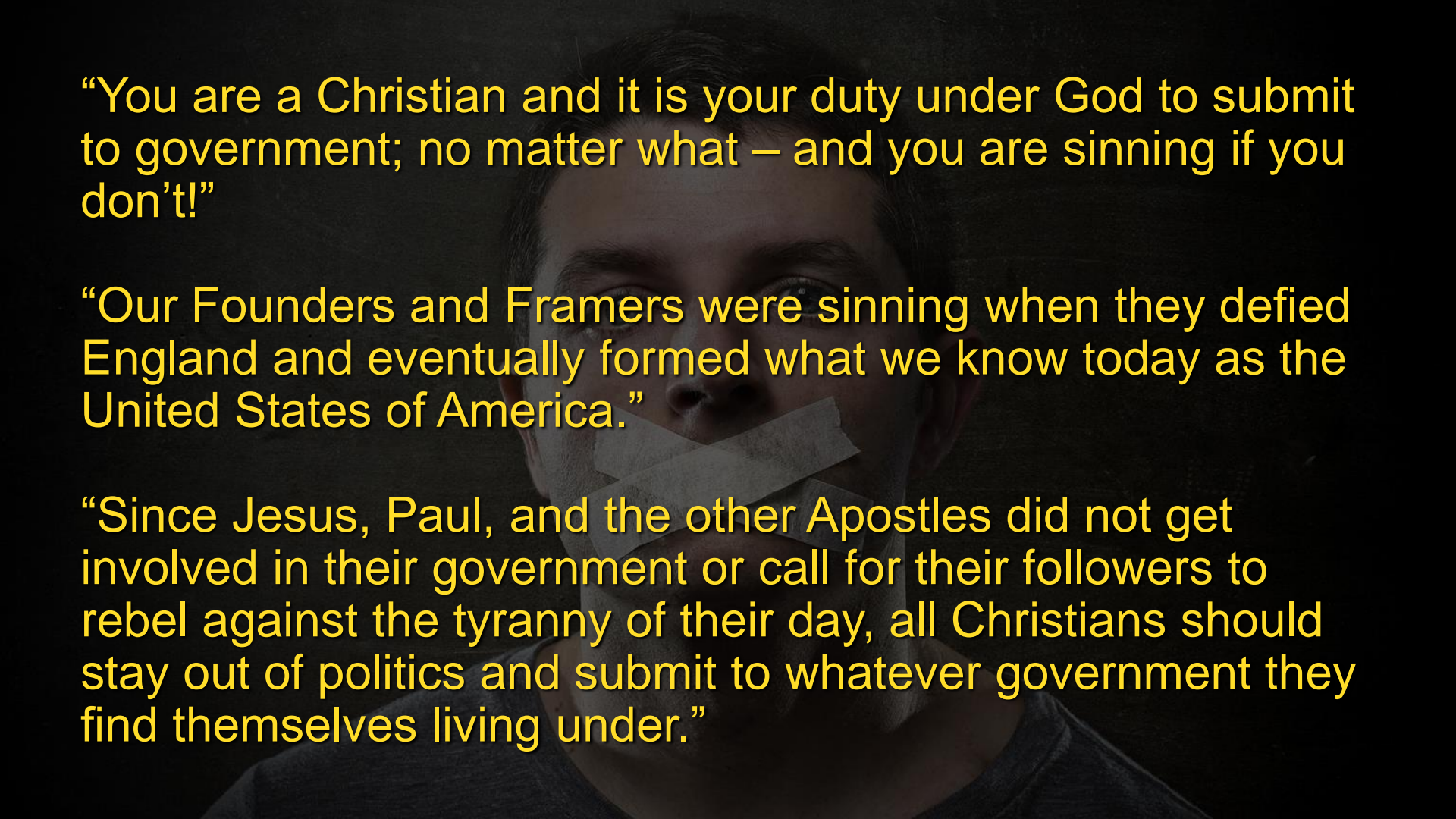


Unlimited Submission?

A close-up photograph of a man's face. He has short dark hair and light-colored eyes. His mouth is completely covered by several strips of white adhesive tape, preventing him from speaking. The background is a dark, textured grey.

How Rom 13:1-5 has been incorrectly used to
silence Christians and the Church

A close-up photograph of a man's face, which is the background for the text. He has a neutral expression and his mouth is completely covered by several strips of white adhesive tape. The lighting is somewhat dim, and the background is dark.

“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!”

“Our Founders and Framers were sinning when they defied England and eventually formed what we know today as the United States of America.”

“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.”

“To some people, evangelical Christianity was a proper justification for the American Revolution. They believe we had every right to load up our guns and kill Englishmen for the sake of our religious freedom. ... So, the United States was actually born out of a violation of New Testament principles, and any blessings that God has bestowed on America have come in spite of that disobedience by the Founding Fathers.”

John MacArthur, “The Christian's Responsibility to Government,” Part 1
<https://www.gty.org/library/study-guides/127/the-christian-and-government>

