

TITUS Part 11. Authority; Government; Taxes. Chapter 2:15-3:1. (4/15/2017)

The following text is based on a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph.

***Portions of this sermon message have been edited to better transcribe the message. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in red. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color.**

I want to start off today lightheartedly. This kind of relates to set the stage, if you will, for what we are going to cover today.

One Sunday morning a mother walks into her son's bedroom, and she's shocked that he's still in bed. "What are you doing?" she asks. "You've got to get up because we have got to go to church." The son responds, "I don't want to go to church," and the mother's kind of taken back a little bit. "Why not, son? What is going on here?" asks the mother. The son answers, "I don't want to go. I don't like the people, and they don't like me. There are two of the reasons why I'm not going." The mother steps back and she gets a little perturbed and responds, "I'm going to give you two reasons why you are going to go." "Number one, you're thirty-nine years old; number two, you're the pastor. You have to go; it's your obligation."

I just shared this humorous story that is clearly not the relational design that God had where the pastor is not connecting with his flock, and the flock is definitely not connecting with the pastor. It is broken; there's something wrong.

Today, we are again going to look at one of God's relational designs, but it's going to be in the context of authority. If you think about it, we've covered a lot on authority in this series. We have looked at the authority of Paul when he commissioned Titus to go raise up men to be elders that are to be governing over the flock. Then you have the servant to the master. We also covered the relationship of the wife to the husband. Now, there is another relationship that needs to be brought to the table. This is a relationship that is the responsibility of the church as the body of Messiah to fulfill. So we're going to look at that today.

What we're going to do is we're going to go back to Titus 2:15—**Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.** So here we have Paul continuing to commission Titus. Paul is telling him, "Hey, remember what position you sit in, Titus. You sit in a position of authority." And it's not "some" authority; it is "all" authority. He has a responsibility as a leader and shepherd. He has responsibility as one who is going out to establish these communities. When it's time to go and exhort those who need to be exhorted, he needs to do it. And, unfortunately, to those who need to be rebuked, he needs to step up and do it. This is who Titus needs to be. And guess what? If you are looking at this, Titus was that man; he fulfilled his ministry.

Let me take you back to 2 Corinthians 7:14-15—**¹⁴ For if in anything I have boasted to him (Titus) about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. ¹⁵ And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all....** I

stopped here because I want to point out that here you can see that Titus acted with authority in bringing the instruction of the Lord, and the people listened and obeyed. But then it goes on to say—**how with fear and trembling you received him.**

Now when you look at this, Paul was not frivolous or careless when penning this statement in this manner—**how with fear and trembling you received him.** I say that because, when you go to 1 Samuel 16:4, we find the very same scenario painted there. Samuel is coming into Bethlehem, and the inhabitants are trembling at his coming. He is a man of God who is respected as a man of God—**So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, “Do you come peaceably?”** So if you really want to see who Titus is, where he's coming from, and the response he had, then read 2 Corinthians 7:14-15 again. And keep in mind that Titus wasn't just building churches in Crete; he was all over the world in places like Corinth. And when he came into town, the inhabitants feared and trembled. That pretty much puts into context who this guy is.

Now, going back to Titus 2:15, we find out what Paul is commissioning him to do. He is reminding him to—**exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.** In other words, do not let anyone undermine your authority. Be careful because what do you think Satan is going to do? He wants the authority. And you better believe that the best way to take down the churches is to get in and destroy the leadership. Taking out the leadership is the quickest way to destroy the church. There is no question about it.

So here Paul warns Titus—**let no one despise you.** Now there's an interesting thought here in that Paul may be conveying a little bit more here than what is said only in this context: when you go to 1 Timothy 4:12, you actually find the same type of statement were Paul is saying to Timothy—**Let no one look down on your youthfulness.** So this may be a scenario of the same measure, or it might indicate that Titus might be on the younger side.

Moving on to Titus 3:1—**Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.** What Paul is talking about here is that Titus is going to go out and establish churches, and Titus needs to remind them to listen to the leaders. While that is true, this statement goes way beyond that. This statement is referring to something else. This statement is referring to secular authority.

I want you to understand something: when you think about the topic of authority, two things should come to your mind, and those two things are right here: divine authority and secular authority. It is imperative that we understand the relationship of these two things, and we need to understand what they represent individually. Divine authority would be the apostolic authority such as the apostles, the authority Titus would have, or the authority of the elders that were set up. That is divine authority. When you have men governing churches all over the world, that, too, is divine authority. Ultimately, the purest definition would be this: Scripture, the instructions of the Living God, and the Word are all divine authority.

