

“Honor the King”

SUBMISSION TO CIVIL AUTHORITY

Eric-Jon K. Marlowe

Eric-Jon K. Marlowe is an assistant professor of Religious Education at Brigham Young University–Hawaii.

The Apostle Peter proclaimed, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29; see also 4:19–20). Yet Peter also declared, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors” (1 Peter 2:13–14).¹ Obedience to God’s authority and submission to civil authority² may seem at odds here. Peter indicates, however, that submission to civil authority is “for the Lord’s sake” (2:13) and regards it as “the will of God”³ (2:15). Thus Peter attributes divine will to our submission to civil authority. As John Elliott explains, it is Peter’s reference to God’s will “that serves as our motivation to be subordinate [to civil authority], and doing what is right.”⁴ As reaffirmed in our dispensation, “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law” (Articles of Faith 1:12).

However, history is replete with inefficient, flawed, and even repressive governments. So why does the Lord generally command that we submit to such imperfect authority? In his first epistle, known as 1 Peter, Peter not only affirms submissiveness to civil authority, but also offers specific rationale for the Lord’s command. Peter’s directive regarding civil authority reads:

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake:
whether it be to the king, as supreme;

Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the
punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to
silence the ignorance of foolish men:

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness,
but as the servants of God.

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the
king. (1 Peter 2:13–17)

To better understand Peter's directive and its value, the context of 1 Peter will be discussed. Then Peter's specific rationale for submission to civil authority—protection, silencing false accusers, honoring others, and glorifying God—will be considered. Finally, civil involvement and civil disobedience will be discussed in response to Peter's command.

Context of 1 Peter

Peter had been taught firsthand by Jesus not to contend with the Roman demand that subjects serve as porters, but to “go with him twain [two miles]” (Matthew 5:38–44). Peter had also been instructed through his participation in the Savior's miraculous payment of taxes (Matthew 17:24–27), and observed Jesus' response, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's” (Matthew 22:15–21; see also Mark 12:13–17). After raising his sword against the unjust arrest of Jesus, Peter was restrained and then witnessed Jesus' submission to an unjust trial (see Matthew 26:51–68). It appears Peter was well acquainted with the Lord's desire that his followers comply with civil authority.

Decades later in Rome,⁵ Peter writes⁶ his first epistle to the church members in Asia Minor⁷ (1 Peter 1:1). An important purpose of this letter seems clear: to exhort its readers to stand fast in the face of persecution. Every chapter refers to some kind of suffering (see 1 Peter 1:6–7; 2:19–23; 3:14, 17–18; 4:1, 13–16, 19; 5:1, 9–10). The exact timing of this letter is unclear, but it was probably composed “in the early to mid [AD] 60s, after Peter came to Rome but before Nero began his violent attacks on believers.”⁸ Tradition indicates that Peter was martyred in Rome under Nero around AD 64–68.⁹ If this is the case, the timing of this letter predates the documented state-sponsored persecution of Christians in Asia Minor, and therefore suggests that the suffering Peter addresses is more likely social ostracism and general harassment.¹⁰ It is challenging to imagine Peter advocating such complete allegiance

to the emperor and governors, whose duty he describes as punishing evildoers and rewarding good (2:14), if such authority was the main cause of that unjust suffering.

Further supporting trials of social discrimination, most references to suffering in 1 Peter seem to deal with slander (false and damaging accusations, 2:12; 3:16), disassociation from others (4:3–4), or being reviled (abusive criticism, 4:14; 4:16).¹¹ Of this suffering, Mark Allan Powell suggests:

The root cause of this abuse seems to be caught up with the letter’s identification of its readers as “aliens and exiles” (2:11; see also 1:1, 17). Their conversion to Christ has led them to cut off ties with former associations, and so they have come to be regarded as social misfits or deviants (4:3–4). They may have been viewed as impious, for refusing to give the [Roman] gods their due, as unpatriotic for neglecting to worship the emperor, and as antisocial for avoiding the various rites and festivities that constituted social life in a pagan world.¹²

To be clear, whatever the cause of their suffering, Peter describes it as a “fiery trial” (1 Peter 4:12). And though Rome may not have been the primary cause of their suffering at the time of Peter’s first letter, Rome had no particular regard for Christians.¹³ It is therefore under the probability of an indifferent government, significant social persecution, and the possibility of Peter’s awareness of even greater tribulations to come,¹⁴ that his direction and rationale to church members regarding their relationship to the state will be considered (2:13–17).

