

Render unto God the Things that Are His

**A Systematic Study of Romans 13
and Related Verses**

Jerald Finney

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Setting the right goal is very important for success. Men, both lost and saved, who do not understand God's principles rely upon their reasoning to conceive of a goal and a way to achieve that goal. Reason tells mankind that the goal of man is happiness, and conceives of various ways to achieve that goal. On the other hand, the Bible reveals that the God-given goal of man is the glory of God and tells man how to achieve that goal.¹ Of course, those who follow biblical teaching will be as happy as others on earth. However, happiness on earth is fleeting, at best. The lost person and the carnal saved person will not be happy when his physical and/or material well being is threatened or lost. The Christian will not be happy when his or another's spiritual state is not as it should be. Christians will have eternal happiness, but that is not their God-given goal.

One thing is for sure, according to reality as judged by the Word of God: mankind, except for a remnant of faithful believers, always rejects God's wisdom and guidelines and seeks happiness for themselves rather than seeking to glorify God. Men, in resorting to their own reasoning instead of getting saved and studying and applying truth and principles from the Word of God as led by the Spirit of God, have sought their goal of happiness in various ways. This is true of philosophies concerning civil government.

Mankind began to reason, instead of following God's principles concerning civil government, immediately after the flood. God, after the flood, ordained civil government

¹ See Jerald Finney, *God Betrayed/Separation of Church and State: The Biblical Principles and the American Application* (Xulon Press, 2008; Austin TX: Kerygma Publishing Company, 2007), Section I, Chapter 2. *God Betrayed* presents a comprehensive study of the issue of "separation of church and state."

and divided the world into Gentile nations.² He did this because, given the nature of man, concentration of the world into one civil government would mean unlimited potential for evil and tyranny.³ Mankind rebelled against God's directions and came together at the tower of Babel.⁴ God confused the tongues—that is, He made men to speak different languages—and they were forced to comply with God's direction to form nations.⁵

At first, all nations were Gentile.⁶ Israel was the only theocracy ever ordained by God, the only nation that God desired to combine religion and state. After Israel rejected the theocracy, religion and state were separated. For example, God rejected King Saul for intruding into the priest's office.⁷

Many still believe, as always, that man will be able to solve all problems and bring peace through unified world government. Since God divided mankind into nations, one goal of many has been global governance. Of course, God's Word and history show the folly of this idea. Nonetheless, God will allow man to achieve his goal. The one world government prophesied in the Bible appears to be forthcoming.

Fascism and communism, in seeking unity, embrace the idea that the general will of the people is well-intentioned; and, as Rousseau put it:

² Ge. 10.5; De. 32.8; see *God Betrayed*, Section I for the biblical principles and history concerning governments.

³ Ge. 11.6. God had already pointed out that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Ge. 8.21), and that, without the control of civil government operating under God, mankind quickly becomes totally corrupt (Ge. 6.12-13). Before the flood, God had forbidden civil government (See Genesis 4) to show man what happens without some direct and immediate controls over his actions.

⁴ Ge. 11.1-4.

⁵ Ge. 11.5-9.

⁶ See Ge. 10.5. All peoples, except the people of Israel, were referred to in the Old Testament as Gentiles.

⁷ See I S. 13.8-14.

“[T]he general will is always on the side which is most favorable to the public interest, that is to say, the most equitable; so that it is needful only to act justly to be certain of following the general will.”⁸

“The idea of the general will created a true secular religion out of the mystic chords of nationalism, a religion in which ‘the people’ in effect worshipped themselves. Just as individuals couldn’t be ‘free’ except as part of the group, their existence lacked meaning and purpose except in relation to the collective.

“It followed, moreover, that if the people were the new God, there was no room for God Himself. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau tells us that because of Christianity’s distinction between God and Caesar, ‘men have never known whether they ought to obey the civil ruler or the priest.’ What Rousseau proposed instead was a society in which religion and politics were perfectly combined. Loyalty to the state and loyalty to the divine must be seen as the same thing....

“Rousseau’s community is bound together by the general will as expressed in the dogmas of what he called a ‘civil religion’ and enforced by the all-powerful God-state. Those who defy the collective spirit of the community live outside the state and have no claim on its protections. Indeed, not only is the state not required to defend antisocial individuals or subcommunities, it is compelled to do away with them.”⁹

Rousseau’s idea of community began at the Tower of Babel where mankind aimed for unity of religion and state. Powerful men have always had this goal. The attempt to force unity continued after the marriage of church and state in the early fourth century and resulted in the adoption of the pagan philosophy which combined religion and state.

Early Christianity was a threat to union of religion and state. Because persecution had resulted in tremendous church growth, church and state combined under Constantine and the established “church” adopted many pagan practices to provide unity.¹⁰ Those who resisted unity were labeled as

⁸ See Jonah Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), p. 39.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁰ See Leonard Verduin, *The Anatomy of a Hybrid* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976); see also, *God Betrayed*.

heretics, imprisoned, persecuted, tortured, and murdered.¹¹ Oneness cannot exist when some are allowed to disagree with a principle of the controlling church-state.

The United States of America became the second civil government in history, after the colony of Rhode Island, to reject unity of religion and state and implemented the biblical principle of soul liberty which is also called religious liberty or separation of church and state.¹² America came closer than any nation to following God's principles for church and state, and she included many of the principles of the Word of God in her founding documents.

America is no longer a nation under God and is experiencing the consequences of failing to operate under God and abide by His principles.¹³ This inevitable turnabout was caused, to a large degree, by the union of church and state. Although the First Amendment guaranteed freedom from civil government, many churches chose to become state churches through incorporation shortly after the ratification of the Constitution.¹⁴ The First Amendment originally applied only to the federal government.¹⁵ States were free to and did offer to incorporate churches; and many churches, against the warnings of leaders like Isaac Backus, ran to incorporate.¹⁶

Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(3) ("501(c)(3)"), passed in the twentieth century, invites churches, in exchange for "tax exemption," to come under federal government control

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² See *God Betrayed*, Section IV, for a history of separation of church and state and the First Amendment religion clause in America.

¹³ See *Ibid.*, Section V for an analysis of how the United States Supreme Court has systematically removed/ God from practically all civil government affairs.

¹⁴ See *God Betrayed*, Section VI, Chapter 3.

¹⁵ The United States Supreme Court extended First Amendment protection to all levels of civil government in the twentieth century. See *Ibid.*, Section V.

¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, Section VI, Chapter 3 and for more details incorporation of churches in the colonies and in the states of the new nation.

to some extent.¹⁷ The great majority of churches have, against the will of God, accepted the invitation by civil government to incorporate and get 501(c)(3) status.

Unconstitutional actions by the President of the United States have further invited churches to unite with and place themselves under federal government control. For example, President George Bush showed his misunderstanding of the First Amendment and God's principles by implementing a "Faith Based Initiative" under which religious organizations may apply for federal government money to finance certain ministries. The Bush administration also invited churches to address national disasters under civil government direction. During the Hurricane Katrina disaster, many "Christians" and pastors, guided by a false interpretation of Romans 13, heeded the call and assisted, under civil government, in disaster relief to the victims. Churches, Christians, and pastors should be the first to help others; but they should operate only under God and His principles, never with or under the control of civil government.

Doing one thing that subjects a church to the state creates a legal entity. "Legal entity" means:

"Legal existence. An entity, other than a natural person, who has sufficient existence in legal contemplation that it can function legally, be sued or sue and make decisions through agents as in the case of corporations."¹⁸

Examples of legal entities in the United States are corporations, unincorporated associations, corporations sole, charitable trusts, and Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(3) ("501(c)(3)") tax exempt organizations.

¹⁷ See *Ibid.*, Chapters 4 and 5 for more information on the 501(c)(3) exemption control scheme. New Testament churches which are not connected to civil government are non-taxable under the First Amendment and under God.

¹⁸ BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY 893-894 (6th ed. 1990), definition of "legal entity."

Because of the First Amendment which recognizes and implements the biblical principle of separation of church and state, churches can still choose to be spiritual entities and *no church is required by any civil law to become a legal entity*.¹⁹ Nonetheless, many “Christians” incorrectly assume or believe that church and state should be united in America; that civil law requires such a union; and/or that churches should become legal entities because Romans 13 and other Bible verses are taken out of context and perverted to mean what they do not mean.

