



'RENDER UNTO CAESER'

**CHRISTIAN PLURAL MARRIAGE
AND
THE LAWS OF THE LAND**

One of the most common arguments against Christian Plural Marriage deals specifically with the relationship of the Christian and submission to government authority. Thankfully, the Scriptures give us a great deal of insight into how to approach that relationship. Let's look at a few verses from the Bible, and see what we find.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1

"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Romans 13:7

"They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Matthew 22:21

"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. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." 1 Peter 2:13-17

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matthew 19:6

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Genesis 2:24

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Genesis 24:67

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SUBJECT UNTO THE HIGHER POWERS?

We are to be subject to our higher powers, but only to a point. There are things that directly belong to God and not the government. Our souls belong to God, for one. If we are to literally obey every law of man, then we will have to take the mark of the Beast. Another example might be that the government could force ministers to marry gay and lesbian couples. They could also force all OB/GYN's to give abortions on demand. Many nations do not allow the gospel to be preached, so missionaries break the law by bringing the Gospel into those countries. We should not obey man's law when it is in conflict with God's law. God's law always takes authority.

HOW DO WE 'RENDER UNTO CAESAR'?

We should render our leaders due honor, respect, taxes, and all those things that belong to the jurisdiction of government. Marriages have been happening since Adam and Eve, long before the existence of government. Marriage should not be regulated by the State. When two are in love and wish to marry, no human authority should decide whether or not they are allowed to go forth with their plans. Government has no more business in defining the word 'Marriage' than it does defining the word 'Christian'!

WHAT CONSTITUTES A MARRIAGE?

As we see in Genesis 24:67, Isaac simply took Rebekah into a tent and became one with her, and they were married. Marriages are between the husband, and God. Not the husband, wife, God, and the government. A marriage is made when a man takes a woman and becomes one with her, physically and spiritually. That is the definition of Biblical marriage.

BIGAMY VERSUS CHRISTIAN PLURAL MARRIAGE

Bigamy is when a man is 'legally' married to more than one wife. Advocates of Christian Plural Marriage do not need to 'legally' marry their wives, but can be married in God's eyes.

DOES GOVERNMENT EVER PLAY A ROLE?

One of the principle duties of government is to protect the rights of the individual. Advocates of Christian Plural Marriage recognize that any marriage must be comprised of consenting, cooperative adults. Each locale has its own laws as to what age of consent is; that is a legitimate function of the authority of government. Biblical Families in no way endorses or gives place to any group or individual that promotes 'underage' marriage. Also, all parties in a marriage must be cooperative, in that, no one should feel compelled or forced to accept any form of marriage. Forcing someone to do something against their will may constitute abuse and deception, and government has a duty to defend the innocent.

Christian writer Blane Robison expresses the following:

“By legal definition polygamy exists when one marries or cohabits with more than one spouse at a time in purported exercise of plural marriage. The term implies more than two in contrast with bigamy which means a second marriage distinguished from a third or other. All the states adopted anti-bigamy laws shortly after the founding of the country. [The Edmunds Act of 1882](#) made bigamous cohabitation a misdemeanor, but the [Edmunds-Tucker Anti-Polygamy Act of 1887](#) classified polygamy as a felony. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the law in 1898. Some states that joined the union after that date included bans against polygamy in their state constitutions.”

“Christian opponents to polygamy often categorize polygamists as lawbreakers and appeal to the apostolic command to be "in subjection to the governing authorities" (Rom 13:1; cf. 1 Pet 2:13-17). Of course, adultery is also a crime and a much more serious problem in America than polygamy. Even Christians commit adultery. Yet, there is no clamor to jail all the adulterers. The truth is everyone breaks the law, if it's only the speed law. Scripture says that anyone who breaks even one law has violated the law as a whole (James 2:10).

“It is ironic that those who object to polygamy on the grounds of obeying Caesar also lionize colonial patriots who not only broke the law but overthrew a legitimate government by force of arms. The truth is that Christians around the world are quite ready to break the law to stop abortions, spread the Gospel or perform other acts of conscience in order to obey God's Word. It was for this reason that Jews in the first century continued to practice plural marriage in spite of the Roman "standard" of monogamy. Jesus' statement about "whom God joined together" (Matt 19:6) illustrates that marriage in Israel was always the province of God and the family, not the idolatrous civil government.”

“Perhaps it's time for Christians to return to a Biblical view of marriage. A covenant of lifetime companionship without a bureaucratic license was considered marriage for over five thousand years before the government got involved. Government sanctioned ceremonies, whether civil or religious, do not guarantee the durability of a relationship. Half of all legal marriages, including Christian, end in divorce, usually with much acrimony and at great expense. This is better than polygamy?”

(Excerpted from “POLYGAMY”,
<http://www.blainerobison.com/concerns/polygamy.htm>)

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