

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL LAW

Aude McKee

There is perhaps not a command resting on Christians that is more simply said and more easily understood than the one which states we are to obey civil authorities. Look first at Romans 13. In verse 1, Paul states: *“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.”* Verse 2 continues: *“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”* Then in verse 5: *“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath (the punishment that might come as a result of disobedience, A. M.) but also for conscience sake.”*

Peter was led by the Spirit to write (1 Pet. 2:13-17): *“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all*

men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”

A few observations might be in order.

First, these words were penned by Paul and Peter when Rome ruled the world. A more wicked and corrupt regime would be difficult to imagine. Yet the only reason for not obeying civil law is found in Acts 4:19-20 and 5:29. Peter and John had been commanded by the civil authorities not to *“speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.”* Then they replied, *“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.... We ought to obey God rather than men.”* Civil law MUST be obeyed unless by so doing we are put in the position of disobeying divine law!

Second, these verses do not teach that civil law is to be obeyed unless the law is stupid, unfair, or whatever. We do not deny that occasionally laws are passed that rankle the hearts of Christians, but obey them we must unless to do so makes us break New Testament law.

Third, Romans 13 clearly states that to rebel against civil law is in effect to rebel against divine law, and to do so means damnation. This is serious enough to cause every child of

God to think twice before acting.

THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD

Robert Jackson

Romans 1:16: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* The apostle Paul brings to our attention the power of the gospel of Christ. It seems as though that many forget the power of the Word of God. If men would see the power of the Word, they would have no desire to change or add to this Word. Other writers had something to say about the power of God’s Word.

AS A MIRROR. James speaks of the Word as a mirror. James 1:23-24, *“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”* The Word had the power to show man his true condition before God. We ought to use this word as James exhorts us.

AS A HAMMER. Jeremiah 23:29, *“Is not my word like as a*

fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.” The man of old said that is as a hammer. This is the very thing that can break down the pride of man. This has been one of the many things that keeps man from God.

AS A SWORD. From the pen of the Hebrew writer, we understand that it is the sword of God. Thus, it is able to pierce the conscience of man. Hebrews 4:12, *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

AS A BALM. The psalmist speaks of the Word as a balm. Psalm 107:20, *“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”* It is able to heal the soul of man. Man is sick in sin. The healing power is the Word of God.

Let us never forget the power of the Word.

CORNELIUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

J.P. Edwards

Cornelius saw a vision from God and sent for Simon Peter. Peter arose and went as God instructed him. Peter began to preach and *“the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word”* (Acts 10:1-44).

The Holy Spirit did not fall on Cornelius to benefit him.

1) It was not to save, the word does that (Acts 11:14).

2) It was not to purify his heart, faith does that (Acts 15:9).

3) It was not to cause him to believe, hearing the word does that (Rom. 10:17).

4) It was not to give him remission of sins, baptism does that (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

5) It was not to make him a disciple, for he was told next to be baptized (Acts 10:47-48).

Peter shows in Acts 10:47 that God bestowed the gift as an evidence that the Gentiles could

now be saved. The Jews were astonished *“because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 10:45). They that received the gift spoke in tongues to evidence that they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter commanded them to be baptized in obedience to God’s law.

The Holy Spirit falling on Cornelius was a sign to the Jewish brethren that *“God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”* (Acts 11:18).

Notice that Peter purposed baptism of these believers after the Holy Spirit had fallen upon them.

Any other use of Holy Spirit baptism on Cornelius is a mis-use! Many today think that in order to be saved they must “get the Holy Ghost” as did Cornelius. Please take your Bible and read and study Acts 10-11 so you will know that Cornelius became a child of God just as we do today by hearing and obeying the gospel.

WHY NOT HAVE A HOME BIBLE STUDY WITH SOME FRIENDS!

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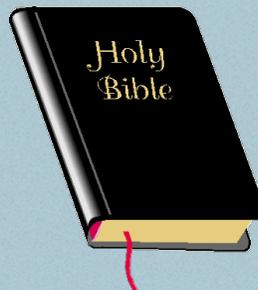
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