Submission to Civil Authority Provides Protection and Order

Referencing 1 Peter 2:13–17, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “In Peter’s day, and in ours, the saints are subject to two wholly separate and independent systems of direction—the Church . . . and the state which governs in civil affairs. And experience gained through conformity to both systems of government is *essential* to the perfecting of the human soul.”¹⁵ Elder McConkie also stated that man’s submission to the “laws of the land in which he lives” is “an *essential* part of working out his salvation.”¹⁶ And Elder James E. Talmage declared, “Governments are *essential* to human existence . . . and His people are in duty bound to sustain them.”¹⁷ So what makes civil authority, these institutions “of men” (2:13), essential to God’s plan?

Peter describes that the king (emperor) and governors' purpose is "for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:14). Rather than its organizational arrangement, Peter extols Roman authority because it punishes delinquents and protects the compliant. In this light, Peter may be understood as saying that civil authority, though a human institution, is to be obeyed because the protection and order it provides is God's will.

Though governments are imperfect and often deficient, the absence of government order is almost always worse. This is a basic argument of such philosophers as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.¹⁸ Without government to restrain people's actions, we would continually be in a state of threat and confusion. Where there are no property rights, no limits on crime, and no restrictions to physical harm, if someone is strong enough (either individually or as a group), they can, without any restraint, remove your agency, pilfer your property, enslave you, or even take your life. The absence of government is not a state of freedom, but rather a state of anarchy and oppression. Almost any form of government is preferable to such conditions.

Elder N. Eldon Tanner quoted the following statement: "In reality the man who defies or flouts the law is like the proverbial fool who saws away the plank on which he sits, and a disrespect or disregard for law is always the first sign of a disintegrating society. Respect for law is the most fundamental of all social virtues, for the alternative to the rule of law is that of violence and anarchy."¹⁹ Consider the descriptions of Ether and Mormon as their people were in the throes of spiraling destruction. Ether explained, "All the people upon the face of the land were shedding blood, and there was none to restrain them" (Ether 13:31). And Mormon exclaimed, "O the depravity of my people! They are without order . . . and I cannot any longer enforce my commands" (Moroni 9:18). As the historian Horneius put it, "Tyranny harasses many, but anarchy overwhelms the whole state."²⁰ In general, if respect for authority is abandoned, subordination goes with it, and then anarchy and devastation take their place.

In a way, civil authority serves as a check on individual free will. Essentially we set aside our unrestrained individual interest and concede power to others (i.e., civil authority) who enforce and secure for us a degree of protection and order. Elder James E. Faust taught, "We are individuals, but we live in families and communities where order provides a system of harmony that hinges on obedience to principles."²¹ A key role of government is to essentially limit individual behavior that harms others.

Finally, it is hard to cultivate human virtues under the constant whimsical threat of someone with a bigger stick. To the degree that governments eliminate

or at least reduce such a threat, we are better able to plan, control, and determine the course of our lives.

Submission to Civil Authority Silences False Accusers

Early Christian communities were viewed with suspicion and distrust. Of these rumors, Bible scholar Bart Ehrman explained, “If you can imagine the worst you won’t be far off the mark. Christians were thought to meet under the cloak of darkness in order to hide their despicable deeds from the world.”²² Thus, as Terry Ball explains, “Peter was anxious for the Saints to understand that they should live above reproach and thereby give no justification to those looking for excuse to persecute them. He urged the Saints to be honest, law abiding, and obedient to governing entities (see 1 Peter 2:12–14; 4:15). . . . He promises them that with such ‘well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men’ (see 1 Peter 2:15).”²³ Submission to civil authority was then, as it is today, a clear demonstration that our faith is not a threat to social order and that any rumors to the contrary are simply not true.

