

What if We Submit Ourselves to the Higher Powers?

by Leon King

July 1997

There is a growing unrest in this nation because of wicked and unrestrained leaders. Anarchy is standing in the wings. Preachers are aiding and encouraging those who advocate insurrection and rebellion against government. Many look back to the American Revolution as a pattern to justify their present actions. In grief and unbelief, we hear of many professing Christians who believe in the "Kingdom Now" philosophy. Some believe they have a Scriptural mandate to overcome and remove wicked rulers. Is this true? Is it right to rebel against established civil rule because that rule is wicked? Is our mission in the world a political one? Do the same rules and theology apply to Americans as apply to the rest of the world?

I have a book on my desk in front of me as I write this article entitled *"Christian Duty Under Corrupt Government"* by Evangelist Ted R. Weiland. In his book, Weiland quotes a long line of American Revolution era preachers and others who advocate active resistance of tyrannical and wicked rulers. He subtitled this book *"A Revolutionary Commentary on Romans 13:1-7."* It is clear that the reason he published this book is to take issue with those who believe that Christians should submit to civil authority in all cases. Weiland makes this comment in the very first paragraph of the book:

"The first seven verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans are often abused and misused by the average clergyman today. This has resulted in one of the most destructive doctrines that has come out of Judeo-Christianity to date, that is, the false teaching of total submission to all government authority. This mistake in

theology has probably contributed more to the loss of Christian dominion than any other false doctrine."

Is submission to wicked secular authorities a destructive doctrine? It is not. I strongly disagree with Mr. Weiland. There is basic difference in perception of what submission means. For Mr. Weiland and others who believe as he does, there is the present political system and secular society to be maintained. He believes the white Anglo-Saxon people are Israel and consequently takes the injunctions given to Israel in the Old Testament to be mandates to present day Christians. He wants to return the United States of America to what he thinks it once was and purge the government of its wicked leaders.

Christ's kingdom is not *now* of this world. If it were now of this world, then would His servants fight. Not yet - but it is coming at His coming. God's people are commanded not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. This present evil world is the system of the unbelieving. Neither the United States nor any other political nation (Israel excepted) has been a nation under God. Israel was chosen of God, preserved by God, and placed in the land promised by God. They are now disbursed because of God's chastening hand.

Israel is God's nation and though under disbursement and chastisement at present, she will ultimately be brought back into God's favor in the last day. He has not withdrawn His love for her because His love is an everlasting love. That is why she is under chastisement, for whom the Lord loves He rebukes and chastens. He will bring them back into the land of Canaan, plead with them face to face in the wilderness, purge out the rebels and bring them into the bond of the covenant. What covenant? The new covenant, of course! He will put his laws in their hearts and their sins and iniquities will He remember no more. (Ezekiel 20:33-44; Jeremiah 31:31-

40). Israel will be placed in their own land. That land is not the North American continent, but the land promised to Abraham for a thousand generations.

1Ch 16:14-19 (KJV) *He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. 15 Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; 16 Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; 17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, 18 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; 19 When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.*

Thus, there is a great difference in the premise. Mr. Weiland thinks he is in Israel in the United States. I believe the Bible teaches that Israel will be restored to their land (Canaan) in the last days. As gentile believers, our covenant nation is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1Pe 2:9-10 (KJV) *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

I say it again; the United States of America is not now and never was a Christian nation. Frankly, the leaders of the American Revolution were not all Christians, but many were deists. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a deist as "One who acknowledges the existence of a God upon the testimony of reason but rejects revealed religion." Such were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. I recently read a book written by William Cathcart, D.D., entitled "Baptists and the American Revolution." Somehow, it didn't jive with what I had been gathering about Baptists and their attitude of pacifism in the revolutionary period. Then I noticed the book was written in 1876 which explains why the book was written. From all appearances, the tenor of that

book has led me to believe that Brother Cathcart wanted to present the Baptists as patriots during America's centennial celebration. I believe that most believed what their forefathers in England believed about submission to rulers.

So, should we be subject to wicked rulers? Was not Paul subject to wicked rulers when he appealed to Caesar? Wasn't wicked Nero the Caesar? Paul evidently appealed to Nero for finalization of judgment in his case for living as a Christian. Obviously, Nero gave a judgment of condemnation for Paul was condemned. Did he resist the judgment? No, he did not. Was Nero wicked? He was the most vile of the vile. Did he understand this when he wrote Romans 13? Most certainly, he did. Did he try to remove and dismantle the corrupt political system of the Roman empire. He did not. Instead, he taught us to be subject to the higher powers. Now, Mr. Weiland says we ought to oppose them when they mandate something that is not in accordance with God's laws. I agree with that statement, but the conclusion will be different.

