

Paul and Civil Obedience in Romans 13:1-7

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Introduction

The Purpose of the Study

We live in a generation in which public opinion of those in political leadership is probably at an all time low. There are a number of reasons for this, including what appears to many as a "crisis in character." In any event, this is, generally speaking, the situation. The purpose of this study is to focus on what Paul had to say about authorities in [Romans 13](#) in order that we Christians might better understand how it is that God would have us relate to those whom he, in his sovereignty, has placed over us.

An Overview of the Study

The study will examine Paul's teaching on the Christian's relation to the civil authorities as outlined in [Romans 13:1-7](#) and then compare that with [1 Peter 2:13-17](#). First, the study will survey the problem of the textual authenticity of the passage. Second, a translation and outline will be given followed by a brief look at the historical context of the letter and the social make-up of the church in Rome. Third, the bulk of the study will be taken up with an in-depth exegesis of the passage. Fourth, and final, certain similarities and differences between Paul and Peter will be delineated.

A Commentary on [Romans 13](#)

[Romans 13:1-7: An Interpolation?](#)

Virtually every serious commentary on the book of Romans has had to wrestle with the integrity of the last two chapters of the work, especially chapter 16.¹ But, this is not the only place in the epistle where Pauline authenticity has been questioned. There are those, who for several different reasons, reject 13:1-7 as truly from the hand of Paul.² One such interpreter who has advanced some of the strongest arguments in favor of [Romans 13:1-7](#) as an interpolation (i.e., a later insertion into the text) is James Kallas.³

Kallas gives two general and three specific reasons for concluding that [Romans 13:1-7](#) is an interpolation. In terms of the general observations, he says that it is likely that [Romans 13:1-7](#) is an interpolation because 1) it is well known that the ending of the epistle has been altered radically and 2) nowhere else does Paul speak about the Christian's relationship to the civil authorities. In response, first, concerning the ending of Romans, it must be said that while there is continuing discussion about the authenticity of chapter 16 and parts of chapter 15, it is not a forgone conclusion that they are indeed spurious. Gamble has demonstrated that there is convincing evidence leading to the conviction that [Romans 16](#) formed the original ending to the document.⁴ Even if Gamble's conclusion is rejected, it is questionable to assert that a pericope (i.e. paragraph) deep within the paraenetic section of 12:1-15:13 is somehow an interpolation due to the questionable nature of chapter 16—an epistolary ending. The problem with chapter 16 cannot be assumed to have occurred in 13:1-7.⁵ Second, the fact that Paul nowhere else speaks about governing authorities is an argument from silence based in part upon the doubtful authorship of the Pastorals.⁶ Even if the authorship of the Pastorals is questioned, it remains an argument from silence. We cannot forbid Paul to speak about something that he has hitherto, for whatever reasons, not mentioned. Paul's letters are occasional documents and the fact that he mentions something only once can more properly be explained as due to

the occasion of that particular case. He mentions the Lord's supper only once (1 Cor 11:17-34). Does this mean that we should on that basis question its authenticity? Further, the universal offer (e.g. 1:16 and *pantiV tw/ pisteuvonti*) of the gospel to all people as outlined in the book of Romans clearly indicates its worldwide agenda. This, then, leads to the inevitable question of the relation of Christians to the state or governing authorities.⁷ The question of the Christian's relationship to the state is a discussion well suited to the book of Romans.

Kallas also raises three specific arguments against the Pauline authorship of [Romans 13:1-7](#). His first two specific points include the idea that the passage is tightly constructed without logical connection to the previous section, and as such it not only stands in *isolation*, but also *interrupts* the flow of the argument in the context. The third argument Kallas raises suggests that [Romans 13:1-7](#) "contradicts basic Pauline ideas and basic Pauline forms of expression."⁸ The first two objections can be responded to simply by seeing the logical connection that exists between both what immediately precedes and that which follows (i.e. the relation of 12:14-21 to 13:1-7 and 13:1-7 to 13:8-14). It seems that Paul's focus on "good" and "evil" in 12:17, 21 and the Christian's responsibility to be at peace with *all* people (12:18) provide sufficient basis for seeing a logical connection to 13:1-7—even though no grammatical connection is explicitly made through the use of *gavr* or *diaV tou'to* or some other Pauline connector. The idea of "clearing all debts" from 13:8 provides a nice flow out of the passage as well, whose end in verse 7 focuses on such issues. We will consider broader connections in the exegesis of the passage.

Kallas's third objection, concerning the lack of Pauline eschatology, and the use of *ejxousiai* to refer to civil authorities ([Rom 13:1](#)), amounts to no real difficulty. Once again this will be demonstrated in the exegesis. Suffice it to say here that nowhere in the passage does Paul *contradict* an eschatological concept he elsewhere explicates. The fact that he may not emphasize eschatological ideas is no grounds for asserting a contradiction. Also, our understanding of Paul's use of language is at best descriptive, not prescriptive, and one cannot safely dismiss an author's consistency if he chooses to use the same term in different ways.⁹ Kallas has not proved his point of contradiction and thereby supported interpolation. We may proceed with the confidence that this passage is truly from the hand of Paul. The fact that it might represent or stem from earlier Christian tradition will be taken up further in the exegesis.¹⁰

An Exegesis of [Romans 13:1-7](#)

A Translation and Outline of the Passage

Textual Problems

13:1—The words *Pa'sa yuchV ejxousivai" uJperecovsai" uJpotassevsqw* in the NA²⁶ are replaced in one papyrus manuscript and certain Western witnesses (p⁴⁶ D* F G it; Irenaeus^{lat} and Ambrosiaster) with *pavsai" ejxousivai" uJperecovsai" uJpotavssesqe*. The external evidence is decidedly in favor of the NA²⁶ reading. Internally, *pa`sa yuchv* most easily gives rise to the other reading—the latter probably an attempt to avoid the Hebraic idiom involved in the presence of *pa`sa yuchV*.¹¹

13:1-4—There are a number of minor revisions in the text which do not affect the sense much and the fact of their presence need only be mentioned in passing.¹²

13:5—The NA²⁶ text reads *ajnavgkh uJpotavssesqai*, but p⁴⁶ D F G it; Irenaeus^{lat} Ambrosiaster leave out the *ajnavgkh* and read *uJpotavssesqe*. The overall witness for the NA²⁶ reading is solid, including a A B Y. As Metzger comments, the changes appear to be an attempt to "simplify the construction."¹³ Dunn also suggests the possibility that the omission is due to an attempt to avoid "the implication of an impersonal cosmic necessity which *dioV ajnavgkh* may have suggested."¹⁴ In any case the manuscript evidence and the fact that *ajnavgkh uJpotavssesqai* is

the more difficult reading all support its originality. That it is not *too* difficult (i.e. so difficult as to be virtually impossible) and awkward is demonstrated by the presence of *ajnavgkh* in [Matthew 18:7](#) and [Hebrews 9:16, 23](#).

