

**TITLE: "Silencing the Critics" (Part 1)**

**PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:13**

**THEME: The Believer's Submission to Civil Authority**

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### **Read Passage**

We're into a section that really cannot be divorced from what comes before and after it.

### **Verses 11 and 12 set the stage for this section . . .**

That really goes back to the first few words of v. 11 ==>

**I urge you as aliens and strangers. . .**

### **Recognize that you are a pilgrim**

As a new creation in X, you are not of this world; you're alien, a pilgrim just passing thru this world.

You've got to keep that in perspective. But there's a balance that must be maintained between our not being of t/world & our living within it.

t/o history there have been Xns who have taken t/concept of being an alien & stranger to t/point where they literally have removed themselves from t/world. This gave rise to t/whole monastic movement that began in t/3rd c. or so. Xns, esp. leaders, withdrew themselves from society & lived in deserts & caves. In fact, t/word "monk" comes from t/Gk. word that means "alone." That's not t/right idea.

There's nothing wrong w/the world as God created it. Xnty makes living in t/world as God created it quite fulfilling. Living in t/world as a Xn brings a fulness of meaning to family // marriage // friendship // recreation // vocation // education . . . .

We don't separate ourselves from that – no – if we are to be "monks" in any sense of that word, it's in relationship to sin. Be separate from sin. Be inexperienced when it comes to t/sinful world.

You see, t/Bible uses that term "world" in 2 senses: 1) creation of God; 2) sinful perversion of t/creation of God by sinful men. 2<sup>nd</sup> sense is how it's used in 1 John 2:15-17 (note how many #s you hear word "world" in these 3 vv.) ==>

15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

This isn't talking about t/creation of God, it's referring to t/sinful perversion of God's creation by evil men. In that sense of t/word "world" we are pilgrims passing through a foreign land.

I remember as a child being struck by t/strange people that I would see in places like Niagara Falls. I had no concept of foreign lands or countries on t/other side of t/globe where people looked different & talked different & acted different. And when my parents decided to take a day & go see t/falls I think I was as much impressed by t/odd people as I was t/great fall of water over a precipice. I didn't know it then, but they were strangers in a foreign land.

That's in a sense how we are to be as Xns. As this world moves further & further away from godliness, we will stand out more and more. We remain distinct from t/world even though we live in it as pilgrims.

And as pilgrims, we are to proclaim God's excellencies to this world. Now we know that this message of ours will not always be welcomed (darkness hates t/light). So one of t/?s we asked in that regard was "How can I maintain my witness in a hostile society?"

We're exhorted to ==>

## Stay Separate: Transform Culture Don't let Culture Transform You

Again, verse 12 (The sphere of our behavior)==>

**Keep your behavior excellent [where?] among the pagans . . .**

I like that translation of t/noun  $\epsilon\theta\nu\omicron\varsigma$  - Most translations render it "Gentiles" but remember, Peter is writing to Gentiles, so in this context it's referring to those o/s of either Israel or t/CH. Those who live w/o a true knowledge of t/true God.

### This is where we live

We are pilgrims passing through a foreign world on our way to t/celestial city of God.

As we've said all along, that doesn't mean we withdraw from culture. We're not to est. some sort of Xn commune. Issue is never that we are to withdraw from t/world. Issue is maintaining a distinction while being in t/world. Do others see JC in you? // that you are different?

Whenever you stand for non-negotiable truth, people are going to react neg. against you. The truth is absolute, it's not relative. We believe in unchangeable truth because we believe in an unchangeable God.

That's not popular among those who reject t/knowledge of t/truth. That's why Peter says in verse 12 ==>

**Keep your behavior excellent among the pagans [why?] so that in whatever they accuse *you* as evildoers . . .**

### Don't be surprised when those who don't know God accuse you of evil

Just be sure that there's no legitimate grounds for that. Let them see your

good deeds, your obedience to JC & as t/light of X reflects from your life, some may themselves be drawn to it and bring God glory on that day.

