

Submission To God Requires Submission To Men (Tit. 3:1-7)

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Background

1. Chapter 1: the needs of the fledgling church in Crete
 - Paul left Titus in Crete
 - Appointment of elders: their qualities
 - Job of the elders: hold fast to the scriptures, exhort and convict those who oppose
2. Chapters 2 and 3: instructions for the believing community, the church
 - In contrast to those who oppose, believers are to behave differently: “But as for you ...” (Tit. 2:1)
 - Lives which exhibit a pattern of good works (Tit. 2:7)
 - Living so as to *adorn* the doctrine, or teaching of God (Tit. 2:10)
 - TODAY: Obedience to rulers and authorities is an important component of maintaining good works (Tit. 3:1-2)

Titus 3:1-7

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.¹

Two Primary Themes

1. Submission to God requires submission to men
2. Salvation is by grace through faith

Submission To God Requires Submission To Men

1. Christians are to be subject to rulers and authorities

- “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work . . .” (v. 1)

- Mature Christians recognize God's design for authority structures, both in the home and in society at large, and seek to uphold those authority structures (Tit. 3:1).

2. A consistent Scriptural teaching originating as early as the Book of Genesis

A. Genesis 9:6

Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.²

- This verse is pregnant with implications
 - How to reliably determine whether one man has killed another?
 - Will accidental death merit the same penalty as premeditated murder?
 - Who enforces the death penalty?
- The basis of civil government

What we call civil or organized government, whether simple or highly complex, exists for only one reason -- the protection, conservation, fostering, and improvement of human life. Ge 9:6, therefore, becomes one of the most important landmarks in all of human history, for here God not only decrees the beginning of human government in a sinful world, but also lays down the moral and social foundation of all such government. As Luther has well said of the text, 'This was the first command having reference to the temporal sword. By these words temporal government was established, and the sword placed in its hand by God.'³

B. Deuteronomy 17:9-13

And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge [there] in those days, and inquire [of them]; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside [to] the right hand or [to] the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. And all the

people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.⁴

- Who enforces the death penalty in Israel? The priests and Levites.
- God establishing, investing, and endorsing the authority structure.
- People of God are to submit to their judgment.
- Unwillingness to follow the ruling of the judge carries severe consequences.
 - Presumption: a challenge not to the ruling, but to the entire legal system.
 - Severity of penalty reflects God's knowledge of where anarchy leads.

C. Romans 13:1-7

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to [execute] wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore [you] must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes [are due], customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.⁵

- Resisting God-given authority is to resist God Himself.
- Paul says such authority is "God's minister" - God's deacon or servant.
- The government bears the sword - capital punishment, as established in Genesis 9:6, has not been abrogated by the New Testament.
- Christian subjection to government includes payment of taxes to support the government.
 - Christians, motivated by financial factors, who look for areas in which the government violates the principles of God in an attempt to justify evasion of their responsibility to government.
 - Christ dealt with this very issue in Luke 20:22-25

"Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me? "Show Me

a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."⁶

- Financial manipulation was evidence of a lack of trust in God to provide for their needs.
- Christ upholds the payment of taxes, even to secular governments as imperfect as early Rome.

D. 1 Peter 2:11-16

Beloved, I beg [you] as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by [your] good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and [for the] praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.⁷

- The goal: honorable conduct among the Gentiles (unbelievers)
- Obediently living within established governmental structures is a good work
- For the Lord's sake . . . this is the will of God . . . as bondservants of God

E. Caveat: Higher Law

- What is "higher law"?

a principle of divine or moral law that is considered to be superior to constitutions and enacted legislation⁸

- Where government mandates that Christians personally participate in practices which violate God's law, we are bound by a higher allegiance to God.
 - Midwives in Egypt refused to kill male children (Ex. 1:16-21)
 - "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw [he was] a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command." (Heb. 11:23)

- Governments may sanction illegal actions redefining them to be “legal” within their jurisdiction.

at the Nuremberg trials, in an attempt to justify their abominable crimes against Jewish and Romany population of Europe during World War II, some of the former leaders of Nazi Germany argued that they had broken none of the laws effective when Hitler had been in power. And it is only by invoking the rule according to a higher law that the Allied prosecutors were able to legitimately overcome such defenses.⁹

- The sanction of abortion by many governments in our day (Ex. 21:22-23)

3. Why is God supportive of institutions of government?

A. On account of sin: where sin is unchecked, ungodliness always leads to repression.

- The book of Judges closes with, “In those days [there was] no king in Israel; everyone did [what was] right in his own eyes.” (Jdg. 21:25)
- Only repressive forms of government can survive ungodly subjects.
- Ungodliness tends toward anarchy which is inherently unstable.
- Since no society can tolerate anarchy, anarchy always gives way to another form of government: most often a repressive form of government where the beleaguered population *willingly trades freedom for security*.

4. Christian Founders on the importance of Christian principles to American government

A. George Washington (1st president of the United States)

Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.¹⁰

It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible¹¹

B. John Adams (2nd president of the United States)

Statesmen . . . may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is Religion

and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People in a greater Measure, than they have it now, they may change their Rulers and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty.¹²

We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made for only a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.¹³

C. Benjamin Rush (signer of the *Declaration of Independence*)

The only foundation for . . . a republic is to be laid in Religion. Without this there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments.¹⁴

D. Noah Webster (statesman, educator, lexicographer, and the author of *Webster's Dictionary*)

In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government ought to be instructed . . . No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.¹⁵

E. James Madison (4th president of the United States, original author of the *Bill of Rights*)

We have staked the whole future of our new nation, not upon the power of government; far from it. We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments.¹⁶

F. The Biblical perspective: where there are people governed by the Holy Spirit there is no need of law.

- “ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22-23)

- “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”” (Gal. 5:14).

