

Understanding the Lord's Will for the Government (cont.)
(Ephesians 5:17)

Introduction:

1. In this verse we are given an important admonition -- to understand what the will of the Lord is.
2. We must put this into practice because we are responsible for doing the Father's will (Matthew 7:21).
3. Today we are studying passages that help us in "understanding the Lord's will for the government."
 - a. This morning we covered several Old Testament passages as well as the Lord's teaching during His ministry.
 - b. This evening we are examining 3 sections of Scripture in the New Testament.
4. Let us begin with . . .

Discussion:

I. ROMANS 13:1-7

- A. (vs.1a) All Christians are to be subject to "*the higher powers*" [civil authorities].
 1. A similar admonition is given in Titus 3:1.
 2. According to these verses, Christians are to obey the laws of the land.
 3. However, if a civil law violates a law of God, we must obey God (Acts 5:29).
- B. (vs.1b-5) Three reasons why Christians must obey the law are given.
 1. Reason #1: Civil laws must be obeyed because God has ordained government's power to rule (vs.1b-2).
 - a. Jesus touched on this principle before Pilate (John 19:10-11).
 - b. Those who resist the power of government are guilty of resisting something God has ordained, and He will hold such people accountable.
 - c. This does not mean that God approves of all governments; however, He has instituted government as a means of ruling and protecting citizens and punishing evildoers.
 2. Reason #2: Civil laws must be obeyed so fear can be avoided (vs.3-4).
 - a. One function of the state is to protect its citizens -- law-abiding citizens have no reason to be afraid.
 - b. Another function of the state is to punish evildoers -- they should be afraid [a serious warning is given in this regard in Ecclesiastes 8:11].
 - c. God has authorized the state to take the lives of those guilty of capital crimes (vs.4; Genesis 9:5-6).
 3. Reason #3: Civil laws must be obeyed for the sake of conscience (vs.5).
 4. In addition to obeying civil laws, . . .
- C. (vs.6-7) Taxes are to be paid to support the government, and respect is to be shown to those in positions of authority.

II. 1 PETER 2:13-17

- A. These instructions are similar to those given in Romans 13.
 1. Civil laws are to be obeyed.
 2. Respect is to be shown to rulers.
- B. The state is responsible for protecting law-abiding citizens and punishing lawbreakers.

III. 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4

- A. Prayer is to be offered on behalf of civil leaders.
- B. Christians are to pray for leaders so we can live in conditions favorable to spreading the Gospel.
- C. This pleases God -- He wants everyone to be saved.

Conclusion:

1. A number of events that have occurred lately indicate that our country needs to take heed to the matters we have studied.
2. Let us fulfill our God-given responsibilities and pray for wisdom as we select leaders in the upcoming election.