Members’ disregard for civil authority is often seen by those who oppose or persecute the church as justification for their unkindness. Referring to Peter’s day (1 Peter 2:13–17), Elder Talmage explained that acts of defiance and indiscretion by church members “furnish excuse, if not reason, for the assaults of persecutors, who . . . denounced [church members] as law-breakers and workers of sedition. Even half-hearted submission [by members] to the civil powers would have been unwise at least, in view of the disfavor with which the Church had come to be regarded by pagan contemporaries.”²⁴ Often it only takes the disregard of a few members for those who are opposed to the church to feel justified in oppressing the entire church. What’s more, members’ disregard for civil authority can even strengthen the resolve of those who oppose the church.

Speaking collectively of church members in our day, Elder Talmage stated that if they would abide by the law they should be “confident that when the true story of their rise and progress as an established body of religious worshipers is fully known, the loyalty of the Church and the patriotic devotion of its members will be vindicated and extolled by the world in general.”²⁵ Ultimately our lives of “well doing” (1 Peter 2:15) and “good works” (2:12) coupled with loyalty to civil authority (2:13–14) will speak louder than any ignorant or false accusations, as well as help avoid the undue antagonism of others.

Particularly in locations where the church is not well established, Peter’s prescription that we submit to civil authority is still one of our best means of silencing

false accusations and alleviating others' fears born of ignorance (1 Peter 2:15). In this light, Peter teaches that our conduct, which includes our submission to civil authority, is also a means of defending the gospel. By submitting ourselves to civil authority, we debunk slander and secure for ourselves an honorable reputation. Essentially, our actions will often speak louder than their words.

Submission to Civil Authority Honors Others

Beyond basic protection and silencing false accusations, Peter connects submission to civil authority with honoring “all men” (1 Peter 2:17). We honor and show respect for others by abiding by laws that preserve their rights as well as our own. In a sense it is the Golden Rule (see Matthew 7:12). If I expect certain protections and rights under the law, I must honor the same protections and rights of others by obeying that law. This is well illustrated in the eleventh Article of Faith: We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God and show honor to others by allowing them the same privilege, even when we strongly disagree.

Connected to honoring others by submission to the law, Peter warns us against using our fidelity to God as an excuse not to submit to civil authority. Peter acknowledges that we are “free,” but that such liberty should not be a “cloak of maliciousness”—a cover-up to less-than-kind treatment of our neighbor (1 Peter 2:16). Commenting on verse 16, Ramsey Michaels explains:

No matter what the provocation, [Christians, “servants of God” (2:16)] must not lose respect for their fellow citizens or forget the common humanity they all share (see 2:13). The kind of freedom the Christians possessed (i.e., spiritual freedom, new life in Christ) was obviously not something that could be used in Roman society at large as “an excuse to cause trouble” or as a justification for antisocial behavior, but it could be so used *among Christians themselves*. Peter’s urgent plea is that his readers never exploit their newly won freedom in this way, deceiving themselves and each other.²⁶

Similarly, Elder Talmage explains Peter’s caution this way: “The saints rejoiced in their testimony of the truth . . . the truth that was to make them free—and it would have been easy for them to regard all others as inferior to themselves, and to rebel against all authority of man in favor of their allegiance to a higher power. There was constant danger that their zeal would lead them to acts of indiscretion.”²⁷

Membership in the Lord’s church does not afford us “emancipation from moral restraint.”²⁸ We honor others by honoring the law that preserves their basic rights as well as our own. We may be right and have eternal truth on our side, but Peter is clear that it does not afford us the right to defy civil authority or do harm to others.

