

Paying Your Taxes, Part 2

Scripture: Romans 13:6–7

Code: 45-103

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problems

Our world is in a terrible condition. Reading the local newspaper can be a distressing and discouraging experience. We're all aware of the conflicts, revolutions, and wars occurring throughout the world. An unending conflict rages on every level, but particularly in the hearts of individuals. Many people can't cope with life to a degree never before experienced in human history. It seems as though mental illness is at an all-time high. It begins with an individual who can't get along with himself, which progresses then to his spouse, family, neighbors, country, and finally his world. We hear many solutions offered to correct these problems. Most think the reasons for our problems are political or economic, such as a bad economy, unwise leadership, social injustice, and various ideologies and philosophies. It is claimed that if all these things could somehow be altered, we could clean up our perspectives on life and begin to deal with our problems.

The truth is that all our problems stem from two things: sin and Satan. The Bible is very clear about that.

1. SinMan is hopelessly engulfed in a state of sinfulness. It is because of his sinfulness that he does what he does. He is bound to a depravity that has reached the very base of his existence. Sin is man's basic problem.2. SatanI would add that Satan is also a problem because he provokes sin. He has a way of exciting the senses through his control of the world, and that causes men to step into sin. Ephesians 2:2 says that men are victims of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.a) He intensifies sin

Since man is a sinner, he finds himself in the domain of Satan, where his tendency toward sin is excited by Satan's influence. Satan is an incorrigible rebel--an inveterate criminal. Because Satan dominates the world of man, the problem is not simply human; it is supernaturally intensified. Man is a product of his fallenness and Satanic activity.b) He controls the worldA look through the pages of Scripture will make us aware that Satan is in control of our world.(1) Matthew 4:9--Satan had just shown Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Then he said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." That indicates to me that Satan possessed the various kingdoms of the world.(2) 1 John 5:19--"The whole world lieth in wickedness."(3) Luke 4:6--In his account of the temptation of Christ, Luke says, "The devil said unto him, All this authority will I give thee, and the glory of them [the kingdoms of the world]; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it." Satan is in charge of the kingdoms of the world and has the prerogative to give them to whomever he wants. That's an important perception.

(4) John 12:31--Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." With His own mouth, Jesus affirmed the monarchy that Satan has over this world. In a certain sense, it is Satan's world. Jesus also called him the prince of this world in John 14:30 and John 16:11.Satan is in charge of the kingdoms of the world. He has the right to give those kingdoms to whomever he chooses.

B. The Paradox

While national governments are ordained by God (Rom. 13:1), nonetheless they express Satan's influence and activity. This demonic activity is kept in check by those governments, yet in some

sense the governments are under the control of Satan. It is an interesting paradox. God has ordained government for the preservation of man. But man is basically evil, and his government is also evil. Satan is active and aggressive in human government, yet he is limited by God because He has established government to preserve human society. So while we say that the governments of the nations of the world are ordained by God, we are not saying they are necessarily being run by God or are reflective of His will. Since man has unlimited potential for evil, which is incited by the world and the flesh, government is an essential restraint. God has ordained it to restrain the inherent Satanic activity within each nation.

REVIEW

God ordains government. What does He call us to do in response to it? First, Romans 13:1 call us to be subject to the government. Second, Romans 13:6-7 calls us to support the government. We submit to government because it is ordained of God. That doesn't mean it isn't Satanic. That doesn't mean it reflects always the will of God. It simply means that God has ordained it to hold in check the limitless evil of Satan, his demons, and men. We are called to submit to those who are in authority: "For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). We have learned we are to submit to the government in Romans 13:1-5. Now we are learning that we are to support the government in verses 6-7.

I. THE PRINCIPLE (v. 6a)

"For, for this cause pay ye tribute also."

LESSON

II. THE PURPOSE (v. 6b)

"For they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."

We are to pay our taxes because those who collect them are God's ministers. That takes us back to verse 4, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good ... the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Those who are in authority are either ministers of God for good or wrath, depending on how you respond to them.

A. Serving a Divine Purpose

The Greek word in verse 6 for "ministers" is leitourgos, from which we get the word "liturgy." It speaks of religious service to God. It is used in Hebrews 1:7 of the service of angels: "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers [Gk. leitourgos] a flame of fire." Angels are called ministers in the sense of their religious service to God. Verse 14 says angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister." Again, the same word for minister is used. There are different words for ministry, but Paul chose the word that referred to a ministry specifically to God. We learn then that public servants who exercise authority in a national government are, in a very unique sense, serving God. They perform an act of religious service because government is ordained by God, and resistance to it is resistance to God. We are to support the government by paying our taxes because it is serving God. Government is ordained by God for the preservation of life and property. Those who serve in it, who collect our taxes to keep the government functioning, do so as ministers of God. That doesn't mean they're all Christians, and that they do all they ought to do. But it does mean that government serves a divine purpose.

