

## **For Conscience' Sake (Romans 13: 5)**

- God's word is beautiful, made all the more beautiful by unexpected discoveries
- Creation is a great example: God did all of that & then, oh yes He made the stars
- What an amazing and utterly understated line: oh yes the millions of stars
- Malcolm Muggeridge called that the greatest throw away line ever (Gen 1:14)

### **I. And Don't Forget Conscience**

- Two reasons Paul gives for obeying the government: 1) God put them there & rebellion against them is against God 2) They bear the sword for your good
- If you refuse to obey them they will punish you. Those are all good reasons
- But Paul goes on and says, "oh yes obey them because of conscience" (v. 5)
- He lifts the matter from the pragmatic to the highest plane introducing conscience
- Paul is emphasizing that human beings are moral agents, God's image bearers

### **II. What Is Conscience**

- Conscience was very important to Paul & found in his letters frequently
- The word conscience is made up of two Latin words: *Con* & *scientia* = knowledge
- Specifically it has to do with one's inner heart (motives) as opposed to his actions

### **III. What This Means for Government**

- How does this relate to the Christian and his response to civil government?
  - 1) We have a higher motive for obeying than others do: Christians alone can appreciate that God gave government, but we must obey for obedience is right
  - 2) We have a stronger reason for disobeying when disobedience becomes necessary
- Civil government is limited: it cannot forbid the free exercise of religion
- No government has the right to violate the 10 commandments or to force others to
- Government has no right to commit unjust acts or force a Christian to do so either

### **IV. The Exercise of Conscience**

- 1) Abortion: the government must protect, abortion is the murder of the innocent
- 2) Pornography: we believe in free speech, but draw the line when it hurts others

### **V. Conscience & the Word of God**

- A danger for us as Christians is pride, thinking we alone have the right answers
- Our consciences are valuable only when they are enlightened by the Word of God