Salvation By Grace Through Faith

1. Titus 3:5-7

“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

2. Clear summary of the means of salvation

- Primary sources of confusion about entry to heaven
 - A. Misrepresentation of Christianity
 - religion vs. relationship
 - doing vs. trusting
 - pride vs. humility
 - independence vs. dependence upon God
 - B. Need for spiritual birth to understand
 - born into a state of spiritual blindness and sin
 - without God’s help, unable to comprehend the plan of salvation

3. Passage in reverse

1. How do we (“become heirs according to the hope of eternal life”, v. 7)? How do we attain eternal life?
2. We are in need of justification (“having been justified”, v. 7)
 - A legal term
 - “Justification is a divine act whereby an infinitely Holy God judicially declares a believing sinner to be righteous and acceptable before Him because Christ has borne the sinner’s sin on the cross . . . It is . . . the result of the redemptive . . . sacrifice of Christ, who has settled all the claims of the law (Rom. 3:24–25; 5:9).”¹⁷
 - “*just as if I’d never sinned*”
3. Justification by God occurs when we *believe*, or *trust*, in the work of Christ, the perfect God-man, Who fulfilled the demands of the Law (Mat. 5:17; John 15:10; Gal 4:4-5).
 - Our understanding and acceptance of Christ’s work on our behalf involves the regenerating work of God’s Spirit “He saved us, through [or

- by] the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (v. 5).
- As Jesus said in the John’s gospel, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).
 - As John himself says elsewhere, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1Jn. 5:1a)
 - washing of “regeneration” (παλιγγενεσία [*palingenesia*] - **again** genesis) and “renewing” (ἀνακαινώσεως [*anakainōseōs*] - **re**-newal)
 - A *second* birthing work subsequent to our physical birth (John 3:4-5)
 - A work of the Holy Spirit, as He is poured out on us (v. 6)
4. A transaction based upon mercy and grace, not our performance
- “when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us . . . having been justified by His grace” (vv. 4-5,7)
 - According to His mercy: we *don’t* get what we *do* deserve (we, being sinners, deserve eternal separation and punishment)
 - According to His grace: we *do* get what we *don’t* deserve (we are granted salvation on the basis of Jesus Christ’s righteousness rather than our own)
 - Acceptance by God is not on the basis of our performance. It *cannot be* because we are *incapable* of earning His acceptance!

The unregenerate man can, through common grace, love his family and he may be a good citizen. He may give a million dollars to build a hospital. . . . If a drunkard, he may abstain from drink for utilitarian purposes, but he cannot do it out of love for God. All of his common virtues or good works have a fatal defect in that his motives which prompt them are not to glorify God,-- a defect so vital that it throws any element of goodness as to man wholly into the shade.¹⁸

- Acceptance by God is on the basis of faith -- trust -- in the means that God Himself provided when His Son Jesus Christ, the perfect God-man, bore the sins of the world on the cross some 2,000 years ago.

Role of the Trinity in Salvation

because God is *more than one person*, this God can demand absolute justice and can Himself pay the price that he requires. Because of the plurality of persons, the triune God can be the holy Judge, the sacrificial Lamb who satisfies divine justice, and the sanctifying Spirit who works within sinners to lead them to God and make them His children.¹⁹

1. God the Father: the perfect judge Whose righteousness requires absolute justice.

He does not grade on a curve. Only the *perfectly righteous* merit heaven.²⁰

2. God the Son: the perfect and righteous Lamb Who died on behalf of sinners to satisfy the righteous demand for justice. Only those clothed in *Christ's righteousness*, rather than their own unrighteousness, will attain heaven.
3. God the Spirit - the perfect and righteous Comforter who leads men to God and brings about their new birth to become children of God. Those who respond to the Spirit's conviction that they themselves cannot possibly merit heaven and avail themselves of the work of Jesus on the cross can have *assurance* of entrance to heaven and eternal life.

Endnotes:

1. [NKJV, Tit. 3:1-7](#)
2. [NKJV, Gen. 9:6](#)
3. [Ref-0183, 46-47](#)
4. [NKJV, Deu. 17:9-13](#)
5. [NKJV, Rom. 13:1-7](#)
6. [NKJV, Luke 20:22-25](#)
7. [NKJV, 1Pe. 2:11-16](#)
8. [Ref-0472, higher law](#)
9. [WP, higher law](#)
10. [Ref-1250, 661](#)
11. [Ref-1250, 660](#)
12. [Ref-1250, 8](#)
13. [Ref-1250, 10-11](#)
14. [Ref-1250, p. 543](#)
15. [Ref-1250, 677](#)
16. [Ref-1250, 411](#)
17. [Ref-0185, Justification](#)
18. [Ref-0096, 68](#)
19. [Ref-0200](#), J. Scott Horrell, *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Toward a Trinitarian Worldview*, Vol. 166 No. 662 April-June 2009, 131-146, 143
20. Therefore, Jesus the Christ is the only man ever to reach heaven on His own merit.

Sources:

- NKJV** *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-0096** Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1932).
- Ref-0183** Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974, c1959).

- Ref-0185** Merrill F. Unger, R. K. Harrison and Howard Frederic Vos, *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988).
- Ref-0200** Roy B. Zuck, ed., *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, n.d.). [www.dts.edu].
- Ref-0472** Merriam-Webster, I. (1992). *The Merriam-Webster dictionary of quotations*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster.
- Ref-1250** William J. Federer, *America's God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations* (Coppell, TX: FAME Publishing, 1994). ISBN:1-880563-09-6^b.
- WP** Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_according_to_higher_law] accessed 20110423
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Links Mentioned Above

a - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.

b - See <http://www.bestbookdeal.com/book/compare/1-880563-09-6>.