

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Me and Government

(Jerry Fite)

Paul addresses “*every soul*” as he sets forth God’s will regarding civil government in Romans 13:1-7. So, one Christian is not free to ignore how God wants him or her to view government, while others must agree with God’s viewpoint. What should I think of the concept of government? What is its purpose? Is it created by man? Should I have anything to do with civil government since, as a Christian, I am a citizen of a spiritual and heavenly kingdom (*Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 12:22-23, 28*)?

I must first have a proper attitude toward government. Being “*subject*” to and not “*resisting*” the civil authorities should characterize my heart. “*Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers...Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God*” (*Romans 13:2*). Why? God has appointed or ordained government. So to resist the idea of government is to withstand what God has set in order for man.

God has ordained government, not a specific type of government. A monarchy, oligarchy, or a republic are specific

forms of government. Regardless of the form of government, the government has been appointed to be “*a minister of God to thee for good*” (*Romans 13:4*).

The civil government should so act to create fear in the hearts of those who do evil, while praising those who do good. “*For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same*” (*Romans 13:3, I Peter 2:13-14*).

The government has been appointed by God to carry out capital punishment. We are not to do evil or carry out personal vengeance upon others. “*But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil*” (*Romans 13:4*). When, as a Christian, you avenge not yourselves but give place to the wrath of God (*Romans 12:19*); you should not feel ashamed for attending the execution of one who has murdered your loved one. God’s rightful place for vengeance is sometimes carried out by His minister, the

civil government wielding the death blow.

I must pay my taxes to civil government. “*...for this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God’s service, attending continually upon this very thing*” (*Romans 13:6*). “Tribute” may come in the form of direct taxes upon my owned property, and “customs” as indirect taxes paid to the government through the retail store. I owe it. “*Render unto all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due custom to whom custom*” (*Romans 13:7*).

Christians living in the spiritual realm, live the same time in the secular realm. Paul tells us how we should view government as we live the life of the Christian. We do not disregard government because we are spiritual. Because we are spiritual, we will be subject to civil authorities, uphold their right to take the life of those who do evil, and pay our taxes. Because we are spiritual, we will obey the laws of government, and only refuse to obey when such laws contradict what God demands of us (*Acts 5:29*). Because we are spiritual, we will subject ourselves “*also for conscience sake*” (*Romans 13:5*).