

1 Peter 2:13

by John Gill

The apostle Peter exhorts believers to submit to civil authorities for the Lord's sake, for the sake of Christ's command, and for the glory of God.

Scripture: Proverbs 21:1, Matthew 22:21, Acts 5:29, Romans 13:1, Romans 13:5, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13-17

Topics: "Submission to Authority", "Christian Conduct"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the importance of submitting to civil authorities as outlined in 1 Peter 2:13, explaining that this submission is not to all individuals but specifically to those in positions of governance, such as kings and magistrates. He highlights that this obedience is for the Lord's sake, reflecting Christ's command to honor earthly authorities, even if they are not righteous. Gill clarifies that while civil government is a divine institution, the specific forms may be human, and believers are called to respect these authorities to uphold the honor of God and the integrity of the Gospel. He notes that submission is essential for maintaining a good witness among Gentiles and for the overall good of society.

Transcript

Ver. 13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man,.... Or, "to every human creation", or "creature"; not to "all the sons of men", as the Syriac version renders it; or to all the individuals of mankind; for there are some that are in such stations and circumstances, that they are not to be submitted to, but to be ruled over, and governed: so kings are not to submit to their subjects, nor are parents to be subject to their children, nor husbands to their wives, nor masters to their servants, which would be preposterous; but submission is limited and restrained to persons in such a place and situation: "the human creature", or "creation", here designs the Gentiles, who are elsewhere called the creature, the whole creation, every creature, and every creature under heaven, Ro 8:19 and particularly Heathen magistrates, styled creation, or creature: not as men, for all men, as such, are creatures; but as magistrates, being created, constituted, and appointed such, and installed into, and invested with such an office: and "human"; not only because they were men, and were taken out from among men that bore the office of magistrates, and governed over men, and were for the good and advantage of mankind, but because they were created and placed in such a station by men; though government itself is of God, is a divine institution, yet this and that particular form of government is of man; and especially the forms of government among the Gentiles were human; and are here so called, in distinction from the form of government among the Jews, which was a theocracy, and was divine; wherefore the Jews, and so these converted ones, scrupled yielding obedience

to Heathen magistrates; on which account they were spoken against, as evildoers; hence the apostle, in the first place, and as a principal part of their honest conversation among the Gentiles, exhorts them to submission to civil magistrates, though they were creatures of men; and to everyone of them, though a Gentile, an unbeliever, and a wicked man: and this he urges,

for the Lord's sake; for the sake of Christ Jesus the Lord, because of his command, who ordered to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and in imitation of him, who paid tribute to whom tribute was due; and for the sake of his honour and glory, who was ill thought and spoken of by the Gentiles, because of the disregard of the converted Jews to their magistrates; and which served to prejudice them against Christ and his Gospel: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "for God's sake"; because civil government is of God; magistracy is of divine appointment; the powers that he are ordained of God, though this or the other form is of man's prescription: it is the command of God that magistrates should be obeyed; and it makes for his glory, as well as for the good of men, when they are submitted to in things that do not contradict the revealed will of God; for otherwise, not man, but God, is to be obeyed:

whether it be to the king; to Caesar, the Roman emperor; and the then reigning one seems to be Nero, who, though a wicked man, was to be submitted to in things civil and lawful; and it holds good of any other king that has the supreme government of a nation: the Syriac version reads it in the plural number, "to kings"; and though the name of king was odious to the Romans, from the times of Tarquin, nor did they call their chief governor, or governors, by this name, yet other nations did; see Joh 19:15 and subjection was to be yielded to him, "as supreme"; for the sake, and in consideration of his being in so high and exalted a station, having the supreme power and government of the people in his hands. The Syriac version renders it, "because of their power"; and the Arabic version, "because of his power"; and the Ethiopic version, "because all things are his"; the Roman emperors were absolute monarchs; see Ro 13:1.

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