



1



2

“You are a Christian and it is your duty under God to submit to government; no matter what – and you are sinning if you don’t!”

“Since Jesus, Paul, and the other Apostles did not get involved in their government or call for their followers to rebel against the tyranny of their day, all Christians should stay out of politics and submit to whatever government they find themselves living under.”

3



4

“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup> to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Titus 3:1-2

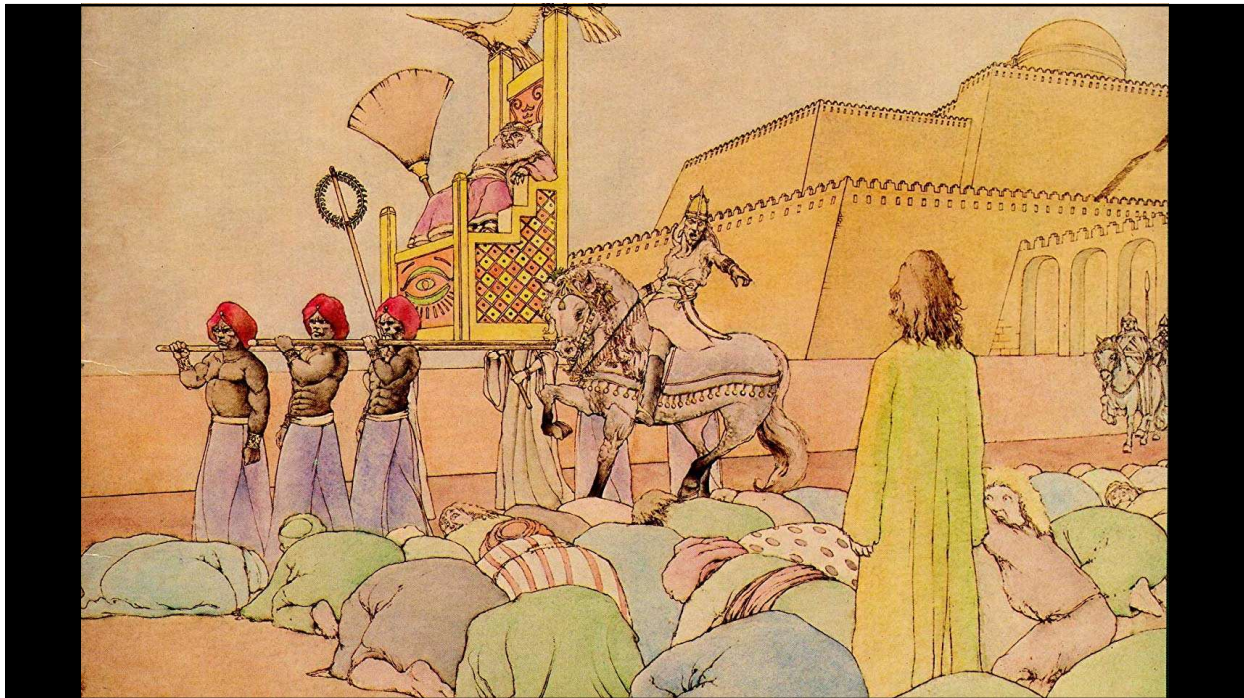
“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men”

1 Pet 2:13-15

5

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. <sup>3</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,” 1 Tim. 2:2-3

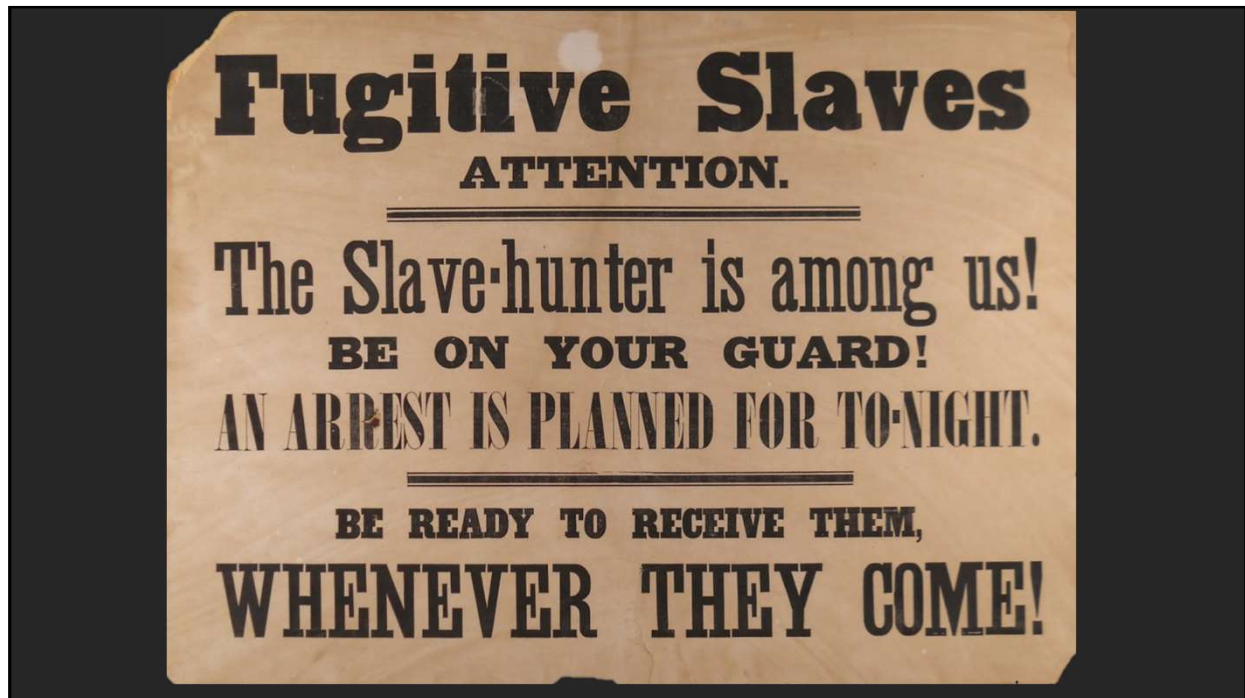
6



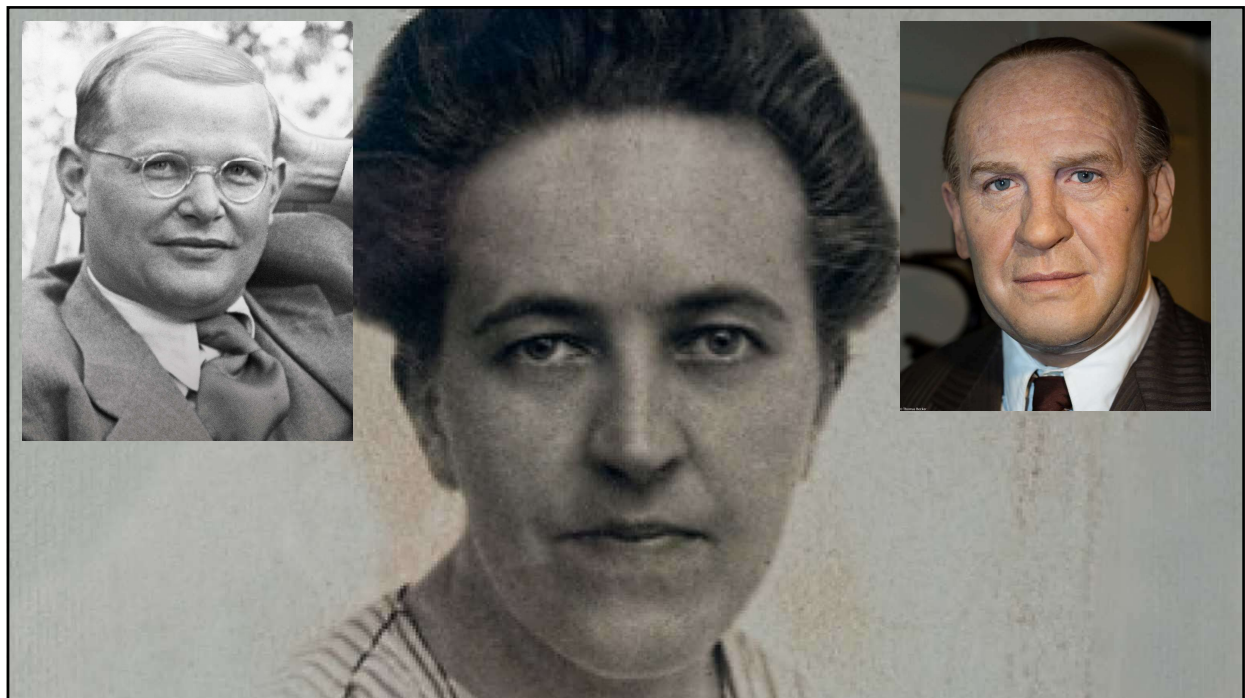
7

- The Hebrew midwives defying the command of Pharaoh
- Moses refusing Pharaoh
- Queen Esther approaching the king uninvited
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refusing to bow
- Daniel defying the king by refusing to stop praying
- Jesus refusing to abide by the Jewish Sabbath laws
- Apostles and early Christians refusing to stop preaching
- Believers through the ages defying ungodly authorities

8



9



10



11



12



13

But doesn't Paul say in Romans 13 that we owe *unlimited* submission to government?

