

## The Ways of the King Who Will Reign Over You

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Taylor Houser / Devotional

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Good morning everyone and happy, though one day belated, Fourth of July! I hope the fireworks were good, and I hope that the displays for tonight and tomorrow are good as well. Yesterday we celebrated almost two and a half centuries of our declared independence from Great Britain. After exhausting every option for peace and reconciliation, the Founding Fathers cast their lot on a brutal and bloody war against an overwhelmingly superior force, the empire of the age. It was, as a passionate Patrick Henry famously said, “an appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts.” And that though the odds seemed grim, “There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.” And so it was. France joined as our loyal ally, and after eight long years, we were a free and sovereign nation. No longer shackled to the patchwork and ad hoc government of Constitutional Monarchy, we chose to embark on an experiment of self governance. The Lord of Hosts, our God, instituted our country according to His will, as He does with all governments and rulers. Paul makes that point clear in [Romans 13:1](#), “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” But this submission isn’t absolute, Peter boldly told officials who tried to ban preaching the Word, [Acts 5:29](#), “We must obey God rather than men.” We must obey and be subject to our rulers and our country insofar it agrees with the Word of God. Where it differs we must hold to Christ rather than to men. And there lays the fine and nebulous line that faithful and obedient Christians must walk as we live in the world.

Those great men, the Founding Fathers, found Great Britain’s extorting rule so intolerable, that it justified war and dissolution of political bands centuries old. And yet thousands of years before that, Jeroboam led ten of the twelve tribes of Israel into revolt and likewise dissolved its ties to David and Jerusalem because Rehoboam refused to lighten the tax burden. And God’s Holy Nation, God’s people, were divided. John Brown was a devout and pious man by all accounts. He had extensive knowledge of the Bible, matching or surpassing that of ministers even. And yet he believed that it was his calling to strike what he hoped was a fatal blow against the gross injustice known as

slavery. He led an armed insurrection to free slaves and lift up the condition of the enslaved who he saw as equals in the eyes of Christ. It failed and he was hanged for his crimes. While it went unfulfilled, he asked for his epitaph to be [2 Timothy 4:7](#). Thomas Jackson was described as “fanatical” in his faith to Christ. He kept and obey the command to keep the Sabbath holy. In fact, Jackson even hosted and ran a Sunday School for slaves, teaching them the Gospel and encouraging literacy—though it broke state law against teaching slaves to read. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, a moniker he earned early in his service, would go on to die in battle fighting for the Confederate States of America in its war of rebellion against the United States.

There have been faithful servants of Christ on both sides of many diverse issues and conflicts. And this year, and all future years till Christ returns in glory, will be no different. There are Christians who cannot abide by a law, or organization, they feel violates God’s commands, and they are those who cannot in good conscience forsake a governing body which God has appointed above them. I am not in the business of giving political advice, please don’t think that of me or ask it from me. I am here to offer spiritual reflections. Just remember to stay engrossed in the Word, be steadfast in your prayers and supplications, and remember that God has commanded us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. If we remember that, and little else, with God’s help we will do well.