Suppose Nero had commanded that men could not pray. God, the higher power, has commanded us to pray. We must obey God rather than men. But then, what if Nero comes and takes away our property and lives? We must not resist. He is God's appointed power. God sets up kings, governors and all rulers. Rulers stay in power as long as it is useful to the Lord for His purpose; even rulers of great wrath only go as far as it serves God's purpose. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." -- Psalms 76:10. This is where men err. We cannot see all of God's purpose but known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Suppose that Nero had made a commandment that all pregnant women who thought they would bear a girl child must abort their babies. God's women could not possibly have obeyed such a command. What if the authorities come to punish? Then, they must not resist evil, but submit

themselves to the punishment meted out by the wicked authorities. Wasn't this the case of Amram and Jochebed with Moses?

Mt 5:39-41 (KJV) *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

No matter what law or edict comes from the lips of an evil ruler - if that law or edict is in contradiction to God's holy law, we must not obey it. We cannot with conscience toward God obey such a law. Howbeit, we must not resist the punishment at the hands of the authority who comes to mete it out.

Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego illustrate this principle very well. They were commanded to bow down to the image of gold made by King Nebuchadnezzar. They refused, knowing they could be punished by that wicked king for refusing. They said,

Da 3:16-18 (KJV) *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

This is a classic Bible illustration of the principle of submission to the higher powers. True, Nebuchadnezzar had been put in power by God himself for God's own purpose. Nebuchadnezzar was later to see this in a vision and in his own plight as he lived with the beasts in the pasture. (Daniel 4:17-18; 33-37).

Why do we submit ourselves? Because God has commanded us to do so. Even submit to wicked men? Yes! If we understand the principle that

the *"heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord and as the rivers of waters, he turneth it whithersoever he will,"* we will have no problem with that. That was true of wicked Pharaoh whom God raised up to show His power in him (Romans 9:17). It was true of Shalmaneser, whom God raised up to remove Israel from their land. It was true of Nebuchadnezzar into whose hand God delivered His people Judah. It is true because God's purpose is going on in spite of the evil and ruthless designs of these wicked men. God moves in them to fulfil His own purpose while all along the king thinks it is his idea. The same is true of the wicked and base men God has placed in power in our time. God is going to bring things to their final end exactly as he promised. Jesus Christ will return and put down all power, and authority, and dominion. He will set up His kingdom which will be an everlasting kingdom. Until then, wicked rulers are the norm. They have been the norm ever since the inception of the *"Times of the Gentiles"* which began under Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon.

As I look about the things going on in our land, I can only ask myself the question, "What if God raised up this land - this United States of America in the last days to usher in the New World Order?" I wonder. Were the Jeffersons, Adams, Franklins and Jays of the revolution era right in rebelling against the king of England. I believe they were wrong. Here I sit writing this paper in absolute freedom and cherish the blessedness of it - yet, I know the revolutionists were wrong in rebelling against the king. There is no Biblical warrant for it. We can justify it by saying things were not right with the king of England, yet he was the king. Will you say that God did not place him in that position? I cannot and will not.

In my lifetime, I have seen the parade of our presidents going from right-wingers to the left, but all have been used to bring us closer to a one-world government. It really doesn't matter who is in power at this point because any blind man can see the handwriting on the wall. Is this the work of the Lord? I believe it is. Why? Because I believe the Bible teaches us of a sovereign God who rules over all principalities, powers, and rulers. He rules

supreme. Even the evil spirits are subject to Him. Satan, himself can only do that which He has sovereignly determined to come to pass. In that singular fact, I rejoice and will rejoice. God will have his way.

This morning, my wife told me that she heard on the news that a United Nations Band was playing in Washington, D.C., today in celebration of Independence Day. Traditionally, the United States Marine Band has been there on Independence Day. A UN Band playing in honor of *our* Independence? What's going on? We all know - don't we? We are already in the New World Order. We're just waiting for the man of sin to appear!!!

May God give us grace to serve Him acceptably as we severally submit ourselves to established authority. Parents are not perfect; Pastors make serious blunders and governments fail greatly. Still, they are the established authorities. Let us submit ourselves. God will deal with those who alter and disobey His holy laws!