

Romans 13:1-7

Romans Chapter 13 overview: This chapter discusses Christians and their service to God in relation to government (politics). This is a controversial chapter. It can be titled "Christian Service and Responsibility."

- 1 *Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.* God sets up nation and kings at His sovereign will. He will punish nations and kings if they abuse the privilege, and He will bless those who do right. Jesus Christ has the authority from above. Every person who has authority is there because God gave them that responsibility.
- 2 *Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.* After the flood in the Old Testament, God set up human governments. Before that time, everyone did what they wanted individually. If you resist these governments, you will be punished by the government.
- 3 *For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:* Governments that are set up under those like Hitler and Stalin are brought to ruin, but they are not set up initially to be evil. God sets up the government and the people in power are ultimately responsible for serving God. If you obey your governmental rules and laws, everything is fine. It's when people break the rules or the leader starts misbehaving that the trouble begins. We have an election year now, and the 3 people who are running are to be analyzed by you to see if they will ultimately serve God.
- 4 *for he is a 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 a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.* A government official is supposed to be a minister of God to do good for Him and you. Leaders have authority from God to keep things in order by punishing those who disobey the law. They punish the guilty and defend the innocent. When the criminals are more protected than the innocent, the country declines.
- 5 *Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake.* Don't just obey the governmental laws that God set up in your country out of fear of God's wrath, but because of your conscious and your healthy fear of God Himself. You know what's right, so do it.
- 6 *For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing.* This is taxes. Everyone must pay their taxes. During the time of Christ, there were about 40 different taxes put on the people. They had to pay taxes on everything! This verse is saying to pay a just amount, not an outrageous amount.
- 7 *Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.* Tribute is a tax; custom is a tax upon a tax. Pay taxes to the government and pay fear and honor to God. At what point do we not obey civil authority? Think of the American Revolution. God had a reason for forming this nation and He will do as He wished with it. The scriptures are very plain about not running out in the streets to take down a government. Paul went and talked to the authorities, and he kept preaching the word of God in the meantime. You can disobey the political authority when they stop obeying God's authority. If governments stop obeying God's word and say you can't preach the Word or worship God, then talk to the government while still preaching and worshipping God. You don't have to overthrow the government. God will take care of them. There are places where this Sermon Audio reaches that would put Carl in jail for preaching the word of God, but he will still do it, because it is God's rule and will. We have to be more concerned about our government officials obeying God's will than paying taxes, but we still have to pay taxes.