

Romans 13:1-8 *“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. 8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”* Very simply, we are going to look at the context or connection of our text with the rest of the book of Romans. Then, we shall look at the content of our text.

I. THE CONNECTION OR CONTEXT OF ROMANS 13

Many ask why Paul (as inspired by the Holy Spirit) inserted instruction on a Christian's relationship to governing authorities in his letter the way he did. They don't see the connection. Personally, I see the connection. Beginning in chapter 12, the apostle Paul is giving us practical guidance to apply the doctrine that he's taught us in the first 11 chapters. He is instructing us on how we are to live peaceably with all mankind and trust in God's vengeance rather than taking vengeance into our own hands. Here are some basic reasons why this instruction of how we are to respond to governing authorities is so important.

A. The Jewish People were notorious for being poor citizens when conquered by foreigners. Evidently Joseph, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego, Ezra and Nehemiah were exceptions to the rule. According to Dr. Lloyd-Jones, the Jews made awful citizens of the states – especially the Roman state. There were many Jewish people who'd become believers of Jesus Christ as their Messiah in the church at Rome, and many of these were teachers, as they had a knowledge of Old Testament Scriptures. Why were so many of them obnoxious citizens?

1. They applied their own scriptures out of context: **Deuteronomy 17:15** *“you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.”* Taking this command out of context, many Jews felt like they were sinning against God when they subjected themselves to a foreign power or paid taxes to a foreign King. As Jewish people, they saw themselves as citizens of an earthly kingdom, regardless of where they lived on the globe. **Matthew 22:17** *“Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar, or not?”* This was more than just a trick question, for many Jews believed it was a sin to pay tribute to Caesar.

2. Also, when these Jews became Christians, they accepted Jesus as their Messiah and King. Although they were mistaken, many of these Jews saw Jesus as an earthly King whose kingdom was of this world and time. Therefore, they felt disloyal to Jesus when they subjected themselves to earthly authorities. Remember, this was the main reason Jesus was misunderstood and rejected by the Jewish leaders. They said, “Jesus, if you truly are the Messiah, go to Jerusalem and set yourself up as King!”

3. All Christians have a tendency to think that because they have submitted themselves to Jesus as their Lord, they no longer have to submit to other authorities. Wives incorrectly believe they are free from their husband's authority, children think they are free of parental authority, slaves think they are free of their masters, employees free of their employers and citizens can incorrectly believe they are free of governmental authority. Without proper instruction, this error comes natural ***Philippians 3:20*** "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," ***Galatians 3:28*** "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The early history of the Anabaptist in Europe **illustrate this error in theology: On December 27, 1521, The crisis came in the Peasants' War in southern Germany in 1525. In its origin a revolt against feudal oppression, it became, under the leadership of Müntzer, a war against all constituted authorities, and an attempt to establish by revolution an ideal Christian commonwealth, with absolute equality and the community of goods. There were some common points between the Zwickau prophets and the later-developed Anabaptists. (Wikipedia "Anabaptist."** My own direct ancestor, in the early 1600's was a Quaker and personal close friend to Mr. Fox, the Quaker who came to Pennsylvania and established a home for Quakers in America. My ancestor and Mr. Fox were placed in the stocks for proclaiming the Gospel publically. After some time, Mr. Martindale was told he could go, but Mr. Martindale ended up spending an entire year in prison because he refused to "doff his hat," to show respect to the magistrate. Later, after spending this year in jail, he joined Fox (they were brothers-in-law if I remember right) in his American adventure.

4. Many have taken scriptures like, "the night is far spent, the day is at hand," as a reason to quit work and completely separate from all earthly authority and responsibility.

B. For the reasons listed above, Christians had to be taught their proper relationship to all established authorities. ***Titus 3:1-2*** "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men." ***1 Peter 2:13-17*** "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

II. THE CONTENT OF ROMANS 13

Specific words that give meaning to our text:

Every soul = Every soul that breathes. There is no exception. It applies to everyone

Governing Authorities (NKJV) = Higher Powers (KJV) = Old KJV is more accurate.

We are to recognize authority that is over us.

Subject = to arrange under, to subordinate. There are 3 other different Greek words that mean "obey," any of which the H.S. could have chosen, thus our word does not mean "obey," although obedience might be included in it. It doesn't mean blind or unthinking obedience in any way.