

Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents



**THE BIBLICAL
CASE FOR CIVIL
DISOBEDIENCE**

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

Mark 12:17

“Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God” – John Knox

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The Biblical Case for Civil Disobedience

Introduction

We are living in historic times. These are also perilous times for America, probably only paralleled by the days of the American Revolution or the Civil War. America is on the brink of either a glorious repentance and recovery, or a violent and shameful slide into tyranny. Will we see the figure of the ancient warrior again in our time?

“One afternoon in April 1689, as the American Colonies boiled with rumors that King James II was about to strip them of their liberties, the king’s hand-picked governor of New England, Sir Edmund Andros, marched his troops menacingly through Boston. His purpose was to crush any thought of colonial self-rule. To everyone present, the future looked grim.

Just at that moment, seemingly from nowhere, there appeared on the streets ‘the figure of an ancient man’ with ‘the eye, the face, the attitude of command.’ His manner ‘combining the leader and the saint,’ the old man planted himself directly in the path of the approaching British soldiers and demanded that they stop. ‘The solemn, yet warlike peal of that voice, fit either to rule a host on the battlefield or be raised to God in prayer, were irresistible. At the old man’s word and outstretched arm, the roll of the drum was hushed at once, and the advancing line stood still.’”

Inspired by this single act of defiance, the people of Boston roused their courage and acted. Within the day, Andros was deposed and jailed, the liberty of Boston saved, and the corner turned on the colonial Glorious Revolution ... Would the Gray Champion ever return? *“I have heard,”* added (Nathaniel) Hawthorne, *“that whenever the descendants of the Puritans are to show the spirit of their sires, the old man reappears again.”* ... *“When eighty years had passed,”* wrote Hawthorne, *“the Gray Champion reappeared. The occasion was the revolutionary summer of 1775 ...”* (*The Fourth Turning*, pp. 139–140).

America at the Brink

How did we get here? That question has a simple and shameful answer: We have forsaken our God and bartered His blessings for the passing pleasures of this world. We have committed the double treachery of ancient Israel.

“But My people have changed their glory for what does not profit ... for My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

Jeremiah 2:11b, 13

Today we stand at the brink of disaster. It has long been said that America would never fall to invasion but would be brought down by betrayal from within. Never before in our history has the lowest most depraved among us been elevated to positions of power and wealth. With a few glowing exceptions, we are ruled by a class of criminals unparalleled in history for their arrogance, greed, and godlessness.

This conference is a call to war. The goal of these classes is to turn each and every one of you into a revolutionary. I say revolutionary, in the sense of our founding fathers—not in the sense of anarchy, which prevails today. Because if America does not wake up from her stupor and reclaim her love for the God of the Bible, we will be the ones guilty of consigning our children and grandchildren to tyranny and slavery.

In these classes you will no doubt hear some things you may have never heard. You will be challenged, and perhaps angered. All that I ask is that you give me a hearing, throw out the bones, and feed on the meat.

CLASS ONE:

The Things of God; The Things of Caesar (Mark 12)

What are you **willing** and **able** to do to resist tyranny? What will you do when Caesar demands everything that belongs to God? Would you prefer to have to bear God's wrath or Caesar's? If we will not answer these questions, they are about to be answered for us.

The Setting (Treachery), vv. 12–15

Verse 12 tells us their ultimate plan—arrest and murder. Short of that, the scheme of vv. 13–15 is put in play. The Pharisees believed paying tax to Caesar was an act of betrayal to Yahweh. The Herodians—wealthy priests—colluded with Rome to be able to maintain wealth and power. Yet Pharisees and Herodians were united in their hatred of Jesus.

If Jesus says to pay the tax, the Pharisees would accuse Him before the Sanhedrin of betraying Israel. If He says not to pay, the Herodians would accuse Him of treason against Rome. They thought they had Him in a trap He could not escape from.

Timeless Wisdom, vv. 16–17

Jesus' answer defeated their scheme, but also declared an ultimate truth. There are things that rightly belong to Caesar, and things that rightly belong to God. The "image" on the coin makes the point. Since Caesar's image is on the coin, give it to him. But what bears the image of God? We do! We owe to God our very selves, all that we are and have and do. Jesus will make that point very shortly.

The word translated "*render*" is *apodidomi*. It means "to give back," and implies a debt. There is a debt that citizens owe to government, and there is a debt that each of us owes to God. The problem is seldom that we give to God too much of what is Caesar's. Rather, we are in danger of always giving to Caesar that which belongs to God.

Though not often recognized, what Jesus said here is revolutionary. Here are some reasons why:

1. Jesus declares that some things belong to Caesar (Government).
2. In saying this He is also declaring that all other things do not belong to Caesar. God or Caesar? If you had to short one of them, who would it be?
3. If Caesar demands the things that do not belong to him, he is to be resisted. In fact, it becomes the duty of all men to resist in every way possible. Have you ever heard the saying, "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." Who said it (Thomas Jefferson? Benjamin Franklin? No, it was John Knox).
4. The only way that men can rightly discern what belongs to Caesar is if they are giving to God what is His due. The point here is that all men will give too much

to Caesar if they are not rightly related to almighty God, the author of both justice and freedom.

5. Many who have believed in Jesus Christ, due to their spiritual immaturity, ignorance of God's Word, and deception from the world, deny God what is His, and render to Caesar (government) what is not rightfully due.
6. Here, Jesus lays down the true principle of separation of church and state. This principle, recognized rightly by Thomas Jefferson, has been perverted by our ruling elites, just as the Pharisees and Herodians sought to do. Its true meaning is echoed in our Constitution: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ...*" (First Amendment to the Constitution). Consider how this has been abused in the beginning stages of tyranny unleashed by the Covid-19 "plandemic."

But the story does not end here. Too many miss the connection with what comes later, in the same setting. After the Sadducees come up with their BS question (vv. 18–27), an honest scribe arrives on the scene. This all occurs in the temple (Mark 11:27)

The Honest Scribe, vv. 28–33

This honest scribe recognized the truth and wisdom of Jesus' answer. So, he put to Him what he believed was the greatest question of all. Jesus not only answered his question (from Deut. 6:4) but made an important addition (Lev. 19:18).

In answering this scribe, Jesus also reinforced what He had said earlier, "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*" (v. 17). Paul caught the sense of this when he wrote in Romans 13:8, "*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*" Once the tax has been paid, it is no longer owed. But the debt of love is never paid in full. (More on this in Class Two).

The scribe's enthusiastic answer (vv. 32–33) shows that he is a truth seeker and is obedient to the extent of his knowledge. Jesus is about to take him one step further.

Jesus' Leading Question, vv. 34–37

When Jesus says, "*You are not far from the kingdom of God,*" He indicates two very important things. First, the honest scribe was not yet in the kingdom, but he was near. Second, there was a vital truth the scribe must know and receive to enter into the kingdom.