Some Christians interpret certain scriptures to mean that Christians and churches are required by God to submit to civil government in all things or to submit to civil government in all things except for the preaching of the gospel of salvation. This book analyzes Matthew 17.24-27 which deals with the miracle of the tribute money; Luke 20.25 (also recorded in Matthew 22.21; and Mark 12.17) in which Jesus proclaimed, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s;” Romans 13, I Peter 2.13, and I Timothy 2.1-6. What those scriptures teach concerning submission by individual Christians and churches to civil government is the subject of this book.²⁰

¹⁹ Jerald Finney, *Separation of Church and State/God’s Churches: Spiritual or Legal Entities* (Austin TX: Kerygma Publishing Co., 2009) explains the distinctions between legal and spiritual entities, and the various ways churches can become legal entities. See also, *God Betrayed*.

²⁰ To totally understand the issue of God’s teachings concerning submission to civil government, one must understand other sub-issues or principles. *God Betrayed* offers a more comprehensive look at all the issues involved.

Chapter 2

Doth not your master pay tribute? Matthew 17.24-27

Christians who advocate unlimited obedience to the civil government sometimes refer to the miracle of the tribute money in Matthew 17.24-27, but that incident does not support their belief. Rather, that incident is consistent with all Scripture. Jesus, who is God the Son, is the Highest Power or Government and cannot and will not be required to pay any type tribute to any other power. God has given no lower power the jurisdiction to tax the Supreme Ruler.

Some authorities define the tax spoken of in Matthew 17.24-27 as the voluntary atonement money of half a shekel given as an offering to God that was used for maintenance of the Jerusalem temple.¹ However, others disagree as to whether the tribute spoken of was voluntary. One source defines the tribute spoken of in these verses as:

“a tax imposed by a king on his subjects (2 S. 20:24; 1 K. 4:6; Ro. 13:6). In Mt. 17:24-27 the word denotes the temple rate (the ‘didrachma,’ the ‘half-shekel,’ as rendered by the R.V.) which was required to be paid for the support of the temple by every Jew above twenty years of age (Ex. 30:12; 2 K. 12:4; 2 Chr. 24:6,9). It was not a civil but a religious tax.”²

Those who received the tribute money asked Peter, not Jesus, if Jesus paid the tribute. “And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?” “He saith,

¹ See *Abbott New Testament Commentary*, *Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, and *Jamieson-Faussett-Brown Commentary* available on SWORDSEARCHER software. Go to www.swordsearcher.com for information on SWORDSEARCHER software.

² See Easton’s Bible Dictionary, definition of “Tribute,” on SWORDSEARCHER software.

Yes.”³ Certainly Peter answered the question of those who received the tribute money before he reflected. Jesus anticipated and addressed Peter’s question before he asked Him. Our Lord began by asking Peter a question. “And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented⁴ him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?”⁵ “Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.”⁶ “That is, Jesus, as the Son of God, might justly have claimed exemption from taxes assessed for the service of his Father.”⁷ Here are some expert analyses concerning this statement of Jesus in Matthew 17.26:

“Then are the children free - As this money is levied for the support of that temple of which I am the Lord, then I am not obliged to pay the tax; and my disciples, like the priests that minister, should be exempted from the necessity of paying.”⁸

“Free; not expected to pay tribute. According to that rule, Christ, the Son of God, for the support of whose worship the money was paid would be free.”⁹

“Peter saith unto him, Of strangers—‘of those not their children.’ Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free--By ‘the children’ our Lord cannot here mean Himself and the Twelve together, in some loose sense of their near relationship to God as their common Father. For besides that our Lord never once mixes Himself up with His disciples in speaking of their relation to God, but ever studiously keeps His relation and theirs

³ Mt. 17.24-25.

⁴ “Prevented” in the above verses means that Jesus anticipated Peter’s question and answered it without Peter asking. See, e.g., SWORDSEARCHER software, *Abbott... and Albert Barnes’...*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Mt. 17.26.

⁷ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Abbott...*

⁸ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible.*

⁹ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Family Bible Notes.*

apart (see, for example, on the last words of this chapter)--this would be to teach the right of believers to exemption from the dues required for sacred services, in the teeth of all that Paul teaches and that He Himself indicates throughout. He can refer here, then, only to Himself; using the word 'children' evidently in order to express the general principle observed by sovereigns, who do not draw taxes from their own children, and thus convey the truth respecting His own exemption the more strikingly:--namely, 'If the sovereign's own family be exempt, you know the inference in My case'; or to express it more nakedly than Jesus thought needful and fitting: 'This is a tax for upholding My Father's House. As His Son, then, that tax is not due by Me--AM FREE.'"¹⁰

"Therefore the sons are free. The argument is this: If the sons of kings are free from the payment of tribute, I, the Son of God, am free from God's tribute. The half-shekel was regarded as given to God (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.9.1)."¹¹

"Then are the sons free - The sense is, This is paid for the use of the house of God. But I am the Son of God. Therefore I am free from any obligation of paying this to my own Father."¹²

"Every Jew throughout the world was required to pay an annual tribute or capitation-tax of half a shekel, about twenty-five cents, in acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and for the maintenance of the temple service, Ex. 30:12-15. It was with reference to this that Christ says, in effect, Mt. 17:25-26, 'If this tribute be levied in the name of The Father, then I, The Son, am free.' In other New Testament passages, tribute means the tax levied by the Romans. On the question of paying tribute to foreigners and idolaters, Mt. 22:16-22, Christ gave a reply which neither party could stigmatize as rebellious, or as unpatriotic and irreligious. By themselves using Caesar's currency, both parties acknowledged the fact of his supremacy. Christ warns them to render to all men their dues; and above all

¹⁰ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*.

¹¹ SWORDSEARCHER software, *The Fourfold Gospel and Commentary on Acts*.

¹² SWORDSEARCHER software, *John Wesley's Notes on the Bible*.

to regard the claims of him whose superscription is on every thing, 1 Co. 10:31; 1 Pe. 2:9, 13.”¹³

Jesus then states: “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”¹⁴

“*Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them.* That is, lest they should think that we despise the temple and its service, and thus provoke needless opposition, though we are not under *obligation* to pay it, yet it is best to pay it to them.

“*Go thou to the sea.* This was at Capernaum, on the shore of the sea of Tiberias.

“*Thou shalt find a piece of money.* In the original, thou shalt find a *stater*, a Roman silver coin of the value of four drachms, or one shekel, and of course sufficient to pay the tribute for two, himself and Peter. In whatever way this is regarded, it is proof that Jesus was possessed of Divine attributes. If he *knew* that the first fish that came up would have such a coin in his mouth, it was proof of omniscience. If he created the coin for the occasion, and placed it there, then it was proof of Divine power. The former is the most probable supposition. It is by no means absurd that a fish should have swallowed a silver coin. Many of them bite eagerly at anything bright, and would not hesitate, therefore, at swallowing a piece of money. {t} ‘offend’ Ro. 14:21; 15:1-3; 2 Co. 6:3; {2} ‘stater’, ‘which was half an ounce of silver.’”¹⁵

“Lest we - offend them - Be a stumbling-block to the priests, or rulers of the Jews, I will pay the tribute - go thou to the sea - cast a hook, and take the first fish - thou shalt find a piece of money, *στατηρα* , a stater. This piece of money was equal in value to four drachms, or two shekels, (five shillings of our money), and consequently was sufficient to pay the tribute for our Lord and Peter, which amounted to about half-a-crown each. If the stater was in the mouth or belly of the fish before, who

¹³ SWORDSEARCHER software, *American Tract Society Dictionary*, definition of “Tribute.”

¹⁴ Mt. 17:27.

¹⁵ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Albert Barnes’...*

can help admiring the wisdom of Christ, that discovered it there? If it was not before in the mouth of the fish, who can help admiring the power of Christ, that impelled the fish to go where the stater had been lost in the bottom of the sea, take it up, come towards the shore where Peter was fishing, and, with the stater in its mouth or stomach, catch hold of the hook that was to draw it out of the water? But suppose there was no stater there, which is as likely as otherwise, then Jesus created it for the purpose, and here his omnipotence was shown; for to make a thing exist that did not exist before is an act of unlimited power, however small the thing itself may be....”¹⁶

Fausset’s Bible Dictionary discusses Matthew 17.24-27:

“In Mt. 17:24-27, ‘the didrachma receivers said to Peter, Doth not your Master pay the didrachma? He saith, Yes?’ Their question implies it was the religious impost; no civil tax would have been asked in such a tone, as if its payment dare be questioned. The half-shekel or half-stater or didrachma (fifteen pence) was the universally recognized due required from every Israelite grown male in support of the sanctuary services, in the benefits of which he had a share: according to Ex. 30:11-15. (See MONEY; JESUS CHRIST; PETER.)

