Matthew 22

Verse 21: What things belong to “Caesar,” our earthly rulers? What things belong to God? In this injunction, is Jesus saying that we obey God when we obey our rulers, or is he saying, “Go ahead and give Caesar what he demands, but it is more important to give God his due”?

1 Timothy 2

Verses 1–2: The word therefore connects this verse to what comes before it. How does the admonition here connect to what is taught in chapter 1?

Is the list “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of things” intended to be a list of four different things or is it intended to be a list that means the same thing as “all kinds of prayers”?

How does Paul explain the need to pray for those with secular authority over us (verse 2)? (Note that the Greek word translated “honesty” in the King James Version is probably better translated “dignity” or “holiness.”)
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**Verse 21:** Is it a universal truth that if we obey the laws of God we have no need to break the laws of the land? If not, how do you explain this verse? If so, how do you explain the Church’s long-lasting opposition to the antipolygamy laws of the nineteenth-century United States?

**Verse 22:** To whom does “the powers that be” refer? What reason does the Lord give here for why we should obey secular authority? How does that compare with the reason that he gives in 1 Timothy 2:2? Do the two verses give the same reason or complementary ones?

The wording of the last phrase of verse 22 could be read as suggesting that the secular authorities are the enemies of the Lord: be subject to secular authority until the Lord reigns, who will subdue his enemies. Is that a reasonable reading? What are the alternatives?

**Verse 27:** How is this verse related to the commandment to obey secular authority?

What are examples of things we can and should do on our own? The phrase “bring to pass” most often means “cause.” How do we cause righteousness, make it happen?

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**Verse 4:** By itself this verse is odd: with regard to the laws of the land, do whatever the Lord commands. How are those ideas connected to each other?
**Verses 5–6:** Does the second clause of this verse (“supporting that principle of freedom”) give us a definition of what it means by “that law of the land which is constitutional”?

What does it mean to say that those laws that are constitutional belong to all people? Specifically, what does it mean to say that a US law that is constitutional belongs to people who are not US citizens?

What does it mean to say that a secular law is justifiable before God?

How do we befriend a law? What do these verses tell us about laws that are not constitutional?

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What circumstances in the Church made this declaration of belief about government necessary? Do we continue to need this declaration in our relations with earthly governments? Does it mean differently for other governments than it meant for the Saints’ relation to the US government in 1835?

**Verse 1:** What does it mean to say that earthly governments were instituted by God? How did he institute them?

How are we held accountable in our relations with earthly governments?

What kinds of laws does the Lord say we should be making and administering? Can you explain those terms more fully?

**Verse 2:** The three kinds of law that are mentioned here—free exercise of conscience, right and control of property, and protection of life—are said to all be necessary for a
government to exist in peace. Why would the absence of those laws make peace unlikely?

Is “free exercise of conscience” the same as “freedom of religion”? If not, how do they differ? If so, why did those who wrote this declaration use the former phrase rather than the latter?

What does “right and control of property include”? Does it mean that the government cannot pass laws that affect what an individual does with his or her property? What do you use to justify your answer to the last question? Are there scriptural answers? Do the circumstances at the time this declaration was written tell us? Are there other factors that we have to take into consideration to answer the question?

What does “the protection of life” include? How do you decide what the best answer to that question is? The original intention of the writers of this declaration or what it has come to mean for us over time?

**Verse 3:** What if a civil officer or magistrate does not “administer the law in equity and justice”? Do we have recourse?

What in this verse lets us know that it was written with more in mind than the relations of the Saints to the US government?

**Verse 4:** Are we to make anything of the fact that the declaration says that religion is instituted by God rather than true religion or something like that? In what sense are all religions instituted by God?

When might a religious practice infringe on the rights and liberties of other people? Would the practice of animal
sacrifice do so? What if most of us were afraid of those of a particular religion? Would that, in itself, mean that they had infringed on our rights and liberties?

Human law has no right “to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men.” What does that mean? Since the declaration mentions that human law cannot dictate the forms of our devotion—the ways in which we worship—we must assume this phrase isn’t talking about that. Does it say that human law cannot bind the consciences of men or that human law cannot interfere with a religion’s right to have rules, rules that bind our consciences?

Suppose this tells us that human law doesn’t have the right to bind our consciences. What would it mean to bind them? How might human law do so? Suppose it tells us that human law can’t interfere in a religion’s right to give rules that bind conscience. How could a religion create such a rule? What might be an example?

We often require that criminals express remorse for the crimes they commit. Does doing so go against the precept that we “should restrain crime, but never control conscience”?

**Verse 5:** We are told here that we must obey and sustain the law, but two escape clauses are given: “while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights” and the fact that this applies to every citizen “thus protected.” Why did the Saints include these escape clauses in their declaration? How do they apply to us today?
The declaration says “all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest” as long, of course, as they uphold freedom of conscience. How wide is the latitude this gives governments? Does what this verse says contradict anything that has been said earlier? Does it help us understand how we should understand the duties of government stated in verse 2?

**Verse 6:** What does this verse add that the previous verses have not already said?

**Verse 7:** This verse says governments are obligated to protect our religious freedom, which the declaration has said at least twice before (verses 2 and 4). But it adds that we have a right to religious freedom “so long as regard and reverence are shown to the laws.” How do we show regard and reverence to the law? What if the law is unjust?

**Verse 8:** What does “their tendency to evil among men” mean? Should we implicitly add the word *cause:* “their tendency to [cause] evil among men”? Is there a better way of reading the phrase?

How would we go about stepping forward “to use [our] ability in bringing offenders” to punishment? Presumably this verse isn’t recommending vigilante action. But if not, what is it telling us we should do?

**Article of Faith 12**

How does Doctrine and Covenants 134 flesh this article of faith out? What does that section help us understand that we might not if we had only this article of faith?