

The Bible & Government

What Does Romans 13 Really Say

Election Day
November 8, 2016

**Last Fellowship Before A New
Government Is Selected**

Headlines In The News

Donald Trump Refuses To Say Whether He'll Accept Election Results

**Bob Woodward: Hillary's 'Pay for Play' Is 'Corrupt,' a Scandal
Hillary: Queen of Corruption**

**Leaked Clinton Documents: Discourage Trump Supporters
With Crap Polls**

**Donald Trump Exposes ALL U.S. Political Corruption
(Including His Own)**

**The Justice Department's Hillary Investigation Reeks Of
Corruption**

FBI Reopens Clinton Criminal Investigation

Have You Ever Wondered?

How should Christians relate to their government?

When (if ever) is civil disobedience justifiable?

What about armed rebellion or revolution against a corrupt government?

Is capital punishment Biblical?

Should Christians withhold part of their taxes to protest government misuse of our tax dollars?

Should leaders elected by illegal or immoral methods be followed?

Romans 13

**The Relationship Of A Christian To
His Government**

NIV Romans 13:1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.

⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

⁷ Render to all what is due them: tax to whom *tax is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Summary Of Principles In Romans 13

- 1. The general principle: Since Yahovah has ordained government authority, we must be subject to it (13:1-2).**
- 2. The purpose for government is to protect law-abiding citizens and punish law-breakers (13:3-4).**
- 3. We should be subject to government not only because it is for our good, but also because it is right (13:5).**
- 4. Paying taxes and giving proper respect to government officials is part of submission (13:6-7)**

Do You Agree With This Interpretation?

Is This Presented In The Proper

Context?

A Simple Definition of CONTEXT

: words that are used with a certain word or phrase and that help to explain its meaning

: the situation in which something happens : the group of conditions that exist where and when something happens

Context

Chronology

Historical Setting

Geographic

Linguistic

Cause & Effect

Cultural

Societal Norms

Let's Consider Romans 13 In A Different Context

From The Commentary

Earlier in Romans Paul establishes God's sovereignty in history. Paul recognizes that God also appoints rulers for his purposes. Paul elsewhere appeals to God's sovereign plan when exhorting believers to remain content and to remain in one's station. Paul speaks here of the moral function of civil government in restraining evil, (a function shared with laws in general), which includes their role in punishing errant citizens. Christians must submit to the state not only because of such punishments, however, but because they recognize that God appointed such rulers.

Clearly Paul does not believe that Christians must always agree with governments. He would have warned against participation in the “patriotic” emperor cult, and he recognized Moses’s divinely commanded opposition to Pharaoh. But as a general rule, he expected Christians to be model citizens. This does not mean that they should not work for change by evangelizing and seeking justice. Christians had to support their societies. In a society that emphasized honor and shame, showing honor to leaders was important.

What Assumptions Are Made?

HRB 1 Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from Elohim, but the existing authorities have been ordained by YAHWEH.

NIV 1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

CEB 1 Every person should place themselves under the authority of the government. There isn't any authority unless it comes from God, and the authorities that are there have been put in place by God.

NAS 1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Incorrect Assumptions

Only God Establishes Governments

All Governments Are Righteous

All Government Decisions Are Moral

Government Authority is Unlimited

What is the Biblical Context?

Did Moses violate God's principle of submission to authority when he killed the Egyptian taskmaster in defense of his fellow Hebrew?

Did Elijah violate God's principle of submission to authority when he openly challenged Ahab and Jezebel?

Did David violate God's principle of submission to authority when he refused to surrender to Saul's troops?

Did Daniel violate God's principle of submission to authority when he disobeyed the king's law to not pray audibly to God?

Did John the Baptist violate God's principle of submission to authority when he publicly scolded King Herod for his infidelity?

What is the Biblical Context?

Did Simon Peter and the other Apostles violate God's principle of submission to authority when they refused to stop preaching on the streets of Jerusalem?

Did Paul violate God's principle of submission to authority when he refused to obey those authorities who demanded that he abandon his missionary work? In fact, Paul spent almost as much time in jail as he did out of jail.

