force. Force and cruelty are not necessary requirements for tyrants. In order to become a tyrant, one has only to usurp an office illegally or unlawfully and assume or claim power or jurisdiction that God has never given him.

In Hosea 5: 10-11, God says, "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment." God judged Judah for tyranny, that is, for removing His boundaries, going over and above the authority that He gave them. Likewise, He judged Ephraim for willingly obeying statutes or laws that were given in usurpation and rebellion to Him. Tyranny is ruling without or apart from God. No one is obligated or bound to obey usurped power and those who do will be judged by God for rebellion. Obedience to tyrants is rebellion to God.

Lawful Authority and Romans 13

First, in Romans 13, the subjection and submission that is demanded of God's people to authority is demanded in abstraction and not concretely and absolutely. In other words, God is not saying in Romans 13:1-2 that we must obey every law, statute, or regulation that comes from any or every officer of any or every government at all times. That interpretation contradicts too many plain and obvious Scriptures. He is saying that we must obey those magistrates and rulers who exercise biblical, lawful and proper authority. This passage does not teach that we must obey tyrants and those that are unbiblical and ungodly.

God has ordained and established government for our benefit, for our blessing, for our good, for the punishment of evil and for the praise of good. God is not going to contradict Himself and demand that we submit to a government that is destroying His law, mutilating the people and annihilating His church. God has never given government that authority.

In proposition form, the truth should be obvious. The first proposition is that the only powers that merit our submission are those powers that are of God. Second, resistance to those powers that are of God is to resist God. Third, those powers that are ordained of God are not a terror to good works, but are a terror to evil works. Fourth, those powers thus ordained of God are God's servants for our good.

Abused, usurped, or tyrannical powers are not an ordinance of God. Neither can they be! If they were the ordinance of God, they would not be abused, usurped or tyrannical. When rulers become a terror to good works and praise to evil works or when they seek the destruction of that which is just, right, and holy, there is no binding power to subjection or submission. Powers that are evil and tyrannical can tie none to subjection. Since there is no biblical or lawful tie to subjection, the powers may be lawfully and biblically resisted.

It is not rebellion to resist a tyrannical, ungodly government or ruler. Rebellion can only be to lawful authority. If the authority is usurped, it is not lawful and therefore may be biblically resisted without the curse and judgment of God upon the resister. It is not a violation of Romans 13:1-2 to resist those rulers and governments that are unbiblical and tyrannical.

Preserving Life and Escaping Persecution

We are under no obligation to suffer under the hands of wicked men. There is no command of God that we must be trampled upon, stolen from or harmed in any way. There is no command to be killed or tortured except in our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are martyrs and are dying for the faith, God says, "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

There is a vast difference between God delivering one into the hands of wicked men in order to suffer for the faith and one delivering himself into the hands of wicked men out of ignorance or irresponsibility. If God delivers one into the hands of the wicked and there is no way to escape, one's attitude should be that he is willing to die for the Lord's honor and glory. On the other hand, we should not be foolish enough to walk up to a mob of wicked people and tempt or encourage them to kill us or abuse us in any way.

The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), forbids the taking of life except on God's terms. The positive side of the sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt preserve life." See Exodus 23:4-5 and Deuteronomy 22:1-4; 22:23-29 for a few case laws dealing with the positive side of the sixth commandment. If one has the obligation to preserve life, he likewise has the obligation to preserve his own life. Self-defense is obligatory. If one does not defend himself or take action to deter someone from murdering him, then he is guilty of self-murder in the greatest and an accomplice to murder in the least.

Christians historically have taken the above position. The Scottish Covenanters believed they had a duty to God to endeavor to escape from the dungeons in which they were imprisoned. If they were successful, they gave God all the glory. If they were unsuccessful, they believed it was the will of God for them to suffer for the faith. The French Huguenots held the same views. They realized their personal responsibility to do everything within their power to preserve their lives. They were not foolishly trying to be martyrs. They did not have a "death-wish." Yet, they were willing to die for Christ if the providence of God determined such to be their course.

The Limits of Authority in Every Sphere

There cannot be a stricter obligation between the government and the people than there is between parents and children, patron and clients, and husbands and wives.

Let me illustrate. In Ephesians 5:24, God demands that the wife be in submission to her husband "in every thing." Likewise, I Corinthians 11:3 teaches that the man is the head of the woman

and the home. Does it necessarily follow that I have the authority to order my wife to take a pistol and rob a bank because we are low on funds? May I order or command her to kill someone? One objects and states that the Word of God commands her to obey me "in every thing." Yes, but the Word of God also limits my authority and jurisdiction over my wife. I am to rule over her for her good and benefit (Ephesians 5:25-29). I do not have the authority to harm or destroy her. Moreover, I do not have the authority to ask her to do anything against the law of God. If I commanded her to disobey God and His Word, her reply should be, "I ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). My wife does not have the responsibility to obey me when I usurp the authority of God and leave the sphere of jurisdiction that God has given me. No husband has the authority to ask or command that his wife do that which is contrary to God.

Do parents have the authority from God to ask or command their children to steal, kill or pillage? Of course not! Do teachers have absolute power over their students so that the students must obey their teachers even when they command wickedly? If you were on a cruise and happened to see the captain at the control of the ship high on drugs and heading the ship at full speed toward an iceberg, would you be concerned? Would you take the attitude, "Well, it's his ship, let him do what he will with it." I dare say that you would physically restrain him, and even take his life if it was necessary, in order to save your life and the lives of the other passengers.

It should be obvious that the same principle applies to government. Every tyrant is a furious and morally distracted man. He must be restrained, stopped and deposed much like the ship captain if need be. God does not command us to destroy our lives, liberty and happiness; rather, He commands us to preserve them. There is no biblical or rational way that anyone can say that Romans 13:1-2 teaches us to obey every law and submit to every law, regardless of the consequences or regardless of the usurpation of authority.

Resistance and the Ordinance of God

Second, resistance to authority that is ungodly and unbiblical is not resistance to the ordinance of God. God has not ordained ungodly, usurped authority. It was Thomas Jefferson who said, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." Samuel Rutherford said, "Faithfulness to Christ cannot be treason to Caesar."

The government which God has ordained to be a favor and blessing, which is to be a screen between liberty and bondage, cannot be transformed into the instrument of bondage and enslavement itself. Since God has ordained government for the protection and promotion of that which is good and the punishment of that which is evil, can it rightly be termed rebellion when one resists abused and usurped authority that is seeking to desecrate and destroy that which God has ordained?

According to Scripture, to resist God's ordinance is to resist God Himself. Therefore, in I Samuel 8:7, when the Israelites rejected the government of God, He told Samuel, "...for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Christ emphasized the same truth in Matthew 10:40 when he said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." If we receive the representatives of God that are ordained by Him, then we receive Him. If we do not receive them, then we do not receive God. We find ourselves fighting against Him. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that wherever and whenever there is a godly government or a godly ruler that is ruling in accordance with the Word of God, then we must obey him. Not to do so is to resist God and that which He has ordained.

In light of the above stated principles, is it not absolutely blasphemous to say that when a government is drinking in the blood of the innocents, destroying the church of God, stealing the property and possessions of the people, violating God's Word, and trampling His law under foot, that God demands we submit to and obey such government? Do you believe that if our Lord Jesus Christ was physically present on this earth that He would exhort us to "obey the powers that be," when they are defying and denouncing everything that is righteous and holy? Do you believe

that Jesus Christ would encourage Christians to support abortion or sodomy? Do you believe that Christ would say, "I know you don't condone abortion or sodomy, and neither do I, but since it is the law of the land, go ahead and give your support"?

The Word of God condemns abortion as murder and says that the sodomites are to be put to death (Ex. 20:13; Leviticus 20:13).

Our text, Romans 13:1 says that we should be in submission to the higher powers. Who is the highest power? God! Do you realize that no matter how high a man is in authority, there is always someone over him? God is the ultimate and highest authority. It is reported that when Pastor Lester Roloff was being hounded by the welfare department and the State of Texas, a female bureaucrat said, "Brother Roloff, don't you know that the Bible says that you're to be in submission to the higher powers?" Brother Roloff responded, "I have no problem with the higher powers, it's you lower powers that are giving me the devil." His position was clearly the position of the apostles. We ought to obey God rather than men. Unhappily, most bureaucrats and governmental servants do not know they will answer to and give an account to the highest authority, God Himself.

The Office and the Person Who Holds It

Third, abused authority does not demand obedience. There is a difference between the office of authority and the tyrant or person that is in that office. One may resist the tyrant without resisting the office. Christians are not anarchists. We know there is a lawful, legitimate authority and that we must be in subjection to that authority. We cannot and must not despise the office of authority. Samuel Rutherford in *Lex Rex* said this:

> "He that resisteth the power, that is, the official power, and the king, as king, and commanding in the Lord, resisteth the ordinance of God, and God's lawful constitution. But he who resisteth the man, who is the king, commanding that which is against God, and killing the innocent, resisteth no ordinance of God, but an ordinance of sin and Satan; for a man commanding unjustly, and ruling tyrannically, hath, in that, no power from God."

King Uzziah was a mighty man. He was a great warrior and military strategist. Moreover, he was a good king until pride entered into his life and he decided that he would enter into the temple and offer incense (II Chronicles 26:14-21). When the king entered into the temple, he was confronted by Azariah and eighty other priests who were valiant men. They rebuked King Uzziah and told him that he had no authority or jurisdiction in the temple and that he must leave immediately. Enraged at their challenge of his unlawful and usurped entry into the temple, he began to speak and, as he did, God smote him with leprosy. Divine judgment hastened him to leave the temple. The king never recovered from his leprosy and lived in a solitary, separate house until the day he died. His son Jotham took over the kingdom.

The priests rightly and biblically resisted and opposed the king. They did not oppose the office of authority, but they did oppose the tyrant who was unlawfully using his office. Further, God sided with the priests and not with the king. Government is limited by God. It does not have total jurisdiction. It cannot simply "do whatever it likes." The government that does so will inevitably fall to the judgment of God. In the meantime, we must dutifully and responsibly confront those who abuse their God-given and ordained authority. Abused authority is not binding upon anyone.

Chapter 6

The Degrees of Resistance to Tyranny

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves dam-nation." Romans 13:1-2

It is lawful to resist those rulers and governments that would overthrow the law of God, abolish or destroy His church, and devour His people. It is not rebellion to resist abused or usurped authority. Moreover, it is obedience to God to do so. According to the Scriptures, if people do not fight against tyranny and wickedness, they will be judged along with the wicked rulers.

Whenever the word "resistance" is used, many questions arise. Who is to resist tyranny? What is the extent of resistance? What form of resistance is to be used? How many forms of resistance are there? How does one know which form to use? Those and many other questions naturally arise. The Word of God has the answer to each of them.

There are basically three degrees or forms of resistance. They are verbal resistance, flight and violent self-defense. Let us consider them individually.

VERBAL RESISTANCE

First, there is verbal resistance. If assaults upon us are verbal, then our defenses must also be verbal. We do not pick up a weapon and begin to shoot simply because someone calls us names, disagrees with us, or even takes us to court over some issue.

The principle of verbal resistance is set forth in I Kings 18:17-18: "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said

unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." Elijah was attacked verbally by a governmental official, in this case, the king. His defense therefore was verbal.

Most have not realized that through the administrative process and the courts, our enemies can be tied up for years. We can lawfully use the system against those who would persecute us. One of the most useful tools is known as "lawyer delay." Through letter writing, press releases, interviews, motions, continuances, and a host of other devices, hearings and court dates can be postponed over and over again. When time is needed to prepare or seek the introduction of legislation to correct a wrong, one must use every verbal means at his disposal. We have a constitutional right to petition and seek a redress of grievances. We need to learn basic paralegal skills in order to defend ourselves from any ungodly aspects of the system. Verbal defense is the first and most basic defense.

FLIGHT

Second, flight is a means of resistance. Whenever the word "flight" is mentioned, we automatically connect it with the word "coward." Hopefully that attitude will be corrected from Scripture. Flight is a non-violent means of resistance. It is not a cowardly tactic! Our Lord told his disciples in Matthew 10:23, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another..." Is our Lord advancing cowardice? Of course not! He states in Matthew 23:34, "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." Now, it is obvious if individuals are being persecuted from "city to city," that someone is using flight as a means of resistance.

Christ Himself used flight as a tactic of resistance. In John 7:1, the Word of God says, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." Why did Christ confine Himself for a period of time to the

region of Galilee? The answer is because the Jews were trying to kill Him. Was he afraid? Was He a coward? Perish the thought! Jesus Christ was not afraid of death. In John 12:27, we read that He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." Jesus Christ fled only because flight is a non-violent way of preventing violence by wicked and evil men. It is a form of resistance.

Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt. Matthew 2:13-14 informs us, "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream saying, Arise, and take the young child into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt." Note if you will, that this flight was ordered and ordained by God Himself. Was God a coward? Was God not capable of protecting Joseph, Mary and the child where they were? Of course He was. Aside from the fact that it was prophesied that Christ would be called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15), flight is a legitimate form of resistance to evil. It is a lawful means to prevent an unlawful taking of life.

David fled from King Saul on numerous occasions (I Samuel). David was a valiant man and certainly one that was full of courage. He faced Goliath (I Samuel 17) when no one else would. He killed many of the Lord's enemies, yet he, too, fled on occasion. He was unwilling to fight King Saul because of Saul's position as the "Lord's anointed," so he chose flight as a means of resistance.

The mighty Elijah who called fire from heaven and destroyed his enemies (II Kings 1) used flight as a means of resistance. The same Elijah who faced the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel and slew four hundred and fifty of them (I Kings 18) fled before the face of Jezebel in I Kings 19. Did his flight disprove his valor? No. He chose flight as a means to prevent Queen Jezebel from murdering him.

The great and mighty Apostle Paul also used flight. Acts 9:23-25 states, "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him. But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket." Paul was certainly not ashamed of his tactic. In fact, he

explains it further in II Corinthians 11:32-33. He says, "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands."

