

Respect for Governmental Authority

TEXT: Daniel 6:1-5; Romans 13:1-8; 1 Peter 2:13-17

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 22:21; 1 Timothy 2:1,2; Titus 3:1

KEY VERSE: Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter. — Ecclesiastes 10:20

One of the most beautiful examples of proper conduct toward governmental authority in all the Bible is given to us in the life of Daniel. Here was a Hebrew lad, perhaps of princely descent, who found himself forcibly torn away from his people and homeland, and placed in a heathen court in the city of Babylon. Being a captive (essentially a slave), it would have been easy for him to hate his captors and feel resentment and rebellion. Instead, even after much testing and many years of service, the record shows that Daniel was so cooperative in this foreign environment that the people could find no fault with him until they wrote a law which required him to choose between God and King Darius. He not only obeyed the civil law of the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians where it did not conflict with God's Law; but, because of his trust in God and God-given wisdom, he actually rose to a position where, as the man-in-charge next to the ruling monarch, he administered that law.

1. In what way did the young exile, Daniel (Daniel 1:1-16), show us how to blend the spirit of cooperation and obedience to authority, with the power of appeal to that authority?

2. Why do you think Paul and Peter, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, instructed followers of the Lord to obey governmental authority?

3. List two laws with which you are acquainted, and the benefits of obeying these laws.

4. According to Romans 13:5, what are two motivating factors for keeping the law?

5. Clip from a current newspaper or magazine an article showing how a “minor” infraction of the law led to a major problem. Take the article and be ready to discuss it in class.

6. What should the Christian’s attitude be toward existing tax laws?

7. Suppose, for a moment, that you live in a totalitarian state where you are forbidden to openly declare Christ or gather with other Christians to worship God. What would you seek to do about the situation, and why?