“Collected both before and after the Babylonian captivity (2 K. 12:4; 2 Chr. 24:9) from all Jews wherever sojourning (Josephus 18:9, section 1; Philo Monarch. 2:2, section 224). Hence Peter at once recognized the obligation. But Christ, while to avoid offense (wherein Paul imitated his Master in a different case, 1 Co. 9:4-19) He miraculously supplied the stater in the fish, for Himself and Peter, yet claimed freedom from the payment to the temple, seeing He was its Lord for whose service the tribute was collected. As Son of the heavenly King He was free from the legal exactions which bound all others, since the law finds its antitypical realization in Him the Son of God and ‘the end of the law’ (Ro. 10:4).

“The temple offerings, for which the half shekels were collected, through Him become needless to His people also; hence they, by virtue of union with Him in justification and sanctification, are secondarily included in His pregnant saying, ‘then are the children (not merely the SON) free’ (John 8:35-36; Ga. 4:3-7; 5:1). As children with Him, they are sons of the King and share the kingdom (Ro. 8:15-17). The legal term ‘the

¹⁶ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary*....

didrachma' Matthew uses as one so familiar to his readers as to need no explanation; he must therefore have written about the time, alleged, namely, some time before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, after which an explanatory comment would have been needed such as Josephus gives (Ant. 18:10, section 1). The undesigned omission in Matthew confirms the genuineness and truth of his Gospel."¹⁷

Thus, Jesus indicated first that He could not be required to pay the tribute and then used the occasion to show that He was God. He could have paid the tribute by taking money from the money bag carried by Judas; but instead He demonstrated His deity by performing a supernatural miracle and giving the money to them in order not to offend them. Only God could have arranged such a miracle.

¹⁷ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*, definition of "Tribute."

Chapter 3

Render unto Caesar...?

Luke 20.25, Matthew 22.21, and Mark 12.17

Another scripture relied upon to support the false teaching of unlimited submission to the civil government is Luke 20.25 (also recorded in Matthew 22.21; and Mark 12.17). The Bible teaches that God is over is over all governments including civil government.¹ Nonetheless, many Americans, in spite of the teaching of the Bible, grab the following words of Jesus and apply the incorrect Americanized interpretation: “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.”²

Obviously, Jesus is saying that both Caesar and God have jurisdictions. What are those jurisdictions? Are America and many pastors correct in teaching church members that they cannot depend totally upon God to supply their needs, that they need and can better serve the Lord with civil government contrived protection through incorporation and tax-exemption, and/or that America, not God, is to be their omniscient, omnipotent benefactor?³

To understand what Jesus was saying, one must understand both the immediate and the overall context of Scripture. Did Jesus say something contrary to scriptural teaching as a whole when He said these words? No, Jesus said those words with a perfect knowledge of Scripture, and in the context of Scripture. He said those words to practicing religious Jews who were well versed in Scripture and most likely understood the contextual meaning of what He said.

In the immediate context, the Pharisees were instigating an attack upon the Lord Jesus. “Then went the Pharisees, and

¹ See *God Betrayed*, especially Section I, Government.

² Lu. 20.25; see also Mt. 22.21; and Mk. 12.17.

³ Section VI of *God Betrayed* will deal with the incorporation and tax exemption issues.

took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.”⁴ The chief priests and the scribes “sought to lay hands on [Jesus]; and they feared the people.”⁵

“And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of *any*, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?”⁶

They wanted the civil government to do the dirty work which they would not do themselves because they feared the people.

“If Jesus said, ‘No, you are not to pay tribute to Caesar,’ He could be accused of being a traitor to Rome which ruled over Israel at that time. If He had said, ‘Yes, you are to pay tribute to Caesar,’ He could not be the true Messiah. They thought they had our Lord on the horns of a dilemma.”⁷

The Lord, being God, knew their plan: “But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?”⁸ Jesus said, “Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?”⁹ When “[t]hey answered and said, Caesar’s,”¹⁰ He gave His famous reply which left them amazed and unable to fulfill their plan.

In the overall context of Scripture, what was the Lord saying? The Pharisees knew the Old Testament. When Jesus asked whose image and superscription were on the coin, they most likely knew that He was saying that mankind, which

⁴ Mt. 22.15; see also, Mk. 12.13; Lu. 20.19.

⁵ Lu. 20.19.

⁶ Lu. 20.20-22.

⁷ J. Vernon McGee, *Matthew, Volume II* (Pasadena, California: Thru the Bible Books, revised printing, 1980), p. 101.

⁸ Mt. 22.18; see also, Mk. 12.15; Lu. 20.23.

⁹ Lu. 20.24; see also, Mt. 21.19-20; Mk. 12.15-16.

¹⁰ Lu. 20.24; see also, Mt. 22.21; Mk. 12.16.

included Caesar, was created by God in the image of God, and that Caesar as a ruler was given his authority with limitations by God. They knew the Scripture that said, “So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”¹¹ They knew the Scriptures that taught that God was the Supreme Ruler, that His was the Supreme Government as well as those Scriptures that taught that God ordained civil government and all other governments. They also knew that Jesus claimed to be God. For example, when Jesus asked the Jews for which of His good works they took up stones to stone Him, “The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”¹² In one short statement, the Lord, as only He could, summarized, in the context of Scripture, God’s jurisdiction (rulership over all men and governments including civil governments) and civil government’s God-given jurisdiction (as laid out in the Bible and discussed in Section I of *God Betrayed*).

The result of this interchange was the opposite of what the Pharisees had hoped for. Since it was not yet His time to be crucified, God defeated their purpose by the power of His Word. “And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marveled at his answer, and held their peace[.]”¹³ “and left him, and went their way.”¹⁴

Men today, as did these Pharisees, prefer to trust in their own doings instead of the perfect righteousness of Christ. Isaac Backus, the great eighteenth century Baptist leader, pointed out the darling of such men:

“[Such men] trust in their own doings, instead of the perfect righteousness of Christ, are in covenant with death and at agreement with hell. And earthly monarchy has generally been

¹¹ Ge. 1.27.

¹² Jn. 10.32-33.

¹³ Lu. 20.26; see also, Mk. 12.17.

¹⁴ Mt. 22.22.

the darling of such men. [As the Pharisees went to the civil government to carry out their scheme to kill Christ, so do men today go to the civil government.] Therefore God says to them, And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved. Isaiah lvii. 9-10 ... [T]he calling any ruler, since the death of Christ, The Lord's *anointed*, and the setting up any earthly heads to the church, is a practice which came from hell, from the bottomless pit; and this is the beast who causeth God's witnesses to prophesy in mourning, and at length kills them. Rev. xi. 7; xiii. 1, 2, 12; xvii. 8."¹⁵

¹⁵ Isaac Backus, *A History of New England With Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians called Baptists, Volume 2* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, Previously published by Backus Historical Society, 1871), p. 563.

Chapter 4

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers? Romans 13

Romans 13, portions of which are quoted below, is often taken out of context to support the argument that men and churches are to totally submit to the civil government in all things except (perhaps) the preaching of salvation.

“1 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. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 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: 4 For he is a 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 a minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”¹

Americans are witnessing the proliferation of civil government use of pastors, Christians in general, and churches to address problems, disasters, and emergencies. Romans 13 is used more than any other verse to justify such cooperation. In addition, other verses are, to a lesser degree, utilized out of context to support submission to civil government in every conceivable way.²

It is wrong to believe that individuals and churches should submit to the authority of the civil government in all earthly and spiritual matters for at least two reasons. First, to

¹ Ro. 13.1-7.

² To fully understand the issue of separation of church and state, see *God Betrayed*, Part One.

believe that Romans 13, I Peter 2.13, and I Timothy 2.1-6 teach blind obedience by individuals and by churches to civil government would make those verses inconsistent with the rest of biblical teaching concerning God's total authority over the individual believer's spiritual life, God's total authority over the church, and God's total authority over the state. For example, Scripture tells us that the authors of Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13 consistently violated these verses as wrongly interpreted by civil government and many "Christians." Second, Romans 13 would be inconsistent within itself. The Word of God is never inconsistent.