Note carefully that it was a governmental authority that was seeking to apprehend Paul. There was no way at that time that he could defend and protect himself except by flight.

Flight is a legitimate means of resistance. It has been used by Christians down through the ages. In fact, speaking of flight, Hebrews 11: 37-38 says, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Why were these people living in caves, dens, deserts and mountains? Why were they so poverty stricken that all they had was either goatskins or sheepskins for clothing? The answer is simple: they were fleeing persecution. They were not cowards! They were not weak! God thought so highly of them that He placed them among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. In fact, He said, "The world was not worthy of them." It should be exceedingly clear that flight is a lawful means of resistance.

There is a major problem with flight, especially in regards to governmental persecution. It does not always work. Take the case of Urijah for instance. In Jeremiah 26:20-23, we learn that Urijah was preaching the truth against wickedness in government. In fact, he was preaching the truths that Jeremiah was preaching. Jehoiakim the king was incensed that a preacher would attack him and his kingdom. Why the very idea that a man would publicly rebuke and confront the king for his evil and wickedness was preposterous to Jehoiakim. Since he was the king, he issued a command to put Urijah to death. Urijah, upon hearing of the king's determination, fled to Egypt. He was now out of Jehoiakim's jurisdiction. Surely he would be safe. King Jehoiakim did not let a small matter like lack of jurisdiction bother him. He merely sent men into Egypt who kidnapped Urijah and brought him to Jehoiakim. King Jehoiakim himself then murdered Urijah with the

sword. Urijah used flight as a lawful means to resist an unlawful ruler. In his case, it simply was too little, too late.

One major problem with flight is that it is not always successful. Another problem is that there are some who cannot flee. An individual or a family may easily flee, but what about congregations? What about a whole body of people or an entire state? Flight is not always successful, nor is it always a viable option.

VIOLENT SELF-DEFENSE

Third, there is violent self-defense as a means of resistance to tyranny and evil. The sixth commandment makes self-defense obligatory. Samuel Rutherford in *Lex Rex* stated it as follows:

> "God hath implanted in every creature natural inclinations and motions to preserve itself, and we are to love ourselves for God, and have a love to preserve ourselves rather than our neighbour; and nature's law teacheth every man to love God best of all, and next ourselves more than our neighbour; for the law saith, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' ... It is true I am to love the salvation of the church, it cometh nearer to God's glory, more than my own salvation, as the wishes of Moses and Paul do prove; and I am to love the salvation of my brother more than my own temporal life; but I am to love my own temporal life more than the life of any other, and therefore, I am rather to kill than to be killed."

It would be a mighty defect if all others in God's creation were allowed to defend themselves, yet we were not. Animals will fight for their lives. They will defend their young against much larger and stronger predators. Birds will attack cats. Some animals will attack man. In every sphere, self-defense and self-preservation are obvious and necessary.

It is strange that many do not comprehend this simple principle. Some years ago, a professing Christian asked me what I would do if I awakened one night and found a man climbing through my bedroom window. My reply was, "If I could get my hands on a gun, I would shoot him. If not, I would pick up a baseball bat and stop him." His response was that I should not even consider such, much less do it. I then asked him what he thought I should do under the

circumstances. His reply was that I should go into another room and "pray about it." I readily confessed that I would pray about the situation. In fact, I told him that as I drew the baseball bat back, I would cry, "Lord, do not let me miss him this time!"

The Word of God gives us the right, duty and obligation to protect ourselves, our family, our church and our nation. Self-defense is obligatory. Historically, Christians have followed this biblical principle.

The Scottish Covenanters

Consider the Scottish Covenanters who were resisting Charles Stuart, the king of England. The Covenanters were so called because they did band or "covenant" themselves together in order to maintain the true preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Charles I was endeavoring to "Anglicize" Scotland and bring it to the episcopal form of church government over which he would rule as head of the church. The Covenanters resisted the tyranny of the king and fought under the banner of King Jesus. Their battle cry was "for Christ's Crown and Covenant." They were often heard to say, "We have no king but King Jesus."

The Scottish people were more than willing to submit to a monarchial form of government in the political sphere. However, they realized, and rightly so, that the king had absolutely no jurisdiction in the church. He was not lord of the conscience. He did not have the right to issue orders concerning worship or conscience.

It must also be pointed out that the Covenanters fought in self-defense. It was the king who initiated the war. It was the king who sent troops to break up the churches and evict the pastors from their pulpits. Those who did not comply were either banished, imprisoned or executed. The penalty for preaching in a conventicle (an unauthorized religious meeting) or attending a conventicle was death.

It was June 22, 1680, when Richard Cameron, "the Lion of the Covenant," and a band of men entered the Sanquhar Town. It had been exactly one year since the Bothwell Brig slaughter, and for the murder of their brothers, the Sanquhar Declaration was

issued. In a clear, solemn and distinct voice, Michael Cameron read:

> "...that they disown Charles Stuart, who bath been reigning, or rather tyrannising, as we may say, on the throne of Britain these years bygone, as having any right, title to, or interest in, the said crown of Scotland for Government, as forfeited several years since by his perjury and breach of covenant both to God and His Kirk [church], and usurpation of His Crown and Royal prerogatives therein...As also we being under the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, Captain of Salvation, do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Cause and Covenants, and against all such as have strengthened him...As also we disown the Duke of York, that professed Papist, as repugnant to our principles and vows to the Most High God." Fair Sunshine, page 39.

In Holland, Richard Cameron, Christian, soldier and teacher, was ordained to the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Godly hands were laid upon his head, commissioning him for the work to which he was called. After the other ministers had lifted their hands from his head, the Dutch minister, the great Mac Ward, kept his hand upon Cameron's head and said:

> "Here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of Jesus Christ who shall lose the same for his Master's interest, and it shall be set up before sun and moon in the public view of the world." Fair Sunshine, page 43.

Such was the ordination for a Covenanting minister! Those who stand for biblical principles must be ready to die for those principles. Richard Cameron was one who was ready to lay down his life for his Lord.

On the day of his death, Richard was with his Bible-reading band in a desert place. As the king's dragoons approached, Richard led his little band in prayer, appealing to the Lord three times to "spare the green, and take the ripe." Then, speaking to his younger brother, he said, "Come, Michael, let us fight it out to the last; for this is the day that I have longed for, to die fighting against our Lord's avowed enemies; and this is the day that we shall get the

crown." He then turned and encouraged all of his comrades and exhorted them to fight valiantly.

The dragoons, emboldened by greater numbers and greater 'arms, attacked furiously. Nine Covenanting Christians lost their lives that day. They had shown themselves strong and courageous, taking many of the king's dragoons with them to the grave. Among the slain was Richard Cameron.

The dragoons cut off the head and hands of Cameron and placed them in a sack. In Lanark, they emptied his head on the ground and kicked it around as if it was a football. Upon reaching Edinburgh, the dragoons placed his head along with the other severed heads upon halberts and cried, "There are the heads of traitors, rebels." Robert Murray, as he delivered them [the head and hands of Cameron] to the Council, said, "These are the head and hands that lived praying and preaching, and died praying and fighting."

Before the head and hands of Cameron were placed upon the Netherbow Port for all to see, one last cruel and vicious usage was to be made of them. They were taken to a godly and staunch Covenanting Christian who had been languishing in prison. He was Alan Cameron, father of Richard Cameron. The cruel question was asked him, "Do you know or recognize these?" He took them into his hands, kissed them, and said, "I know them, I know them. They are my son's, my own dear son's. It is the Lord. Good is the will of the Lord, Who cannot wrong me nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days." A father, a prisoner, head of a broken home, yet, one victorious in Christ. He was one that realized that Christians are "more than conquerors in Jesus Christ."

Mattathias and the Siege of Malta

In 168 B.C., in the town of Modin, a city of Judah about 18 miles northwest of Jerusalem, lived Mattathias, a priest of the first order. Antiochus Epiphanes (The Illustrious), as king, was forcing Hellenism upon the Hebrews. He sent his representative to offer a swine upon the altar and thus defile it. When Mattathias refused to offer the sacrifice and a renegade volunteered to do so, Mattathias

slew the man who was going to defile the altar. Thus began what has come to be known as "the Maccabean revolt." There followed a long and bloody war until at last the Maccabeans and their followers were put down.

One of the most exciting and fascinating books of all times is Ern Lee Bradford's book *The Great Siege*. *The Great Siege* is the story of the siege of Malta from May 1565 until September 1565. It was there the spread of Islam was stopped. In the providence of God, the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem were allowed to defeat the Turks. It was a tremendous victory, especially when one considers that de la Valette, the leader of the knights, had fewer than ten thousand troops, of which about one thousand were knights who were trained fighting men. The Turks, on the other hand, came against de la Valette with forty thousand battle-hardened troops.

De la Valette, the leader of the knights, was 70 years old. His main antagonist and adversary was Dragut Rais or Torghoud, who was a pirate and governor of Tripoli. Dragut was 80 years old when he directed the siege against de la Valette. Both men had remarkable energy and skill.

When the Turks captured a number of knights, they endeavored to strike terror into the hearts of the Christians by ripping out the hearts of the knights. They then placed the dead knights in the river so that their bodies would float to the castle for the others to see. This was the Turk's way of saying, "No quarter, as we have done to these, so shall we do to you." When de la Valette saw what the Turks had done to his knights, he commanded one thousand Turkish prisoners to kneel and his knights severed their heads from their bodies. He then stuffed the decapitated heads into his cannons and fired them on the Turks. In essence, he said, "No quarter, we will not surrender and we will do so to all of our enemies."

At the end of the siege, de la Valette had fewer than one thousand troops left alive. The Turks went home with fewer than ten thousand men. The Christians had killed three to one. The battle of Malta stopped the western flow of Islam in its tracks. Men died in order that the West could be a professing Christian continent. De la Valette encouraged his men with these words before the siege began:

> "It is the great battle of the cross and the Koran which is now to be fought. A formidable army of infidels are on the point of investing our island. We, for our part, are the chosen soldiers of the cross, and if Heaven requires the sacrifice of our lives, there can be no better occasion than this. Let us hasten there, my brothers, to the sacred altar. There we will renew our vows and obtain, by our faith in the sacred sacraments, that contempt for death which alone can render us invincible."

Nehemiah and the Defense of Jerusalem

History alone is insufficient to establish a principle for those who believe that the Word of God is the sole foundation for our faith and practice. Consider Nehemiah 4:7-17. In this passage, a number of enemies were preparing to attack Nehemiah and those who were building the wall of Jerusalem. The attack was to be violent, for verse 8 says they "conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." Moreover, according to verse 11, it was to be a surprise attack in which they were planning to "slay them, and cause the work to cease."

What was the response of Nehemiah and those with him? First, they made a prayer to God for His providential protection (verse 9). Second, they set a watch for the enemy (verse 9). Third, they prepared to defend themselves by means of violent self-defense: "Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (verses 13-14). Nehemiah believed that it was lawful to defend the work of God and the lives of God's people with deadly force.

Even after the immediate danger was past, Nehemiah still maintained his defensive position. Read carefully verses 16-18: "And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on

the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me." Nehemiah maintained a state of readiness even after the immediate danger was passed. His trust in God did not negate his responsibility to use means to defend himself and those for whom he was responsible.

The principle is simple. Weapons may be lawfully used to defend the work of God and the people of God, but may not be used to advance the work. God's people are not Conquistadors. We do not use force to make converts.

It is true the Apostle Paul said in II Corinthians 10:4, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." As a general rule, that is absolutely correct. However, that does not mean that there is never a time when we must take up "carnal" weapons. There are times when our spiritual enemies take up carnal weapons to destroy us and we must likewise resort to the same in order to protect our lives and property. It was Christ Himself who said in Luke 22:36, "...and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." There is a time for violent self-defense.

Chapter 7

The Pastor as Magistrate

> "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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Romans 13:1-2

The question that should arise in your mind is: "Who is to resist tyranny and wickedness?" The answer is: "Every Christian particularly," for the Bible says emphatically in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." If we are obeying God and His law, we will be fighting against tyranny for Proverbs 28:4 proclaims, "They that forsake the law [God's law] praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them." We must fight in order to be obedient unto God. We must use every means at our disposal. We must honor God.

In Psalms 94:16, the question is asked, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" If God's people will not stand for God, who will? God is looking for individuals who will stand for Him against the evil doers, who will stand for Him against the workers of iniquity.

We must stand against evil, all evil, evil in high places, even evil in civil government (Ephesians 6:12). God asks in Psalms 94:20, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" It is important to note, first of all, the phrase "throne of iniquity." A throne denotes power, rulership, dominion and government. Second, it is also a wicked, evil and iniquitous government, for it is a "throne of iniquity," one that frames mischief or sin by a law. The civil government that God condemns is one that frames transgression by a law, one that makes sin legal. In essence, it is a government that makes God's

law illegal and man's law legal. It is one that legalizes abortion, sodomy and thievery. It is one that sets itself against God and His Word. Legalizing sin is nothing less than a deposing of God and an enthroning of man. Shall God have fellowship with such a government? No! Will God be in agreement and accord with such a government? Of course not! The only action that God could take toward such a government would be to condemn, curse and ultimately destroy it.

Public Authority and Private Self Defense

It is true that every Christian must of necessity resist evil in every form. However, when we speak concerning armed resistance, we must understand that such resistance is reserved only to those who are led by a magistrate or a proper authority. Naturally, self-defense would be excluded. If one is physically assaulted, he does not wait for the presence of a proper authority before he begins defending himself. For instance, if someone is breaking into my home, I do not wait for a policeman to arrive in order to defend myself. God gives us the right, duty and obligation to defend ourselves.

When properly understood, the principle of being led by a magistrate or proper authority will suppress mob uprisings, insurrections and anarchy. The Word of God condemns anarchy. In I Corinthians 14:33, the Bible says, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace..." Likewise, God admonishes in I Corinthians 7:20: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." God gives a definite calling to definite men. Not all men have the same vocations. Not all men have the same positions. Not all men have been called to the use of arms. To those individuals to whom God has given the position, authority and leadership in bearing arms, the Bible says in Romans 13:4, "...he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." In other words, they have the authority to use arms and will most certainly use them.

