

## **FOLLOW THE LEADER**

2 Chronicles 12:1 ... “Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel along with him.”

Solomon was a great leader of Israel; loved by his people and respected by his enemies. He rebuilt the temple and insisted that sacrifices and worshipping God resume. Israel prospered under Solomon's reign and God blessed Solomon. However, Rehoboam, who was Solomon's son and successor, oppressed his enemies and led the people away from God.

Romans 13:1 reminds us: “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities...” and in verse 7: “Render therefore to all their DUE: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs [are due], fear to whom fear [is due], honor to whom honor [is due].” These instructions are associated with what you owe someone for services provided.

At that time in history, “taxes” were tributes to foreign rulers and Israel was controlled by Roman authorities. “Customs” were fees for importing goods. “Fear” was respect for the OFFICE of governing authorities, even if the authorities themselves did not earn respect. “Honor” was for leaders who earned it. Your taxes to the Philippine government pay for police protection, roads, bridges, and medical assistance. Your respect for laws keep you out of jail. Rome oppressed Israel, but it also protected Israel from its enemies. Jews could import goods if they paid duties. They experienced peace if they obeyed laws. But Paul tells us that honor is required only for leaders who earn it – leaders who obey God and submit to God's authority and sovereignty.

Neither Christ nor Paul instruct us to support evil things our leaders might do. Israel earned God's wrath by supporting the evil Rehoboam. Our true leader is God. And, while it is possible to submit to fair and moral laws, pay our taxes and duties, and respect the government, we are cautioned not to honor leaders who dishonor God. Otherwise, we may earn the same curse that Israel did when it supported Rehoboam. Follow God. Follow Godly leaders. But do not become trapped in the curse that ungodly leaders bring upon themselves.

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