





# CHRISTIANS AND THE GOVERNMENT

# GOVERNMENT IS GOD'S SERVANT

Romans 13 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is **no** authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebellious against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended...

# GOVERNMENT IS GOD'S SERVANT

Romans 13:4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

# SUBMIT TO EVERY HUMAN AUTHORITY. LIVE AS FREE PEOPLE.

1 Peter 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. 16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. 17 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

# CONTEXT

- Jewish power vs. Roman power – subject to foreign domination by pagans.
- We are governed by people we elect collectively.

“We the People...” are subject to:

- Legislative (making law)
- Executive (enforcing law)
- Judicial (interpreting law)

Federal, state, and local

# TITUS 3:1,2

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

# HYPOTHETICAL

- Ignore speed limits
- Refuse to pay taxes
- Resist arrest
- Engage in a political riots
- Shout death threats against political figures
- Stockpile weapons
- Bomb abortion clinics
- Insurrection



# AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

- More like a city than a nation: Only 2.5 million people; compare with 8 million people in just NYC today.
- British closed down American-led legislature and closed the courthouse
- Americans created a new governing authority for Massachusetts in Concord, MA – leading to fighting at Lexington and Concord.
- Declaration of Independence, establishment of a Continental Army, establishment of a new national Congress (external to Britain).
- People fought under the authority of the new government.

# THOMAS AQUINAS JUST WAR THEORY?

- **Just cause** – preserve innocent life, preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence, secure basic human rights.
- **Legitimate authority** – war must have been declared by a true authority; not an insurrection.
- **Last resort** – all peaceful alternatives have been exhausted
- **Probability of success is high.**
- **Proportionality** – the violence used in the war must be proportional to the injury suffered.

# OLD TESTAMENT VS. NEW TESTAMENT

Many instances of warfare under the authority of God in the Old Testament; but not a single one in the New Testament? Why?

- Shorter time period.
- Contextual shift: Theocracy led by God directly or through prophets. God handled the affairs of state directly.

# INDIVIDUAL ACTION VS PARTICIPATION IN AN AUTHORIZED WAR

## **Matthew 8** - Centurion

5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.”

7 Jesus said to him, “Shall I come and heal him?”

8 The centurion replied, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”...

# INDIVIDUAL ACTION VS PARTICIPATION IN AN AUTHORIZED WAR

**Matthew 8** - Centurion

10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

Modern U.S. soldiers only need to follow lawful commands. UCMJ provides guidelines and protocol for rejecting illegal or unethical commands.

# INDIVIDUAL ACTION VS PARTICIPATION IN AN AUTHORIZED WAR

I Samuel 24

The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

5 Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. 6 He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." 7 With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way...

# INDIVIDUAL ACTION VS PARTICIPATION IN AN AUTHORIZED WAR

## I Samuel 24

8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9 He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? 10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed.'

11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or **rebellion**.

# NEW TESTAMENT PHILOSOPHY

## **Matthew 26**

50 Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ...

55 In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a **rebellion**, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?..."

**John 18:36** "Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.'



# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## MATTHEW 5

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

**1 Peter 3:9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing...

# EXAMPLES OF NON-VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE

- Stephen prayed while being stoned by the Jews **Acts 7:59-60**
- Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns in prison; did not flee from the jailor or try to kill him
- **Luke 23:33** When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

# SUMMARY

- Christians obey the law, pay taxes, give honor to rulers.
- Christians live in peace – even accepting wrong, doing good to people who persecute us.
- Christians are non-violent and do not participate in violent insurrection.
- Christians are peacemakers, considerate, and gentle.
- Christians are as wise as serpents and harmless as doves.
- Christians are of a Kingdom not of this world – our nation is God's Kingdom.
- Christians recognize government as an extension of the authority of God.
- Christians do not slander those in authority.
- Christians fight evil with good - not evil with evil.