Our Lord has said concerning individuals that unlawfully use the sword, "...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the

sword" (Matthew 26:52). That is, they shall perish either through capital punishment or through divine vengeance and intervention. I repeat, not all men have the same position. There is a difference between a public person and a private person. Another way of stating the same principle is that there is a difference between a collective person and a particular person. The duty of the one person or group is not the duty of the other person or group. All men are bound to serve God. However, some men are placed in a higher rank, in a different position, or are given greater authority, or even a different authority than others. Each individual is responsible to and answerable to God for the authority that God has bestowed upon him. If he abuses, misuses or fails to use the authority given to him, he will be judged by God.

In order to illustrate the difference between a private or particular person and a public or collective person, consider the following: Let us suppose that a man breaks into my home. In so doing, he finds my son and attempts to murder him. While he is in the act, I walk into the room with a pistol and kill the man. Upon investigation by the sheriffs department, they determine that I acted not only in self-defense, but also in the preservation of my child's life. Although I acted as a private person, and although I took a man's life, there will be no charges brought against me.

On the other hand, suppose the same man does indeed murder my son. My wife walks into the room and sees the murder. She screams and the murderer flees. The crime is reported to and investigated by the sheriffs department. However, they are unable to capture the murderer. Six months later, my wife and I are driving down the street and she sees the murderer. She positively identifies him. She knows that he is the one who murdered our son. I calmly reach into the back of the car, pick up my rifle, point it out the window and kill him as he walks down the street. Although the man was a murderer, and although he murdered my son, at that point in time, as a private person, I do not have the authority to take his life. If I do so and am apprehended, undoubtedly I will be charged with murder. As a private individual, I do not have the right to exercise a personal and private revenge. At that point in time, my actions should either have been to call the sheriff or simply hold him at gunpoint until the sheriff arrived.

For the sake of illustration, let us suppose further that my vocation happens to be that of public executioner for the state. I have been duly appointed and chosen to the office of public executioner. Now, the man that murdered my son is caught, tried, found guilty and sentenced to death in the electric chair. I am the one who prepares him for death. I am the one who straps him into the electric chair. I am the one who pulls the switch and sends the electric current through his body. I am the one who is responsible for the taking of his life. Will the sheriff now come and charge me with murder? Of course not. Why not? I took the life of the man who murdered my child. The difference is that when I acted as the public executioner, I acted in a public and collective capacity, and not as a particular and private person. I carried out that which I had been authorized by God and by the state to perform in order to punish evil.

The Biblical Terms for Authority

Since armed resistance must be led by a magistrate or proper authority, the question arises, who are our magistrates or proper authorities? Are only those in civil governmental positions considered to be magistrates or proper authorities? Does the Word of God indicate there are others who are considered magistrates other than civil governmental officials? Remember, it is God who has ordained and established authority. He alone is the determiner and definer of a magistrate. Let us consider the term "magistrate" and its equivalents biblically.

MAGISTRATE

First, in Judges 18:7, the Bible says: "Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man." The Hebrew word for "magistrate" is *eser*. It literally means "a possessor of restraint," that is, someone with power and authority, someone who has the

right and ability to resist. Since there was no magistrate, that is, no one who possessed the power or authority of restraint, the Danites attacked and confiscated the land. A magistrate is a man of authority, a man who has been given the power to restrain and hold back evil by the use of force.

Second, in Ezra 7:25, we read, "And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not." The Hebrew word *shephat* means "to litigate, pass sentence, to vindicate or punish." The ruling, litigating, or passing of sentence is to be in terms of God's law. Ezra was to appoint magistrates "who knew the laws of thy God." Moreover, it was his responsibility to teach the law of God to those whom he appointed that did not know God's law. A magistrate is not one who simply possesses the power of restraint, he is also one who is obligated to know the law of God and rule accordingly.

Third, there are also New Testament references to the term "magistrate." In Luke 12:11, the Greek word is *arkos*. It simply means a "ruler, a superior, one who is first." The verse is as follows: "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say." The magistrate in this verse is a ruler, a superior. Likewise, in Luke 12:58, Scripture says, "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him..." Here the word is *arkonta*, which means "one who is first in rank, a magistrate, a prince or a ruler." Thus far, we have seen, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, that a magistrate is a possessor of restraint, a ruler, a superior and one who knows the law of God and rules in terms of that law.

Acts 16 is an eye-opener. The word "magistrate" is found in verses 20, 22, 35, 36 and 38. The Greek word is the same in each verse. The word is *stratagos*. The word means "the commander of an army, a general, a governor, the captain of the temple, the chief or commander of the Levites." It is from the root word *stratia*, which is the word for "army," or "a band of soldiers." We derive our English word "strategy" from this Greek word. Now the

amazing thing is that the word refers not only to a civil magistrate, but also to a spiritual magistrate. The chief of the Levites or the captain of the temple would not be a civil position, but a spiritual one. It indicates a spiritual leader who has the authority to restrain, hold back, or use armed resistance.

It may surprise many to discover that in New Testament times there were armed officers, religious leaders, stationed in the temple. We read about these individuals and never consider their function. Notice in Acts 4:1 that the record states: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them." The word "captain" is a military term. He was an officer, a man with power and authority, and he had weapons. Further, in Acts 5:24, we read; "Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priest heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." In verse 26 we read, "Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." There were officers who were under the captain of the temple. The captain and his officers brought the apostles "without violence," not because they did not have the authority to use it, but because they "feared the people." In other words, they were outnumbered. They knew if they initiated violence at that point that it might be more than they could handle.

Luke 22:4 indicates there was more than one captain of the temple. In this passage, "Judas went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them." In Luke 22:52, the same men are coming after our Lord: "Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" Our Lord acknowledges that these men were armed. He did not dispute their right or authority to bear arms or use them; He merely stated that they had no reason to use them against Him for He had done no wrong.

Where did these captains of the temple originate? Is there a historical precedent for them? Remember that one of the definitions of *stratagos* is "chief or commander of the Levites." Psalm 42 is dedicated to "the sons of Korah." The sons of Korah

were Levites and were singers and musicians. Their ministry was to sing praises to God. Korah, their father, was one of the main leaders in the rebellion against Moses in Numbers 16. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up in the earth and "went down alive into the pit." Their wickedness was so great that Moses exhorted all to separate themselves from them lest they be judged and destroyed with them. Evidently the sons of Korah heeded the exhortation, for Numbers 26:11 tells us, "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." The reason Psalms 42 was dedicated to them was for their ministry in music. They were Levites, teachers and, especially, singers. One would hardly expect this type of individual to be a man of war or a man of weapons. Yet, that is precisely the truth.

In I Chronicles 9:19, we read, "And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brothers, of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, being over the host of the LORD, were keepers of the entry." The Korahites, the descendants of Korah, were not only singers, but also guardians of the entrance to the tabernacle. The Korahites had other duties concerning the tabernacle as well (Numbers 4:4-15). In all probability their duties were transferred to the temple when it was built. Since most of their duties recorded in Numbers 4 would no longer be needed, no doubt they were singers and guardsmen par excellence.

There is further light shed on these singers-guardsmen in I Chronicles 12. This passage deals with King David's mighty men, that is, men of valor, men of war, men who were experienced in the use of weapons and armor. Verse 1 says, "Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war." Note that they were helpers of the war. They did not simply report for duty, they were active in duty. Verse 2 tells us further, "They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even Saul's brothers of Benjamin." From verse 3 through 14 there are many listed who were mighty men. Verse 6 is the verse to focus upon where "Elkanah, and Jesiah, and

Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites," are listed. Korhites or Korahites were Levites, priests, teachers and singers. It is these priests who are identified as "mighty men, helpers in the war." They were willing to resist evil and defend the truth even in battle if necessary! No doubt the captains of the temple had their roots in the guardians of the entrance.

Titus 3:1 gives us yet another word for "magistrate": "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." The Greek word for "magistrate" is *peitharkeo*. It is made up of two Greek words, *peitho* and *arko*. *Peitho* means "to bind, to persuade, to convince," and *arko* is simply "a ruler." It basically means "to be bound to a ruler." Christians are obligated to obey rulers that rule lawfully and in obedience unto God. In that sense, they are bound to their ruler. One must always keep Acts 5:29 in mind. When rulers usurp authority and rule unlawfully and contrary to God, then Christians are no longer bound to them and their attitude must be, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Everyone has a ruler; even the rulers have a ruler. They are bound to the Supreme Ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ. According to the Word of God, a magistrate is one who has been given power and authority by God and therefore he rules according to the dictates of his Sovereign.

POWERS

The term "powers" is equivalent to the term "magistrate." It comes from the Greek word *exousia* which is often translated as "magistrate, authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, or right." In John 1:11-12, God says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." The word "power" in verse 12 is *exousia* meaning that He gave the authority, the might, and the right to become the sons of God. It has already been pointed out that the word "powers" in Romans 13:1-2 is the word exousia. The word is a general word and can be used in different ways. It can refer to offices as in Romans 13, or can refer to power, as in John 1.

GODS

Exodus 22:28 states, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." What is commanded in this law? When God says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods," is he saying, "Do not mock or curse the false gods"? It certainly is not forbidden to mock, castigate or disparage false gods. How do we know? God mocks them Himself. He calls them "vanities" and "things of nought" (Isaiah 66:3; Leviticus 19:4; Psalms 96:5). Further, if you will check the Hebrew word *gillulim*, you will find that it means "a detestable thing, filthy thing, dung balls." It is that one word that is used to describe idols 39 times in the book of Ezekiel alone. Moreover, the prophet Elijah mocked Baal and his prophets on Mt. Cannel in I Kings 18.

If the phrase does not forbid us to mock false gods, what does it forbid us to do? Rulers, judges and magistrates are referred to as gods in the Bible because they represent God. In Psalm 82:1, we read, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods." The terms "congregation of the mighty" and "gods" refer to those who hold offices of power and authority. In verses 2-5, God condemns the judges of the land for their corruption and wickedness. In fact, Psalm 82, as a whole, is an indictment against an evil and corrupt judicial system. It certainly is applicable today! In verse 6, God continues, "I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." Once again, God emphasizes the special positions that office bearers hold. Our Lord corroborates this interpretation in John 10:34-36. He says, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Who was referred to as a god? Those to whom the Word of God came, such as kings, rulers, judges and magistrates who had the responsibility of receiving God's Word and carrying it out in the normal and regular functions of their offices. We are forbidden to mock, revile or speak evil of any officer or magistrate who is exercising his lawful office under obedience to God.

RULERS

Exodus 22:28 further tells us that we are not to "curse the ruler of thy people." The Hebrew word for "ruler" is *nasi*. *Nasi* means "one who is lifted up, elevated or exalted by the local assembly." The same word is used for rulers in Exodus 16:22; 34:31; 35:27; Leviticus 4:22 and Numbers 13:2. How did the leaders of the tribes acquire the status of rulers or magistrates? They were chosen by the people. Look closely at Numbers 13:2: "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them." The rulers that were sent were those that were lifted up by selecting them out of the tribes and designating them as rulers. Naturally, they were to be men of character, valor and intelligence.

The term *nasi* therefore applies to any ruler or leader of God's people. Why? Because they have been selected and lifted up and entrusted with the position by the congregation. In fact, the word "princes" in Joshua 9:15-21; 13:21; 17:4; 22:14,30,32 is translated from the word *nasi*. One became a prince or a ruler by selection and elevation by the people of God. The term "ruler" is equal to the term "magistrate." Both are chosen and exalted in the same way.

The term "ruler" is equal to the term "magistrate" and is applied to spiritual leaders as well as civil leaders. Therefore, Exodus 22:28 forbids the cursing of any spiritual or civil ruler or magistrate who is exercising his God-given office in a manner that is in conformity to the law of God. It is important to understand this principle. A spiritual magistrate is just as much a magistrate as a civil magistrate. Each magistrate is duty-bound to obey God. Lesser civil and spiritual magistrates are equally obligated to obey God as are higher civil and spiritual magistrates. The doctrine of interposition is when a lesser magistrate steps up to perform the duties of a higher magistrate, when the higher magistrate fails to perform his duties.

Spiritual Leaders and Civil Duties

This is the only explanation of the fact that, often times, in the Bible, spiritual rulers take upon themselves functions that are not necessarily theirs by office. They assume temporary duties or functions of the civil magistrate when the civil magistrate has failed to carry out his office unto God. They do so because they are spiritual magistrates and have been entrusted with an office, power and authority. All magistrates, both civil and spiritual, are to act for God. In Deuteronomy 1:17, God said, "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's..." Likewise, in II Chronicles 19:6-7, God speaks, "And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." Note carefully that all magistrates are to show forth God's judgments. Why? They are His representatives; therefore, they must of necessity act as God would act in condemning the wicked and justifying the innocent. Moreover, they must give forth the same judgment that God would give to the wicked.

Moses is an example of the above-stated principle. In Exodus 32:26-27, after the people had grievously sinned against God, committed idolatry, which is a capital crime, and blatantly refused to repent, Moses asked, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come over unto me." The sons of Levi, the priestly tribe, stepped over unto Moses. His instructions were simple: "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." Moses, preeminently a spiritual leader, issued a civil judgment against those who traitorously sinned against God and would not repent. Moreover, it was the sons of Levi, the priestly tribe that executed the sentence against the unrepentant.

One of the clearest examples is found in I Samuel 15. God had commissioned King Saul and sent him on a specific mission. The

mission was to annihilate totally the Amalekites. In fact, the mission was spelled out in no uncertain terms. God said in verse 3: "Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." King Saul, the civil ruler, was to be God's instrument to execute the death penalty on a wicked and rebellious culture. Did Saul obey God? No! "Saul and the people spared Agag [the king of the Amalekites] and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" (verse 9). The civil ruler refused to obey God. He clearly and distinctly violated the will and Word of God. He was the leader of the people. God held him primarily responsible.

