

Romans 13 - The Christian and Government

SUMMARY

This chapter deals with relationships with the world system and government.

- v. 1 - All people are to be subject unto (obey) the higher powers.
- God established government and ultimately a **righteous government** under the authority of Jesus Christ will rule throughout all eternity!
 - The subject here is **AUTHORITY!** - Luke 20:17-26

Summary of God's Chain of Authority:

1. God the Father has all power - Rom. 13:1-2
 2. All power (authority) given to Jesus Christ - Matt. 28:18
 3. Jesus Christ gave special **spiritual and physical** power **only to his apostles**.
- Matt. 10:1-8, 16:13-19; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Luke 9:1-2; 10:19; John 20:21-23
 4. The special power from Jesus Christ given to the apostles **ceased** at the end of the apostolic period (1st century). - 1 Cor. 13:8; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20
 5. Upon Adam's sin, Jesus Christ allowed the Devil the power for "all kingdoms of the world" and the Devil further gives this power (within God's permissive will) to whomsoever he will. - Luke 4:5-6
 6. By God's permissive will, the Devil has **temporarily** been delegated the power to run the current world system. - 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:11-12
 7. Why has God's power been given out like it has been? Jer. 27:1-11; Nebuchadnezzar represents the Devil (a god of this world) in vv. 6-8.
- "Every soul" (lost and saved) is commanded here to be subject to the authorities. - Titus 3:1-2
 - God makes no mention concerning **the worthiness** of the powers. (plural "s")
 - It is when a government misuses its legitimate God-given authority/power and becomes a **weapon for evil** instead of fulfilling its God-ordained responsibilities that God's plan for government doesn't and cannot work. - Prov. 16:12, 25:5
 - So, why should believers be subject to the authorities? . - 1 Peter 2:13-17 gives believers three reasons: 1) for the Lord's sake - v. 13, 2) to be in the will of God - v. 15, and 3) as part of our service to God - v. 16
 - All governmental powers are "**of God**" and "**ordained of God**" (with **God-given** responsibilities). - Ex. 14:4; Ps. 75:6-7; Prov. 8:15-16 (Godly wisdom is inseparable from God Himself); Dan. 2:20-21, 4:34-35
 - Those who despise **legitimate** government are those who are presumptuous, self-willed, and who walk after the flesh in their lust of uncleanness. - 2 Pet. 2:10
 - When there is a conflict between obeying the authorities and the **expressed will of God**, a believer **must obey God**. - Acts 5:29

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v. 2 - Resisting or disobeying the authorities is equated with resisting and disobeying God. Those who refuse to be in subjection to legitimate governmental authority are nearly always the same people who refuse to be in subjection to God.

- Throughout history, evil powers have misused this doctrine by establishing a military to back up their evil ambitions, e.g. the Moslems and the Catholics.
- Baptists have always stood for the **separation of Church and State**, which means we **vehemently oppose** the government establishing a state religion that everybody must follow. This does **not** mean we believe that Christians have no role in government to ensure it functions as God intended.
- To disobey authorities has consequences. - Gal. 6:7 - Be not deceived...
- This use of “damnation” is referring to the just penalty of disobeying the powers that be, as in 1 Cor. 11:29 dealing with the Lord’s Supper (not the eternal damnation in Hell).

v. 3 - Governmental authorities are **supposed to be** a terror to evil. - Prov. 16:12

- If rulers (authorities) do right, then people benefit by obedience and submission to the authorities and you will be recognized for doing good. - 1 Peter 3:8-13
- Just as we are commanded to always fear God, the Bible here says we are supposed to be afraid of the legitimate powers that be. Fear (notice “**be afraid**” referred to in both v. 3 and in v. 4) is a proper motive for behavior, it will keep you out of a lot of trouble.
- If the authorities are corrupt and do evil, then we as believers cannot go along and should take a stand against the evil authority. An example: The fiery furnace experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - Dan. 3:1-18

v. 4 - Legitimate authorities who rule righteously are God’s ministers.