**Over first couple of centuries of the church's life it was pretty common for them to be living not only in a very sinful society but also a very hostile society**

First of all, there was a basic anti-Semitism in ancient world. They resented Jews // hated Jews. Xns were viewed as a sect of the Jews.

Apeon writes, "In the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes the Jews every year offered up a fattened Gentile as a sacrifice on a fixed day in a certain feast, ate his entrails and swore eternal hostility of the Gentiles,"

Nothing could be further from t/truth but that was simply 1 of t/slanderous lies that were leveled against t/Jews & by extension at that time, Xns.

**Christians were also accused of insurrection**

Were accused of rebelling against Rome & all human authority. Was really t/foundational reason why t/Romans engaged themselves in t/crucifixion of X. He was considered to be a tremendous threat against Rome, which, of course, was not true.

And over 1<sup>st</sup> 2 c. t/same sort of accusations of insurrection against t/Roman government were charged to t/followers of X, even though they were not true. (Rem. it was Rom. Emp. Nero who falsely accused t/Xns of burning Rome.)

**Early church was also accused of atheism & there was great hostility against them for that**

It's hard to imagine, isn't it, that t/CH could be accused of atheism? But anyone who refused to worship t/many gods of Rome, including t/Emperor, was an atheist. It wasn't that t/Xns worshiped Jesus.

That would have been fine IF only (what?) - IF only they worshiped t/other gods along w/Jesus. To have a single god to t/exclusion of all others, including Caesar, was atheistic. Not only atheistic, but criminal.

### The early church was also accused of cannibalism

One pagan writer writes of "Thiestian" feasts. Thiestes was a man, who organized banquets where t/delicacy was human flesh. So when they accused Xns of "Thiestian feasts," they were accusing t/CH of engaging in cannibalism. They based it on words of Jesus, "Except you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no part in Me." And the words of the Apostle Paul who also said that when you commune w/cup & t/bread you are communing w/the body & blood of JC.

### The early church was accused of damaging trade & of course that much was true if you're trade includes vice

So you had Men & women coming to transforming faith in this 1 called "Jesus t/X." And they were giving up all their bad habits in doing so.

### They accused the early CH of fostering slave rebellion because when a slave came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, he had a new life—a new dignity in Christ

And that was thought hostile to keeping slaves in their rightful place.

The church in the early years was not only in the world but in the hostility of a very hateful world.

### And to Peter there was only one way to deny the charges

The only way to deny t/charges was to live a godly life, to live such a virtuous, X-like life that t/mouths of t/critics would be silenced. To live a life so rich in spiritual quality that there was nothing that t/world could use to slander Xns & thus God himself.

That's t/emphasis of verse 12 ==>

... they may see your good works and glorify God in the day of visitation.

### May I suggest to you that little has changed?

T/world is still hostile toward Xnty. Men still hate God // still reject JC. Someone has suggested that "Maybe the form of it has changed a little bit." That men "may be a little bit more tolerant of the religious system of Christianity but they are no more tolerant of the truth of righteousness than they've ever been." [so MacArthur, transcript of sermon on this passage, 1997]

And t/challenge to t/Xn is still today to be an alien, a pilgrim—& yet to be different; to live a life that is above & out of t/world, & yet live in t/world. That challenge is great. We are to live in such a way that in spite of all t/false accusations // t/hatred // t/hostility, we might still turn t/hearts of people to X, in part thru t/evident transformation of our lives.

Greatest apologetic for evidence of t/transforming power of t/gospel is your life. There is really no greater way for people to see t/transforming power of t/gospel than to see t/life of a transformed person. That's t/greatest apologetic. It is the foundation of all of our witness.

We can't be like t/unbeliever who stunned his hypocritical Xn friend by telling him one day, "Ya know, you like to talk to me about Jesus, but your life speaks so loudly against Him that I cannot hear what you're saying."

