

Allegiance to Which Kingdom?

Romans 13:1-5; Jeremiah 10:7

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The tyranny we increasingly see exercised in this nation in seeking to control families, church, and individual lives and to suppress our God-given rights did not begin in 2020 with locking down churches, closing businesses, and mandating vaccinations. No, that was the end of a long drawn out, gradual process over 230 years that was actually laid much earlier at the ratification of the U. S. Constitution (1788). For it was at that time that this nation determined that it would not be established as a Christian nation under the express authority of God and His Son, Jesus Christ or in submission to His holy Law as the supreme law of the land. In failing to do so, there was no constitutional basis to prevent the tyranny we now see being exercised by civil government over us (other than the will of the people, whose will is corrupt and as changeable as the wind).

Should we give our allegiance to nations and civil governments that give not their allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth? That is the question we shall seek to answer as we look at the teaching found in God's Word. Since civil government is God's institution, it is to Him that we must turn in order to know to which kingdom/nation we must give our allegiance. There are two questions I would like us to consider today: (1) What Is a Christian Nation? (2) To What Government Are We to Give Our Allegiance?

I. What is a Christian nation?

A. There are Five Characteristics of a Christian Nation.

1. **A Christian nation officially acknowledges the Triune God** revealed in the Bible as the One who has instituted civil government as His ordinance (Romans 13:1)—not with an absolute power, but with a limited and delegated power under Him.

2. **A Christian nation honors the Son of God** officially in its constitution as the “prince of the kings of the earth” and as the “King of kings and Lord of lords”—it does not hide Him as if embarrassed of Him (Psalm 2:12; Revelation 1:5; Revelation 19:16). It cannot be a Christian family if Jesus Christ is not honored as the only Savior and Lord—the same is true of a Christian nation. Who will dare say that though Christ is King of nations, nations in their constitutions are not bound to own Him as their supreme King (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22)?

3. **A Christian nation establishes the Moral Law of God as the supreme law of the land** (as summarized in the Ten Commandments). Just as the family and the church have no right to exalt man's laws above God's Moral Law, neither does the state. Whoever establishes and authors the law of a nation is honored as supreme—whether man or God (Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12).

4. **A Christian nation establishes biblical, reformed, Christianity** as the official religion of the nation—not as one religion among many others, but as the only true religion—not a pantheon of gods and religions like that of Rome. That was common to pagan nations, not to Israel (First Table). What a nation legally allows, it legally promotes (it does not have to legally require it of all its citizens). If it legally allows abortion, it promotes it. If it legally allows false religion, it promotes it.

5. **A Christian nation requires the civil rulers of the nation to swear to uphold and rule according to this biblical constitution.** If one will not do so, no authority to rule should be placed in his hands. Without this point, all other previous points are futile—they will not be enforced.

B. Application

1. A moral wrong can never be a civil right. For all rights (civil and religious alike) originate with God (not with man); and if God does not establish a civil right to practice a false religion within any nation

(which He does not, but to the contrary declares that false religion must not be tolerated as a rival to the one true religion, Deuteronomy 12:2-3), then such an alleged civil right does not exist (regardless of what a civil government constitutionally permits and defends). And a nation that legally creates such an alleged right only demonstrates that it is not a Christian nation, but is rather a rebellious nation usurping the place of God and Christ. Polytheism is the established religion of that nation—not Christianity?

2. If the moral evil of abortion can never be a civil right because the Moral Law of God condemns all murder in the Sixth Commandment (“Thou shalt not kill” Exodus 20:13), how can the moral evil of false religion/polytheism become a civil right when the same Moral Law of God condemns all false gods (and all false religions) in the First Commandment? Having many false religions that are legally permitted is not a Christian nation. Jehovah God is King of the nations and judges nations for their false religions (Jeremiah 10:7,10,11), and Jesus Christ is God’s appointed Mediator under whose lordship and dominion all nations have been subjected and to whom alone all civil rulers and nations must bring their worship or suffer His wrath (Psalm 2:10-12).

3. Therefore, God and His Mediator (Jesus Christ) alone have the right and authority to establish the moral duties and moral rights of magistrates, citizens, and nations. The nations of this world are always up in arms over the violation of so-called human rights, but what nation and its civil leaders are up in arms over the violation of the rights of the Triune God of the Bible who created us and instituted civil government. A truly Christian nation will first constitutionally and legally defend the rights of God and His Christ as revealed in the Bible, and then will constitutionally and legally defend the rights of man as revealed in the Bible. A nation cannot defend the rights of men if it does not first defend the rights of God. A nation that will not constitutionally and legally uphold and defend the rights of Jehovah God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and His commandments, but will to the contrary renounce His rights by a wicked toleration of false religion, murder of unborn children (63.5 million), and sexual perversion cannot be a Christian nation.

II. To What Government Are We to Give Our Allegiance?

A. Paul’s purpose in Romans 13:1-7 is to address a problem that some Christians at that time wrestled with after their conversion: an anti-government position that alleged a freedom from all civil governments in the world.

1. Peter writes concerning false teachers who “despise government” (2 Peter 2:10), and Jude likewise mentions those who “despise dominion” (Jude 8).

2. Thus, it would seem that since the lawful ordinance of civil government was in hazard of being denigrated by false teachers, and since Christianity was in hazard of being brought under reproach by such false teachers, the apostles warned the churches and clarified what was the divine lawful ordinance of civil government instituted for His own glory and for the good of society and the church.