1. The minimizing of God's standard

Robert Culver, who has written a very helpful book about civil government, is correct when he says, "Where theistic religion grows weak, [justice] will weaken. Crimes then are defined as antisocial activity, which in turn is then merely what the majority says it is. Then punishments seem to be the result of the majority's ganging up on the minority. This in turn seems inconsistent with democratic feelings. The result is a decline in uniform application of penalties for crime, resultant miscarriage of justice, trampling on the rights of law-abiding people, together with an increase in what ought to be

called crime" (Toward a Biblical View of Civil Government [Chicago: Moody Press, 1974], pp. 78-79). He's right. As soon as the principles of government are detached from God and no longer seen as a reflection of the divine mind, justice weakens. We are seeing that very thing in our society. Crimes no longer are defined as crimes, but as anti-social behavior. The question isn't, Are you guilty? but, Were you psychologically sound when you did it? The Bible knows nothing of that. If you committed a crime, you paid a penalty whether you were psychologically sound or not. This is an issue now because society sees crime as anti-social behavior rather than a reaction against a holy law. We no longer see God's holy standard behind our laws. As a result, punishment does seem to be the result, as Culver says, "of the majority's ganging up on the minority." Now everyone wants to fight for the rights of the criminal, and there are miscarriages of justice and an increase in crime. Every principle of justice and social order must be based on the rockbed of righteousness. When the foundation of what is right and wrong is removed, all that's left is the opinion of the majority. The result is a loss of justice. Government should not only be a service to God, but also be based on the standards that God has established. Since there is a divine purpose behind government, we ought to do all we can to maintain a godly standard. That's why we should take issue with the morality of our time. When it begins to decline, we lose our foundation. But even when government abandons a biblical foundation, our orders are the same--we are to submit to it and support it with our taxes.

2. The models of order and peace

The apostle Paul wanted Christianity to avoid insurrectionist, Judaistic attitudes of rebellion against the government. Christians are bound together by a common commitment to be models of order and peace. That's exactly what Christians were in the early days of the church. In spite of hostile and persecuting governments, they maintained a marvelous testimony of integrity by submitting to the government and paying their taxes.

a) Justin Martyr There was a man who lived from around A.D. 100 to 163 by the name of Justin Martyr. He is well-known among theologians. In his First Apology he said, "Everywhere, we, more readily than all men, endeavour to pay to those appointed by you the taxes both ordinary and extraordinary, as we have been taught by [Jesus.] ... Whence to God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings, and rulers of men, and praying that with your kingly power you be found to possess also sound judgment" (chap. xvii). That should be the Christian's attitude. We give our worship to God, but we'll support our government also.

b) Tertullian Tertullian was a Carthaginian theologian who lived from around A.D. 160 to 230. He wrote, "Without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest--whatever, as man or Caesar, an emperor would wish" (chap. xxx). He knew the emperor was called by the Lord to his office. Tertullian had the right attitude, even in a time when the empire was hostile toward Christians.

That was the spirit Paul was after. And that spirit did reside in the leaders of the church in those early centuries, and it should reside in us as well. Jesus taught that we are to respect the government, and Paul adds we are to do so because they are the ministers of God.

B. Ruling Under a Divine Trust

We have to keep in mind that all authority in government is delegated from the Lord. It is important for us to remind our leaders that they have a divine trust granted to them by God. In that sense, they rule under Him.

There is a most interesting section in the Psalms, running from chapters 92 to 98. There is a recurring theme through these Psalms, testifying to the world that God is the only true sovereign and king, and that all other authority is simply delegated from Him.

1. Psalm 92:8--"But Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore."

2. Psalm 93:1-2--"The Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty. The Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He hath girded himself; the world also is established, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne

is established of old; thou art from everlasting."

3. Psalm 94:1-2, 10--"O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth He who chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct? He who teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" God is always exalted as the sovereign.

4. Psalm 95:3-7--"The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Oh, come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

5. Psalm 96:3-10--"Declare his glory among the nations, his wonders among all peoples. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the peoples; give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him, all the earth. Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth."

6. Psalm 97:1, 5-6--"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

7. Psalm 98:2, 9--"The Lord hath made known his salvation, his righteousness hath he openly shown in the sight of the nations.... he cometh to judge the earth."

