

Our Responsibility to Civil Government

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Recognize God's Dominion Over It

We must recognize God's dominion over civil government (Prov. 21:1; Dan. 4:13-17; 5:18-21; John 19:8-11; Rom. 13:1, 4).

Proverbs 21:1 ... 1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes. (NASB95)

*Daniel 4:13-17 ... 13 'I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven. 14 'He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it And the birds from its branches. 15 "Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, But with a band of iron and bronze around it In the new grass of the field; And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 "Let his mind be changed from that of a man And let a beast's mind be given to him, And let seven periods of time pass over him. 17 "This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, **In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.**" (NASB95)*

*Daniel 5:18-21 ... 18 "O king [Belshazzar], the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. 19 "Because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled. 20 "But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him. 21 "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven **until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.** (NASB95)*

John 19:8-11 ... 8 Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; 9 and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." (NASB95)

Romans 13:1 ... 1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. (NASB95)

Romans 13:4 ... 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. (NASB95)

Recognize That God Will Judge The Nations

We must recognize that God will judge the nations of men, both generally (Psa. 75:6-8; Hag. 2:22), and specifically: Israel (28:1-2, 15), Babylon (Jer. 25:12-26), Egypt (Ezek. 29:19-20), and Rome (Rev. 18:1-3).

Psalm 75:6-8... 6 For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation; 7 But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another. 8 For a cup is in the hand of the Lord, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. (NASB95)

Haggai 2:22 ... 22 'I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and their riders, and the horses and their riders will go down, everyone by the sword of another.' (NASB95)

Israel

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 ... 1 "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the Lord your God: (NASB95)

Deuteronomy 28:15 ... 15 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: (NASB95)

Babylon

Jeremiah 25:12-26 ... 12 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the Lord, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation. 13 'I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations. 14 '(For many nations and great kings will make slaves of them, even them; and I will recompense them according to their deeds and according to the work of their hands.)' " 15 For thus the Lord, the God of

Israel, says to me, "Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. 16 "They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them." 17 Then I took the cup from the Lord's hand and made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me drink it: 18 Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and its kings and its princes, to make them a ruin, a horror, a hissing and a curse, as it is this day; 19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes and all his people; 20 and all the foreign people, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (even Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and the remnant of Ashdod); 21 Edom, Moab and the sons of Ammon; 22 and all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon and the kings of the coastlands which are beyond the sea; 23 and Dedans, Team, Buzz and all who cut the corners of their hair; 24 and all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the foreign people who dwell in the desert; 25 and all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam and all the kings of Media; 26 and all the kings of the north, near and far, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the earth which are upon the face of the ground, and the king of Shishak shall drink after them. (NASB95)

Egypt

Ezekiel 29:19-20 ... 19 Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And he will carry off her wealth and capture her spoil and seize her plunder; and it will be wages for his army. 20 "I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor which he performed, because they acted for Me," declares the Lord God. (NASB95)

Rome

Revelation 18:1-3 ... 1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality." (NASB95)

Submit To It

We must submit to civil government (Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-15).

Romans 13:1-7 ... 1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for

it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. (NASB95)

Titus 3:1-2 ... 1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. (NASB95)

1 Peter 2:13-15 ... 13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. (NASB95)

Honor It

We must honor civil government (Exod. 22:28; Prov. 24:21-22; Eccl. 10:20; Rom. 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:17).

Exodus 22:28 ... 28 "You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people. (NASB95)

Proverbs 24:21-22 ... 21 My son, fear the Lord and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change, 22 For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin that comes from both of them? (NASB95)

Ecclesiastes 10:20 ... 20 Furthermore, in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known. (NASB95)

Romans 13:7 ... 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. (NASB95)

1 Peter 2:17 ... 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. (NASB95)

Pay Taxes To It

We must pay taxes to civil government (Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26; Rom. 13:6-7).

Matthew 22:15-22 ... 15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said. 16 And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. 17 "Tell us then, what do You

think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?” 18 But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, “Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? 19 “Show Me the coin used for the poll-tax.” And they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” 21 They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” Then He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.” 22 And hearing this, they were amazed, and leaving Him, they went away. (NASB95)

Mark 12:13-17 ... 13 Then they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him in order to trap Him in a statement. 14 They came and said to Him, “Teacher, we know that You are truthful and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? 15 “Shall we pay or shall we not pay?” But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, “Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at.” 16 They brought one. And He said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” And they said to Him, “Caesar’s.” 17 And Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were amazed at Him. (NASB95)

Luke 20:20-26 ... 20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor. 21 They questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. 22 “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” 23 But He detected their trickery and said to them, 24 “Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s.” 25 And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” 26 And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent. (NASB95)

Romans 13:6-7 ... 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. (NASB95)

Pray For It

We must pray for civil government (Psa. 72:1-2; Ezra 6:8-10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Psalm 72:1-2 ... 1 Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king’s son. 2 May he judge Your people with righteousness And Your afflicted with justice. (NASB95)

Ezra 6:8-10 ... 8 “Moreover, I [King Darius (see vs. 1)] issue a decree concerning what you are to do for these elders of Judah in the rebuilding of this house of God: the full cost is to be paid to these people from the royal treasury out of the taxes of the provinces beyond the River, and that without delay. 9 “Whatever is needed, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for a burnt offering to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and anointing

oil, as the priests in Jerusalem request, it is to be given to them daily without fail, 10 that they may offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 2:1-4 ... 1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (NASB95)

Influence It

We must influence civil government (Psa. 119:46-48; Prov. 14:34; 20:28; 25:5; Esth. 4:13-17; Matt. 5:14-16).

Psalm 119:46-48 ... 46 I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings And shall not be ashamed. 47 I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love. 48 And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love; And I will meditate on Your statutes. (NASB95)

Proverbs 14:34 ... 34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. (KJV)

Proverbs 20:28 ... 28 Loyalty and truth preserve the king, And he upholds his throne by righteousness. (NASB95)

Proverbs 25:5 ... 5 Take away the wicked before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness. (NASB95)

Esther 4:13-17 ... 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. 14 "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 16 "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him. (NASB95)

Matthew 5:14-16 ... 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (NASB95)

Give God Priority Over It

We must give God priority over civil government (Dan. 3:16-18; 6:1-11; Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29).

Daniel 3:16-18 ... 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” (NASB95)

Daniel 6:1-11 ... 1 It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, 2 and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. 4 Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. 5 Then these men said, “We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God.” 6 Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: “King Darius, live forever! 7 “All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions’ den. 8 “Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.” 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction. 10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. 11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. (NASB95)

Acts 4:18-20 ... 18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (NASB95)

Acts 5:27-29 ... 27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, “We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. (NASB95)

Sources: Adapted from *The NASB Topical Index*. (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1998 (electronic ed.), s.v. “Government.”)