Samuel, the prophet of God, was sent by God to King Saul. Saul, being the hypocrite that he was, seeing Samuel afar off, cried, "Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of LORD" (15:13). Samuel responded, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear" (15:14)? In essence, Samuel was saying, "Saul, if you had obeyed God, I would not be hearing anything, for everything would be dead. It is evident that you have not obeyed God."

Consequently, Samuel gave Saul the distressing news. God was going to take the kingdom away from Saul and give it to one who would obey Him. He tells Saul, "For thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel" (15:26). Although Saul yet remained king over Israel for a little time, it was the beginning of the end for Saul.

The spiritual magistrate, Samuel, then issued a startling order: "Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites" (15:32). The Word of God informs us that Agag came unto Samuel delicately, assuring himself that the worst was over and the bitterness of death was past. He thought that surely he had escaped the sword.

Samuel, the spiritual leader, in the presence of King Saul, the civil leader, said to Agag, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women" (15:33).

It was Samuel, the prophet of God, who executed Agag. He did so publicly and in the presence of the civil ruler. He was not rebuked, restrained nor charged with usurping authority. Why? The answer is simple. Spiritual rulers are magistrates as well. Samuel held the prophetic office. He was one who was invested with power, authority and jurisdiction. When the civil magistrate refused to carry out the Word of God, the spiritual magistrate stepped in and did the job. He hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. The phrase "before the Lord" does not simply refer to "in the presence of." Since God is omnipresent, everything is done in the presence of the Lord. Rather, it carries the force of "unto the Lord," that is, Samuel was offering Agag as a sacrifice to the justice of God.

Elijah, in I Kings 18, is another example. Elijah, the spiritual leader, confronted the civil leader, King Ahab of Israel, because of his wickedness and rebellion. The showdown came on Mt. Cannel. Ahab's false prophets faced off against Elijah. Elijah gave the false prophets every advantage. When the battle was over, Elijah had won. In the presence of King Ahab the civil ruler, Elijah the spiritual ruler said, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there" (18:40). According to the Bible, Elijah slew four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal that day (18:22). The civil ruler had the responsibility for stamping out idolatry. It was the civil ruler's duty to execute the death sentence. However, since the civil ruler failed in his duty, the spiritual ruler stepped in and performed the duty.

In Numbers 22-24, Balak, the king of the Moabites, endeavored to have the false prophet Baalam curse Israel. In every instance without exception, Baalam ended up blessing Israel. Naturally, Balak was disturbed. It seemed to Balak that Israel would swallow up Moab as they did other countries. In a last-ditch effort, Baalam advised Balak that he could not curse Israel, but that God could. His advice was for Balak and his people to seduce Israel into sinning. Balak followed the advice and succeeded in getting Israel to participate in idolatry, fornication and adultery (Numbers 25:1-3). The curse of God came upon Israel and the order went out from Moses to "slay ye every one his men that were joined unto

Baalpeor" (25:5). However, the order was neither timely nor sufficient. The plague had already begun (25:9).

Israel was sinning so brazenly that "behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (25:6). Zimri, a prince and a leader of the tribe of Simeon, brought Cozbi, a Midianitish woman, into the camp (25:14-15). His purpose was to commit fornication with her. He was flagrantly and openly defying God. He brought her into the camp "in the sight of Moses and all the congregation of the children of Israel." The phrase "congregation of Israel" refers to the elders and rulers of Israel. Note that Moses and all of the rulers were weeping. Why? Because of the sin and wickedness of the people. They also knew that God was judging Israel for their sins. Yet, Moses and the rulers did absolutely nothing to stop Zimri and Cozbi. They simply watched and wept as the pair walked toward Zimri's tent.

It was a spiritual magistrate who corrected the situation. The rulers wept, yet did nothing to alleviate the problem. "And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in has hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel" (25:7-8). Was God angry because of the actions of Phinehas? Remember, Phinehas was not a civil ruler. His normal function was not to wield the sword, but to offer sacrifice. God was not angry with Phinehas rather, He was pleased with his actions. His intervention not only stopped the plague, but was honoring to God. His attitude was that if no other ruler would fulfill his functional role; then he would! It was a priest who fulfilled the role of the civil magistrate.

Further, God was so pleased and honored by the actions of Phinehas that He said, "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say,

Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel" (25:11-13). God did not condemn Phinehas. He commended him.

Grandmothers are usually sweet, gentle and kind. They dote over their grandchildren and spoil them on a regular basis. However, there are exceptions to that description. Athalia is one of the exceptions. Her son, Ahaziah, was king over Israel. When he died, she did a most un-grandmotherly thing - she murdered all of her grandchildren except one. The only reason she did not murder Joash was that his aunt, Jehosheba, took him away just in the nick of time. Why did she murder her grandchildren? She wanted to reign as queen of Israel. The king's children would be the most natural recipients of the throne. If they were all dead, there would be no one to stand in her way. She methodically murdered each of them and ascended to the throne and reigned for seven years (II Kings 11).

At the end of seven years, Jehoiada, the high priest, called all of the elders and rulers of Israel together, with the exception of Athalia. He entered into a covenant with them and showed them Joash, the king's son. They agreed to defend the king and crown him in order that he might reign in his father's place. Later, when the ceremony took place, they gave him a copy of the law of God, anointed him king, and clapped and shouted, "God save the king."

When Athaliah heard the noise, she went to investigate. Upon seeing King Joash, "She rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason" (11:14). Jehoiada, the high priest and a spiritual magistrate, said, "Have her forth without the ranges; and him that followeth her kill with the sword...And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which horses came into the king's house; and there was she slain" (11:15-16). Athalia was not only a murderer, but also a usurper. She had no lawful authority, although she was queen. She was certainly in no position to carry out the functions of her office or to execute the law of God. Had she done so, she would have condemned herself. How did it come to pass that Jehoiada called the shots? How was he able to give the order to "execute Athalia and all that followed her?" In order to

understand, we must remember the fact that spiritual magistrates are magistrates in the same sense that civil magistrates are. The functional roles may differ, but the office and authority are the same. When there was no civil leader to take control and correct the situation, the spiritual magistrate did so.

A multitude of Christians have resisted and fought against tyranny. I cannot tell you how many, yet the Word of God indicates it was a great many. The author of Hebrews tells us in chapter 11 that "time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jepthae; of David also, and Samuel and of the prophets; Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (11:32-34). How does one subdue kingdoms? The Word of God tells us it is "through faith." Yet, faith does not negate the use of weapons. Evidently our fathers used their weapons in faith. How do we know? Because God said they were "valiant in fight," they "escaped the edge of the sword," and they "turned to flight the armies of the enemies." One of the main reasons we have such a weak and anemic ministry in our country is that we have forgotten that God's preachers are rulers! God's preachers are magistrates! God's preachers have authority! God's preachers have power! God's preachers are fighters! We will never recover our country until we recover our pastors! We will never recover the gospel until we recover the men who are to proclaim it!

Pastors in the American Revolution

Historically speaking, Christian pastors believed the principle of the spiritual magistrate. One needs only to read such books as The Spirit of '76, which is an anthology of the Christian ministers of the American Revolution, and J. T. Headley's *The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*. History gives an account of the men that fought on Lexington green that first and frightful day of the Revolutionary War. Everyone knows of the battles of Lexington and Concord. Many do not know, however, that the men at Lexington, who

withstood the onslaught of the British, had been trained and led by their pastor, Jonas Clark.

The American Revolution was led by ministers! Pastors played such an important part in the war that they were referred to by the British as "the black-robed regiment." The fight against tyranny was encouraged from many pulpits. The trumpet of freedom sounded long and loud from men who loved liberty! As they preached, they proclaimed "liberty to the people!" Why? They believed Christ when He said, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...!" They recognized that true liberty is found only in Christ and obedience to His Word. Christ has freed His people from the bondage of sin in order that they may serve Him.

James Caldwell was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Inevitably, his church was burned by the British and he and his family were murdered by the British in 1780. He preached with such power, fervor and authority that almost to a man, his people were one with him in sentiment and feeling. He and they were branded as "the rebel parson and parish." The British desired his life so much that he always went armed and, as he preached the gospel of peace to his people, he was compelled to keep loaded pistols on the pulpit.

Caldwell's wife, Hannah, was brutally murdered by the British. It is reported that British troops passing her house on June 24, 1780, saw her inside holding a baby. A soldier, aiming his weapon through a window, shot her between the eyes. Thankfully, a neighbor was with her and caught the baby.

James Caldwell continued to preach and continued to fight. In one of the battles near Springfield, New Jersey, Mr. Caldwell was in the thick of the battle. He saw the fire from one of the companies slacken from lack of wadding for their weapons. He jumped on a horse, galloped to a nearby Presbyterian church and, rushing from pew to pew, filled his arms with hymn books written by the beloved Isaac Watts. Hastening back into the battle, he pitched the hymnals to the troops and shouted, "Now, boys, put Watts into them, give them Watts!"

The British despised the pastors. They counted them the "leaders of the rebels." Therefore, if they could not destroy the

pastors, they would destroy the churches. Pastor John Rogers, a Presbyterian minister in New York, preached a sermon and alluded to the destruction of the churches by the British. He said:

> "They have, in the course of this war, utterly destroyed more than fifty places of worship in these States. Most of these they burned; others they leveled with the ground, and in some places left not a vestige of their former situation; while they have wantonly defaced, or rather destroyed, others, by converting them into barracks, jails, hospitals and riding schools. Boston, Newport, Philadelphia, and Charleston all furnished melancholy instances of this prostitution and abuse of the houses of God; and of nineteen places of public worship in this city, when the war began, there were but nine fit for use when the British troops left it."

One of the most thrilling episodes of the war took place in Dunmore County, Virginia. The pastor of the Protestant Episcopal Church was Peter Gabriel Mulenburg. He preached to his people that Lord's Day morning and announced that he would be bringing a special message that afternoon on "the duties men owe to their country." At the appointed hour, the building was packed with an eager audience. His text was from Ecclesiastes chapter 3: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." He was intense, animated and fervent. His message burned with patriotic fire. His hearers sat on the edges of their seats. At the close of his message, he paused briefly and then in tones of thunder exclaimed, "The time to preach has passed, the time to fight has come!" He then threw off his episcopal robes and stood before his congregation in full military uniform. Drumming for recruits was begun on the spot and almost every male of suitable age in the congregation enlisted immediately. General Mulenburg then headed toward the British with at least four hundred men in his command.

In defending his course in leaving the pulpit for the army, he said:

> "I am a clergyman, it is true, but I am also a member of society as well as the poorest layman, and my liberty is as dear to me as to any man. Shall I sit still, and enjoy myself at home, when the best blood of the continent is spilling? Heaven forbid it! Do you think if America should be conquered I should be safe? Far from it. And

would you not sooner fight like a man than die like a dog? The cause is just and noble. Were I a bishop, even a Lutheran one, I should obey without hesitation; and, so far from thinking that I am wrong, I am convinced it is my duty so to do, a duty I owe to my God and to my country."

The Responsibility of Spiritual Magistrates

It is high time that pastors awaken to their calling, their position of rulership and authority. If the civil magistrates will not obey God, the spiritual magistrates must step in and do the job. God has not left his people leaderless. God has not left his people without direction. We must not depend upon the ungodly to lead us into holiness, righteousness and justice. God's people are looking to God's men for leadership and direction. Will they find it?

Our problem is that we have denied the fact that pastors have the authority to rule under God and to act under God. We have sat idly by and allowed the wicked and the ungodly to steal our land, our country and our freedom. We need not look for them to merely give it back. No, it must be taken back on God's terms and in conformity to His Word. If a revival or awakening takes place in this country, it will begin when pastors realize their calling, position and responsibility before God.

The President of the United States should have the courage and the intestinal fortitude to lead this country back to biblical standards. He is the highest civil magistrate. It is his responsibility. If he will not do so, then the vice president ought to lead the way. If he refuses, the speaker of the house should do so. If he will not, then our congressmen should. If they refuse, then it reverts to the individual states. The governor should lead the reform. If he will not, the lieutenant governor should. If he will not, the speaker of the house should. If he will not, the state congressmen should. If they will not, the judges should, from the supreme court judges down to the lowliest probate judge. If they refuse, where are the city councilmen and aldermen? Why go down the line? The doctrine of interposition teaches us that a lesser magistrate is just as responsible to obey God as a higher magistrate.

If none of our civil magistrates have the courage, conviction and the integrity to lead us back to God, then, blessed be God, the spiritual magistrates, the pastors, must step in and say, "FOLLOW ME, THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YE IN IT!" We must not have anarchy. We must align ourselves with a godly leader and stand for truth with him. May God give us men like Moses, Phinehas, Jehoiada, James Caldwell and Peter Mulenburg.

Chapter 8

Statism is Idolatry

> "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:1-3

Idolatry is plainly and obviously forbidden in the Scriptures. While most Christians readily admit that idolatry is wicked and vile, they do so because of their limited concept of idolatry. The very mention of the word "idolatry" conjures up in our minds visions of men and women bowing before totem poles, statues and graven images. These practices are indeed idolatry in its grossest form. However, idolatry is not limited to the gross conceptions of our minds. We usually define idolatry so narrowly because we do not wish to consider ourselves idolaters. The Word of God does not limit idolatry to gross forms. In fact, idolatry is exceedingly broad. In Ephesians 5:5, we read, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." In case anyone misunderstood what Paul said in Ephesians, he says it again in Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Covetousness is idolatry. When anyone covets another man's wife, possessions or position, it is not only a violation of the seventh and eighth commandments, but a violation of the first commandment as well. Idolatry involves any and every attempt by man to be governed by his own law rather than by God's law. Covetousness seeks to overthrow God and His law. It is easy to see this truth in the lives of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 3:4-5, the serpent says to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and

ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Eve coveted and lusted after that which God had forbidden. She and Adam were willing to replace God's Word with their word, God's law with their law, God's will with their will and God's way with their way. Modern day men and women who stubbornly and rebelliously substitute their word for God's Word are as idolatrous as Adam and Eve.

