

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



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Pledge of Allegiance

By Terry Carter

The following article was written in 1999, but has never been published. It seems to me that it is more relevant today than ever before. It was written in answer to those who refused on religious grounds to pledge allegiance to the flag or stand for the National Anthem. Specifically, it answers those who believe that doing so is a form of worship of the flag or nation and therefore, idolatry.

Today, there are people who refuse to honor our flag, National Anthem, etc. for political reasons rather than religious reasons. Whatever the reason, the Christian is bound by God's Word which tells us to give honor, tribute, and fear to whom it is due and to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.



While it is certainly wrong and idolatrous to worship anything other than God, I do not believe that pledging allegiance to the flag or standing for the National Anthem amounts to "worship". It is right to honor, respect, and fear the government, but not to worship it for the following reasons:

First, there is nothing inherently idolatrous about having a flag. Even the Israelites had standards, which were flags. "Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp **by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house**; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting." **Numbers 2:2 (NKJV)**

Second, there is a difference between honor and worship. We are told in Scripture to honor quite a number of people, including the king. Clearly, this is not the same as worship.

1. Our father and mother, **Ephesians 6:2**

2. Widows, **I Timothy 5:3**
3. Elders, **I Timothy 5:7**
4. All men, **I Peter 2:17**
5. The king, **I Peter 2:17**
6. One another, **Romans 12:10**

It is especially noteworthy that we are commanded to honor the king who is the head of the government. Jesus also made it plain that supposed honor to God does not free us from our obligation to honor our father and mother. "3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 "For **God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'**"; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 "**But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"; 6 'then he need not honor his father or mother.'** Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition." **Matthew 15:3-6 (NKJV)**

Third, to honor our flag with the pledge of allegiance is certainly not to worship it since the pledge itself acknowledges that the nation is under God and therefore secondary and subject to Him. The National Anthem simply sings of the joy of having gained and maintained our freedom. There is no indication of worship of our nation in it whatsoever.

Pledging allegiance is not swearing allegiance. The word "pledge" means to promise. "Swear" means, "to vow, promise under oath, or assert to be true with an appeal to God".

We can, and ought to, love our country without idolizing or worshipping it. I do the same with my wife. I love her, but I don't idolize or worship her. I did, however, pledge, in fact vow, my allegiance to her when I married her. I even called upon both God and man to witness my vow of allegiance to her.

Fourth, Jesus said to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. There are things that belong to Caesar and other things that belong to God. "They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "**Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**" **Matthew 22:21 (NKJV)**

Fifth, Paul commanded that we honor, fear, and pay taxes to the governing authority. He says they are appointed by God and to resist them is to resist the

ordinance of God. **“1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.** 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 **Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Romans 13:1-7 (NKJV)**

If it be objected that our government is corrupt, unjust and ungodly, remember the following:

1. So were the governments of Babylon and the Medes and Persians under which Daniel served.
2. The Caesars accepted worship as gods.
3. The wicked Nero who was later responsible for terrible persecution of Christians was on the throne when Paul wrote **Romans 13:1-7**.
4. The church was being persecuted by Rome when Peter commanded them to honor the king, **I Peter 2:17**.

Sixth, God's people are to seek the peace of our country and pray for our leaders. This is how we can have peace and live in godliness and reverence. It is good and acceptable in the sight of God. Israel was to seek the peace of Babylon while they were in captivity. Daniel did exactly that, even serving Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.

“And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.” Jeremiah 29:7 (NKJV)

“1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,” I Timothy 2:1-3 (NKJV)

It is right and proper to honor and give allegiance to government. Even to a government as corrupt as Rome's was under Nero. To resist the authority is to resist the ordinance of God.

We are not seeking to ostracize anyone over this issue. Nor do we wish for anyone to violate their conscience in this. But we do believe that we not only have the liberty to do this as Christians, but a Scriptural imperative to do so.