

subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement” (Romans 13:1-2).

Understand this. All authorities are appointed by God. To disobey the rulers of your country is to disobey God. Christians are “to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient...to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all people” (Titus 3:1,2). They must “be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution” (1 Peter 2:13).

Christians must be subject to rulers with one exception. That is when man’s rules are clearly against specific commandments given by God. In such cases “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). That was Peter’s reply when the authorities told Christians to stop teaching the people about Jesus Christ. This was against the command given to the apostles by Jesus himself: “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). The commands of God and Jesus Christ must always come first. Because of that principle, Daniel’s three friends refused to worship a golden image set up by a mighty king (Daniel 3:18). In the same way, true Christians today will not fight because Jesus said “love your enemies”. Sometimes the state and the Christian will have to disagree. Christians must then accept any punishment which may come from obeying “God rather than men”.

4. SHOULD A CHRISTIAN VOTE IN ELECTIONS?

There is one very powerful reason for Christians not voting in any political elections. It is this: “The Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he

will” (Daniel 4:17). God is in control of this world’s rulers and their politics. The people God wants to be in power will be in power. He is working out his divine purpose through them. If Christians vote, they could be supporting someone God does not want in power. He needs no help from us in choosing leaders. Should we vote? No! Leave well alone.

5. WHICH LEADER SHOULD I FOLLOW AND SUPPORT?

There can only be one wise choice. Jesus said “you have one instructor, the Christ”(Matthew 23:10). The kingdoms of men are going to fall (Daniel 2:44). The Lord Jesus is the world’s future king (Matthew 19:28). Once we have chosen him, we cannot support any other ruler. Jesus is perfect and immortal. If we keep his commandments, “we will also reign with him”, in his coming kingdom on earth (2 Timothy 2:12). That will be the Christian’s day. “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

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BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

Politics, Voting and Protest

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BE INVOLVED?

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. Isn’t helping your country and local community a Christian duty?
2. Was Jesus involved in politics and protest?
3. What advice did early Christian leaders give?
4. Should a Christian vote in elections?
5. Which leader should I follow and support?

1. ISN’T HELPING YOUR COUNTRY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY A CHRISTIAN DUTY?

Everyone agrees that there are many things wrong with our world. God’s original creation was wonderful. God “saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:21). Unfortunately, people have damaged it in many ways. Jesus said “from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder,

adultery...” (Mark 7:21). When people think and act like that, there are bound to be problems.

Politicians have power to govern. Usually, they have been elected to do so. All of them make decisions which affect the lives of each country's citizens. Even politicians who care more about their country than themselves make bad decisions which create problems.

The question has been asked “what is a Christian's duty to the land in which he lives?” Many believe that they must take an active part in politics, to change their countries for the better.

A Christian does have a duty to be a helpful citizen. If everyone was a follower of Jesus and his teaching, the result would be:

- No armed forces (there would be no wars)
- No destructive weapons (people would not fight)
- No Police forces (true followers of Jesus do not break the laws of their countries)
- No prisons (there would not be any crime)
- No Law courts, judges or lawyers (disagreements would be peacefully resolved)
- No security guards, checks, monitoring systems (no theft or people trying to hurt each other).

What an amazing place the world would be! Peace, love, kindness, gentleness and honesty would rule. Imagine everyone caring for each other. No abuse! No violence! Think of how much money would be available to spend on good causes. That would be our world today...if only everyone was a true Christian, living as Jesus told them to do.

Christians, by living Godly lives, do help their countries and local communities.

However, they do not need to be involved in politics, voting or protests to do so. At all times, Christians are guided by the world's two greatest advisers: i) The Lord Jesus Christ, and ii) The Bible, God's Word. We must now consider what these advisers tell us.

2. WAS JESUS CHRIST INVOLVED IN POLITICS AND PROTEST?

The clear Bible answer is that Jesus was never involved in either politics or protests. He had a simple, guiding principle: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). In the age to come, Jesus will be king of this world. But, at his first coming, he was always involved with people's spiritual condition. He left politics to the leaders of his day.

If anyone could have claimed a Christian should fight against injustice, it was Jesus. But even though treated very badly himself, he did not protest. Think of his situation. His land, now called Israel, was under the iron fist of the Roman Empire. Roman soldiers often killed Jews. Did Jesus protest? He did not. Was he a revolutionary leader, seeking social change and the overthrow of the Romans? He was not. He made no threats, offered no resistance, and never cried “Let's get rid of the Romans!” In a ministry lasting three and a half years he was never in conflict with the Roman authorities. Jesus was silent on all political issues. He was asked whether Jews should “give tribute to Caesar, or not?” His reply was simple, yet profound: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's” (Luke 20:22-25).

Even when Jesus was on trial for his life, he did not show any resistance. He came to teach us how to behave, and develop spiritual standards. He called for repentance from sin, not conflict with Rome. He gave us

important rules for living. Jesus said “if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles”, and “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:41-44).

Jesus was a man of peace, and his followers must be the same. He never campaigned for justice. He wanted to change the inside of people, the way they thought, and not their outward circumstances. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, taught sinners to repent and preached the good news of the Kingdom of God. It was these concerns that filled his life, not politics and protest.

3. WHAT ADVICE DID THE EARLY CHRISTIAN LEADERS GIVE?

As we would expect, it was totally in line with the thinking of Jesus their Master.

All true Christians will seek a policy of peace. We are told “strive for peace with everyone” (Hebrews 12:14). Paul says in Romans 12:18 “if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all”. This view is confirmed in 1 Peter 3:11 “Turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it”. Even slaves were told to serve bad masters well! What a loving attitude. Peter told them “if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:20,21).

The Apostle Paul said “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content” (Philippians 4:11). He was in prison when he wrote that!

All these scriptures lead us away from protest. A Christian's attitude towards authority must be: “Let every person be