

## **ROMANS 13:2-5 REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS ARE TO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY**

### **God has ordained the state. God has ordained the church.**

These two institutions differ in their origin. One has a special grace and the other has a common grace. The church was brought in for spiritual purposes. The church is to preach the Word to the unsaved, to evangelize.

The state is about preserving peace and external good. It is not concerned with the spiritual. These two are different and distinct. That truth was lost from the time of Constantine until the Reformation. The Reformers restored this distinction in a measure. It had been a state-church combination for a millennium and even throughout the reformation there were a lot of things that had to be worked out even by leaders such as Calvin and Zwingli, and Knox and many others.

The Reformation had solved many problems but there were many doctrines to be hashed out. Ceremonies, rituals, government of the church, etc. was many of these issues. The Puritans of the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw that the Reformers stopped short on many things. The Puritans wanted to purify throughout. They became more and more dissatisfied with the Anglican Church. When they spoke out they were persecuted and even put to death. Many moved to Holland. Later they came to this land to start a new life and be free to worship that was Biblical. They left the tyrannical ecclesiastical England. The Pilgrims, in Massachusetts, set up the right to vote and to take part in government. This was for church members only. Like Calvin and Knox, they expected the state to enforce church discipline.

John Cotton was a great figure among the first settlers. He wrote a book that changed the mind of John Owen as it dealt with becoming Independent instead of Anglican. They separated from the church-state. But they were still subject to the English government and the King. They were semi-Separatists. But then next, was the Free Church. It was totally free from the state. They were Separatists. They broke off from the Presbyterians who still held to a church-state view. There were Independents, Congregationalists. They came to believe in freedom of worship, and separation of the church entirely from the state. Some of these adopted Baptist views such as Thomas Helwys and John Smyth. Up to 1640 there were two groups that were Separatists—the Independents and the Baptists.

As far as America is concerned, Roger Williams was remarkable. When he came over from England, there was Separatism here already but they hadn't gone far enough. They hadn't renounced the errors of the Church of England. He didn't want them to have anything to do with the Anglican church at all. He became a pastor and a huge influence on American history. He believed in complete freedom of worship and held that the state had no right to dictate religious beliefs. The complete separation in America is mainly due to his influence.

In England, Cromwell formed a New Model Army of godly men who fought the Royalists and Charles I. Many of those men developed separatist views. One group was known as the Levellers. They were pioneers in freedom of worship and had brilliant ideas of democratic government that we enjoy today. It took 300 years in England before their ideas came into place.

In 1662 the Independents and Baptists and Congregationalists became true Separatists. They became known as Nonconformists. Of course before them were many pastors who had the same ideas but were arrested. John Bunyan was one of them.

Separation between the church and state was very important because they saw biblically how God had ordained both but they were for different purposes.

We are very blessed by God when the evil of the human heart is restrained by civil authority and law, so that anarchy and mob rule and vigilante justice do not hold sway.

Paul knows that civil authorities are not just a terror to bad conduct. They are a terror to good conduct sometimes. They kill Christians, just like Jesus said they would, “You will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. . . . and some of you they will put to death” (Luke 21:12-16).

first, that he wanted Caesar to get the message that God is over him and that there is a God-given moral law above the laws of the state, and states ARE to act this way. We use language that way: We say what *is* in order to say what *ought* to be.

So Paul has an eye on Caesar as he writes and says, “Government rewards the good and punishes the bad, not the reverse!” And he means: They ought to

The other reason Paul spoke so resoundingly about submission to the state, I suggested, is that he wants us to know that the danger to our soul from unjust governments is nowhere near as great as the danger to our soul from the pride that kicks against submission. No mistreatment or unjust law has ever sent anyone to hell. But pride and rebellion is what sends everyone to hell who doesn’t have a Savior.

#### **1. GOVERNMENT IS BY DIVINE DECREE**

#### **2. RESISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT IS REBELLION AGAINST GOD**

#### **3. RESISTANCE WILL BE PUNISHED**

#### **4. GOVERNMENT SERVES TO RESTRAIN EVIL**

#### **5. GOVERNMENT SERVES TO PROMOTE GOOD**

God intends for government to promote public good.

Paul took advantage of the government’s role promoting what is good. He used the protection of Roman law.

Acts 25:11, Acts 19:38-39, 1 Tim 2:1-2

A minister of God is what a civil official is.. He does the Lord’s work whether he knows it or not.