Treason and Idolatry

One of the basic questions that must be answered for the Christian is: "What is treason?" Treason and idolatry are synonymous. Why? Both seek the overthrow of a law system or a social order. Is treason unfaithfulness to God or unfaithfulness to the state? If we answer that treason is unfaithfulness to the state, we have declared the concept that has been used to destroy Christians down through the centuries.

Why were Christians put to death in the Roman Empire? It is a fact of history that many were thrown to the lions, killed in the arena and put to death in various and sundry ways. It is reported that Nero tied Christians to stakes and poured an oil or tar-like substance upon them and lit them when he wished to tour his flower gardens at night; thus, he used Christians as human torches. Why were Christians so evilly treated? One must understand that in the Roman Empire there was religious freedom of a sort. It did not matter whether you worshipped Baal, Venus, Aphrodite or Jesus Christ. In fact, the Pantheon was full of gods. The only stipulation for freedom of worship was that once a year one must worship the emperor cult. One must swear by the genius of Caesar, or make an offering to Caesar, or simply proclaim that Caesar is Lord.

Christians refused to worship Caesar or say that Caesar is Lord. Their confession was that Jesus Christ is Lord and that Caesar was answerable and accountable to Jesus Christ. Christians would not support the system. They refused to worship the Roman emperor and therefore were branded as subversive and traitors to the Roman Empire; thus, Christians were executed, not simply for being Christians, but for being traitors to the Roman Empire. They

were counted as treasonous individuals. Their goods were confiscated and their lives forfeited.

What is treason? The Christian must answer that treason is unfaithfulness to God and His law. Idolatry is treason because it seeks to overthrow God and His law system. It seeks to replace God with an alien authority and God's law with an alien law system. Disobedience and unfaithfulness to God is treason because it is idolatry.

The Constitution of the United States defines treason in Article III, Section 3, paragraph 1, as follows:

"Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort."

Treason, according to our Constitution, consists of fighting against the people of the United States or giving aid to the enemies who are fighting against the people of the United States. The question must be asked: "What if the enemy of the citizen and the Christian is the state turned traitor against the law of God and its own constitution?" It would then be an idolatrous and treasonous government, one that defies God and man. It would be a usurper, a tyrannical and dictatorial government. Any citizen or Christian who supports such a government would be guilty of treason and idolatry toward the One True and Living God. Any citizen or Christian who participates in such a system would merit the righteous judgment of God upon themselves along with the idolatrous system.

The Claims of Statism

Statism is totalitarianism. It is the civil government playing god. Statism is idolatry. It is a claim to total jurisdiction on the part of the state or federal government. As far as the citizen is concerned, statism is the idea that government is always right and can do nothing wrong. It is the idea that government can do whatever it desires. Might makes right. That concept, on the part of the citizen, is equally idolatrous, for it imputes to government perfections, powers and authority that God has never granted. Government can be an idol just as much as any other false god.

Kings Who Promoted Idolatry

One of the most amazing truths in the Bible is that civil government is presented as a leader and promoter of idolatry. In fact, a cursory reading of the Bible will manifest this truth. For instance, I Kings 11:4-10 says:

> "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom [Molech] the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded."

It was King Solomon, the highest civil ruler in the land that introduced idolatry into Israel. He had the power and the position to see that his will was carried out.

Ahab was the most wicked king in the Northern Kingdom. Manasseh was the most wicked king in the Southern Kingdom. He also was responsible for corrupting the people by seducing them into idolatry. Manasseh was exactly the opposite of his godly father, Hezekiah. II Kings 21: 1-3 tells us:

> "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them."

Manasseh even built an altar to heathen gods in the temple of God! He made his sons pass through the fire, used divination and wrought much wickedness in the land. How could he get away with such wickedness? He was the king. He made the laws of the land. He did not have the authority to go against the law of God; yet, he had the power as king to do so.

Jeroboam was another civil ruler who forced idolatry upon the people. He did so for very selfish reasons. He was extremely successful in his efforts to subvert the people from the One True God. I Kings 12:26-33 tells us the story:

> "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."

Why Governments Turn to Idolatry

It would be an interesting study to discover which idolatries came into existence under the kings of Israel. There is always a purpose and design in promulgating and promoting idolatry. Civil governments are prone to idolatry. Why? Let me give you three reasons:

First, government deals with law. All law is inherently religious. There is no such thing as neutrality or a lack of bias. All law is an expression of a religion. It may be the Christian religion or a pagan religion. Behind every law is a determination of right and wrong. Behind every law is a moral or value judgment. Our morals and values are determined by our religion. It is impossible to have a non-religious law. When men in governmental positions reject the Word of God and the Christian faith, the outcome is a pagan, humanistic law system that is in opposition to the law of God.

Second, governments are prone to idolatry because it is the nature of government to attempt to perpetuate itself. Why did Jeroboam introduce idolatry into the land in I Kings 12? He was afraid that if the people worshipped in Jerusalem, they would return to King Rehoboam and he would lose power and be executed. In order to promulgate his power, position and kingdom, he was willing to lead the people into idolatry. He was not interested in the good of the people, rather, the good of his party. Have you ever known a politician that did not want to be re-elected? Have you ever known a political party that did not want to stay in power? In fact, every politician and political party will do practically anything to maintain its power base and control of a country. How far will men go in order to maintain power? Read John 11:47-48:

> "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

The men in power in the days of Christ were willing to crucify the Son of God in order to maintain their place. They were more concerned with their position than with justice, righteousness and integrity. Our Lord has told us that, "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you..." (John 15:20). If men were willing to sacrifice Jesus Christ in order to stay in power, they will not hesitate to sacrifice his people today. Evil, wicked men will do anything in order to maintain power.

Third, governments are prone to idolatry because government is force and power. Instead of exercising dominion over the earth, corrupt and depraved men wish to exercise dominion over people. The temptation in Genesis 3:5 was that "ye shall be as gods." It is the nature of fallen man to think he is god and to play god. Therefore, in order to demonstrate his godhood, he must manipulate and control people. Since he is a "god," he must act out his "godhood." He expects all to submit or else they must suffer.

The Moloch State

It is an interesting fact that Moloch worship was introduced into Israel by King Solomon. It is also noteworthy to mention that Moloch worship was introduced by Solomon when he was old (I Kings 11:4). Solomon had known more power and wealth than anything we can imagine. When he became old and feeble, he turned to the worship of Moloch for rejuvenation. The word "moloch" means "king or kingship." It is the worship of the king as god. It is the religion of the divine right of kings. It is the king as god and the god as king. The king is to be the divine-human link between heaven and earth. The Moloch religion is a power religion. It is a power religion manifested in the political realm. The king becomes identified with god to the degree that he manifests absolute power.

The Moloch state is a government that claims total control. The modern state is a Moloch demanding Moloch worship. It claims total jurisdiction over every sphere of man and hence requires total sacrifice. The Moloch state claims to be the total governor of man and the world. It demands control from the cradle to the grave, from the womb to the tomb, over welfare, education, worship, family, business, farming and every other sphere. If you are not convinced concerning this control, simply try to do any of the above without a state license or permission.

In Ft. Worth, Texas, a local pastor was repeatedly issued citations and was arrested for feeding the poor of that city. What was his crime? He did not secure a license or permit from the health department before his church shared their food with the poor. It is considered unlawful in Texas for a church to share their

food with the poor. This pastor was told that if he threw the food into a trash can and the homeless picked it out and ate it, he would not need a permit or license. Did not Jesus Christ command us to feed the poor? Did he not say, "...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40)? How is it that in Texas a local church must have a license in order to obey the Word of God? One would think that any city or state would welcome any help in order to keep people off the government dole.

We tend to forget that government is limited by the Word of God. In Romans 13, government is referred to as God's deacon or servant, God's exacter of righteousness, and God's liturgy or public worship. Government is defined and limited by God. Man cannot legitimately make government into what God has not ordained it to be. When anyone ascribes power, authority, reverence, submission or anything else to the government, over and above the Word of God, it is idolatry!

The Fear of God and the Fear of Other Gods

Our local church was in a battle with the state. After exchanging several letters, we were visited by two bureaucrats. In a great show of humility, the bureaucratic spokesman began by saying that he did not want to argue the Bible with me. I agreed not to discuss theology in this meeting if he did not. I had previously mentioned the theological problems in a letter and deemed it wise to stick with the many constitutional objections we needed to discuss. The meeting had not progressed more than ten minutes when one of the men of our church asked a question. In his answer, the bureaucrat said, "You see, the state in its infinite wisdom..." - and that was as far as he got. I slammed my desk with my fist, jumped up and exclaimed, "You promised not to discuss theology! You have broken your promise and I wish to tell you that no one but God is infinite. Infinity is an attribute that belongs to God alone. The real problem that exists between us is that we confess and serve two different gods. You confess that the state is god and serve the state. I confess that Jesus Christ is God and serve Him. The problem that we face is a theological one and will not be

resolved until we worship and serve the same God. The Word of God asks 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' (Amos 3:3). I do not recognize any God other than the Lord Jesus Christ and, consequently, there will only be constant and continual friction and problems between us.

We are not to fear other gods. We are to fear the One True and Living God and Him alone. It is idolatry to fear other gods. The reason that God chastised Israel and Judah was for their idolatry. They feared false gods. II Kings 17 is an awesome chapter on idolatry. This passage gives us the specific reasons why God delivered both Israel and Judah into captivity. II Kings 17:7 tells us:

> "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods."

What does it mean to fear the LORD? One fears the LORD when one forsakes evil, wickedness, ungodliness and all that is opposed to Him. Further, one brings his life into submission and obedience unto Him. Job 28:28 tells us:

"And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

Proverbs 1:7, 29 and 30 explain further:

> "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction...For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof."

The "fear of the LORD" is obedience to God's wisdom, knowledge and counsel. It is an obeying of His laws and commandments. One does not fear God unless he obeys God.

What does it mean to fear "other gods" or "false gods?" It is to reject the One True and Living God who has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to deny, forsake, and reject His covenant and commandments. In II Kings 17:7-8, the Word of God states, "They feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen..." One obeys the laws of his god. It is impossible to fear

Jesus Christ and a false god at the same time. Listen to the testimony of Scripture. II Kings 17:13-16 is as follows:

> "Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal."

It is obvious from the Word of God that if one fears the Lord Jesus, he will obey Him. On the other hand, if one fears a false god, he will obey his false god. Your actions, conduct and obedience demonstrate which lord you serve.

The Statutes of Apostate Rulers

Observe verses 7 and 8 of II Kings 17 very closely. There are two aspects of idolatry given. They embody the reasons why God judged and chastised Israel and Judah. What are they? First, they "feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the heathen." Second, it is stated, "and of the kings of Israel, which they had made." What does that mean? Actually the children of Israel were obeying the wicked laws and statutes of a false god and the wicked laws and statutes of a wicked, apostate civil government. God sent Israel into captivity for obeying their rulers. Just as it is idolatrous to obey the laws and statutes of a "false god," it is equally idolatrous to obey the wicked laws and statutes of a civil government that is ruling contrary to God and His law. II Kings 17:19 makes this point exceedingly clear:

"Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made."

Judah, the Southern Kingdom, had adopted the laws and statutes of their apostate brethren in the Northern Kingdom. They were not the laws of God; they were the laws of an apostate civil government. Consequently, God judged both Israel and Judah. God considers it idolatry to substitute man's law for His law.

The amazing thing is that civil rulers know exactly what they are doing when they impose idolatry on their land. II Kings 17:21 tells us that "Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin." The word "drave" is ned-aw-baw in the Hebrew and means "spontaneously, willingly, freely, abundantly and voluntarily." He purposefully and deliberately led Israel into idolatry for his own advantage and the furtherance of his power and kingdom.

Another deception of rulers is found in II Kings 21:9. It is stated that King Manasseh "seduced" the people into idolatry. The Hebrew word means "to deceive, to cause to vacillate, waver, and go astray." How does a ruler cause someone to vacillate, waver or leave the faith? Simply by imposing sanctions or penalties upon his conduct. In our country, one may believe anything he wishes as long as it remains simply head knowledge. However, once you begin to apply, act and work out the implications of your faith in practice, you run into a multitude of problems. Oftentimes such activities as street preaching, visitation, home Bible studies and distributing Christian literature are forbidden by statute. If you persist in the application of your faith, you are faced with arrest, persecution, confiscation of property and loss of liberty. In other words, the ruler simply makes it difficult for an individual to act without suffering severe penalties. Therefore, the individual wavers or vacillates in his obedience unto God, for he does not wish to suffer.

Sin Under the Color of Law

We have forgotten that idolatry and sin can and often do come under the color of law; that is, they have legal standing.

Governments can and do make idolatry and sin lawful. Psalm 94:20 asks:

"Shall the throne of iniquity have fellow-ship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?"

First, the question refers to a throne, that is, a government, power or authority. Second, it is a throne of iniquity. It is a wicked, vile and apostate government. Third, it is one that frames "mischief" or sin by a law. It makes sin legal and lawful! For instance, in our country, it is legal to murder your baby, just so you do it before it is born. It is lawful to be a sodomite. It is lawful to steal, just so you do it by congressional action! Now the question is: "Shall such a throne of iniquity have the fellowship and sanction of the Holy God of heaven and earth?" The answer must be a resounding, "No!" God does not sanction or condone such civil wickedness. He is opposed to it; He curses it, and will ultimately judge and overthrow it. Habakkuk 1:13 tells us about the character of God:

"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil [approvingly], and canst not look on iniquity [condoningly]."

It is nothing less than idolatry when any Christian obeys a civil law or ruler when that law or ruler is contrary to God and His Word. We need to take Peter's words very seriously. He said in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Statism is idolatry. The people who place government above God and His law will find only judgment and destruction.

Chapter 9

A Friend of Christ or Caesar?

> "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him .....If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away." John 19:1-6; 12b-16

Friends are extremely important. The Word of God places a great deal of emphasis upon friendship. In fact, there is a multitude of Scriptures that deal with friends and friendship. One could quote Scriptures such as: "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24), and "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverbs 27:6). When it comes to friendship, the Bible emphasizes that "Open rebuke is better than secret love" (Proverbs 27:5) and "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17). Scriptures could be multiplied on the subject.