14

**Rom 13:1-5** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to **good** works, but to **evil**. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. <sup>4</sup> For he is **God's minister** to you for good. But if you **do evil**, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an **avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil**. <sup>5</sup> Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

15

Context is everything!

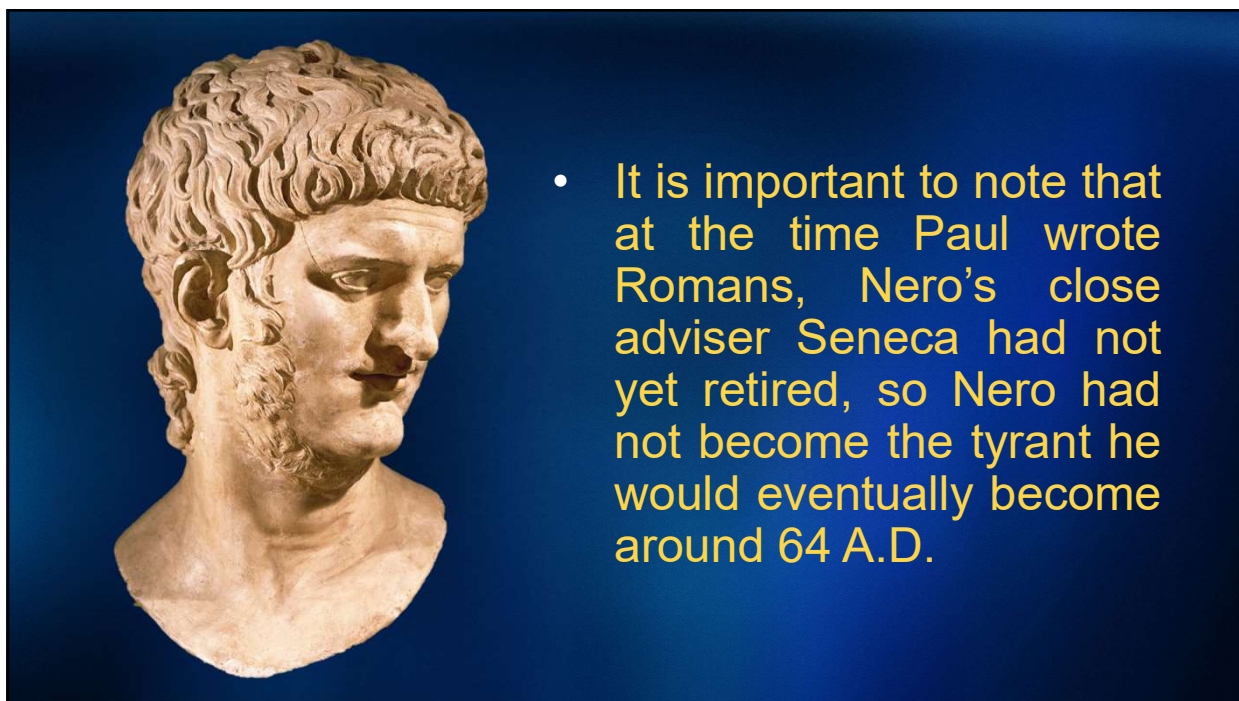
**Hermeneutics:** the art and science of Bible interpretation

16

## The context of Rom 13:1-5

- Paul wrote the letter to the Church in Rome in 56-57 A.D. while he was in Corinth during his third missionary journey. The church in Rome dates back at least to 49 A.D.
- Having learned of the “troublesome” Jews in Rome who caused the mass deportation of Christians and Jews, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul felt compelled to instruct the believers in Rome how they should co-exist with Roman rule.

