

I. Introduction and review: Is America a Christian nation?

II. The nature of civil government: The State is a Divine Institution. v. 1-3a

- A. God has established human government. v. 1b I Sa. 12:8 Isa. 45:1
1. God originated civil government in order to restrain sin. Gen. 9 Judges 21:25
 2. God is the Supreme King Who appoints all human rulers. Dan. 2:21 4:17,25
They should realize they derive their authority from God. John 19:10-11
 3. God works out His sovereign will through human rulers. Pr. 21:1 Acts 4:27-28
 4. Is God responsible for the wicked acts of evil rulers? Is. 10:5
 - a. They are responsible for their own sinful choices. Ex. 8:15 John 19:10-11
 - b. God works out His good purposes in spite of their sin. 9:17 8:28 Acts 4:27-28
 - c. Sometimes God uses evil rulers to chastise the wicked. Je. 27:6 5:31 Hab. 1
 5. No particular form of civil government is endorsed by the Bible.
- B. Is there any holy nation today?
1. Under the Old Covenant, Israel was God's chosen nation.
 2. There is no earthly holy nation under the New Covenant. Jo. 18:36 I Pe. 2:9-17
 3. Even though there is no holy nation, all rulers are accountable to God. Dan. 2,4
- C. What is the proper relationship between government and other human institutions?
1. God has established different institutions, each of which is accountable to Him.

God

Church

State

Family

2. Each institution should be faithful in carrying out its duty without interfering in the spheres of the others. Pr. 1:8 4:1 I Ti. 5:8
3. The biblical understanding of separation of church and state does not imply the separation of state from God. *We are a nation under God.*
4. The government has a tendency to go beyond its sphere: Statism. I Sam. 8:10-21

III. The duty of Government: The State is to Maintain Order v. 3-4

- A. Governors are God's servants (ministers). v. 4, 6
The character of our rulers matters. Pr. 8:15 16:12 20:28 31:3-4 29:2 Dt. 17:14-20
- B. Positively, government is to commend those who do right. v. 3b I Pe. 2:14b
Good government is a blessing to good citizens. Pr. 29:2,4 22:29 I Ti. 2:2 Acts 19:35f
- C. Negatively, government is to punish evildoers. v. 4 I Pe. 2:14a Pr. 20:8,26
1. Civil government is appointed by God to avenge evil. 12:19
 2. God determines which evil acts are to be punished. v. 4b Pr. 20:26
 3. The punishment is to reflect God's justice: swift, impartial, proportionate. Ecc. 8:11 Pr. 18:5 17:15 24:23-25 31:8-9 Deut. 19:13,21 25:1-3 Num. 35:31
 4. Is capital punishment biblical? v. 4 6:23 Gen. 9:6
 - a. Capital punishment demonstrates how highly God values human life.
 - b. The Scripture requires a high standard of evidence. Deut. 17:6
- D. Unjust rulers will answer to God. Is. 1:23 Ps. 2 Pr. 17:15,23 29:14,4 16:12 Hab. 1:2-4
Isa. 5:23 Rev. 6:10 Jo. 19:6 Pr. Ps. 82:2 Ex. 23:8 Dt. 17:16-17 27:25 I Ki. 11:1-5

IV. Your duty to government: Submit. v. 1-7

- A. Be subject to the governing authorities. v. 1,5 I Pe. 2:13**
1. This applies to everyone: with no exceptions (not even for heavenly citizens).
 2. Obey the law of the land.
 3. Pay your taxes. V. 6-7 Mark 12:13-17 Lu. 20:22 23:2 Mt. 17:24-27 22:18-21
 4. Respect your leaders, even if you don't approve of their character. v. 7 I Sa. 26:9f I Pe. 2:13,17 Acts 23:5
- B. God gives you good reasons to submit to civil authority.**
1. Your government is ordained by God. v. 1b
 2. Resistance to government is rebellion against God. v. 2a Num. 16:31f
 3. Disobedience brings divine judgment. v. 2b-4 I Pe. 2:14 Pr. 20:2
You will be punished.
 4. You should obey because of your conscience towards God. v. 5,2 2:15 I Pe. 2:13,19
 5. Submit because of your witness to a watching world. I Pe. 2:12,15 4:15-16
- C. Is civil disobedience ever justified?**
1. The government is to be obeyed even when they are unjust.
 2. Government's right is not absolute. God has the ultimate claim on your loyalty.
Mark 12:17b I Pe. 2:17 Pr. 24:21
 3. When Caesar demands what is God's, we must obey God. Acts 4:19 5:29 1:8
 - a. When government commands what is prohibited. Ex. 1:15-17 Dan. 3:1 6:3f
 - b. When government prohibits what is commanded. Acts 1:8 5:29 Heb. 10:24-25
 4. When government exceeds the limits of its jurisdiction, we *may* disobey.
 5. If you must disobey, do so respectfully and be prepared to face the consequences.
 6. Conscientious disobedience must never be used for usurping functions of authority God has not given us.
- D. Exercise your citizenship. Pr. 28:7 Jer. 29:1-14**
1. Seek the peace and prosperity of the land in which we live as exiles. Jer. 29:7
 2. Christians are free to use their political and civil rights. Acts 16:37 25:11 19:38-39
 3. Seek to influence the government for good: Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah. Phil. 4:22
- E. Pray for our rulers. I Tim. 2:1-3**

V. Concluding Applications. Mark 12:17

- A. The hope of our nation is not a change of government, but revival!**
- B. Our ultimate hope is in the Kingdom Christ will bring. 13:11-12 John 8:31-32
Re. 19:46 21:1-5 11:15 . Rev. 5:10 I Co. 6:2**

Discussion Questions.

1. What is the origin of human government?
2. What is the primary function of human government?
3. Is there any holy nation today?
4. What is the proper relationship between civil government and the church?
5. In what ways does government tend to go beyond its sphere of authority?
6. What are the chief duties of civil government?
7. What are your duties to civil government?
8. What reasons does Paul give for submission to the authorities?
9. Why should you pay (all of) your taxes?
10. When is civil disobedience justified?
11. Is there a form of civil government which is more biblical than others?