

Sunday Evening, November 12, 2023  
Rom. 13:1–5; 1 Tim. 2:2; Rom. 12:17–21; 1 Thess. 5:15

*WCF Chapter XXIII - Of the Civil Magistrate*

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil authorities to be, under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good. For this purpose he has armed them with the power of the sword for the defense and encouragement of those who are good, and for the punishment of those who do evil.

2. It is lawful for Christians to hold public office when called to it. In such office they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth. For that purpose they may now, under the new testament, lawfully wage war upon just and necessary occasion.

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I. God Establishes All Civil Authority Rom. 13:1–5

- A. God Established All Government Generally as His Design  
Rom. 13:2; Gen. 9:6
  
- B. God Establishes Each Governor Specifically, as His Appointment  
Rom. 13:1a; Rom. 13:4; Rom. 13:2; Dan. 2:21; Dan. 2:37
  
- C. God Establishes Each Governor as His Design and Appointment, but Not Always Approves of Them  
Ac. 4:26–28; Jer. 27:2–6; Dan. 4:25

II. God Defines All Civil Authority

- A. Leaders Are Responsible to Promote the Good Rom. 13:4; 1 Tim. 2:2
  
- B. Leaders Responsible to Punish the Evil Rom. 13:3–4
  - 1. The State Is One of the Ways God Uses to Bring about Justice  
Rom. 13:4; Rev. 6:16
  
  - 2. But The Individual is *Not* Given the Authority that God Gives the State for Justice  
Rom. 12:17–21; 1 Thess.. 5:15
    - a. We Do Not Take the Judge’s Place Rom. 12:19; Prov. 13:15
  
    - b. Because the Lord Will Avenge His Children, Always.  
Rom. 12:19; Deut. 32:35–36; 2 Thess. 1:6–9
  
    - c. So What to Do When We Don’t See Justice Through Laws and Courts?  
Rom. 12:17; 1 Cor. 6:6; 1 Sam. 25:21–33; Prov. 20:22; 1 Cor. 13:5c

## QUOTES

“Without justice, what are kingdoms but great gangs of robbers?”

Augustine

“A state that refuses to acknowledge its subordination to God is on a collision course with the Lord of history.”

R C Sproul

"We may not as private citizens take upon ourselves the execution of the demands of justice in the sphere of government."

John Murray

"Vengeance is forbidden us in every case, without exception, however wicked the man that has injured us may be, we must refrain from inflicting injury"

John Calvin