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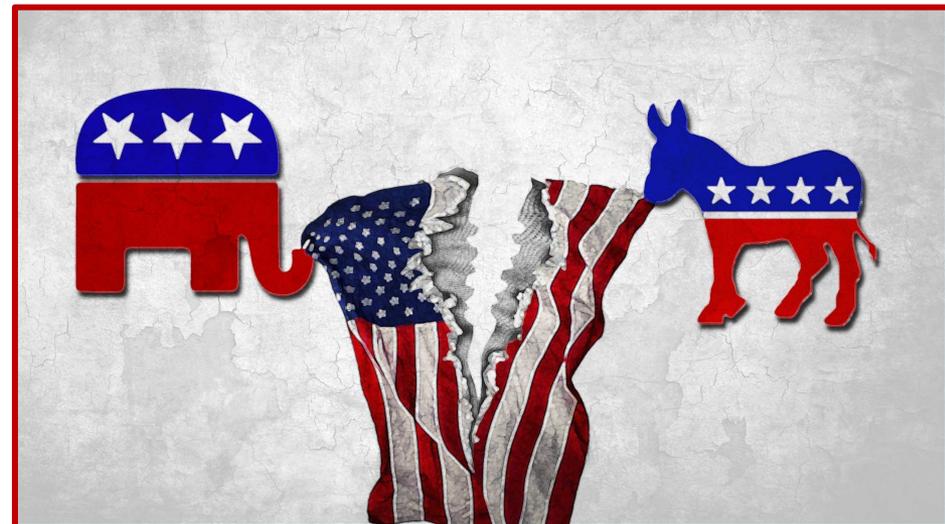
# The Christian, Politics, and Civil Government



# Introduction

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- ❑ We live in politically polarizing times...
  - “MAGA extremist terrorists” vs. “radical leftist Marxists”
- ❑ With divisive issues...
  - Abortion, gay marriage, transgenderism, immigration, violent crime, gun rights, racism/sexism, homelessness, election fraud, foreign policy, climate change, ...
- ❑ And government involvement in our lives...
  - Taxation, regulation
  - Public schooling
  - Mandatory vaccination/masking
  - Gun rights
- ❑ Many have a spiritual dimension



# Questions for Christians

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- ❑ Must Christians obey the government?
- ❑ Must Christians honor the president?
- ❑ Must Christians pay taxes to a government that spends money wastefully or on promoting evil?
- ❑ Can Christians be patriotic?
- ❑ Can Christians lobby for political causes?
- ❑ Can Christians vote?
- ❑ Can Christians run for political office?



# Two Extremes

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*“It is sinful to have anything to do with promoting civil government.”*

- Jehovah’s Witnesses (salute the flag, lobby, vote, run for office)



*“It is the duty of Christians to lobby for civil rights, social justice, and equality.”*

- Many progressive denominations with the “social gospel”



# Christian's Citizenship

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- ❑ Church as kingdom with Christ as King
  - ❑ Mark 1:14-15
    - ❑ “...*kingdom* of God is at hand...”
  - ❑ Col. 1:13
    - ❑ *For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the **kingdom** of His beloved Son,*
  - ❑ 1 Cor. 15:24
    - ❑ *...when He delivers the **kingdom** to God the Father...*
- ❑ Christians as citizens
  - ❑ Eph. 2:19
    - ❑ *So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow **citizens** with the saints, ...*
  - ❑ Phil.3:20
    - ❑ *For our **citizenship** is in heaven*
- ❑ “Dual” citizens
  - ❑ In the World, but not of the World



# Obey?

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## □ Role of civil government

### □ Rom. 13:1b

- ... *For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

## □ Submit

### □ Rom. 13:1, 5

- *Let every soul be **subject** to the governing authorities. ... Therefore you must be **subject**, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.*

### • 1 Pet. 2:13; Titus 3:1

- *13 Therefore **submit** yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the **king** as supreme, 14 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. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*