John MacArthur, *Why Government Can't Save You*, p. 6

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

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

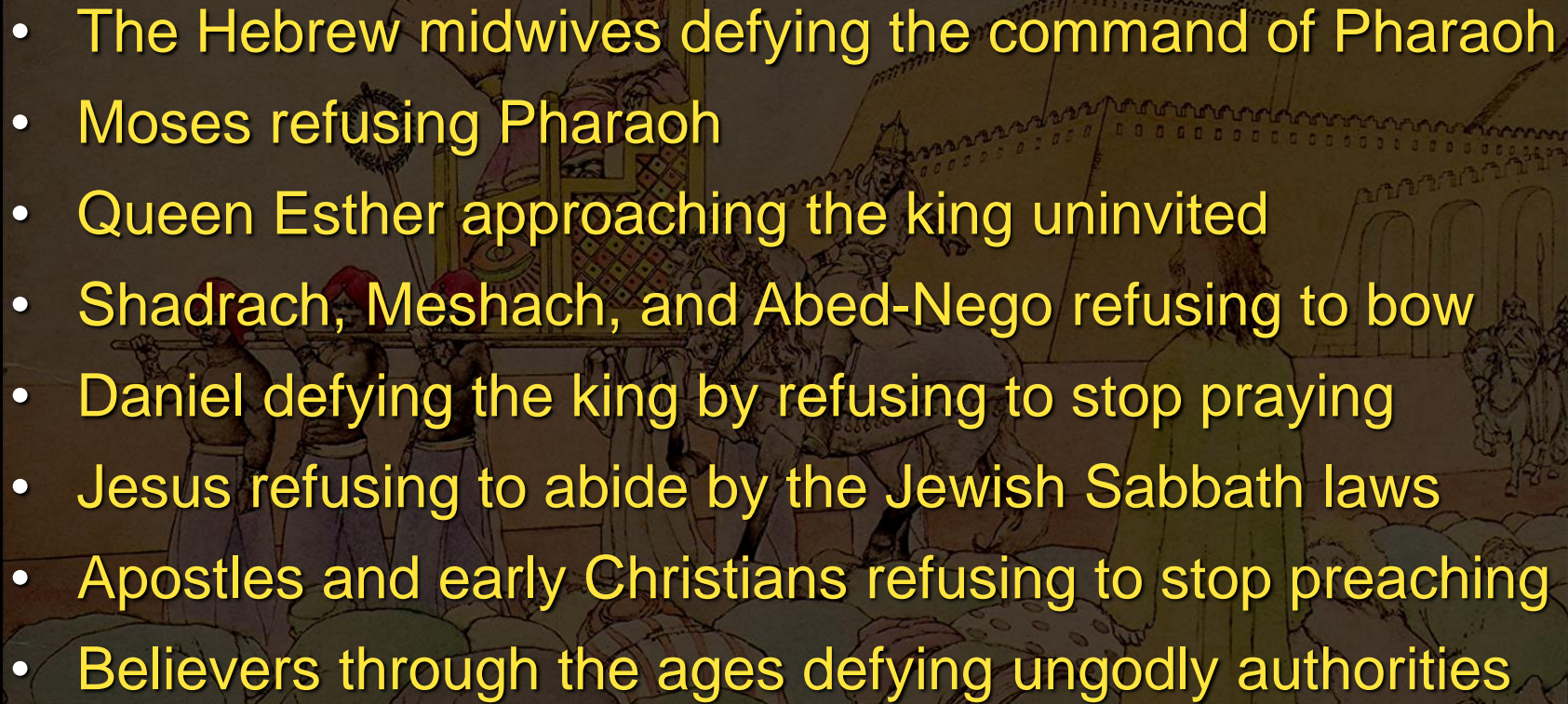
1 Tim. 2:2-3

Rom 13:1-2 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which **God has established**. The authorities that exist have been **established by God**. (2)

Consequently, he who **rebels** against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will **bring judgment** on themselves.



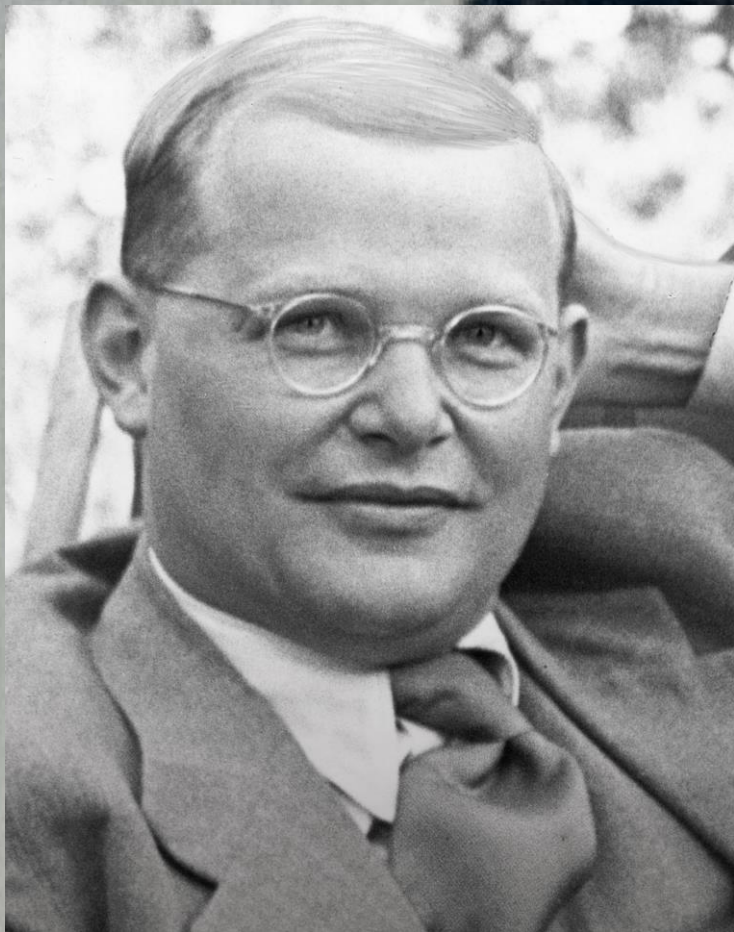
Believers have not always believed in
unlimited submission

