

Resisting Tyrants

Understanding submission to government and resistance to tyranny.

Sermon Questions

1. In Acts 17:6–7, what was the charge against the disciples?

2. Every Christian affirms that there is a time when we must obey God rather than men. (Yes/No)
3. The men of Magdeburg resisted the Emperor who was seeking to undo the reformation. (Yes/No)
4. A number of important items help us understand the context...
 - i. Romans 12 ends discussing the _____ of God (see also 13:4).
 - ii. The civil authorities oftentimes saved _____ from the lawless mob.
 - iii. At this time, Nero was said to be an exemplar of _____ and moderate conduct.
 - iv. The text is _____. It directs the civil government to its duty.
5. The church is called to submit to the governing authorities. (Yes/No)
6. David is exemplary in that he lived in submission to _____ even while not obeying him.
7. We live in submission to the higher _____ rather than the higher officer.
8. Governing authorities are limited as to their _____ and to their _____.
9. List the four levels of injustice of a higher power articulated in the Magdeburg Confession:
 - i. When the higher powers are “not excessively atrocious,” we bear it but speak out.
 - ii. When the higher power is a _____ tyrant. God does not compel us to obey unlawful orders yet we can bear these if it only affects a few or can be tolerated without sin.
 - iii. When the higher power is a _____ tyrant. Lesser magistrates are duty-bound to interpose for the defense of the people.
 - iv. When the higher power is the _____ of God. Christian subjects are duty-bound to resist at all worldly costs.
10. The resistance of the Magdeburg pastors resulted in a great harvest for the gospel. (Yes/No)

Discussion/Meditation Questions

1. Why should we be thinking about resistance to tyrants?
2. What is the important role of the “lesser magistrates” in a society where the higher magistrates are acting as tyrants. How can we help these “lesser magistrates”?
3. What are the motivations for resistance? What are improper motivations?
4. How would you evaluate the injustice or overreach of the governing authorities today? What does our response look like?