But then you have this secular authority. Secular authority would be everything you see in the world today such as policemen, judges, congressmen, mayors, governors, presidents, or whatever the case may be. All of that falls under secular authority. And there is a relationship here that is imperative to understand. Again, this is layered; we have got to look at this authority and understand a concept about divine authority and secular authority in that it is layered. A good example is when I showed you the

covenants (See Titus series part 10). To truly understand the covenants, you have to understand how God built the design so that one covenant is built upon another starting with the Abrahamic, then going to the Mosaic, and then eventually to the New Covenant. You understand it better when you understand the layers that are involved and the reality behind it. It is no different here. There are layers here and a structure to authority with divine authority being over all with secular authority being submissive to the divine—it is below it.

I want to focus on the secular authority today, and what I want to do is I want to take you to Paul's words to the Romans in 13:1 which talks about the government—**Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.** There are two critical things that we learn here. The first is in regard to obedience. We hate that word. I don't care what anyone in this room says. When we hear the word obey, we tweak our neck because we don't want to obey. We just naturally, in our flesh, want to be independent. We want to rebel and run our own governments. We can deceive ourselves all we want, but it takes everything you have to fight your flesh and to fight rebellion. But here Paul tells us the first thing about obedience—**Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.**

The second thing he tells us is kind of a why, if you will. It is because God established them. They were appointed by Him. In fact, Daniel 2:21 says this—**And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings.** There is something pivotal we need to acknowledge here. Whether you like them or not, understand this: You do not want to be troubled by the times, seasons, and by things that are happening in particular governments whether it's our own or not. And if you're not liking or appreciating particular presidents, take solace in this: it is the Lord who put them there. It is by His knowledge that they are in that particular position. You need to understand this layered authority structure and how it works. I understand there's authority here, but ultimately we serve the divine authority. When I understand and appreciate that, I am not as troubled all of a sudden.

Look at Psalms 103:19—**The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.** Therefore, there is no power outside of the Lord's authority. All things are subject to Him. Period! I mean everything, including the court systems down here, is subject to the heavenly courts. And again it is monumental for us to understand that there is a relationship here between divine authority and secular authority.

Now I understand for some this can be perplexing in the sense that, when we look closely at all the various governments that exist here on Earth, we realize that they are very dark. There is corruption, lying, cheating, stealing, and murdering. There are all these vile things within the government. So then if everything here on earth is subject to this divine authority, then why, pray tell, are there so many secular, wicked, and vile governments? How can that be if His government is ultimately in control?

This is where the Bible comes in handy and helpful for us because there are perplexing things. We have the nature of the universe and how it is operating. We have why God does specific things and how He chooses to do them. These things are perplexing at times, and these are certainly questions that arise especially for believers, atheists, or people who are on the fence who want to understand this. These are questions that arise. Well, for us believers, we need to go to the Word. We start peeling back layers of understanding, and we build on that to help us understand what God is doing.

Let me take you to Luke 4:5-6 so we can get a better understanding of this structure of authority. The background for this verse is that the Holy Spirit has driven Yeshua into the wilderness to be tempted by

the devil. And this is what we read—⁵ **Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.** Now you have to understand, as Yeshua went out into the wilderness, the physical realm merged with the spiritual realm, and I mean that literally. And the context is that the devil through supernatural power literally showed all the kingdoms of the world to Yeshua in a single moment by laying them at his feet. This happened in just one moment—⁶ **And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.** There are two things to note here: number one, the devil has power and authority. And this is in the secular, governmental level; this is real. The second thing to understand is that he has been given that authority. Again, understand the structure and how this works between these authorities. Divine authority is above all; secular authority is submissive to that. The devil only has authority over all these governments because he was given it. This is just a reality.

So when you look at this, it helps you understand why the governments are corrupt. It helps you understand why there is sin in these governments. Who is leading them? The thief, the liar, and the murderer: Satan. He is in charge of all these governments. Therefore, you can step back and examine this and understand how all these things are happening.