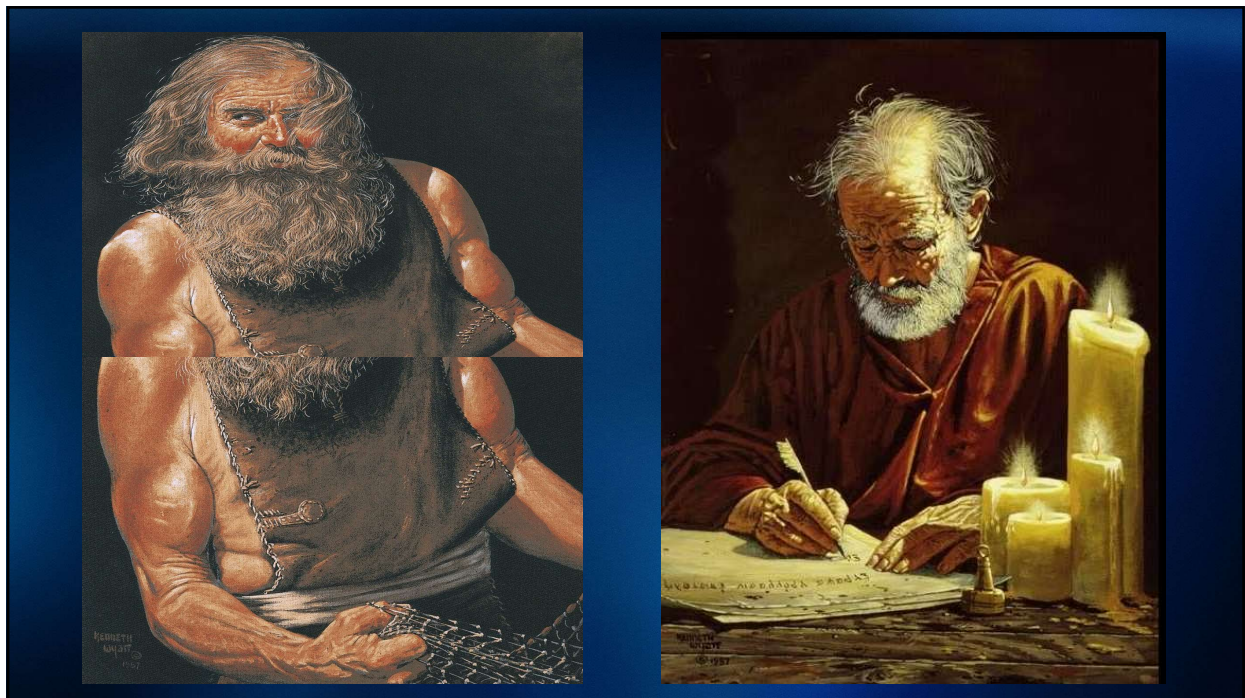
17



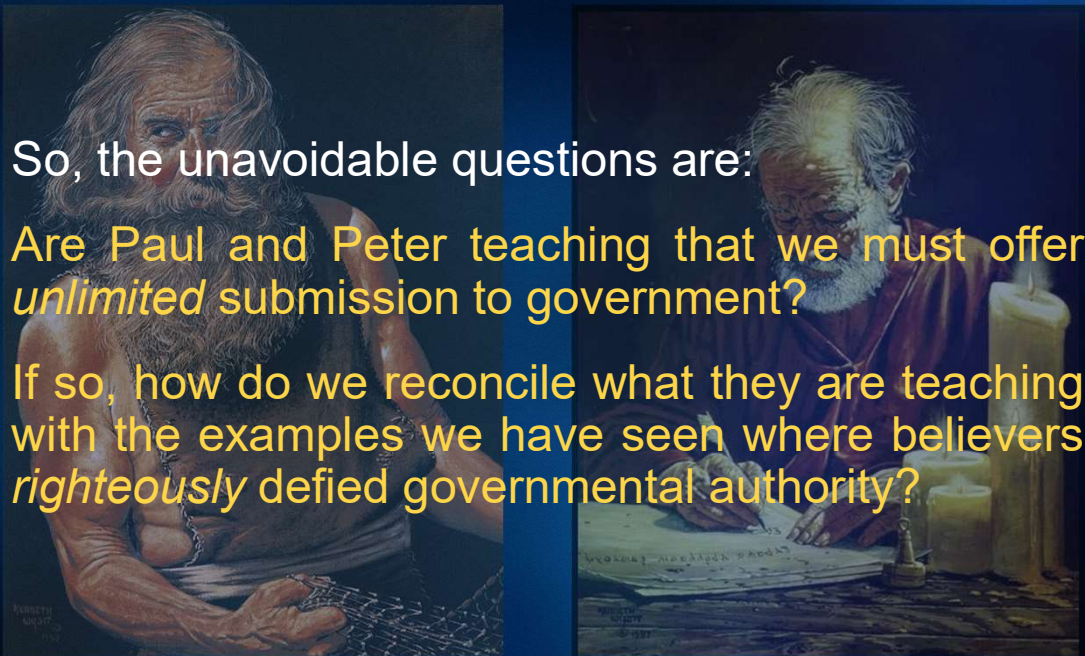
18

**1 Pet 2:13-15** “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men”

19



20

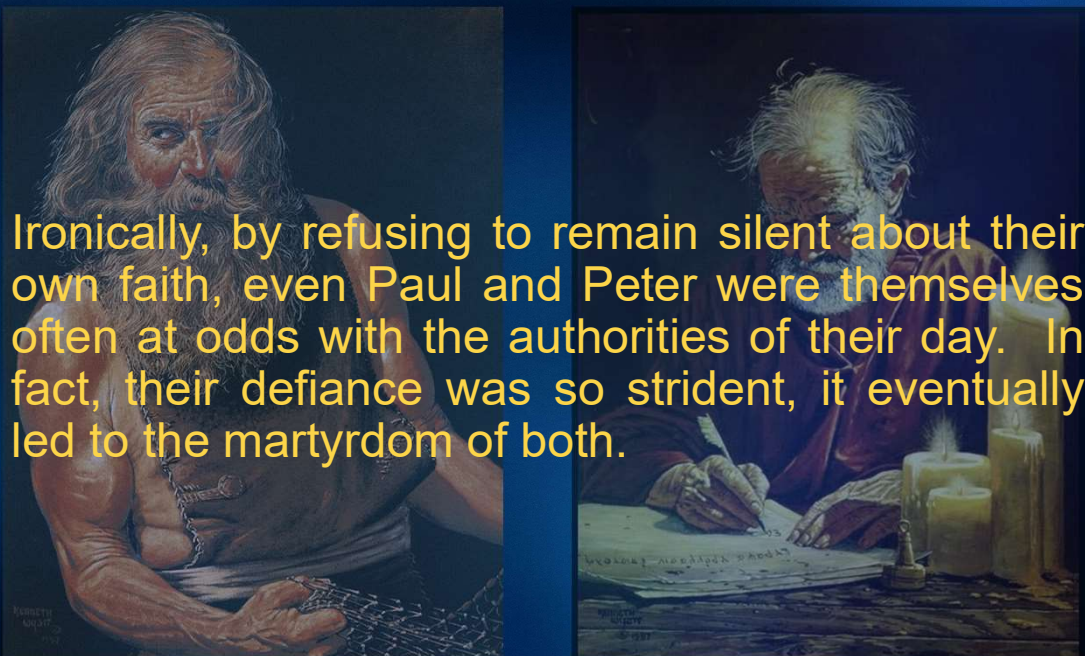


So, the unavoidable questions are:

Are Paul and Peter teaching that we must offer *unlimited* submission to government?

If so, how do we reconcile what they are teaching with the examples we have seen where believers *righteously* defied governmental authority?

21



Ironically, by refusing to remain silent about their own faith, even Paul and Peter were themselves often at odds with the authorities of their day. In fact, their defiance was so strident, it eventually led to the martyrdom of both.

22

In Rom 13:3-5, Paul defines for us the “type” of government that is due our submission by stressing:

23

## 1. The position government holds

- In verse one, Paul writes that God is the source of all authority and that He appoints all authorities:

“... For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”

- In verse four, Paul writes twice that rulers wielding governmental authority are God’s ministers:

“For he is God’s minister to you for good. ... for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”

24

## 2. The purpose government fulfills

**Rom 13:3-4** For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

- In calling rulers "God's ministers," Paul qualifies this title by pointing out that the purpose of governmental authority is to be a minister for good.
- The proper function of government then, is to be "a terror to evil works" and to be "an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil."

25

## 3. The power government wields

**Rom 13:2-4** Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ... <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? <sup>4</sup> ... But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

- Since proper government operates as "God's minister," its ordinances are ultimately the ordinances of God and anyone who resists/disobeys can expect judgment.
- Being a "terror to evil," proper government should be feared because of its heavy and long arm.

26

Paul teaches that *proper* government, one worthy of a Christian's submission ...

- Is a government that acts as "God's minister for good." (Rom 13:4)
- Is a government that "avenges evil by *executing* wrath on him who does evil." (Rom 13:3-4)
- Is a government that "protects and rewards those who do good." (Rom 13:3)

27

But, what is the believer to do when their government does the opposite?

28

## Submission and cooperation is not always the godly option

**Rom 12:18** “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

29

## There are other commands for submission in Scripture as well:

**Eph 5:22** Paul teaches that wives are to submit to the authority of their husbands

**Eph 6:1** Paul teaches that children should submit to the authority of their parents,

**1 Tim 3:5, 5:17** Paul teaches that the congregation must submit to its pastor(s).

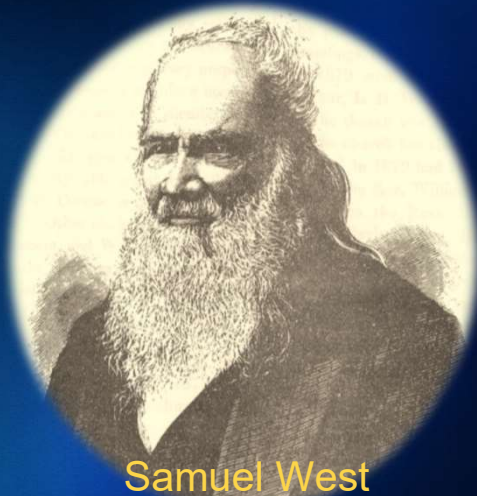
30

When the laws of men bring us into conflict with God's higher law, we must defy the laws of men and obey God.

**Acts 5:29** But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

31

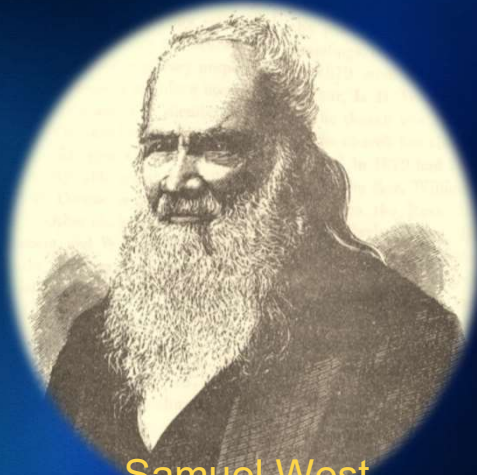
"A slavish submission to tyranny is a proof of a very sordid and base mind. ... all good magistrates, while they faithfully discharge the trust reposed in them, ought to be religiously and conscientiously obeyed. ... The reason why the magistrate is called the minister of God is because he is to protect, encourage, and honor them that do well, and to punish them that do evil; therefore it is our duty to submit to them, not merely for



**Samuel West**  
Pastor, Hollis Street Church in  
Boston, MA

32

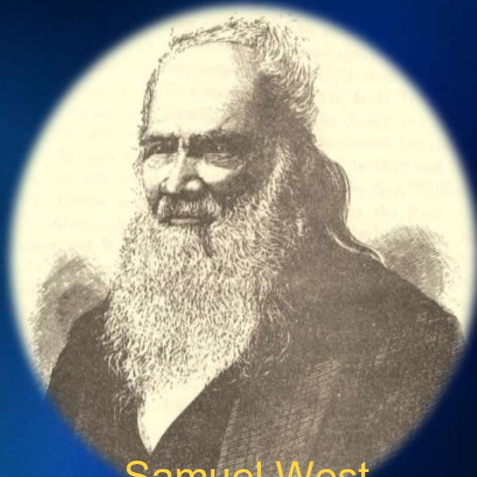
fear of being punished by them, but out of regard to the divine authority, under which they are deputed to execute judgment and to do justice. ... if magistrates are no farther ministers of God than they promote the good of the community, then obedience to them neither is nor can be unlimited; for it would imply a gross absurdity to assert that, when magistrates are ordained by the people solely for the purpose



**Samuel West**  
Pastor, Hollis Street Church in  
Boston, MA

33

of being beneficial to the state, they must be obeyed when they are seeking to ruin and destroy it. ... Unlimited submission and obedience is due to none but God alone. ... Whenever, then, the ruler encourages them that do evil, and is a terror to those that do well, i.e., as soon as he becomes a tyrant, he forfeits his authority to govern, and becomes the minister of Satan, and, as such, ought to be opposed."

