

March 3, 2024 Romans 13:1-14 Jesus

**Romans 13:1-6** *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

Governments, just like family, morals, ethics, education, business and all other entities of life - first and foremost come under the delegated authority of the Sovereign Creator. Priority 1 in life is always God. When that is compromised by an individual or governments,/// well you already know the consequence. Keep that in mind as we go along because unethical, immoral, power and greed based government becomes not the Christians guardian but great nemesis – government outside the Sovereign delegated righteous authority of God destroys the righteous moral fabric of human existence.

We start by being reminded of Paul's intellectual power and understanding of the Old Testament coupled with his divine inspiration for writing this New Testament epistle. Then we will look briefly at the setting and date of the context. And finally for these first 7 verses a practical application for our Christian lives.

The background of those 7 verses starts in Genesis 3 when the sin free paradise on earth was violated with consequences recorded in **Genesis 3:16-17** *To the woman He*

*2. said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." 17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.*

As you see every individual, every entity of creation and government that violate heavenly instruction have dire consequences./// Some 1600 years of failure and consequences from Adam and Eve repeated over and over resulted in **Genesis 6:7-8** *So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*

Add another 1,000 plus years later after Moses when God had Judges rule Israel as their government. We come to a specific record of including prophecy concerning government: **1 Samuel 8:1-22** *Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3 But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."10 So Samuel*

**3.** *told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, “This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. 12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day.” 19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No, but we will have a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” 21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. 22 So the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed their voice, and make them a king.”*

If you wonder if your government is Gods, or mans - read that passage again as it defines even specifics of the results of removing God from government or any part of His creation. God and righteousness are the sacred definition of the purpose of the government and the delegation and limitation of their authority. **Joshua 24:15** *And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

Last weeks 4 o'clock Truth Project study developed this examination much deeper to show why governments outside the providence of God righteousness are not ordained by

4. God, but - even so- are never outside the parameter of His Sovereignty. Just two direct quotes from that lesson and we move on: “Governments can become the most terrible monster of all.” AND “The New Testament Church Age has been filled with some 170 million, men, women and children who have been killed by ungodly governments of which we are witnesses today.

**Proverbs 29:2** *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.*

The rest of our Old Testament record is a history of mankind's failures, their consequences and Gods grace on a remnant who chose faithfulness to HIM. The Old Testament is also a record of prophecy warning of the inevitable consequences of sin and God’s equally inevitable grace on a remnant because of and through His son Jesus.

Leading up to our scripture over 4,000 years with 100’s of recorded examples in the Bible and others in secular history record the same pattern of an occasional government based on righteousness (at least for a time), but most based on unrighteous man.

In the setting of Romans chapter 13 written about 57 AD we gain additional clarity by noting that Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from the city of Rome in 49 which left only Gentile Christians as God’s messengers. Claudius was killed by his wife Agrippina in 54 AD and her son Nero advanced to the throne immediately allowing the Jews to return to the city. From 54-59, at the time of this writing, the empire enjoyed a period of peace that looked quite different from the chaos that would characterize the later years of Nero's reign. Nero reneged on his promises and the torture and slaughter of Christians began with some being impaled, set on fire and used for street lights, others fed to hungry lions to entertain theater patrons and much, much more. Paul wrote this chapter just prior to that which also resulted in his own martyrdom within 10 years. It is reasonable to assume that the temporary peace like condition of the Roman empire impacted the immediate context of Paul’s writing to those Christians living in Rome during that period of hopeful and pending peace.

5. With all that background you understand why the text must carefully be examined and simply cannot be extended to previous or later specific responses to all governments at all times in world history in spite of their treachery and unrighteousness.

The point of this reminder of world history is to help us see the inescapable consequences of God against unrighteousness of mankind and his institutions. Every form and aspect of Mans rebellion always results in God's discipline. The world is experiencing God's discipline even as we speak. By understanding that, means our faith is growing in the knowledge that God can and does use unrighteous governments to discipline people with the intent of leading them back to Jesus and righteousness..

From last week and **Romans 12:18** *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.* i.e. be responsible righteous citizens and if the government is not – do what you can about changing it... be sure and vote for a starter. Luke made that clear in **Acts 5:29** *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.*

From the time of sin entering the human equation and throughout the ages - the champions in life have sought righteousness and suppression of sin with the goal of the earth being restored to it's original pristine sin free condition. All of the Bible is a record of the sojourn of mankind on earth with their failures and victories. Part of Christianities righteous survival is based on standing against the influence of sin whatever form including government it may take. ///The Roman government of the first century is long gone, but the exact same Christian message their government tried to demolish continues to exert it's righteous influence and will do so until the time when Jesus catches the righteous up out of this sin sewer where we continue to seek and serve God and HIS Holiness.

Let me encourage you with these verses in closing: **ESV Romans 12:9** *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.*

**6. Habakkuk 1:13** *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*

Christians are to be as good a citizen as possible prompted by God's love made real to others through our spiritual giftedness to each other and in our community.

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**1 Samuel 8:1-22**

**Joshua 24:15**

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