But the problem then is that this raises some other concerns. As you begin to get the answer to one question and begin to understand some of it, it then raises ten other questions. This is just the reality. So it raises some concerns in regard to the fact that God is ultimately in control. It's clear that the devil has been given all the kingdoms of the earth at the secular level. He is involved in the governments. So wouldn't that mean that if he's the ruler of all these governments, and they're filled with wickedness, filth, and lying—wouldn't that suggest then that any obedience to them would be directed to HaSatan (Satan)?

I say that because this is actually what's being taught today. And in the very obvious, crazy land of the Internet, so many people are espousing so many different things. You can find anything you want there; it's just this giant Kool-Aid stand sitting there that is offering Kool-Aid for free. I mean this is really what's going on here. There is one thing that men are doing that really bothers. It is the context that "OK, we're not going to obey secular governments or not have anything to do with it just because the devil is running the whole show." They are attempting to do this through the Word of God. They're attempting to justify this idea that we are not going to be these people who obey the government because the government is not of God. This is the devil, and obedience to that would be total submission to Satan.

Is that the truth? The answer to that is no. Following the government's authority and being a law-abiding citizen is what we've been commanded to do. Now you might say, "How can that be? How is that possible when we know how these governments operate, and now we know who's running them? They've been given over to the authority of HaSatan." Again, the key to understanding how all of this works is to understand this relationship of how divine authority works in tandem with secular authority. It is important to understand how they at times sync up, and at times they collaborate.

You might say, "I don't see anywhere in Scripture where God is collaborating with the devil." Well let me be clear: the Holy One of Israel could not be farther apart in nature and character than his adversary the enemy: HaSatan. There is no doubt about that. But you need to understand how the Lord chooses to impose His will; it is peculiar and strange. For us on earth, we typically don't understand the ways of the Lord—***For who has known the mind of the LORD? (Romans 11:34).***

Let me let me give you some examples of what I'm talking about here, and these are important. In 2 Samuel 24:1 we read—**Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."** OK, I want to show you the exact same story, but I'm going to take you to 1 Chronicles 21:1, and this is what it says—**Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.** I have actually heard people attempt to say, "This is proof that the Bible is bogus because it contradicts itself." Well, which is it? Is it God or Satan who moves David? In 2 Samuel there is no question about who it is. If you read it in the Hebrew, you can read it a thousand times; it is clearly God who moves David. But, when I go to 1 Chronicles 21:1, it explicitly says HaSatan. HaSatan is not Yahweh, or vice versa.

2 Samuel 24:1—**Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."** (Emphasis added)

1 Chronicles 21:1—**Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.** (Emphasis added)

So which is it? And the answer is: yes, both. It is both. And you might say, "How can that be?" This is what's fascinating about the Lord and how these authorities can work in tandem. The Lord's will is ultimately being done, but it is the devil who is going forth to perform it. That doesn't make sense on a very real level to us as believers. Why would God do that? Well, you know what? We can't answer that other than the fact that this is how the Lord has chosen to do this.

Let me give you another example. In John 13:26-27, Yeshua is having the Pesach supper—²⁶ **Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.** ²⁷ **Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him [meaning Satan], "What you do, do quickly."** You need to understand something: the whole betrayal of Yeshua and the whole manipulation scheme of what he did, this was orchestrated by the devil. Putting Yeshua on the cross was orchestrated by the devil—here on Earth. But we know for a fact this was ultimately the will of God. Right?

Again, we're seeing a pattern here that the Lord can work in tandem. We can see these secular governments working in tandem with the divine government, the heavenly court. So the bottom line here is that nothing happens beyond the will of God, and I say that in the context that Satan cannot impose his will to the expense of God's will. That will never ever happen. These authorities at times will work in tandem. And so here's my point: if you're going to attempt to justify rebellion against secular government simply based on the criteria that the devil's been given authority over all these governments and they're not Godly governments, you have a problem because there's more to the story. The Bible is explicit in that the Church is commanded to submit.

And so, with that said, I want to take you back to Romans 13:1-2, and I want to begin to read through this passage because Paul is going to bring some serious clarity to our obligation as the body of the Messiah and what we're called to do. The verse begins—¹ **Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.** ² **Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will**

bring judgment on themselves. So if you're going to go and rebel against the government, Paul said that you are cooking your own goose because you'll bring judgments on your own head. I know people that have taken the stance by attempting to take it from a biblical standpoint. They say, "Guess what? We don't have to listen to this government; it's not a Godly government."

