

## **Trending: Civil Disobedience and the Christian**

***By James Moriello***

This topic has increasingly become a hot button topic over the past decade, as state court rulings have increasingly been in favor of "same sex marriage." Potentially, the United States Supreme Court could issue a ruling on this as well. That may have the practical effect of further violating the free speech and free exercise of religion rights of Bible believing Christians across the nation. So far, we have already witnessed the rights of many conscientious religious objectors trampled upon. Private business owners such as a florist, a baker, a photographer, a Bed and Breakfast owner, and a pizza place have paid either legal consequences and/or had to deal with the threats of those who do not wish to give them the right of free expression of belief. Catholic Charities of Massachusetts had to end their adoption ministry, and parachurch campus ministries have been restricted in some cases to "free speech zones" on college campuses. The irony of this term is that it admits that free speech is tyrannically stifled on the rest of the campus! Those with an agenda of attempting to force acceptance of behavior that the Bible calls "against nature" (Romans 1:26-27) have infiltrated many of our churches and denominations as well. The goal here is to gain support among some professing Christians, and marginalize and brand as "haters" and "bigots" those who believe the Bible. We should not be voting on whether or not we accept the Bible way of one-man, one-woman marriage. God has already "voted", and His position is clear as a bell. His position on marriage and sexual behavior is: "Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-5, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11." That is my position, and if you believe the Bible, it is yours. If you disagree, take it up with God. From this context, the question arises as to what the response of the Bible believing Christian ought to be when challenged.

As general principle, Christians should obey the law, because the government is God's agent to maintain authority in society (Romans 13:1). Earthly governments have power that is given to them by divine allowance (John 19:11). The degree to which a human government can expect God's blessings, and be a

legitimate agent of God is the degree to which that government rewards good and punishes evil (Romans 13:4). But “woe to those who call evil good, and good evil” (Romans 5:20). America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles of law, and is therefore a “client nation” of God, in a similar way to that of ancient Israel. Therefore, we can expect God to respond to us with blessings and curses according to Deuteronomy Chapter 28. Is it any wonder that our nation is disintegrating in many ways before our eyes, and that American power is waning?

Peaceful opposition to unbiblical concepts that arise in society is always the Christian’s first and best option. “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). Civic remedies include voting and exercising the right to free speech. Legal remedies include challenging court rulings lawfully by appealing to constitutional and prior case law. Religious remedies are the best method for the Christian to combat the celebration of sin in the culture. People are changed from the inside out, not the outside in. So let’s participate in the Great Commission, since we have much freedom to do so (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15). There is currently no civil law in our country that restricts gospel content on our websites and in our newspapers. Nor are we prohibited from personal and public evangelism. So let’s get busy! The day may come when we won’t have all of these options.

There are times in human history when Christians must choose to either obey a government which actively opposes divine precepts, or choose to obey God. When the Hebrew midwives were commanded to murder male Hebrew babies, they refused to do so, and are commended in the Scripture for it (Exodus 1:15-17). When Daniel’s friends in Babylon were commanded to engage in idolatrous worship, the Lord Himself vindicated them (Daniel 3). When the Apostles were commanded by men to disobey the Great Commission, they rightly chose to obey God’s command (Acts 5:28-29). In all three cases, faithful people of God chose to obey Him, whatever the cost may be.

What remedies might there be for the church, and its people? The local church is wise not to accept government monies or grants, to have a clearly

written Statement of Christian Faith, to practice biblical separation from those whose liberal brand of Christianity affirms sin (Romans 16:17), and to put safeguards in place with regard to the local governance of the church and protection of biblical doctrine. The individual Christian must stand his or her ground with Shiphrah, Puah, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Peter, John, and James. If we are in a position to help others stand their ground, let us help them. As Christians, we are not to be intimidated by the “thought police”, who brand those of us who affirm the truth of Romans 1:26-27 as “haters” and “bigots”. It is good to support groups such as ACLJ and FRC, but let us remember that our first mission is the propagation of the gospel, and that other items are secondary to that. Bible believing Christians will always be a small minority. Jesus said so (Matthew 7:13-14).

Some have gone so far as to question whether or not active rebellion and civil war is an issue. Clearly, this is not something a Christian should get involved with, except as an absolute last resort, after all other avenues have failed. Just War Theory sets forth the criteria that there be a legitimate cause, a legitimate alternative authority, a reasonable chance of success, and that the activity is rightly conducted through right means.

Why is God allowing this? Perhaps the Lord is purifying the church by separating the true believers from the “make-believers” (Matthew 13:24-30). If the church will not be like Philadelphia, then Laodicean Christians will join the world, and God’s true church will be like Smyrna (Revelation 2-3). From an earthly standpoint, this may involve the persecution of true believers on account of their faith in Christ. But the positive outcome will be that the Bible-believing remnant will be strengthened, and much hypocrisy and false teaching will be removed from the professing church. Christian friend, remember to keep your focus. Jesus Christ Himself is interceding for you now, even as He has sent you into the world. Keep the focus on your heavenly hope and your heavenly home, and do not be overcome by earthy circumstances (John 17:13-19). Stay faithful! Keep fighting the good fight! And to God be the Glory! Amen.