



Empowering People to Change the World

Two Kinds of Government, Romans 13

Steve Holt

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One of the founding members of Chapel Hills Church and The Road, Jan Mathias will be moving to Aurora, Colorado soon. Today is her last Sunday at The Road.

Jan moved to Colorado in 1958 and started attending Academy Baptist fifty years ago when it was located on the site where USAA now resides. Academy Baptist moved to our present location and became Chapel Hills Baptist. When Chapel Hills Baptist transitioned to The Road, Jan stayed.

We thank God for Jan's faithfulness to God and wish her well as she moves closer to family.

Prayer for a Kingdom of God Revolution

Two Kinds of Government (Romans 13)

- Homespun wisdom says that neither religion nor politics should be discussed in polite company.
- But what about religion and politics!! Kind of an incendiary mix!!
- In our chapter, Romans 13, Paul has no problems mixing the two.
- No chapter in the Bible has been so abused throughout history.
- **Adolf Hitler used the first part of this chapter to keep the churches in Germany in line.**
 - Hitler said in effect, "The Bible commands you to obey me as your political leader, so if you want peace, do what I say."

Erwin Lutzer writing about Hitler at this time,

"Hitler began with lies; they were reflected through laws, and finally emerged as lord." (Erwin Lutzer)

Raues Rushdoony put it well,

“Behind every system of law there is a god. To find the god in any system, locate the source of law in that system.” (Raues Rushdoony)

- And they did fall in line, as almost all the German pastors decided to ordain Hitler as their *little g god*—even when they knew that many of his policies went against their conscience—many pointed to the first verses of Romans 13 to justify their decisions.
- But German pastors like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller defied these decisions and said that their allegiance was first to Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God and were soon hunted down and persecuted by Hitler.
- Bonhoeffer and Niemöller went underground with the *Confessing Church* because they did not believe that these verses were meant to subvert one’s faith in Jesus as Lord to the state.

But what are our responsibilities to the state and federal government?

Two Kinds of Government in Romans 13

- **Civil Government (verses 1-7)**
- **Self-Government (verses 8-14)**

Verse 1

- If we just take this verse out of context it would seem that Paul is saying that we should always be subject to the government because it is set up by God.
- But remember, no verse stands alone—it is always subject to the whole of scripture, and it is important to gain God’s heart on a matter through searching other similar passages from the rest of the Bible.

The scripture is clear that we are to obey our civil leaders with one exception: when the command or law of the government would require disobedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ultimately, He is our King!

- Jesus said (in Matthew 22), “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s.” Note that our passage says, “...authorities that exist are appointed by God.”

- Keep in mind that when the nation of Israel was in Egypt, after Joseph had died, that a new king took over and made a law that the midwives should kill the Jewish babies...Exodus 1:15-17

“Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, ‘When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.’ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive” (Exodus 1:15-17).

- These midwives feared God more than they feared a king—even at the risk of their lives.

- Remember in the time of Daniel that King Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image on the plain of Dura in Babylon and commanded that everyone fall down and worship at the image, and whoever doesn’t fall down and worship will be thrown into the fiery furnace.

- Daniel 3:13-18

“Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?’

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.'

God desires our relationship with Him, obedience to His Law, and our conscience to direct us, and if the government is calling us to deny either, we have to obey God.

- Paul is writing while Nero is in power—a mad despot—The early church and the Christians in Jerusalem would not submit to the authorities...in Acts 4

“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 to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard’” (Acts 4:18-20).

- Even Paul, who wrote this passage ended up being killed by the civil authorities for preaching the Gospel.

So, what does our verse mean? The key phrase is “for there is no authority except from God...authorities are appointed by God.”

Read verse 1 again.

“For there is no authority except from God.” Meaning, God is our authority! He is the One above any Civil Authority.

- This means that if there are laws that go against God’s laws, then we are called to resist those commanded.
- Remember that when the church opposed the injustices of the government and stood for the Kingdom of God as supreme, the church grew and multiplied but when we became cozy with power, things went south in a hurry!

- We are the *Contra Mundum*—against the world. Radicals!
- In context, Paul is speaking of the general laws that are set up because we have to have laws in the land to keep order.
- Most laws of the land do not call us to disobey God—they are in place for our protection and the protection of others.

Verse 2-3

- If we didn't have laws, policemen, stop lights, etc. we would probably be dead before we got home today—and if you made it home, what would be left?
- Paul's point is that you would have nothing to worry about if you are obeying the law: if you're going down Powers Blvd and you see the police car and you are traveling 45 mph, you have no need for terror, but if you are going 75 mph, you might have reason for concern.
- If you are doing your taxes correctly, you have no need to worry about an audit from the IRS.
- We must have state and federal government because we can't self-govern very well!

The issue is not left or right politically but up or down! Who's Lord over your life? If we could self-govern, we would need less civil government; the less self-government, the more civil government.

- If we aren't a people who can self-govern—our character/self-restraint, we will perish as a nation.
- Thus, why we must have a Kingdom of God Revolution in our nation!