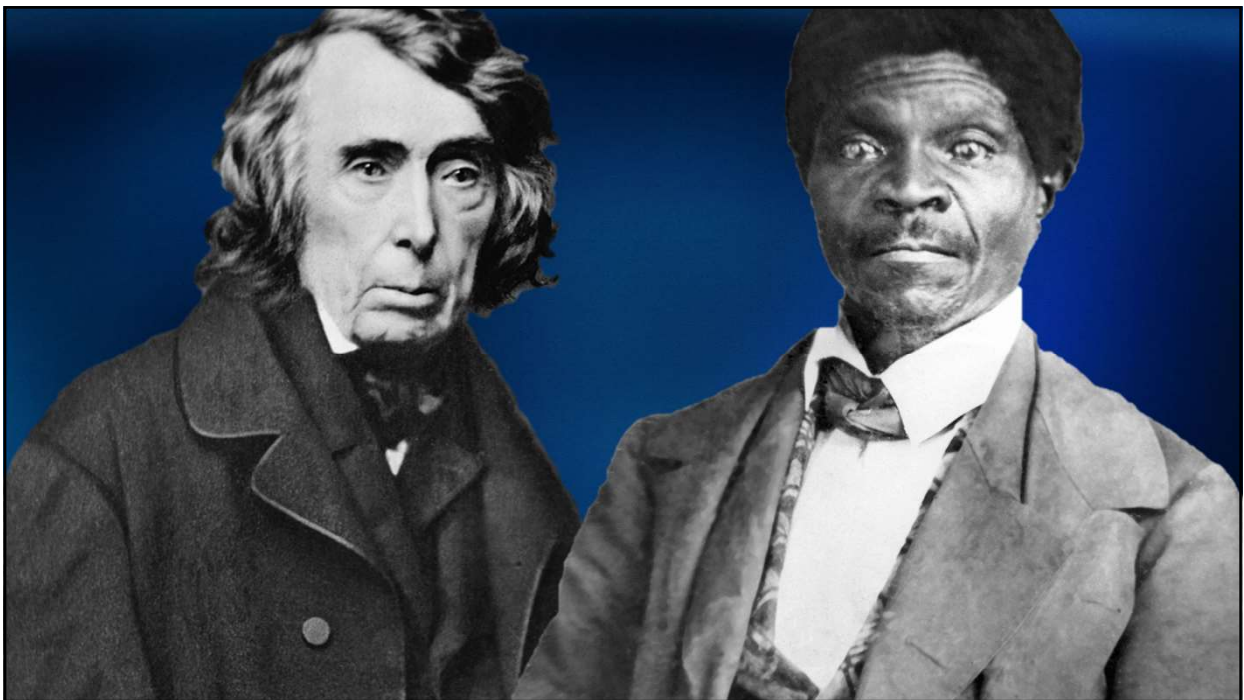


**Samuel West**  
Pastor, Hollis Street Church in  
Boston, MA

34



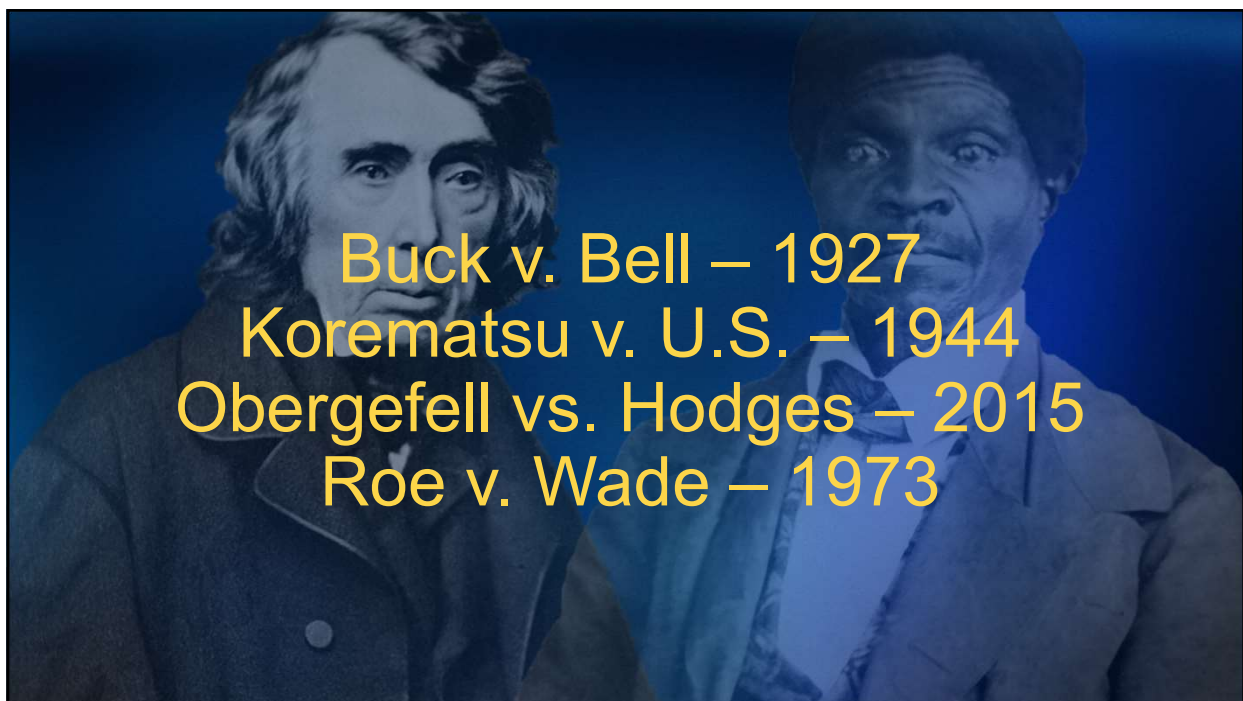
35



36



37



38



39


20  
WEEKS

Since 1973 – 62 million+ (and counting)  
15-20 babies murdered every business day in OK  
Over 200,000 murdered in OK since 1973

© Pregnancy.com/stopabortionweek.org

3D Ultrasound

40

A circular portrait of Joseph Lathrop, a man with long, light-colored hair, wearing a dark coat and a white clerical collar. The portrait is set against a dark blue background.

“A Sermon On A Day Appointed For Public Thanksgiving,” Dec 14, 1787

“Perhaps it will be asked, ‘Is there no case in which a people may resist government?’ Yes, there is one such case; and that is, when rulers usurp a power oppressive to the people, and continue to support it by military force in contempt of every respectful remonstrance. In this case the body of the people have a natural right to unite their strength for the restoration of their own constitutional government.”

