**The Christian and Civil Government**

1. Primary Texts: Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17, Titus 3:1
2. Like many subjects this subject is complex. The bibles teaching on the Christians relationship to Civil government is complex. It calls for study, contemplation, and nuance.
3. What are the complexities?
4. Regarding Romans 13:1-6.

What is the higher power/governing authority? A Person or Document?

Lex Rex or Rex Lex?

Is this passage intended to be descriptive or prescriptive?

If viewed as descriptive:

-The HP/GA are, irrespective of their policies, a terror to those who do evil.

-The HP/GA, irrespective of their policies and persons, praise those who do good.

Hence if the HP/GA proscribes and prosecutes a behavior it is of necessity evil.

Also, if the higher power/governing authorities praise a behavior it is of necessity good.

If viewed as primarily prescriptive:

The text is not saying what the HP/GA necessarily are, but rather what God expects them to be.

Does God expect civil higher powers/governing authorities to prescribe and promote His revealed moral law, Yes!

* Matt 28:19-20

1 John 5:3

Psalm 119:105

* Psalm 2:10-12, Ps148,7-14
* 1Tim.6:14-16, Rev.1:6, 17:14, 19:16
* Deut.4:5-8, Ps.119:46
1. There is a biblical teaching that seems to advocate resistance to civil government.
Exodus 1:17, Judges 3:20-21, Daniel 3:18, Daniel 6:10|, Acts 4:19, Acts 5:29

Is resistance permitted only in the unique circumstances described in the passages above?

Is resistance permitted in any circumstance where obedience to the civil government entails disobedience to an explicit command of God?

Is resistance permitted in any circumstance where obedience to the civil magistrate would entail disobedience to any command that by good and necessary deduction may be deduced from scripture?

1. There is biblical teaching that seemingly gives the same unqualified authority to multiple entities.

Colossians 3:20, Ephesians 5:24, Colossians 3:22, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:13-14

The obvious conflict between the various human authorities can be resolved in one of two ways.

* Subordinationism- Amongst the various authorities there is an established hierarchical structure. Of the various human authorities, one is recognized as supreme and all others are subordinated to it. The subordinate authorities with the supreme authority’s permission may exercise a delegated authority over others that are lower on the hierarchical structure than they are. (ex. Statism, communism, Erastianism Divine right, Roman Catholicism, Islam)
* Sphere Sovereignty/ Jurisdictionalism – Each of the various authorities has sovereign authority in its own sphere. None of the authorities has any authority outside of its own sphere. An individual may exercise authority distinctly in multiple spheres. i.e. A man can be a father/ husband, employer, pastor and civil authority all at the same time.
1. Does scripture present either subordinationism or sphere sovereignty as the biblical option?

Yes, sphere sovereignty is supported by scripture. This assertation is based on the following:

1. How are we to discern the boundaries of the civil governments sphere of authority/ Jurisdiction? (For that matter, the boundaries of any human authority.)
2. Summary