There is a big battle happening right now. There are some pastors saying, "No. Do not submit to any component of the government. Don't you dare become a 501C3. You're worshipping the devil. We shouldn't be paying taxes; we shouldn't be paying any personal property taxes. I don't have to show my license to the police officers, and I'm not doing any of that." I'm going to tell you something: If you don't pay your taxes, call me from jail or from prison because that's where you're going to be. You're going to have happen to you exactly what Paul says: you're going to bring judgment on yourselves. You can take it to the bank. Let's not beat around the bush. Call it what it is. Ultimately, it is deception. And the action is rebellion. And we don't like that.

Continuing in Romans 13:3—³ **For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.** In other words, be a law abiding citizen because it bears a righteous and holy testimony. Verses 4-5—⁴ **For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.** ⁵ **Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake [emphasis added].** Something I want you to note: this is Paul. He is writing this; he's commanding this. We need to be subject at this time.

Understand this: Paul was not a hypocrite. He, himself, living in the first century, actually practiced what he preached. He submitted to the government of Rome. Keep in mind that neither Israel nor Judah were in control of their own land. The Roman government's law reigned over all. That is a fact. So I don't want you to think for a moment that the Apostle Paul, making these statements, isn't in the same situation that you're in. Do you really believe that the Apostle Paul was in love with the government of Rome? Do you really believe that you know how they treated the Jewish people? It was horrific! Just start digging into the history and you will find story after story in regard to the ill treatment of the Jewish people.

Paul himself knew very well who Rome was and what he was dealing with. Yet he is saying these things in the context that he, himself, was obedient to the Roman government. In fact, I can take it further by showing you that Paul adamantly stood on Roman law in his pursuit of his own justice. Let me show you this in Acts 25:9—**But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"** Now here's the situation: the backdrop is that Paul's own people, the Jews, were going after him because they wanted him dead. He was a preacher of the gospel; he was causing all sorts of dissension and saying really foreign things, and they didn't like it. So, therefore, they wanted him dead. So this is what led to this event which actually starts back in Acts 21, but in these verses he is being accused. But how does Paul handle the situation? Paul says—**I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged.** I want you to think about that statement for a second. Notice he doesn't say, "Caesar and everybody who is working for him, the government of Satan, I'm not going to have anything to do with you. You can go pound sand because I'm not subject to you. You're out of your jurisdiction. I'm a man of God."

This is how some people are talking today; it is absolutely insane. We have to go back to the first century and see how the apostles lived their lives in righteousness. The governments that we're seeing today are not any different than the Roman government.

So here Paul says—I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged (Acts 25:10). He submits completely to Roman law. There are many other examples that we can look at in Scripture where we find righteous men of God being model citizens by submitting to the ordinances of secular government. A good example would be Nehemiah.

I want to take you to the book of Nehemiah. I want you to see his attitude. Keep in mind he's in a foreign, pagan government, the Persian Empire. This is where the totally godless religion of Zoroastrianism originated. Look at what happens in Nehemiah 2:5—And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." Notice that Nehemiah is not off on some tirade here telling King Artaxerxes, "Hey, I don't have to submit to you. You're not God's government. You're a pagan government. I am out of here." He doesn't do that at all. He, in a humble and submissive way, asks for permission. Of course we know that the only reason he received permission is because of the heavenly court which is the court above all courts. God gave him favor. It was the will of God that brought him back to build the wall.

Another example I can give you is Daniel who was taken into captivity by the Babylonians. He served the Babylonian government which was completely secular. It was vile in nature, and yet he was completely submissive to it. Eventually he gains favor from God, and he's raised up to be one of the most powerful rulers in the kingdom. But then the Babylonian Empire falls, and another pagan empire comes in: the Persian Empire. What does Daniel do? Does he reject that one? No. Let me show you what he says in Daniel 6:4—So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him [Emphasis added]. I want you to understand something. These other Persian leaders that are mentioned, they went out against Daniel to look for a violation of Persian law where Daniel could be found rebelling against Persian law. However, they couldn't find anything against Daniel because he was totally submissive to law. That is unbelievable and remarkable! And again, make no mistake, the Persian government was not a holy government; nobody would classify the Persian government as God's government. It was very godless.

