

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.”* This morning, we are going to look at purpose of government. God has established government and the purpose of government is to *“minister to you for good.”* Therefore, those who resist governing authorities bring judgment upon themselves. God defines this good purpose this way: The purpose of government is to punish, praise and protect. When government fulfills her God-given purpose, her citizens are blessed with peace and tranquility: **1 Timothy 2:1-3** *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”*

I. THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO GIVE PUNISHMENT *“3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil..... (4)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.”* God has given authority to governments to punish those who break the law. This authority includes the “power of the sword,” which is a reference to corporal and capital punishment. Punishment has several objectives.

A. Purpose of punishment is to administer a just retribution: **Deuteronomy 19:21** *“... life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”* This command puts a just limit on the retribution – it should be just and fit the crime. Punishment was to be administered by proper authorities, not by the victim!

B. Purpose of punishment is to be a deterrent to crime: **Deuteronomy 19:20** *“And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.”* (see also Deut. 17:13 and 13:11).

C. Principles of punishment seen in the Old Testament:

(1) Punishment for murder is to be administered without pity: **Deut.19:13** *“Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.”* Today, our society shows more pity to perpetrator than victim.

(2) Punishment is to be administered without partiality: (see Deut. 13:6ff)

(3) Punishment is to be administered swiftly: **Deut.25:2** *“then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.”* **Ecclesiastes 8:11** *“Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”*

(4) The law should have provision for pardon and for restoration and rehabilitation: **Deuteronomy 25:3** *“Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.”* *In God’s law, “...criminals were not to be permanently stigmatized. Once an offender paid his penalty, he was to be accepted back into society as a respectable citizen (MacArthur).”*

(5) Prisons were not part of God’s plan for punishing and restraining evil. Thieves were required to give restitution (up to 4 times the amount stolen). Corporal punishment was administered. Those who didn’t have the money to pay were required to work so they could make payment. Punishment was to be swift and painful.

(6) Governments have the God-given duty of administering capital punishment to those who are guilty of 1st degree murder! Governments that neglect this duty bring their nation under condemnation and subject their nation to God's wrath!

Genesis 4:10 "And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."

Genesis 9:5-6 "Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man."

Numbers 35:30-34 "Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. 31 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. 33 **So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land,** and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34 Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit"

God raised up the nation of Israel so that she could administer His wrath against the nations that occupied Canaan. Israel remained in Egyptian bondage for over 400 years waiting for the iniquity of the Canaanites to come to the place where God had to judge them. Then, when Israel's wickedness reached its fullness, God raised up a nation in the north to punish her:

Ezekiel 7:23-24

(7) When governments do not execute those guilty of 1st degree murder, God will punish the people of that land:

Isaiah 24:5-6a "The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,"

Deut.21:1,7-9 "If anyone is found slain, lying in the field in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who killed him...Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it. 8 Provide atonement, O Lord, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood. 9 So you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord."

2 Samuel 21:1-6 Note verse 1 here and speak of context "Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, 'It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.'" Saul murdered Gibeonites with-whom Israel had entered a treaty. The blood guilt on the land was cleansed by the execution of 7 of Saul's sons (Saul was no-longer alive.

Matthew 23:35-37a "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!"

II. THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO GIVE PRAISE "Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good"

III. THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO PROTECT 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.

Timothy 2:1-3 "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."