- 
- 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



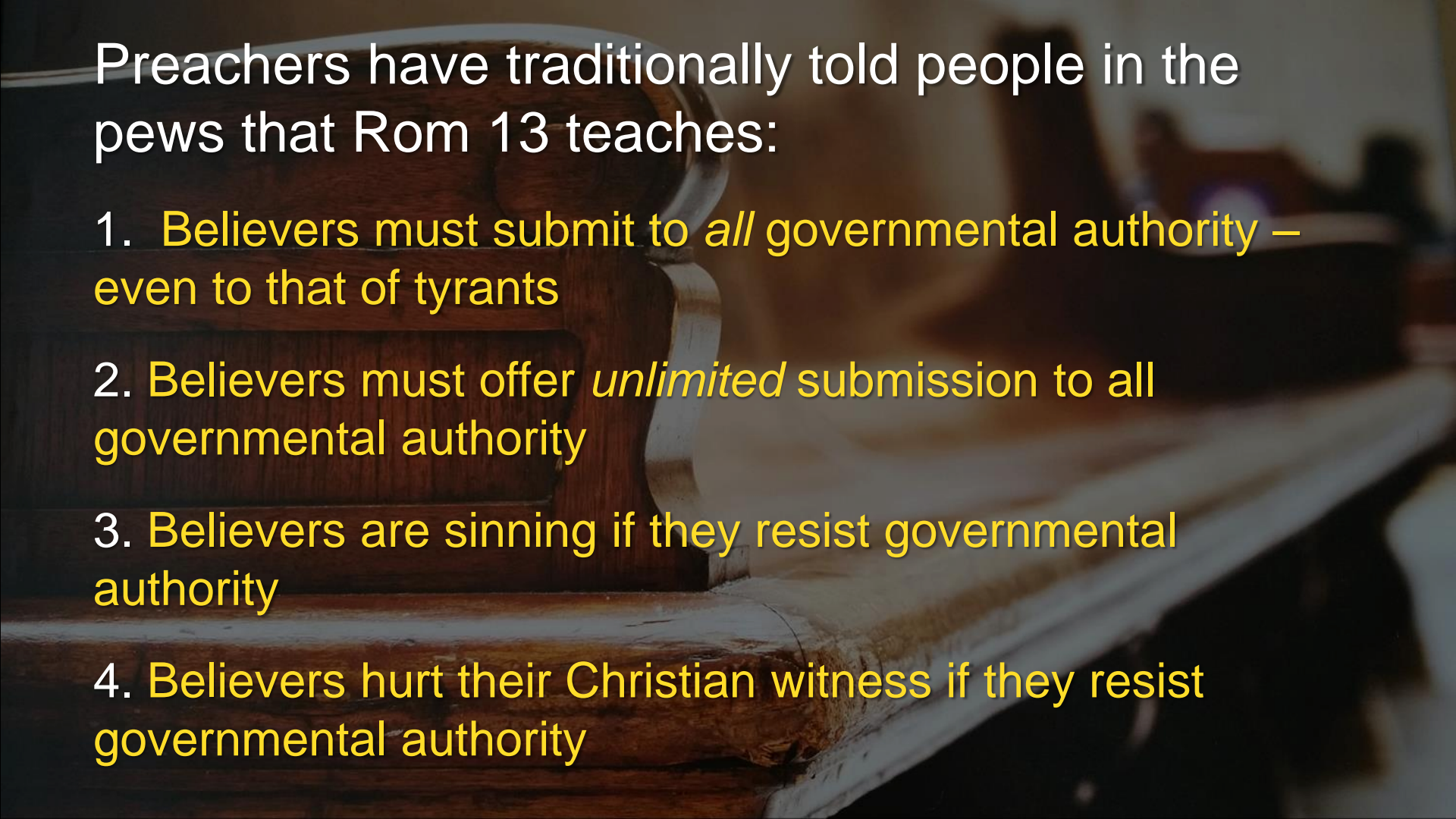






© Thomas Becker





Preachers have traditionally told people in the pews that Rom 13 teaches:

1. Believers must submit to *all* governmental authority – even to that of tyrants
2. Believers must offer *unlimited* submission to all governmental authority
3. Believers are sinning if they resist governmental authority
4. Believers hurt their Christian witness if they resist governmental authority



What did Paul *actually* say
about submission to government
in Rom 13?

1. Does Rom 13 teach that believers must submit to *all* governmental authority – even that of tyrants?



Some have stated:

“Paul wrote his letter to the Roman believers while Nero was Caesar and since Nero was a tyrant, Paul was teaching that believers must submit to tyrants.”

NOT THE WHOLE STORY!



Historical Facts:

- It is important to note that Paul wrote his letter to the Roman believers **7-8 years before** Nero became the tyrant we remember him to be – after Seneca, his close adviser, had retired (around 64 A.D.)



Historical Facts (con't.):

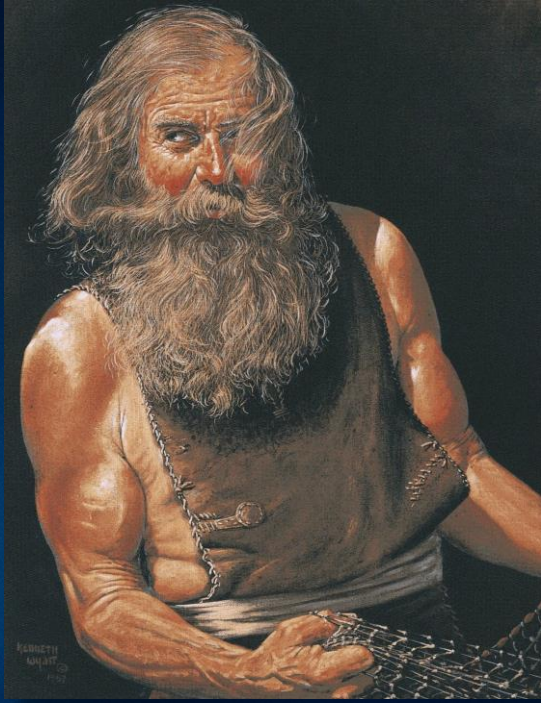
- Paul wrote Romans in 56-57 A.D. while he was in Corinth during his third missionary journey.
- Emperor Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome around 49-52 A.D., leaving only Gentiles
- Paul probably felt compelled to instruct the Gentile believers how to co-exist with Roman rule and to help the fledgling church there.

2. Does Paul differentiate between a tyranny and a proper government?

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. ⁴ 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**.

Rom 13 teaches that *proper* government, one worthy of a Christian's submission ...

- Acts as God's minister for good. (13:4)
- Avenges evil by executing wrath on evil doers. (13:3-4)
- Awards and protects those who do good. (13:3)



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

3. Must a believer offer unlimited submission to those in authority?

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

Other Scriptures besides Rom 13 that call for submission :

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 5:17 Paul teaches that the congregation give double honor those who preach & teach God's Word.

