**#NotMyCaesar**

Ken Weliever / The Preacherman’s blog

“Politics have caused a vast divide in our country. Some Christians want to think that a president being elected by a suspicious or even illegal method means they need not recognize or honor him,” wrote Illinois gospel preacher David Diestelkamp in an article entitled #NotMyCaesar. “Some conclude,” David continued, “that a president who is immoral, accepts the killing of babies (abortion), or condones the sexually deviant is not ‘their president.’ And some are judging the validity of a presidency based on their perspective on law, rights, taxes, foreign policy or free trade.”

David correctly reminds us that the first-century Roman emperors failed in all these areas. Imagine being a Christian in New Testament times. Paganism was widely practiced. The Governors were corrupt. Most of the Roman Emperors were homosexuals and even pedophiles. The Roman historian Suetonius wrote that the Emperor Tiberius, who reigned from 14-37 A.D. and was in power during Jesus’ day, retired to the island of Capri to engage in “wanton sexual pleasure” with young boys and girls. Yet, when asked whether or not it was right to pay taxes to the corrupt Roman Empire, Jesus said, ***“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.”*** (**Matthew 22:21**).

Caligula (37-41 AD), Claudius (41-54 AD) and Nero (54-68 AD) succeeded Tiberius and were not any better. Maybe worse! Caligula is described as, “a noble and moderate emperor during the first six months of his rule. After this, the ‘historical’ sources focus upon his cruelty, sadism, extravagance and sexual perversion, presenting him as an insane tyrant.” He is infamously remembered for his promise to “make his horse Incitatus, a consul, and actually appointed him a priest.”

While under Claudius’ reign the Empire underwent expansion and gave rise to many public works projects. His personal life, according to various historians, was characterized by bribes, murder and dominated by sexually illicit relationships. Aquila and Priscilla got to experience firsthand the emperor’s ire when Claudius tried to solve his problems by expelling all Jews from the city of Rome (**Acts 18:2**). Comply with a megalomaniac emperor’s unreasonable edicts?” The answer? Yes. The apostle Peter exhorted Christians living at that time to ***“submit yourselves to every ordinance and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God…”*** (**1 Peter 2:13-17**).

Nero, the Emperor during Paul’s ministry, was a fornicator, adulterer and pedophile. The sexual pervert once married a 12-year-old boy, Sporus, and paraded him through the streets of Rome. Described as a “brutal psychopath,” historians record his many barbarous acts against Christians as they were arrested and viciously executed by “being thrown to the beasts, crucified and being burned alive.” However, Paul commanded Christians to pray, ***“for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness”*** (**I Timothy 2:2**). He further commanded, ***“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.”*** And he added when we refuse, **“we resist the ordinance of God”** (**Romans 13:1-7**).

Tomorrow (last Wednesday – kds), Joseph R. Biden, Jr. will be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States. So, what responsibility do Christians have toward him and his administration?

Succinctly stated…

1. **Pray for President Biden and all other governmental leaders.**

2. **Respect authority.**

3. **Obey the law.**

4. **Pay your taxes.**

5. **Do NOT speak evil of rulers.**

6. **Do NOT use your liberty as a cover-up for evil.**

7. **Be an influence for good, giving glory the God as a reflector of the light and love of Christ.**

As David correctly asserted, “#NotMyCaesar was not an option that Scripture gave to Christians.” And neither is #NotMyPresident.