Using a quote from Psalm 110:1, Jesus asks how Messiah/Christ could be the Son of David (a Messianic title), if both God (*Yahweh*) and David called Him *Adonai* (all of this is in the text of the Hebrew). Since *Adonai* was only used for God, how could this be? Jesus is leading the honest scribe to consider that Messiah must be both God and Man (see Rom. 1:3–4). It is most interesting that Jesus also includes the entire Trinity in His question: "*The Holy Spirit ... The LORD [Yahweh] ... My Lord [Adonai—Jesus].*"

The point here must not be missed! The only ones who can truly “*Render unto Caesar ... and unto God*” are those who are able to “*confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus ... for whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*” (Rom. 10:9, 13—more on this in the next class). Freedom from Caesar demands faith in Christ!

How do men and women of faith respond when “Caesar” demands what belongs to God?

Bible Examples: The Progressive Steps of Civil Disobedience

1. Daniel 1 (vv. 11–15): the use of appeal. Principle of the “lesser magistrates.”
2. Daniel 3 (vv. 16–18): refusal to obey command of compulsion to evil.
3. Daniel 6 (v. 10): refusal to obey command of prohibition from good.
4. Daniel 2 (vv. 17–23): offer of solution by supernatural wisdom/guidance.
5. Esther (8:8–12; 9:3): affirm the right of self-defense (Persian 2nd Amendment).
6. See Daniel 11:32–35 as an example of the civil disobedience of the Maccabees, and yet future of those fighting the forces of Antichrist.

The Minority Rules

In his excellent book *Skin in the Game*, Nassim Taleb illustrates in principle how Christianity conquered Rome, and how those few early Christians who truly knew and loved God impacted human history.

“So it appears that the church founders really wanted Christ to have skin in the game. He did actually suffer on the cross, sacrifice Himself, and experience death. He was a risk taker. More crucially to our story, he sacrificed himself for the sake of others.”

Skin in the Game, p. 120

Principle: The minority rule/3% rule (*Skin in the Game*, p. 69).

“A certain type of intransigent minority—with sufficient skin in the game (or, better, soul in the game) to reach a minutely small level, say 3 or 4 percent of the population, for the entire population to have to submit to their preferences ... the minority rule will show us how all it takes is a small number of intolerant, virtuous people with skin in the game, in the form of courage, for society to function properly.”

Skin in The Game, pp. 69–70

Taleb tells of going to a summer barbeque and being surprised to see his “kosher” friends drinking the lemonade, until one pointed out that almost all drinks now carry the mark that

shows they are kosher. The conclusion: “*The kosher population represents less than three tenths of a percent of the residents of the United States. Yet, it appears that almost all drinks are kosher*” (p. 71).

Supporting considerations:

1. A kosher (or *halal*) eater will never eat non-kosher (or non-*halal*) food, but a non-kosher eater isn't banned from eating kosher.
2. A disabled person will not use the regular bathroom, but a nondisabled person will use the bathroom for disabled people.
3. Someone with a peanut allergy will not eat products that touch peanuts, but a person without such an allergy can eat items with no peanut traces in them (which Taleb notes increases the number of people with peanut allergies, because reduced exposure is one of the causes of the allergies).
4. The minority group is an intransigent (unwilling to change) group, while the majority is flexible and therefore adaptable or malleable.
5. Taleb mentions (p. 72) pulling a prank on a visitor from Europe at a restaurant. Since they only had seating in the smoking section, he convinced his visitor they had to buy cigarettes and smoke while there.
6. Another example: “*Once you have 10 percent or more women at a party, you cannot serve only beer. But most men will drink wine. So you only need one set of glasses if you serve only wine—the universal donor, to use the language of blood groups*” (p. 77).
7. In Rome, Christians were tortured and put to death if they would not eat sacrificial meat. Ultimately, Christians conquered Rome! Too bad they did not read Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8! The persecutions were primarily ignited by the intolerance of Christians to polytheism, and their intransigence to conformity (preview of Rom. 12:1–2 and Rev. 2:10–11).

Summary: Giving God His Daily Due (5 Daily Disciplines)

Those who love God prize His fellowship and communion above all things. Life for them is a never-ending pursuit of purity (1 John 3:3).

1. **Wash** (Psalm 26:6; 1 Cor. 6:11; 11:31; Eph. 5:26; 1 John 1:9). “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*” Socrates made this statement at his trial for supposedly corrupting the youth of the nation. A daily “gut check” is crucial to spiritual training. Think of yourself as a spiritual warrior: Have I mastered all necessary skills? Is my spiritual equipment in order? Do I understand the standing order for the day? Do I understand the commander's intent? Am I walking and warring in

the power of the Spirit? If you cannot evaluate your life and find need for refining and improvement, you are apathetic, lazy, and self-deceived!

2. **Eat** (Matt. 4:4, John 6:35, 51; Heb. 5:14; 1 Pet. 2:2).
At the moment one trusts in Jesus Christ as Savior a new spiritual man is created within. This spiritual “babe” can only grow as spiritual nourishment is ingested. The only food fit for spiritual growth is first the milk, and then later the meat of God’s Word. Consistent intake of God’s Word must also be matched with the exercise of applying God’s Word to life.
3. **Walk** (2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 4:1; 5:8, 15).
There are two major figures that are used throughout the Bible for living the spiritual life: the walk and the warfare. They remind us that our spiritual life is both a journey and an ongoing battle against the forces of darkness. Walking illustrates the progress of spiritual growth, as we meet the tests and temptations of life using the Word of God as our staff and support. Also, by consistent walking, not only do we progress, but we become stronger through spiritual exercise.
4. **Work** (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 2:10; 4:12; Phil. 2:12; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:17).
The Bible is clear that each of us has been called and gifted for a specific work in this life. It is the duty and responsibility of each believer to seek, pray, and find the specific gift and calling of God on their life. This is why we can never compare ourselves to other believers. We each have a different work which we are to do (Mark 13:34). When we stand before the Lord and our lives are evaluated, it will be on the basis of our calling, whether we were faithful in our placement in His plan.
5. **Rest** (Matt. 11:28–30; Heb. 4:1–3, 11). The call of Christ comes to each of us with the offer of rest. First, it is rest from the burden and guilt of our sins. Once free of that unbearable burden, we are given a new burden, the task of learning from Christ (Eph. 4:20–21). We enter the School of Christ as a disciple to learn how we can be conformed to His image (Rom. 12:1–2; 2 Cor. 3:18). It is in the process of this growth and conformity that we find the moment-by-moment rest of abiding in Him (Psalm 91:1, John 15:4–9).

