



BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS NATION

1. Believers are commanded to fear their government (qal imperative of *yare'*: Prov. 24:21a; aorist active imperative of *apodidomi* Rom. 13:7). We are also commanded to submit to the government (Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:13–14). Separation from rebels is your protection (Prov. 24:21b–22).
2. Resisting governmental authority is resisting an ordinance of God (Rom. 13:2a).
3. There are times when believers must disobey their government. The law of civil disobedience is: follow higher authority when man's will and God's will contradict.
 - a. The Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh (Exod. 1:15–21). Pharaoh had no right to ask them to murder newborn babies. Those in authority cannot command subordinates to sin against God. God blessed the civil disobedience of these midwives.
 - b. Moses' parents disobeyed Pharaoh (Exod. 1:22–2:3; Heb. 11:23).
 - c. The Magi disobeyed Herod the Great (comp. Matt. 2:8 with 2:12). The angelic messenger is from God and is therefore higher authority.
 - d. Peter and John disobeyed the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:19–20).
 - e. Peter and the apostles disobeyed the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:27–29, 41–42).
 - f. Daniel disobeyed his government by praying to God (comp. Dan. 6:7 with 6:10–13). He said, "I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime" (6:22).
4. The government does not have the right to impose doctrine or procedure on the Church (cf. Acts 4:19–20; 5:27–29).
5. A separation of church and state is the best way to preserve religious freedoms. The freedoms of speech, assembly, and worship existed in the Theocratic Kingdom. The functions of church and state were separated in this constitutional monarchy: the king controlled the political realm and the priests controlled the religious. At the time of Christ, however, the Jewish government suppressed these freedoms. Believers were forced to worship underground because of a fear of the Jews. They were afraid of being excommunicated from the synagogue.
 - a. freedom of speech (John 7:13; cf. John 9:22).
 - b. freedom of assembly (John 20:19).
 - c. freedom of worship (John 19:38).
6. Believers are commanded to pay their taxes (Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25; Rom. 13:7; cf. Luke 23:2). Joseph, for instance, went to Bethlehem to register for the census (Luke 2:1–5).
7. A believer's responsibility to his government includes military service.
 - a. Military victory is the basis of national peace (2 Sam. 10:19; cf. Josh. 11:23; 14:15).
 - b. Military service falls within a believer's circle of responsibility (comp. 1 Sam. 7:3 with 7:14). Notice the two circles of responsibility: God confused the Philistines but Israel had to rout them. This is the normal pattern—God *helps* Israel. But twice God chose to intervene without human help—at Jericho (Joshua 6:5, 20–21) and in Jehoshaphat's day (2 Chron. 20:17). Both are exceptions to the norm.