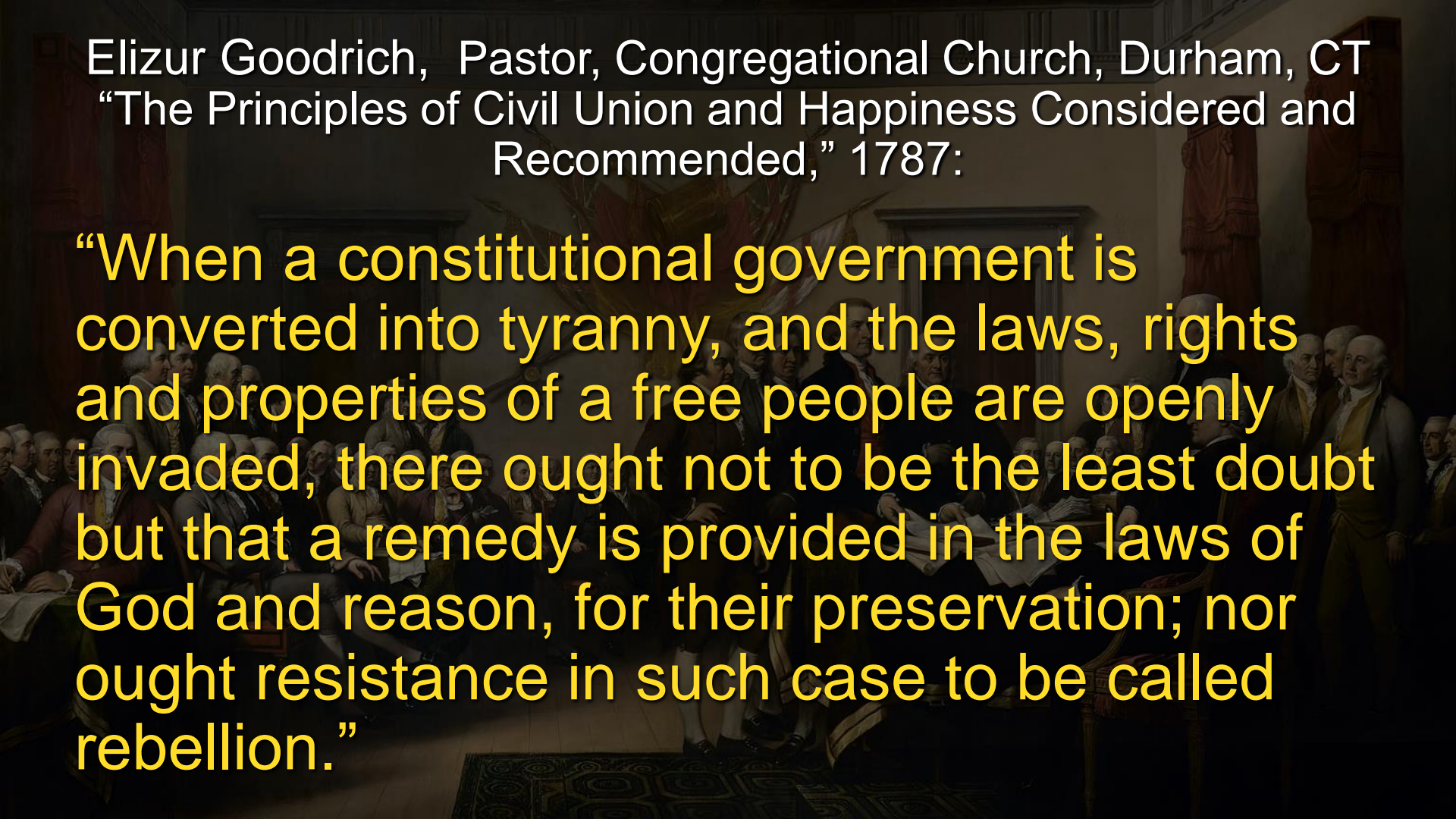
IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

“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.”



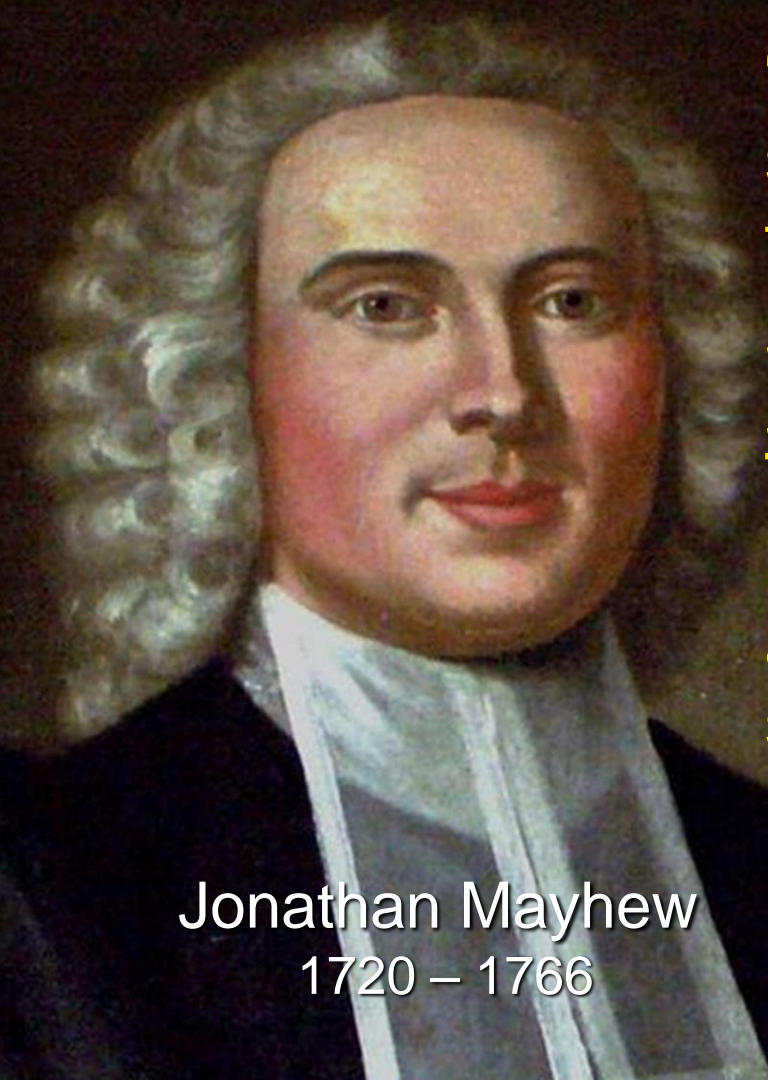
Alice M. Baldwin, PhD.
Historian, Duke University