CLASS TWO:

Getting Romans 13 Right/Paul's Commentary on Jesus' Words

Romans 13 is an extended discussion of the truth found in Mark 12:17. Believe it or not, this passage was the most often cited text used during the Revolutionary War, used as justification for the war (*Sacred Scripture, Sacred War*, p. 117). Further, Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognized that it was the misapplication of the principles of Romans 13 that led to the Lutheran Church of Germany passively submitting to Adolph Hitler. (See both Foreword and Memoir in current edition of *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer). Hitler also used the anti-Semitic writings of Martin Luther to convince the Church that his persecution of the Jews was just.

Historical Background: Romans 10:9–10, a Revolutionary Concept

At the time Paul wrote this, the cult of Caesar was dominant in Rome. It was required that one make sacrifices to Caesar and proclaim, "Caesar is Lord." Failure to do so was considered an act of rebellion and treason. Under the reign of Nero, to proclaim that **JESUS IS LORD** was an act of defiance!

This was not so much a problem in Israel, because Rome had realized they could not overrule Jewish religious convictions (another example of the 3% rule), and it was not required. However, outside of Israel, it was imposed. Paul is writing to Christians in Rome. Failure to pay homage to Caesar here could mean the death penalty.

Today there is a fairly large segment of the Christian community that ascribe to what is popularly known as "Lordship Salvation." The basic tenet is that if you believe in Jesus but do not make Him "Lord of all/Lord of your life," you are not really saved, but only self-deceived. Romans 10 is one of the main texts used to promote this false teaching. With proper exegesis, this passage actually destroys this false teaching.

In reality, what Paul is teaching here is something much deeper and much more spiritually sublime. Paul begins by expressing his heart's desire that unbelieving Israel might be saved (v. 1), then declares that "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes*" (v. 4). The barrier to Israel was their ignorance of the only Savior and the way of salvation (vv. 2–9). Their desire to keep the law was as impossible as someone going into Heaven, or descending into Hell, to bring forth the Messiah/Christ. The truth was that Christ had already come down from Heaven and had already risen from the realm of the dead (1 Cor. 15:3–4).

What was needed for Israel to enter into eternal salvation (as with the honest scribe we saw earlier in Mark 12) was for them to recognize the deity of Jesus Christ. Verse 13 consolidates the idea with a quote from Joel 2:32, where "*LORD*" is *Jehovah* in the Hebrew. To call on the Name of the LORD means to call on His reputation and character as proven through His mighty deeds. He is God, and He alone is able to save.

The Context: Romans 12—The Things of God

It is interesting that while Romans 12 deals with what we ought to render to God, Romans 13 deals with what we ought to render to “Caesar” (earthly government).

What We Ought to Render to God (Romans 12):

1. Our self (vv. 1–2),
2. Our service (vv. 3–8),
3. Love to one another (vv. 9–10),
4. Our diligence (vv. 11–13 cf. 2 Pet. 1:5–7), and
5. Genuine compassion for all (vv. 14–21).

Note the closing command of Romans 12:21, which commands victory over evil by that which is good. The “good” is mentioned in vv. 2, 9, 17, 21, and Romans 13:4. “Good” in Romans 12:21 has the definite article, referring back to the “perfect will of God” (Rom. 8:28; 12:2). This sets the stage for the commands of Romans 13, which are subordinate, in that whatever we render to Caesar is always subordinate to our surrender and service to God.

The Command (Rom. 13:1–2)

The command “*Let every soul be subject*” is subordinate to the phrase: “*For there is no authority except from God.*” Here, we have the principle of **delegation** of authority. This tells us that all authority is delegated! There is no such thing as independent, autocratic, authority. Since God delegates all authority, every authority is limited to His mandates. **Any and all laws that violate His mandate (unjust laws) are not to be obeyed.**

The word “*subject*” is *hupotasso*, a military term meaning “to stand in order of rank.” This word never means absolute subjection, as Runyun points out. “*No doctrine could be more agreeable than this to tyrants, and to all that panders to unholy power; for, if this be Paul’s meaning, there is no despot, no usurper, no bloody conqueror, but could plead the divine sanction and, more than this, the devil himself could lay the teachings of Paul under contribution to enforce his pre-eminently unholy authority.*” (*Resistance to Tyrants*, Runyan, p. 19, quoting James M. Willson, *The Establishment and Limits of Civil Government*).

Note that “*governing authorities*” is an interpretation, rather than a translation, of the word *huperecho*, which means “to hold above,” and would include all ranks of ascending authority: from parents, to father, to clan leader, to church leader, to local leader, etc. The idea is, “Let every soul be submissive to all ranks of authority.” It refers to those authorities ascending in order all the way up to God Himself. It can also refer to those having “moral excellence” and who are therefore worthy of that submission (*Resistance to Tyrants*, Runyan, p. 13).

The Intent/Good (vv. 3–4)

The second great principle enunciated in this passage is that of **limitation** of authority. “*For he is God’s minister to you for good*” (v. 4); and from v. 3, rulers are to be “*a terror ... to evil.*”

It is under the principles of delegation and limitation that we find the command to “be in subjection.” God ordained government for *“the good.”* “Good” here has the definite article, continuing the string of usage from Romans 12 (vv. 2, 9, 17, 21), where it refers to the perfect will of God. This could also take us further back, to Romans 8:28, where God is working the good of His plan through both good and evil, *“to those who love God, to those that are called according to His purpose.”*

It is most interesting that John MacArthur, himself a staunch Calvinist, previously has declared that the American Revolution was unbiblical, based on his misunderstanding of Romans 13. Yet now he finds himself leading a civil-disobedience revolt against the Governor of California, because of the Church shutdown orders to the Covid-19 “plandemic.” John Calvin himself wrote: *“For earthly princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God and are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought, rather, to spit upon their heads than to obey them.”* (Calvin, *Commentary on Daniel*; Dan. 6:32).

The Limits of Submission (vv. 5–7)

“Therefore ... be subject ... render therefore to all their due.” The present passive infinitive of *hupotasso* indicates purpose/result. The purpose and the result are found in the phrase *“because of wrath...also for conscience sake.”* If our ultimate obedience is to God, our conscience will be clear. Though like the apostles (Acts 5:40; 14:19) we may suffer the wrath of man, we will not suffer the wrath of God.

God’s Wrath in Romans:

1. God’s wrath is the inevitable consequence of sinful actions (Rom. 1:18–32).
2. God’s wrath intensifies the more grace is rejected (Rom. 2:5).
3. The law of Moses magnifies God’s wrath against sin (Rom. 4:15).
4. We are saved from wrath by entering into the life of Christ (Rom. 5:9–10). This refers not only to justification, but obedience in life. The Spirit lives out of us the resurrection life of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4, 7:6).
5. God demonstrates His wrath on *“vessels of wrath”* (Rom. 9:22–23), who by their unbelief have fitted themselves for destruction. This warns the unbeliever and so brings many to Christ, so that God might *“make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy,”* who are prepared by faith and growth to share His glory. (Note that the topic of *“mercy”* is first presented in Romans 9, and occurs nine times in Chapters 9 and 11, leading up to the tenth in Romans 12:1.)
6. We need not take vengeance against evil doers because we know the wrath of God will deal with them (Rom. 12:19).