Some have attempted to suggest that because [Romans 13:1-7](#) is not found in Marcion's edition of the New Testament, it is therefore spurious. Actually, as F. F. Bruce points out, this is based primarily on "the ground that Tertullian, in his running commentary on Marcion's Pauline edition (*Against Marcion* v. 14.11-14), makes no reference to [Romans 13:1-7](#). But there was probably no reason why he should refer to it." ¹⁵ The only reasonable conclusion is that there is no good manuscript evidence for questioning the authenticity of [Romans 13:1-7](#). (See above under "[Romans 13:1-7: An Interpolation?](#)")

A Translation

13:1 Let every person be submissive to the governing authorities

13:2 For (gavr) there is no authority except [that which is given] by God and those who are appointed by God.

13:3 Consequently (w{ste) the one who resists authority, opposes the institution of God, and those who do so will receive judgment on themselves.

13:4 For (gavr) rulers are not a fear to good work, but to evil [work] Do you want to not fear the authority? Do good and you will have praise from it.

13:4 For (gavr) it is God's servant to do you good, but if you do evil, then fear, for it does not bear the sword in vain (eijkh`/). For (gavr) it is God's servant, an avenger to bring wrath on the one who practices evil.

13:5 Wherefore (dioV) it is necessary to submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience.

13:6 For this reason (diaV tou`to gavr) you pay taxes, for (gavr) [those in authority] are God's servants who persist in this very thing.

13:7 Give back to all people what is owed; taxes to whom taxes are due; revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due and honor to whom honor is due.

An Exegetical Sentence Outline

Subject/Complement: The reason the Roman Christians should submit to the governing authorities and give them their proper due is because the authorities have been appointed by God (as attested by conscience) and will praise those who do good and inflict punishment (i.e. wrath) on those who do evil. ¹⁶

I. The reason Paul commands the Roman Christians to submit to the authorities is because civil authority is God's institution and as such will punish wrongdoers and praise those who do good (13:1-5).

A. Paul commands the Roman Christians to submit to civil authority because God has appointed that authority (1-2a).

B. Paul commands the Roman Christians to submit to civil authority because the civil authorities will punish those who resist them (2b-3a) and praise and do good to them that obey (2b-4).

C. Paul commands the Roman Christians to submit to civil authority because of the punitive action of the state (i.e. wrath) and also because of conscience (5).

II. The way in which Paul enjoins submission to civil authorities who give themselves to collecting taxes is by giving back to them whatever is owed, whether taxes, dues, respect or honor (13: 6, 7).

A. The reason the Roman Christians pay taxes is because God has appointed the state to receive taxes and they persist in collecting them (6).

B. The way the Roman Christians are to demonstrate submission to civil authorities is by giving back to each authority what is owed, whether taxes, revenue, respect or honor (7).

The Historical Setting of the Passage

The Readership

There has been an ongoing discussion in scholarly circles with regards to the composition of the church in Rome. The letter was probably written to the church at Rome in the late winter/early spring of A. D. 57 so we can safely say that there were some Jews back in the city after being expelled due to the edict of Claudius in A. D. 49.¹⁷ Some of those Jews would undoubtedly have been Christians and were expelled for embroiling themselves in a dispute with other Jews over Jesus (cf. [Acts 18:2](#)).¹⁸ At this point Christians and Jews were considered to be basically one and the same group—at least as far as the state was concerned.¹⁹ During the middle to later years of the reign of Nero, Christians and Jews began to be distinguished as two separate groups.²⁰ But the question remains as to composition of the church in Rome. Was the church composed of Gentiles? Jews? Or a mixture of the two? If so, did any group predominate?

The old Tübingen school, based on the Jewish element in chapters 9-11, postulated a solely Jewish church in Rome. Others have followed in a similar vein for various reasons including the assumption that the letter reads better if understood to refer to a Jewish Christian audience alone.²¹ Paul does refer to Abraham as *propavtora hJmw`n* which some have concluded indicates that the readers were primarily Jewish. As Harrison says, such an argument is "robbed of any great force" by Paul's reference to Israel as *oiJ patevre* "uJmw`n" in [1 Corinthians 10:1](#) where the readership is primarily Gentile.²²

Many interpreters argue for a primarily Gentile audience.²³ Paul's reference to the audience as Gentiles among whom he has received grace and apostleship to call them to the obedience of faith (1:5, 12-14; 15:16); his reference in 6:19 to *ajkaqarsiva/* and *ajnomiva/* as well as the fact that he says that he explicitly addresses them as Gentiles (11:13) and says that *they* have received mercy due to Jewish unbelief—all this seems to indicate a Gentile audience. This has led to another, probably more accurate, theory.

Romans appears to be addressed to a mixed audience of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Due to the emphasis on the Gentiles, as indicated above, as well as Paul's personal call to the Gentile mission (15:16), it would appear that the Gentiles were in the majority. Perhaps this is, in part, due to the edict of Claudius wherein many Jewish Christians had been expelled, but not Gentile Christians. When the Jewish Christians returned (A. D. 54, 55?) the Gentiles were in the majority and in positions of leadership in the church.²⁴

What was the church in Rome like in A. D. 57? From the lack of a reference to *the church at Rome* (i.e. meaning the entire church as a whole) in the book of Romans, combined with the fact that many different groups appear to be mentioned in [Romans 16](#) (cf. 16: 5, 10b, 11), it seems rather safe to conclude at this point, that there was no central organization *per se*, or a central place of worship. Perhaps there were several house churches (cf. 16:5).

The Political Setting

As has already been mentioned, the letter to the Romans was written in A. D. 57. Nero was in power, but in the early part of his reign (A. D. 54-68). There appears to be no indication that at this time he was a tyrant and brutal ruler.²⁵ The Jews had been expelled in A. D. 49, but that was under Claudius and things appeared to be different in A. D. 57.

There was a problem with "tax protests" under Nero in A. D. 58,²⁶ but this does not appear to be relevant at the time of the writing of Romans. Therefore, we may assume that political conditions were fairly stable and that the Christian church which was undoubtedly born in the synagogues at Rome²⁷ enjoyed the status of *religio licita* as they were still largely seen to be within Judaism's fold.

Marcus Borg suggests the possibility that Jewish nationalism had reached violent levels in Rome and for that reason the Jews were expelled²⁸ and that such a situation forms the background to [Romans 13:1-7](#). This appears to be cautious speculation. The expulsion occurred some eight years prior and there doesn't appear to be any concrete evidence to demonstrate that such was the case in A. D. 57. Ksemann suggests another possibility for the background to the passage. He claims that certain Christian enthusiasts had thrown off all restraint in the light of their heavenly calling and regarded "earthly authorities with indifference or contempt."²⁹ This may be true, but it is difficult to defend from within or outside of the passage. Indeed the use of the indicative "you pay taxes" (v. 6) would tend to indicate that there was at least some degree of submission to the state already in the church.³⁰ There have also been other suggestions concerning the background of the passage. It would appear, however, that we simply cannot be as precise as Borg or Ksemann suggest. We know that Paul exhorts the Romans in right conduct toward the state, but it is very difficult to say for sure what prompted such a discussion.