Romans 13.1 first makes clear that *every* soul is to be subject to the higher powers. Thus, even human leaders, since they also have souls, are subject to a higher power. According to the Bible, God is the power higher than all other governments. As shown in Part One, Section I, of *God Betrayed*, God ordains all governments, is above all governments, and lays out the jurisdiction of all governments. Man is to be subject to civil government concerning those earthly matters over which God has given civil government jurisdiction. According to Romans 13.3-4, civil government was ordained by God to be a minister of God to execute judgment over evil doers and to reward those who do good. Man is to be under God only, regardless of what the rules of civil government declare, concerning those spiritual matters for which God has retained jurisdiction for Himself.

Romans 13, consistent with Old and New Testament principles, proclaims the God-ordained purpose of civil government, and that God—the highest power—ordained and is over civil government. According to Romans 13.7, Christians are to render to civil government tribute, custom, fear, and honor—where due under the God-given jurisdiction of civil government.

Romans 13.3-4 and I Peter 2.13-14 lay out, consistent with the rest of Scripture, the God-given jurisdiction of civil government over man. In those verses, God grants civil

governments jurisdiction over certain earthly, not spiritual, matters, and instructs man to do good and to refrain from doing evil. Many Christians point to those Scriptures and incorrectly declare: “That settles it. The Bible orders blind obedience to civil government in all matters, period;” or they proclaim that those verses require Christians to obey civil government in all things with the possible exception of the preaching of salvation.

Even with the establishment of the church, as recorded in the New Testament, God found it necessary to continue the institution of civil government. The original God-given purpose and jurisdiction of Gentile civil government was to continue. In Romans 13.3 He proclaims that “rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil” since if citizens “do that which is good,” rulers will praise them. The word from which “evil” in Romans 13.4 is translated means “generally opposed to civil goodness or virtue, in a commonwealth, and not to spiritual good, or religion, in the church.”³ Romans 13.4 proclaims that this is because a ruler is a “minister of God to thee for good,” just as he is “a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

Many civil governments go beyond their God-given jurisdiction. Was Rome a minister of God for good when she executed untold numbers of Christians before the marriage of church and state in the fourth century? What about those governments during the Middle Ages that worked in conjunction with the Roman Catholic “church” to persecute and kill millions of Christians labeled as heretics for refusing to bow down to a false theology? Was Hitler a minister of God for good when he forbade, on penalty of imprisonment and/or death, authentic biblical teaching which condemned his actions against the Jews and true Christians? How about

³ Roger Williams and Edward Bean Underhill, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience Discussed and Mr. Cotton’s Letter Examined and Answered* (London: Printed for the Society, by J. Haddon, Castle Street, Finsbury, 1848), p. 133.

Lenin and Stalin who were not only responsible for the murder of tens of millions of Christians, but who also required the teaching of atheism and established atheism as the official faith of the Soviet Union? How about the governments of Red China, Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and many others at the present time? Are such civil governments legitimately operating under God and His principles? Is the Christian who lives under such civil governments expected by God to follow all their rules?

How does God feel about Christians who obey God and thereby disobey civil governments which go beyond their jurisdiction? Were those Christians who conspired against Hitler wrong? Were Corrie Ten Boom and others wrong to save Jews from extermination? Were Moses' parents wrong to save their son against the order of Pharaoh?⁴ Was the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews wrong to praise them for hiding Moses, not being "afraid of the king's commandment?"⁵ How about the Egyptian midwives when they "feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them but saved the male children alive?"⁶ Was God wrong in dealing well with those midwives for saving the male babies and lying to Pharaoh?⁷ Was Moses wrong when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; [c]hoosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; [e]steeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."⁸

Was God wrong when He told Moses to defy Pharaoh?⁹ Was Moses wrong to exercise his faith, obey God, and defy

⁴ Ex. 2.3.

⁵ He. 11.23.

⁶ Ex. 1.17.

⁷ Ex. 1.20.

⁸ He. 11.24-26.

⁹ Ex. 3.2-12; 3.15-22; 4.21-23.

Pharaoh?¹⁰ Was Rahab the harlot wrong to lie to the authorities about the whereabouts of the Jewish spies in her land in order to save their lives?¹¹ Was Joshua wrong for allowing her to live as a reward for defying her governing authorities?¹² Was God wrong to include Rahab in the hall of faith, along with such people as Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and other heroes of the faith?¹³ What about Ehud who killed King Eglon,¹⁴ Joshua who attacked the governing authorities by God's command;¹⁵ Jael, who nailed her governing authority to the ground with a tent stake;¹⁶ Samson who revolted against the governing authorities;¹⁷ David who ran from Saul;¹⁸ Mordecai who refused to bow down and worship Haman;¹⁹ Elijah who ignored the order of a wicked King even when fifty soldiers showed up, then stood against King Ahab, Jezebel, and their false prophets;²⁰ Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego;²¹ the apostles including Peter who said, "We ought to obey God rather than men,"²² Paul who disobeyed many of his ruling authorities; all those down through the ages since Jesus' resurrection and return to glory who have suffered persecution and death for the cause of Christ, including all the apostles, eleven of whom were ultimately martyred for the faith; Christians down through the last 2000 years from Christ to this very day who were imprisoned, tortured, and killed because they would not

¹⁰ Ex. 5.12; He. 11.27.

¹¹ Jos. 2.

¹² Jos. 6.22-25.

¹³ See He. 11 and 11.31.

¹⁴ Jud. 3.15-26.

¹⁵ See the book of Jos.

¹⁶ Jud. 4.17-22.

¹⁷ Jud. 13.24-16.30.

¹⁸ See I S. 18.8 through chapter 31.

¹⁹ Est. 3.5.

²⁰ I K. 18.17-41; II K. 1.9-16.

²¹ See the book of Daniel.

²² Ac. 5.29.

submit to the governing authorities in spiritual matters, many times religious organizations such as the Lutheran or Catholic churches, or renounce Christ, or quit rebaptizing, or quit street preaching, or succumb to false doctrines and/or worship the governing authorities; and those contemporary Christians in the underground churches of China, Cuba, Korea, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, Malay, the Sudan, Morocco, Libya, Somalia, Algeria, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Colombia, the former Soviet Union, and many other nations?²³

Did the blessed Savior and God, the Lord Jesus Christ, sin when He chose to continue to do His miracles, to preach to the people, to condemn the religious leaders of His day and their errors, to proclaim that He was the Messiah even though He was upsetting the religious rulers of His day who ultimately used the governing authorities to crucify Him?

The Bible, history, and reality show that some rulers, according to Romans 13, exceed their God-ordained power. America does not honor God and His principles. America is a pluralistic nation. All religions are regarded equally, except for Christianity which is now attacked from all quarters. America allows abortion, the murder of unborn babies,²⁴ to

²³ An excellent source to keep abreast of the ongoing persecutions of Christians throughout the world is “The Voice of the Martyrs,” 1-800-747-0085; e-mail: thevoice@vom-usa.org; web site: www.persecution.com; children’s web site: www.kidsofcourage.com; address: The Voice of the Martyrs, P.O. Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74005-0443.

²⁴ Jb. 31.15: “Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?” Is. 44.24: “Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; ...” Is. 49.1: “... the LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” Je. 1.5: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

go unpunished. Abortion is the ultimate attack on God²⁵ and the legitimacy of God's supreme rule. Abortion is an attack on the first institution ordained by God in that it tells men, and especially women, that they can discard God's rules concerning sex before marriage²⁶ and engage in sex outside the marriage vows²⁷ with impunity. Abortion attacks individuals by tempting them to ignore God's rules regarding fornication and adultery. Women who have their babies killed risk great emotional, and spiritual damage. Likewise, men who allow their babies to be murdered suffer, at the very least, spiritual and emotional harm. Abortion is the ultimate attack on the God-ordained institution of marriage, the basic building block of society.

America has also redefined marriage and the family contrary to biblical definitions and principles. In fact, what authority has the state to define marriage other than it is defined by God? Who—the state or God—ordained marriage? America has redefined marriage as a contract between two equal people. God said marriage is a covenant between a man, a woman, and God.²⁸ America has redefined the family to be a group of people living together all of

²⁵ Ge. 1.27: "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

²⁶ See, e.g., Ro. 1.29; I Co. 5.1; 6.9-10 ("... Be not deceived: neither fornicators ... shall inherit the kingdom of God."), 13; 18 ("Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."); 7.2; 10.8; II Co. 12.21; Ga. 5.19; Ep. 5.3; Col. 3.5-6; I Th. 4.3.

²⁷ In Mt. 19.4-6 Jesus confirms the Genesis narrative of creation ([Jesus said to the Pharisees who were attempting him,] "Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."). See Ge. 1.27 and 2.23-24 (God created male and female in his own image). See also, for example, Mt. 5.31-32, 32; Mk. 10.1-12; Lu. 16.18; and I Co. 7.10-15 which deal with dishonoring the marriage relationship.

