

Although we at times cannot obey that authority, we must always respect it, for God is the source of its power!

Commenting on *Rom 13:1-7*, Barclay says:

“Ideally men should be bound together by Christian love; but they are not; and the cement which keeps them together is the state. Paul saw, in the state, an instrument in the hand of God; the state preserved the world from chaos; those who administered the state were playing their part in that great task. Whether they knew it or not, they were doing God’s work, and it was the Christian’s duty to help and not hinder”.

No 27

CHRISTIAN LIFE BIBLE COURSE

Study Twenty-seven: The Christian and Government

OUR CITIZENSHIP

The Bible tells us that Jesus “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with _____ and _____” *Lk 2:52*.

We, too, should endeavour to live in harmony with God and man, for Jesus is our supreme example.

What is the lifestyle God desires us to live? *Rom 12:18* _____

What commandments did Jesus give in the way we should live towards God and man? *Mat 22:37-39* _____

The fulfilment of these commandments is the pathway to living harmoniously with God and man? Yes/No.

Where is our citizenship? *Phil 3:20*. (The word “conversation” is better translated “citizenship.”) _____

Since our citizenship or real home is in heaven, what do you think our main concern in life should be? *Phil 3:20; 1Thes 1:9,10; Col 3:1-3* _____

SECULAR GOVERNMENT

One of the most difficult questions to be resolved at times, is the Christian's relationship to the secular authorities, especially when they do not govern with specifically "Christian principles."
The Bible has much to say concerning this subject.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DELEGATED AUTHORITY

All authority has its source in God, *Rom 13:1*. The Kingship of God is a basic revelation as far as the Scriptures are concerned. Authority is not authority unless it finds its source in Him.

The principle of delegated authority, as taught in the Bible, can be summed up in the following way:

God rules through delegated authority;
therefore a failure to submit to delegated
authority constitutes a failure to submit
to God.

GOD IS RULER OF THE NATIONS

What is the extent of God's rule and Kingdom? *Ps 22:28*

A very important truth to grasp is that because God is sovereign and the real ruler of the nations, He is the authority behind even unjust government! This is illustrated by looking at various passages in Scripture concerning secular authority. *Dan 5:22,23; Dan 3:17-20*. The book of Daniel deals with the rise and fall of a number of extremely unjust, anti-God governments.

Who rules over these governments? *Dan 4:25* _____

The most unjust government that the world has ever seen was that which sentenced the spotless Son of God to a criminal's death.

When Pilate began to "brag" about his authority to Jesus, what did Jesus say? *Jn 19:11* _____

Read *Ac 23:1-5*. What is Paul's attitude toward the (unjust) ruler?

Instead of criticising our leaders we should _____ for them.
1Tim 2:1,2. Why are we to do this? *v2-4* _____

From where have the present world governments obtained their authority, and who appointed them? *Rom 13:1* _____

Notice that in *Rom 13:2*, we find that the person who resists the governing authority resists God! Read *Rom 13:7; Mat 22:21*, and note our responsibility to pay taxes, duty and honour to those whose positions require it. *IPet 2:13-17* is another passage which highlights the Christian's duty to the government. The government at the time Peter was writing dealt very severely with Christians. It was an unjust government.

THE ONE EXCEPTION

What is the one exception, when it is right to disobey the government?
Ac 5:28,29; Ac 4:18-20 _____

The context of these verses shows us the kind of situation in which it is permissible to go against what the governing authorities say..... a situation in which the authorities go so far as to try and make the Christian disobey what God says in His Word.