“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.**”



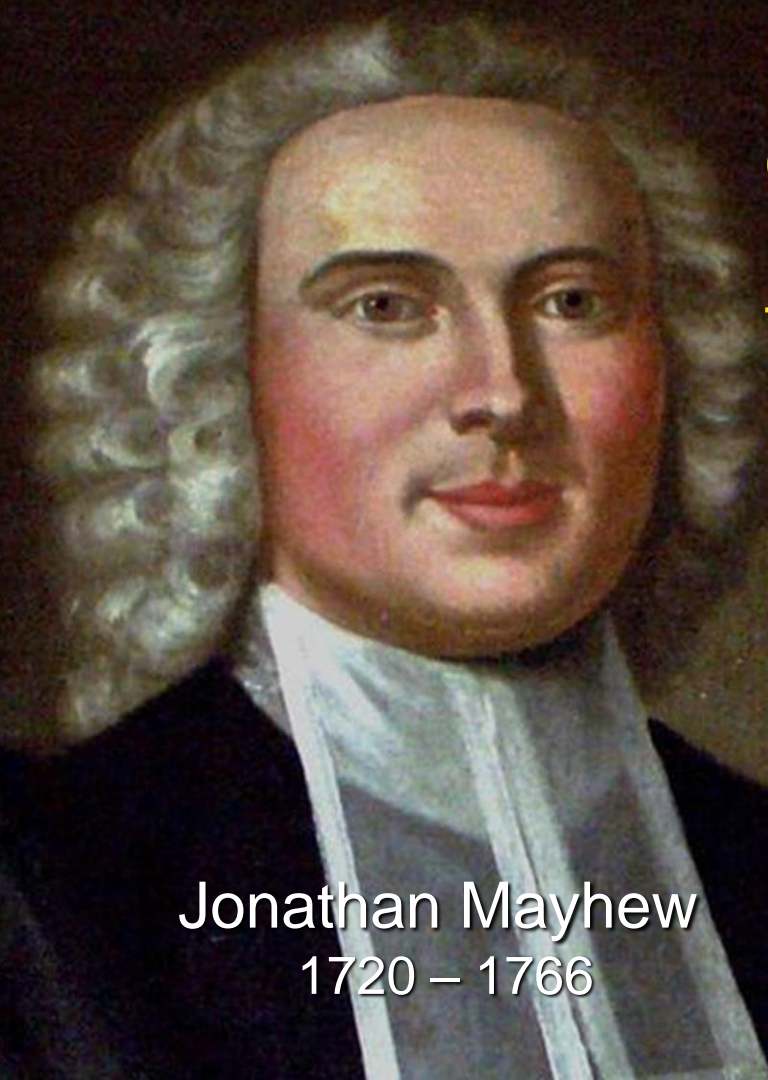
Elizur Goodrich, Pastor, Congregational Church, Durham, CT
“The Principles of Civil Union and Happiness Considered and
Recommended,” 1787:

“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.”



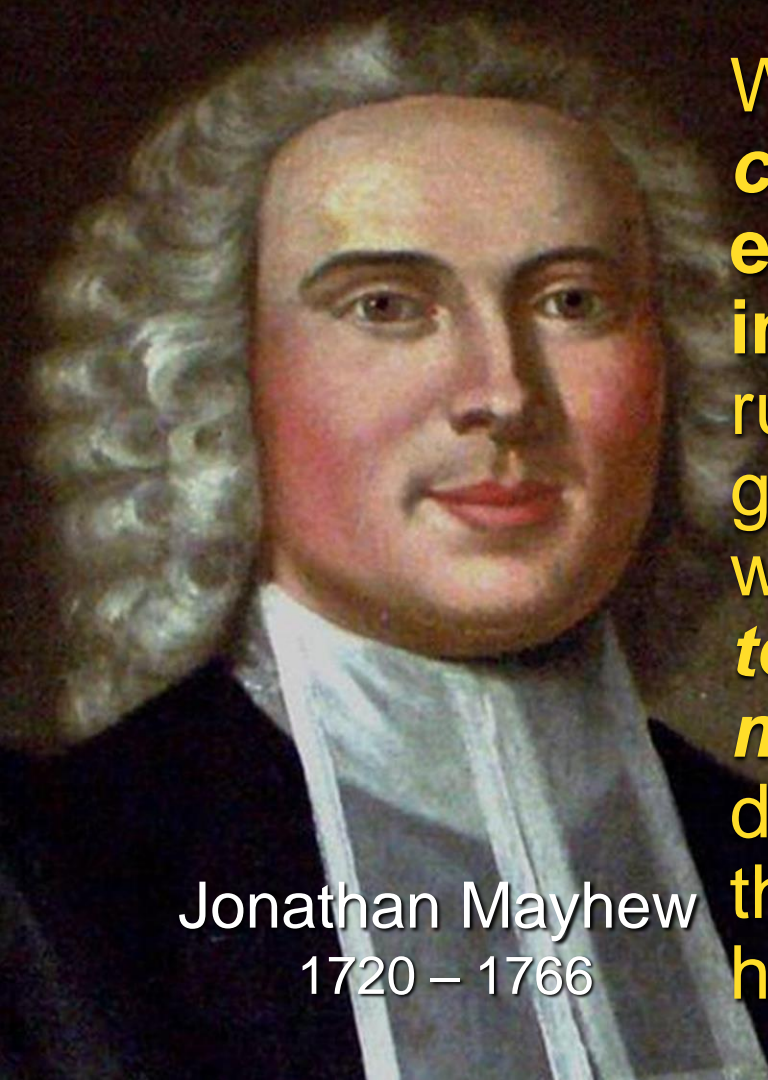
Jonathan Mayhew
1720 – 1766

“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 [for] the institution of civil government and the only rational ground of submission to it is ***the common safety and utility (effectiveness/helpfulness).***



...If therefore, in any case, the common safety and utility would **not** be promoted by submission to government, but the contrary, ***there is no ground or motive for obedience and submission, but for the contrary.***
(Romans 13:1-7)

