

## The Christian & Civil Government

Text: Romans 13:1-7

Introduction:

- A. Our nation began its course with the recognition of God as supreme Ruler.  
*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights Governments are instituted among Men... (The Declaration Of Independence).*
- B. Yet religious people, even Christians, have had extreme difficulty through the years determining the proper relationship between civil government and Christians.
  - 1. Some say the Christian is to have nothing to do with civil affairs.
  - 2. Others say the church and government can meddle in one another's affairs.
- C. What is the relationship of the Christian to the civil government which rules him and to the civil state of which he is a citizen?
- I. Civil government and the civil state are ordained of God. - Romans 13:1-2 ; John 19:11 (no particular kind of government; just government)
  - A. definitions:
    - 1. civil state: "... an organized body of people living with in a defined territory and having the power to make and enforce law without the consent of any higher authority" (**Magruder's American Government**. 18).
    - 2. civil government: "... the agent through which the state exerts its will and accomplishes its ends. It consists of the machinery and the personnel through which the state is ruled (governed)" (Ibid. 20).
  - B. God ultimately rules the nations. - Daniel 4; Revelation 19:11-16
  - C. Rulers are God's ministers. - Romans 13:3-6
  - D. Even the basest of men may be God's ordained rulers. - Daniel 4:17; Romans 9:17
- II. Civil government has three God ordained purposes.
  - A. to punish the evil - Romans 13:3-4; I Peter 2:14; Ecclesiastes 8:11
  - B. to praise the good - Romans 13:3; 1 Peter 2:14
  - C. to avenge evil - Romans 13:4; Luke 18:2-5; Amos 5:12
- III. The Christian is a citizen of two nations ("dual citizenship").- Mark 12:17
  - A. He is a citizen of a civil state. - Acts 22:24-29
    - 1. One is either born or naturalized a citizen of a civil state (Magruder. 250-1).
    - 2. A Christian may
      - a. exercise the rights he has as a citizen of a nation. - Acts 16:16-24,35-39; 22:23-29; 25:1-12
      - b. serve in government office. - Romans 16:23
    - 3. The civil state does not have the right or responsibility to decide religious questions or to meddle in church affairs. - Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 5:29
  - B. He is a citizen of the kingdom of God.- Ephesians 2:19
    - 1. This citizenship is gained by the new birth.- John 3:5
    - 2. This is a spiritual kingdom.- John 18:36; Luke 17:20-21
    - 3. The church has neither the responsibility nor right to meddle in civil affairs.- John 18:36

*(The political priest and the partisan preacher who align the church with the political administration of civil and secular government are in the true sense disturbers of the civil peace and of civil society.... Political Christianity is a contradiction in terms [Foy E. Wallace, Jr., **The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State.** 152].)*

- IV. Christians have certain God given obligations to the state of which they are citizens.
- A. Be subject. - Romans 13:2-5; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14
    - 1. We must obey even laws we do not like. - Mark 12:13-17
    - 2. There s only one exception. - Acts 5:29
  - B. Pay taxes. - Romans 13:6-7
  - C. Honor (even the basest of men). - Romans 13:7; Daniel 4:17
  - D. Pray for. - 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- V. May a Christian be a police officer or a soldier (They stand or fall together, for both involve the use of force to uphold the laws of the state)?
- A. The civil state has the God-given right and responsibility to use force to uphold its just laws.- Romans 13:3-4 (Christians have the right to participate in any proper function of civil government.)
  - B. Christians are not forbidden to use force or even to take life in a lawful capacity.
    - 1. The definition of the outward act of killing (forbidden killing) is the same in both Old & New Testaments. - Matthew 5:21-22
    - 2. What killings forbidden?
      - a. not accidental killing - Numbers 35:22-25
      - b. not the just administration of the death penalty - Exodus 21:12-14
      - c. not legitimate warfare - Numbers 31:1-7; 1 Samuel 15:1-3
      - d. intentional murder, the shedding of innocent blood - Numbers 35:20-21
    - 3. Although Christians must not take personal vengeance, civil government is God's appointed agency for vengeance. - Romans 12:17-21; 13:4  
*Peace in the world between nations, as between individuals, is the outcome of justice established by orderly and organized society, and applied through the functions of civil and penal law (Wallace. 218).*
  - C. The apostle Paul made use of the armed power of the civil state. - Acts 23:12-33
- Conclusion:
- A. You, as a Christian, have dual citizenship.- Acts 22:27; Ephesians 2:19
  - B. Therefore, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."- Mark 12:17