7. By proper submission to higher authorities, we avoid both the wrath of those authorities, and the wrath of God (Rom. 13:5).

“Pay taxes ... render ... to all their due, customs ... fear ... honor to whom honor” is due. The word *“render”* is the same one Jesus used in Mark 12:17 and means “pay back.” This is further defined by the little word *“due,”* which is stronger in Greek, being the word *tas ophelias*, meaning “what is rightfully owed” (*Resistance to Tyrants*, Gordon Runyan).

Note: It is God, not government, who determines what is to be given to government. The Biblical limitations are clear:

1. As children of God, we give all that we are to Him first (Mark 12:17).
2. As part of our obedience to Him, we render to Caesar only what is his due.
3. When any conflict arises, we give to God and oppose Caesar (Acts 4:19; 5:29).
4. At all times our greatest debt to all higher authorities is prayer (1 Tim. 2:1–6).
5. When government becomes totally corrupted and evil, it is to be resisted by all means (**Heb. 11:23–40—read it!**).
6. We also have the dual command: *“Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty by which Christ has made us free ...”* (Gal. 5:1), and *“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.”* (1 Cor. 7:23).

Romans 13 for Children

*I have six little friends
They taught me all I knew
Their names are what, and where, and when
And why, and how, and who.*

– Longfellow

1. **Who?** First, *“every soul,”* therefore applies to believer and unbeliever. Then, *“Governing authorities,”* which is a terrible translation. The word that is translated *“governing”* is from *huperecho*, which means “surpassing, superior”.
2. **What?** *“be subject”* is *hupotasso*, meaning to take your place in the ranks. The idea is submission within your proper sphere. Believers are *“citizens of heaven”* (Phil. 3:20), with our primary objective being to act as *“ambassadors of Christ”* (2 Cor. 5:20–21), in order to bring others to faith in Jesus Christ. This obligation supersedes all others.

3. **When?** Essentially at all times, but specifically when it is time to “*render ... to all their due, taxes ... customs ... fear ... honor*” (Rom. 13:6–7). However, we are **never** to be subject when government demands what belongs to God.
4. **Where?** The unstated implication is that we are to be subject wherever we are.
5. **Why?** Two negatives and two positives are given in Romans 13:3–5. The negatives: to avoid fear of punishment, and to avoid an evil conscience. The positives: to receive praise (good standing) from those in power, and to reap the good benefits of government.
6. **How?** Simply by “rendering to Caesar that which is Caesar’s,” Romans 13:6–7. By obedience to the words of Christ, no man, certainly no well-instructed believer, will ever tolerate tyranny. However, we will see more of the “how” in Romans 13:8–10.
7. One phrase deserves special attention: “*For he does not bear the sword in vain*” (Rom. 13:4)

Contrary to popular opinion, however, this warning works both ways. It works from the “higher authorities” downward, but it also works from the “lesser magistrates” upward. This was understood by the founding fathers.

“Roman Emperor Trajan, while appointing a subordinate authority, handed him a sword and instructed him, saying, ‘Use this sword against my enemies if I give righteous commands; but if I give unrighteous commands, use it against me.’”
 – *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates*, Matthew J. Trewhella, p. 2.

Application

1. It takes wisdom and discernment to know what belongs to Caesar, and what belongs to God.
2. It takes humility and integrity to render what rightfully belongs to Caesar.
3. It takes faith and love to render to God that which is His.

The Unpaid Debt, vv. 8–10

As the recipients of the grace of God we all are placed into a position of great debt. Take note that the word “*due*” in v. 7 and the word “*owe*” in v. 8 come from the same Greek word for debt or obligation.

The Believers Three-Fold Debt:

1. We are **debtors of the gospel** (Rom. 1:14–5). Our obligation (and joy) to give the Gospel to others will never end.

2. We are **debtors of the Spirit** (Rom. 8:12–14). The spiritual treasures given to us (Eph. 1:3) were designed not to be hoarded, but to be dispersed by the power of the Spirit to bless a sorrowing world.
3. We are **debtors of love** to those in positions of authority (see Acts 13:6–12; 16:25–34; 24:10–20; 26:19–32; 27:30–44). One debt we must remember to pay daily is to **pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1–6)**.

Some Critical Questions:

1. If all “superior authorities” are ordained, what authorities are excluded?
2. If you live under a dictatorship, what authority has God put over you? What about an oligarchy? What about a republic? Who did God put in authority over Israel when they sinned? Who were the Israelites under in Egypt?
3. Who has the highest authority in the United States? The President? Congress? The Supreme Court? No—according to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, it is **“We the people!”**
4. How do we decide what is the will of “We the people?” We vote! So, what if one party uses collusion and fraud to cheat the people of a free election? Then “We the people” must do everything necessary to purge the government of corruption and those who use it!
5. David refused to fight against Saul, “The Lord’s anointed.” But he did not hesitate to fight against Ish-Bosheth and Northern Israel (2 Sam. 2:8–4:12).
6. If criminals invade your home and threaten harm or death to your family what do you do? If enemies infiltrate your country and threaten to enslave you and your family what do you do? “Against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”
7. If a foreign enemy (i.e., China) uses bribes and payoffs to corrupt elected government officials, are those officials not now agents of the foreign enemy? Whether by invasion or infiltration, the enemy must be destroyed.

Is It Right to Fight?

When mobs of devil-worshipping fanatics riot, burn, and loot in the streets, attacking the weak and helpless, all with the tacit support of the local authorities, it is time for all who love freedom to stand up and fight. (Again, Heb. 11:23–40. See article: “*The Right to Armed Self-Defense in the Light of Law Enforcement Abdication*”, David E. Bernstein).