The Literary Setting of the Pericope and Its Relation to the Argument of the Book

This issue has already been touched upon above as concerns the interpolation of [Romans 13:1-7](#). There we saw that the pericope, while somewhat abrupt in that there are no explicit connectors,³¹ nonetheless continues the thought-line in the immediate setting of 12:9-21 and 13:8ff. There is the continual influence of Jewish wisdom from 12:9-21 and the use of similar language in 12:9-21 and 13:1-7.³² The passage relates well to 12:1-2, the major turning point in the focus of the letter (i.e. from the indicative to the imperative) where the Christian is urged on the basis of God's mercy to offer himself as a living sacrifice. This wholehearted submission of the Christian is expressed through a commitment to live righteously in an ever expanding series of relationships—including living in accordance with the government God has established.³³ We must also consider the whole argument of Romans. Without entering into the rather great debate as to the purpose of the letter,³⁴ we can see that there is a new defining line for the people of God—faith in Christ Jesus (3:21-24; 10:12).³⁵ The Law, as it was so often used by the Jews to mark themselves out as God's people (cf. 3:2), has been replaced by Christ and one's attachment to him as the new defining line regarding the constitution of the people of God (10:4). As such, the Christian's relation to the state must be redefined, not as an opponent to be overcome necessarily, but as an ally as far as God's current program is concerned and as stewards to do good to those who obey. With this overarching theme in Romans, the civil injunctions in chapter 13 mesh quite well.

The Exegesis Proper

The passage breaks down into three basic units consisting of the command to submit to authorities (13:1a), the rationale, including theological as well as practical considerations for such an injunction (13:1b-5), and certain matters of practical consideration covered by the command (13:6-7).

The Command to Submit to Authorities (13:1a)

13:1a Pa'sa yuchV ejxousivai" uJperecousai" uJpotassevsqw. "Let every person be submissive to the governing authorities."

Pa'sa yuchv—literally means "every soul." It occurs in one other place in Romans with the same meaning as 13:1 (cf. 2:9).³⁶ The expression has a Semitic background and is essentially a metonymy for the "person" as a living being. It occurs in [Leviticus 7:27](#); [23:29](#); [Acts 2:43](#); [3:23](#) and 1 Clement 64, among other places. In [Leviticus 23:29-30](#) the Hebrew text has *vp#n lk** which the LXX translates as *pa'sa yuchv*. Clearly this refers to the "person" to whom God was stipulating the regulations for the Passover. The references in [Acts 2:43](#), [3:23](#); [7:14](#) and [27:37](#) also refer to the "person as a whole," not just the inner man. 1 Clement 64 reads, "May the all-seeing God. . . grant to *every soul* that has called upon his magnificent and holy name . . ." Here Clement uses *yuchv* to refer to the person as a whole, and with *pa'sa* to refer to "every" person—the context being the delimiting factor in the "every." In summary, *pa'sa yuchv* focuses on the person as a whole (obliquely conveying the idea that man has a soul) and may yield overtures of creation—the fact that man was created a living being (cf. [1 Cor. 15:45](#) and [Gen 2:7](#)).³⁷ Having shown that the phrase is a Semitism, such an emphasis must not predominate though, for it is used as the subject of a predominantly Hellenistic term, namely, *uJpotavssw*.³⁸

eixousivai **uJperecouvsai**—"governing authorities." The term **eixousivai** is the plural form of *eixousiva* and refers not to the *principle* of authority as such (cf. *ouj gavr e[stin eixousiva* further in the same verse), nor to the *domain* in which a certain authority is carried out (cf. [Luke 4:6](#); [22:53](#); [23:7](#); [Eph 2:2](#)). Instead, it refers to the *rulers themselves* who are charged with exercising such rulership (cf. [Luke 7:8](#); [19:17](#), esp. 20:20). Thus it refers to an official power or authority invested in certain individuals (cf. [Luke 12:11](#) and the reference to the *taV* *ajrcaV* *kaiV taV* *eixousiva*" which probably refers to Roman authorities).³⁹ In describing the rule of life for the Essene community Josephus says that a potential initiate "will show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in *authority*, because no one obtains the government without God's assistance" (*War* 2.140).

The term **uJperecouvsai**⁴⁰ is also used to refer to rulers. In *Wisdom of Solomon* 6:5 the text reads "because severe judgment falls on *those in high places*" where kings and rulers (cf. 6:1, 2) are clearly the referent for *those in high places*. Consider also 2 Maccabees 3:11 and the relation of wealth to positions of power and Philo, *De Agricultura*, 121, for its use to refer to a superior athlete.

The term *eixousivai*" therefore had a wide and extensive usage in and around the time of the New Testament in reference to human rulers and combined with *uJperecouvsai*" serves to refer to the highest rulers (e.g. governing authorities) over people. We now turn our attention to certain questions concerning differing interpretations of *eixousivai*" and *uJperecouvsai*". We will begin with *uJperecouvsai*".

Porter argues that the emphasis in the term *uJperecouvsai*" is not particularly superiority in rank, but qualitative superiority as well (i.e. justness). He cites several instances from Greco-Roman and Pauline literature where the term is used to refer to a qualitative difference. He says, "adopting the qualitative sense, Paul in [Rom 13:1](#) is commanding obedience not just to any superior authorities or to those who occupy a superior position, but to authorities who are superior in some sense qualitatively or, specifically in this case, *according to their justness*."⁴¹ This interpretation is probably not correct. First, Porter uses this particular interpretation (i.e. the state's superior quality of justness) to influence the answer he gives to the question of obedience to the state. But, Paul says that obedience to the state is motivated by fear, praise and inner sense, i.e. conscience—not one's state greater "justness" as opposed to another. Second, there is nothing in [Romans 13:1-7](#) that tends to favor a qualitative reading of the participle. Therefore, it seems that Paul's readers would have taken the term simply to refer to authorities who preside over them, since as has been shown, this was the normal use of the term in a *context of a discussion about political rulers*. We now turn our attention to the referent for the term *eixousivai*".

The question that has arisen in the interpretation of *eixousivai*" is, "Does the term refer only to human rulers in [Romans 13](#) or to human rulers plus angelic rulers as well? Oscar Cullmann represents several scholars since the turn of this century who argue for a double referent—that *eixousivai*" refers both to human rulers as well as to angelic authorities controlling (cf. Cullmann's term "instruments") them."⁴² The following discussion will be a consideration of his arguments.

Cullmann argues that the "authorities" in [Romans 13](#) are indeed human rulers, but they are controlled by angelic powers. He says that "only when this conception is found there does the entire section become really clear; only then does it fall into harmony with the entire outlook of Paul."⁴³ There is "abundant" evidence, he adds, in the book of Daniel, *The Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach*, *Enoch*, *the Talmud* and *Midrash* for such a conclusion. Thus there is a straight line of continuous thought in Judaism on the issue running from the post-exilic⁴⁴ period right up to and well beyond the time of the New Testament. He says that in [1 Cor 2:8](#), "Paul manifestly means *both* the invisible 'princes of the world,' who are often mentioned as such, and their actual human instruments, Herod and Pilate."⁴⁵ He argues that [1 Cor 6:3](#) is unintelligible unless such a view be maintained.⁴⁶ Cullmann criticizes G. Kittel who attempted to overturn the idea by citing ordinary Greek usage as not supporting such a double referent. Cullmann responded to this problem by claiming that ordinary Greek usage knows nothing of the late Jewish idea of angelic powers over state rulers. In other words, Paul is distinctly influenced by the Jewish idea. Further, this idea is found among the Gnostics in their interpretation of [Romans 13:1](#) (cf. Ireneaus, *Against Heresies*, 5. 24. 1).