That's t/error of a compartmentalized life. I've got a life of 70 separate compartments & God is relevant to 15 of them. No God is relevant to all 70 & has title deed as Lord over all 70. That includes our relationship to civil authority.

And That brings us to verses 13-17

## **I. The Believer's Submission to Civil Authority: Silencing the Critics (2:13-17)**

You might wonder about that phrase, "Silencing t/Critics." That's reflective of v. 15 ==>

**For this is the will of God, that by doing right you might silence the ignorance of foolish men.**

This forms t/heart of t/passage.

"Respectfully submit to civil authority so that the critics be silenced."

### **We could also look at it this way**

There are 3 different perspectives that Peter gives. He says you must view your life in 3 ways. Number 1, you must see yourself as a pilgrim in this world (that's what we see in vv 11 & 12). Then in verse 13 to 17 he says even tho you are pilgrims you are still citizens, even thou you live in another dimension, you still are here in this world & you must conduct yourselves in a proper way as citizens of t/nation to which you belong.

Thirdly, in vv 18-20, he discusses the matter that we are servants. So Peter sees t/Xn as a pilgrim // citizen & as a servant. Each of those perspectives relates to how t/watching world views us. As t/world sees us they must see us as pilgrims, as aliens. As they see us they must see us as good citizens, and they must recognize that we are also humble servants.

As it relates to t/latter two of those {cite}, t/main topic is submission to authority.

### **This brings us to the other side of the passage**

Rem. I said you can't divorce this passage, vv. 13-17, from what comes before OR after. That's esp. true in t/sense of after. This concept of submission is going to guide us all t/way to 3:12.

At this point, if you want to know where t/main points of my o/l are going (take us into the summer months at least) ==>

II. The Believer's Submission to Vocational Authority: Servants and their Superiors (2:18-21a)

III. The Believer's Example of Submission: The Suffering Savior (2:21b-25)

IV. The Believer's Submission to Domestic Authority: Winning Lost Husbands (3:1-7)

V. The Believer's Reminder toward Christlikeness: Inheriting a Blessing (3:8-12)

Our launching point, again, is back in 2:13-17 ==>

## I. The Believer's Submission to Civil Authority: Silencing the Critics (2:13-17)

There's a Command // Motive // Extent // Reason // Attitude // Application

### A. The Command for Submission (2:13a)

**Submit yourselves to every human institution . . .**

#### 1. The Command is Simple

It's straightforward // to t/point // it's w/o exception ('every').

**Submit yourselves to every human institution . . .**

#### a. Phrase "human institution" is literally, "human creation"

##### (1) The Word is κτίσις

Common word for "creation." Used in reference to God's creation of man & woman Mark 10:6. Used of t/creation of t/world in Romans 1:20. It's used of t/believer being a "new C." in 2 Cor. 5:17 (solely God's work).

Point is, in every single use it refers to either a creature or creation of God. Never used in NT of t/enterprises of man, always of t/work of God.

You say, "But here it's used in conjunction w/"men." It's t/creation of men or t/institutions of men? How does that square t/them created by God?

Human institutions are ultimately derived by whom?

Romans 13:1 . . . For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

The powers that be are ordained of God, Romans 13:1. Civil government is the work of God.

We translate it "institution" here & that's understandable. Word is used frequently in extra-biblical literature to refer to the act of creating a governmental body or founding a city. Josephus uses t/word to refer to 'settlements' which the Jews established after leaving Babylon

However, God is always sovereign over t/workings & creations of men.

Another possible reason why Peter uses this term is that t/Emperor Nero, to whom he refers in this v., demanded worship as a god. It was "t/cult of emperor worship." Peter's use of this term "creation" is a reminder that t/emperor was no god. In fact, he wasn't inherently superior to anyone else (cf. v. 17). He was a creation of God that was under t/authority of God.

We are to subject ourselves to every human institution because we recognize that in doing so we are submitting to the God who is sovereign over those institutions.