B. What does lawful civil government look like (Romans 13:1-4)?

1. Paul calls the lawful ordinance of civil government instituted by God “the higher powers” (Romans 13:1a). The word translated as “powers” (*exousíais*) refers to moral power as distinguished from raw physical power (*dunamis*). Thus, Paul identifies what moral qualifications a lawful civil government instituted by God will exhibit.

2. This is further evidenced by the word that modifies “powers”: namely, the word “higher” i.e. “the higher powers.” By “the higher powers”, Paul does not mean those magistrates holding a higher position or rank than others, but rather powers (civil governments) that are morally higher (Romans 13:1; Philippians 2:3; Philippians 3:8 [translated here as “excellency”]; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 2:13). God lays out the moral qualifications for those who would rule as His ordinance for the good of God’s people (Exodus 18:21; 2 Samuel 23:2-3; Job 34:17; Psalm 94:20; Proverbs 16:12).

3. Paul (in Romans 13:1) does not describe as the ordinance of God just any civil

government or civil ruler that may be in power by God's providence (whether Nero, Hitler, Stalin, or the Beast of Revelation) or just any civil government that may be approved by the people. For the Third Reich of Germany (under Hitler) had the consent and support of the people (and yet was an unlawful civil government due to its moral disqualification). How is the murder of 63.5 million babies in the U.S. less heinous than anything that Hitler did? That civil government according to Paul is only the ordinance of God that has the "higher" (or "excellent") moral qualities found in God's Moral Law, so that when Paul continues in Romans 13:1-7 to address the "higher powers" that be, he is addressing only those lawful civil governments that rule according to God's Moral Law. Those rulers and governments that flagrantly and habitually rule contrary to God's commandments are not the ordinance of God, but rather are tyrants—practicing treason against God.

4. Note what else the Apostle Paul says about the "higher powers" (lawful civil government) in Romans 13:2-4.

a. Lawful civil government and rulers that are the ordinance of God "are not a terror to good works, but to the evil" and give "praise" to and honor the good works of their citizens (Romans 13:3). That is, lawful civil governments that are the ordinance of God do not frame laws to defend evil works like false religion, atheism, witchcraft, Satanism, covenant-breaking, Sabbath-breaking, murder of unborn children, adultery, sodomy, pornography, unlawful divorces, same sex "marriages", or theft of property. But rather lawful civil government (that is the ordinance of God and that is a Christian nation) becomes a terror to the wicked by restraining their wicked practices.

b. Lawful civil government that is the ordinance of God is "the minister of God" to the people and to the Church of Christ for good, and is "the minister of God" in avenging God's wrath against those who do evil (Romans 13:4). But how can a civil government or its rulers be the minister of God (the servant of God) for the good of Christ's Church, when the constitution and laws by which it rules refuse to officially and constitutionally kiss the Son and rather legally tolerate and promote all the evils (and much more) that were just mentioned that are contrary to God's Moral Law? Dear ones, such a civil government cannot be either the ordinance of God or a Christian nation, especially when it has the written revelation of God's Moral Law available throughout the country and yet has rebelliously resisted it. Sadly, this is true of our own nation. It is not a Christian nation nor was it officially founded as such.

c. It is to a civil government that is indeed the minister to thee for good to which alone we are to submit and give our allegiance for conscience sake (Romans 13:5). We resist God when we stand with tyranny that opposes Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth. Just because we must oppose tyranny does not mean we support anarchy. We obey all the laws that do not require us to sin against God. I dare say that anarchy is far worse than tyranny in its destruction.

C. Conclusion

1. As I close, I would not only have you to know from God's Word what He says a Christian nation morally looks like and does not look like, but also what should we do in our present circumstances when we confess our nation is NOT a Christian nation nor God's ordinance.

2. To resist (oppose) tyranny is to obey God (James 4:7). We cannot be neutral with regard to sin and tyranny is a sin. As Samuel Rutherford has said so well (*Lex Rex*, "The Author's Preface", 1644):

Christ, the prophets, and apostles of our Lord, went to heaven with the note of traitors, seditious men, and such as turned the world upside down: calumnies of treason to Caesar were an ingredient in Christ's cup.... Truth to Christ cannot be treason to Caesar....

3. How should we resist tyranny? We should pray, teach, preach, protest, flee injustice, and defend ourselves (our good name and body) when necessary.

4. But especially, we must see and understand this is a spiritual battle between Christ and Satan, truth and lies, righteousness and corruption, God's Law and man's law. We must prepare ourselves and

our families for that spiritual battle first; then we will have the divine light and wisdom to fight any other battle we face. As Christians, we are called to resist sin, tyranny, and corruption in high places, but we must begin with resisting our own sin and corruption, not tolerate it, cover it, excuse it, or blame others for it. It is hypocrisy to resist tyranny in the civil government and tolerate it in our own lives and families.

a. Our hope cannot be in the arm of flesh (political parties, candidates, or elections). Our hope must be only in the LORD and in the gospel; for only Jesus died to change wicked hearts—even the heart of the rebellious king (Proverbs 21:1).

b. There is no other way to resist the enemy than to resist in the power of Christ and His truth. The enemy may crush us, but he cannot crush King Jesus and His truth. King Jesus is sovereign over all nations—He will subdue all nations to Himself by His power and will change wicked hearts by the gospel (“All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him” Psalm 72:11).

c. Our supreme allegiance must be to Jesus Christ and His kingdom. It is treason against Christ to give our supreme allegiance to any earthly kingdom/nation (especially one that refuses to submit to Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords). To Christ our King be all glory, honor, and power. Amen.

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