I will give you another example from Jeremiah 27:12—I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! That directive is absolutely bonkers! Think about this: right now Judah is in full powers; Zedekiah is the king of Judah, and the Jewish people are the apple of God's eye. They have a government, and how did their government get established? By God himself. But if you keep reading you find that the Lord actually prophesies and says that He is going to bring in Nebuchadnezzar, and he is going to rule all the nations. And the nation that does not submit to him, they are going to die. So the prophet Jeremiah warns his people, "Listen, the Lord is raising up this kingdom that is totally pagan and totally horrific. It is a godless, filthy, and vile nation, and I want you to submit." Well, obviously that didn't go over so well with Zedekiah; he actually rebelled. And how did that end up for Zedekiah? He

got to watch his family slaughtered in front of his face; then they plucked out his eyes, and he died in prison. The Lord had told him not to rebel. If he had not rebelled, he would have finished out his days in peace. And mark my words: when the Lord says you will finish all your days, you will—unless you rebel. I mean TOTAL submission.

So the point I'm making here is that there are plenty of examples in Scripture where we see righteous men of God who followed the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength while submitting to secular empires and secular laws. Peter says this in 1 Peter 2:13-14—¹³ **Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake [emphasis added].**

Isn't that interesting? Peter brings something to the table here that is so critical. And again, this is going back to this relational design of all these aspects of being obedient through submission like a servant to the master. Do you remember that the servant is not to do it as unto the master; he is to serve the master as unto the Lord. The same thing with wives: submit to your husbands as unto the Lord. Church, submit to the secular governments as unto the Lord. This is what it is; this is where we are at.

Continuing in 1 Peter 2:14—¹⁴ **or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.**

Now does this mean that, no matter what the government comes out with in regard to laws or rules, we should just blindly obey the secular government? The answer of course is no. There is a line called the Torah. And we are not allowed to compromise our faith and our worship to Yeshua for the sake of secular law that is being imposed.

A great example of this is Daniel who, again, was a model citizen submitting to totally pagan and corrupt governments. And yet, when a line is drawn, how does Daniel respond? Let's go back and reread this—⁴ **So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.** ⁵ **Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Daniel 6:4-5).** That is an amazing statement. They find Daniel perfect, spotless, and without blemish in Persian law. They were not going to get to him that way. The only way, they decided, that they were going to get to him was if they imposed a law that would be in direct violation of Daniel's law (meaning Torah). Crossing that line would be the only way they were going to be able to take him out and get him cast into the lions' den.

So what happened? We know that they imposed a law so that no man in the kingdom could actually petition, in a religious sense, any other man or God except the king of Persia himself. And, if he does, he is to be destroyed; he is to be killed in the lions' Den. How does Daniel respond to that? We continue in Daniel 6:10—**Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem [emphasis added].** Did you ever catch that before? They make a law, and Daniel doesn't waste one second. Immediately, after he hears the signing of the law, he goes to rebel against it because it was a violation of his worship. And did he do it in secret? No. He purposely opened the windows so that all could see what he was doing. This is an amazing situation!

Continuing—he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. So Daniel, despite the decree, didn't hesitate even for a moment. He immediately moves contrary to the Persian law, and he worships the Lord. And this is a perfect example where we see that a line had to be drawn, and when that line is drawn and crossed by the secular government we have to reject the secular government in favor of the heavenly courts.

What I am talking about today is not blind obedience. In fact, we could look at other examples. We could look at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were actually government employees (Daniel 3). They were model citizens until the king made an image and commanded everyone to bow down and worship it. At that point, they had a problem, and then they did exactly what Daniel did: they refused the king's law. The same type of thing that happened to Daniel also happened to these three. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace. Yet all of them were preserved. They were obviously left for us as a story today so we can know that we are not called to compromise. Amen?

I want to take you back to Romans in order to solidify something about the context of this passage. This passage is not explicitly talking about the heavenly authority; it's talking about the governmental authority. It is very specific, and we're going to see this. Going to Romans 13:5-7—⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Now what's fascinating to me here is that this is not a teaching of Paul. He is actually grabbing from the ministry of Yeshua, and he is incorporating and conveying this to the brethren in that this is what we need to be like. To be subject to the government ultimately comes from Yeshua.

Let me show you this in Matthew 22:17. The backdrop here is that the Pharisees and Herodians come to Yeshua in an attempt to get Him to trip up and get entangled on His words. So they come up with what they believe is a very crafty question—Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? I just want to stop here and point out this question: Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? They are not talking about Roman law. They are talking about Torah.

