

The Christian and the Government, based on Romans 13:1-5

”Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴ For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.”

Here we have some amazing statements:

We must submit to the government

Submitting means obeying the laws, rules and regulations which are established by the government

All governments are established and instituted by God

The word “all” is used here. This included the Roman government which persecuted and killed Christians. It also includes Muslim governments, Hindu governments, Buddhist governments, Communist governments, Conservative governments, Liberal governments, Secular governments and our own government.

Rebelling against the government is rebelling against God

Disobeying the government is the same as disobeying God. Not following the instructions of the government is rebelling against God. Going against the laws of the government is going against the laws of God.

Free from fear of the government means doing right

There is no need to live in fear of being caught by the police or the authorities when we obey the laws of the land.

The Government is God's servant

This may be difficult to understand but we must believe this because the Word of God says so. So in the world we have servants of God who are not believers, in fact some are atheist governments who do not believe there is a God.

The government is God's agent to punish those who do wrong.

What if the government is wrong? We have 3 ladies in prison for teaching the Gospel to children. We have Christians meeting on the streets because the government has allowed church buildings to be closed.

**Is there an exception to this principle of obedience to the government?
Is there ever a time we can disobey those in authority?**

Again we go to the Word of God for the answer.

The case of Peter and John

Acts 4:18-20

"Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰ For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Acts 5:25-32

"Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." ²⁶ At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

*²⁷ Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." **THE BELIEVERS IN JERUSALEM GREW TO 5000!***

QUESTION: what would have happened had Peter and John compromised and obeyed the authorities rather than God?

The case of Daniel. Daniel 6:7-10

“The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den.”⁸ Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”⁹ So King Darius put the decree in writing.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”

Please note the effects of Daniel's disobedience to the authorities! Daniel 6:23-28

“The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴ At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land:

"May you prosper greatly!

²⁶ "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

²⁷ He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.

He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”

QUESTION: *What do think would have happened if Daniel had compromised and obeyed the King rather than God?*

The case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

Daniel 3:13-27

"Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, ¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, 'Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? ¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?'"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

WORSHIPPING STATUTES WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN!

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king."

²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

GOD HIMSELF CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO PROTECT AND SAVE HIS SERVANTS!

²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, ²⁷ and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

The effects of the disobedience to the authorities!

DANIEL 3:28, Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon. QUESTION: WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED HAD THEY COMPROMISED AND BOWED DOWN BEFORE THE GOLDEN IMAGE?

CONCLUSION

WE MUST SUBMIT TO AND OBEY THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE HE IS GOD'S SERVANT. THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS WHEN THE GOVERNMENT ORDERS US TO DISOBEY THE HIGHER LAWS OF GOD. WHEN WE OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN THEN GOD IS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OUTCOME. GOD IS VERY CAPABLE TO PROTECT US AS WE HAVE SEEN IN THE CASES OF JOH AND PETER, DANIEL AND SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO. PRAISE HIS WONDERFUL NAME.

An example of two higher laws:

Hebrews 10:25 "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
Mark 16:15, "Jesus said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." ALL CREATION MEANS EVERY BODY IN EVERY NATION, THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THE ADULTS.