Personally, I think that angelic authorities are involved in the affairs of people and governments (cf. [Dan 10:21](#)). But, for several reasons, I do not think that is in Paul's mind in [Rom 13:1-7](#). First, Cullmann's reading of [1 Cor 2:8](#) and [6:3](#) is by no means "manifestly clear" as to the involvement of both angels and rulers.⁴⁷ Second, the reference to *eixousivai* in the plural provides no solid ground for concluding that it refers to angels as well as men, and the fact that it is not immediately joined to *ajrchv* as it is in [Ephesians 1:21; 3:10](#) (cf. [6:12](#) also) further weakens Cullmann's thesis. Third, despite Cullmann's arguments to the contrary, subjection to spiritual authorities *does* detract from the centrality of Christ and in no other place in the New Testament is such a command issued. In fact, the opposite is enjoined on Christians (cf. [Eph 6:12](#)). Fourth, nowhere is it asserted that Christ's death and resurrection has accomplished subjugation of fallen angels to the point of conscripting them toward a positive role in his service. This does not appear to be in the New Testament and if one holds to a mostly futuristic view of [Rev 13](#), then the fallen angelic authorities will at some future time rebel against Christ by political means.⁴⁸ Fifth, it is difficult to understand angels in verse 6 in the context of paying taxes.⁴⁹ Sixth, as Ernst Ksemann has pointed out, in [Romans 13](#) "the terminology we encounter has its origin in the vocabulary of the of secular government in the Hellenistic world," not in Judaism with its view of angelic rulers.⁵⁰ For these and other reasons, many commentators have rejected the idea of a double referent in [Romans 13](#).⁵¹

So it can be said, according to the context in [Romans 13](#) and Pauline usage elsewhere, that the authorities (i.e. *eixousivai*) spoken of in [Romans 13:1](#) refer solely to human rulers. Since the term lacks the article⁵² and is plural, it probably refers to anyone in a governing position acting on behalf of and with the authority of the Roman government (cf. [1 Pet 2:14](#)).⁵³

uJpotassevsqw—The verb is a 3rd person, singular, present middle imperative. Immediately one is confronted with the change from the second person singular in [12:19-21](#) to the third person singular in [13:1](#). Why this abrupt shift? We have dealt with [Romans 13:1-7](#) and its asyndetic nature, but we have not probed the reason for the switch to the third person in [13:1](#). First, we observe that this shift in person does not continue through the entire unit. It persists until [13:3b](#) where Paul returns to the second person singular (*qevlei"/poivei/e{xei*). Therefore the switch to the third person singular covers the actual command to submission and the rationale wherein all authority comes from God (*vv.1-3b*). [1 Peter 2:13](#) reads *uJpotavghte pavsh/ ajnqrwpivnh/ ktivsei diaV toVn kuvrion*. Peter admonishes obedience to the authorities using the aorist, second person plural. Perhaps the change to the third person singular in Paul indicates that the command is really for all people, saved or not, whereas the commands in [12:19-21](#) for example are really only possible for Christians—those who have been recipients of the mercy of God. It is clear in [13:1](#) that Paul has Roman Christians in view, but it may be that the imperative is true for all people without exception, thus the use of the third person with *Pa'sa yuchv*.⁵⁴ It is difficult to know whether Peter, writing from Rome, borrows from Paul or whether both are original or both go back to a tradition developed early in the church to deal with conflicts with the governing authorities.⁵⁵ If they both go back to an earlier tradition, such as that found in [Mark 12:13-17](#), then perhaps that tradition got lifted to the level of a universal principle that we see highlighted by the

use of the third person rather than the second. If indeed Paul is working with a tradition that was well known in Rome, that would account for the lack of a connecting particle (i.e. joining 13:1-7 to 12:21) as he simply allowed the tradition to stand as is. It must also be remembered that at times paraenetic material is often without tight argumentation (Rom 12:9-21; 1 Thes 5:16-22).⁵⁶

Another question remains concerning the term *uJpotassevsqw*. What kind of submission is Paul talking about? The term is used 18 times in Paul and 20 other times in the New Testament. In the book of Romans he uses the term in conjunction with *savr* and its inability to *submit* to the law of God (8:7) and the *subjection* of the creation to futility by God (8:20)⁵⁷ as well as Israel's failure to *submit* to God's righteousness, instead creating their own. It also occurs twice in our passage, namely, verses 1 and 5. Paul uses the term to refer to *submission* of all things to Christ in the process of redemption (1 Cor 15:27, 28; Eph 1:22; Phil. 3:21; Heb 2:5, 8; 1 Peter 3:22) and in relationships in the church. Prophets are to be in *submission* one to another so that peace and order may be maintained (1 Cor 14:32). This is also true of women's roles in the church (14:34) and husband/wife relations as well. The wife is to submit to her husband as to the Lord (Eph 5:24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1, 5; and Ps. *Callisth.*, 1. 22. 4).⁵⁸ Slaves are to be subject to their masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18), men and women to their spiritual leaders (1 Cor 16:16; 1 Peter 5:5) and of course *submission* to God himself is enjoined (Heb 12:9; James 4:7). The idea of *submission* to political authorities is seen in Titus 3:1 and 1 Peter 2:13-17. Finally, as far as NT usage is concerned, Luke uses it to refer to Jesus' *submission* to his parents after the Temple incident (Luke 2:51) and the fact that the demons had to *submit* to the disciples Jesus had sent out on a mission (10:17, 20). Its use in the New Testament, then, basically yields the idea of humble, informed submission to another in the light of God's will and redemptive work. That *submission* happens in all relationships in life.

The term is found in literature outside the New Testament as well. Josephus uses it in relation to the *submission* of Israel to foreign powers, i.e. Rome (*War*, 2.433; 4.175). It is also seen as a commendable attitude in *The Letter of Aristeas*, 257 where the text refers to a person who has a willing desire to submit to others. The king asks the question, "How can one find welcome abroad among strangers?" The answer given includes the idea of "*appearing inferior* rather than superior to those among whom one is a stranger." Here again we see that humility is at the core of the idea inherent in *uJpotavssw*.

The term is employed in the LXX about 30 times. Two instances of the verb in the middle voice are of note: 2 Maccabees 9:12 and 13:23. In 9:12 the writer relays the story of how Antiochus IV eventually *submitted* to God after God had smitten him with a wasting disease. In 13:23 the text says, "he [Antiochus] was dismayed, called in the Jews, *yielded* and swore to observe all their rights." From these two examples we can see that humility is involved in a process of submitting oneself to a higher authority—ultimately a voluntary *submission* in the light of the power of the higher authority.