- Smaller government can only happen if we become a people of self-government: if we governed ourselves, we would need less civil laws.
- We have a bigger and bigger government because we cannot self-govern—we don't have godly character and love for our neighbor—so we need more and more police, prisons, laws, insurance, policies.
- The key to self-government is not Washington D.C. but the Church.
 - The problem is not *no prayer in schools* but *no prayer in the church*.
- We need a revival! A revival rests with the Church.

Verse 4

- Our government officials are *God's ministers*.
- Our magistrates, our police, our mayor, our governor are ministers of God.
 - I am the minister of God in the spiritual realm.
 - But they are God's ministers in the civil realm.
 - We will all stand before God and are responsible to Him.
 - Both will be held accountable in how they vote and legislate.

- If you get pulled over by a policeman you should thank him, yes thank him for protecting you from yourself.

We have bigger and bigger government because we are people who no longer have self-control, self-government.

- We decry the largeness of government but there is a direct correlation to our lack of faith in Christ and lack of self-government and the growth of our federal government.
- The only answer is Christ, a spiritual awakening that transforms individual lives!
 - The Welsh Revival at the turn of the twentieth century was so powerful that it upset the civil government...so many miners got saved that they could no longer get their mules to obey because they only used curse words to command them...the bars and clubs closed down...the police had nothing to do and they had to fire them...Revival upsets the government apple cart!

Verse 5

- We obey the laws of our land because when we do, we are obeying God.
- Keep your conscience clear by obeying the law.
- So, we don't obey the speed limit or drive drunk or steal from the store because it's the law and you might be punished, but because we are disobeying God—we fear God and do right to honor Him.
- But also remember, government is ordained by God for the purpose of preserving order.

Francis Schaeffer writes, “God has ordained the State as a delegated authority, but it is not autonomous.”

Dr. Carl Henry sums this up, “If a government puts itself above the norms of civilized society, it can be disobeyed and challenged in view of the revealed will of God; if it otherwise requires what conscience disallows, one should inform government and be ready to take the consequences.”

Verses 6-7

- Now I really don't like these verses very much!
 - The tax which the Romans exacted was really heavy on people: especially in the conquered territories, which was the vast majority of the Roman Empire, and included combined income and property taxes.
- Jesus taught that taxes should be paid—even to a pagan government.
- Matthew 22:17-21

“Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, ‘Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.’ So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription is this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s’” (Matthew 22:17-21).
- Don't give them more than you need to, but you should pay your taxes.
 - Do you know the IRS has a *conscience fund* where people can pay taxes that their conscience is convicting them about? Between fifty to one hundred million dollars comes into this fund every year...now my conscience is fine. It doesn't seem that the billionaires who want to keep taxing us more have had any problems with their conscience.
- Remember how Paul started the letter: you have two addresses.

- We are part of two kingdoms (Augustine wrote in *The City of God*)

- Romans 1:7
 - “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.”
 - You are in Christ and in Colorado Springs.

 - We live in both realms and God has order for both.

- God wants us to show honor to those in authority.
 - We are to honor our government authorities, military, school officials, teachers, fireman, policeman, doctors, and nurses—would all of those who serve in these capacities please stand.

- Let’s honor them for their service to us.

Now Paul shows us the key to self government...

Verses 8-10

Self-Government of Love: if everyone in Colorado Springs just followed this law, there would be no need for prisons, government regulations, or law enforcement.

- This is not a regulation against borrowing money—the rest of scripture permits and regulates the borrowing money for your needs, as long as you are paying it back.

- If you have a loan with the bank for your house, and you are making your payments that is an equitable relationship.

- Paul's point is that we are the best citizens in our community when we are loving the community—Springs Initiative, being involved in the political and civil processes, healthcare, education.

A Kingdom of God Revolution is the people of God acting in love, proclaiming and demonstrating the Kingdom of God in our city, county, and state.

- **Love fulfills the Law! Love even fulfills the civil law! When you obey the laws of the land because you love God, the entire community gets blessed.**

Verse 11

- The word here is not *chronos* or chronological time, but *kairos*—knowing the season you are in.
- He's saying, "Are you aware of the time you are living in?"
- Are we going to have another Josiah, Manasseh ruling over us? We have sowed the wind, we will reap the whirlwind.
- God is judging our nation because of our immorality, injustice, and corruption. We have the leaders we have due to our inability to self-govern and our disobedience to God.

Verses 12-14

- So put on the armor of God everyday! You will increasingly need it.
 - Put on the armor of God...
- The greatest defense against sin is a strong offense and proactive holy living.
 - If you struggle with the internet, put on a block;

- if you struggle with pictures in magazines, throw out the magazines;
 - if you struggle with materialism curtail the trips to the mall and start giving more of you money away;
 - if you can't control your spending with credit, cut up your cards;
 - if you struggle with drinking, fill your time with serving others instead of going to the bar.
- Put on Jesus!

In Camelot, King Arthur says at the end, “Don’t let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment, that was known as Camelot.”

- Not President Biden, not President Trump...Jesus is our King! Jesus is our President—Jesus is the only Camelot Kingdom.
 - So we debate, we learn about policies, we pray, we respectfully speak out in the public arena, we vote in elections, but remember Jesus’ words,

Jesus: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15)