

When Is It Right for a Christian to Disobey the Law?

Recent events have called into question the issue of obeying the government in all ways—even in all circumstances.

In the 13th chapter of Romans, Paul says that God has given us the government as a minister of righteousness. It is our duty to obey it. But we also see in Scripture that on occasion, when the government calls for one to disobey God, then civil disobedience is in order.

There's a great lesson to learn from one aspect of World War II related to distortions of Romans 13. I'm not calling anybody a Nazi, but consider this lengthy lesson, wherein the Nazis quoted Scripture in order to demand unquestioning obedience.

On April 9, 1940, without any warning or provocation, the Germans invaded Norway. It was an unexpected battle and an unfair fight with 400,000 German Wehrmacht versus a nation not expecting it. This nightmare lasted until May 1945.

There were, of course, Norwegian collaborators—Norwegians who sold their soul to get ahead during the reign of the Nazis. Foremost amongst them was Vidkun Quisling. His name has been adopted into the dictionary: A quisling is a traitor.

When the Nazis took over Norway, a country full of “pure Aryans,” they expected the Norwegians to fully participate in their attempts to glorify the “master race” and purge the “undesirables” from humanity, such as Jews, Gypsies, and Slavs.

The Norwegians would have nothing to do with this. So they resisted, usually in every peaceful way they could. Much of the battle was fought over distributing accurate information.

In Oslo, there is a museum (Norges Hjemmefront Museum) dedicated to the resistance movement in World War II. They have a plaque there in English: "In Norway, Nazi ideology was defeated by the democratic forces rooted in a national, Christian culture."

While the Nazis won militarily (until the end of the war), they never came close to winning the hearts and minds of the people.

Normally, in those days, the churches were full. But during the war, something happened to cause the churches to go empty. The Norwegian bishops and priests, desiring to be faithful to God and the Scriptures, resisted the Nazi efforts to control the churches and the content of sermons. The clergy reasoned that if they all resisted together as one, nothing could happen to them. They were all arrested and sent to concentration camps. Most of them never returned.

Many Norwegian Christians met in private homes secretly for worship and avoided the churches during the war.

The same thing happened with the school teachers. The Nazis took over the curriculum of the schools. The teachers resisted as one group. They too were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Most never returned.

The museum contains a 1941 book, written in Norwegian used in the schools by the Nazis. In it, they quote Scripture: "What are those called in Romans 13:1 who God has set over us? Have you considered that your parents, your school teachers (your principal), policemen, police chief, judges, the priest, the bishop, the county commission, the state government, are the authorities who are installed by God, and that you owe them obedience?"

Then it says: "Overall, we owe the Fuhrer and the government obedience. If you set yourself up against the authorities and against the state, you are standing against God's structure

and are subject to punishment.”

Talk about the devil quoting Scripture. In reality, the Fuhrer was hostile toward Christianity. Hitler once declared, “The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity’s illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew.” But he was happy to have his minions twist the Christian Scriptures for his own ends.

God’s Word is pure and right. But that doesn’t mean it can’t be distorted sometimes by evil people intent on achieving goals that are contrary to the message of Scripture. There’s a time and a place for everything under the sun, including (on occasion) civil disobedience.

Recently I came across an unpublished letter by D. James Kennedy (11/29/1988), in which he addressed this issue:

The basic Bible principles, I believe, are these:

- 1. All authority is from God.*
- 2. All human authority is delegated from God.*
- 3. No human authority can countermand the authority of God.*
- 4. If such anti-biblical laws are passed, Christians must in conscience disobey them.*
- 5. They must be prepared to suffer the consequences of their actions.*

Then he solidifies the whole point: “The very existence of Christianity depends upon Christians obeying these principles. Had they not done so, Christianity, which was outlawed first in Israel and then in the Roman Empire, would have ceased to exist many centuries ago.”

For the original article, go to .