You need to understand the context. They are basically saying, "We're asking you, a Jew, what your interpretation of Torah is. Does Torah specify that taxes are to be paid to Caesar (the secular government) or not?" How did Yeshua respond to that question? Matthew 22:18-21—¹⁸ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" ²¹ They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Notice that Yeshua doesn't tell these men to go tell Caesar to go fly a kite. He doesn't tell them that. He tells them to—Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. He tells them to submit to the authority and pay their taxes if that's the law of the land.

The reality is this: pay your dues, and you know what? You won't bring judgment upon yourself. And even further than that, guess what will happen? You will bring glory to the name of Yeshua because no one will have anything evil to say about you.

As we come into these last days, you want to be in a Daniel situation where men from the world are looking at you, and they're looking to take you down, but they can't bring anything according to the law of the land against you. What they have to do is present a scenario for you to compromise the Torah—your worship, and obedience of Yeshua. And that's just fine when that day happens. We need to be ready for these things.

I want to close by jumping the tracks here and go back to the divine authority. I want to go to Hebrews 13. There is an easy way to remember the authority portions of Scripture: Romans 13 is secular authority; Hebrews 13 is divine authority. This is what we read in Hebrews 13:7—**Remember those who rule over you.** He is not talking about government authorities; he is talking explicitly about the elders, the judges, and the shepherds—**who have spoken the word of God to you.** So we know that this is explicitly in the context of the righteous and divine, heavenly courts. Continuing—**whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.** Now this is the beautiful relationship that is supposed to be, because they're supposed to be able to look at the church leaders and say, "This is where we need to be; this is where we need to go." We are looking at their conduct, and their conduct produces fruits of righteousness. This is the reality; this is how the relationship is supposed to work.

Dropping down to Hebrews 13:17—**Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls.** In other words, a rebellion against the leadership is not a good idea. The leadership has been put in place for a reason: because they're looking out for your salvation, and they don't want you to be deceived by the enemy. They want you to inherit eternal life.

So here you have this beautiful relationship that is opposite of my humorous illustration that I started with. The pastor doesn't like the people, and the people don't like the pastor at all. The relationship is broken. That is not what it's about. What it is about is the pastor loving the community so much that when it's time to exhort he will do it; when it's time to rebuke, he will do it not because he wants to lord over the people, but because he has integrity. He cares about that person.

Think about it this way: when parents are chastising their children, the parents aren't sitting there like power-hungry freaks attempting to impose their power upon their children. It is just the opposite. They love their kids, so they don't let them do everything they want to do. That is a good relationship; that is a relationship that God has designed, but there has to be submission, there has to be authority, and there has to be love. There has to be the willingness to obey.

I'm going to tell you something. There are probably some things, if not many things, about our government and the direction that it's going right now that you may not like. Be very, very careful in these last days that you don't jump on this bandwagon, which is very scary. There are people saying, "I'm free. I'm not subject to any of that." They are looking horizontally at the kingdoms here on earth and their interpretation of the Constitution. We, however, are serving the heavenly courts. We need to stay focused; we need to go vertical, and our actions, our minds, are looking straight up to God's

Kingdom. We are not going to like everything that's going on. In fact, we may loathe it just as Paul loathed the Roman government and the things of the Roman government. There's no question that it made his skin crawl.

Now when they start imposing laws to get us to compromise, when they step over that line, we will hold the line. That's when we're going to break off, and we will dissent. We cannot obey when people are trying to take us from the worship of the One True God, the God of Israel. Amen?

I am going to finish out the passage in Hebrews 13:17—**they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.** I could tell you as a parent how wonderful it is when I command my daughter, and she responds with joy: “OK daddy!” That is fantastic! That's a perfect world; it's a beautiful thing. That's the relationship that God has designed for the Church and the leadership within the Church.

We have a lot of people that watch us online and are plugging into all different communities. If you're in a habitation where you have refused to submit yourself because you've lost all faith in the leadership, you need to leave that community. If you can't trust in the leadership enough to say, “I trust them to care for me,” you're in the wrong place, and you've got to get out and go find a place that you trust the leadership. Your leaderships should care for you and want to bring you to Yeshua, and they're going to strengthen you; they are not going to hurt you. They are going to equip you, and they are going to do all these things.

If you're in the concept of “I'm not going to submit to any authority,” you need to have a “come to Yeshua” moment because you are in rebellion. Again, we hate the term obedience; we don't want to be told we're rebellious. I hated that when my parents told me that. It made me mad. I was just like, “No.” It was true: it was in total rebellion. We are not to be like that.