

### **Dig Deeper:**

Mr. Lapham said, "I don't hold much with these fellows that are always trying to stir up trouble between us and England. Maybe English rule ain't always perfect, but it's good enough for me. Fellows like Mr. Hancock and Sam Adams, calling themselves patriots and talking too much. Not reading God's Word—like their parents did—which tells us to be humble."

Mr. Lapham seems to imply that to speak out against the British the way John Hancock and Sam Adams do is, according to the Bible, disobedience. Consider the following quotations:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those [authorities] that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

### Romans 13:1–5

Upon careful review of the author's reasoning in this passage [from Romans 13], it appears that his arguments to enforce submission are of such nature as to conclude only in favor of submission to such powers as he [St. Paul] himself describes, i.e., such as rule for the good of society. . . . If it be our duty to obey our king, merely for this reason, that he rules for the public welfare . . . it follows . . . that when [the king] turns tyrant [becomes a dictator] we are bound to throw off our allegiance to him, and to resist.

From "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-resistance to the Higher Powers," a sermon given by Jonathan Mayhew in 1750.

*Johnny Tremain*

Self-preservation is an instinct by God implanted in our nature. Therefore we sin against God and Nature when we tamely resign our rights to tyrants if it be in our power to defend ourselves. . . . [God] commands us to stand fast in the liberty wherewith he hath made us free and not to bow down to any tyrant on earth. . . . The cause of liberty is the cause of God and truth, [and] to take arms and repel force by force, when our liberties are invaded, is well-pleasing to God.

From "Antidote Against Toryism," a sermon given by Nathaniel Whitaker in 1777. (The American Revolution began in the spring of 1776.)

Do you think speaking out against British rule was disobeying scripture? Write a short essay discussing the following questions:

- Were Bostonians in particular and Americans in general disobeying God when they spoke out against British rule over the colonies?
- Was the American Revolution itself wrong in the eyes of God?
- More generally, is it ever right to rebel against authority? If so, when? If not, why not?