The Bible teaches that friends have the greatest potential for blessings. In other words, everyone has been blessed by their friends in times of tragedy, bereavement and discouragement. It has been our friends who have comforted and helped us many times. On the other hand, friends who are capable of being the greatest blessing can also cause the greatest hurt. There is absolutely no hurt like the hurt that one receives from a friend. When our friends deceive and betray us, we are wounded to the point of despair. David describes this beautifully in Psalm 55:12-14:

> "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hateth me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."

David could have understood if it had been his enemies that reproached and hated him. He could have understood that because it is expected of an enemy. However, it is not expected of a friend, especially one who was counted not only an equal, acquaintance and guide, but a brother as well. One expects an unconverted enemy to act in a deceitful and traitorous fashion, but not one who is a professing Christian brother. It is obvious that as friends have the greatest potential for blessing, they also possess the greatest potential for hurt.

It is indeed a true maxim that a man must choose his friends carefully. Do you realize that this principle is taught very plainly in the Word of God? I Corinthians 15:33 informs us that "evil communications corrupt good manners." We must be careful concerning our associates lest we become corrupted by evil. Psalm 1 describes the "blessed man" as one who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly; neither imitates the ungodly in conduct, nor agrees with the ungodly. A man is known not only by his character, but also by the company that he keeps. Homespun wisdom says, "Birds of the feather flock together." Therefore, we must indeed choose our friends very carefully.

God forbids us to befriend certain individuals and entities. In Proverbs 22:24-25, God says, "Make no friendship with an angry

man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." We are forbidden to make friends with angry, furious and uncontrollable men. Why? The answer is simple. God does not desire that we learn the angry man's wicked habits. Scripture affirms that "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Corinthians 15:33).

God also forbids us to be friends of the world system. It was the rulers of the world that crucified Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 2:8). Likewise, the world system represents all that is contrary to God and His Word. James 4:4 declares:

> "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Enmity is extreme hatred. The word "world" does not refer to this terrestrial ball. It does not refer to God's creation; rather, it refers to the world system which is opposed to God. It is the same system that is proclaimed in Psalm 2:2-3:

> "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

The world system is in defiance and rebellion against God. It hates God and will not acknowledge His sovereignty and dominion. For rulers to abide by God's Word and principles would be tantamount to confession and submission to Him. In order to demonstrate their independence from God and their rebellion against God, they refuse to consider or apply any of His mandates. Is it any wonder that God says in I John 2:15-17:

> "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

We are not to be friends of a world system that is alienated from God, in defiance to Him and seeks to overthrow His kingdom.

The Meaning of Friendship

There are two Greek words in the New Testament that are translated "friend." The first word is *hetairos*. It refers to "a comrade or an acquaintance, one who is linked to another." It is not a word of intimacy. We have many acquaintances that we casually call friends. However, we do not share our hearts with them; we do not confide in them. They are individuals that we work with regularly. We are on a first name basis with them. We are friendly with them; yet, they are acquaintances, not friends.

The second Greek word is *philos*. *Philos* is also translated "friend." It refers to "a loved one, someone beloved;" it is a term of endearment. It is from the verb *phileo*, which is translated "I love." The word *philema* refers to "a kiss." It is obvious that there is a vast difference between the words *hetairos* and *philos*.

In Matthew 26, Judas had betrayed Christ and sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. The sign agreed upon for the identification of Christ was the normal greeting, a kiss. Judas asked, that upon the capture of Christ, that the enemies of Christ "hold him fast." Interestingly, when Christ saw Judas, he asked, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" The word "friend" is *hetairos*. He did not use the term of endearment or intimacy, rather, a term that signified merely that Judas was a comrade or an acquaintance. Judas was not a loved one. He was someone with whom Christ traveled and worked and was never a real friend.

When it comes to intimate friends, endeared ones and loved ones, you and I must, of necessity, choose between the friendship of Christ or of Caesar. Everyone relies upon an ultimate, a sovereign and final authority. We will recognize either Christ or Caesar as that sovereign. Simply put, we will be known as Christ's friend or Caesar's friend.

It is indeed a shame and a tragedy that we must make such a choice. If civil government acted upon and carried out the purposes for which God ordained it, we could be an intimate friend to both Christ and Caesar. God has ordained civil government for our protection and promotion. It turns out; however, that civil government is a rival against God and His law. The evidence that government is indeed a rival is that it

continually harasses God's people, overthrows His law by legislative statutes and seeks to banish God from His universe. Government claims to be neutral. Instead, it is antagonistic and actively seeks to remove Christianity from every sphere of government. What it does not banish, it seeks to control. The "government-as-god" mentality will allow Christianity to exist only if it is controlled. The bottom line is that we are either the friend of Christ or the friend of Caesar. The case today is exactly the same as it has been throughout history.

Are you a friend of Christ or a friend of Caesar? The question must be answered. We cannot serve two masters. A choice must be made. Let us understand clearly from the Bible the exact requirements for friendship with Christ and with Caesar. We will then be enabled to make a deliberate and intelligent choice.

The Persecution of the Innocent

The first requirement to be Caesar's dear, intimate friend is that one must be willing to persecute and prosecute the godly and the innocent. In John 19:12, the Jews who sought to have Christ crucified said to Pilate, "...If thou let this mango, thou art not Caesar's friend..." The Greek word for "friend" is *philos*, which speaks of love, endearment and intimacy.

Pilate knew that Jesus Christ was an innocent man. In fact, Pilate had previously declared Christ innocent on two occasions. In verses 4 and 6, his declaration was: "I find no fault in him." Matthew 27:18 informs us that Pilate knew that "for envy they had delivered him." Pilate, therefore, sought to have Christ released (19:12). What changed his mind? What persuasive argument changed his view? It was a simple one. If Pilate released Christ, who was innocent, he would be siding against Caesar. One cannot remain a friend of Caesar and stand for truth, justice, morality and righteousness. If one remains a dear friend of Caesar, he must be an active participant in the persecution of the godly and innocent, or at least be a silent bystander and an observer of many perversions of truth and justice. Caesar will count all as his dear friends who join with him or who will not oppose him.

The Bible condemns such perversions of justice. Proverbs 21:3 declares that, "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." God demands justice. The word "justice" and the word "righteousness" in the Hebrew are exactly the same. You cannot have justice without righteousness. You cannot have righteousness without justice. God would rather have us do that which is right than to give everything that we have in sacrifice.

A major complaint that God lodged against His people in the Old Testament was, "None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth..." (Isaiah 59:4). Unhappily, the same complaint could be lodged against His people today. Very few people are interested in justice; even fewer see the necessity for justice. We are either deliberately ignorant of injustice or callously indifferent to what happens to our fellow men.

Saul of Tarsus, before his conversion, was an enemy of Jesus Christ. He hated Christ and did many terrible things against those who loved Christ. He persecuted and hounded Christians, binding them and delivering them to prison, consenting to their deaths. Scripture tells us that Saul was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1). After his conversion, the one thing that haunted him all the days of his Christian life was that he had persecuted godly, innocent Christians. In Acts 22:4, Paul confesses, "I persecuted this way unto the death." Further, in Acts 26:11, Paul acknowledges, "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Paul knew that he had done wrong. He could not shake the awful reality of his actions. In Galatians 1:13, Paul says, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." In his biographical sketch in Philippians 3:6, Paul's credentials include "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church..." Finally, in I Corinthians 15:9, Paul's estimation of himself is based upon his ungodly persecution. He humbly proclaims, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

The one thing that Paul could not escape in his Christian life was that before God converted him, he persecuted Christians who were innocent and godly. It is one thing to persecute and prosecute someone who is manifestly guilty, and quite another to destroy innocent individuals.

Persecution Through Mala Prohibita Laws

How are God's people persecuted? How are they destroyed by civil government? In order to understand the answer to those questions, one must know the difference between the terms *mala in se* and *mala prohibita*. The Latin terms *mala in se* refers to "that which is evil in and of itself." It refers to those acts that are morally wrong in themselves such as murder, rape and robbery. On the other hand, *mala prohibita* speaks of "those acts which are offensive by virtue of positive law." They are not acts that are sinful in and of themselves. *Mala prohibita* includes such offenses as disobeying "keep off the grass" signs, "no parking" signs, statutes demanding that certain forms be filed or not filed, and violating speed zones. It is not inherently evil to walk on grass or fail to file a form. It only becomes evil because it is either demanded or enjoined by man's law. *Mala in se* refers to violations of God's law; *mala prohibita* refers to violations of man's law.

The edicts of man, the *mala prohibita* laws, are used to persecute and prosecute the godly. The godly are not persecuted because of evil, wickedness and sin; they are persecuted because they do not conform to Caesar's edicts or Caesar's demands. They do not obey because their conscience is bound to biblical truth. There are edicts of man that Christians cannot obey without denying their faith. There are positive laws, laws enacted by civil governments that are absolutely contrary to the Word of God. Christians suffer when they choose to obey God rather than man.

Paul states the principle precisely in II Timothy 3:11-12:

> "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

If we are godly, obedient and submissive to the Word of God, there is no way to avoid persecution. Paul suffered many times and in various ways. Why? He was obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. Even in Philippi, he and Silas were thrown into jail for preaching. If we are faithful, we too shall suffer. Lack of suffering for truth denotes a lack of godliness.

Peter emphasizes exactly the same truth in I Peter 4:12-16. He also reveals the distinction between *mala in se* and *mala prohibita*. Follow the scripture carefully:

> "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part, he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Peter definitely states that trials of faith are coming. When they appear, we are not to count them as "some strange thing," but understand that they come as a result of our obedience to Christ. It is wickedness on the part of civil government to so harass and persecute Christians. Persons in government persecute Christians because they are "speaking evil of God." Their acts are to be considered as statements of rebellion against God. However, on the part of the Christian, God is glorified. Why? The Christian's obedience unto Him is that which brings forth the persecution.

Notice how Peter says, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer..." (verse 15). He is saying that no Christian should be guilty of those acts that are constituted as *mala in se*. Why? Because they are wicked, vile acts that are in direct contradiction to the Word of God. He goes further and says, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed..." It is no shame to suffer for Christ's sake. If we are imprisoned for violating mala prohibita laws for conscience sake to Christ, it is not a shameful experience. One should rejoice and glorify God rather

than be ashamed. We must learn that suffering for Christ's sake is the gift of God (Philippians 1:29).

Can we expect persecution, imprisonment and death for faithfulness to Christ? Listen to our Lord Jesus.

> "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." (John 15:19-21)

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John 16:2)

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried..." (Revelation 2:10)

> "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake." (Luke 21:12)

Religious and political sanctions are brought against Christians. Those who are faithful to Christ and His Word will be persecuted by the established religion as well as the established civil government. Christ said, "the devil shall cast some of you into prison." How? The devil does not have a prison. He simply uses wicked rulers and civil magistrates to accomplish his purpose. He did so with Paul and Silas in Acts 16. He does so today.

It is important to remember Psalm 94:20. We are told that sin is "framed by a law." "Thrones of iniquity," that is, wicked civil governments pass statutes that make sin lawful. We have forgotten that sin can be forced upon us by legal means. This is one of the greatest areas of conflict. It is precisely this area that gives civil government the green light to persecute those who will not and cannot conform to its laws. Thus, Christians can be persecuted and punished, not because they are wicked and violate God's laws,

but simply because they cannot in good conscience do that which their government demands in violation of God's edicts.

It should be easier now to understand why those Jews said to Pilate, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend" (John 19:12). Pilate knew that Christ was innocent. The Jews knew that Christ was innocent. It was not a matter of guilt or innocence; it was a matter of friendship. In order to be a dear, intimate and beloved friend of government, you must learn to persecute and prosecute the innocent and the godly. You cannot be Caesar's friend otherwise. Caesar does not care about truth, righteousness, justice and morality. He cares only about power. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend."

Speaking Against Caesar

The second requirement to be Caesar's friend is that one must not speak against Caesar or allow others to do so. Scripture tells us the Jews cried out, "Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar (verse 12)." The word that is translated "to speak against" is *antilego*. *Anti*, even in English, means "against." The Greek word *lego* means "I say" or "I speak." Caesar does not want anyone speaking against him. The Greek word *antilego* is used consistently in the Bible to speak against. In Acts 28:19 Paul said, "But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar..." Likewise, in Acts 13:45, Luke records, "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming."

In the preceding verse, "speaking against" is equated with contradicting and blaspheming. Viewing the situation from Caesar's eyes, when anyone speaks against him, he interprets it as contradicting and blaspheming. Thus, "to speak against" Caesar is not only to contradict him, but it is to blaspheme him, which is a denial of his power, authority and position. In order to be Caesar's friend, one must understand that he will not tolerate any outcries against him.

Neither the Word of God nor the Constitution of the United States is any longer officially the supreme law in America. Public

policy has replaced both documents. We are no longer a nation ruled by law. We are ruled by public policy; and public policy happens to be whatever our rulers determine. Public policy is to America what the "will of the people" was to Robespierre and the French Revolution.

Public policy is clearly enunciated as the controlling factor in the Internal Revenue's Publication 557 entitled How to Apply for and Retain Exempt Status for Your Organization. In order to receive and maintain a 501(c) (3) tax exempt status for a church or a religious organization, the IRS maintains two basic guidelines:

> "1) That the particular belief of the organization is truly and sincerely held; and 2) That the practices and rituals associated with the organization's belief or creed are not illegal or contrary to clearly defined public policy."

In order to receive such a tax exemption, churches must agree not to have a creed or belief that is contrary to "clearly defined public policy." Clearly defined public policy is not the Christian's standard; rather the Word of God is the Christian's standard. It may interest you to discover that sodomy and abortion have been determined to be public policy. If a pastor and church are faithful to the Word of God, they must speak out against sodomy and abortion as sins. On the other hand, if they are faithful to Caesar, they will keep their contract with him and refuse to preach against these wicked sins. Of course, if Caesar is spoken against, one will automatically lose the "tax exempt status," and undergo further harassment and persecution.

