

God and Government: Why We Should Respect the Government?

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Abstract

Many people regard that those who work in government do not have relationship with the Christian's teaching and considered them to some extent just a group of people who sit in the government because won in political election and God does not support them in many ways then Christian should not follow them faithfully. This paper would like to solve the problem by knowing that the Bible teaches that God alone who elected Government and even urge Christian should treat Government officials as treating of God's servant in Church.

Keywords: *Government, God, Authority, Servant.*

INTRODUCTION

Living and working together with different needs, people and purpose are not easy. Therefore, the presence of a government is to accommodate the common needs and purposes of people so that be able to work and live together as a nation. However, the government sometimes governs people with injustice, unrighteous, violence, and far from the teaching in the Bible. To what extend Christian should submit or obey to the polices or the authorities that given by the government

How do I and other Christian in my country should react and behave wisely? How do we Christians at large should react and behave as well toward Government's polices? Are there exceptions? This paper would like to see of what Bible says towards Government' authorities looking in the epistles in particular on Romans 13:1-7 and the from other verses in OT and NT, how did come from, and how does Christian should react toward ungodly Government's authority.

The Fallen Authority

God gives to Adam and Eve the authority to take over all the earth (Gen 2:27-28) except one thing was not to touch and eat the forbidden fruit. However, they misused such authority.

They used it to against God's command. As a result, they lost the "divine" authority, they are no longer able to maintain or take over all animal or other creation or even more relationship with God. The authority was fallen. Then the "fallen" authority has been creating many problems over and over toward God's creation in this earth.

Human kill each other and kingdoms fight for the sake of power to control over others. In Gen 14:1-12 described that kingdoms fought and killed each other to take authority over and the land or people. The authority that initially was to maintain, manage over God' creation and give glory to God but finally fall and created "chaos" on the earth. People do what is right as they see it and ignored to be managed by God's authority. People realized that it is not going to work when every person walk with their own truth.

Then, they make organization, pick and select some people to rule over them. In the past, the organization called "kingdom". The modern people world called it "Government" means some selected people that have been given authorities to rule, maintain and work to give beneficial for all people. Again, God allows it because the purpose of it is to help and to take care people live in justice and truth as a group or as a

nation.

The Exhortation to Submit and Obey toward Government's Authority

New Testament totally urge and agree that believers should submit and obey toward Government's authority. But it does not mean they should become "blind" obedience. Believers are urged to acknowledge that their obedience to Government's authority are act and respect to God as well. There are some reasons why believers must submit and obey Government's authority.

Government authorities are appointed by God

Paul said that authority come from God (Rom 13:1) and Jesus also said to Pilate that his authority was given by God (Luke 20:20). It is "divine" appointment. It means that God alone allowed and gave to Pilate the right and the power to rule. God uses the ruler to represent his rule in the point of helping and making people to be able to live in peace, harmony, and to pursue good and great things. The presence of the government's authority must be seen as the "hand" of God in giving Christian opportunity to express their love to God. God gives mandate to Government in order to maintain and manage the right things for the beneficial to all people. The word

"authority" in Roman 13:1 is "exoursia". It means the freedom to decide or a right to act without hindrance. All such authority begins with God.¹ It means that Christians should realize that God is the source to do the command and to submit and obey government authorities and there is nothing man involved on make it.

Rulest hat have been written by government body for public interest because God alone urged give such authority! It should not be considered as just human's policies but should be acknowledged that God has given permission to do so. Seeing government rules as God' hand will help believers to do every rules or policies rightly and faithfully as a Scholar says "Resistance to the powers that be, regarded as resistance to God's ordinance"²

Government authorities are God's servant

Second reason that God wants to Christians acknowledge that the government authority is God's servant (Rom 13:4). It is very interesting point where Paul uses the word God's servant here in Greek "diakonos" not "leitourgos" where the meaning usually portrays public officials as God's servants as (compared to verse 6). The word "diakonos" usually refers for Christian

¹ Sam Hamstra Jr., "[Authority](#)," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 45.

² John Peter Lange, Philip Schaff, et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Romans* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 403.

minister who serve in Church. As a scholar say:

The word *diakonos* has a basic sense of “servant” or “messenger” in both the NT and secular Greek literature. This generic sense is applied to Tychicus, a faithful *diakonos* in the Lord who delivered Paul’s letters to the church congregations at Ephesus and Colossae (Eph 6:21–22; Col 4:7). The term was later used to designate someone holding an official position of church leadership, often called a deacon (1 Tim 3:8, 12).³

It clearly says that Paul urged the reader to understand who government authorities are.