8. Psalm 83:1-7, 13, 17-18--"Keep not thou silence, O God; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against thee: The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre O my God, make them like a wheel, like the stubble before the wind.... Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish, that men may know that thou, whose name alone is the Lord, art the Most High over all the earth."

9. Daniel 4:32--King Nebuchadnezzar is told, "They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Nebuchadnezzar thought he was invincible. He thought he had obtained his kingdom by his own power and wisdom. But he was going to learn a lesson by becoming a raving maniac and living like an animal with his hair growing like a bird's feathers and his fingernails like eagle's claws. He learned that God gives and takes kingdoms according to His will.

10. Daniel 5:21--This verse describes again what King Nebuchadnezzar was taught: "Till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will." If a person is in a position of authority, that's because God delegated that right to him. It is a divine privilege and a divine occupation.

C. Attending to Divine Service

In Romans 13:6, Paul says rulers "are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." What thing? The service of ruling; the service of leading people, protecting them, collecting their taxes, and performing all civil matters for the public good.

1. The choice of servants

When we have the opportunity to vote for officials, we need to choose those who are competent and committed to serve. If you find someone in office who is unfaithful and isn't continually attending to

service, but is attending to something else, we need to find another servant. It would be best if they were Christians, but we often don't have that alternative, so we choose someone who's competent. If I was going to have heart surgery, it would be wonderful to have a heart surgeon who is a Christian. But if I had my choice between a nice Christian and a good, unsaved heart surgeon, I'd take the good, unsaved heart surgeon. The Christian might mean well, but I'd rather survive! There may come a time in government when our choice is between a competent person and an incompetent one. There may be times when a Christian is the incompetent and unfaithful one. We have to be careful to know who we are selecting. We want people who understand something of the dilemma Moses faced in Exodus 18. He couldn't get all the work done. He looked at everything he had to do in judging Israel, but he couldn't handle it. That's when his father-in-law told him to divide up the responsibility (vv. 14-23). Moses followed his father-in-law's advice and selected qualified people to handle all the varying responsibilities. He divided up his load and was therefore able to do it well (vv. 24-26). Government is called to do what it does well--to attend itself continually to ruling and protecting its people.

2. The commitment of servants

To satisfy my own heart and mind, I spent some time looking through the prophets because they have so much to say to leaders. We've said that we need to be willing to submit and pay our taxes--that's our part. But it ought to be said what the leaders' part is. a) Recognition First, they are to recognize that they are in leadership because God put them there. They need to know that their responsibility was delegated to them by divine authority. They certainly should take stock of the divine standard. They ought to be faithful knowing that their accountability is to God. b) Responsibility Scripture is very explicit about the kind of people who are to be in leadership in government. No matter if you read Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, they all spoke not only to Israel, but also to all the nations around Israel. They were calling for leaders of all nations to conform to a divine standard. I want to give you some principles that we need to lay upon our leaders if they're going to be faithful in their responsibility. Jeremiah 1:9-10 says, "Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." Jeremiah's message went far beyond Israel. God has requirements of all national leaders, not just those in Israel. And it was not only Jeremiah who gave that message, but many other prophets did as well. What does God require of the rulers of nations?

(1) Serve a divine purpose First, God requires leaders to know that they serve a divine purpose. God told Nebuchadnezzar that he would have to learn the hard way that God was the Most High ruler who gives kingdoms to whom He wills. Any ruler from the President down to a local assemblyman needs to know that his responsibility is God-given. (2) Be committed to truth and justice The prophets made it very clear that one called to leadership is to be humble, serious, diligent, and loyal to truth and justice. If leaders know they serve a divine purpose, they ought to serve in a manner that reflects that knowledge. Daniel rebuked Nebuchadnezzar for his pride (Dan. 4:25-26), and for oppressing the poor (Dan. 4:27). Daniel pronounced judgment on Belshazzar for his pride and his failure to glorify God (Dan. 5). God indicts the leaders beyond Israel. I believe that while we submit to our rulers, they are called to accountability before God. While we are willing to submit to the authorities, we also have to be willing to confront their evil if it needs to be confronted. If we are going to be faithful, and be the right kind of citizens, we will submit. But when the leaders perpetrate evil, vice, wickedness, and self-seeking policies, we need to speak out with a prophetic voice.

(3) Maintain order The prophets taught that leaders should maintain order by a just and firm enforcement of the law. The prophets indicted the nations for failing to enforce the law-- allowing people to get away with crimes without punishment. That is particularly true in Jeremiah's prophecy.