From this evidence it is clear that the term has the idea of curbing one's will to the will of another; in this respect, a higher authority. In only one instance in the New Testament does it carry the idea of "forced submission," i.e. compulsion (Luke 10:17, 20). But there are other observations that can be made as well. The term as used in the New Testament has the constant reminder that there is a divine "order" at work, wherein God values societal order and is seeking in the context of redemption to bring such a result out of the chaos of sin in human relations. Thus even Jesus had to submit to his earthly parents and his work on earth was carried out according to God's design and order (Luke 2:51). He will someday, according to God's order, turn over the kingdom to the Father and he himself will be subject to God (1 Cor 15:28). Insofar as this order and submission is inherent in the Trinity and its inner relations, so it must occur in the redeemed community—in worship, in family relations and in all other relations—as ones who have received the mercies and Spirit of the Trinity. If the Son has to submit, we must all submit to whatever authority God the Father has appointed (cf. 1 Cor 11:12 in context).

The choice of the term *uJpotavssw* is interesting in the light of other terms Paul could have chosen—stronger terms which are rendered "obedience." They include *peiqarcei`n*, *peivqesqai* and *uJpakouein*.⁵⁹ This probably indicates that Paul does not have in mind slavish, uncritical obedience to the state, but that there are various points at which

the Roman Christians could not, and indeed must not, submit to the authorities.⁶⁰ This particular aspect of the issue is not taken up, however, as *it was his purpose to stress submission*.

What Paul wants then, according to [Romans 13:1](#) is willing, intelligent submission to the authorities, out of humility, because one is conscience of God's appointing and working through them.⁶¹ Underlying Paul's injunction is the understanding that the government is doing what God has appointed it for—that it knows between right and wrong (13:3) and carries out its role of maintaining harmony among the citizens.

A few other things must be said about submission to governmental authorities. Paul is not putting his *carte blanche* on all government actions per se, but is instead upholding the *principle* (13:1b) of "government and order" as an end towards responsible, peaceful living in a fallen world. When a government fulfills its functions of maintaining peace, and generally protects the welfare of its people, both against those from within and without who would threaten these things, then it is carrying out the end to which it was appointed. It must be obeyed even if some things are tough—e. g. paying high taxes. But, when it crosses these boundaries and becomes an instrument for evil, violating the explicit will of God as outlined in Scripture, then it must not be followed (i.e. obeyed) *at that point*.⁶² When the explicit will of God conflicted with certain authorities, Peter said we must obey God, not men ([Acts 5:29](#)). Paul accused the governing authorities of carrying out sentence without proper jurisprudence and he demanded certain actions be taken to remedy the situation ([Acts 16:37](#)).⁶³ If the spreading of the gospel is unwelcome by one's own state, then the Christian must suffer the consequences, but nevertheless continue to obey God. There does not appear to be the possibility in [Romans 13:1-7](#) that a Christian could take up arms against the state.

If indeed the problem in [Romans 13](#) is strife between Christians and the state over the payment of taxes, then Paul says, "Give back to the state the taxes you owe" (v. 6, 7). But someone might say, "The state uses tax money for immoral purposes." Paul does not address these kinds of issues here. His assumption is that the government in power (even Rome with its erroneous religious views, etc.) is better than the evil that would result from anarchy.⁶⁴ People must learn to live in a posture of submission. This goes back to creation and God's ordering of the world, especially of those in the church. In the end, one will always find oneself under the punitive authority of the state. Even Peter and Paul, as far as tradition is concerned, were killed by Roman authorities. So, if we do not follow the state in all its ideology and demands, we will end up being judged by them should they disagree with our Christian convictions.⁶⁵

The Rationale for Submission (13:1b-5)

A Theological Basis (13:1b-2a)

13:1b ouj gaVr e[stin ejxousiva ejj mhV uJpoV qeou', aiJ deV ousai uJpoV qeou' tetagmevnai eijsvn. " For (gavr) there is no authority except [that which is given] by God and those who are appointed by God."

The **gaVr** indicates that what follows is the rationale for the command given in 13:1a. Paul says that every man should subject himself to the governing authorities *because* God is the originator and "establisher" of that authority. The twice repeated **uJpoV qeou'** clearly indicates the emphasis is on divine ordering, and the exclusion of any authority apart from (**ejj mhV**) God furthers the idea of his sovereign control and ordering of the affairs of men. Later on Paul will talk about other motivations for civil obedience—fear, praise and conscience—but for now he wants his readers to know that governmental authority and those who carry it out are from God.

The question arises, does the term **ejxousiva** refer to specific authorities? Or, does it refer to the principle of authority itself? If we say that Paul is simply referring to the principle of authority and rulership we anchor the theology more closely with the nature of God—one who is ordered within himself and the Trinity. This observation definitely follows from the text, but it may not be the explicit denotation for **ejxousiva** here. The use of **uJpoV** and the elliptical nature of the clause, suggest the provision of a transitive verb of some kind, perhaps **ejdvwqh** (i.e. given), or possibly **uJpov** has the force of **ajpov**.⁶⁶ If this is true, then Paul is likely talking about rulers as "individuals given"—

as concrete expressions of God's authority. Second, the last clause in the verse is joined by way of parataxis (dev) to the clause preceding. This would tend to further the idea that what we have in the last clause is support for those individuals mentioned as ejxousiva.

The term **tetagmevnai** is in paraphrastic construction with **eijsvn**. The construction tends to emphasize the present aspect of the appointment and tetagmevnai continues the language of order and submission that pervades [Romans 13:1-7](#).⁶⁷ Such language includes: uJpotassevsqw/ uJpotavssesqai, ajntitassovmeno", diataghv and ajnqevsthken. Tetagmevnai is a perfect middle from tavssw which means "to determine," or "to appoint;" the same meaning it carried in non-biblical Greek.⁶⁸ The term is used in the New Testament eight times. It can mean simply "to point out, choose or indicate," as in the case of Jesus choosing the mountain where he wanted to meet his disciples ([Matt 28:16](#)); the church at Antioch choosing or designating Paul and Barnabas to the special task of going to the Jerusalem Council ([Acts 15:2](#)); Paul's choosing a day to meet the Jewish leaders in Rome ([Acts 28:23](#)); and with no necessary negative inferences, the household of Stephanus choosing themselves to serve the saints ([1 Cor 16:15](#)). The term is also used theologically with God as the subject and the one who "appoints" people to eternal life ([Acts 13:48](#)) and the one who had already "chosen" or "marked out" a plan for the Apostle Paul's life ([Acts 22:10](#)). It is used one other time in [Luke 7:8](#). In this passage the centurion recognizes something of Jesus' authority, knowing that he can heal just by "saying the word." The theological use of the term as well as its use in [Luke 7:8](#) is instructive for it sets out some parameters which we may bring into the situation in [Romans 13](#) in order to help us further understand the nature and boundaries of civic appointment. We will discuss this in a moment, but it is necessary to address first from whence Paul is deriving his idea of governmental authority. The background of the passage has had a bearing on this question in the history of discussion of this text.