In other words, when Christian looking toward government minister it is the same thing as

Christian looking on God’s servant who are serving in the church or christian organization that they actually are same as the servants of God well. This means that human rulers to some degree

are “the servants of God” and disobedience toward the authorities is a form of disobedience to God.⁴

A Scholar says “they are responsible to God and to men in the exercise of their power. For as they are deputed by God and

do his business, they must be given an account to him: and then the ministration which God has committed to them has a regard to the subjects”⁵In means that God alone selected the ministers in the government. It is not only considering them as “secular” minister but also consider them has a responsibility to God as the person who appointed them. It is remarkable view of Paul to help Christian to see that the government minister is the servant of God as well. If Christian wants to respect God they must respect government minister as the Bible regarded government minister as the people who are serving in Church as well.

Christian Responsibilities towards Government authorities

All the writer of New Testament agree that Christian should submit towards Government authorities. Interestingly, The Greek verb *hypotassō* for “be subject” (ESV) and “submit” (NIV) is in the imperative mood which means a strong order or command from the writer to be done by the readers are often occurs in the context of submission to authority following a traditional hierarchical framework.

⁶However, the act of submission of Christian

³ David Seal, “Diakonos,” in Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016).

⁴ Derek R. Brown and E. Tod Twist, Lexham Bible Guide: Romans, ed. Douglas Mangum (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), Ro 13:1–14.

⁵ John Calvin and John Owen, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 481.

⁶ John D. Barry, Douglas Mangum, et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012,

towards it should be proven by involving to support Government in praying for them (1 Tim 2:1-2), do good things (Rom 13:3; Titus 3:1), pay taxes (Matthew 22:15-22; Rom 13:6-7), receive and respect the government officials (1 Peter 2: 13-14).

Paul says praying for the government is the responsibility for every Christian (1 Tim 2:2). Many examples in the Bible show how great the work of God when people pray or intercede to the government. Take Nehemiah for example, He was the example of a person who prayed for the restoration to his country and God answered it and even moved the King who was not Jew or worship the God of Israelite to help Nehemiah and restore God's temple in Jerusalem.

Paul also urges Christian participating to obey government's rules, offer power, ideas or even money as the act of doing good things to government (Rom 13:3; Titus 3:1). Christian should be not as passive citizen but rather become active citizen who participates to be a blessing for the country.

In regard to pay taxes the scholar says "We owe these taxes because the leaders are God's servants, and their governing is

characterized as a service to God."⁷This helps Christian to have a better understanding when paying taxes to government authorities and also consider them as servants of God that has a right to be supported. All these things are Christian's responsibilities toward Government's authorities that God wants to be done seriously and actively.

The Exception to Disagree

God also does want Christian to be "blind" obedience. Paul does not believe that Christians must always agree with government in all cases, he expected at least Christians to model a good citizen.⁸ Submission to Government's authorities must walk together with truth that commanded in the Bible especially in the private and principle of Christian's faith. There many stories that Government authorities against the truth in the Bible, for example pressing Christian to deny their faith in Jesus, disallow Christian to have worship or forcing Christians to do immoral or in justice. Jesus said also the fear to God must be greater than to fear to Government in the context when Government authorities force Christian to deny their faith in Jesus (Matthew 10:1-32).

2016), Ro 13:1.

⁷ Steven E. Runge, High Definition Commentary: Romans (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 232.

⁸ Craig S. Keener, Romans, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 154

In areas where Christian known as minority or conflict areas, they face many difficulties to worship God because the local people or authorities banned Christian to have such private and principle things. In this way, Christian should not agree or submit towards authorities. It must not come from God. In some issue, a country force believer to involve in war where the Bible clearly teach and disallow to kill people. However, it is still be debated because for some people understand that to have a war does not mean to offence but sometimes is to have an act in defense.

CONCLUSION

Christian should acknowledge that government authorities comes from God, selected and appointed by God as well. They are doing God's business as well and have responsible to God. The bible calls them as "diakonos" or servant where times God used to mention the servants who serve in the Church. Therefore, Christian should submit for the rules or polices that they have made. They should be recognized and respected as Christian treat God's minister in the church. However, there are exception when Christian should disagree over government's authorities. Christian should refuse when such authorities forcing believers to deny their faith in Jesus, disallow believers to have

worship or even to press Christian to do injustice or immoral things.

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