

Robert Haldane puts it this way,

The institution of civil government is a dispensation of mercy, and its existence is so indispensable, that the moment it ceases under one form, it re-establishes itself in another. The world, ever since the fall, when the dominion of one part of the human race over another was immediately introduced (Gen 3:16), has been in such a state of corruption and depravity, that without the powerful obstacle presented by civil government to the selfish and malignant passions of men, it would be better to live among the beasts of the forest than in human society.

As soon as its restraints are removed, man shows himself in his real character. When there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes, we see in the last three chapters of the Book of Judges what were the dreadful consequences.

- Robert Haldane, An Exposition of Romans, p. 581

Now Paul speaks of something we are all familiar with, paying taxes. And I am sure that many of you are not excited about this one, I don't think anyone is.

And the reason being, not only because they are so high, but because our taxes support so many ungodly things.

But Paul tells us that we are to pay taxes for the taxes are also used to help restrain evil and to keep the government going so the society doesn't deteriorate into anarchy!

Now for those who still struggle with paying taxes, and I think we all do, let's go to the authority, to Jesus and see what He has to say in Matthew 22:15-21.

Here we see that Jesus has an encounter with a Herodian, who was working together with the Pharisees to catch Jesus, and we are told, "**Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. 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.'**"

Jesus makes a very powerful point. Yes, we are to pay our taxes and we are to give to God that which is His. That means we give to God our entire lives!

And, you are to pay your local taxes, your state taxes, and your federal taxes and in doing so you are honoring God.

That does not mean I agree, or you agree on how those taxes are being spent, that is not the issue, I give out of obedience.

We should be praying for our leaders. We should pay our taxes. It is as simple and as difficult as that! But as we surrender to the Lord, seek His will in these matters, it is an easy thing to do!

Make no mistake about it. A life that is surrendered to God, placed on the altar of sacrifice as a living sacrifice unto God, will walk properly before God as his life continues to be transformed into the image of God.

Not only that, but then we will be a light to this world that is in darkness, a world without hope and without love. We can give them hope and love in Christ!

As Paul said in I Corinthians 13:4-8a, "**Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.**"

What the Bible says about . . . Government

This is a tough one for many Christians, that we are to obey the laws of the land or we are to obey what the government tells us. And at this point, you may be upset, but let's look at what the Scriptures tell us and then, let us live accordingly.

Paul tells us in Romans 13:1-7 about our role in human government, how we are to live out our faith. He wrote, "**Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.**"

As I said, not an easy section, but an important one for us to understand and apply to our lives.



One writer said regarding this,

Believers must live properly in the world, including obeying government authorities and rulers. Christians should practice good citizenship and receive praise from those who rule, because they do so as ministers of God for good.

If believers disobey legitimate government, they will suffer as evildoers. Practicing love for one another fulfills the law; and this love will do no wrong! Christians should “behave properly,” because the day of service is short. They must leave no room for the working of the flesh and its lusts.

- Woodrow Kroll, Romans – Righteousness in Christ, p. 201

Again, as we have seen, in Romans 13:1-7 Paul deals with this subject of human government and what our responsibility is towards this government.

Here in Romans Paul makes it very clear as he says, **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities . . .”** That includes you and me, every soul!

And as you look at the leaders in this country, this is not an easy task and yet, God appoints people into governing positions, and sometimes it is for our good and sometimes for judgment!

In Jeremiah 25:9 we are told, **“‘behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the LORD, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.’”**

Also, in Jeremiah 27:6-7 we are told, **“And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son’s son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.”**

Do you see that? God calls this pagan King, Nebuchadnezzar His servant for he is accomplishing the will of God, even though he thought he was doing as he pleased, he thought he was in control.

Thus, if you resist those in authority over you; you are disobeying God’s Word; you are resisting His will!

You see, God has placed them as the legitimate authority and we must respect that position they are holding, we are subject to them!

It is as Paul said in I Timothy 2:1-4, **“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

Also, in Titus 3:1-2 Paul tells us, **“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”**

And lastly, in I Peter 2:13-17 Peter tells us, **“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men - as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”**

Did you see that? Peter said, **“for this is the will of God.”** In other words, this is not an option for us, we are to respect, honor, we are to be subject to those who are in authority over us. And if we reject that, then we are not in the will of God! It truly is that simple. We may not like it, but it is what God has said!

Now let me also say this. This does not mean we have to agree with everything they say or do. And if what they tell us goes against what God says in His Word, if they tell us to do something that is immoral, then we can disobey what the government says.

Peter, after he and the boys were arrested for sharing their faith, sharing Jesus, they were arrested by the religious leaders, and they were confronted by the High Priest in Acts chapter 5. And this is what the High Priest said and what Peter said, **“‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’”** Acts 5:28-29.

Now please understand that what Peter said is not a license to be disobedient to the government.

Look at all the atrocities that Rome had perpetrated upon Christians, as I have said, all the injustice, and Paul’s focus was not to change the government, protest against the government, but to preach Christ crucified, the Gospel message!

You see, Paul wanted to see them changed inwardly and that change would then affect their outward actions!

The only reason we may go against what they are saying and disobey them is when they order us to do something in contradiction to God’s law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before man (as in Acts 4:19).

For instance, if they told a woman she has to have an abortion. You obey God and not the government!

You see, until Jesus Christ returns to set up His government, until He rules and reigns on this earth, we will have human government and thus, we are to be subject to it. It will be far from perfect, but, for the most part, it does help keep things in line!

And here is the thing. As a rule, people who do what is right need not fear the authorities. It is only those who break the law who have to fear punishment.

Again, Paul is speaking in general terms. There are governments like China, North Korea, Iran who are not for their people, but their cause, their agenda.

And in verse 4 of Romans chapter 13 Paul is speaking of the government’s right to execute capital punishment upon those that commit such crimes; it is a deterrent to others.

In Genesis 9:5-6 the Lord tells Noah, **“Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.”**

Make no mistake about it, a government that does not put forth justice will move to anarchy! And we are moving quickly in that direction here in our nation!