

God & Uncle Sam

Rm 13:1-7

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Illustration about bureaucrat's brain, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #4747.
- B. If we are honest, even we Christians view the government with a certain amount of cynicism.
- C. This is an election year.
 - 1. Throughout this year candidates will be making promises they have no intention of fulfilling.
 - 2. Throughout this year candidates will sling much mud at one another.
- D. Although we tend to view the government with cynicism, the government is a God- given institution.
 - 1. Government was God's idea and the authority for government comes from him.
 - 2. Since the government comes from God, we need to see what God's Word says concerning the government.

II. PROVIDER OF GOVERNMENT, vv 1 -2.

- A. Every soul is to be subject to the governing authorities, v. 1.
 - 1. Every soul refers to everyone.
 - a. Everyone is to obey the government.
 - b. No one is special and exempt from obeying the law.
 - 2. The theme of Christians' obeying the government runs throughout the NT.
 - a. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks are to be made for those in power (1 Tim. 2:1-2).
 - b. Titus was to remind the Christians in Crete "to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey" (Tit. 3:1).
 - c. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man" (1 Pet. 2:13).
 - 3. To be in subjection is to come under the will of another, to subject oneself, to obey.
- B. There is no authority except from God, v. 1.
 - 1. God is the One who gives the government the right to rule.
 - a. The power that Pilate had over Jesus came from above (Jn. 19:10-11).
 - b. "The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses" (Dan. 4:25).
 - 2. God has all authority and he has given civil government the authority it needs to rule.
- C. The authorities that exist are appointed by God, v. 1-God doesn't necessarily put his stamp of approval on a certain leader, but he does so to the institution of government.
- D. Those who resist the government resist the ordinance of God, v. 2.
 - 1. Christians have no right to resist the government—The Christian is to do what the government demands.
 - 2. The only time the Christian has a right to disobey the government is when following the government would be sinful.
 - a. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 3).
 - b. When the Sanhedrin ordered the apostles not to preach in Jesus' name, Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).
- E. Those who resist the government will bring judgment on themselves, v. 2.
 - 1. This could very well refer to punishment from the government—the government does punish wrongdoers.
 - 2. However, this most likely refers to judgment from God. If one disobeys the government, God will punish him.
- F. God is the provider of government-He gives government the right to rule.

III. PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT, vv. 3-5.

- A. God established government to punish wrongdoers.
- B. Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil, v. 3.
 - 1. The government does not seek to curb good deeds but evil ones.

2. Rulers are a terror to evil works.
 - a. "Terror" refers to that which causes fear.
 - b. Fear should be caused when one disobeys the government.
- C. The way not to fear the government is to do good. The one who does good will receive praise from civil authorities.
- D. The leaders in government serve as God's ministers, v. 4.
 1. As ministers those in government serve God.
 2. To those who do right they are God's ministers for good.
 3. Those who do evil should be afraid of the government, for they do not bear the sword in vain,
 - a. This gives the government the right to punish—indeed, this gives government the right to put to death.
 - b. When Jesus was before Pilate, he didn't say, "Now, Pilate, you don't have the right to put me to death" (Jn. 19:10-11). Jesus recognized the government's right to put to death.
 4. Government leaders are avengers to execute wrath on evildoers—One way that God punishes sinners is through the civil government.
 5. The reason laws must be made is to keep the wrongdoers at bay—"The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate" (1 Tim. 1:9).
- E. The Christian must be submissive to the government, v. 5.
 1. He is to do so because of wrath—because the government punishes wrongdoers.
 2. He is also to be submissive to the government because of conscience, simply because it's the right thing to do.

IV. PAYMENTS TO GOVERNMENT, vv. 6-7.

- A. Since the government praises those who do well and punishes those who do evil, we should pay taxes, v. 6.
 1. The taxes in Rome were unreasonably high.
 - a. There was the income tax: one percent of a man's income.
 - b. There was the ground tax: a man had to pay one-tenth or one-fifth of the crops produced by his ground.
 - c. There was a poll tax: paid by everyone between the ages of 12 or 14 and 65. It amounted to about one day's wage.
 - d. There were local taxes which had to be paid. There were taxes for using main roads, crossing bridges, entering markets and harbors, transferring animals, and driving carts or wagons.
 2. Even though the taxes were extreme, God's people were to pay them.
 - a. Even if we believe taxes are unreasonable in our day, we are still to pay them.
 - b. Illustration about Bob Hope wanting to be in Washington, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #4767.
 3. God expects us to pay taxes today.
 - a. We are to render "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mt. 22:21).
 - b. Even if our taxes go to ungodly purposes—e.g., aborting unborn children—God still expects us to pay taxes.
- B. We are to give everyone his due, v. 7.
 1. We are to pay taxes to whom taxes are due.
 2. We are to pay customs to whom customs are due—"Customs" then as now referred to duties imposed on articles of trade and traffic brought in from other countries.
 3. We are to give fear to whom fear is due.
 4. We are to give honor to whom honor is due.
- C. V. 7 presents the Christian with two duties:
 1. To pay monetary requirements to the government.
 2. To respect and honor the leaders in that government.
 - a. The leaders of Rome were often evil, yet God's people were to honor those leaders.
 - b. We are to respect and honor the leaders in government today.
 - 1) When David had a chance to kill King Saul, even after Saul had tried to kill David, David refused saying that Saul was the Lord's anointed (1 Sam, 24:1-7).

- 2) God told the Israelites not to "curse a ruler of [their] people" (Ex. 22:28).
 - 3) After Paul was rebuked for speaking roughly to the high priest, he said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people'" (Acts 23:5).
- c. Are we showing respect?
- 1) We need to be careful with the jokes about those who lead this nation.
 - 2) We need to be careful what we say about those who lead this country.

V. CONCLUSION.

- A. God expects us to honor that government, but we are also to honor God with our lives.
- B. Are you honoring God with your life?