I pulled out a telephone book & there must have been listed 100s of these "human institutions." (Blue Govt. section at t/front). From governments at a federal level, to state, to county, to city, to town. The fact that these exist is due to t/providential common-grace of our God. We must be numbered among those who willingly & graciously subject ourselves to t/laws of these institutions.

**b. BTW - This is a direct command (imperative)**

Word submit, from t/Gk word ὑποτάσσω, was a military term meaning to arrange in military fashion under a commander. It's talking about being subject to an authority, voluntarily arranging oneself under that authority.

For most of t/world back then, this was demeaning. Submission & humility in ancient times were looked upon as those things which characterized cowards or weaklings. No man of strength would ever think of submitting himself, or being humble. This is a distinctly Xn grace (as we'll see in vv. 21-24, we have a wonderful example of this in t/earthly person and work of X).

Like him, we are to live in a humble, submissive way in midst of a hostile, godless, wicked, accusing, slandering society. It might be expected that God's people would be falsely accused of insurrection, but we are never called by God to engage in it.

#### *A. The Command for Submission 2:13a*

**Submit yourselves to every human institution . . .**

#### **2. Why does Peter have to say this?**

What might have been going on in t/hearts of his readers that might impel them to do otherwise? What might be in our hearts?

God gives this to us as a clear command because t/natural thing— when we think of ourselves as above t/world as heavenly citizens & when we are attacked by irresponsible, ignorant, unfounded, evil accusers— t/natural thing may be to rise up in self-defense & perhaps even to retaliate. Maybe even to think that I have no part in this world & this world has no part w/me, so I will ignore w/indifference all of its systems.

Can't do that!

We see that next in ==>

## B. The Motive for Submission (2:13b)

... for the Lord's sake ...

### 1. God forbids that we act in any way we want thinking we're not answerable to human institutions

To t/contrary, He wants us to demonstrate self-restraint // virtue // a concern about community, to seek peace in t/community, to do all we can to prevent trouble, to live in such a way in peace & good will that we deprive our enemies of t/grounds for all their false accusations. The Xn way to muzzle t/critics is to obey all t/laws & respect all t/authorities.

But, ultimately, we do it not for them, but for Whom?

... for the Lord's sake ...

### 2. For the sake of Jesus Christ

Word "Lord" here referring to God t/Son, not God t/Father. When we submit to governments, their leaders & their laws, we do so for X - & in a very real way to do so is to submit to X.

But how far-reaching is this command? That's our third point ==>

## C. The Extent of Submission (2:13c-14)

What is t/extent of our submission, our lawfulness? We touched on this earlier.

**Submit yourselves to every human institution ...**

That word πάση (all) implies that this is far reaching.

### 1. You say, "Okay, but every?"

That's what it says...every. You say, *"Yeah but we have some wicked leaders in our nation, we have wicked judges making wicked decisions."*

That's right. You want to know something? Ours is not the first set of bad leaders or bad judges. Are you ready for a little history?

### a. Go back to Isaiah chapter 3

It says in verse 1, "For behold the Lord God of host is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water."

God's going to provide no water & no bread for you. He is going to judge you. Why is He going to do that? He's going to judge t/mighty man & t/warrior, v. 2, He's going to judge t/judge & t/prophet, t/diviner & t/elder. In other words, He's going to judge them all. He goes down through a long list. Why? Verse 8, "For Jerusalem has stumbled, Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the Lord, to rebel against His glorious presence."

Hey, this isn't the first time there have been bad judges, this isn't the first time there have been bad leaders. But who judges them? Who judges them? God judges them.

### b. You can go to Daniel chapter 9, as another illustration

Daniel 9:12, God is again going to judge. T/curse is on us, v. 11 says, thus he confirmed his words which he had spoken against us and against our judges who judged us to bring us into great calamity. And again Daniel points out t/fact that there were unjust judges, unfair judges in t/society in which he was living w/the people in captivity. This is not anything new. This is not anything unusual.