Jeremiah 34:8-9 says, "This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; that every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should enslave them, to wit, a Jew his brother." A decree was made to free those people. But verse 11 says, "Afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids." The people were supposed to let their servants go free, but they didn't. They took them back. The rest of the story chronicles that there was no enforcement of the decree. Because of that, God said, "Ye turned and polluted my name I will command, saith the Lord, and cause them [Judah's enemies] to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant" (vv. 16, 22). One of the reasons for the terrible captivity that came upon Israel was that they were not enforcing the covenants they had made. Leaders are responsible to enforce the law firmly and justly.

(4) Avoid self-seeking
Leaders are not to be preoccupied with their own welfare and position. Jeremiah 22:13-15 says, "Woe unto him who buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; who useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; who saith, I will build myself a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth out windows; and it is paneled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness, and then it was well with him?" This message is being given to wicked King Jehoiakim. Then verse 17 says, "But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for shedding innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it." When a leader is covetous, self-seeking, violent, and oppressive, the judgment of God will fall. They are not to seek their own welfare at the expense of others. There are leaders around the world that do that, and they are under the condemnation of Scripture.

(5) Sympathize with the needy
Those who serve in an official capacity should care for people who have needs. Isaiah 10:1-2 says, "Woe unto them who decree unrighteous decrees, and who write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from justice, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!" Israel had leaders who were unbelievably brutal, depriving the poor and needy (cf. Amos 2:6-7).

(6) Treat others with kindness
A leader should have an attitude of basic decency toward people. That principle is violated by the tyrants, despots, and murderous leaders of the world. Amos 1:13 says, "They have ripped up the women with child in Gilead." The nation of Ammon ripped open the wombs of pregnant women.

(7) Speak the truth
Leaders must speak truth. God hates lying lips. Amos 2:4-5 says, "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after which their fathers have walked; but I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem." God indicted the leaders for their lying tongues.

(8) Enforce public morality
To be faithful to their delegated authority from God, leaders must enforce public morality. We see them failing to do that today. God sent Jonah to Nineveh and said, "Cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" (Jon. 1:2). God indicted that city and all its leaders for tolerating wickedness. He promised devastating judgment if Nineveh had not repented. Isaiah 13--23 is a cry against the leaders for failing to call the people to a high moral standard.

Scripture indicates some very specific things that leaders are to do. Let me briefly review them: Leaders need to know that they serve a divine purpose. They are to be humble, serious, diligent, and loyal to truth and justice. If they know their service is rendered to God, then they ought to take it very seriously. They are to maintain order by a just and firm enforcement of the law. They are not to seek their own welfare. They should sympathize with the needy. They are to treat others with kindness. They must always speak the truth. Finally, they are to enforce public morality.

The Bampton Lecture of 1898 Robert Lawrence Ottley in his Bampton Lectures of 1898 had some

interesting things to say that relate to what we have been studying. (The Bampton Lectures were a series of eight lectures on theological topics given regularly at Oxford University since 1780.) Ottley said, "The Old Testament may be studied ... as an instructor in social Righteousness. It exhibits the moral government of God as attested in his dealings with nations rather than with individuals; and it was their consciousness of the action and presence of God in history that made the prophets preachers ... to the world at large There is indeed significance in the fact that in spite of their ardent zeal for social reform they did not as a rule take part in political life or demand political reforms. They desired ... not better institutions, but better men" (Aspects of the Old Testament, The Bampton Lectures, 1897 [London: Longmans, 1898], pp. 430-431). I believe that in our day the church and its preachers have to rise to a level of not seeking political reform, but calling for better men. They should not try to manipulate the system, but confront its evil. While we want to be submissive, we will not be silent when the role of leadership is abused.

We support government by paying our taxes because we realize that its leaders are God's ministers called to attend continually on their service. If they don't attend continually to it, we are responsible to bring it to their attention.

III. THE PARTICULARS (v. 7)

Paul now gets more specific in his command so we can be sure we understand the fullness of our obligation.

A. The General Obligation (v. 7a)

"Render, therefore, to all their dues."

The word "render" is *apodidomi* in the Greek text. It refers to giving back something that you owe. That's what you do when you pay your taxes. You owe taxes; you're not giving them as a gift. When you render something, you are paying back a debt (cf. Matt. 5:26; 18:25-26, 28-30, 34; 20:8; 22:21). The word "dues" is *opheile* in the Greek text. It means, "a debt," or "an obligation." Pay your debt to the government. We have a moral obligation. Romans 13:8 says, "Owe no man any thing"--and that includes the government. Verse 7 says, "Render, therefore, to all their dues." Taxes are debts owed. If you don't pay, you're a robber.