Remember that every apostle of Christ (except John) was killed by hostile civil authorities opposed to their endeavors. Did all of these Christian martyrs violate God's principle of submission to authority?

Hosea 8:4, "They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not."

Is it A Matter Of Translation?

Every person is to submit to the “governing” authorities. The word translated “governing” is the Greek word huperecho. It means to excel, to be superior, or better than; to surpass.

It should be noted that most modern translations, the New King James Version included, have erroneously rendered the Greek phrase “exousias huperechousias” (literally, “authorities above”) as “governing authorities,” rather than “higher powers,” as it appears in the older King James Version.

What Are We To Do?

What about civil disobedience against corrupt governments or bad laws?

What about armed rebellion against evil, tyrannical governments?

Who Are We To
Obey?

Who Is Your
Authorized
Covering?

Guiding Principles

When the government commands us to do something that is disobedient to Yahovah's Word, we must resist the government and obey Yahovah.

Good government is ordained by Yahovah.

Government officials are to be good ministers who represent Yahovah.

Civil disobedience is permitted when the government's laws or commands are in direct violation of Yahovah's laws and commands.

Armed revolution is justified ... only if the state has become totally opposed to the purpose for which Yahovah ordained it, and if there is no other recourse available to prevent massive evil.

The only true powers are those that Yahovah ordains.

Romans 13 In America

Biblical principles form the foundation of all three of America's founding documents: The Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution, and The Bill of Rights.

Historically, as a result, Christians in America (for the most part) have not had to face the painful decision to "obey God rather than men" and defy their civil authorities.

The problem in America today is that we have allowed our political leaders to violate their oaths of office and to ignore, and blatantly disobey, the "supreme Law of the Land," the U.S. Constitution.

Therefore, if we truly believe Romans Chapter 13, we will insist and demand that our civil leaders submit to the U.S. Constitution.

What Are We To Do?

Yahovah Is In Control!

Follow His Guidance As Found In The Bible

Take It To Yahovah In Prayer

Is The Government A Product of God Or Of Man?

The image features a close-up, slightly blurred view of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. A semi-transparent, white, scalloped-edged text box is centered over the flag. The text inside the box is in a bold, black, serif font. The background of the entire image is a light blue gradient.

**No matter who
is President**

**Jesus is still
King!**

life 88.5

Additional Reading

Should We Always Obey the ‘Powers’ that Be?

Barry Napier October 26, 2016



In contemporary Christian circles there are groups who believe we should follow governments and other authorities at all costs. There are also groups who shun the very idea of being ‘dictated to’ by ‘godless’ governments. However, it is safe to say that most Believers could not care less what happens, so long as they are ‘left alone’ to worship as they please (a very unsafe attitude). Believers today rarely bother with politics, the law, the judicial system, or even local government. To them, it is all something they should not meddle with. What this does is to completely separate beliefs from practical, everyday living, giving unbelievers total freedom to dictate what Christians may, or may not, do, always to their detriment.

Many of these folk are staunch Calvinists (or, at least that is what they are *told* they are, by their pastor or their denomination!). But, they obviously are unaware of the fact that Calvin himself was a politician, or that the Reformers were actively involved in the politics of their time. The whole impetus behind Luther’s harassment by the Roman Catholic ‘church’ was that he was directly opposing the civil authority of the day – the pope and Roman Catholic rule. That Luther’s own agenda was to preach Christ crucified was not so important as his refusal to submit to the ‘authority’ of the pope, the ‘church’ and the civil codes they enforced.

Today, few enter the political arena because, to evangelicals, it is somehow ‘improper’ for Christians to become involved in ‘that kind of thing’. This is all without Biblical basis, however.

The real point we are discussing is, whether or not Christians should *obey* the civil (or local church) authorities, even if they do not get involved with them in any ongoing sense. As with everything else, we must look to our Bible for answers. The Book of Romans is packed with information on many things, including authorities!

