

#1 God and Government

It may surprise you to learn that God considers governments as one of the gifts that He has given to us in the Church, the Body of Christ!

1 Corinthians 12:27-28 (page 1073)

*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, **governments**, diversities of tongues.*

Paul tells us that there is nothing illegal for us, because we are not under Law, but under grace alone. We can still sin, of course, but all our sins, even future sins have been forgiven! All things are lawful! How great is that?

1 Corinthians 6:12 (page 1067)

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (page 1071)

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Paul also knows how people think, "If I can do anything I want and still be saved, why should I follow any laws?" He also says, "God forbid" to that kind of thinking and behavior.

Romans 6:15 (page 1054)

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

We would not be good citizens, and government could not function if we did not follow any laws, just because we are already forgiven for any sins we commit.

We are to submit to the ordinance of man.

1 Peter 2:13-17 (page 1136)

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. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free,

and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Not only are we supposed to submit to our leaders, we are also supposed to pray for them! It is not for them, but for us—to help us lead peaceful and Godly lives.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 page (1110)

*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.*

Jesus famously told us that we are to pay our taxes.

Luke 20:20-26 (page 978)

*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? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.** And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.*

Paul tells us that we should give people their due. If they are due honor, or custom, or fear, we are to give it to them. He also lists quite a few things that we should not do which sound very much like the 10 Commandments. He sums them all up by telling us to love our neighbor. That prevents us from doing a lot of things that we may want to do but should not.

Romans 13:7-10 (page 1060)

***Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.** 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.***

Paul goes so far as to say that you can fulfill all of God's Law by simply loving your neighbor as yourself. The difference is that it is not a requirement for your salvation.

Galatians 5:14 (page 1090)

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

God tells us that every power that exists comes from Him. Powers include those things we can see on earth and those we cannot see because they are in the heavens.

Colossians 1:16 (page 1101)

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or **powers: all things were created by him, and for him:**

Paul says that if we resist the higher powers, which we know are ordained of God, we will receive damnation. That sounds pretty scary, but since we know that we are sealed unto the day of redemption and cannot become "unsaved," this damnation is what we bring on ourselves in our flesh, on this earth. We will be punished by man's ordinances, not God's.

Romans 13:1-2 (page 1060)

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

As you know from history, there may be times when it becomes necessary to resist the higher powers, when you know they are evil—but you will still be subject to the punishment of these evil leaders.

Acts 5:28-29 (page 1019)

Saying, **Did not we 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. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**

So every power that exists is from God. He also tells us that kings reign by Him as well as princes, noble, and judges. God gives counsel, sound wisdom, understanding, and strength to these rulers to decree justice.

Proverbs 8:14-17 (page 618)

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

God has created these positions to be filled by rulers who love Him. We know that sometimes evil people are in these positions, but we are to follow our leaders as God's ministers and give them respect as such. Paul tells us that no one can prevent us from doing good works in whatever circumstance we find ourselves.

Romans 12:3-6 (page 1060)

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

As you are probably saying, "But there are a lot of leaders who are not acting as God's ministers!" And you would be right. Remember Pontius Pilate? He tried to release Jesus when the Jews brought Jesus to him to be crucified. He thought he had power over Jesus' life and death.

John 19:9-10 (page 1009)

And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus reminded Pilate that God had given him this power.

John 19:11 (page 1009)

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

We find out from the temptation of Jesus by Satan that Satan really has been given power over all of the kingdoms of the world! Satan truly was able to offer all of the kingdoms of the world to Jesus! Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim that he had been given this power (by God of course) but quoted scripture, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Luke 4:5-8 (page 954)

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Paul tells us that our fight is not with flesh and blood people, it is with the spiritual powers that are ruling this world.

Ephesians 6:12 (page 1096)

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

We have already won our battle because Christ triumphed over these principalities and powers and won it for us.

Colossians 2:15 (page 1102)

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

But, until we are taken from this earth, we will continue to encounter these powers as part of "this present evil world."

Galatians 1:3-5 (page 1087)

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

God also wants us to know that He is not responsible for the evil done on this earth. He cannot commit iniquity, do wickedly, or pervert judgement.

Job 34:10-12 (page 535)

*Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: **far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.** For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely **God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.***

God does not cause us to be tempted by evil.

James 1:13 (page 1131)

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: **for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:***

Ephesians 3:10 (page 1093)

*To the intent that now unto the **principalities and powers in heavenly places** might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*

Titus 3:1 (page 1118)

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

We have read that all power is from God; notice that it does not say everyone in power is of God.

Proverbs 29:2 (page 633)

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

Finally, we know that no matter what government may be in place and whatever laws may be in effect, that God will not forget the people who love Him.

Romans 8:28 (page 1056)

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.