Jonathan Mayhew
1720 – 1766



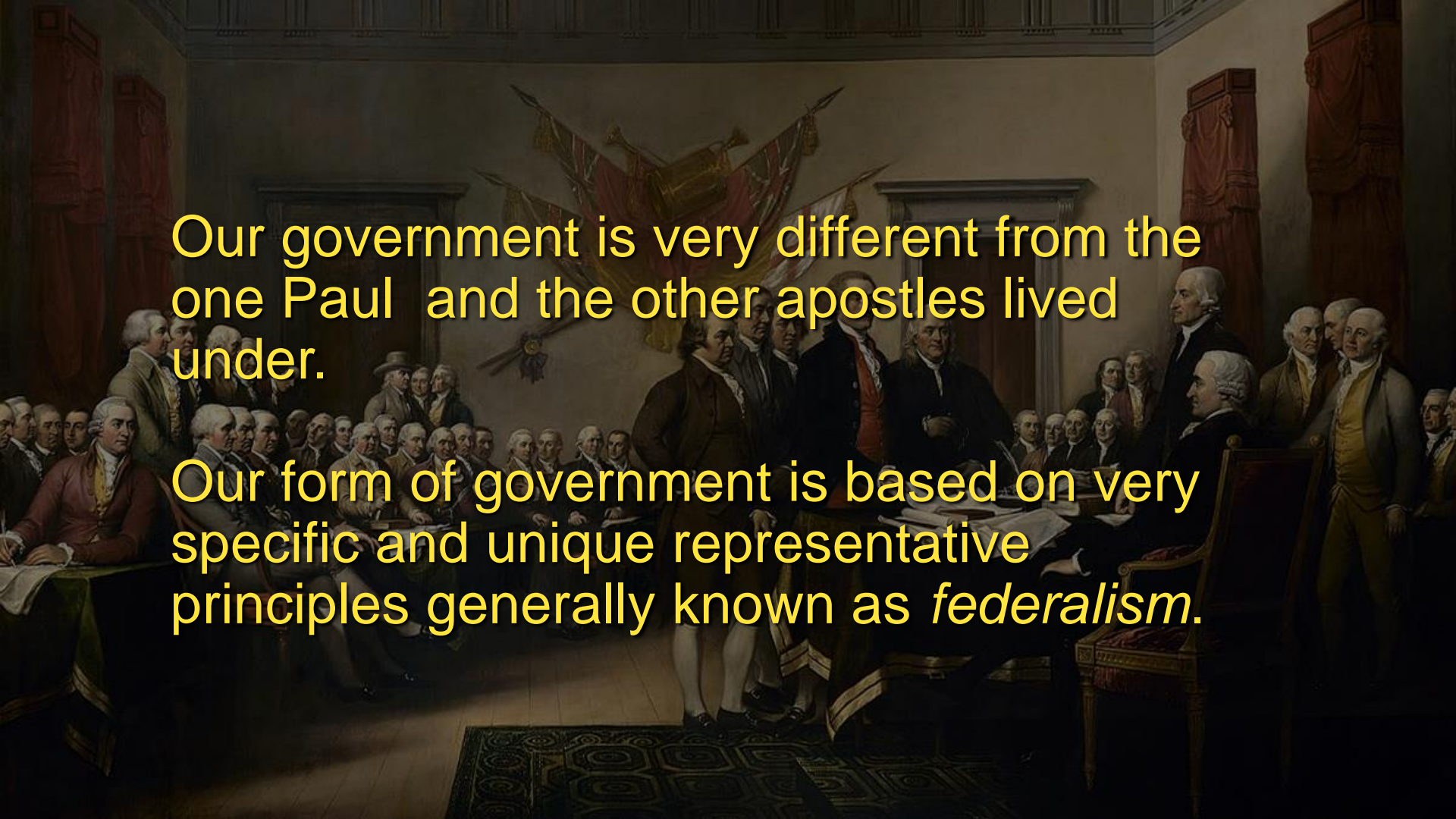
Jonathan Mayhew
1720 – 1766

When once magistrates **act contrary to their office, and the end (purpose) of their institution**; when they rob and ruin the public, instead of being guardians of its peace and welfare; they immediately **cease to be the ordinance and ministers of God**; and no more deserve that glorious character than common pirates and highwaymen.”

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)



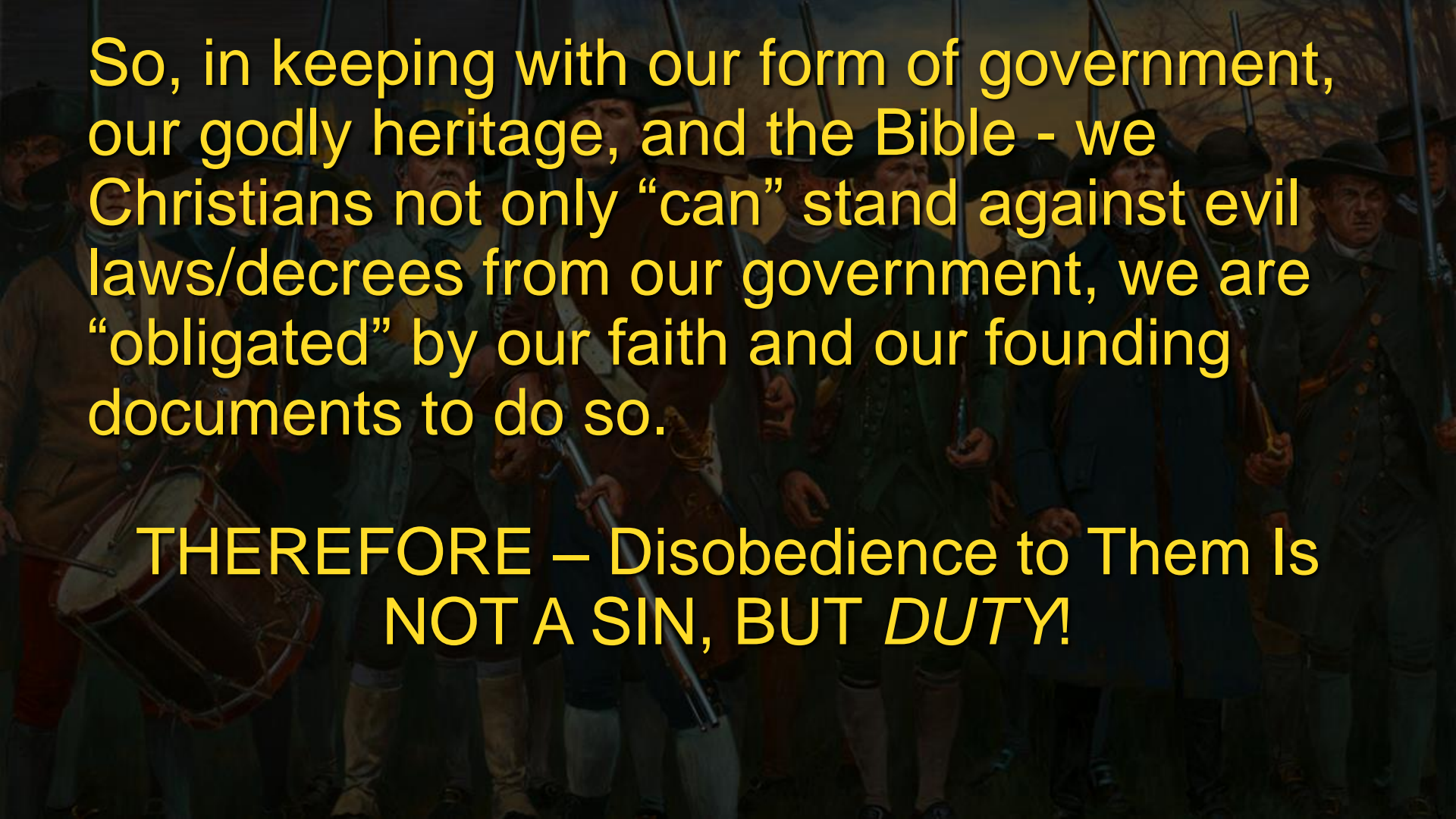
Our government is very different from the one Paul and the other apostles lived under.