Caesar will not tolerate anyone who decries, denounces or denigrates his power, position and preeminence. According to Caesar, one must voluntarily submit to his edicts or be coerced into submission. Caesar will not count anyone a friend who speaks against him.

Recently, while preaching in Indiana, I had the privilege of hearing John Noble. John Noble is an American citizen. His family was extremely wealthy and had industrial plants in Europe and America. During World War II, John Noble was in Germany supervising one of his father's plants. He was arrested and incarcerated by the Nazis. The Russians, who were ostensibly our

allies during the war, liberated the prisoners the Germans had taken. The only problem was the Russian definition of liberation. They took the prisoners and sent them to their own concentration camps.

Literally thousands of American soldiers were murdered, mutilated or incarcerated by the Russians. John Noble was sent to a concentration camp. He would have died there had not the providence of God intervened to deliver him.

He was assigned to a camp in Siberia. Men, women and children were thrown together and forced to work in sub-zero temperatures with little food or clothing. In his particular concentration camp, there was such a row raised over their conditions that it looked as if the prisoners would revolt. Of course, the Russians did not want a revolt because they did not want to lose their slave labor. A solution was proposed by the Russians. The prisoners were to choose their spokesmen and a meeting was set to air all complaints and gripes. The Russian officers listened attentively. As the prisoners finished speaking, others were also encouraged to speak if they so desired. When all speaking was finished, the Russian officers duly acknowledged the complaints. They then arose, stepped aside and machine guns opened fire. First, all of the spokesmen were murdered and then the guns were turned upon the prisoners. One man was shot dead and fell upon John Noble, knocking him to the ground. It was through the death of another that the life of John Noble was spared. What was the crime of the prisoners? They spoke against their rulers.

Thankfully, it has not yet reached such extremes in this country. There is still a degree of freedom of speech. Yet, as this book is being read, there are churches and patriotic meetings where vehicle tag numbers are taken down by government agents. Why? Because those who do not agree with civil government must be silenced at all costs. They will be investigated, harassed, audited and persecuted. Those who think that one still has freedom of association or speech should try becoming vocal about governmental tyranny or associating with those who are vocal. It is impossible to be Caesar's friend and expose his wickedness and corruption. If one is going to be Caesar's dear, intimate friend, one

must condone and nod approvingly to everything Caesar says or does.

The Refusal to Tolerate a Rival

Third, in order to be a friend of Caesar, one must understand that Caesar will not tolerate any rival. Scripture says in John 19:12, "... Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." Caesar will not recognize anyone else as a king or sovereign. Why? The answer is simple. If one claims sovereignty, he cannot tolerate anyone else who proclaims himself a sovereign without endangering or denying his own status. It was a common practice in Old Testament times, especially among the heathen, that when a new king ascended the throne, he immediately killed the family and friends of the former monarch. He exterminated them. Why? He would brook no rival. He did not want anyone contesting his power or rule. He did not want anyone else claiming power or authority.

King Herod wanted to murder Jesus Christ for the same reason. In Matthew 2:1-8, we read:

> "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the King had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, In the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

Did Herod really want to worship Jesus Christ? No! When God warned the wise men to return home another way and not return

to Herod, what did Herod do? Herod sent his soldiers and slaughtered all the children from two years old and under. Why did Herod seek to slay Jesus? Because Herod was king of the Jews and he would brook no rival. He claimed to be sovereign.

In Israel there was a fight for the kingdom. Two men wanted to be king. One was Tibni and the other was Omri. Omri was a wicked man and was also the father of King Ahab. Who won the kingdom and how was it won? Listen to I Kings 16:22: "But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died and Omri reigned." Why must Tibni die? Omri would not tolerate a rival.

Acts 4:12 is one of the most significant verses in the New Testament. In order to understand its significance, one must know the historical background surrounding it. In 17 B.C. when a strange star shone in the heavens, Caesar Augustus inaugurated what was called "the cosmic hour of salvation." Because of his successes militarily and economically, he had himself proclaimed "god." His coins carried the inscription, Caesar Divi Filius, that is, "son of god, son of eternal Caesar." It was during this time that Caesar Augustus had proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire, "Salvation is to be found in none other name save Augustus and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved." Augustus was clearly claiming to be the sovereign. Peter proclaimed concerning Jesus Christ in Acts 4:12:

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Peter was denying the lordship of Caesar and proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ. His proclamation was nothing less than a declaration of war against Caesar and the Roman Empire. We must understand that we are at war. Moreover, it is a war to the death. The truth is that either Christ or Caesar will be recognized as the ultimate ruler and sovereign. Christ seeks to overthrow Caesar and Caesar seeks to overthrow Christ. The reason civil government cannot stand to hear the Word of God or the Constitution is because it will tolerate no rival. The Word of God is a threat to civil government because the Bible proclaims another Sovereign, King and Final Authority. Likewise, the Constitution is a

threat to government because it is an express powers document. "We the people," who ordained the Constitution, expressed and limited the powers given to government. If the Constitution is recognized, the limited nature of government will be acknowledged. Government cannot submit to the Constitution without destroying its claim to absolute power.

Just as Caesar will tolerate no rival, God Himself will brook no rival. In Isaiah 42:8, God says, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." God will not share His glory or power with idols or graven images. God will most certainly fight against and overthrow all who fight against His rule and kingdom.

Psalm 2 is one of the most important passages in the Psalter. It explains the rebellion of the rulers of this world. It also tells us the ultimate outcome:

> "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

The cords and bands that the kings of the earth wish to cast off are the limitations and boundaries that have been placed upon their delegated authority. They do not wish to recognize another sovereign. It is their desire to "play god." What is God's response to such rebellion?

> "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure... Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psalm 2:4-5, 9)

Further, in verses 10-12, God tells the civil rulers of their only hope if they wish to escape certain destruction. What is it? It is unconditional surrender and submission to the One True and Living God through His Son, Jesus Christ:

> "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Scripture consistently states that it is going to be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ who is going to triumph. It does not matter how many kings fight against Him or who they are that fight. They shall all fail. He alone is King of kings and Lord of lords. Revelation 17:12-14 informs us:

> "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

It is kings who are making war with the Lamb, kings who will not acknowledge His sovereignty and power. They may fight with all of their might; however, they shall not prosper. Revelation 11:14-15 announces:

> "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

It is as simple as black and white. If you remain a true friend to Caesar, you must disclaim and denounce all rival sovereigns. Caesar will brook no rival. All who are true to Caesar will perish with him. On the other hand, since the true King and Sovereign is Jesus Christ, all who are His friends renounce Caesar as lord.

The Rejection of Christ as King

Fourth, in order to be Caesar's dear and intimate friend, one must reject and repudiate Jesus Christ as Lord and King. In John 19:15-16 we read:

> "But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away."

The repudiation of Jesus Christ as Lord is an absolute and necessary consequence of being Caesar's friend. It is also the logical consequence of all the previous requirements. If one persecutes and prosecutes the godly, he must do so in disobedience and rebellion to the plain command of Jesus Christ. If one refuses to speak against Caesar when Caesar is unbiblical and ungodly, he is in violation of Holy Scriptures and thus in rebellion and defiance of Jesus Christ. If one will tolerate no rival against Caesar, he is in essence saying that Jesus Christ is not the King and Sovereign. It is saying that Christ does not have authority to bind, regulate or control civil government.

There can be only one final authority. If one confesses that authority is Caesar, he is at the same time denying Christ. In order to remain the friend of Caesar, it is necessary to deny the deity, sovereignty and kingship of Jesus Christ. When one confesses Caesar is lord, that government can do whatever it desires, it is a denial of the claims of Christ. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 28:18, "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Since His claims are true, He is Lord. Only those who are the friends of Caesar will deny the claims of Christ.

It is a fact of biblical truth and history as well that ungodly rulers will unite in defiance and rebellion to the kingship and sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Men who hate each other, men who are implacable enemies, will become friends in order to destroy Christ. Such was the case in Luke 23:6-12:

> "When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves."

Two men, both civil rulers, who hated each other, became dear, intimate friends in their hatred, defiance and rebellion to Jesus Christ. If you think Russia and China are enemies, you have been fooled. If you think that America and Russia are enemies, you are deceived. Russia could not do one tenth of what she does without American technology, food and money. The rulers of this world will unite in defiance to the sovereignty and the kingship of Jesus Christ.

The Requirements of Friendship with Christ

If you are Caesar's friend, you must deny Christ. Are you Caesar's friend? Are you the friend of Christ? Having seen what Caesar requires for friendship, what are the requirements for friendship with Christ?

Christ's requirements for friendship are very simple and need no explanation. They are self-explanatory. They are found in John 15. His requirements are simple, yet they are profound.

First, we must know His Word. Christ says in John 15:15, "Henceforth, I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." If we are friends of Christ, we must know His Word, will and desires. How do we know what He demands? It is revealed in the Bible. Those who know the Bible know the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16). If we are to be the friend of Christ, we cannot be ignorant of His Word.

Second, if we are friends of Christ, we obey Him. He says in John 15:14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." A true friend of Christ obeys Him. Why? Because he knows that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus said in John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me..." Further, in verse 24, He said, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Likewise, in I John 5:3, we read, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Christ says plainly in I John 2:4 that, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the

truth is not in him." It is impossible to be a friend of Christ without obeying Him.

Third, if we are friends of Christ, we shall be willing to lay down our lives for His sake. Christ says in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is true that Christ, our greatest Friend, laid down His life for us. However, if we are the friends of Christ, we will be willing to lay our lives down for Him. In Romans 12:1-2 Paul exhorts us as follows:

> "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

A living sacrifice is one that is continually being offered. If we are willing to live for Christ, we shall also be willing to die for Christ. Christ commands us to "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

What is required to be the friend of Christ? Three simple requirements: know His Word, obey His Word, and be faithful unto death. One of the most beautiful passages in the Bible is found in James 2:23, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

In light of all the Scripture given, you must now be prepared to answer a most important question. Are you a friend of Christ or a friend of Caesar? Will you be the dear, intimate friend of Christ or the dear, intimate friend of Caesar? Each has its reward!

About the Author

Pastor John Weaver is a native of Georgia, and a graduate of Bob Jones University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology and attended graduate school. Pastor Weaver is married, has four children, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He has been in the Christian ministry over 61 years and has helped plant several churches and Christian schools around the country. Pastor Weaver has traveled across America preaching and lecturing in churches, colleges and conferences.

John Weaver is an expositor of God's whole Word. His preaching style is in the tradition of those early American pastors whose pulpits were the cradle of America's Christian liberty.

Scripture Index

References are arranged in biblical order. Chapter references and verse references are listed separately. Roman numerals refer to the front matter.

Genesis

3 *43*
3:4–5 *101*
3:5 *107*
9 *45*

Exodus

1:15–22 *54*
1:20–21 *55*
2:1–4 *56*
16:22 *90*
18:21 *12*
20:1–3 *101*
20:8 *41*
20:10 *41*
20:12 *41*
20:13 *64, 67*
22:28 *89–90*
23:4–5 *64*
30:12–13 *32*
32:26–27 *91*
34:31 *90*
35:27 *90*

Leviticus

4:22 *90*
19:4 *89*
20:13 *67*

Numbers

4 *87*
4:4–15 *87*
13:2 *90*
16 *87*
22–24 *93*
25:1–3 *93*
25:5 *94*
25:6 *94*
25:7–8 *94*
25:9 *94*
25:11–13 *95*
25:14–15 *94*
26:11 *87*
26:59 *56*
35:31 *45*

Deuteronomy

1:13 *12–13*
1:17 *91*
5:14 *41*
17:15–20 *11*
19:14 *51*
22:1–4 *64*
22:23–29 *64*
27:17 *51*
28 *10, 22*

Joshua

2 *56*
2:9 *57*
2:17–21 *21*
9 *33*
9:15–21 *90*
13:21 *90*
17:4 *90*
22:14 *90*

22:30 *90*
22:32 *90*
24:1 *19*
24:25 *19*

Judges

18:7 *84*

1 Samuel

2:30 *57*
8:7 *66*
10:1 *15*
12:24–25 *18*
12:25 *35–36*
15 *91*
15:3 *92*
15:9 *92*
15:13 *92*
15:14 *92*
15:26 *92*
15:32 *92*
15:33 *92*
17 *71*

2 Samuel

5:3 *18*
5:12 *15*
11 *31*
12 *31*
21 *32*
21:1 *33*
23:2–3 *13*

1 Kings

11 *12*
11:4 *107*
11:4–10 *104*
12 *106*
12:26–33 *105*
16:22 *126*
17 *33, 52, 54*
17:1 *53*
18 *71, 89, 93*
18:5 *33*
18:10 *53*
18:17–18 *53, 69*
18:18 *33*
18:22 *93*
18:40 *93*
19 *71*

2 Kings

1 *53–54, 71*
1:9–10 *53*
1:10 *53*
1:11 *54*
1:13–14 *54*
11 *95*
11:14 *95*
11:15–16 *95*
11:17 *18*
17 *23, 109–110*
17:7 *109*
17:7–8 *109–110*
17:13 *23*
17:13–16 *110*
17:19 *110–111*
17:21 *111*
20:5 *15*
21:1–3 *104*
21:9 *111*

1 Chronicles

9:19 *87*
11:3 *18*
12 *87*
12:1 *87*
12:2 *87*
12:3–14 *87*
12:6 *87*
21:1–17 *32*

21:17 *32*

2 Chronicles

19:6–7 *91*
23:2–3 *19*
23:16 *19*
26:14–21 *68*

Ezra

7:25 *85*

Nehemiah

4:7–17 *78*
4:8 *78*
4:9 *78*
4:11 *78*
4:13–14 *78*
4:16–18 *78*

Job

19:29 *35*
28:28 *14, 109*

Psalms

1 *114*
2 *14, 127*
2:1–3 *127*
2:2–3 *115*
2:4–5 *127*
2:9 *127*
2:10–12 *127*
42 *86–87*
47:9 *15*
55:12–14 *114*
72:1–11 *14*
75:6–7 *1*
78:70–71 *15*
82 *89*
82:1 *89*
82:2–5 *89*
82:6 *89*
94:16 *81*
94:20 *81, 112, 121*
96:5 *89*
119:89 *xvi*
127:1 *12*