It seems fairly clear that Paul is deriving his idea of the authorities being appointed by God, not directly from the gospel or early church tradition *per se*, but instead from the OT and his Jewish background, perhaps as a Diaspora Jew.⁶⁹ The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel make abundant reference to such ideas which form the background to Paul's thinking here in [Romans 13](#). In highlighted fashion, [Isaiah 45:1-7](#) says:

¹Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed, Whom I have taken by the right hand, **To subdue** nations before him, And **to loose** the loins of kings; **To open** doors before him so that gates will not be shut: ²I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze, and cut through the iron bars. ³And I will give you the treasures of darkness, And hidden wealth of secret places, **In order that** you may know that it is I, The Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. ⁴**For the sake of** Jacob My servant, And Israel my chosen *one*, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me. ⁵I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me;

⁶**That men may know** from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord and there is no other, ⁷The One who forming light and creating darkness, Causing well being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.

Isaiah clearly says that God is the one who will raise up and appoint Cyrus to the task of serving him, in order that YHWH's purposes with Israel might be served—that Israel would realize that there is only one true God and He is YHWH. We note in this passage that Isaiah is speaking proleptically and thus there is an eschatology inherent in God's dealings with nations as he raises up leaders and peoples according to his grand purposes.⁷⁰

[Jeremiah 21:7, 10](#) and [27:5-7](#) also declare God's sovereign, punitive purposes as he works through the Babylonian nation and King Nebuchadnezzar to bring judgment upon his people Israel. Jeremiah is very conscious of God's sovereign control of people on the earth and the Jews knew what it was like to live under foreign domination. Though the church has a different commission than did Israel, the analogy carries over in that God's people in the world have always had to determine how they would relate to the worldly structures. In the same way as Jeremiah was able to discern the workings of God through the pagan nations, so Paul is able here in [Romans 13](#) to borrow on

that precedent and declare that all authority on earth ultimately comes from God. There is an eschatology in Jeremiah that concerns the nations' dealings with Israel in that God is using them *to bring about* a purified people. He is using Babylon to bring about a nation obedient to him which will then fulfill his eschatological purposes promised in [Genesis 12:1-3](#) and [2 Samuel 7:12-16](#) (cf. [Matt 1:1](#)).

Perhaps no prophet makes it more clear that God is in control of human affairs and places leaders in positions of authority for the carrying out of his purposes than does Daniel (cf. [Dan 2:21, 37, 38; 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21](#)). In 4:17 Daniel says, "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men." These kingdoms are set over the lowliest of men, that is, for their government. But again, there is an eschatological outlook on these kingdoms for they are only forerunners to the great climactic kingdom which God himself will set up in the end (2:44).⁷¹

The fact that God is the one who sets up governments and establishes authority is seen not only in the Old Testament, but also in Jewish intertestamental materials as well. Sirach 10:4 says that "the government of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and over it He will raise up the right leader for the time" (cf. 17:17). In the middle of a discussion about the Essenes and their duties, Josephus says that an Essene should obey the ruling authorities "because no one obtains the government without God's assistance" (*War* 2. 140). The author of the *Letter of Aristeas* says that a person can avoid envy by realizing that "God assigns glory and greatness of wealth to kings, each and every one, and that no king is independent. All of them wish to share his glory, but they cannot—it is a gift of God." The same emphasis is seen in intertestamental apocalyptic materials. 1 *Enoch* 46:5 says that the apocalyptic Son of Man can dispose of kings who do not glorify and obey him, the One who is "the source of their kingship" (cf. also 2 *Apocalypse of Baruch* 82:9).⁷²

Both Dunn and Cranfield agree that Paul is here pulling on his heritage, both in the OT and as a first century Jew.⁷³ Dunn, however, argues further from the OT and Jewish intertestamental materials that not only has Paul derived the idea that God has ordained the state, but that the OT and Jewish sources indicate that the state must function within its God-given ordering (cf. tetagmevnai) or design. If the state does not function according to its proper authority, but exceeds such limits by calling for "greater submission than God has ordered, [it] will come under the judgment of God."⁷⁴ According to Dunn, this balancing of the truth of governmental authority is implied in Paul's discussion of the state here in [Romans 13](#)—that is, insofar as it is explicated in the OT and Jewish sources Paul relied upon. But, says Dunn, it has simply not been Paul's ambition to spell it out here. Porter takes issue with Dunn's approach. The OT and Jewish sources may lay behind the passage, but as Porter says, such a reconstruction of a wisdom tradition "is unnecessary to introduce into the discussion." Instead Porter argues that the limits on the authority of the government are to be found in the text itself wherein Paul refers to the ejxousivai/ uJperecouvsai".⁷⁵ These, he states, are a reference to "just" authorities. When the authorities are not being "just" then they have not been appointed by God or are at the least going outside their divine ordering. This interpretation rests on the qualitative use of uJperecouvsai" which we rejected above. Since the term is used simply to refer to "governing" authorities, it is difficult to believe that the Roman church would have understood it in a qualitative sense at all. It simply refers to those who are rulers, in a political sense. A better approach to defending the nature and boundaries of governmental authority from the text would be to recognize that the term tetagmevnai implies "delegated authority;" an authority which was bestowed by a holy God who cherishes order in society. One may also refer to the terms diavkono" (v. 4) and leitourgoiv (v. 6) to see that the authorities are servants and they, too, have a Master to whom they will give an account. This, then, is enough to demonstrate that Paul was conscious of the *state's responsibility* as well as the Christian's. The background materials, contrary to Porter, are important *in this case* for they give us a feel for ideology influencing the Apostle Paul.

13:2a w{ste oJ ajntitassovmeno" th'/ ejxousiva/ th'/ tou' qeou' diatagh'/ ajnqevsthken. "Consequently (w{ste) the one who resists authority, opposes the institution of God,"

The term **w{ste**⁷⁶ introduces an inference deduced from the preceding argument, namely, that God is the one who has established governments and their rulers with the result that anyone who resists government, *de facto* opposes the institution of God himself.

The substantival participle **oJ ajntitassovmeno**" comes from the verb ajntitavssw which is used only five times in the New Testament and here in [Romans 13](#) forms the antithesis to the verb uJpotavssw used in verse 1. Luke uses it to refer to the Jews who opposed and abused Paul during his ministry in Corinth (cf. [Acts 18:6](#)). James uses the term twice in 4:6 and 5:6. In 5:6, though the opposition spoken of was only hypothetical to show the injustice of the rich oppressors, it carries with it here the note of strong, determined opposition, sufficient to warrant decisive action on the part of the opposed. In [James 4:6](#) (i.e. the other time he uses it) as in [1 Peter 5:5](#), the term is quoted from [Proverbs 3:34](#) in the LXX (see also 1 Clement 30:2; Ignatius to the [Ephesians 5:3](#)). Here it is remarked that "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Again, the opposition spoken of would qualify as "determined resistance" in an attempt to frustrate—only here in a good sense since God is the author of the opposition. Thus its usage in the NT carries the idea, not of mild resistance against someone or something, but a conscious determination to resist or oppose the will or action of another. When God is not the subject it is always used in a negative sense and the resistance is actually something disapproved of by God, or men, or both.

