

**Hebrews 11:23**

The faith exhibited here is actually that of the parents of Moses. The parents of Moses are not named in this Hebrews account but are named in Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59.

*"And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years."*

*"And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister."*

The events of Egypt, Pharaoh, and Moses were providentially used by God to ensue that His plan for Israel would be completed.

**23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.**

Exodus 1 - 2:10 gives the background to this story of faith.

Exodus 1

- 15 *And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:*  
 16 *And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.*  
 17 *But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.*  
 22 *And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.*

Exodus 2

- 1 *And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.*  
 2 *And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.*  
 3 *And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.*  
 4 *And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.*  
 15 *Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.*  
 16 *Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock*  
 21 *And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.*  
 23 *And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.*  
 24 *And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*  
 25 *And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them*

Exodus 3

- 16 *Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:*

There are a couple of things in play in this event.

1. Satan consistently tried to destroy the line of the Messiah, to prevent the Redeemer from coming into the world. This is one of those attempts. The Messianic line would have been disrupted not by the death of Moses, who was a Levite, but with the destruction of the nation.
2. Amram's and Jochebed were convinced, based on God's word (promise), that the Jewish people, as a nation, were secure.

So in what way did the parents of Moses show faith in their actions?

Genesis 9:6 *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

They:

- 1) Disobeyed the commandment of the authorities.
- 2) Were not afraid.
- 3) Followed the will of God, and the world was greatly blessed by the ministry of Moses.

### **When is it right for believers to act like Moses parents in the disobedience to civil authority?**

Three Possible Positions

- 1) Anarchism - always right

No biblical argument at all for anarchy.

- 2) Radical Patriotism - never right

God ordained government (Genesis 9:6) and has commanded man to submit (Romans 13:1,4; Titus 3:1).  
Reasons why this is not valid -

- 1) God did not ordain Government's evil and we do not need to obey their evil laws, Romans 13:4.

*For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

The midwives did not kill innocent babies (Exodus 1) nor did the 3 Hebrew children worship idols (Daniel 3).

- 2) Obedience is not unqualified - Acts 4:19 *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

- 3) Biblical submission to Government - sometimes right

Two views:

- 1) The Anti-promulgation Position - Christians have a right to disobey authority when a law or action is initiated that is contrary to God's word.  
Promulgate is to publish; such as laws or the gospel
- 2) The Anti-compulsion Position - Christians have a right to disobey authority when a law or action is initiated that command one to do something contrary to God's Word  
Compulsion is the act of driving or urging by force, physical or moral.

- The Anti-promulgation Position

Arguments For:

- 1) The power of government is not absolute. God's law is king not the government.
- 2) The law (in essence the law of God) is above the government. The Christians obedience than is to the government only as they follow God's law.
- 3) Governments which rule contrary to God's law are tyrannical. Thus, Christians should not obey government's law.
- 4) Christians should resist tyrannical governments. Christians have a moral obligation to resist ungodly governments.
- 5) Resistance takes two forms: protest and force. Christians should first protest and if that does not work they should use force as necessary.

- The Anti-compulsion Position

Arguments For:

- 1) Biblical examples of disobedience to governments

All have the same elements

- A command by the authorities that is contrary to the Word of God
  - Disobedience to that command
- a) Refusal to kill innocent babies Exodus 1:15-21
  - b) Refusal of command not to worship God Exodus 5:1-2
  - c) Refusal to worship an idol Daniel 3:5,18
  - d) Refusal to stop proclaiming the gospel Acts 4:18-19

- How should one disobey authorities

- 1) Refuse to obey it nonviolently - example of midwives, Daniel, etc.
- 2) Flee - example of Israel fleeing Egypt, Elijah fled from Jezebel, Joseph and Mary with Jesus fleeing to Egypt.
- 3) Accept it's punishment - example of Jesus and John the Baptist

**WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO IN RESPONSE TO OPPRESSION** (see letter from Pastor Wang Yi)

1. Obey its laws Romans 13:1  
*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*
2. Pray for oppressive governments 1 Timothy 2:1-2  
*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*
3. Work peacefully and legally to change it James 4:17; Galatians 6:10  
*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*  
  