# Obey?

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## □ Pay taxes

### □ Matt. 22:21

- *“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”*

### □ Rom. 13:6-7

- *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, ...*

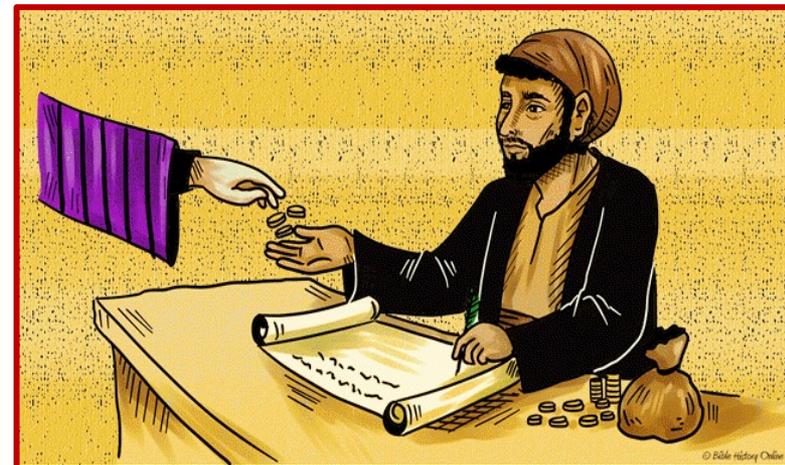
## □ Commit civil disobedience

### • Acts 5:29

- *...We ought to obey God rather than men.*

### • Rom. 12:17

- *... Respect what is right in the sight of all people.*



# Honor?

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- Honor the king

- 1 Pet. 2:13-17 *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors... **Honor** the king.*



# Pray For?

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## □ Pray for rulers

### □ 1 Tim. 2:1-2

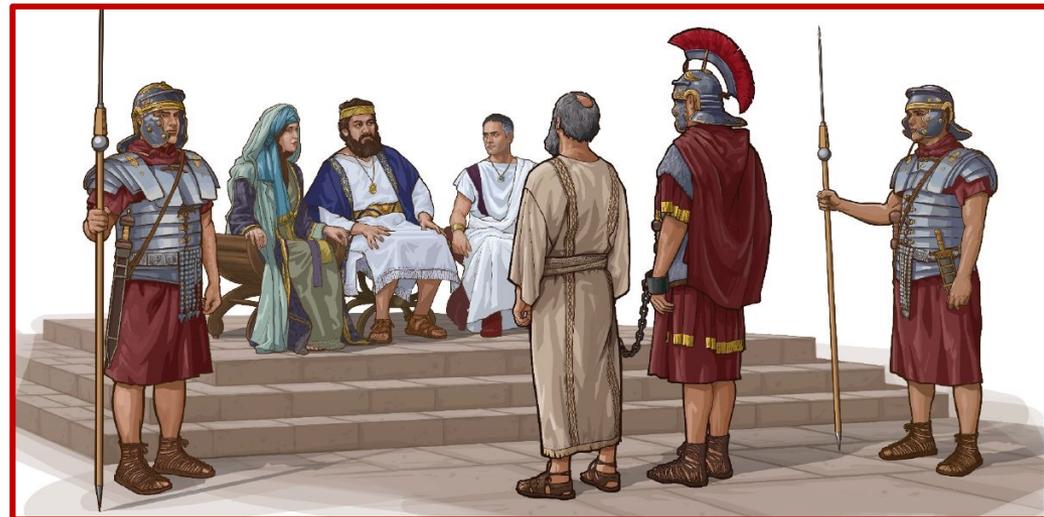
- *1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 **for kings and all who are in authority**, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*



# Exercise Civil Rights?

## □ Paul's example

- Acts 16:37
  - *But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."*
- Acts 22:25
  - *And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"*
- Acts 25:11
  - *"...I appeal to Caesar"*



# Exercise Civil Rights?

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- ❑ Call the police - bring charges against evil doers (Rom. 13)
- ❑ Sign a petition
- ❑ Vote
  - Violating one's conscience by voting for the "lesser of two evils"



# Serve?

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## □ Serve as a juror

- John 7:24

- *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

## □ Become an elected official (local, state, national)?

## □ Serve in the military??



# Speak up?

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## □ "Separation of Church and State"

- “... ensures the government cannot exercise undue influence over Americans' spiritual and religious lives.”
- Does not prohibit Christians as citizens to express themselves on political-moral topics (1<sup>st</sup> Amendment)
- Does not prohibit personal evangelism with family, friends, coworkers, etc.

## □ Political-moral topics

- Homosexual/transgender rights
- Abortion
- Law and order, death penalty
- Immoral politicians



# Churches and the Government?

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- Preach the truth
- Encourage prudent application of God's word
- Emphasize the here-after
- Use building as a voting place
- March in protest as an organization
- Campaign for a candidate
- Emphasize the here-and-now



# Conclusion

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- Much to consider with lots of pitfalls
  - Gossip, slander
  - Division of family, friends, congregations, communities
  - Rebellious attitudes against authority
- Need to keep perspective
  - Rise and fall of nations
  - Opportunities to exert our influence for good
  - John 17:15-16
    - *“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”*
  - Heb. 11:13-16
    - *... confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ... But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.*

