



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord

THE LAWS OF THE LAND

By Jeff Sweeten

I used to pop my son's head forward and then backward, in a herky-jerky rhythm, at each stop sign. He would give me a hard time about my "old-man" driving but he was learning an important lesson: even with no traffic in sight, dad stops at stop signs. And, while many relegate this breach of law to a petty offense, it reflects an attitude soundly condemned by the Bible. "*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*" (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Submission is not our current culture's strong suit. Evidently, a large percentage of Americans disregard traffic laws habitually, cheat on their taxes annually and commit other "victimless crimes." Yet, Peter, who lived under a repressive Roman regime, demanded our submission to secular laws. The excuses offered for unethical behavior are legion but rationalizations don't change the fact that when we refuse to obey even those minor, insignificant laws of the land, ***we are refusing to obey God's word.***

A chief reason for obeying the laws of the land is stated by Peter as being "for the Lord's sake." He explains what that means in the next verse. "*For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*" (1 Peter 2:15).

Christians are a popular target for ridicule, the meat of mockery, taunted and jeered for faithfulness, especially when obeying government mandates that many of our neighbors ignore with seeming impunity.

Seatbelts are uncomfortable, but we wear them. Taxes come due each year, which are frequently wasted in large part on failed social programs or indigent giveaways (2 Thessalonians 3:10), but Christians pay their taxes (cf. Luke 20:22-25). This fidelity to civil law does not exempt civil disobedience, of course (Daniel 3:17-18; Acts 4:19-20), but so few civil regulations fall into this category.

Laws exist to protect us (Romans 13:1-4). They are rarely, if ever, perfect in their purpose or application, but Christians submit to civil authority because "*to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*" (James 4:17). If one intentionally, willfully, rebelliously disregards the laws of the land in everyday conduct, not only does that person stand condemned in the sight of God, but he/she also lays the body of Christ wide open to ridicule and derision. How can anyone teach or stand for the truth in matters of eternal consequence while at the same time disregarding matters of ***temporary*** consequence. The inconsistency is a glaring one, and fodder for the cannons of infidelity.

A Christian will submit to the laws of the land so "*that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed*" (1 Peter 3:16).

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

1300 E. Boynton St.
Hamilton
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Schedule of Services

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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