Submission to Civil Authority Glorifies God

In verse 12 of chapter 2,²⁹ Peter teaches his readers that “by [their] good works,” the Gentiles may “glorify God.” It is in this context (2:12) that he teaches submission to civil authority (2:13–17). Simply stated, our compliance to civil authority sets forth an example that can bring glory to God.

Considering the influence of church members within their own countries, Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander said, “Even though the Church is to ‘stand independent above all other creatures’ (D&C 78:14), it still must work within the context of law, respect for the society in which it operates, and fidelity to the principles that distinguish it as a religious society. Neither representatives of the Church, nor its members, can [flout] the law and hope to be known as peacemakers or be considered as a valuable, influential, and respected part of society.”³⁰

Elder Lance B. Wickman said that the “credibility” we gain by honoring the law is “the gateway through which the Church must pass in order to preach the gospel with vigor in any nation.”³¹ One example of this was the church’s desire to have LDS missionaries serve in communist East Germany. President Thomas S. Monson shared that in a meeting with government deputies the nation’s chairman Erich Honecker said to him, “We know members of your Church believe in work; you’ve proven that. We know you believe in the family; you’ve demonstrated that. We know you are good citizens in whatever country you claim as home; we have observed that. The floor is yours. Make your desires known.” After President Monson made his request for missionaries, Chairman Honecker concluded, “We know you. We trust you. We have had experience with you. Your missionary request is approved.”³²

To some degree, our submission to civil authority allows our salt to be savored, and our light to shine (Matthew 5:13–16). Elder L. Tom Perry explained, “in a world of many nations and various laws. . . . as we spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the earth . . . we must respect the governments of each nation we enter. Truly, we believe in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law of each land.”³³

Civil Involvement

Some may argue that Peter’s teaching of submissiveness to civil authority only perpetuates the status quo. However, Peter’s apparent silence on engaging and

petitioning civil authority should not be interpreted as a declaration of inaction. Peter does tell his readers to be ready to give a defense of the gospel when the occasion presents itself (1 Peter 3:15–16). He also tells them they must show that they are different in a positive way, not just that they no longer practice aspects of pagan life that their neighbors still find appealing (4:3–4).

As members of the church, we are encouraged to participate in political and governmental affairs.³⁴ Elder L. Tom Perry has said, “As Church members, we live under the banner of many different flags. . . . In those countries that allow us the right to participate in the affairs of government, we should use our free agency and be actively engaged in supporting and defending the principles of truth, right, and freedom.”³⁵ President Gordon B. Hinckley succinctly said, “we desperately need moral men and women who stand on principle, to be involved in the political process. Otherwise, we abdicate power to those whose designs are almost entirely selfish.”³⁶

Clearly we seek to make our conditions better. However, we recognize that we live in common societies and therefore seek to do so within compliance of the law. Elder N. Eldon Tanner explained, “There are many who question the constitutionality of certain acts passed by their respective governments . . . and they feel to defy and disobey the law. Abraham Lincoln once observed: ‘Bad laws, if they exist, should be repealed as soon as possible; still, while they continue in force, they should be religiously observed.’ This is the attitude of the Church in regard to law observance.”³⁷ We can and should seek needed change, but we cannot disregard the society in which we live by dismissing civil authority in the process.

Civil Disobedience

Using Peter and others as an example, Bruce R. McConkie stated:

Obviously . . . situations can arise in which civil power can command an act which so sets at naught the Lord’s decrees as to require his saints to follow his law rather than the lesser worldly requirement. When commanded to preach no more in the name of Christ, Peter and John replied: “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:13–21). Similarly, Daniel continued to worship the true God, though the law prohibited prayer to any but Darius (Daniel 6), and the three Hebrew captives [Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego] continued their proper worship though their rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar’s law meant the fiery furnace for them. (Daniel 3)³⁸