“If you will not fight for right when you can easily win without bloodshed; if you will not fight when your victory is sure and not too costly; you may come to the moment when you have to fight with all the odds against you, and only

*a precarious chance of survival. There may even be a worse case.
You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to
perish than to live as slaves.”*

– Sir Winston Churchill

The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates

This brief overview is taken from the book by Matthew J. Trehwella, *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates*:

1. In 39 A.D., Publius Petronius was ordered by the Emperor Caligula to place an image of the Emperor in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews sent thousands of learned men to appeal to Petronius, resulting in him refusing the order of Caligula. The lesser magistrate placed himself between tyranny and the people. This is called an act of **Interposition**—what Scripture calls “standing in the gap” (Ezek. 22:30). Caligula ordered him to commit suicide, but before this was done, his own praetorian guard assassinated Caligula.
2. The Roman Emperor Trajan understood the role of lesser magistrates. When he said to his subordinate, “Use this sword against my enemies if I give righteous commands; but if I give unrighteous commands, use it against me,” he was affirming the rule of the lesser magistrate. Applied to what Paul said in Romans 13:4’ “*He does not bear the sword in vain,*” it is a reminder that the principle works up the chain of command, as well as down.
3. In 1159 A.D., John of Salisbury wrote *Policraticus*, emphasizing that God delegates all earthly power. No ruler is autonomous and “*When the king makes law contrary to God’s law, he becomes a tyrant ... for tyranny is abuse of power entrusted by God to man.*” (p. 12).
4. The *Magna Carta* was the result of Christian nobles who took a stand against the tyranny of King John in the year 1215. They threatened war against him if he did not sign it. The *Magna Carta* established the principle of the rule of law, and that all are subject to the law, whether King or subjects. It also established the individual freedom of every man. King John signed the document “*because of the combined swords of the lesser magistrates who gathered to demand its signing.*” (p. 2).
5. John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, speaks of the duties of the lesser magistrates to withstand the abuse of power by kings.
6. In 1548 Emperor Charles V sought to impose Roman Catholicism on all churches in Germany. One church, in Magdeberg, refused to accept this tyranny. In 1550, the Pastors of the churches in Magdeberg wrote *The Magdeberg Confession*, refusing to submit to the order. The army of Charles surrounded the city and laid

siege to it. The siege lasted over a year. After 4,000 of Charles' forces were killed, and only 468 men of Magdeberg, the siege was ended in favor of the Magdeberg pastors and churches.

7. John Knox, who is credited with the saying, "*Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God,*" in 1558, wrote his *Appellation*, in which he cited seventy passages of Scripture to support the Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates.
8. William Blackstone (1723–1780) was the most cited legal scholar in the writings of the American Founders. He declared that "*Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being*" (p. 22).

Point: When the "lesser magistrates" are compromised and corrupt, then the men of the communities—heads of households—become the final authority, "*Who bear not the sword in vain!*" We will look further into this history when we consider the case of the American Revolution: Was it biblical or not?

Biblical Examples:

1. Jesus was constantly attacked for violating the Sabbath laws. Humanly speaking, the religious leaders were the authorities in Israel. Jesus showed that their laws (oral tradition) were a violation of the God-given purpose of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:27— "*Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath,*" and "*The Sabbath was made for man ... not man for the Sabbath*").
2. In the Beatitudes, Jesus showed that they would be practicing civil disobedience because they would be persecuted for obedience (Matt. 5:10–12). Later, in the Sermon on the Mount, He directly challenged the teaching of their civil and religious leaders by saying, "*You have heard it said ... but I say to you*" (Matt. 5:21–22, 31–32, 33–34, 38–39, 43–44). To His listeners, these were revolutionary statements.
3. Paul and Silas engaged in an act of civil disobedience in Philippi and suffered unjustly for it, so as to establish a safe place for the Gospel to prosper (Acts 16:16–40). All Paul needed to do was to declare his Roman citizenship prior to the beating and it would have stopped. Yet, by enduring the abuse, he created a caution in the rulers of the city, lest he report them to Rome. The penalty for beating or imprisoning a Roman citizen without charges by the court was death.

CLASS THREE:

Peter's Commentary on Romans 13 (1 Pet. 2:13–17)

This text appears to be Peter's comment on Paul's teaching in Romans 13. **This was the fifth most often used passage during the American Revolution** (*Sacred*, p. 117). Peter echoes Paul's instructions, but places it within the context of persecution from the higher powers.

The command to “*submit*” is repeated, both greater and lesser authorities are mentioned, and emphasis is placed on the divine role of government: “*those who are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good*” (1 Pet. 2:14). What then happens when a government promotes evildoers and punishes those who do good? Then “Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.” However, even in this, the goal is “*that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free ... but as bondservants of God*” (1 Pet. 2:15–16).

The Context

1. Peter writes this letter to believers scattered by persecution (1 Pet 1:1).
2. The outline of the book speaks of increasing trials and sufferings:
 - 1 Peter 1—The suffering of various trials (v. 6).
 - 1 Peter 2—When suffering unjustly (v. 19).
 - 1 Peter 3—Suffering for righteousness sake (v. 14).
 - 1 Peter 4—Sharing the sufferings of Christ (v. 17).
 - 1 Peter 5—Direct Satanic attack (v. 8).
3. Though true at all times, it is especially important that when we have no power to resist or appeal our treatment by government, we must adopt a strategy of resting in the sovereign rule of the heavenly Father. Even in regimes of total tyranny, there may be sympathetic local magistrates who can help (as in Dan. 1; also, the story of Schindler's List; and the book *Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates*, Trewhella).
4. This is where a free people end up if they fail to maintain spiritual focus and guard their freedoms. Any nation with a once-strong population of believers in Jesus Christ, who then become apathetic and spiritually soft, is doomed to slide into tyranny.

The Pilgrim's Mindset, vv. 11–12

As the children of God, we must always keep in mind that “*Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Phil. 3:20). If we fulfill our allegiance there, we will not fail in regard to earthly powers. Our goal is always to bring others into the kingdom by faith in Christ.

Living in a Foreign Land, vv. 13–19

We are sojourners in a foreign land, but that land is still under the authority of God. We therefore “submit ... to every ordinance of man,” which would be better translated, “to every [divine] institution [ktisis] among men.” Once again, the divine purpose for government is “for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of those who do good.” The context shows that enduring persecution may be endured for the sake of witness to the truth (v. 19). In this, we follow in the steps of Christ.

Imitating the Outcast Savior (Jer. 14:8–9)

The prophet Jeremiah foretold the rejection of the Lord Jesus as One traveling through a strange land, finding no hospitality (no room in the Inn). He was the mighty One who came to save, yet His great work was hindered by the unbelief of His people. Though He demonstrated extreme humility (Phil. 2:5–9), He was not reluctant to rebuke and resist their evil (Matt. 23:13–36).

The Inevitable End of Unconditional Submission

“And how we burned in the camps later, thinking: What would things have been like if every security operative, when he went out at night to make an arrest, had been uncertain whether he would return alive and had to say good-bye to his family? Or if, during periods of mass arrests, as for example in Leningrad, when they arrested a quarter of the entire city, people had not simply sat there in their lairs, paling with terror at every bang of the downstairs door and at every step on the staircase, but had understood they had nothing left to lose and had boldly set up in the downstairs hall an ambush of half a dozen people with axes, hammers, pokers, or whatever else was at hand? The Organs would very quickly have suffered a shortage of officers and transport and, notwithstanding all of Stalin's thirst, the cursed machine would have ground to a halt! If...if...we didn't love freedom enough. And even more – we had no awareness of the real situation.... We purely and simply deserved everything that happened afterward.”

– Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956*

The Five Divine Institutions:

1. **Volition:** Volition provides an authority for the soul (Josh. 24:15; Col. 3:1–2).
2. **Marriage:** In marriage, the authority is vested in the man (1 Cor. 11:3).
3. **Family:** The authority in the family is vested in the parents (Eph. 6:1).
4. **Nation:** Authority is in the government (Dan. 2:37–38; Rom.13:1).
5. **Church:** Authority is in the Pastor/Shepherd/Elder (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:1–5).

In none of these is the authority absolute, nor is the submission total. All authority is under the rule of God, and all submission owes Him first allegiance. Any authority that violates its own allegiance to God, using its power arbitrarily, diminishes the obedience owed to it.

Biblical Examples:

1. Abigail, the wife of Nabal the fool (1 Sam. 25), defied her husband's orders and thus saved his life and that of his men. She also paid homage to David, the anointed king, and was blessed by God for her actions.
2. Saphira, though under the authority of Ananias (Acts 5:1–11), should have refused to participate in his scheme. This may have brought abuse from him but would surely have brought praise from God. Peter gave her this opportunity, but she failed to take a stand against her husband.

CLASS FOUR:

Was the American Revolution Biblical? (Gal. 5:1)

The book of Galatians is a polemic against encroaching legalism. The reason legalists tend to take over churches is due to most Christians being willing to surrender liberty in Christ for the sake of “unity/harmony.” This goes back to the 3%, minority rule. The intolerant minority will always rule the indifferent majority.

The Context: the Judaizers

The background for this command is found in the attempt of the Judaizers to impose legalism on the church of Antioch (Acts 15:1–5), which was compounded by the compromise of Peter and Barnabas (Gal. 2:11–21). The error consisted first in the teaching that circumcision and law-keeping were essential to salvation (Acts 15:1–5) and, secondly, that obedience to dietary and social laws were a means of spirituality (Gal. 2:11–21).

The Command: Stand Fast

This passage was the third most popular passage used by preachers in the time of the Revolutionary war (*Sacred*, James P. Byrd, p. 129). “In his enormously influential essays from 1768, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, the affluent Philadelphia Lawyer, John Dickinson, made much of this verse. Dickinson viewed Paul’s statement as biblical proof that freedom was the design of creation. God ‘hath made us free,’ meaning that freedom was a ‘birthright’ ordained by heaven.” (*Sacred*, Byrd, pg. 130).

1. **“Stand fast”** (*Steko: present active imperative—implies habitual action*).
This command is essentially the same as what we have in Ephesians 6:14. We are to play the part of a good soldier of Christ, take our stand on the line of spiritual liberty, and refuse to retreat. Good soldiers hold the line!
2. **“Liberty”** (*Eleutheria: dative case*)
The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament notes here that “the dative could be instrumental,” in which case our liberty in Christ is “the means by which” we stand firm. In other words, we utilize and mobilize our freedom in Christ so as to keep standing firm. The word connotes the freedom of one who has been set free from slavery.
3. **“By which Christ has made us free”** (*Eleutheroo: aorist active indicative*)
The aorist tense speaks of the cross as the point in time; the active voice indicates Christ’s part in surrender to the plan of God and willingness to bear our sins, and the indicative mood tells of the reality of our liberation from sin and death.
4. **“Do not be entangled again in a yoke of bondage”** (*Me palin zugo douleias enecho: present, middle, imperative*)
This means to be ensnared or entangled again in that from which you were set free. It refers to the Judaizers attempts to impose circumcision as a requirement

for salvation (Acts 15:1–5; Gal. 2:1–10), and also to Peter’s compromise at Antioch, which implied that spirituality was attained by obedience to social and dietary laws (Gal. 2:11–21).

A Brief History: The Declaration of Independence/Constitution **(Supreme Law of Land)**

What is the Supreme Law of the Land in America? For Paul commands us to be subject to “the higher powers” (Rom. 13:1). As stated earlier, to translate this “governing authorities” is contrary to the text. It speaks of the “superior powers,” meaning those that excel in performing what God has ordained government to do. No government ordained by God can be obeyed when it defies the laws of God.

1. Before the revolutionary war, American loyalists fought four major wars on behalf of British interests (*Sacred Scriptures, Sacred War*, Byrd):
 - King William’s War (1689–1697),
 - Queen Anne’s War (1702–1713),
 - King George’s War (1744–1748), and
 - The French and Indian War (1754–1763), also known as “the Seven Years War” (1756–1763).

2. Britain repaid Americans for their loyalty by a series of taxes, to help Britain pay for those wars. After the treaty of Paris (1763), British debts soared to 137 million pounds, “*far surpassing the normal British budget of 8 million pounds*” (*Sacred*, p. 27). Britain’s solution? (see *Sacred*, pp. 27–31).
 - Maintain a standing British army of 10,000 soldiers on American soil. Seen as an unprecedented act of aggression by Americans.
 - The Stamp Act of 1765, levying a tax on all paper products. So furious was the opposition to the Stamp Act that Britain ultimately repealed it, leaving the British furious and Americans jubilant.
 - The Currency Act (1764) forbidding the colonies from printing their own money.
 - The Sugar Act (1764) imposed duties on sugar, molasses, etc.
 - Britain responded to this with the Declaratory Act, declaring Parliament’s absolute authority over the colonies. There comes a time when authorities make laws simply to show you that you are powerless and that they hold all the power.

Note: Sir Edmund Burke stood before Parliament and argued on behalf of the American colonists, and against the treachery of the British crown. He proposed

six resolutions which, if Britain had adopted them, would have avoided the revolution. This occurred only months before the war broke out (*The Portable Edmund Burke*, Isaak Kramnick, pp. 259–273).

3. When Americans continued resisting, the Boston massacre resulted on March 5, 1770. Britain responded by increasing troop numbers to 4,000 in Boston—a city of 15,000 residents.
4. As tensions continued to build, on June 10, 1772, the British customs ship, *Gaspee* was attacked and burned, followed on December 16, 1773, by the Boston Tea Party. With the imposition of the Tea Act, Britain gave the East India Company, which was nearing financial ruin, the monopoly over all tea imported into America. Is there any wonder Americans now prefer coffee?
5. Next came the attempt to disarm patriots at Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775, and the fight was on. Paul Revere was not the only one who rode to warn the patriots. Both William Dawes and Samuel Prescott joined the alarm. Only Prescott made it all the way to Concord. Overcoming militia forces at Lexington green, the British troops marched on to Concord. Patriot militia occupied the high ground, then moved to the north bridge and engaged the British (“The shot heard round the world”). Militia forces continued to arrive until they numbered around 2,000. They drove the British back, even after they were reinforced.