- God uses these ministers as “a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”
- Under God’s system, law enforcement is to **EXECUTE WRATH** (i.e. “execution”), not to keep offenders separate from society, not to rehabilitate the criminal, not to get offenders to pay their debt to society.
- **GOD’S SYSTEM OF EXECUTING WRATH**: The purpose of “the sword” was for execution, hence we have here the NT doctrine authorizing capital punishment. In the Old Testament (Ex. 9:5-6), people under the law were “**put to death**” for all of the following offenses:
 1. Murder - Gen. 9:6, Lev. 24:17, 21; Num. 35:16-31
 2. Stealing (kidnapping) and selling a man - Ex. 21:16
 3. Cursing his father or mother - Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9
 4. An owner of an ox that knows his ox is dangerous and the ox kills someone. - Ex. 21:29
 5. Anyone who lies with a beast. - Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:15-16
 6. Anyone who works on the Sabbath. - Ex. 31:14; Num. 15:32-36
 7. Anyone giving his seed to Molech (pagan idol of the Ammonites) - Lev. 20:2

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8. Adulterers and adulteresses - Lev. 20:10
 9. Fornication with the your father's wife or a man with his daughter-in-law - Lev. 20:11-12
 10. Sodomy - Lev. 20:13
 11. Taking a wife and her mother. - Lev. 20:14
 12. Anyone who has a familiar spirit or is a wizard (witch) - Lev. 20:27
 13. Anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord. - Lev. 24:16
 14. Any stranger that comes near 1) the tabernacle, 2) the priests office, or 3) the sanctuary - Num. 1:51, 3:10,38
 15. False prophets who turn the people away from God and His truth - Deut. 13:5
 16. Anyone who rebels against/disobeys the commandments of God - Josh. 1:18
 17. Failing to seek the Lord God - 2 Chron. 15:12-15
- v. 5 - Two reasons to be subject to the authorities:
- 1) Fear of the consequences. - Gal. 6:7b "**that shall he also reap.**"
 - 2) to keep a good conscience - Acts 23:1; 24:16; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Peter 3:15-18
- If we as believers must suffer, we must always make sure it is for doing right according to the word of God and **NOT** for being an evildoer. - 1 Pet. 4:15-16
- vv. 6-7 - We are to pay our taxes and other obligations when due. - Matt. 17:24-27
- Why? Because of v. 5 and the three reasons given earlier in 1 Peter 2:13-16: 1) for the Lord's sake - v. 13, 2) to be in the will of God - v. 15, and 3) as part of our service to God - v. 16
 - God even used taxation to fulfill Bible prophesy. - Mic. 5:2 cf. Luke 2:1-7
 - The governing authorities are "**God's ministers**", who make their living off the tax money that is being paid by those being ministered to.
 - In the same way Pastors today are to be supported from the freewill offerings given by those who are being ministered to. 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Cor. 9:9-14, 16:1-2
 - Positions of authority deserve our respect because of the position itself. Should a person bring dishonour to his position through doing wrong or immorality, we still respect the position since it has been "ordained of God", e.g. the office of President is to be respected even when the person is corrupt or immoral.
 - Believers are to honour the Lord to give Him our firstfruits, not our leftovers. - Prov. 3:9
 - Believers are to honour our parents and love our neighbor as ourselves. - Matt. 19:19
 - The Bible teaches us to also honour widows, elders/Pastors (double honour), masters (bosses), all men, husbands are to love and honour their wives.

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v. 8 - God's command to: 1) love others and 2) avoid financial debt.- Prov. 22:7, 26-27

- These are likely the most violated commands in the Bible (they bring about much **stress and bondage**). - Deut. 15:6; 28:12; 2 Kings, 4:1; Matt. 18:23-25; Eph. 4:28
- God's system of finances is the opposite of the world's system. The world says **buy now, pay later**; God says a foolish man spends up everything. - Prov. 21:20
- Since God considers spending up all the money you have as being foolish in Prov. 21:20, we understand that to spend **more than** you have (i.e. buying on credit) is **worse than** being foolish.
- Easy credit, mortgages, car loans, and interest payments of various types have put Americans in financial bondage and has taken away millions in interest payments that could have gone to support missionaries. (Personal credit card debt is skyrocketing and has now eclipsed \$1 Trillion)
- "usury" (FM-Ex. 22:25) is when exorbitant interest rates (up to 30%) are charged to make obscene profits and take unfair advantage of the poor.
- Debt is connected to being in distress and being discontented. - 1 Sam. 22:2; Prov. 15:16; Heb. 13:5
- God says to owe no many anything except for the debt of love, which we can never fully pay off. - John 15:12; 1 John 4:11; 1 Peter 1:22
- Even though many lost people don't appreciate it, the most loving thing you can do is to have compassion for their soul, pray for them, and share with them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. - Rom. 1:14-16

v. 9 - The moral laws of the 10 Commandments.

