

“Further Questions about Government Authority”

Romans 13:1-7, Pt. 2

August 7, 2022

I. What about taxes used for illegitimate or evil purposes?

- A. We should still pay them.
- B. Paul lived under a government that spent tax revenue in horrible ways.
- C. Jesus teaches us that we pay even unjust taxes to avoid giving offense that would hurt the progress of the gospel. (Matt. 17:25-27)

II. Does governing authority come from the people (“the consent of the governed”)?

- A. It seemed to work that way, at least to a degree, in the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 17:14–15 - ¹⁴ “When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’ ¹⁵ you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.

1 Samuel 11:15 - So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

2 Samuel 5:3 - So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel.

- B. But, once appointed, Israel’s leaders had God-given authority (1 Sam. 24:1-11).

III. What about nations with constitutions? What’s the real authority?

- A. Israel had a constitution (the Law) and covenants with their Kings:

2 Samuel 5:3 - So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel. →

- B. Yet Israel was not at liberty to overthrow David when he broke that constitution in a limited and temporary way (the Bathsheba/Uriah incident).

IV. What about when governments abandon practically all forms of good and support evil?

- A. Believers always have a right personal self-defense if their lives are immediately threatened, and they have no choice. (Ex. 22:2)

- B. Believers can also appeal to their leaders for relief and as well as flee.
- C. Lower-level rulers (“lesser magistrates”) have a duty to protect those they rule from the predations of higher authorities.
 - 1. This may legitimately include the use of force.
 - 2. If called by a lesser magistrate to such a conflict, believers are free to participate.

V. Application:

- A. Let us be thankful we live in a nation that allows us to give our consent as to whom are leaders are.
- B. Rather than complain about national leadership, let’s learn to appeal to more local leaders for support.
- C. Let’s remember who’s really in charge:

Daniel 2:21 - It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings...

Psalm 2:10–12a - ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled....