

CAN CHRISTIANS DISOBEY THE GOVERNMENT?

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The Bible consistently presents God's people influencing rulers and governments

A. Biblical examples of godly influence in public life

- Joseph
- Moses
- Daniel
- Jeremiah
- Nehemiah
- Mordecai
- Esther

Scripture references: Genesis 41; Exodus 3–14; Daniel 1–6; Jeremiah 27–29; Nehemiah 1–6; Esther 4–8

B. Prophetic witness to nations and rulers

- Isaiah
- Ezekiel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah

Scripture references: Isaiah 1; Ezekiel 34; Amos 7; Obadiah 1; Jonah 3; Nahum 3; Habakkuk 1–2; Zephaniah 3



C. New Testament examples

- John the Baptist confronting Herod
- Paul testifying before rulers

Scripture references: Matthew 14:1–4; Luke 3:19; Acts 24–26

The Kingdom of God is not merely spiritual; it is also political

A. The conflict began with rebellion against God’s authority

- A coup in heaven
 - Darkness cast down
 - Evil worked out through rulers, powers, and nations
- Scripture references:** Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:12–17; Revelation 12:7–12; Ephesians 6:12

B. The story of Scripture is the clash of kingdoms

- God’s kingdom confronting kingdoms of darkness
- Scripture references:** Psalm 2; Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:10; Revelation 11:15

C. Government is one of God’s ordained spheres of authority

- Given for order, restraint of evil, and protection of society
- Scripture references:** Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–14

A repeated biblical pattern appears throughout Scripture

A. God issues a command

B. Nations and rulers rebel

C. God’s people are forced to choose

D. God honors those who side with him



Scripture references: Exodus 1:15–21; 1 Samuel 16:1–13; Daniel 3:1–30; Daniel 6:1–28; Acts 4:18–20; Acts 5:27–29

God sometimes requires civil disobedience when rulers command what God forbids

A. The Hebrew midwives feared God more than Pharaoh

- Refused the king's order
- Preserved life
- Received God's favor

Scripture references: Exodus 1:15–21

B. Samuel obeyed God over the reigning king

- Saul was still king
- God sent Samuel to anoint another
- Obedience to God required action politically dangerous to Samuel

Scripture references: 1 Samuel 8:4–22; 1 Samuel 15:26–28; 1 Samuel 16:1–13

C. The Magi disobeyed Herod

- Warned by God in a dream
- Refused to return to Herod
- Their obedience protected Christ

Scripture references: Matthew 2:7–12, 16

Civil authority is legitimate only under God's moral order

A. Human rulers do not define right and wrong; God does



- Government is meant to punish evil and commend good
Scripture references: 1 Peter 2:13–14; Romans 13:3–4

B. When rulers redefine evil as good and good as evil, they oppose God

- Such rule stands under divine judgment
Scripture references: Isaiah 5:20; Psalm 2:10–12

C. God is not anti-authority

- He ordains spheres of human authority for human flourishing
Scripture references: Romans 13:1–2; 1 Peter 2:13–17; Ephesians 5:22–6:4; Hebrews 13:17

Submission to government is real, but never absolute

A. Peter commands honor and submission

- Submit for the Lord's sake
- Honor the emperor
- Fear God
Scripture references: 1 Peter 2:13–17

B. Peter also practiced resistance when commanded to disobey God

- Forbidden to preach Christ
- Continued preaching Christ
Scripture references: Acts 4:18–20; Acts 5:27–29

C. The controlling principle



- “We must obey God rather than men.”
Scripture reference: Acts 5:29

Christians must distinguish between rightful submission and faithful resistance

A. Where civil law aligns with God’s moral law

- Christians cheer
- Support
- Submit
Scripture references: Romans 13:1–7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13–17

B. Where civil law contradicts God’s word

- Christians stand out
- Stand up
- Stand against, if necessary
Scripture references: Daniel 3:16–18; Daniel 6:10; Acts 4:19–20; Acts 5:29

Political corruption is ultimately a repentance issue

A. Rejection of truth is rooted in rejection of Christ

- Refusal to admit guilt
- Refusal to bow before God
Scripture references: Acts 5:28–31; Psalm 51:17; Philippians 2:9–11

B. The true solution is repentance

- Not mere policy adjustment



- Personal humility before divine judgment
Scripture references: 2 Chronicles 7:14; Acts 17:30–31; James 4:6–10

Historic Protestant theology recognized limits to civil obedience

A. Rulers are subject to God

B. Obedience to rulers must never lead to disobedience to God

Scripture references: Psalm 2:10–12; Daniel 4:17, 34–37; Revelation 19:16

Christians Are Called Not Merely To Resist Evil, But To Build What Is Good

A. Christians do not bury their heads in the sand

- They put their hands to the plow
Scripture references: Luke 9:62; 1 Corinthians 15:58

B. Christians build better things in acts of faith

- Stronger families
- Stronger churches
- Stronger children
- Stronger schools
- Stronger institutions
Scripture references: Deuteronomy 6:6–9; Psalm 78:5–7; Matthew 16:18; Titus 2:1–8

Salt Must Leave The Salt Shaker

A. The church is the salt of the earth



- Not merely the salt of the church
Scripture reference: Matthew 5:13

B. Without salt, decay spreads

- Without godly witness, nations rot
Scripture references: Matthew 5:13–16; Philippians 2:14–16

The Kingdom Of God Must Be Seen As Tangible, Visible, And Public

A. The kingdom lands in the middle of human life

- Not merely abstract
- Not merely otherworldly
Scripture references: Matthew 6:10; Luke 4:18–19; Luke 11:20; Colossians 1:13

B. The kingdom demands allegiance from persons and peoples

- Individuals
- Nations
- Rulers
Scripture references: Psalm 2; Matthew 28:18–20; Revelation 11:15

America's founding language appealed to a law above kings

A. The laws of nature and of Nature's God

B. Resistance to tyranny was framed in submission to higher law

Scripture references: Acts 5:29; Isaiah 33:22; Psalm 33:12

The church must act before the line is drawn further



A. Better to stand early than remain silent until devastation comes

B. Free speech and religious liberty matter for public faithfulness

Scripture references: Proverbs 31:8–9; Esther 4:14; Ephesians 5:11; Colossians 4:5–6

Final call: courage, clarity, and confidence in Christ's reign

A. The choice is clear

- Be courageous
- Be bold
- Stand up

- Let your voice be heard

Scripture references: Joshua 1:9; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 6:10–20

B. Jesus remains on the throne

- No election alters his reign

Scripture references: Psalm 110:1–2; Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:15–20; Revelation 19:11–16

C. The church must press on in kingdom advance

- Make a dent in the nation for King Jesus, whatever the cost

Scripture references: Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:31–39

