

From the Bits and Pieces Series (#430) by Elder Ralph Harris

OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN

We are taught by the apostles Paul and Peter that we should be subject to the higher powers and submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (Rom. 13:1 & I Peter 2:13). These brethren were fully aware of the fact that dictatorial rulers might pronounce edicts that were in direct contradiction to God's laws, and they did not advocate obedience to such laws, but they had under consideration those ordinances that do not require us to blaspheme God or to otherwise violate His commandments.

Peter seems to speak primarily of good kings and governors and of those ordinances that relate to the punishment of evil-doers and the commendation of those who do well (I Peter 2:14). These are the kind of laws that are necessary to an orderly society and should be carefully observed by everyone. But when men in the legislative branches make laws that conflict with God's directives, they have overstepped their bounds and have placed themselves in opposition to God and godliness.

It is at this point that godly men and women should assert themselves and, if possible, see that such corrupt rulings are overturned and that the unfit people who made them are put out of office. Failing this, they should do as Peter and the other apostles and bravely "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), regardless of the costs. How could we submit ourselves to an ordinance of man "for the Lord's sake" if that ordinance required us to *disobey* the Lord?

When anyone requests, urges or demands that we do anything contrary to "thus saith the Lord," we are duty bound to obey God rather than man. ---Elder Ralph Harris