Though there have been exceptions, the bar for any exception seems high. Just because laws may be unjust is not reason enough to renounce civil authority. Peter instructed his readers that “when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God” (1 Peter 2:20). And Peter adds that no Christian should provoke suffering from civil authority by breaking the law: “Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God” (4:14–16; emphasis added). Even when we do what we can within the law to improve civil authority, compliance with the command that we submit to such authority can result in our suffering under unjust laws. Elder Talmage explained, “Pending the overruling by Providence in favor of religious liberty, it is the duty of the saints to submit themselves to the laws of their country. . . . The saints have practically demonstrated their acceptance of the doctrine that it is better to suffer evil than to do wrong by purely human opposition to unjust authority.”³⁹

Furthermore, the Lord explained that “when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work . . . and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings” (D&C 124:49). President Anthony W. Ivins explained that this verse “reveals to us this great truth, that God does not require at the hands of men the accomplishment of that which is impossible—not impossible to him, but impossible to them. . . . whether it applies to any other [commands] given of the Lord, and which the Church has conscientiously endeavored to carry out and been prevented from doing so by the enactment of civil law which would bring us into direct conflict with the government under which we live—the Lord holds that [command] in abeyance [temporary suspension].”⁴⁰ This is not an excuse, but rather the Lord’s acknowledgement of our genuine effort, hindered only by civil authority, and affirmation of the importance of abiding by civil law.

Conclusion

Peter clearly supports and gives rationale to our submission to civil authority, but urging subordination is not a call to supernal loyalty or worship. God is sovereign, and Peter appears to use a chiasmus in verse 17 of chapter 2 to emphasize this.

- A. Honour all men.
 - B. Love the brotherhood.
 - B. Fear [revere] God.
- A. Honour the king.

Ramsey Michaels explains,

The double use of “respect”[“honour” in the KJV] at the beginning and end of the sequence, and the placement of the “brotherhood” and “God” side by side in the center gives the whole maxim a chiasmic (a-b-b-a) quality, with the obligations of Christian believers to God and each other framed by their secondary obligations to fellow citizens (including enemies), and to civil rulers. It is the secondary obligations that Peter emphasizes by this arrangement but precisely with the reminder that they *are* secondary.⁴¹

In the centuries that follow, Peter’s contrast between honor for the emperor and fear/reverence for God is held up by Christian martyrs—God alone is to be feared (see Acts 5:29).⁴²

It is important to note that Peter does not deal with how we create a civil society that is more just. Issues of governance can be very complex, and questions of optimal balance between liberty and order, organizational structure, reach, distribution of power, and so forth, have not been addressed here. Instead, attention has been given to Peter’s rationale for civil authority with the intent that we better understand, and thus are better enabled to properly abide by this directive. Some discontent with civil authority seems inevitable; seldom do we always get what we want. But we need government, and giving up some rights and choosing to abide by civil authority will inevitably be a necessary aspect of peace in diverse societies.

As in Peter’s time, latter-day revelation requires our prudent allegiance to civil authority. President David O. McKay taught that “three significant words used in the twelfth Article of Faith express the proper attitude of the membership of the Church toward law. These words are—obey, honor and sustain. . . . We obey law from a sense of right. We honor law because of its necessity and strength to society. We sustain law by keeping it in good repute.”⁴³ Finally, the Lord has said, “Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet” (D&C 58:21–22).

Notes

1. The Savior certainly alluded to abiding by the law of the land (see Matthew 5:38–44; 17:24–27; 22:15–21), and Paul also declared submission to civil authority (Romans

13:1–7, Timothy 2:1–3; Titus 3:1–3, 8). However, as John H. Elliott explains, 1 Peter 2:13–17 is a clear break from Romans 13:1–7. Peter makes no assertion that civil authorities are “servants” of God representing his authority. Peter’s conception of the functions of civil authority is a simple utilitarian one, devoid of divine warrant. Peter’s point is not to discourage resistance to authorities established by God, as appears to be the case in Romans 13:2, but to encourage doing what is right as a sign of subordination to God’s will and a means to silence detractors. See John H. Elliott, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 493–94.