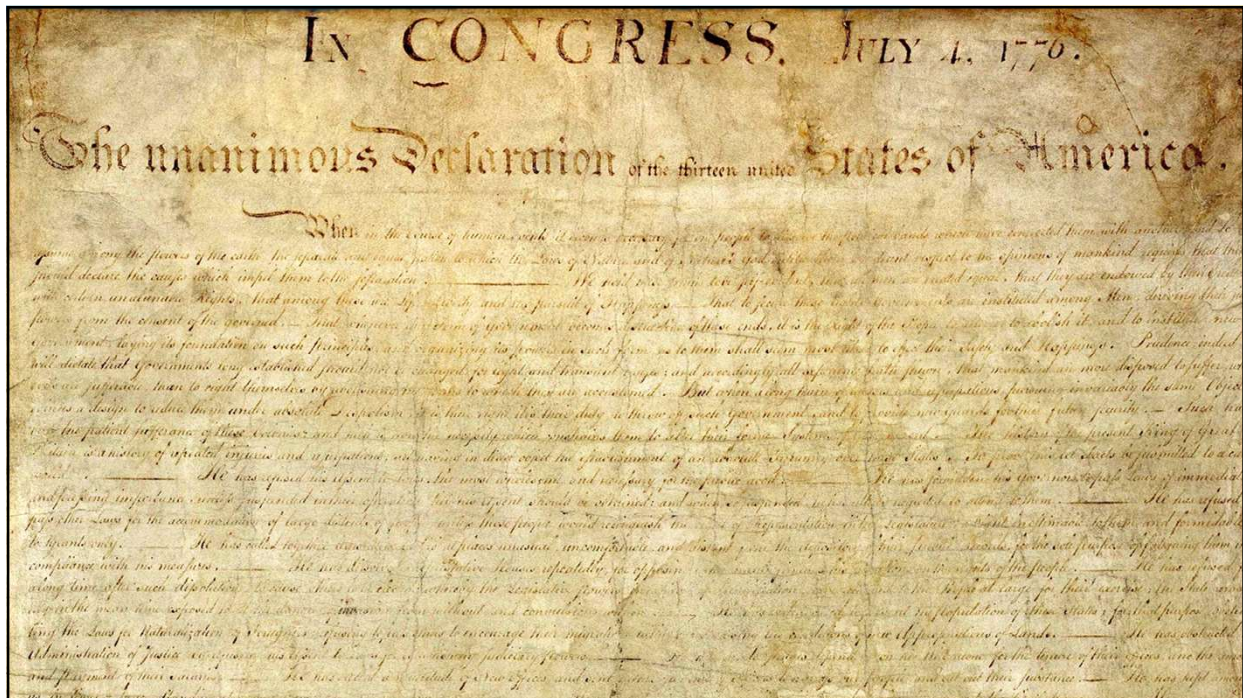
**Joseph Lathrop**  
Pastor, 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church, West Springfield, MA

41

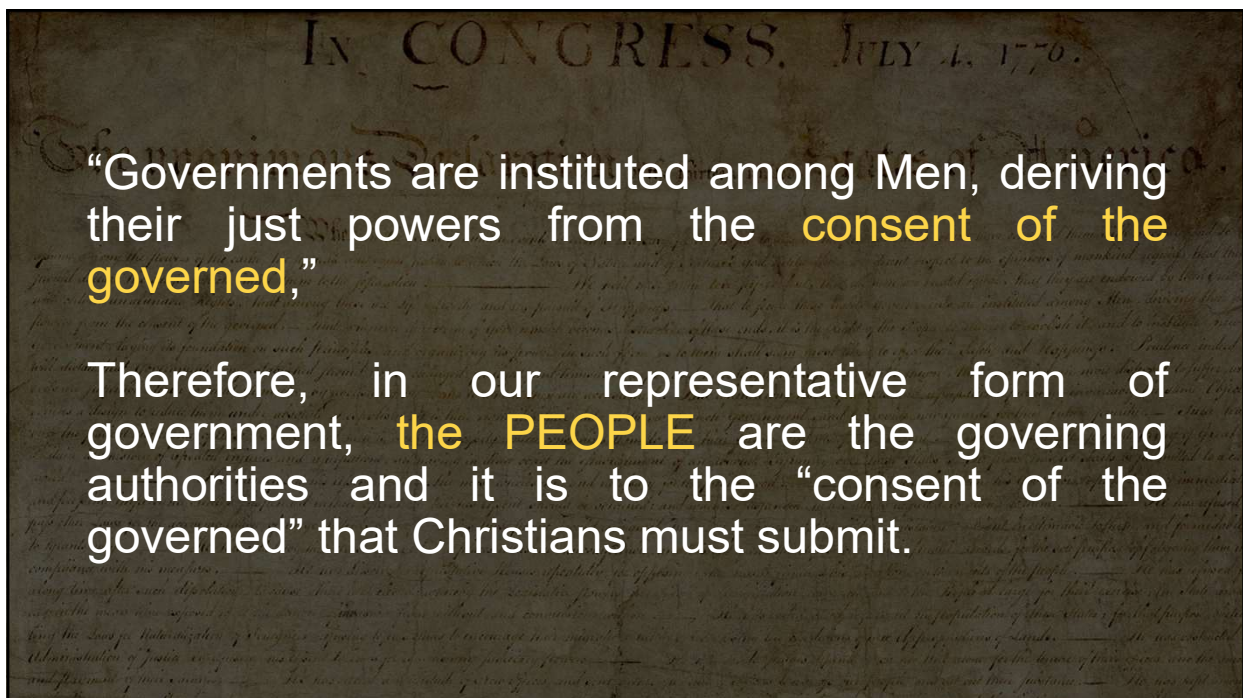
Our government is very different from the one Paul lived under.

Our form of government is based on very specific and unique representative principles generally known as *federalism*.