- Notice first that "thou shalt not bear false witness" has been omitted from many of the modern Bibles. Does this make it OK for them to lie to us?
- Notice the law on keeping the Sabbath is not included in the list, showing us that it is no longer in effect for believers today. Seventh Day Adventists wrongly believe that keeping the Sabbath is still in force today as a moral law. Nowhere in Paul's epistles is the Body of Christ commanded to observe the Sabbath, although believers ought to live by the other nine.
- All of God's commandments are summed up in two great commandments. - Matt. 22:36-40
- Luke 6:31 - "**And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.**"

v. 10 - Believers should show genuine love. - Rom. 12:10, 13:8; John 13:34, 15:12; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:22, 3:8-9; 1 John 4:7-12

- Genuine love means not doing anything wrong to others. - Gal. 5:14
- Love is the first fruit of the Spirit. - Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 3:11, 23
- Galatians 6:2 - "**Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**"
- The Holy Spirit produces the love of God in our lives when we walk in fellowship with God.

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v. 11 - Believers need to wake up!

- It is shameful that so many believers do not know God very well at all. - 1 Cor. 15:34
- To get light from Jesus Christ, believers need to wake up. - Eph. 5:14-17
- Most believers are spiritually asleep when it comes to winning people to Christ.
- Believers who live just for themselves are unusable to God and that is why we have many groups of them in spiritually dead churches consisting of men's programs and with no power of God on them.
- "our salvation" is referring to believers being delivered at the Rapture; the salvation of the soul is a present possession for every believer, here the Bible is referring to the completed salvation at the Rapture. - Rom. 8:23

v. 12 - It is time to be busy in the Lord's work.

- Here are some things that will happen soon as shown in the last chapter of the Bible. - Rev. 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20
- "**the day is at hand:**" - the time is short; all things are ready for the Lord's return. - Heb. 10:37
- Believers are to "**cast off**" (stay away from or "**have no fellowship with...rather reproved them**") "**works of darkness**" (sin). - Eph. 5:11-13; Rom. 12:9
- Believers are to "**put on the armour of light**" - 2 Cor. 6:1-10; Eph. 6:10-18

v. 13 - Believers are to "**walk honestly**".

- "honestly" is found in only 2 other places in the KJB - 1 Thes. 4:9-12; Heb. 13:18
- Believers are NOT to walk in these 6 other ways:
 1. rioting - civil disturbances and disorderly conduct
 2. drunkenness - believers are to be total abstainers, and not even "social drinkers". - Prov. 20:1, 23:20-21, 29-35; Eph. 5:18; Isa. 5:11, 22; Hab. 2:15
 3. chambering - sins normally carried on in a bed chamber (bedroom) - Heb. 13:4
 4. wantonness - found in only 1 other place in the KJB - 2 Peter 2:18 which gives the definition → "lusts of the flesh".
 5. strife - enmity, scorn, quarrels, contentions, discord, arguments.
 6. envying - this is a "root sin" - Isaiah 14:12-15 and always is accompanied by strife. - 1 Cor. 3:1-3; James 3:14-16

v. 14 - If you are a believer, then live like a believer ought to live. - Rom. 6:1-2, 6-12

- This verse is not dealing with getting saved, it is like putting on a new suit of clothes. - Gal. 5:16
- This is the practical righteousness that is to be lived out in a believer. - Rev. 19:8
- We are not to provide a means for the flesh to get the victory. If you are tempted to sin by use of the internet, cable TV, or your smart phone, get rid of it so it won't provide a means for your weakness in the flesh. If you are tempted by impulse spending, don't go to the store or the mall.
- Don't set yourself up for failure in the flesh. - 2 Tim. 2:22