2. Civil authority (i.e., civil government) here means the person(s) who exercise administrative control over civilian affairs and enforce law and order.

3. Note the phrase “For so is the will of God” in verse 15 may refer to what precedes it in verses 13–14, or it may also refer to what follows—that their good behavior silences the ignorant.

4. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 493. Referring to “for the Lord’s sake” (v. 13), Elliott further explains, “The phrase provides the motivation for the imperative” (489). Similarly, Ramsey Michaels explains, “Peter requires cooperation and compliance not because the state requires it, but ‘for the sake of the Lord.’” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 124.

5. Most scholars accept that “Babylon” in 1 Peter 5:13 refers to Rome. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 131–34.

6. In this chapter, the assumption will be that Peter himself, or a secretary/scribe, wrote this epistle. However, there are three general theories of authorship for 1 Peter: (1) it was written by Peter, (2) Peter dictated or conceived the substance of the letter which was written by a secretary/scribe (perhaps Silvanus, see 1 Peter 5:12), or (3) it was pseudonymously written in Peter’s name and authority. See Elliott, *1 Peter*, 118–30. John Gee offers support for Peter as author: “Modern scholars have ‘arbitrarily’ tended to reject Peter as author of the epistle. Historically though, 1 Peter was almost always seen as written by the chief Apostle, Peter. The early Christian author Eusebius cited it as undoubtedly genuine. The epistle was used extensively by Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and others. Eusebius traced the influence back to Polycarp’s use. Presumably Polycarp would not have done this if he had not believed that 1 Peter was authentic, and since he lived only a few years after the letter was written, he was in a good position to know what its origin was.” John Gee, “James, First and Second Peter, and Jude: Epistles of Persecution,” in *Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles: From the Day of Pentecost to the Apocalypse*, ed. Thomas A. Wayment and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 180–82.

7. Modern-day Turkey.

8. Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009) 463–77. John Gee explains a broader window of when this letter could have been written: “An early church tradition has Peter slain at the hands of Nero in Rome, about AD 65. Thus there is about a fifteen-year time period in which the epistle could have been written.” Gee, “James, First and Second Peter, and Jude,” 180–82. Other scholars, considering 1 Peter to be written pseudonymously, believe it was written near the end of the first century. Bart D. Ehrman,

The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 434–36. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 134–38.

9. Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, 463–77.

10. Mark Allan Powell explains, “In recent years, however, most scholars have become convinced that the variety of suffering being addressed in 1 Peter is social ostracism and general harassment rather than government-run persecution of the church. As far as we know, Christians in Asia Minor did not endure state-sponsored persecution until the second century. This letter, furthermore, never mentions persecution *per se*; rather, it speaks of suffering as a common experience that should be regarded as the expected lot of anyone who is a Christian (4:12), anywhere in the world (5:9).” Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, 463–77.

11. Peter also indicates, at least in the case of some Christian slaves, physical violence (2:19).

12. Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, 463–77. David Horrell further explains Peter’s addressees suffering this way: “One of the things that would have particularly aroused the hostility of their non-Christian neighbours was the Christians’ exclusive devotion to the worship of their God alone, and their refusal to honour the various deities of the Greek and Roman pantheon. Since worshipping the gods was thought to be vital to keeping the peace, and to keeping natural and economic disasters at bay, those who refused to do this could be held responsible for bad things that occurred. Moreover, by withdrawing from such religious and social participation, and meeting in what was held to be a secretive and mysterious manner, Christians were felt to be an ‘anti-social’ people, who—as the Roman historian Tacitus puts it—became known for their ‘hatred of the human race.’” David G. Horrell, *1 Peter* (New York: Continuum International, 2008), 55.