²⁸ See, e.g., Mt. 5.31-2; 19.3-9; Mk. 10.1-12; Lu. 16.18.

whom should have an equal voice, even children. Are fathers and mothers wrong to structure and operate their families according to biblical principles, denying their children an equal voice? Perhaps they are if the state married them since they willingly submitted their marriage and family to the authority of the state. If married by the authority of the state, perhaps they are also wrong to operate their family according to biblical principles because they willingly submitted their family to state authority. Are couples wrong to choose to marry under the authority of a God-ordained minister who refuses to pronounce them man and wife by the authority given him by a God-hating government which operates under Satan's principles?²⁹

America has enticed churches, as will be developed, to operate by the authority given them by the state. Are pastors wrong to continue to operate solely under the Headship of God? By the way, a church can still preach, teach, and operate solely by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in this nation. Yet, most pastors choose the government cheese and ease over the principles and promises in the Word of God. Why? The Christian who walks in the flesh does not cherish at least one of the promises of God for the Christian—persecution. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”³⁰ Most American “Christians” reject suffering instead of accepting it as instructed (“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”³¹), as mild as it would be compared to the suffering of Paul, Peter, and the other apostles and Christians down through the last two thousand years. Those “Christians” do not know what they are missing: “That I may know him, and

²⁹ See *God Betrayed*, Section VI for more insights into this civil government attack on the marriage of man and woman and the family as well as the marriage of Christ and His church.

³⁰ II Ti. 3.12.

³¹ Ph. 1.29.

the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death[.]”³² And how almost non-existent is the persecution to be suffered by the church and the Christian who refuses to put himself or herself under the American civil government in spiritual matters. What would the American Christian today—who bows down to civil government despite the very mild inconveniences that would result from doing things God’s way—do should he face the persecutions endured by the early Christians; persecutions by, for example, the Apostle Paul and others who lived in a society in which Paul, before his conversion, had “imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on [the Lord],”³³ and persecution by others after Paul’s conversion. Paul noted, shortly before his martyrdom, that he had endured many persecutions,³⁴ but that “out of *them* all the Lord delivered [him].”³⁵ Let it be emphasized that despite the fact that America is no longer a nation under God, Christians are required by Scripture to obey, for the Lord’s sake, every legitimate biblically consistent American law dealing with wrongdoing against one’s fellow man.

Although the early colonial dissenters such as the Baptists were persecuted by the established churches in the colonies, they were nonetheless free. On the other hand, today’s Americans, including Christians in churches which

³² Ph. 3.10.

³³ Ac. 22.19.

³⁴ II Co. 11.23-27: [speaking of the persecutions he endured for serving the Supreme Ruler] “... in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeying often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; *in* weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness....”

³⁵ II Ti. 3.12.

place themselves under civil government, are in bondage. The eighteenth century words of Isaac Backus apply to Americans today:

“Now how often have we been told that he is not a freeman but a slave whose person and goods are not at his own but another’s disposal? And to have foreigners come and riot at our expense and in the fruit of our labors, has often represented as to be worse than death.... But how is our world filled with such madness concerning spiritual tyrants! How far have pride and infidelity, covetousness and luxury, yea, deceit and cruelty, those foreigners which came from Hell, carried their influence, and spread their baneful mischiefs in our world! Yet who is willing to own that he has been deceived and enslaved by them? ... All acknowledge that these enemies are among us, and many complain aloud of the mischiefs that they do, yet even those who lift up their heads so high as to laugh at the atonement of Jesus and the powerful influences of the Spirit and slight public and private devotion are at the same time very unwilling to own that they harbor pride, infidelity, or any other of those dreadful tyrants. And nothing but the divine law ... brought home with convincing light and power, can make them truly sensible of the soul-slavery that they are in. And ’tis only the power of the Gospel that can set them *free from sin* so as to become the servants of *righteousness*, can *deliver* them from these *enemies* so as to *serve God in holiness* all their days.

“... Therefore the divine argument to prove that those who promise liberty while they despise government are servants of corruption is this: *For of whom a MAN is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage, 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19.* He is so far from being *free* to act the *man* that he is a *bond-slave* to the worst of tyrants. And not a little of this tyranny is carried on by such an abuse of language as to call it liberty for men to yield themselves up to be so *foolish, disobedient* and *deceived* as to *serve divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. iii. 3.*”³⁶

The biblical truth is that God gives Gentile civil government control only over certain earthly sins involving

³⁶ Isaac Backus, “An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty,” Boston 1773, an essay found in *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism, Pamphlets, 1754-1789*, Edited by William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968), pp. 311-312.

man's relationship to man as is attested to by Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13 in their immediate context and in the context of Scripture as a whole. As at His original establishment of civil government at the flood, God never mentions one act which involves man's relationship to God in any Scripture involving the authority of civil government. Even in Israel after God allowed the people to have a king, as they requested, the civil ruler was not to intrude into the affairs of the priest.³⁷ In Romans 12.9-20 and 13.8-14, the verses immediately surrounding Romans 13.1-7, the Word of God, speaking to Christians, elaborates upon the Christian responsibility to his neighbor and to civil government. Nothing is said about the Christian's responsibility to God (Notwithstanding, treating one's neighbor as God desires is a responsibility to God.). For example, Romans 12.9-20, the verses immediately preceding Romans 13, state:

“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”

Romans 13.8-14 says:

³⁷ See, e.g., I S. 13.8-14.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law. And that knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfill* the lusts *thereof*.”

Notice in those verses that, in regard to obeying the ordinances of men, Paul only dealt with the law of love toward one’s neighbor; that is, with man’s relationship to man, and not man’s relationship to God. God did not give Gentile civil government responsibility for exercising authority over spiritual matters, over the first four commandments dealing with man’s relationship to God.

Civil government has no authority over matters dealing with man’s relationship to God since such matters are spiritual. Spiritual matters, according to God, the Supreme Ruler of the highest government, include both our duties, as individual believers and as members of a church, to God and to man. Christians are to love both God and their neighbor.

Religious and secular rulers, being led by the god of this world to satisfy their own lusts, have always been concerned with their authority. Not knowing God, they are their own gods. We see that over and over again in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus faced that problem.

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone [Jesus]. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest

thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods.³⁸ 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? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.”³⁹

The apostles always obeyed God in regard to spiritual matters, even when, in so doing, they violated ordinances of man. Disregarding threats, imprisonments, and beatings, the apostles continued both to do for their fellow man and to preach, both in the name of Jesus, repeatedly violating Romans 13, and I Peter 2.13 as interpreted by most contemporary “Christians.” Peter wrote:

“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.”⁴⁰

Notice that Peter pointed out the purpose of civil government and therefore the ordinances of man—to punish evildoers, and to praise those who do well. According to him, Christians were to obey every “ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” and civil government was to deal only with earthly matters.

Punishment by civil leaders did not cause Peter and John to violate the biblical principle of separation of church and state which was at odds with the worldly principle of separation of church and state. The people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon Peter and John, laid hands on them, and held them,⁴¹ after they performed the first apostolic miracle, healing the lame man.

³⁸ The Lord here quotes Ps. 82.6a: “I have said, Ye *are* gods[.]”

³⁹ Jn. 10.31-38.

⁴⁰ I Pe. 2.13-14.

⁴¹ Ac. 4.1, 3.

The “rulers, and elders, and scribes” brought them in and asked them, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?”⁴²

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, ... [B]y the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”⁴³

Their response:

“[T]hey conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”⁴⁴

These rulers would have had no complaint had Peter and John and the other apostles done what they did under the authority of the rulers. Obviously, Peter and John had not yet been taught that Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13 required them to obey the earthly authorities over them in all matters, including spiritual matters. Of course, the apostles, under the authority of the rulers, would not have been able to heal and do other miracles, nor to preach in the power of the Holy Ghost. They still understood that the Highest Power, God himself, told them to do what they were doing and gave them the power to do it, that no earthly power was given the

⁴² Ac. 4.5, 7.

⁴³ Ac. 4.8, 10-12.