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



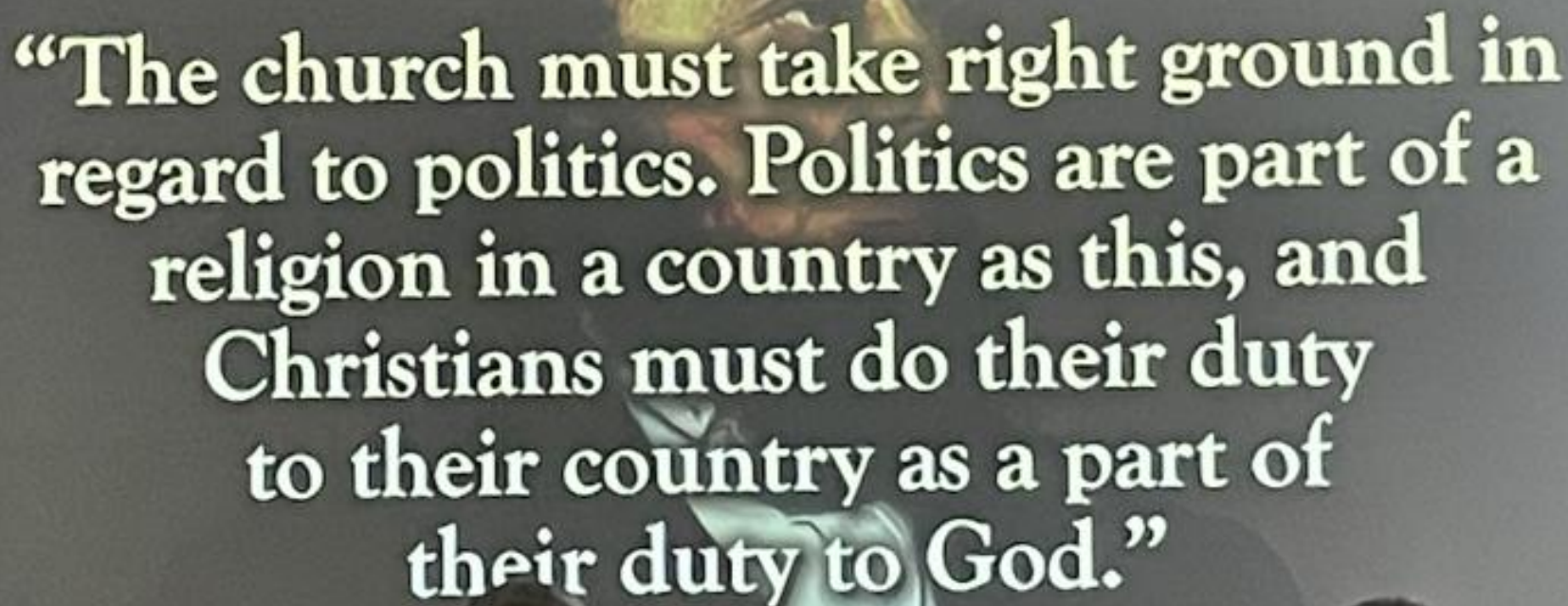
IN ESSENCE – “Federalism”:

- RIGHTS COME FROM GOD TO THE PEOPLE
- People Choose Their Governing Authorities
- The “Consent” of the Governed”
- Gov’t PROTECTS those Rights for Citizens
- Sovereign Political Power *in the People*
- Federal Gov’t – *Limited* Must obey Law!
- States Closest to People so more power.
- People have right & duty to remove tyrannical government.



So, in keeping with our form of government, our godly heritage, and the Bible - we Christians not only “can” stand against evil laws/decrees from our government, we are “obligated” by our faith and our founding documents to do so.