13. Ehrman explains that Rome seemed more focused on order than justice: “The provincial [Roman] governors had two main responsibilities: to keep the peace and to collect the taxes. [This was done by] . . . employing whatever means necessary to maintain public order and maximize revenue collection.” Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 428. Charles Bigg further explains, “Roman law made no sharp distinction between ‘immoral’ and ‘criminal.’ The governour was father as well as magistrate, and his power extended to every action that was *contra bonos mores* [against good morals].” Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 2nd ed., *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 140.

14. Referring to the fifty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, Terry Ball explained, “Today we know that the Lord and His prophet were trying to prepare the Saints for the Jackson County persecutions. In the same way, the First Epistle of Peter seems to be trying to prepare the early Saints for the terrible persecutions that they would soon face. For example, in July of AD 64, Nero set fire to Rome and then to absolve himself blamed the Christians for the act. The historian Tacitus described the ruthless persecution that followed.” Terry B. Ball, “Peter’s Principles: An Approach to the First Epistle of Peter,” in *Go Ye into All the World: Messages of the New Testament Apostles* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 220–29.

15. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 3:299.

16. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:297.

17. James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915), 381; emphasis added.
18. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651); John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, (1690); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (1762).
19. N. Eldon Tanner, in Conference Report, October 1975, quoting *Case and Comment*, March/April 1965, 20.
20. David Brown, Andrew Robert Fausset, and Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary: Critical, Practical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Toledo, OH: Jerome B. Names, 1884), 420. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb> <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.pdf> <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.xxi.iii.html>.
21. James E. Faust, “Obedience: The Path to Freedom,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 45.
22. Ehrman, 429, see also n. 11.
23. Ball, “Peter’s Principles: An Approach to the First Epistle of Peter,” 220–29.
24. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 381.
25. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 374.
26. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 129.
27. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 381.
28. Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 141.
29. In 1 Peter 2:11–12, Peter shifts his message toward the conduct of Christians living in communities where they are falsely accused and subject to suffering. Peter aptly provides his readers instruction on how to act civilly (2:13–17) and domestically (2:18–3:12) in ways that will help disprove and silence slanderous accusations, manifest their honorable character, and demonstrate their fidelity to God. Elliott, *The Anchor Bible*, 484–85.
30. Dennis B. Neuenschwander, *Bridges: Alumni Magazine* (Provo, UT: BYU Kennedy Center for International Studies), Spring 2011, 20–27.
31. Lance B. Wickman, as quoted in Aaron Shill, “Relationships Key to Building Credibility Abroad,” *Deseret News*, April 8, 2008. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “Wherever we go, we go in the front door. Our representatives honor the laws of the nations to which they go and teach the people to be good citizens.” “Gordon B. Hinckley’s speech at the National Press Club,” *Deseret News*, March 27, 2000.
32. Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, April 1989, 69.
33. L. Tom Perry, “The Doctrines and Principles Contained in the Articles of Faith,” *Ensign*, November 2013, 48.
34. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, “As citizens, Church members are encouraged to participate in political and governmental affairs, including involvement in the political party of their choice. Members are also urged to be actively engaged in worthy causes to improve their communities and make them wholesome places in which to live and rear families” (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 21.1.29.
35. L. Tom Perry, in Conference Report, October 1987, 87.
36. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Stand a Little Taller* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 15. Similarly, Elder M. Russell Ballard declared, “Remember Edmund Burke’s statement: ‘The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.’ We need to raise our voices with other concerned citizens throughout the world in opposition to current trends.” In Conference Report, October 2003, 17.

37. N. Eldon Tanner, in Conference Report, October 1975, 126.
38. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 437.
39. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 383.
40. Anthony W. Ivins, in Conference Report, October 1929, 97; “abeyance” means a state of temporary disuse or suspension.
41. Michaels, *1 Peter*, 123. See also Elliott, *1 Peter*, 497.
42. Elliott, *1 Peter*, 501.
43. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, April 1937, 27–28, as cited in *Latter-day Prophets and the United States Constitution*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1991), 118.