Josephus uses the term when referring to the Jews who *opposed* Caius Caesar when he wanted to set up his statues in the Temple, destroy those who resisted and take captive the rest of the nation (*War* 2. 184-85). Josephus says, "while all the nations in subjection to them [Rome] had placed the images of Caesar in their several cities, among the rest of their gods,—for them alone [i.e. the Jews] to *oppose* it was almost like revolters, and was injurious to Caesar" (*War* 2. 194). The Jews got together in large numbers in this instance to oppose what their rulers were doing, hence ajntitavssw has the same sense as in the NT—a strong determination to resist something, in this case, Caesar's decree.

The term is used in [1 Kings 11:34](#) in the LXX to render the Hebrew Wntva which itself has the idea of "to place" or "put" [him]. God "resisted" Solomon and eventually gave the kingdom to someone other than Solomon's sons (11:35).⁷⁷ Another occurrence of the word is found in [Hosea 1:6](#). Here the MT says that God will not show love to the House of Israel with the result that He would forgive their sin. The LXX renders God's refusal to forgive Israel by the language of opposition—"I will no longer show mercy to Israel, but will surely *oppose* her" (my translation). These are strong words showing God's commitment to resist Israel in her adultery.⁷⁸ Thus the term is used in the negative sense in the OT and Jewish literature as well.

The idea that Paul has in mind is opposition to governing authorities on issues that should not result in Christian opposition. The source of the opposition is probably arrogance and pride since the term came to be associated with [Proverbs 3:34](#). We notice also that the opposition rendered by certain individuals in the NT (where God is not doing the opposing), is always against God's chosen individuals and therefore ultimately against Him. This is the case in [Acts 18](#) with the Jews' who opposed Paul. It is also the case in [Romans 13](#) wherein Paul will not tolerate those in the church to resist those in government (cf. th/ ejxousiva).

The term **diataghv** means "ordinance, direction or instruction"⁷⁹ and continues Paul's heavy emphasis on the language of submission. But inherent in the term in [Romans 13](#) is the idea of God's order and structuring (i.e. design) of human society.⁸⁰ It is used 2 Esdras 4:11 (LXX) to refer to a "copy" of the letter certain men had sent to King Artaxerxes. It is also used once in the Apostolic Fathers in 1 Clement 20:3. Clement says, "The sun and the moon and the choirs of stars circle in harmony within the courses assigned to them, according to his *direction*, without any deviation at all." Thus the cosmos maintains its order by virtue of the *directions* of the Creator. Stephen (i.e., Luke in [Acts 7:53](#)) uses the term in the sense of the *instruction* rendered by the angels who acted as mediators during the giving of the Mosaic Law (cf. [Gal. 3:19](#)). Concerning angels as instructors and mediators of the Mosaic Law, Josephus maintains a similar idea (*Ant.* 15. 136). Thus Paul refers to the governing authorities as ruling according to a divine order and God's express will concerning the management of societal affairs. Morris says the

term *diataghv* refers to a "divine institution."⁸¹ This is definitely the sense in [Romans 13](#).⁸²

Paul says that the one who resists governmental authorities *opposes* (*ajnqevsthken*) the order or structure which comes from God. The term **ajnqevsthken** is used 14 times in the New Testament, eight of which are found in Paul ([Rom 9:19](#), [13:2](#); [Gal 2:11](#); [Eph 6:13](#); [2 Tim 3:8](#), [4:15](#))⁸³ where it clearly refers to strongly "opposing" someone or something. Why the shift from *ajntitavssw* to *ajnqvsthmi*? Most commentators who address the issue claim that it was for stylistic purposes and that the terms carry the same basic meaning.⁸⁴ But, as Dunn points out, its usage in the LXX is illuminating since it constantly denotes a rather useless resistance against an obviously superior power ([Lev. 26:37](#); [Deut 7:24](#); [9:2](#); [Josh 1:5](#), etc.), including resistance against God which is futile at best ([Job 9:19](#); [Ps. 76:7](#); [Jer. 49:19](#); [Wisdom of Solomon 11:21](#) and cf. [12:12](#) with [Rom 9](#)). Thus there was probably a conscious shift for Paul as he attempted to *hint* at the utter folly of opposing what God has instituted. Porter argues that the shift in verb was to indicate a more determined resistance to God's order in government than *ajntitavssw* could achieve.⁸⁵ He bases this distinction on Pauline usage, but Paul uses *ajntitavssw* only once, i.e., here in [Romans 13](#). Therefore such a comparison is unfounded. While the result is perhaps true, it is best derived from OT usage as Dunn has shown.

A Practical Basis (13:2b-5)

13:2b oiJ deV ajnqesthkovte" eJautoi" krivma lhvmyontai⁸⁶ "and those who do so will receive judgment on themselves."

Paul says that those who "set themselves to oppose" (*ajnqesthkovte*)⁸⁷ the divine institution of government will receive **krivma**. What does the term *krivma* denote? Does it refer to divine wrath? Now? At the last judgment? Or does it refer to some punitive action of the state? The term is used 48 times in the NT, six times in Romans alone (2:2, 3; 3:8; 5:16; 11:33; 13:2). It can refer to a person's judgment or estimation of another ([Matt 7:2](#)); to God's temporal judgment of sin ([Rom 2:2, 3](#); [1 Cor. 11:29, 34](#)); to God's eternal judgment ([Mk 12:40](#); [Acts 24:25](#); [Heb 6:2](#); [2 Pet 2:3](#); [Jude 4](#)) or to a political sentence handed out by the state or ruling authorities ([Luke 23:40](#); [24:40](#); [1 Cor 6:7](#)). Since Paul's focus is on the state in [Romans 13](#) it seems best to understand this judgment here as a temporal judgment handed out by the state to the offending party. This interpretation fits the use of the term and allows for the force of the *gavr* in 13:3 and the following explanation that rulers hold no terror for those who do good. But, it must be said that while Paul's focus is on the state and the judgment it will render, we must remember that it has been appointed by God and is his *servant* to mete out punishment when necessary (13:4).⁸⁸ Therefore, although the term *krivma* refers to a sentence handed out by the state, the state is nonetheless acting on behalf of God. When acting within its God-given sphere, the state rules for God and He is the ultimate reason for necessary punitive action. Dunn sees the judgment as divine and eschatological, the result of a program of deliberate opposition to God's instituted authority. This may well be the *result* of such a course of action, for opposing what God institutes will always incur judgment on "the final day," but if the *gavr* of verse 3 be allowed to go with verse 2, then the judgment is God's but mediated through the state. This appears to be Paul's emphasis.⁸⁹ C. K. Barrett says, and I believe accurately, that "when resistance is offered to the state divine judgment comes into operation at once by means of the state's own judicial procedures."⁹⁰