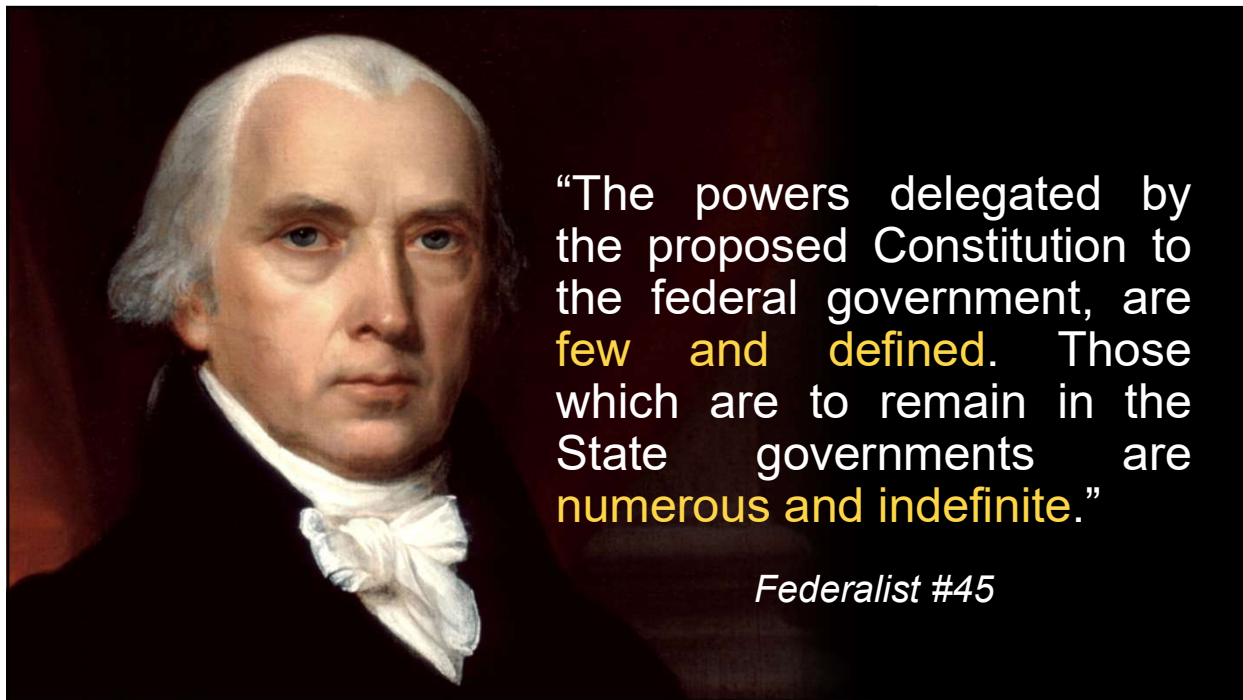
42



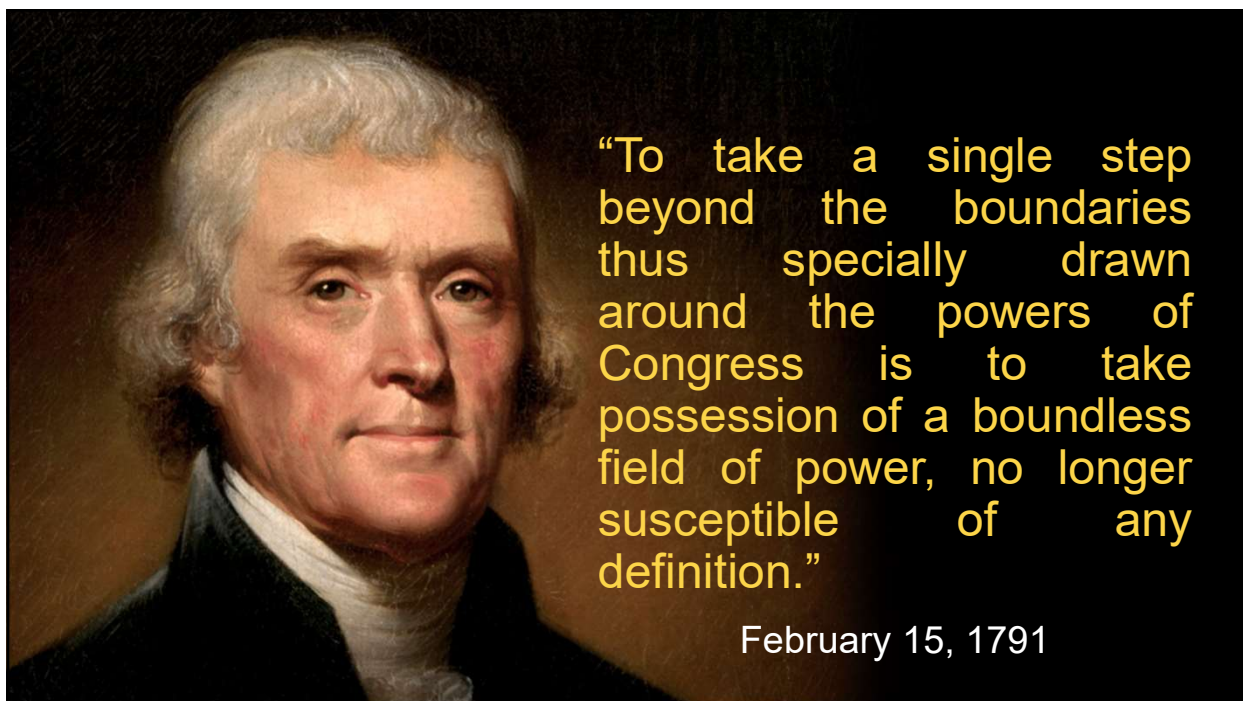
43



44



45



46

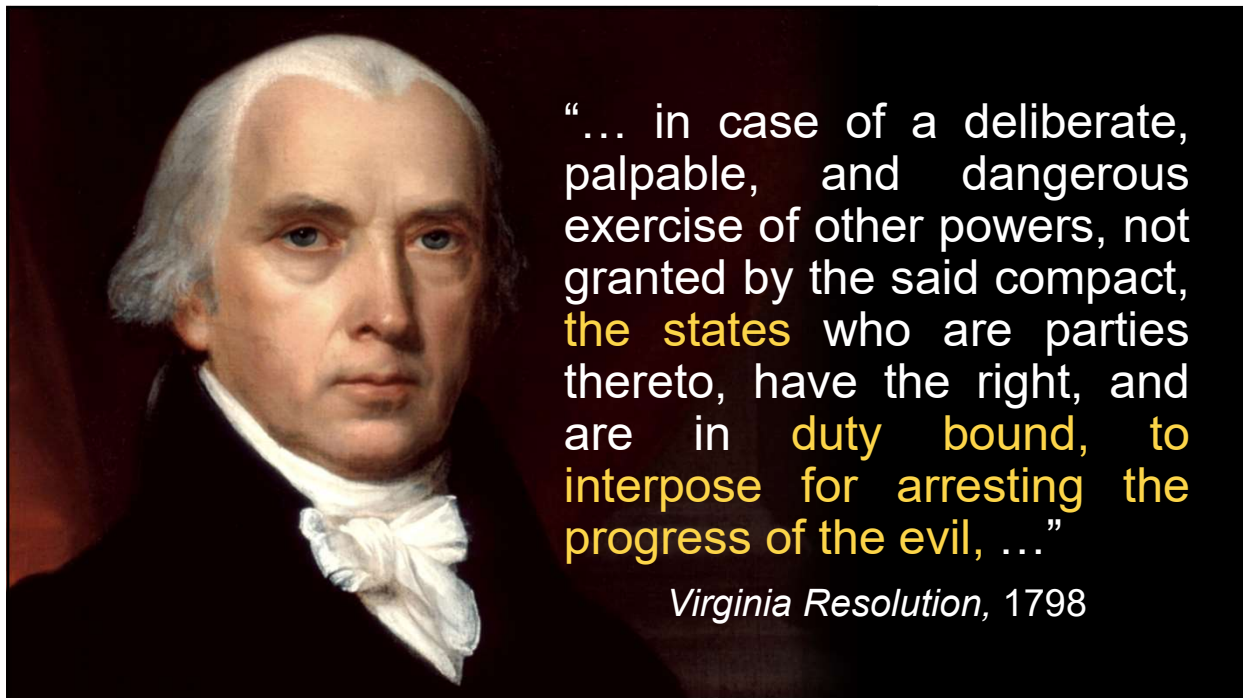
What should we do if the government ever exceeds its rightful authority?

47

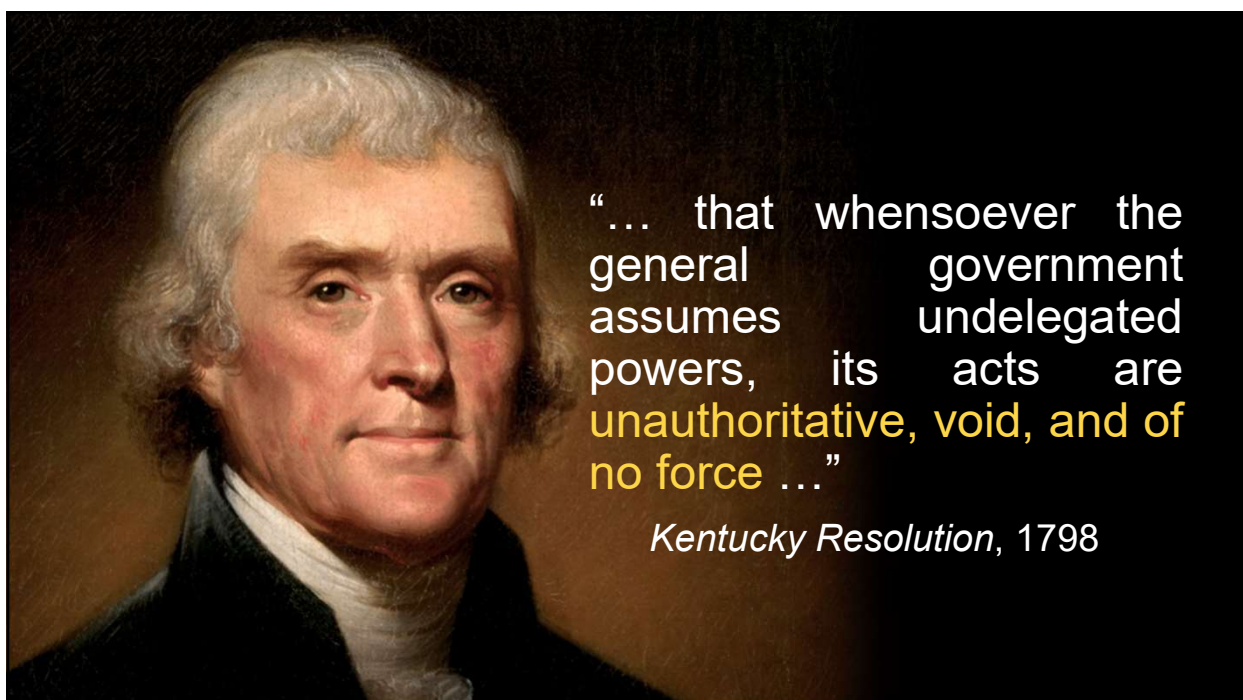
IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

"That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right (and duty) of the People to alter or to abolish it (or throw it off), and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