### c. Micah, the minor prophet, chapter 7 verse 2 ==>

"The godly person has perished from the land and there is no upright person among men, all of them lie and wait for blood shed, each of them hunts the other with a net."

This is a terribly vicious society, murderous. "Concerning evil, both hands do it well." They're just doing it with both hands. "The prince asks, also the judge for a bribe." And he goes on to speak judgment against this society. All the way down, v. 9, which talks about a proper pleading of a case in executing of justice.

Point is there have always been bad judges and God is always t/One to execute proper justice.

**2. Just in case there's any misunderstanding Peter gives a few examples (he starts at the top)**

**... whether to a king as one in authority. . .**

While this title that Peter uses ( $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ ) could have been used several ways, from world monarchs like Alexander t/Great to those of a more limited domain such as Alexander's successors, t/Herods, no one other than t/Emperor would have fit this description from where Peter wrote in in Rome and to where his readers were scattered t/o 5 Asian provinces.

**a. What's the point?**

Point is that Peter gives as an illustration a very wicked ruler by t/name of Nero.

**(1) Nero is one of the most ruthless tyrants of all history**

Nero came into power in 54 A.D. at the age of 17. He was a sexual deviant who freely engaged in homosexuality. He had his own mother murdered.

Right around t/time that Peter wrote this letter, on July 19, 64 AD T/great fire of Rome broke out. Here was a city built w/high wooden structures that were engulfed w/flames. The fire burned 3 days and 3 nights, it was checked and then broke out again w/double the intensity. Was pretty much common knowledge who set the fire: Nero. He had a passion for

building things (or having them built). The city was full and he wanted to start over. It was said that t/firemen of the day were being deliberately hindered in their work and whenever it looked like the fire was getting under control men were seen sneaking about rekindling it. [Barclay, 147]

After the devastation the people were enraged. Nero needed someone to blame. Who better than the Xns.

Remember, 1<sup>st</sup> c. Christians were distrusted anyway. They spoke of a coming day when t/world would be destroyed in fire. Easy to see how they served as the perfect scapegoat. So, they were and a massive persecution ensued. Nero rolled Xns in pitch & lit them alive, allowing them to burn to ash as they lit his gardens. He had t/skins of wild animals sewed on them and then he set his guard dogs on them.

Roman historian Tacitus records for us==>

“Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed by crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burned, to served as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle. . .” [Barclay, 149]

This was a man who ranks right along with Hitler and Ghengas Khan!

And this is t/Emperor, t/King to whom Peter says ==>

**Submit yourselves to every human institution, for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as one in authority, or to governors as those sent by him . . .**

This is t/Emperor, t/King to whom Peter says ==>

**. . . [grant] honor.**

BTW - When Peter wrote this he probably had no idea that both he and his beloved co-worker Paul would be martyred under t/authority of this madman. They didn't know it; God did.

**Now, I know that you have lots of questions about all this...**

We've left lots of unanswered questions. After all, what does this submission to civil authority look like in our time? Is there a place and time for civil disobedience & if so, when? What about groups like Operation Rescue? We'll get to that, next time.

**We'll close with this: Turn to Titus Chapter 3 . . .**

**{read 3:1}**

Sounds like Peter in 2:12, remember?

**Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

Those in authority over us must see us as compliant, obedient to t/rightful place of law & authority. After all, in whose worldview does t/concept of authority made sense? Believer's or unbeliever's?

**Authority comes from God**

The concept of authority extends to t/workplace, t/home, t/CH, t/nation. Rightful authority & submission are not things that came out of t/fall of man. Authority & submission are good. There is authority among angels (1Thess. 4:16; Jude 9) // t/redeemed in heaven (Luke 19:17,19) // even among t/members of t/Trinity from all eternity (1 Cor. 11:3; 15:28). Authority comes from God. To reject authority is to reject t/God who ordains it.

**{read 3:2}**

You see, this is our witness, this is our greatest defense of and promotion of t/faith. to {restate}

**{read 3:3-7}**