At Menotomy (now Arlington) they were ambushed by 78-year-old Samuel Whitmore (“Stone Cold Samuel”). Whitmore originally came to America to fight for the British in King George’s war. He then fought through the French and Indian War, and the later Indian Wars (at age 68). After fighting in three major wars, Whitmore had identified as an American. **The Gray Champion, the ancient warrior, had returned!**

Whitmore took cover behind the stone wall near his farm. He shot one British soldier with his musket, then dispatched two more with his dueling pistols. As the Redcoats attacked, he took on another with his sword, taken from a French officer during his involvement in the French Indian Wars. Samuel was finally shot in the face, and bayoneted at least 13 times, then left for dead. Nearby villagers carried him to the Cooper Tavern and called for Doctor Nathaniel Tufts, who said there was nothing that he could do for Samuel. He declared that Samuel would surely die, and die he did—18 years later! At the age of 98, before he passed away, he was asked if he regretted his actions on that day. With disgust at the question he replied, “*No! I would take the same chance all over again.*”

6. “*Sic Semper Tyrannis.*” The state motto of Virginia, was included in the State seal designed by George Wythe, signer of the Declaration of Independence, in 1776. There was only an estimated 3% of American Patriots who fought in The War of Independence! As the signers of the Declaration of Independence stated, these were men (and women) who had “skin in the game” (Taleb’s phrase). Taleb

wrote: *“For the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.”*

Biblical Examples:

The Book of Judges is a valuable resource for information and guidance on the subject of civil disobedience. First, it always shows us that a nation that forgets its God and defies His Word will always end in tyranny. The phrase that occurs over and over is: *“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers ... [and] the hand of the Lord was against them.”* (Judg. 2:11, 12, 15). Second, when Israel repented, God sent them a deliverer. *“Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.”* (Judg. 2:16). These judges were in step with God and knew when the time for judgment had come on their enemies. They fought the spiritual war first, leading the revival, until *“the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up a deliverer for them”* (Judg. 3:15).

1. The story of Ehud (Judg. 3:12–30). With a hand-made dagger, and a courageous plan, Ehud slew the tyrannical king of Moab, and led the Israelites to victory.
2. The story of Jael (Judg. 4:17–24). With a tent peg and a hammer, Jael killed the commander of Jabin’s army, Sisera. She was the one who received the praise in the song of Deborah (Judg. 5:24–27). To the timid Barak, Deborah said, *“I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”* (Judg. 4:9). Oftentimes, when men are too cowardly to fight, God will raise up women who will!
3. Heroes of Faith (Heb. 11:23–40). Most people who consider the issue of civil disobedience from a scriptural point of view, seem to overlook this passage, which is filled with acts of disobedience by great believers.

Critical Considerations:

1. When Israel rebelled against God, it was the Lord who *“delivered them into the hand”* of their enemies (Judg. 6:1; 4:2, etc.). This means that they were under *“governing authorities ... appointed by God”* (Rom. 13:1).
2. When Israel repented, according to the promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14, God heard their prayers and *“The Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.”* (Judg. 2:16).
3. In the case of Jael, she used cunning and deception against the commander of the king’s forces, even though her husband was in a treaty with him (Judg. 4:17). Richard Wurmbrand, founder of *The Voice of the Martyrs* ministry, spoke with

contempt about the Christians who, under communist rule, would not lie so as to hide fellow believers and Jews.

4. Those interested in how a captive people can engage in civil disobedience might want to read *Natural Born Heroes* by Chris MacDougal, John Steinbeck's classic *The Moon is Down*, and Ann Petry's book *Harriet Tubman*. If African Americans want a true hero, they should look to Tubman and/or Frederick Douglas, who said, "*Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have the exact measure of the injustice and wrong which will be imposed on them.*"

CLASS FIVE: **Civil Disobedience in Persecution (Rev. 2:10)**

There are many times, in a multitude of places, where the hold of tyranny is so great and the position of believers is so weak, that no option is available but that of submission and endurance. This was the position of the early church under Rome. This does not, however, excuse compliance or complicity with evil rulers. The rule of civil disobedience still applies, and the cost is often life itself.

The Context

In the letters to the seven churches, the Lord Jesus evaluates each church, giving commendation where possible, and condemnation and correction where needed. These churches illustrate conditions that may exist in any local church at any given time, and provide instruction for us to correct the constant trend in the church to drift from our first love toward the apathy and arrogance of the Laodiceans.

These messages to the churches encompass three spiritual perspectives:

1. **History:** These were seven actual churches to which John ministered, and they are evaluated here by the Lord Jesus according to their strengths and weaknesses at the time of the early church.
2. **Prophecy:** The conditions that existed in these churches are a preview of those that will exist within churches throughout church history. By studying them, we can evaluate our own local church from the divine perspective.
3. **Mystery:** The scrutiny of the Lord evaluates “*the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12). Jesus Christ speaks to each of us through these messages to reveal areas of commendation or condemnation in our own lives.

In the message to the saints in Smyrna (Myrrh—an ointment associated with death but having a wonderful fragrance; see 2 Cor. 2:14–16), the Lord Jesus surrounds His commands with reference to several promises:

1. He speaks in the power of the Resurrection, “*the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life.*” Death cannot hurt you!
2. He reminds them that they are rich (in eternal inheritance), in spite of their sufferings, poverty, and opposition. “*But you are rich.*”
3. He reminds them that overcomers cannot be hurt by the Second Death. We have eternity to look forward to, in His presence forever.
4. It is worth noting that this is the shortest of all the messages.

A Message to the Martyrs (Rev. 2:10)

1. Do not fear. Fear is natural in the face of extreme suffering, but faith conquers fear (Psalm 56:3).
2. Look reality square in the face. Some will suffer, some will be imprisoned, and some will die. This is a personal attack by the devil (1 Pet. 5:8–9), the highest form of affliction (Luke 22:31).
3. Be faithful! The Greek word is *ginomai*, which is in the present middle imperative and should be translated, “Become faithful.” No matter how well one has done, the test is the duration! Will you finish strong? (2 Tim. 4:6–8).
4. The Promise – *“I will give you the crown of life.”* This is one of five crowns promised to those who excel in the Christian life:
 - The Imperishable Crown (1 Cor. 9:24–27)
Given to those who exercise self-discipline so as to fulfill the plan of God. This can differ with different gifts and ministries.
 - The Crown of Joy (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19–20)
Given for effective witness in bringing many to Christ.
 - The Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8)
Given to those who live in the expectation of Christ’s return (1 John 2:28, 3:3).
 - The Crown of Life (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10)
Given to those who endure testing and trials faithfully.
 - The Crown of Glory (1 Pet. 5:4)
Given to faithful ministers.

Note: Unlike the unconditional promises given to overcomers, this is one of five conditional promises given to the seven churches. Some promises apply to all who are believers. The five conditional promises apply only to those who fulfill the accompanying condition (Rev. 2:10, 25; 3:4, 11, 20).

