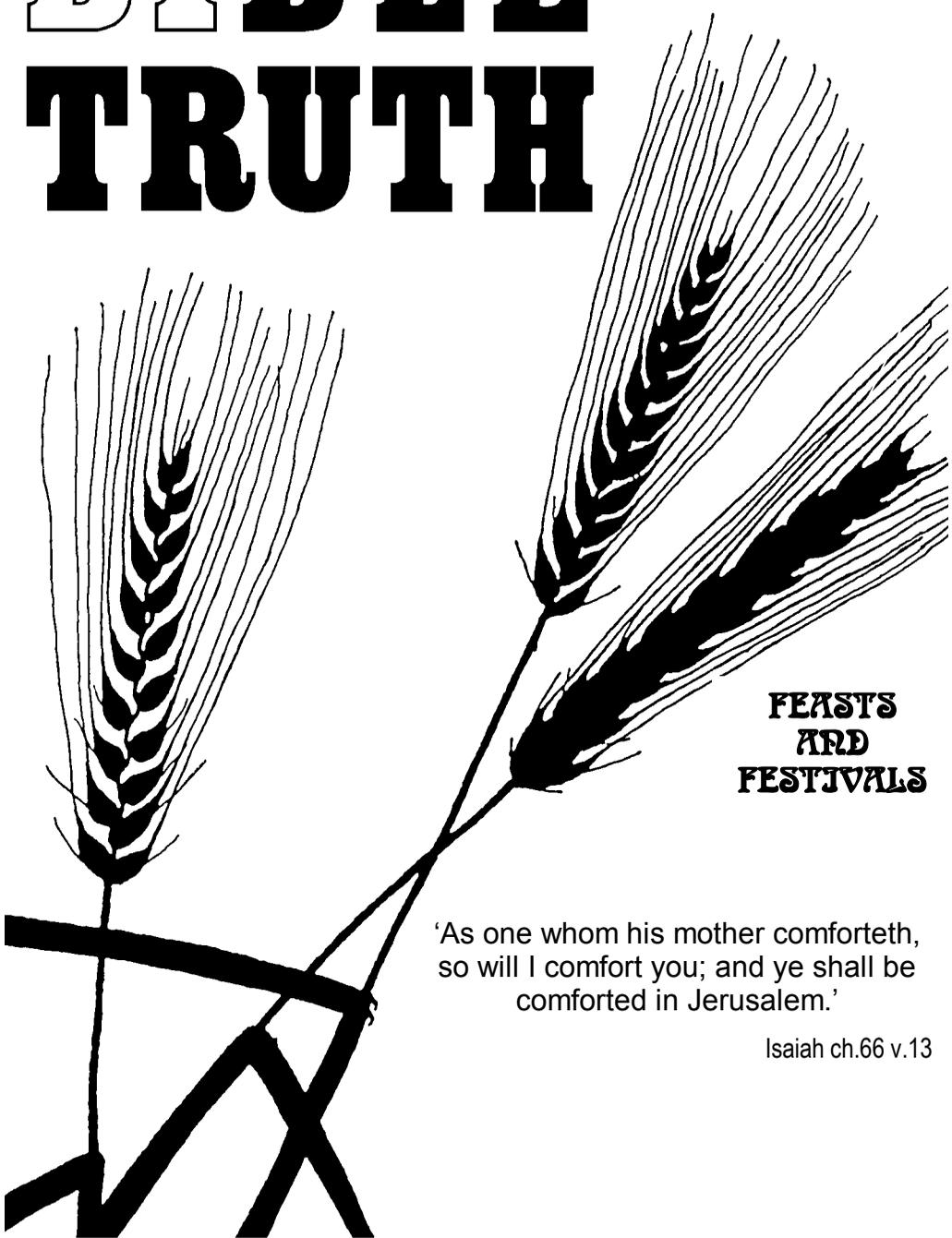


# BIBLE TRUTH

No. 258  
April/June 2010



**FEASTS  
AND  
FESTIVALS**

'As one whom his mother comforteth,  
so will I comfort you; and ye shall be  
comforted in Jerusalem.'

Isaiah ch.66 v.13

# Submission to Governmental Institutions

by Pastor Karl Schott

‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.’

1 Peter ch.2 v.13-20

The challenge and difficulty which the Apostle Peter was addressing in this chapter had to do with submission to man’s government there in Asia Minor. Peter’s epistle was not directed to the heathen people, or gentiles, living in Asia Minor (as we learn from ch.1), but to the Israelites who still sojourned there.

Peter exhorted them to be submissive to every ordinance of man’s government for the Lord’s sake. Not for fear of punishment, but because ‘the powers that be are ordained by God’. Christians at the time were commonly accused of insubordination (see Acts ch.17 v.7) and of doing things that were ‘contrary to the decrees of Caesar’. Peter informed them that they must show by their conduct that these accusations were not true, so that the progress of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would not be hindered.

When Peter wrote this epistle to the Israelites who were living in Asia, Nero was the emperor, and history describes him as being cruel and wicked. Peter was well aware of this, yet he instructed the Christians to obey Nero, for his power, was given to him by God.

The prophet Daniel reminds us of the following,

‘... the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men’.

Daniel ch.4 v.17

The Apostle Peter's instructions to the Christians living in Asia are just as valid today as they were when he wrote them. It is important that we do not feel that it is alright for everyone to start robbing banks, blowing up abortion clinics, and resisting the law enforcement agencies, just because we may have a number of people like Nero ruling in the country. Otherwise, overnight we will have rebellion, anarchy, and confusion, which will bring about the destruction of our society and the nation. It is important for us to realise that it is God Almighty's permissive will for evil people to rule over us due to our sinful, wicked, and immoral ways.

