

Ten Reasons Why Romans 13 is Not About Secular Government, Pt. 1

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If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:3)

Psalm 11 is one of King David's many Psalms of encouragement, meant to hearten us *even* when we are experiencing less than desirable conditions. As Christians, our greatest testimony to the world is evidenced in how we respond to such situations:

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in Yahweh, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.... As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 6:9-10)

Even so, the unstated implication of Psalm 11:3 is that the righteous *do* suffer when Yahweh's¹ foundations (as established in His righteousness and codified in His Ten Commandments and their respective statutes and judgments²) have been overturned.³ The righteous suffer when biblical foundations are replaced with anything less than God's perfect law as the standard for society:

The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of Yahweh are true and righteous altogether. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and keeping of them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)

Because there are no vacuums when it comes to legislated ethics, there can be no vacuums when it comes to dominion. *Someone* always holds dominion and is, therefore, in control of the foundations upon which that dominion is based.

Yahweh's foundations are destroyed whenever they are supplanted with something other than His moral law. Thus, they are destroyed whenever someone other than His servants hold dominion by legislation.

When this is the state of society, *everyone* and *everything* suffers:

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (Romans 8:19-22)

Because all creation suffers when the biblical foundations are destroyed, all creation waits and yearns for the sons of God to restore the foundations. Thus, it is also implied in Psalm 11:3 that the righteous should *never* be content whenever they find themselves living at such a time as depicted by King David. Such is, in fact, a dereliction of duty. As subjects and ambassadors of Christ and His kingdom, it is our responsibility to do everything within our realm of influence to reconstruct the righteous foundations.

Even though it's our intention to be at peace with all men so much as it depends upon us, ⁴ this will put us at odds with those responsible for destroying the righteous foundations. This is inevitable whenever opposing world views vie for supremacy. It's why Caesar was threatened by the Apostle Paul and other first-century disciples. His world was being turned upside down by these Christians whose world view demanded they turn the world right side up by restoring righteous foundations under Christ's kingship:

[L]ewd fellows of the baser sort ... drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city [intending to incriminate them], crying, These that have turned the world upside down ... do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (Acts 17:5-7)

We must be careful to avoid sacrificing the foundations for the sake of peace. To sacrifice the foundations is to reject their Architect.

Contemporary America is full of Christians who are doing this very thing in a multitude of different ways. One of the most prevalent is in asserting that Romans 13:1-7 is about secular government and that Christians are therefore obligated to submit to (or, at least, content themselves with) any government authority at any given time.

There are a number of different versions and degrees to this errant theology. My question in this series is: "Does Romans 13 have *anything at all* to do with secular government?"

The Text

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the 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 the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. (Romans 13:1-7)

Does Paul depict a secular or biblical civil government? In the articles to follow, we'll let the text and related passages provide us with the answer to this extremely important question.

Stay tuned for [Part 2](#).

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1. YHWH, the English transliteration of the Tetragrammaton, is most often pronounced Yahweh. It is the principal Hebrew name of the God of the Bible and was inspired to appear nearly 7,000 times in the Old Testament. It was unlawfully deleted by the English translators. In obedience to the Third Commandment and the many Scriptures that charge us to proclaim, swear by, praise, extol, call upon, bless, glorify, and hold fast to His name, we have chosen to memorialize His name here in this document and in our lives. For a more thorough explanation concerning

important reasons for using the sacred name of God, see [“The Third Commandment.”](#)

2. *Law and Kingdom: Their Relevance Under the New Covenant*

A Biblical Constitution: A Scriptural Replacement for Secular Government

See also series of ten online books on each of the Ten Commandments and their respective statutes, and judgments, beginning with *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*.

3. Deuteronomy 28:15-68

4. Romans 12:18