How We Prevail

As John surveys the scope of the tribulation period, under the ferocious attack of antichrist, he records three stages of victory experience by believers. All have overcome, but not all to the same degree.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

Revelation 12:11

1. First, there is the initial and ultimate victory of all those who place their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, "*the blood of the Lamb.*"
2. Next there is the victory of those who are devoted to His Word, both in learning it and applying it "*by the word of their testimony.*"
3. Finally, there is the victory of those who face martyrdom rather than deny their Lord: "*they did not love their lives [even] to the death.*"

Biblical Examples:

1. The apostles' civil disobedience (Acts 4:19; 5:29) is expressed: "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" This is always the fundamental principle behind biblical civil disobedience.
2. The ultimate example when faced with corrupt and evil human authorities who have all the power is the Lord Jesus Christ. He simply submitted to the will of the Father: "*Not my will, Thy will be done*" (Matt. 26:39, 42).

CLASS SIX:

Spiritual Warfare, Earthly Conflict, and Ultimate Victory

All earthly conflict is rooted in the invisible war. At any given moment, we align ourselves either with the forces of light by walking in the Spirit, or with the forces of darkness. When we are living in fellowship with the Lord, we have His peace and strength, even in the midst of trial. **But we have to fight for it**, because the enemy will contest possession of it at every moment.

Spiritual warfare assumes the conflict between good and evil. To fight and win in the spiritual war demands devotion to truth and virtue. **No Christian can hope to win the spiritual battle if they are submissive to evil authority.**

The spiritual war is fought on a cosmic battlefield, but we win our personal battle in the soul. The battle is always in the arena of the mind. (For the best work on this subject, read *America's Revolutionary Mind* by C. Bradley Thompson). Three majestic victories, two past and one yet future, can strengthen our resolve and lead us to victory.

The Five Laws of the Battle of the Soul

1. The Law of Conscience (Rom. 2:13–16)
The basic concepts of the 10 commandments are at work in conscience.
2. The Law of Moses (Rom. 7:7–12)
Moses' law clarifies and confirms what conscience already declares.
3. The Law of Indwelling Sin (Rom. 7:13–23)
The sin nature is in rebellion against all law, demanding self-rule.
4. The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ (Rom. 7:24–8:4)
Only the resurrection life of Christ can both defeat sin and fulfill law.
5. The Law of Faith (Romans 3:27–31)
Apart from "*faith it is impossible to please Him [God]*" (Heb. 11:6).

A Faithful Man, a Mighty Angel, and a Triumphant Savior

1. **Enoch's Victory in the Antediluvian World (Jude)**

"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'"

Jude 14–15

When Jude speaks of “*these men*,” he is referring to those false teachers and their followers who are always infiltrating into the church to cause disruption and chaos (vv. 4–13). Imagine that he quotes from Enoch, who was looking forward thousands of years, and including our own generation in the certain expectation of the final victory of the Lord Jesus Christ over all evil.

Point: We know that “*Enoch walked with God*” (Gen. 5:22), but here Jude, quoting 1 Enoch, tells us Enoch’s secret. His mind was riveted in the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ yet future—the same certainty that sustained Job (Job 19:25–26). Thus, in the chaos of the antediluvian world he maintained inner peace and stability by fixing his eyes on the end of the story (2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; 1 John 2:28–3:3).

2. Michael’s Victory over Satan

*“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil about
the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation,
but said, ‘the Lord rebuke you’ “*

Jude 9

The devil, having once been Lucifer, the anointed cherub, had once been the ruler of Michael. Rather than resort to accusations and defamation, Michael, a true angelic officer and gentleman, knowing his victory was secure, deferred to the Lord as the one who would bring the only fitting rebuke to the devil.

Point: Here, Michael—the warrior archangel—takes the same approach as Enoch. The battle is won, the end is certain. No need for hysterics or personal vendetta. Simply remind the devil of his end!

3. Second Advent—The Ultimate Victory of Jesus Christ

*“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him
was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”*

Revelation 19:14

The description of Jesus here (Rev. 19:12–14) echoes that of Revelation 1:12–15:

- The flaming eyes speak of divine omniscience in all judgment.
- The many crowns speak of His many victories as “*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*” (Rev. 19:16).
- His unknown name speaks of His infinite intimacy with the Father, just as ours also will speak of our intimacy with Christ (Rev. 2:17).
- The blood-soaked robe is a constant reminder of His sacrifice for us. He is the living Word of God.

- We, along with the angelic armies, will follow Him and share in His victory. The role we will play at this time is hinted at in prophecy (Joel 2:2–11; 3:9–11).

Conference Summary Principles

1. As those who believe in Jesus Christ, we must always remember that we are spiritually born again into a heritage of victory (John 16:33; Rom. 8:28, 31–39; 1 John 5:4–5).
2. We must never forget that the battle is the Lord's and He never fails (1 Sam. 17:47; 1 Cor. 15:57).
3. We have spiritual armor, weapons, and access to the throne of God that the enemy forces cannot withstand (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 5:1–5; 2 Cor. 10:3–5; Eph. 6:10–18).
4. We fight against the forces of darkness, yet we pray for those in authority who may yet be under the control of the devil (1 Tim. 2:1–6). The grace of God may yet win over hardened hearts.
5. Remember also, we are surrounded by a mighty angel army (2 Kings 6:16–17).
6. In keeping the authority of God first in our minds, we must never forget that we are here to win others to faith in Jesus Christ. Every potential action should cause us to consider its eternal consequences!

All Glory Be to Christ was sung (to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*) after Gene taught about The Ultimate Victory at the conference and was thoroughly enjoyed by all of the attendees. (See sheet music after the Bibliography.) Or, [click here](#) to listen.

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All Glory Be to Christ

Scottish Traditional

1. Should noth - ing of our ef - forts stand, no leg - a - cy sur - vive;
2. His will be done, His king - dom come, on earth as is a - bove;
3. When on the day the great I AM, the Faith - ful and the True;

Un - less the Lord does raise the house, in vain its build - ers strive.
Who is Him - self our dai - ly bread, praise Him, the Lord of love.
The Lamb who was for sin - ners slain is mak - ing all things new.

To you who boast to - mor - row's gain, tell me what is your life?
Let liv - ing wa - ter sat - is - fy the thirst - y with - out price;
Be - hold, our God shall live with us and be our stead - fast light

A mist that van - ish - es at dawn; all glo - ry be to Christ!
We'll take a cup of kind - ness yet; all glo - ry be to Christ!
And we shall e'er His peo - ple be; all glo - ry be to Christ!

All glo - ry be to Christ, our King, all glo - ry be to Christ!

His rule and reign we'll ev - er sing, all glo - ry be to Christ!