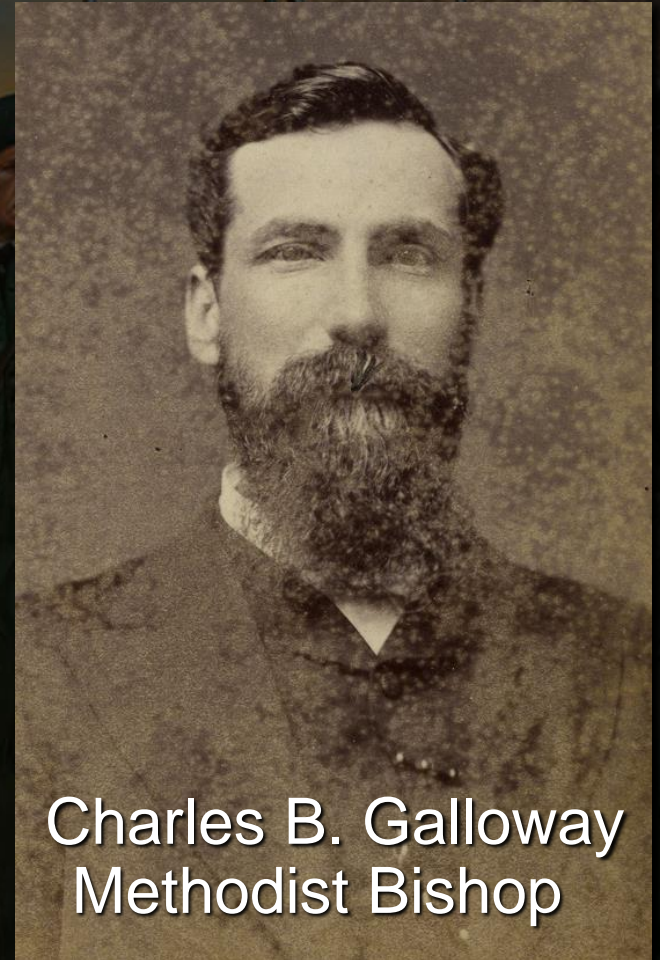
**THEREFORE – Disobedience to Them Is
NOT A SIN, BUT *DUTY!***

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is speaking at a podium. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid in a large, white, serif font with a slight drop shadow.

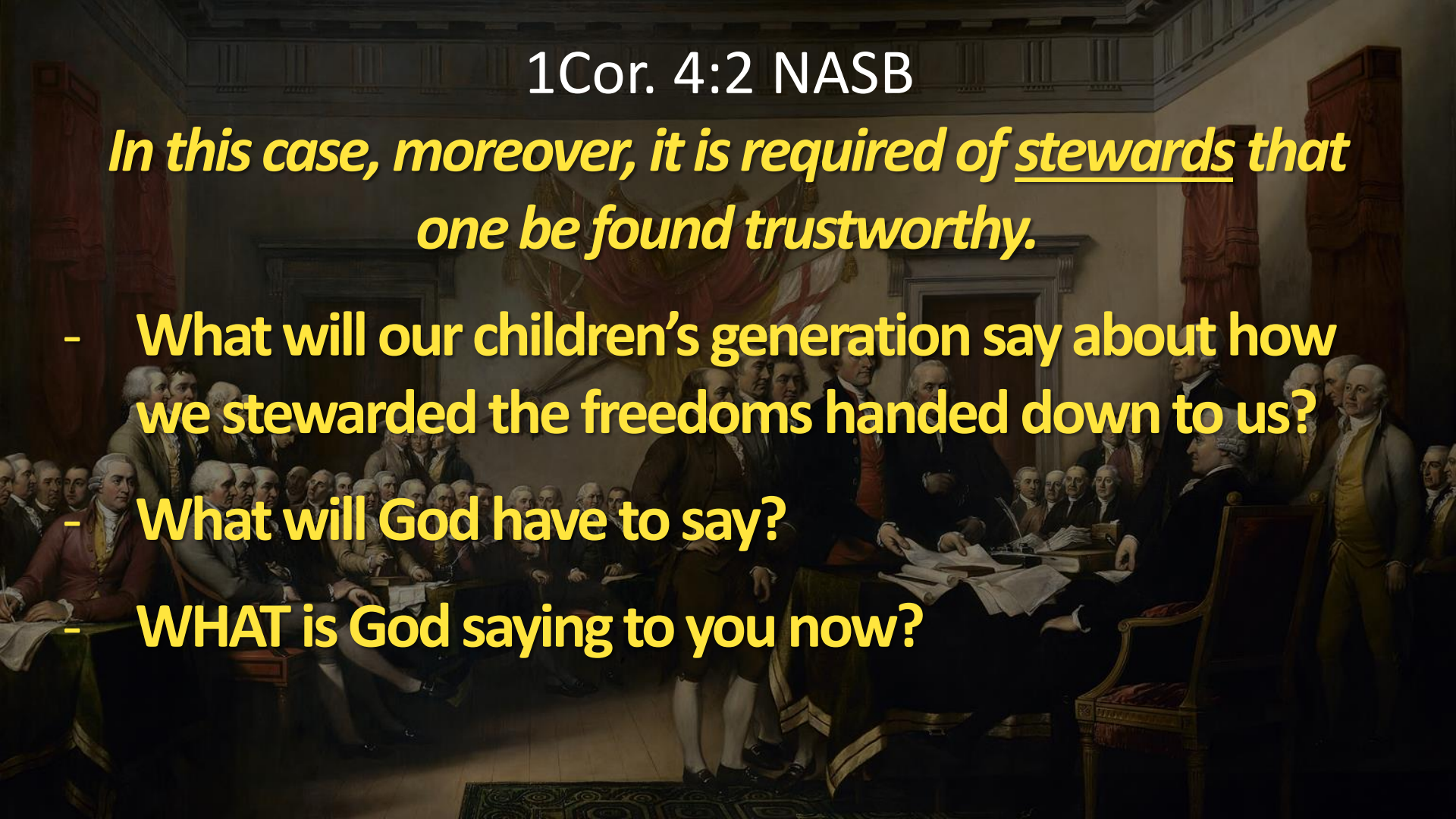
“The church must take right ground in regard to politics. Politics are part of a religion in a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to their country as a part of their duty to God.”

“Mighty men they were, of iron nerve and strong hand and unblanched cheek and heart of flame. God needed not reeds shaken by the wind, not men clothed in soft raiment; but heroes of hardihood and lofty courage to be the voice of a new kingdom crying in this Western wilderness.

March 1898 speech at Emory College in Oxford, GA



Charles B. Galloway
Methodist Bishop



1Cor. 4:2 NASB

In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

- What will our children's generation say about how we stewarded the freedoms handed down to us?
- What will God have to say?
- **WHAT** is God saying to you now?