As soon as the restraints are moved, man shows himself in his real character.(R. Haldane)

Haldane says that government is a dispensation of mercy and it’s existence is indispensable.

#### **6. RULERS ARE EMPOWERED BY GOD TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT**

##### **A. GOVERNMENT CAN PRESCRIBE AND ENFORCE PENALTIES**

Genesis 9:6, Matthew 26:52, Acts 25:11, Ezekiel 7:23-24, Gen 4:10

Capital punishment was prescribed by God and the refusal to do it, is disobedience to God.

The whip, the cell, the guillotine, the noose, stand behind the stability of civilized society. They are necessary for God has declared so. The society that gets rid of punishment has lost touch with man’s fallen state, realities of the world, and the truth of divine revelation in nature, man’s conscience, and the Bible.---Robert Culver

##### **B. GOVERNMENT CANNOT DEVELOP MORALITY**

Government cannot change the criminal. It can restrain evil somewhat, but it takes

A supernatural work for souls to be changed.

##### **C. MORALITY COMES FROM THE REVELATION OF GOD**

Christians are the best citizens and assets a country has. They will advance it in the direction of justice and true righteousness.. We don’t need more laws. We need more people who know God and want to live by the moral laws of God. 2 Chron 7:14 This is not about the election of anyone or a new law. It is about repentance

#### **7. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE**

Christians are to be exemplary citizens.

We should obey the authority for it is the right thing to do.

Paul appeals to our conscience. He treats us as moral agents who are made in God's image.

1 Peter 2:13-15—The conscience's sake is for the Lord's sake

#### A. WHAT IS THE CONSCIENCE?

Con-with Science-knowledge (with knowledge)

Knowledge of one's heart or inner motivations as contrasted with one's actions

Paul's usage of it—1 Tim 1:5,19, 3:9, 2 Tim 1:3, Acts 23:1, 2 Cor 1:2, 4:2

The Christian not only knows what is right or wrong but has been given a true desire and ability to do what the conscience demands. God has quickened the Christian's moral nature.

#### B. CONSCIENCE AND THE WORD OF GOD

Consciences are only valuable when we are enlightened by the Word of God.

Somebody has compared the conscience to a sundial.. It is not a perfect timepiece but it is fairly accurate—as long as the sun is shining on it. If it is only in the moonlight it will be terribly inaccurate.. It is only valuable when the sun is shining on it. The conscience has to be illuminated by the Word of God.

#### C. WHAT THIS MEANS FOR GOVERNMENT

1. Christians have a higher motive for obeying than others have

What we do really matters. It matters to God. If we take some laws too lightly and just say well they are crazy laws anyway, this contributes to a spirit of lawlessness. Many have no respect for the law today. Civil disorder is rising. The police are unable to contain all the crime that happens. The courts are Overworked and the prisons are overflowing.

2. Christians have a stronger reason for disobeying when disobedience becomes necessary

Christians are to stand against wrong actions and for right actions because of conscience

#### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE---WHAT ABOUT IT?

We must ask 2 questions.

##### **1. What is the biblical evidence that sometimes God approves of His people not submitting to authority He put in place?**

Acts 5:27-29—We must obey God rather than men.

**IF THE LAW COMMANDS WHAT GOD FORBIDS OR IT FORBIDS WHAT GOD COMMANDS, THEN THE LAW HAS TO BE BROKEN**

What is important here, is the conscience.

Daniel 6:6-10

Daniel 3:9-18

Exodus 1:15-20

Esther 3:13, 4:11-16,

But, somethings are not clearly commanded by God? What are the guidelines, then?

What do we do with abortion?---We are to make it known that we are against it. We Should explain our position and argue our case. We should not go about it in the world's way by sit ins and pressure tactics. We should explain that we are made in the image of God and are valuable to God even an embryo. That it is disenfranchising an unborn child just like blacks were called less than humans, or Jews were a threat to society.

1.The grievousness of the action sanctioned by the law

How atrocious is it? Is it a traffic pattern that you think is dumb? Or is the law sanctioning killing?

2.The extent of the action---a few people effected or millions

Or is it putting a whole group of people into bondage because of their ethnic origin

3. The potential of effectiveness of the truth

4. The movement of the Spirit of God over His people at the right time

what had hung in the air for years as tolerable evil explodes with an overwhelming sense that this state of affairs simply can no longer be!

**2. When civil disobedience is right, what should it look like** The tone and demeanor of this Christian civil disobedience will be the opposite of strident, belligerent, rock-throwing, screaming, swearing, violent demonstrations. Mt 5:38-42