⁴⁴ Ac. 4.15-20.

authority to direct them concerning spiritual matters, and that even had an earthly power given the authority to do those matters under earthly authority, they could not have done the miracles or preached the true gospel with power. Many “Christians” today believe that they and the church can simultaneously achieve God’s spiritual goals while operating under the authority of the god of this world. “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”⁴⁵

After their release, the response of Peter and John and their Christian friends was quite different from what can be expected of “Christians” today, who now have America’s interpretation of Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13 at their disposal. Peter and John then went “to their own company” and prayed:

“Lord, thou *art* God, which hath made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”⁴⁶

These men knew their Bible. Within their prayer they quoted from Isaiah 51.12, 13 and Psalm 2.1-3. They did not take Scripture out of context so that they could forego confronting the rulers. They just asked God to give them

⁴⁵ II Ti. 3.5.

⁴⁶ Ac. 4.24-31.

boldness to remain under His authority while speaking the Word of the Lord and doing signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. They were concerned with not only preaching the Word but also with “doing” for their fellow man under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. They knew that they could not do any good for their fellow man without the power of God and that they could not have the power of God should they operate under the authority of the state or anyone else.

The apostles continued to violate today’s perverted interpretation of Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13, accompanied by God’s own angel; and they were so presumptuous as to do so in public places, which is improper according to many of today’s state indoctrinated “Christians” who advise Christians not to preach on the street, or do door-to-door evangelism or any public ministry because they “feel” that to do so is offensive to others and wrong and the proper place for these activities is within the four walls of the church. The apostles continued to do signs and wonders among the people,⁴⁷ “healing many sick folks and them which were vexed with unclean spirits.”⁴⁸ Because of this, the high priest and all they that were with him, “laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.”⁴⁹ The angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, released them, and told them to “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”⁵⁰ Here God’s own angel was instructing the apostles to violate America’s false version of Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13. The apostles did what the angel told them to do: “[T]hey entered into the temple early in the morning and taught....”⁵¹

Notice, as a side note, that they were not going into their own meeting-place, but were going into the temple—all

⁴⁷ Ac. 5.12.

⁴⁸ Ac. 5.16.

⁴⁹ Ac. 5.17-18.

⁵⁰ Ac. 5.19-20.

⁵¹ Ac. 5.21, 25.

through Acts they are depicted as not going into the four walls of their own meeting place, but are preaching and helping their fellow man in synagogues, in public places, and going door to door. Maybe the Lord in His wisdom did not mention that a church should own property for a reason—if a church has to operate in the world, outside the four walls of a building, that church, if its members love the Lord, will probably do what God commissioned her to do: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”⁵² Luke recorded the words of Jesus:

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promises of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”⁵³

Obviously, God’s intent for the church was to get His message to the whole world, not for the church to seclude itself within four walls. Notice that Christians were to begin at Jerusalem, then to go to all the world, to all nations. Because of persecution in Jerusalem for speaking and acting in public in the name of Jesus, the governing authorities forced them to leave Jerusalem and go to the world. God’s will was accomplished through persecution.

The apostles continued to operate under God regarding spiritual matters. They were again apprehended and brought before the counsel who said to them, “Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.”⁵⁴

⁵² Mk. 16.15.

⁵³ Lu. 24.46-49.

⁵⁴ Ac. 5.28.

“Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.** The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.”⁵⁵ [Bold emphasis mine].

“When they heard *that* they took council to slay them.”⁵⁶ Gamaliel talked them out of killing the apostles.⁵⁷ Instead, they beat the apostles and “commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”⁵⁸ The apostles “rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ,”⁵⁹ and continued to do for their neighbor: Peter healed Aeneas of palsy of which he had been in bed eight years and raised Tabitha from the dead in Jesus’ name.⁶⁰ Later, the angel of the Lord violated the popular Americanized version of Romans 13 and I Peter 2.13 by breaking Peter out of prison.⁶¹

Paul was determined to obey God, not man and not civil government, in regard to spiritual matters. Paul wrote on this matter in Romans and many other books in the New Testament. For example, he instructed the Christian:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ[.]”⁶²

⁵⁵ Ac. 5.29-32.

⁵⁶ Ac. 5.33.

⁵⁷ Ac. 5.34-38.

⁵⁸ Ac. 5.40.

⁵⁹ Ac. 5.41-42.

⁶⁰ Ac. 9.32-41.

⁶¹ Ac. 12.5-11.

⁶² II Co. 10.5.

Paul simply did not obey the civil government laws which contradicted God's laws relating to spiritual matters, nor did he teach submission to civil government in spiritual matters. He and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison after casting out a demon from a damsel.⁶³ The masters of the damsel, because they lost the gains of her divination, brought them to the magistrates, charging that they "teach customs, which are not lawful for [them] to receive, neither to observe, being Romans."⁶⁴ Paul was frequently imprisoned as a result of ministering for Christ.⁶⁵ He was concerned with obeying God and with "casting down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

Paul, inspired by God, understood that the true Christian was in a warfare initiated by Satan who would do everything in his power to usurp the God-given duties of Christians and churches to love God and to love one's neighbor. His understanding is reflected in instructions he gave:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints[.]"⁶⁶

⁶³ Ac. 16.1-24.

⁶⁴ Ac. 16.19-21.

⁶⁵ II Co. 11.23.

⁶⁶ Ep. 6.10-18.

Notice that the armor he mentioned was totally spiritual—loins girt with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

As to the prayer mentioned in the above verses, Paul instructed Christians to pray in the Spirit that all men, including kings and others in authority, would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Christ died for all, including rulers, but he gave everyone a choice of whether to submit to Him.

“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. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”⁶⁷

He instructed Christians to include rulers in their supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks so that Christians could lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. In other words, a ruler who is saved and comes to the knowledge of the truth will provide an atmosphere, under God his Supreme Ruler, in which Christians can live quiet and peaceable lives. By implication, and as shown consistently throughout history, lost rulers and others in authority likely will not provide such an atmosphere. This is discussed more in Chapter 6, *infra*.

Paul knew that Satan would continue to come against the church through earthly powers, through civil government. He also knew that God wanted His children to fight this warfare using only spiritual, not earthly, means. His goal was the glory of God, not the happiness of man.

⁶⁷ I Ti. 2.1-5.

Chapter 5

Submit to every ordinance of man?

I Peter 2.13

“The forming of the constitution and appointment of the particular orders and offices of civil government is left to human discretion, and our submission thereto is required under the name of their being the *ordinances of men* for the Lord’s sake, *I Pet.* ii, 13, 14. Whereas in ecclesiastical affairs we are most solemnly warned not to be *subject to ordinances after the doctrines and commandments of men*, *Col.* ii, 20, 22.”¹

I Peter 2.13, quoted below along with I Peter 2.9-12 and 14-20 to put the verse into its immediate context, is often cited, again alone and out of context, to support almost total submission to civil government.

“9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 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. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. 18 Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with

¹ “An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty,” Boston 1773, an essay of Isaac Backus found in Isaac Backus, *Pamphlets on Church, State, and Calvinism: Pamphlets, 1754-1789*, Edited by William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 313.

all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God..²

If the above verses had only stated, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man” and nothing more, the statement would have contradicted the entirety of Scripture. However, the verse in its immediate context can only be analyzed as was Romans 13, and such an analysis renders the verse consistent with the rest of God’s Word. Much of the analysis of Romans 13 in Chapter 5, *supra*, included an analysis of I Peter 2.13 and will not be repeated.

The Americanized interpretation of I Peter 2.13a, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” leaves out or misinterprets, “for the Lord’s sake.” I Peter 2.13a, even when considered alone and out of context, does not say what the Americanized version asserts that it says. Usually, an uninformed Christian or a lost person, in asserting that one is to obey all civil government laws, will merely state, “Obey every ordinance of man” without even knowing where the verse can be found in Scripture. In the context of Scripture, that phrase indicates that Christians are to submit to every ordinance of man which man made “for the Lord’s sake”—that is, which God granted civil government jurisdiction to make. In other words, believers are not to obey any ordinance of man which is outside civil government’s God-given jurisdiction and which restricts Christians in the exercise of their spiritual responsibilities. As with Romans 13, the immediate context of I Peter 2.13 as well as the context within Scripture as a whole make clear that God grants civil government jurisdiction over only certain matters regarding man’s relationship to man, and not over any matters regarding man’s relationship to God. As

² 1 Pe. 2.9-20.

has been stated, this does not mean that God does not desire civil governments to operate under Him—He gives civil governments (and all other governments) the free will as to whether or not they will operate under Him.