(This option is not found in the Scriptures and earlier in chapter 4 we are told that friendship with the world is enmity with God. Thus, this may not be the wisest or best use of our time.)
4. Patiently endure suffering 1 Peter 4:12-13  
*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

## **IS REVOLUTION EVER JUSTIFIABLE? SOME WOULD ARGUE YES.**

### **1. Scripture approves of some revolution - 2 Chronicles 22:10-12; 23**

This one incident in Scripture is a God-appointed revolution (vs. 14) and was necessary so that Athaliah would not kill Joash, the last remaining heir to the Davidic throne. Thus, this exception can not be used as support for revolution.

### **2. Without revolution tyranny reigns.**

God is sovereign, Daniel 4:17:

*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*

We need to trust in God and not our resources.

### **3. If some wars are just, why not some revolutions?**

Wars are fought by God ordained governments (Romans 13:1-7), revolutions are fought by citizens against the government.

### **4. We are to only obey governments that follow God's moral laws?**

Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 when Nero was in authority in Rome.

**Over 100 members of Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, China, were arrested beginning Sunday, December 9. At the time of publication of this translation, arrests are still being made. Among those taken away were Pastor Wang Yi, senior pastor of Early Rain, and his wife, Jiang Rong, who have not been heard from since Sunday.**

**Foreseeing this circumstance, Pastor Wang Yi wrote the declaration below to be published by his church should he be detained for more than 48 hours. In it he explains the meaning and necessity of faithful disobedience, how it is distinct from political activism or civil disobedience, and how Christians should carry it out. We thank Brent Pinkall and Amy Cheung for their contributions in translating this letter.**

**From Chinapartnership.org**

First draft on September 21st, 2018; revised on October 4th.  
To be circulated by the church after 48 hours of detention.

**On the basis of the teachings of the Bible and the mission of the gospel, I respect the authorities God has established in China. For God deposes kings and raises up kings. This is why I submit to the historical and institutional arrangements of God in China.**

As a pastor of a Christian church, I have my own understanding and views, based on the Bible, about what righteous order and good government is. At the same time, I am filled with anger and disgust at the persecution of the church by this Communist regime, at the wickedness of their depriving people of the freedoms of religion and of conscience. But changing social and political institutions is not the mission I have been called to, and it is not the goal for which God has given his people the gospel.

For all hideous realities, unrighteous politics, and arbitrary laws manifest the cross of Jesus Christ, the only means by which every Chinese person must be saved. They also manifest the fact that true hope and a perfect society will never be found in the transformation of any earthly institution or culture but only in our sins being freely forgiven by Christ and in the hope of eternal life.

As a pastor, my firm belief in the gospel, my teaching, and my rebuking of all evil proceeds from Christ's command in the gospel and from the unfathomable love of that glorious King. Every man's life is extremely short, and God fervently commands the church to lead and call any man to repentance who is willing to repent. Christ is eager and willing to forgive all who turn from their sins. This is the goal of all the efforts of the church in China—to testify to the world about our Christ, to testify to the Middle Kingdom about the Kingdom of Heaven, to testify to earthly, momentary lives about heavenly, eternal life. This is also the pastoral calling that I have received.

For this reason, I accept and respect the fact that this Communist regime has been allowed by God to rule temporarily. As the Lord's servant John Calvin said, wicked rulers are the judgment of God on a wicked people, the goal being to urge God's people to repent and turn again toward Him. For this reason, I am joyfully willing to submit myself to their enforcement of the law as though submitting to the discipline and training of the Lord.

At the same time, I believe that this Communist regime's persecution against the church is a greatly wicked, unlawful action. As a pastor of a Christian church, I must denounce this wickedness openly and severely. The calling that I have received requires me to use non-violent methods to disobey those human laws that disobey the Bible and God. My Savior Christ also requires me to joyfully bear all costs for disobeying wicked laws.