48



49



50

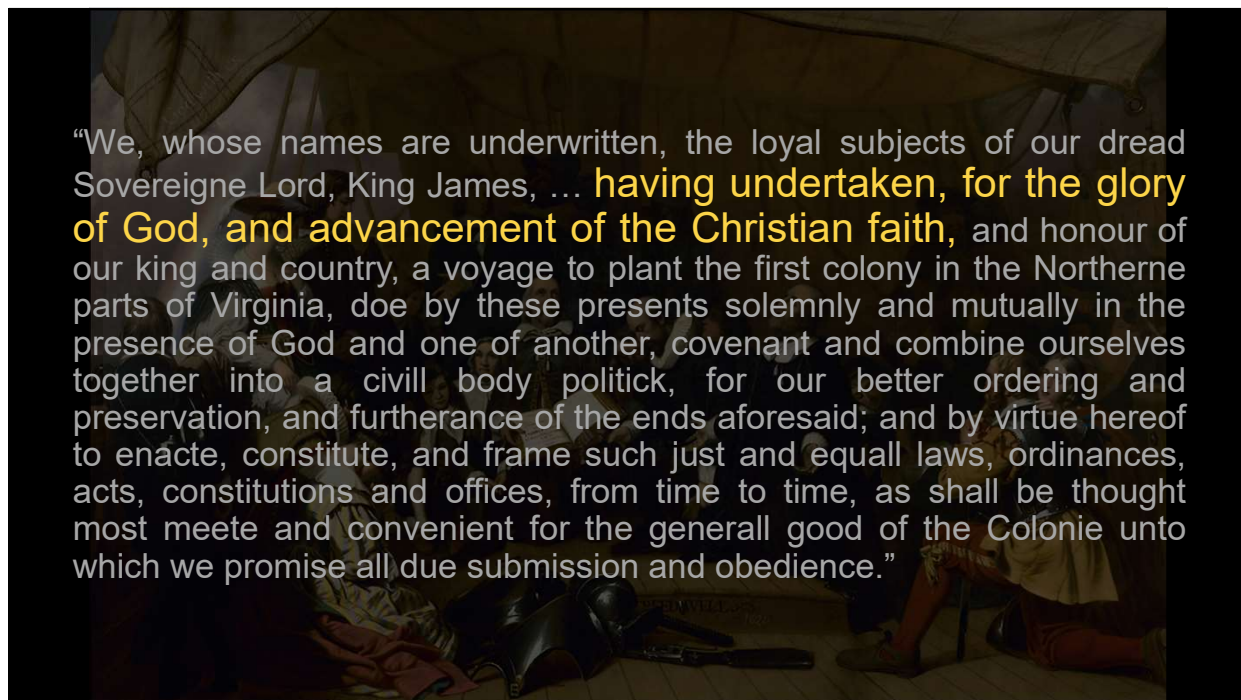
But if we stand against the government,  
doesn't that make us rebels?

Were our Founders/Framers sinning when  
they defied the English government?


51



52



53



**Alice M. Baldwin, PhD.**  
Historian, Duke University

"Probably the most fundamental principle of the American constitutional system is the principle that no one is bound to obey an unconstitutional act. ... No single idea was more fully stressed, no principle more often repeated, through the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, than that governments must obey law and that he who resisted one in authority who was violating that law was not himself a rebel but a protector of law."

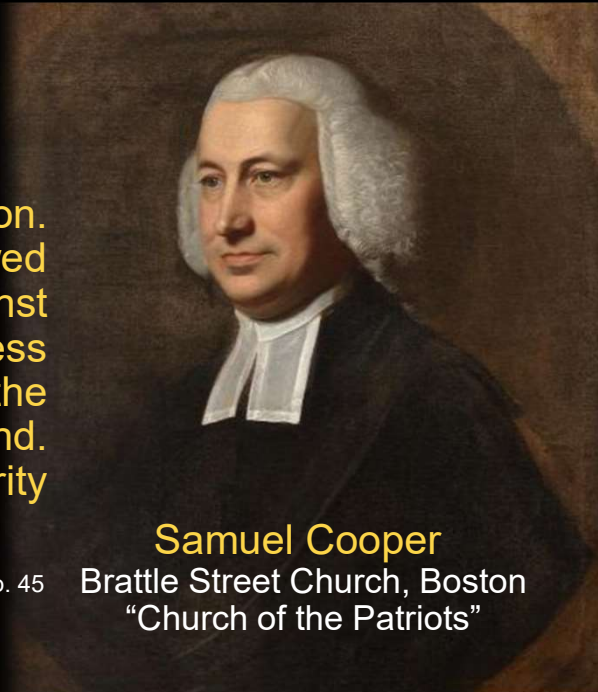
Baldwin, Alice M. *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*, p. 169.

54

February 20, 1775:

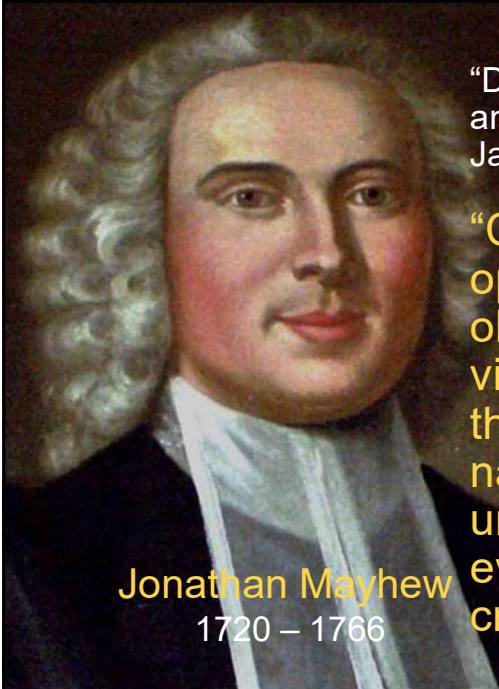
“We are not exciting rebellion. Opposition, nay, open, avowed resistance by arms against usurpation and lawless violence, is not rebellion by the law of God or the land. Resistance to lawful authority makes rebellion.”

Adams, John, *Novanglus and Massachusettensis*, p. 45



Samuel Cooper  
Brattle Street Church, Boston  
“Church of the Patriots”

55

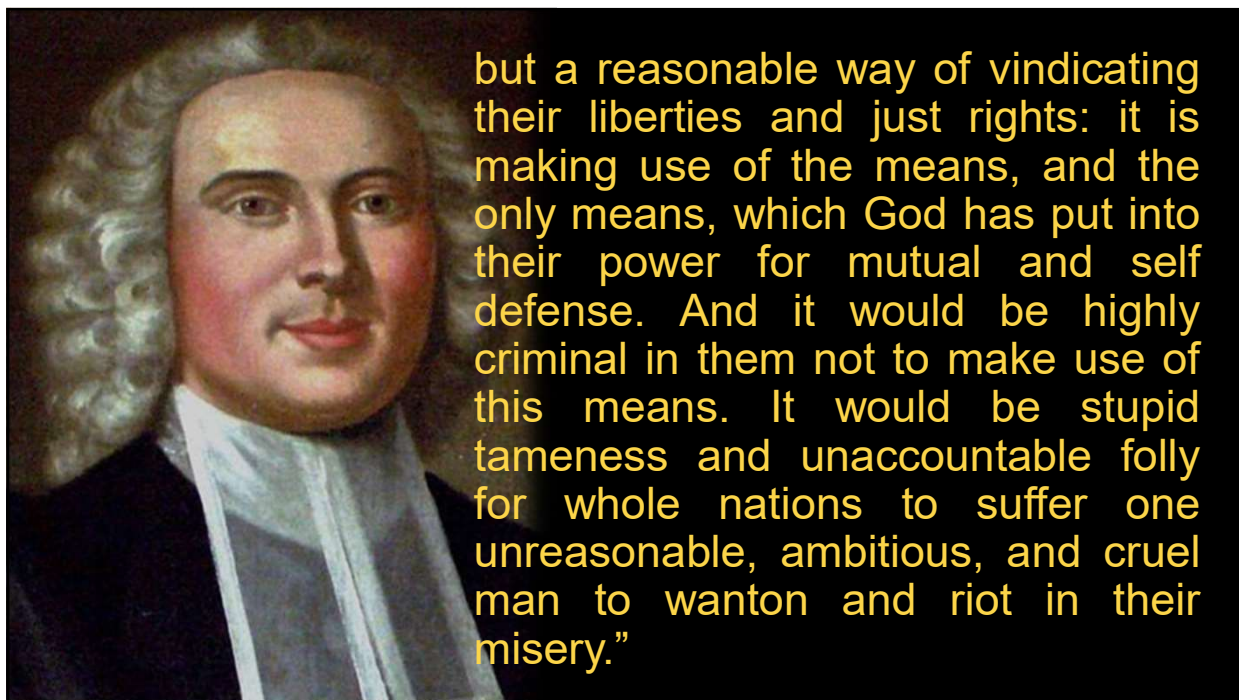


Jonathan Mayhew  
1720 – 1766

“Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance To The Higher Powers,”  
Jan 31, 1749-50:


“Common tyrants and public oppressors are not entitled to obedience from their subjects by virtue of anything here laid down by the inspired apostle [Paul]. ... For a nation thus abused to arise unanimously and resist their prince, even to the dethroning him, is not criminal,

56



57

"The brutal outrage at Lexington transformed this peaceful scholar and meek divine into the fiery, intrepid soldier, and seizing a musket he put himself at the head of a party, and led them forward to the attack. The gentle voice that had so long spoken only words of peace suddenly rung like that of a prophet of old. A body of British soldiers advancing along the road [from Concord back to Boston], he poured into them such a destructive volley that the whole were slain or taken prisoners. He was a man of peace and conciliation, but the first citizen's blood that crimsoned the green sward made a clean sweep of all his arguments and objections, and he entered with his whole soul into the struggle."