Chapter 13 begins with the words:

Thus, Christians, without exception, are subject to the 'higher powers', for they are set in their sphere of authority by God Himself. Some claim these 'powers' refer to church hierarchies and 'higher' levels of church rulers, but this claim is wrong, given what the Bible tells us about the nature of the Church. No, 'powers' refers to civil authorities. And in verse two we are warned that if we disobey these authorities, then we will be judged wrong and will be in error.

Verse three outlines the main activity of civil rulers: they are to be a 'terror' to those who do evil... including sinful Christians. The authorities are also to praise those who do good. This should throw a new light on the subject of the UK 'Honors List' which are now a very grubby affair! Yes, it is abused when pop-musicians are honored and those whose 'good' is thin on the ground are knighted. But, generally, the List is meant to honor those who deserve it, with civic praise. According to God's word, this is right and proper.

Verse four tells us we should be justly afraid of the civil authorities if we do wrong, for they have been given the right by God to administer justice and punishment, even including the death penalty. In verse five we are advised to follow these requirements not just because of fear of punishment, but because we should *want* to do what God says, in our hearts.

Verses six and seven, etc., will no doubt cause many a murmuring amongst Christians, for these verses refer to taxation, including various added taxes (e.g. VAT)! Yes, we are to pay our taxes, because those who tax us are 'God's ministers', although this is not how many view tax inspectors! This command was emphasized by Jesus when He was asked if the Jews ought to pay taxes to Caesar. He told them to give to Caesar what belonged to him, because taxes are only temporal burdens. (However, we can complain about unjust taxes).

We are also told in verse seven to give

"fear to whom fear (is due); honor to whom honor (is due)".

That means we must be subject to those who hold positions of authority in the land. Not only that, but we must treat them with civil courtesy and an attitude of respect. How often do we find this in modern Christians, especially if the political party they voted for is not in power? (However, we need not necessarily agree with them, or even like them!).

Should we obey everybody all the time? No. We can obey civil authorities in good conscience so long as they do not oppose, or cause others to oppose, God's word. An

example would be, say, if the government decreed that Christians cannot worship God. Such a law can be resisted. Another today is Obama and Clinton's hatred for Christians, and sharia-led countries whose laws kill or maim them.

There are some who say that Christians can take up arms against their government. I have no qualms with that statement, but would not personally do so unless the situation was extreme and there was no other route to take. We may not attack or oppose government, or any other authority, merely because we do not like their particular policies, especially if they do not affect religious liberty, etc.

Another example of laws to be resisted would be the employment of homosexuals in a Christian organization, or the maintaining of homosexual pastors. Christians can wholeheartedly resist such laws even if to do so incurred legal penalties. Thus, the laws we may legitimately ignore or resist and the degree to which we resist them, depends entirely on the particular situation. In normal everyday life, we must just obey authorities and not go looking continually for reasons to disobey! This is God's command and, as He says in Romans 14:7,8:

"None of us liveth to himself... we are the Lord's".

It is our duty to obey the authorities placed there by God, because we love God. But what about obeying pastors and teachers/teachers? Yes, we must do so, but only insofar as they themselves obey God. If they require or teach us to do what is contrary to God's word, then no obedience is due to them. Simple as that. And, those who deride God or His word are not to be respected as officers of government, nor may we respect what they believe.

What or whom do we 'obey'? Not pastors as men! Only what is reasonable and what does not remove our individual responsibility to God. Pastors are not rulers, or managers. They must not dictate what we may, or may not, do in our lives. It is their role to watch the Flock and to advise them when they go wrong. If necessary, they may also warn them and demand that they change their ways. But, they may *not* demand what God Himself would not demand.

The authority of pastors is limited and delegated. That is, they can only demand what the Lord declares. Beyond that they have no authority and no claim to our loyalty, which is to Christ anyway, not to men. Even when we obey civil authorities, it is 'as to the Lord' and not merely for the sake of obedience. The authorities exist because of Man's propensity to commit wrongs against their fellows and against God. They are human safeguards against ourselves, given by God. But, when those authorities themselves disobey God's laws we must resist and disobey.

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