**But this does not mean that my personal disobedience and the disobedience of the church is in any sense "fighting for rights" or political activism in the form of civil disobedience, because I do not have the intention of changing any institutions or laws of China. As a pastor, the only thing I care about is the disruption of man's sinful nature by this faithful disobedience and the testimony it bears for the cross of Christ.**

**As a pastor, my disobedience is one part of the gospel commission. Christ's great commission requires of us great disobedience. The goal of disobedience is not to change the world but to testify about another world.**

**For the mission of the church is only to be the church and not to become a part of any secular institution. From a negative perspective, the church must separate itself from the world and keep itself from being institutionalized by the world. From a positive perspective, all acts of the church are attempts to prove to the world the real existence of another world. The Bible teaches us that, in all matters relating to the gospel and human conscience, we must obey God and not men. For this reason, spiritual disobedience and bodily suffering are both ways we testify to another eternal world and to another glorious King.**

**This is why I am not interested in changing any political or legal institutions in China. I'm not even interested in the question of when the Communist regime's policies persecuting the church will change. Regardless of which regime I live under now or in the future, as long as the secular government continues to persecute the church, violating human consciences that belong to God alone, I will continue my faithful disobedience. For the entire commission God has given me is to let more Chinese people know through my actions that the hope of humanity and society is only in the redemption of Christ, in the supernatural, gracious sovereignty of God.**

If God decides to use the persecution of this Communist regime against the church to help more Chinese people to despair of their futures, to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them

know Jesus, if through this he continues disciplining and building up his church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for his plans are always benevolent and good.

Precisely because none of my words and actions are directed toward seeking and hoping for societal and political transformation, I have no fear of any social or political power. For the Bible teaches us that God establishes governmental authorities in order to terrorize evildoers, not to terrorize doers of good. If believers in Jesus do no wrong then they should not be afraid of dark powers. Even though I am often weak, I firmly believe this is the promise of the gospel. It is what I've devoted all of my energy to. It is the good news that I am spreading throughout Chinese society.

I also understand that this happens to be the very reason why the Communist regime is filled with fear at a church that is no longer afraid of it.

If I am imprisoned for a long or short period of time, if I can help reduce the authorities' fear of my faith and of my Savior, I am very joyfully willing to help them in this way. But I know that only when I renounce all the wickedness of this persecution against the church and use peaceful means to disobey, will I truly be able to help the souls of the authorities and law enforcement. I hope God uses me, by means of first losing my personal freedom, to tell those who have deprived me of my personal freedom that there is an authority higher than their authority, and that there is a freedom that they cannot restrain, a freedom that fills the church of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.

Regardless of what crime the government charges me with, whatever filth they fling at me, as long as this charge is related to my faith, my writings, my comments, and my teachings, it is merely a lie and temptation of demons. I categorically deny it. I will serve my sentence, but I will not serve the law. I will be executed, but I will not plead guilty.

Moreover, I must point out that persecution against the Lord's church and against all Chinese people who believe in Jesus Christ is the most wicked and the most horrendous evil of Chinese society. This is not only a sin against Christians. It is also a sin against all non-Christians. For the government is brutally and ruthlessly threatening them and hindering them from coming to Jesus. There is no greater wickedness in the world than this.

If this regime is one day overthrown by God, it will be for no other reason than God's righteous punishment and revenge for this evil. For on earth, there has only ever been a thousand-year church. There has never been a thousand-year government. There is only eternal faith. There is no eternal power.

Those who lock me up will one day be locked up by angels. Those who interrogate me will finally be questioned and judged by Christ. When I think of this, the Lord fills me with a natural compassion and grief toward those who are attempting to and actively imprisoning me. Pray that the Lord would use me, that he would grant me patience and wisdom, that I might take the gospel to them.

Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and my family – the authorities are capable of doing all of these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith; no one can make me change my life; and no one can raise me from the dead.

And so, respectable officers, stop committing evil. This is not for my benefit but rather for yours and your children's. I plead earnestly with you to stay your hands, for why should you be willing to pay the price of eternal damnation in hell for the sake of a lowly sinner such as I?

Jesus is the Christ, son of the eternal, living God. He died for sinners and rose to life for us. He is my king and the king of the whole earth yesterday, today, and forever. I am his servant, and I am imprisoned because of this. I will resist in meekness those who resist God, and I will joyfully violate all laws that violate God's laws.

The Lord's servant,  
Wang Yi