

The Christian and Human Government: Part 1

Romans 13.1-7

Christians live *in* this world as ambassadors for Christ, but are citizens *of* the world to come. How are we then to treat government? God deals with nations and leaders, and calls us to submit to them for His sake.

God Is Sovereign Over Nations and Rulers

- God raises up kings and rulers, and takes them down
Jer. 27.5-7; Daniel 2.20-21; Rom. 13.1b
- God Uses Nations to Accomplish His Own Purposes
Exod. 2.23-25; Hab. 1.5-11a; John 19.11a; 1 Cor. 2.7-8
- God Holds Nations and Leaders Accountable
Dan. 4.17, 25, 32; 5.18-28; Hab. 1.11b; Jn. 19.11b

God Calls Christians to Submit to Governing Authorities

Rom.13.1-7; Titus 3.1-2; 1 Pet. 2.13-17

- Submit = *put yourselves under*
- For the Lord's sake = *do it for Him*

(Next week: *Should a Christian ever disobey the government?*)



1. Getting a ‘big picture’ about this world is critical to making sense of how to live our lives now. We need to see God’s grand scheme – where we came from (He created us), how we got into the mess we are in (the Fall), how we can get out of that condition (salvation through faith in Jesus Christ), and when it will all be made right (when Jesus returns to reign). Over this whole ‘story of mankind’ is our sovereign God. His plans cannot be thwarted, though Satan will try, and His final victory is sure. This assurance has sustained and comforted suffering saints throughout history. It gave hope to Old Testament Israel when they were in captivity. It strengthened early Christians facing fiery persecution. It spawned conviction of grace for heroes of the Reformation. It was a vision of heaven for slaves in the deep south. How does your knowledge of God’s plan ‘to seek and save those that are lost’ (Lk. 19.10) and the promise of being with Christ forever in heaven (1 Thess. 4.13-18) affect you as you live each day in a fallen world?
2. Understanding God’s sovereignty over nations is vital to retaining equilibrium in a world where nations (and leaders of nations) are spreading evil and suffering. On the other side of this study sheet are Scripture references which reflect how our sovereign God deals with nations and rulers. Read these verses, and if you have a cross reference Bible, look for other verses. When we get our eyes off of God’s power, and focus instead on our problems, we worry. When we focus on God, we can have the attitude Paul exhibited writing from his prison cell in Philippians 4.4-7!
3. Someone has said that Christians should be ‘model citizens.’ When people think of Christians, they think of those who are law-abiding and do good. Scripture enjoins this both in *attitude* and *action*. Read Romans 13.1-7, Titus 3.1-2, and 1 Peter 2.13-17. Think about how this instruction might have sounded to persecuted Christians in the first century. What about a Christian living in a Muslim or Hindu country? A communist country? What does it mean for Christians in a liberal democracy like ours, where obedience to God and His Truth is progressively attacked?