We who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ need to consider the words of King David who was in charge of the government of Israel.

'Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. ... Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.'

Psalm 37 vv.1-3 & 7-9

Should we decide to take things into our own hands, then we must be ready to pay the price. I am well aware of all of the evil and wickedness that is taking place in many areas of our government, but, unless we see the Sovereignty of God Almighty, we will fret about what the enemies of Christendom are doing; and that is just what Satan hopes to accomplish with God's people. We need to be in prayer that our people will turn from their wicked ways and then, and only then, will the Lord heal the land as promised (see 2 Chronicles ch.7 v.14).

It would be well to note that Peter exhorted those Israelites who were living in Asia,

'As free, [men] and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God'.

1 Peter ch.2 v.16

The Apostle Peter is explaining that Christian freedom must not show itself in license or lawlessness, but in willing obedience to constituted authorities; not only for wrath, or punishment, but, as

Paul states ‘... also for conscience sake ...’ (see Romans ch.13 v.5). The pretence of Christian liberty must not be a cloak, or a covering, or a concealment of wickedness. But Christian liberty must mean truly being a servant of God, doing good regardless of what the workers of corruption do. Two wrongs never make a right!

There is also another factor, or principle, which comes into play that Christians are not aware of when they defy (refuse to submit to or co-operate with) any government institution. Oswald Chambers deals with this important subject in his devotional entitled *Submission to Human Institutions*\*, where he comments on these passages from Peter’s epistle which are under discussion, as follows.

‘Peter’s statements in these verses are remarkable, and they are statements the modern Christian does not like. He is outlining what is to be the conduct of saints in relation to the moral institutions based upon the government of man by man. No matter, he says, what the condition of the community to which you belong behave yourself as a saint in it.

Many people are righteous individuals, but they ignore the need to be righteous in connection with human institutions. Paul continually dealt with insubordination in spiritual people. Degeneration in the Christian life comes in because of this refusal to recognize the insistence God places on obedience to human institutions.’

\* *Still Higher for His Highest* p. 98 by Oswald Chambers.

If the Apostle Paul, who also dealt with this same subject in his epistle to the Christians living in Rome, were alive today, he would be continually dealing with insubordination in spiritual people. The remarkable insight quoted above by Oswald Chambers needs to be understood by both young and old today.

Only the Lord knows how many otherwise righteous individuals have ignored the need to be righteous in their relationship with governmental institutions, and have thus fallen into insubordination, which then has led to degeneration in their Christian life. Often this attitude of insubordination and their resultant actions have culminated in the arrest and jailing of the person who claims to be a Christian. The enemy of our faith then is the only winner! Today there are thousands of men (especially young men), who are languishing in jail, separated from their families and loved ones, because of their lack of understanding regarding the insistence God places on obedience to human institutions.

Earlier I mentioned the Apostle Paul's comments concerning this matter. Let us look briefly at his Epistle to the Romans. At that time the government of Rome was ruled over by unscrupulous and dishonest men. Nero was ruling when Paul wrote this epistle but, like Peter, he still insisted that Christians were to obey those in authority over them, as we shall see from the following.

'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: [and] the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance [law] of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power [government]? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject [obey the authorities], not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.'

Romans ch.13 v.1-5

It is evident then that the Apostle Paul, like Peter, was inspired by God to admonish the peoples of Israel (and all people) to obey the civil authorities, since they are God's ministers also. Both Peter and Paul knew that there would be those men in government who would be crooked and greedy, but in spite of that they still insisted that we, as God's people, are to obey the civil authorities.

There are many dedicated, good men and women who are working in the government, in the police or magistrates department, and as judges, and we thank God for each one of them. If it were not for them, things would possibly be more dire. But God still manages to give us the type of government that we deserve. It's only by His mercy that we have not had worse.

In this time of 'Jacob's Trouble' (which is a result of our disobedience to the laws of God), we should not be surprised that we are seeing men who fail to be honourable and are unjust in Government. It appears that the higher position of authority, the more corruption we see taking place. It is time that we who are Christians need to let the light of the Lord Jesus Christ shine through us. It is also a time when Christians should avail themselves of the opportunity (privilege, responsibility) of running for office. King David, under the inspiration of God's Spirit, uttered the following words,

'... He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God'.

2 Samuel ch.23 v.3

We realize that there may be some who will not agree with the stand that has been taken in this article. However, if this will help save only one or two people from spending years of their life in prison, then it will be worth it. During the past few years we have received many letters from young prisoners who are paying a terrible price for insubordination to established law by man's government.

We realize and appreciate the frustration that comes when our elected officials are more interested in serving themselves or global interests than they are in serving their constituents, but we must see that God is permitting the robbers and spoilers to rule over us due to our sins, as the prophet Isaiah informs us,

'Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law'.

Isaiah ch.42 v.24

With this in mind, let us look at Paul's first Epistle to Timothy.

'I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.'

1 Timothy ch.2 vv.1-4

Paul tells us what is 'acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour'. God knows well that people in these positions of authority wield great power for good or for evil. Also, they are exposed to and are liable to greater temptations and dangers than most of us.

Kings, and others in authority can do much to promote the well-being of the Church of God. We should pray for them because they can promote our outward peace and tranquillity by restraining the bad and by encouraging the good.

In 1 Peter, chapter 2, the apostle encouraged our ancestors, the scattered tribes of Israel that were living in Asia Minor, to be submissive to every ordinance for the Lord's sake because the powers that be are ordained by God. Therefore, as Christians and servants of the Lord Jesus, let us also do as Peter encouraged and submit to God's word in this area of our lives so that the progress of the Lord Jesus Christ's Gospel and His coming Kingdom be not hindered.

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