



The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas



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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
We need to be reminded of Jesus' incomparable authority to rescue us from our sins and transform our lives as we look to Him.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK:
Thank You, dear God, for calling me to You in love. Please lead me to someone I can share Your love with today.

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

(Matthew 28:18 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", May 1, 2024)

Spring Series: Social Teachings of the Church

UNIT 2: Fulfilling Our Obligations to Family & Community

NEXT WEEK

Children: Gift and Model
Mark 9:36-37, 42; 10:13-15

Authority: Belonging to God **Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1, 6-8; 1 Peter 2:13-17**

Lesson Background and Introduction

The Gospel of Mark and the epistles of Romans and 1 Peter contain some of the sharpest statements in the New Testament about how Christ-followers should relate to their governments. These passages guide us as we walk out our duties to God and nation. Two aspects of first-century context are helpful for modern readers in this regard.

First, the intended audiences of these texts lived under the dominion of a foreign empire. The Roman emperor held total authority. He ruled locally through a structure of governors and other officials. Roman citizens possessed a few rights, but most of the emperor's subjects had minimal legal protections and no say in the political processes that affected them. Public objection toward ruling powers was considered seditious, and officials responded swiftly with overwhelming force. Consequently, the populace possessed few avenues for political or cultural change.

Second, the earliest Christians viewed spreading the gospel as their primary responsibility. Therefore, they avoided actions that might hinder their message. They discouraged behaviors that would dishonor the faith community in the eyes of unbelievers—the apostles aimed at discipleship, not political revolution.

Lesson Context: Mark

The Gospel of Mark contains a series of stories with a consistent structure: (1) Jesus' opponents pose a tricky or controversial question, hoping he will stumble in his response, but (2) Jesus gives a response that challenges, frustrates, or silences them.¹ The opponents aimed to trick Jesus, harm his reputation, and subvert his authority (12:13). These opponents came from religious sects like the Pharisees and Sadducees, as well as political groups like the Herodians. Conflicts between members of religious sects or philosophical schools were common in the ancient world.

Lesson Context: Romans

Paul wrote this letter to introduce himself to the followers of Christ in Rome. He explained the gospel message, corrected rumors, and addressed misconceptions regarding his character and message. One distortion of his teaching was that Paul encouraged his converts to "do evil" so that "good may come" (Romans 3:8). Paul provided examples of upright behavior in response (Romans 12-15).

Lesson Context: 1 Peter

The epistle of 1 Peter was most likely written from Rome in the early AD 60s. During this time, the evil Emperor Nero reigned (AD 53-68). Therefore, we detect a coded reference to the city of Rome as Peter greets his readers from the church "who is in Babylon"². The Babylonian empire brought about the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah (586 BC). In Jewish literature contemporary to 1 Peter, Babylon represented decadence, immorality, and opposition to God. Some Jews also used "Babylon" as a code name for Rome. The author of Revelation calls Rome "Babylon" too.

Peter addresses his letter to the "exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1). By using the term "exiles," Peter encourages Christ's followers to perceive themselves primarily as citizens of God's kingdom, even as he addresses the responsibility owed to their earthly government.

¹ Mark 2:18-22; 2:23-28; 3:1-6; 7:1-13; 11:27-33; 12:13-17; 12:18-27; 12:28-34

² 1 Peter 5:13; compare Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Entitlement of Authorities (Mark 12:17)

Entitlement of earthly authorities (17)

Entitled to not be rebelled against (Prov 24:21)

Entitled to be paid taxes (Matt 17:25-27)

Entitled to be respected (Rom 13:7)

Entitled to be honored (1 Peter 2:17)

Entitlement of God's authority (17)

To fulfill vows to God (Eccl 5:4-5)

To love God (Mark 12:30)

To offer body as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13)

To offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1)

To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God (Mic 6:8)

Tribute to Authorities (Rom 13:1, 6-8)

Source of authority (1)

Authorities are instituted by God (1 Peter 2:13-14)

Authorities are anointed by God (1 Sam 24:5-6)

Authorities are given power by God (Dan 5:18-19)

Debt to authority (6-7)

Debt of obedience (Eph 6:5)

Debt of submission (1 Peter 2:18)

Debt of honor (Eph 6:2)

Debt of respect (Lev 19:32)

Requirement of authority (8)

Requirement of not taking advantage (Deut 24:14)

Requirement of providing what was promised (Prov 3:27)

Requirement of the golden rule (Matt 7:12)

Requirement of loving one's neighbor (Gal 5:14)

Submission to Authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17)

Submit to obedience (13-15)

Obedience to show faith (Gen 22:9-12)

Obedience to witness (Acts 8:26-31)

Obedience regardless of prejudice (Acts 10:19-23)

Obedience to follow Jesus (Matt 9:9)

Submit to serving others (16)

Serve out of love (Gal 5:13)

Serve wholeheartedly (Eph 6:7)

Serve with the gifts God has provided (1 Peter 4:10)

Serving makes one great (Mark 10:43-44)

Serve by carrying other's burdens (Gal 6:2)

Submit to honoring others (17)

Honor by serving (Matt 20:26-28)

Honor by seeking other's interests (Phil 2:3-4)

Honor by giving honor that is due (Rom 13:7)

Honor by welcoming others with great joy (Phil 2:28-30)