Bible experts have commented on I Peter 2.13:

“Every ordinance of man; all human laws which are not in opposition to the law of God. For the Lord's sake; for the purpose of honoring him.”³

“Verse 13. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man.* Gr., ‘to every *creation* of man,’ (anqrwpinh ktisei.) The meaning is, to every institution or appointment of man; to wit, of those who are in authority, or who are appointed to administer government. The laws, institutes, and appointments of such a government may be spoken of as the creation of man; that is, as what man makes. Of course, what is here said must be understood with the limitation everywhere implied, that what is ordained by those in authority is not contrary to the law of God. Cmt. on Ac. 4:19. On the general duty here enjoined of subjection to civil authority, Cmt. on Ro. 13:1. For the Lord's sake. Because he has required it, and has intrusted this power to civil rulers. Cmt. on Ro 13:6. Comp. Cmt. on Eph 6:7. Whether it be to the king. It has been commonly supposed that there is reference here to the Roman emperor, who might be called king, because in him the supreme power resided. The common title of the Roman sovereign was, as used by the Greek writers, *autokratwr*, and among the Romans themselves, *imperator*, (emperor;) but the title *king* was also given to the sovereign. John 19:15, ‘We have no king *but* Cesar.’ Ac. 17:7, ‘And these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.’ Peter undoubtedly had particular reference to the Roman emperors, but he uses a general term, which would be applicable to all in whom the supreme power resided, and the injunction here would require submission to such authority, by whatever name it might be called. The meaning is, that we are to be subject to that authority whether exercised by the sovereign in person, or by those who are appointed by him.

As supreme. Not supreme in the sense of being superior to God, or not being subject to him, but in the sense of being over all subordinate officers.”⁴

³ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Family Bible Notes*.

“Our apostle having exhorted them in general to take care that their conversation be honest among the Gentiles, he now descends to particular duties, which he advises them to be very exemplary in the performance of.

“And the first is, in their subjection to governors and government; submit yourselves, says he, to every civil ruler, both supreme and subordinate.

“Where observe, 1. How the apostle calls magistracy and civil government, though originally of divine institution, an **ordinance of man**. First, As to the end of it, it being appointed and ordained for the good and benefit of man.

“Secondly, In reference to the kind of it, every nation having a liberty to choose what kind and form of government human prudence shall direct them to, as most agreeable to, and commodious for, the people.

“Observe, 2. The quality of that obedience and subjection which is to be given unto magistrates, **it must be for the Lord's sake**, that is, in obedience to the command of God, and with an eye at the honour and glory of God. Christianity is no enemy to the civil right of princes, it requires subjection for conscience, Pr. 8:15.

“**By me**, says God, **kings reign**; some read it, **for me** kings reign; both are true: princes then hold not their crowns either from the pope or from the people, to be kicked off by the one, or to be plucked off by the other, at their pleasure: **Submit yourselves**, says our apostle, **to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake**.

“Observe, 3. The reasons assigned why magistrates should be thus subjected and submitted to; namely,

“1. Because **they are sent by God for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well**; the magistrate's office is to punish evil-doers; the fear of the magistrate's sword awes many men more than the fear of God's hand. If some men were not gods among men, many men would be devils among men; there would be no living among those who fear not the invisible God in heaven, if there were not some visible gods on earth to fear.

“2. Because God will, by this their subjection given to magistrates and governors, silence, or, as the word

⁴ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Albert Barnes* '....

signifies, put a muzzle upon the mouth of, foolish and unreasonable men, who rage against his people, as if they were enemies to order and government: by this kind of well-doing in particular, namely, by subjection and obedience to rulers in the Lord, and for the Lord's sake, we put to silence the foolishness of wicked men.”⁵

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man - In every settled state, and under every form of political government, where the laws are not in opposition to the laws of God, it may be very soundly and rationally said: ‘Genuine Christians have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them.’ Society and civil security are in a most dangerous state when the people take it into their heads that they have a right to remodel and change the laws. See the whole of this subject fully handled in the notes on Ro. 13:1, etc., to which I beg every reader, who may wish to know the political sentiments of this work, to have recourse....”⁶

I Peter 2.13 is therefore consistent with all of Scripture and consistent within itself. Men are to obey all laws of man which are within the God-given jurisdiction of civil government. God gave man responsibility to rule over man only with regard to certain matters involving man’s relationship with his fellow man. On the other hand, God gave civil government no jurisdiction over matters involving man’s relationship with God. As to spiritual matters, God wants man to have free will as long as their free will does not violate criminal laws which are within the God-given jurisdiction of civil government. Christians in America are protected in the exercise of their free will by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

⁵ SWORDSEARCHER software, *William Burkitt’s Expository Notes*.

⁶ SWORDSEARCHER software, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*.

Chapter 6

Pray for all rulers?

I Timothy 2.1-6

Three God-given purposes of Gentile civil government are stated or can be inferred from Scripture. Perhaps the most important purpose of civil government is to teach. Just as “[t]he law is a “schoolmaster” to bring us unto Christ,”¹ a nation, by its laws, teaches. The laws of a nation have a didactic effect—they teach. Lawrence McGarvie observed:

“American law tended to operate as if it had a life of its own, shaping society to conform to legal values by directing the actions of individuals. Recognizing law’s relative autonomy, scholars such as Michael Grossberg, Christopher Tomlins, and Mark Tushnet contend that law acted to infuse the new society—including the judges—with a system of rules and principles derived from liberal ideology. Many authors have noted the incremental pace of legal change. Law’s structural dependence on the Constitution, common-law precedent, and the procedural dictates of pleading recognizable legal arguments mitigated any societal tendencies toward rapid transformation. Instrumentalism, as a theory of understanding law, fails to fully appreciate its institutional inertia, the multiplicity of forces involved in its creation, and its hegemonic role as a relatively autonomous body of values, beliefs, and doctrine that provides the means of ‘discourse’ in a nation of law.”²

God also ordained civil government to control evil.³

The third God-ordained purpose of Gentile civil government is to operate under Him; and He gives each nation a choice of whether or not that nation will do so.

The Bible instructs Christians to pray for their leaders, but within the framework laid out within His Word:

¹ Galatians 3.24.

² McGarvie, p. 12.

³ Ro. 13.3-4; see also, I Pe. 2.13-14, I Ti. 1.9-11, Chapters 11-5, *supra*, and *God Betrayed*, Section I for a thorough discussion of civil government and its God-given purposes.

“1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”⁴

The above admonition of Paul to Timothy, which tells Christians to pray for all men including their leaders, also instructs Christians that such prayers should be that leaders be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth so that they will organize society under God—that is, according to God’s principles so that Christians can “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

An application of God’s principles in civil law would be laws regulating hunting. God told mankind in the Noahic covenant: “Every living thing that liveth shall be food for you.”⁵ Thus, God gave man the authority to hunt animals, but not the “right to engage in mass and wanton slaughter of the animal kingdom.” Likewise, God placed man in the Garden of Eden to “dress it and keep it,”⁶ not to destroy it. “So God requires man to exercise wise stewardship in his use of the animal kingdom and of natural resources in general.”⁷

God wants every Gentile nation to choose to operate under Him—that is, under His principles as given in His Word. If a nation will do that, Christians and non-Christians will live a quiet and peaceable life; and everyone will be free to choose God, no god, or false gods or gods since, as is shown in *God Betrayed*, separation of church and state is a biblical principle for Gentile nations.

⁴ 1 Ti. 2.1-6.

⁵ Ge. 9.3a.

⁶ Ge. 2.15.

⁷ John Eidsmoe, *God and Caesar: Biblical Faith and Political Action* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stack Publishers, 1997), p. 8.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

God ordained civil government as an earthly institution and limited its jurisdiction to certain earthly matters.¹ God ordained His churches to be spiritual institutions and limited their jurisdiction to spiritual matters.

He desires every state to remain both under Him and within her God-given jurisdiction; but every nation that has ever existed has failed to honor God sooner or later. America herself, which was to a large degree a nation under God for much of her history, has now rejected God and His principles.

Many Christians in America have been persuaded by false interpretations of Scripture that civil government is the highest power. Many believe that civil government is led by God to do all that they do, no matter how evil. In fact, civil governments, like all other governments, insofar as they choose to operate outside the principles of God, they are under the god of this world.

The unity of world power prophesied in the Bible appears to be in the making. The world is being prepared to accept the last days. At the same time that America has almost totally removed God from all civil government affairs, many Christians, largely because of a false interpretation of the Word of God, almost deify America. One would fare better in many fundamental Bible believing churches should he lash out at Jesus Christ rather than speaking ill of America. Many believers, due to an erroneous interpretation of Scripture, think that God Himself bows down to civil government.

