



A Civic Lesson for Christians **1 Peter 2:13-17**

- 1 Peter 2:13-17 takes its place along side Romans 13:1-7 as the premier passages in the New Testament on the Christian's responsibility to human government. Before you do any further study on this subject, read these two passages and write down your observations. You will also want to examine Titus 3:1-2 to see what contribution it makes. It will be helpful to do a brief investigation into the historical background of 1 Peter, Romans, and Titus. What governing authority did the first readers of these letters live under? What kind of government was it? Did Roman citizens vote on their political leaders?**
- Review your notes from the message on 1 Peter 2:11-12. These verses are important as a preparation for all the material given in 1 Peter 2:13 to 4:11. According to 2:12, why is it important that Christians conduct themselves in a godly way in the society in which they live?**
- Peter uses the word "submit" to describe the basic responsibility of the Christian to human government. What does this word mean? Where else is it used in 1 Peter? What is to be the motivation for this submission? Is there any particular form of civil government recommended by the New Testament (e.g., monarchy, democracy)?**
- Since man-made laws are not the same as divinely revealed law, what is the Christian's responsibility to the laws a human society creates? What is the believer to do if a man-made law conflicts with God's law (Acts 4:19)? Can you think of any Old Testament examples of civil disobedience (i.e., breaking a man-made law deemed in violation of God's law)?**
- The fundamental purpose of human government is the "punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right" (v. 14). How is this to be carried out? Does government have the right to take a human life if it breaks certain laws (i.e., capital punishment)? What is the Christian's duty when his government is wicked and tyrannical (e.g., Nazi Germany)?**
- Why would Christians have been viewed with suspicion by many in Roman society in the first century? What could Christians do to silence their critics? Can you think of any situations like this that exist today? If you did not hear last Sunday's message, you can access it on Berachah's web site. In the message some reasons for the persecution of the early church are given.**
- Can you think of some ways you can be a better citizen in the coming year? Do you pray for those in authority on a regular basis (1 Tim. 2:1-6)? This would be a good time to write down the names of various government officials in your prayer notebook.**