B. The Specific Obligations (v. 7b)

1. "Tribute to whom tribute"

"Tribute" is *phoros* in the Greek text. Rome had one tax called *kensos* in Greek, and that was a head tax, or census. Every person paid it. Then they had the poll tax, or land tax. That is what Paul is referring to in verse 7. This tax was like our income tax. An assessment was made on land, property, slaves, and capital. The taxable amount of one's possessions was determined, the appropriate tax rate applied, and then the person was charged the tax. So Paul says to pay your income tax.

2. "Custom to whom custom"

The word "custom" is *telos* in the Greek text. It refers to revenue that was raised from merchandise or goods. It would be like duty or sales tax--any tax attached to a commodity. Paul is saying to pay your sales tax or your duty. Don't smuggle things; pay what's fair. Tax collectors were positioned at all crossroads. That's what Matthew did, sitting at crossroads collecting taxes and duties from people transferring goods across borders.

3. "Fear to whom fear"

The Greek word for fear is *phobos*, from which we get the English word, "phobia." It can mean anything from respect to sheer terror, depending on how it's used. It is translated "terror" in Romans 13:3: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." So it can mean anything from terror to respect. It means "respect" in verse 7. You ought to have a healthy respect for the people who collect your taxes. That healthy respect translates into giving them what you owe them, realizing they have a right to it for the service they render. First Peter 2:17-18 says, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters." Show people respect for the position of authority they possess.

4. "Honor to whom honor."

The Greek word for honor is *time*. It can sometimes refer to money. So this phrase could be translated, "Give money to whom money is due." It can also mean "respect." It is best to see Paul as using two words that refer to money--tax and duty--and two words that demonstrate attitude--respect and honor. We are to pay our taxes and duty with an attitude of respect and honor. Notice this illustration: First Timothy 5:17 says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor [time]." What is the double honor? Verse 18 says, "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the grain." In other words, if you expect an ox to tread the grain, you better feed him. So, first of all, if you have an elder that rules well, pay him money. Then verse 19 says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation." That means he should be shown respect. But Paul does go on to say that if the elder does sin, he is to be rebuked before everyone (v. 20). Double honor would be respect and money.

As Christians, we are called to pay our taxes, respect our leaders, and give them the honor that is due them. We should want to do what is right by giving honor to whom honor is due, and respect to whom respect is due. We should pay our taxes and live as Christians should live for the glory of our Lord.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What are the two sources of man's problems in the world?
2. How is Satan related to sin?
3. Cite some Scriptures indicating that Satan is in control of the world.
4. Explain the paradox surrounding who controls government.
5. When Paul used the word "ministers" in Romans 13:6, what was he referring to?
6. What happens when the principles of government are detached from God?
7. Explain how Christians in the early days of the church were models of order and peace?
8. Cite some Scriptures testifying that God is the only true Sovereign and King.
9. What kind of officials should Christians vote for?
10. What is one important thing that the leaders in government need to recognize?
11. What was one of the main messages that God wanted the prophets to communicate to the world?
12. What should Christians be willing to do when leaders perpetrate evil?
13. What was one of the reasons that the nation of Israel was taken into captivity (see Jer. 34:8-9, 11, 16, 22)?
14. What did Jeremiah accuse Jehoiakim of (Jer. 22:13-15)?
15. What was Judah indicted for in Amos 2:4-5?
16. Why did God indict Nineveh and its leaders (Jon. 1:2)?
17. What did Paul mean when he said, "Render, therefore, to all their dues" (Rom. 13:7)?
18. Explain each of the specific obligations that Christians have to their government (Rom. 13:7).

Pondering the Principles

1. How are you presently fulfilling your responsibility to be a model of order and peace? Both Justin Martyr and Tertullian testified to the ways in which they tried to be models (see pp. xx-xx). Compare what you are doing to what they practiced: They paid taxes that were ordinary and extraordinary, worshiped God only, and served the government. They also prayed for kings and rulers in these ways: for prolonged life, sound judgment, security for the nation, protection for the leaders, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, and a world at peace. If you have not been a model in those ways, make the commitment that the members of the early church did.
2. When you choose leaders in an election, what criteria do you use? Review the section on the responsibility of leaders (pp. 8-10). Make a list of each of those responsibilities with a brief

description of each. Before the next election, make the effort to compare the candidates against that list. Find out how well they served in their past responsibilities. Remember, it is your responsibility as a Christian to try to select leaders who will be faithful to serve as ministers of God.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2026 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).