

Liberty Commentary October 28, 2008

As we contemplate the election that is before us, it is often a challenging decision for the Christian as to how we are to relate to earthly, human government, when the believers citizenship is actually in heaven. Can the Christian be a citizen of two worlds, and if so, how is the Christian to relate to human government? In Romans chapter thirteen the Bible deals with the institution of Government as the Apostle Paul shows the Christian that we are not only to be a good Christian, but also a good citizen.

God has established at least four institutions to guide us through our journey of life here on earth. Human government is one of the institutions that God has erected. The Apostle Paul writes about the institution of government in Romans chapter thirteen. The Apostle Paul writes, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake”.

Paul gives us two reasons why we are to be subject to human government. 1) For wraths sake. One of the purposes that God established the institution of government is to “bear the sword”. The government is to protect the innocent by dealing out just punishment to those who harm the innocent citizen. 2) Paul says we are to be subject to government for “conscience sake”. It takes the wisdom of Solomon for the Christian to know how to walk the fine line between their allegiance to God and their allegiance to human government. The Apostle Paul says the state has a right to demand our respect and allegiance and we are to be in subjection to those in authority over us, not only for wraths sake (we don’t want to go to jail), but also out of a good conscience before God who established the institution of Government for our good.

The Christian may at times be presented with a dilemma of having to choose between Gods laws and governmental laws that may be in direct contradiction. How are we to respond when human laws violate Gods law? At no time is the believer to blindly bow to the demands of the state when the states laws clearly violate Gods laws. The early church had to deal with this issue when they were under the jurisdiction of the Roman government, consequently some three million Christians were executed in the first three centuries because they violated the Roman governments decree banning Christianity from the Roman empire. It was the Apostle Peter who said in Acts 5:29, “We ought to obey God rather than men”. Since the state and its laws are not infallible, the Christian may at times have to conscientiously object to what the state is demanding if it is in direct violation to Gods law.

We citizens of the United States are very blessed to have been founded on Judeo Christian principles that our founding fathers wove into the governmental laws of the land. Other countries are not as fortunate. However, through the years there have been laws made and decisions rendered that are contrary to Gods higher law. In 1857 in the case of Dred Scott Vs. Sanford, the Supreme Court ruled that the people of African descent who had been imported into the United States as slaves could never be citizens and the United States congress had no authority to prohibit slavery in federal territories. The court ruled that slaves could be held as private property of their owners. This was an unjust ruling that violated Gods precepts and needed to be overturned. Thankfully, under the leadership of President Abraham Lincoln and through the prayers of freedom loving people, the Dred Scott decision was overturned by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendment in 1865 and 1868, which guaranteed full rights and citizenship regardless of race.

A more recent decision that violates Gods precepts is the Roe vs.

Wade decision of 1973 that ruled a mother may abort her pregnancy for any reason. We must pray and do what we can within the parameters of the law to overturn this unjust law, just as the Dred Scott decision was overturned.

Christians have a responsibility to be both good saints and good citizens and we should all go to the polls and cast our vote each and every time an election is held. Ultimately, whomever is elected to office this election cycle, we can rest assured that “The kings heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it withersoever he will”. (Proverbs 21:1)

Kingdoms rise and fall, elections come and go, economies ebb and flow. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man”. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Pastor, Randy Mason
Liberty Baptist Church www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com