Proverbs

1:7 *109*
1:29–30 *109*
8:15–16 *1*
17:15 *47*
17:17 *113*
18:24 *113*
21:3 *118*
21:31 *12*
22:24–25 *114*
27:5 *113*
27:6 *113*
28:4 *81*

Ecclesiastes

3 *98*
8:2 *20*
8:11 *45*

Isaiah

28:10 *51*
28:13 *51*
42:8 *127*
45:7 *42*
49:23 *14*
58 *24*
59:4 *118*
60:10 *14*
66:3 *89*

Jeremiah

15:4 *34*
26:20–23 *72*

Daniel
2 *1*
2:21 *1*
2:37 *1*
3 *57*
3:4–6 *57*
3:15–18 *57*
3:28 *58*
4 *1*
4:17 *2*
4:32 *2*
4:34–35 *2*
6:1–4 *58*
6:5 *58*
6:7 *58*
6:10–11 *59*

Hosea
4:6 *xv*
4:15 *50*
5:10–11 *50, 62*
5:11 *51*
11:1 *71*

Amos
3:3 *109*
4:6–11 *24*

Habakkuk
1:13 *112*

Matthew
1:5 *57*
2:1–8 *125*
2:13–14 *71*
2:15 *71*
5:17 *xvi*
10:23 *70*
10:40 *66*
23:34 *70*
25:40 *108*
26 *116*
26:52 *83*
27:18 *117*
27:22 *34*
28:18 *xv, 16, 129*

Luke
12:11 *85*
12:48 *x*
12:58 *85*
21:12 *121*
22:4 *86*
22:36 *79*
22:52 *86*
23:6–12 *129*

John
1 *88*
1:11–12 *88*
1:12 *88*
7:1 *70*
8:32 *xv*
10:34–36 *89*
11:47–48 *106*
12:27 *71*
14:21 *130*
14:24 *130*
15 *130*
15:13 *131*
15:14 *130*
15:15 *130*
15:19–21 *121*
15:20 *106*
16:2 *121*
19:1–6 *113*
19:4 *117*
19:6 *117*
19:12 *117, 122, 125*
19:12b–16 *113*
19:15–16 *128*

Acts

4:1 *86*
4:12 *126*
5 *60*
5:19 *60*
5:24 *86*
5:26 *86*
5:29 *59, 61, 65, 81, 88, 112*
9:1 *118*
9:23–25 *71*
12 *60*
12:6–11 *60*
13:45 *122*
16 *85, 121*
16:20 *85*
16:22 *85*
16:35 *85*
16:36 *85*
16:38 *85*
22:4 *118*
26:11 *118*
28:19 *122*

Romans

12:1–2 *131*
13 *x, 4, 15, 17, 51–52, 61–62, 88, 108*
13:1 *ix, 4, 67*
13:1–2 *1, 6, 17, 49, 52, 60–63, 65, 69, 81, 88*
13:1–4 *37*
13:2 *4, 9*
13:3 *4, 41–42*
13:3–4 *44*
13:4 *4–5, 15, 45, 82*
13:5 *20*
13:6 *5*

1 Corinthians

2:8 *115*
2:16 *130*
7:20 *82*
11:3 *64*
14:33 *82*
15:9 *118*
15:33 *114–115*

2 Corinthians

10:4 *79*
11:32–33 *72*

Galatians

1:13 *118*

Ephesians

5:5 *101*
5:24 *64*
5:25–29 *65*
6:12 *81*

Philippians

1:29 *121*
3:6 *118*

Colossians

3:5 *101*

1 Timothy

2:1–2 *20*
6:15 *xv*

2 Timothy

3:11–12 *119*
3:16 *xv*

Titus

3:1 *88*

Hebrews

11 *35, 57, 72*
11:32–34 *96*
11:37–38 *36, 72*

James

1:13–15 *43*
2:23 *131*
4:4 *115*

1 Peter

2 *9, 17*
2:13 *9*
2:13–14 *9, 44*
4:12–16 *120*
4:15 *120*

1 John

2:4 *130*
2:15–17 *115*
5:3 *130*

Revelation

2:10 *63, 121, 131*
11:14–15 *128*
17:12–14 *128*

Topical Index

Entries identify substantive discussions. Roman numerals refer to the front matter. See references direct readers to related entries.

A

Abortion, *7–8, 14, 36, 55, 67, 82, 112, 123*
Accountability. *See* Government, accountability to God; Rulers, responsibilities
Agag, *92–93*
Ahab, *33–34, 52–53, 69–70, 93, 104, 126*
Ahaziah, *53–54, 95*
American Revolution, *26–30, 96–99*
Anarchy, *42, 67, 82, 100*
Apostles, *52, 59–60, 67, 71–72, 79, 85–86, 118, 126*
Armed resistance. *See* Magistrates; Resistance; Self defense
Athaliah, *95–96*
Authority
- **delegated by God**, *1–5*
- **limits and jurisdiction**, *3, 6–8, 64–65, 67–68, 127*
- **office distinguished from officeholder**, *67–68*
- **usurped**, *61–63, 66–68*

B

Baal, *23, 50, 70–71, 89, 93–94, 102, 104, 110*
Bible
- **as final authority**, *xv–xvi, 42–43, 78, 123, 130*
- **Old and New Testaments**, *xv–xvi, 59*

Black robed regiment, *96–99*

C

Caesar
- **claims to sovereignty**, *102–103, 125–129*
- **friendship with**, *113, 116–131*
- **worship of**, *59, 102–103, 126, 129*

Caldwell, James, *97, 100*
Cameron, Richard, *74–76*
Capital punishment, *8, 44–46, 67, 82–84, 91–93*
Charity, *37–38, 107–108*
Charles Stuart, *74–75*
Christ Jesus
- **friendship with**, *116–117, 130–131*
- **kingship and sovereignty**, *xv, 10, 14–16, 59, 74, 88, 125–130*
- **persecution and death**, *34, 70–71, 86, 106, 113, 115–117, 125–126, 128–130*

Church
- **charity and education**, *37–38, 107–108*
- **licensure and regulation**, *7, 51–52, 107–109, 111, 123*
- **pastoral authority**, *84–100*
- **separation from the state**, *5–7, 44–45, 68, 74*
- **tax exemption**, *123*

Civil disobedience. *See* Obedience; Resistance
Civil government. *See* Government
Cobbett, Thomas, *xvi*
Commandments, *41–42, 64, 73–74, 101–102, 109–110, 130–131*
Conscience, *6–7, 20–21, 47, 49, 51, 60–61, 74, 119–120, 122*

Consent of the governed, *25–26, 29–31, 90*
Constitution of the United States
delegated and reserved powers, *38–40, 126–127*
general welfare clause, *40–41*
supremacy, *29–30, 39–40, 59, 122–123*
treason, *103*
unconstitutional laws, *28–30, 32, 39–40, 59*
Covenanters, Scottish, *35, 64, 74–76*
Covenants
breach of, *21–26, 28–30, 75*
God rulers and people, *17–20*
judgment for unfaithfulness, *22–24, 31–36*
oaths and conscience, *20*
rulers and people, *18–19, 25–31*
Covetousness, *12–13, 101–102*

D

Daniel, *1–3, 35, 47, 58–59*
David
covenant and kingship, *18–19*
flight from Saul, *71, 87*
personal and public sin, *31–32*
Declaration of Independence, *28–30, 50*
De la Valette, *77–78*
Democracy and republican government, *8–10, 30*

E

Education, *6–7, 38, 107*
Elijah, *33, 52–54, 61, 69–71, 89, 93*
Evil
God as the standard, *42–43*
punishment of, *44–47*

F

Fairfax Resolves, *27–28*
Faithfulness, *63–64, 75–76, 119–122, 130–131*
Family, *6–7, 38, 64–65*
Fear of God, *11–14, 55, 91, 108–111, 127*
Federalist Papers, *40–41*
Flight, *53, 63–64, 70–73*
Friendship
Christ and Caesar, *113, 116–117, 122–131*
knowing and obeying Christ, *130–131*
wisdom in choosing friends, *113–116*

G

General welfare. *See* Constitution of the United States, general welfare clause
George III, *xvi, 26–28*
Gibeonites, *32–33*
Government
accountability to God, *3–5, 30–36, 54, 67, 91*
covenantal nature, *17–21, 25–31, 35–36*
divine institution, *1–5*
forms of, *8–10, 44*
limits of authority, *3, 6–8, 38–42, 50–51, 64–68, 108, 126–127*
ministry of justice, *4–5, 7, 15–16, 37–38, 41–47, 91*
religion and law, *5–6, 44–45, 106*
statism and idolatry, *101–112*
Great Siege, The, *77–78*

H

Hebrew midwives, *54–56, 61*
Herod, *60, 71, 125–126, 129–130*
Humanism, *6, 25, 43, 45, 106*

I

Idolatry
civil laws and false worship, *110–112*
covetousness, *101–102*
government promotion of, *23, 50–51, 104–107, 110–112*
Moloch worship, *104, 107–108*

treason and, *102–103*

J

Jehoiada, *18–19, 95–96, 100*
Jeroboam, *23, 105–106, 111*
Jesus Christ. *See* Christ Jesus
Judgment
covenant unfaithfulness, *22–24, 31–36*
public sins of rulers, *31–36*
Justice
divine standard, *14, 42–43, 91, 118*
government as minister of, *4–5, 7, 15, 37–38, 43–47*
perversion of, *117–119, 122*

K

Kings. *See* Rulers

L

Languet, Hubert, *xvi, 17*
Law
biblical standard, *xv–xvi, 42–43, 123*
negative and positive, *41–42, 46–47, 119–120*
religious character, *5–6, 44, 106*
sin made lawful, *81–82, 111–112, 121–122*
Lex Rex, *xvi, 25, 30, 67, 73*
Liberty, *xv, 26–30, 96–99*
Licensure, *7, 51–52, 107–108*

M

Magistrates
biblical terms for, *84–90*
public and private persons, *82–84*
spiritual leaders, *86–88, 90–100*
Mala in se, *46–47, 119–120*
Mala prohibita, *46–47, 58–59, 119–122*
Malta, siege of, *77–78*
Manasseh, *34–35, 104–105, 111*
Martyrdom, *35–36, 63–64, 75–76, 121, 131*
Mattathias, *76–77*
Midwives. *See* Hebrew midwives
Moloch, *104, 107–108*
Moses, *56, 73, 87, 91, 93–94, 100*
Mulenburg, Peter Gabriel, *98–100*

N

Nebuchadnezzar, *1–3, 35, 57–58*
Nehemiah, *14, 78–79*
Noble, John, *123–124*

O

Obedience
civil rulers and limits, *6–9, 49–52, 62–63, 88*
God rather than men, *55–61, 65–67, 81, 88, 112*
to Christ, *130–131*

P

Parents and children, *6–7, 56, 64–65*
Pastors. *See* Church, pastoral authority; Magistrates, spiritual leaders
Paul, *1, 20, 52, 61, 71–73, 79, 101, 118–122, 131*
Persecution
Christian faithfulness, *35–36, 47, 59–60, 63–64, 74–76, 111, 118–122, 131*
flight from, *53, 63–64, 70–73*
mala prohibita laws, *47, 58–59, 119–122*
Pharaoh, *54–56, 109*
Phinehas, *94–95, 100*
Pilate, *34, 113, 117–118, 122, 128–130*
Prayer for rulers, *20–21*
Property, *35, 46–47, 64, 66, 79, 103, 111*
Public policy, *7, 122–123*
Punishment. *See* Capital punishment; Evil, punishment of; Justice

R

Rahab, *21–22, 56–57, 61*
Rebellion, *56, 63, 82–83*

Religion and government. *See* Church; Government, religion and law
Resistance
  degrees of, *69*
  flight, *53, 63–64, 70–73*
  lawful authority and, *62–63, 65–68, 88*
  leadership and magistrates, *81–84, 90–100*
  self defense, *63–65, 73–79, 82–84*
  verbal and legal, *69–70*
Romans 13
  government as minister of God, *4–5, 108*
  obedience and jurisdiction, *6–8, 49, 51–52, 60–63, 65–68, 88*
  purpose of government, *37–38, 41–47, 108*
Rulers
  personal and public sins, *31–36*
  qualifications, *10–14, 90–91*
  responsibilities, *3–5, 14–16, 18–21, 30–31, 90–91, 99–100*
Rushdoony, Rousas J., *38, 41*
Rutherford, Samuel, *xvi, 25–26, 30–31, 66–67, 73*

S

Samuel, *18, 66, 92–93, 96*
Sanquhar Declaration, *74–75*
Saul, *33, 71, 87, 91–93*
Scottish Covenanters. *See* Covenanters, Scottish
Self defense
  biblical and historical examples, *74–79*
  preservation of life, *53, 63–65, 73–74, 78–79, 82–83*
  private defense and public authority, *82–84*
Separation of church and state. *See* Church, separation from the state
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, *35, 57–58, 61*
Solomon, *12, 17, 20, 104, 107*
Sovereignty
  claims of Caesar, *102–103, 125–129*
  God and delegated authority, *1–3, 9–10, 127*
  kingship of Christ, *xv, 10, 14–16, 59, 74, 88, 125–130*
Statism, *101–112, 117, 125–129*

T

Taxation, *7, 26–27, 40, 123*
Treason, *56, 59, 66, 76, 95, 102–103*
Tyranny
  definition, *61–62*
  resistance to, *25–30, 61–79, 81–100*

U

Urijah, *72–73*
Uzziah, *68*

V

Verbal resistance, *69–70*
Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos, *xvi, 17*

W

Welfare, *37–38, 40–42, 107–108*
Worship
  Caesar, *59, 102–103, 126, 129*
  false gods and civil rulers, *23, 50–51, 91, 93–95, 104–112*
  freedom of, *20–21, 59, 74–76, 102–103, 111, 123*