**Samuel Phillips Payson**  
Congregationalist pastor  
Chelsea, Massachusetts

Joel Headley, *The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*, Chapter 5, p. 60.

58

Elizur Goodrich, Pastor, Congregational Church, Durham, CT  
 “The Principles of Civil Union and Happiness Considered and  
 Recommended,” 1787:

“When a constitutional government is converted into tyranny, and the laws, rights and properties of a free people are openly invaded, there ought not to be the least doubt but that a remedy is provided in the laws of God and reason, for their preservation; nor ought resistance in such case to be called rebellion.”


59

National seal  
 proposed to Congress on  
 August 20, 1776 by  
 Thomas Jefferson,  
 Benjamin Franklin,  
 & John Adams

Drawing by Benson Lossing, for *Harper's  
 New Monthly Magazine*, July 1856,  
 General Collections, Library of Congress (106)




60



**Jonathan Mayhew**  
Pastor, West Congregational  
Church, Boston, MA

“No government is to be submitted to, at the expense of that which is the sole end of all government – the common good and safety of society. ... The only reason of the institution of civil government and the only rational ground of submission to it is the common safety and utility. If therefore, in any case, the common safety and utility would not be promoted by submission to government, but

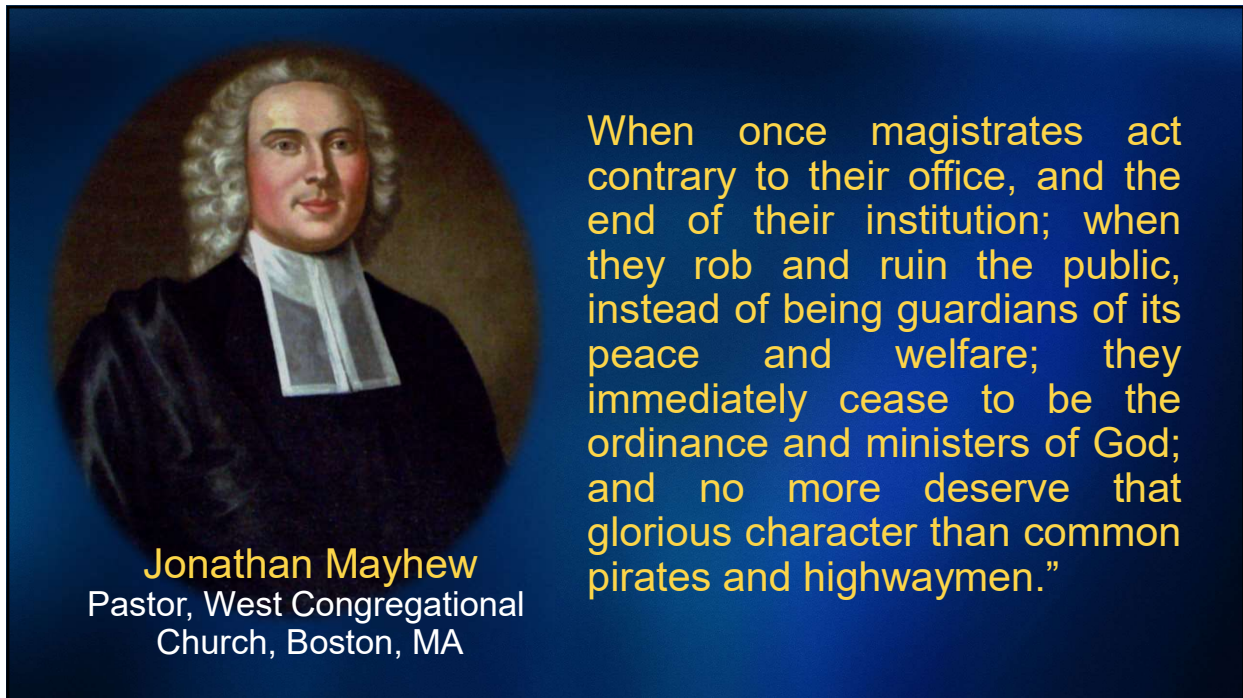
61



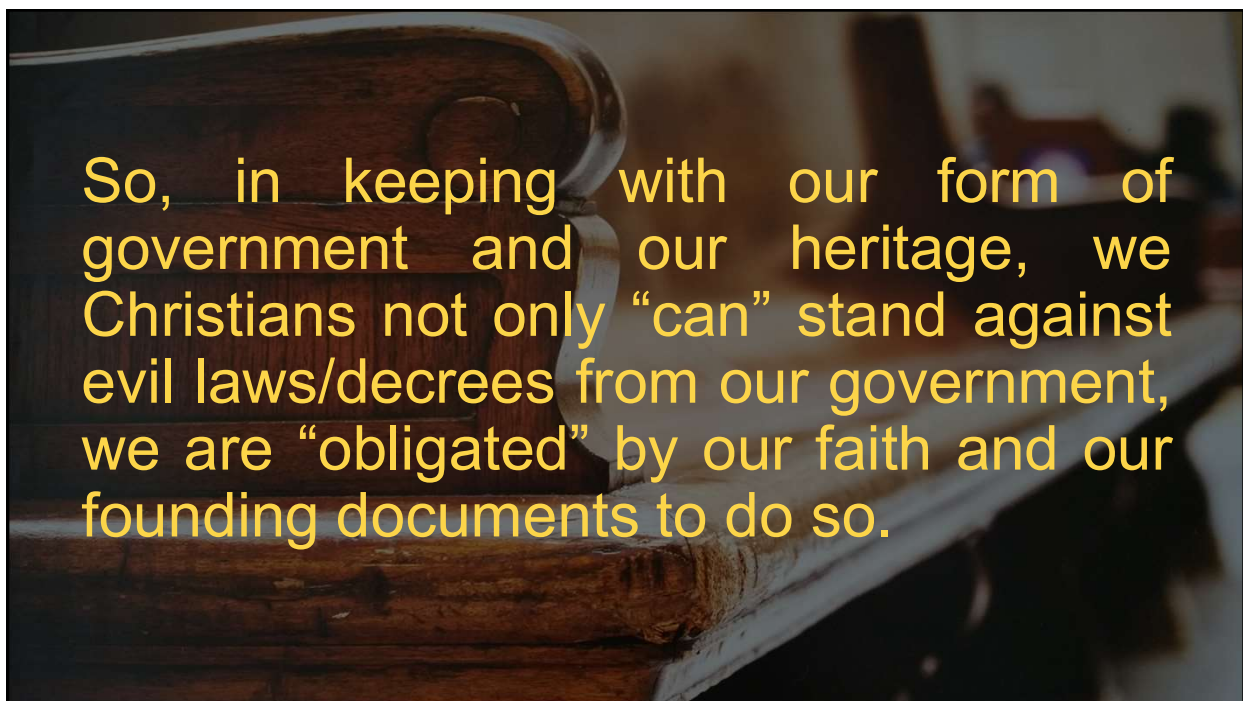
**Jonathan Mayhew**  
Pastor, West Congregational  
Church, Boston, MA

the contrary, there is no ground or motive for obedience and submission, but for the contrary. ... [But] the duty of unlimited obedience, whether active or passive, can be argued neither from the manner of expression here used, nor from the general scope and design of the passage [Romans 13:1-7].

62



63



64