

God And The Nations

Lesson 3

How Should Christians Behave Toward Government?

Jesus Rules And Judges All Nations Today

1. Jesus rules all nations today
2. By what standard does Jesus judge all nations?
3. What means does Jesus use to judge all nations?

2

Introduction

- As Christians, we should be thankful that Jesus controls all nations, judging them according to His righteous standard
- But, how are we to behave toward government, no matter where we live?
- We dare not exalt government above the Lord
- Also, we must not disregard government and do as we please

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How Should Christians Behave Toward Government?

1. Submit to the Lord above all
2. Submit to civil authorities
3. Pay taxes
4. Pray for civil leaders

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Submit To The Lord Above All

- Submission to and love for the Lord is the foundation for all Christian conduct
- Submission to Christ is expressed by recognizing Jesus' authority over all and willingly obeying His commands in all areas of life
- How we are to submit to anyone is determined by the Lord's authority

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Submit To The Lord Above All

- We must submit to government because the Lord demands it
- The only exceptions would be when governments demand we disobey the Lord
- We must obey civil laws for the Lord's sake unless they order us to sin directly conflicting with the Lord's commands

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Submission To The Lord Controls All Christian Conduct

Mat 22:36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

Mat 22:37 And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

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Submission To The Lord Controls All Christian Conduct

Mat 22:38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.

Mat 22:39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

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Submission To The Lord Controls All Christian Conduct

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Col 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

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Submission To The Lord Controls All Christian Conduct

Col 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Col 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,
Col 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

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Obedying The Lord Requires Submitting To Government

Rom 13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Rom 13:2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

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Obedying The Lord Requires Submitting To Government

Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

Rom 13:4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. ¹²

Obeying The Lord Requires Submitting To Government

Rom 13:5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

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Obeying The Lord Requires Submitting To Government

1Pe 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

1Pe 2:14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

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Daniel and Friends Submit To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 1:5 The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service.

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Daniel and Friends Submit To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 1:8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.

Dan 1:9 Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials,

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Daniel and Friends Submit To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 1:12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink.

Dan 1:13 "Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

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Daniel's Friends Submit To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 3:15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

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Daniel's Friends Submit To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O

Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.

Dan 3:17 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

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Daniel's Friends Submit To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 3:18 "But *even* if *He* does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

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Daniel Submits To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 6:7 "All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den.

21

Daniel Submits To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Dan 6:11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

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Daniel Submits To Babylon But Loyal To God

Dan 6:16 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."

Dan 6:22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."

23

Apostles Obey The Lord Above All Earthly Authority

Act 5:27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them,

Act 5:28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

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Apostles Obey The Lord Above All Earthly Authority

Act 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.

Act 5:30 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.

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Apostles Obey The Lord Above All Earthly Authority

Act 5:31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Act 5:32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

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Which Laws Can Christians Violate And Still Please God?

Traffic laws?

Tax laws?

Building code laws?

Copyright laws?

Commerce laws?

Immigration laws?

Challenge – corrupt governments may unfairly enforce or fail to enforce their own laws

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Pay Taxes

Rom 13:5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

Rom 13:6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

Rom 13:7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

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Pray For Civil Leaders

1Ti 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

1Ti 2:2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

1Ti 2:3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

1Ti 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ²⁹

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How Should Christians Behave Toward Government?

1. Submit to the Lord above all
2. Submit to civil authorities
3. Pay taxes
4. Pray for civil leaders

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How Should Christians Behave Toward Government?

5. Use civil laws for protection and promotion of gospel
6. Respectfully correct government officials
7. Teach the gospel to all even those in government
8. To what extent can a Christian interact with government?

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

- Christians have the right to appeal to civil authorities for protection and for help
- Notice Paul appeals to Roman authorities for protection against false accusations and physical attacks from his Jewish enemies
- Ultimately, we should seek protection of law that we may live as Christians and spread the gospel to the lost

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

Act 22:24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

Act 22:25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

Act 22:27 The commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."

Act 22:29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

Act 23:17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him."

Act 23:20 And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him."

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

Act 23:21 "So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you."

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

Act 23:23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen."

Act 25:9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these *charges*?"

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Use Civil Laws For Protection And Promotion Of Gospel

Act 25:10 But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to *the* Jews, as you also very well know.

Act 25:11 "If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is *true* of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar."

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Respectfully Correct Government Officials

- In a humble gentle and truthful manner, Christians should correct civil officials
- For example – point out unrighteous application of laws or unrighteousness of laws themselves
- Further we can point out that the Lord Jesus is now above all rulers

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Respectfully Correct Government Officials

Act 16:35 Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men."

Act 16:36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace."

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Respectfully Correct Government Officials

Act 16:37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

Act 16:38 The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,

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Respectfully Correct Government Officials

Act 16:39 and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city.

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Respectfully Correct Government Officials

Joh 19:10 So Pilate *said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

Joh 19:11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin."

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Teach The Gospel To All Even Those In Government

Act 24:24 But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus.

Act 24:25 But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you."

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Teach The Gospel To All Even Those In Government

Act 26:22 "So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place;

Act 26:23 that the Christ was to suffer, *and* that by reason of *His* resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

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Teach The Gospel To All Even Those In Government

Act 26:24 While *Paul* was saying this in his defense, Festus *said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! *Your* great learning is driving you mad."

Act 26:27 "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do."

Act 26:28 Agrippa *replied* to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."

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Teach The Gospel To All Even Those In Government

Act 26:29 And Paul *said*, "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains."

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Teach The Gospel To All Even Those In Government

Php 1:12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

Php 1:13 so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Php 4:22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

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To What Extent Can A Christian Interact With Government?

- Hardest part of this lesson because some things we will mention are not found in New Testament
- However, some Bible principles should guide us in whatever we do
- We should never abandon Bible principles for what we believe will benefit us now

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Interacting With Government and Biblical Principles

- If we choose to work for the government, we must always serve the Lord and follow His authority above all
- If we vote, we must take care not to give our approval to those who promote and practice evil
- If we are called for jury duty, we must not participate in promoting unjust laws

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Interacting With Government and Biblical Principles

- We must realize Christians are forbidden from taking personal vengeance on others
- Governments are God's servants to execute His vengeance
- Nothing revealed about specific judgments of the Lord today
- Concerning combat, beware that we might be fighting against the Lord's judgments
- Doubting our conduct leads to sin

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Work As For The Lord Not For Men

Eph 6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

Eph 6:6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

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Example of A Christian Working For Government - Corinth

Rom 16:23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

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Do Not Give Approval To Evildoers

Rom 1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

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Expose Evil Not Condone It

Eph 5:11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

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Christians Forbidden To Take Vengeance

Rom 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

Rom 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Rom 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

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Governments Ministers of God to Avenge Wrong

Rom 13:4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

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God's People Not To Fight Against God's Judgments

Jer 21:8 "You shall also say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.

Jer 21:9 "He who dwells in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by pestilence; but he who goes out and falls away to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live, and he will have his own life as booty.

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God's People Not To Fight Against God's Judgments

Luk 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

Luk 21:21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

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Always Act With Clear Conscience Toward God

Rom 14:22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

Rom 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

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