¹ See *God Betrayed* for an explanation of biblical principles concerning government, church, separation of church and state as well as the American application of those principles. See, especially, Section II, Chapters 2 and 3 and Section III, Chapter 3 for insights into the differences between church and state, the spiritual nature of churches and the earthly nature of nations.

The worst consequences in America of Christian misunderstanding of biblical principles concerning separation of church and state has been the union of most Bible believing churches with the state through incorporation, charitable trusts, unincorporated associations, and 501(c)(3) tax exemption and the results of those unions. Churches have willingly placed themselves, to a great extent, under the authority, rules, procedures, and principles of civil government. As a result, most churches are to some degree earthly, not spiritual.

Many misled believers hold huge rallies, preach in their churches, and work in other ways to try to have an influence in bringing America back under God. Most of those believers are in churches which have dishonored their love relationship with their Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, by uniting with the state through the methods mentioned many times in this book. They incorrectly apply to America, a Gentile nation, God's admonition to the people of the nation Israel in II Chronicles 7.14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." God's people today are those who have been saved and added by Jesus Christ to His church. The correct interpretation for II Chronicles 7.14 today is that if Christians and churches "shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek [God's] face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will [He] hear from heaven, ... will forgive their sin, and will heal" believers, their families, and churches."

More appropriate for churches would be:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be

their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”²

Other appropriate verses include, e.g., John 15.19; Romans 6.16-23, 12.1-2; I Corinthians 6.15-17, 19-20; Galatians 1.4; Ephesians 5.14-17; Philippians 2.12-16; Colossians 2.6-8, 3.1-4, 15-17, 23-25; James 4.4-8; I Peter 1.13-16; II Peter 1.4-10; and I John 2.15-17.

Persecuted Christians have refused, even under penalty of torture, imprisonment, and/or death to submit churches and spiritual matters to the ungodly, usually the civil government, and/or the state-church. Christians were labeled as heretics and persecuted after some churches united with Rome under Constantine. Roger Williams, the man who established Rhode Island, the first civil government in history to honor the biblical principle of separation of church and state, wrote:

“Scripture and all history tell us, that those Caesars were ... arrogant, without God, without Christ, &c.; ... [and] worshippers, or maintainers, of the Roman gods or devils; ... notorious for all sorts of wickedness; ... cruel and bloody lions and tigers toward the Christians for many hundred years.

“Hence ... it was impossible that he should appoint such ignorant, ... idolatrous, .. wicked, and ... cruel]persons to be his chief officers and deputy lieutenants under himself to keep the worship of God, to guard his church, his wife. No wise and loving father was ever known to put his child, no not his beasts, dogs, or swine, but unto fitting keepers.

“Men judge it matter of high complaint, that the records of parliament, the king’s children, the Tower of London, the great seal, should be committed to unworthy keepers! And can it be, without high blasphemy, conceived that the Lord Jesus should commit his sheep, his children, yea, his spouse, his thousand shields and bucklers in the tower of his church, and lastly, his great and glorious broad seals of baptism and his

² II Co. 6.14-18.

supper, to be preserved pure in their administrations—I say, that the Lord Jesus, who is wisdom and faithfulness itself, should deliver these to such keepers? ...

“[W]hen the Lord appointed the government of Israel after the rejection of Saul, to establish a covenant of succession in the type unto Christ, let it be minded what pattern and precedent it pleased the Lord to set for the after kings of Israel and Judah, in David, the man after his own heart.

“But now the Lord Jesus being come himself, and having fulfilled the former types, and dissolved the national state of the church, and established a more spiritual way of worship all the world over, and appointed a spiritual government and governors, it is well known what the Roman Caesars were, under whom both Christ Jesus himself, and his servants after him, lived and suffered; so that if the Lord Jesus had appointed any such deputies—as we find not a title to that purpose, nor have a shadow of true reason so to think—he must, I say, in the very first institution, have pitched upon such persons for these *custodies utriusque tabulae*, keepers of both tables, as no man wise, or faithful or loving, would have chosen in any of the former instances, or cases of a more inferior nature....”³

“Christ never delivered His sheep or children to these wolves, his wife and spouse to such adulterers, his precious jewels to such great thieves and robbers of the world, as the Roman emperors were. Paul never appealed to Caesar as judge appointed by Christ Jesus to give definitive sentence in any spiritual or church controversy; but against the civil violence and murder which the Jews intended against him, Paul justly appealed. For otherwise, if in a spiritual cause he should have appealed, he should have overthrown his own apostleship and power given him by Christ Jesus in spiritual things, above the highest kings or emperors of the world beside....”⁴

“A civil magistrate may be a good subject, a good magistrate, in respect of civil or moral goodness, which thousands want; and where it is, it is commendable and beautiful, though godliness, which is infinitely more beautiful, be wanting, and which is only proper to the Christian state, the

³ Roger Williams and Edward Bean Underhill, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience Discussed and Mr. Cotton's Letter Examined and Answered* (London: Printed for the Society, by J. Haddon, Castle Street, Finsbury, 1848), pp. 204-205.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

commonweal of Israel, the true church the holy nation, Ephes. ii.; 1 Pet. ii.”⁵

Roger Williams correctly maintained that the civil power has five proper political means to attain its end:

“First, the erecting and establishing what form of civil government may seem in wisdom most meet, according the general rules of the word, and state of the people.... The magistrate has power to publish and apply such civil laws in a state, as either are expressed in the word of God in Moses’s judicials—to wit, so far as they are of general and moral equity, and so binding all nations in all ages—to be deducted by way of general consequence and proportion from the word of God.

“For in a free state no magistrate hath power over the bodies, goods, lands, liberties of a free people, but by their free consents. And because free men are not free lords of their own estates, but are only stewards unto God, therefore they may not give their free consents to any magistrate to dispose of their bodies, goods, lands, liberties, at large as themselves please, but as God, the sovereign Lord of all, alone. And because the word is a perfect rule, as well of righteousness as of holiness, it will be therefore necessary that neither the people give consent, nor that the magistrate take power to dispose of the bodies, goods, lands, liberties of the people, but according to the laws and rules of the word of God....

“Secondly, the making, publishing, and establishing of wholesome civil laws, not only such as concern civil justice, but also the free passage of true religion: for outward civil peace ariseth and is maintained from them both, from the latter as well as from the former.

“Civil peace cannot stand entire where religion is corrupted, 2 Chron. xv. 3, 5, 6; Judges viii. And yet such laws, though conversant about religion may still be counted civil laws; as on the contrary, an oath doth still remain religious, though conversant about civil matters.

“Thirdly, election and appointment of civil officers to see execution of those laws.

“Fourthly, civil punishments and rewards of transgressors and observers of these laws.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

“Fifthly, taking up arms against the enemies of civil peace.”⁶

On the other hand, Mr. Williams wisely observed that:

“the means whereby a church may and should attain her ends, are only ecclesiastical, which are chiefly five. “First, setting up that form of church government only of which Christ hath given them a pattern in his word.

“Secondly, acknowledging and admitting of no lawgiver in the church but Christ, and the publishing of his laws.

“Thirdly, electing and ordaining of such officers only as Christ hath appointed in his word.

“Fourthly, to receive into their fellowship them that are approved, and inflicting spiritual censures against them that offend.

“Fifthly, prayer and patience in suffering any evil from them that be without, who disturb their peace.

“So that magistrates ... have no power of setting up the form of church government, electing church officers, punishing with church censures.... And on the other side ... churches, have no power, though as members of the commonweal they may have power, of erecting or altering forms of civil government, electing of civil officers, inflicting civil punishments—no, not on persons excommunicated—as by deposing magistrates from their civil authority, or withdrawing the hearts of the people against them, to their laws, no more than to discharge wives, or children, or servants, from due obedience to their husbands, parents, or masters: or by taking up arms against their magistrates, though they persecute them for conscience; for though members of churches, who are public officers, also of the civil state, may suppress by force the violence of usurpers, as Jehoiada did Athaliah, yet this they do not as members of the church, but as officers of the civil state.”⁷

The failure of churches to honor God is far worse than the failure of civil government to honor God. One expects civil government, made up mostly of unregenerate people who cannot understand or honor God’s Word, to dishonor God; but it is vexing to see God’s people follow the

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213. See pp. 219-223 concerning the power of the magistrate in making laws.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

principles of the god of this world as individuals, families, and churches. How our Savior must be grieved to see His Holy Word being perverted to condone union of His bride and wife with civil government.

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