13:3a oiJ gaVr a[rconte" oujk eijsiVn fovbo" tw/ ajgaqw/ e[rgw/ ajllaV tw/ kakw' /. " For (*gavr*) rulers are not a fear to good work, but to evil [work]"

The term **gavr** is an explanatory conjunction and should go with the idea of judgment in verse 2 and not the command in verse 1 so that what follows is an explanation of the *means* of the execution of judgment, by the state.⁹¹ The **oiJ a[rconte"** could refer to angelic beings ([Eph 2:2](#)), but due to its parallel with *eixousivai*" in verse 1 and the reference here to punishing the good (cf. *mavcairan* in v. 4) it seems almost certain that it refers to the Roman rulers ([Matt 20:25](#); [John 7:26](#); [12:42](#); [Acts 3:17](#); [1 Cor 2:6-8](#); [Ps Sol 17:36](#); [Jos. Ant. 20. 11](#)).⁹² The plural use of *a[rconte*" demonstrates that "the Apostle [sic] is speaking quite generally."⁹³

The expression **tw'/ ajgaqw'/ e[rgw** refers to *any* good work or deeds done within the confines of the law enforced and upheld by the state.⁹⁴ This is clear from the following verse wherein Paul talks about "doing good" (i.e. verse 4). The expression **tw'/ kakw'** refers to the opposite of **tw'/ ajgaqw'/ e[rgw** and has the idea of any deeds or actions which oppose the state and its laws. These expressions have the broadest reference and scope. Dunn says,

Once again the **ajgaqov"/kavko** antithesis signals that Paul is expressing himself in terms which would gain the widest approbation from men and women of good will . . . whatever the abuses perpetrated on the system by corrupt rulers, this statement of principle would be widely accepted. . . That good citizenship may be particularly in view is suggested by the following clauses, but in societies where religious performance and piety were part of good citizenship that indicates an already broad reference.⁹⁵

The question that has arisen here concerns the idea that Paul has apparently taken no account of unjust authorities.⁹⁶ Many commentators see the problem⁹⁷ and Cranfield surfaces three possible explanations. First, says Cranfield, there is the possibility that Paul is speaking out of his good experiences with the Roman government and has forgotten or neglected the fact that Rome could do and had done evil. That this is the explanation is severely weakened by the fact that Paul had been treated unjustly by the Roman authorities (**Acts 16:22, 37; 2 Cor 11:25**) and it was ultimately those authorities that he understood to be the ones who crucified Christ (**1 Cor 2:8**). Second, Paul, though fully conscious of the possibility that the government might commit evil, is here only speaking of its true and natural duty as a magistrate under God and appointed by him. Third, Paul is saying that consciously or unconsciously, in one way or another, the government will praise the good work and punish the evil. Cranfield argues for the third possibility based in large measure on the "absoluteness" of the promise. He says,

The promise of v. 3 is absolute: the Christian, in so far as he is obeying the gospel, may be sure that the power will honour him. It may indeed intend to punish him, but its intended punishment will then turn out to be praise. It may take his life, but in so doing it will confer a crown of glory. On the other hand, if he does evil, it must needs punish him.

I find it difficult to see Cranfield's rationale for the acceptance of this third option. Paul does not appear to be talking abstractly, or about such accidental benefits to the saint as death and a crown of glory, but is simply saying that those in authority will punish the wrong and praise what is good. The second explanation for the passage seems best as Paul is arguing for the role of the state in the light of the diatagh' of God. He is here assuming as a norm a positive and just role for the state.⁹⁸

13:3b qevlei" deV mhV fobei'sqai thVn ejxousivan toV ajgaqoVn poivei, kaiV e{xei" e[painon ejx aujth"" " Do you want to not fear the authority? Do good and you will have praise from it."

Paul has commanded that all people are to be subject to the governing authorities and this because God is the originator of that authority. To resist authority is therefore to resist God (1-2a). Those who do so will receive the state's discipline (2b-3a). Now, Paul gives a positive reason for submission to the state, namely, praise. Those who obey will have praise from the state and need not live in fear of it (13:3b).

The term **qevlei"** introduces either a question, independent statement or a conditional statement. Though the difference between these possibilities is fairly negligible, perhaps it is best to take it as a conditional statement: "If you do not want to fear the authority, then do good, and you will have praise from it." In this case **qevlei"** forms the protasis with the imperative **poivei** forming the apodosis.⁹⁹

The use of the second person singular appears to have the force of diatribe style and lifts the discussion to a very personal level with the readers.¹⁰⁰ As Porter aptly says, "the use of the second person in the diatribe style creates a personal address in the midst of the larger sweeping statements about governmental authority. The result is a direct and impressive forcefulness to Paul's rhetoric."¹⁰¹

Is Paul saying that the state will, no matter what, recognize in a public way, such individuals who do good? ¹⁰² Is this the meaning of e[painon? Barrett suggests the possibility that "statues and inscriptions" were bestowed on those who made a notable contribution to society.¹⁰³ Hendricksen, while recognizing this possibility, understands the idea of e[painon to be the government forming "a favorable opinion of that well-behaved person, and will, whether only in "its heart" or even by means of an openly expressed commendation, approve of him."¹⁰⁴ This view most likely reflects what actually happened in most cases and, therefore, fits Paul's general approach here.

13:4 qeou' gaVr diavkono" ejstin soiV eij" toV ajgaqovn. ejaVn deV toV kakoVn poih'"/, fobou' ouj gaVr eijkh'/ thVn mavcairan forei' qeou' gaVr diavkono" ejstin e[kdiko" eij" ojrghVn tw'/ toV kakoVn pravssonti. " For (gavr) it is God's servant to do you good, but if you do evil, then fear, for it does not bear the sword in vain (eijkh`/). For (gavr) it is God's servant, an avenger to bring wrath on the one who practices evil."

The particle **gavr** has an explanatory force related to the idea of e[painon in verse 3b. Thus, the Apostle is saying that the reason one will have praise if they do good is because the ruling authorities are God's servants to do that obedient person good, i.e., praise them. The verse as a whole, however, outlines two purposes for the state as God's servant. It is to reward the good and punish the evil.

The term **diavkono**" is used 44 times in the New Testament and is joined here to **qeou'** which is placed first in the clause for emphasis.¹⁰⁵ The state with its representatives, as Paul has so clearly outlined in 13:1-2 is *God's* servant. As Morris says, "The ruler is God's servant, no less. And *servant* reminds us that he is no more; he is not God even if some rulers had a very exalted view of themselves and their functions."¹⁰⁶ Nowhere else does Paul or any other NT writer refer to the state as the qeou' diavkono".¹⁰⁷ But the term does appear to have been used this way in and around the time of the NT¹⁰⁸ and instances of such usage can be seen in the LXX ([Esther 1:10; 2:2; 6:3](#)¹⁰⁹) as well. It is probably from these sources that Paul derives his language of the state as God's servant.

Two of the more important questions that have arisen in the interpretation of this clause concern the meaning of **soiV** and **toV ajgaqovn**. The pronoun soiV is most likely a dative of advantage.¹¹⁰ But to whom does it refer? Cranfield (cf. also M. Borg)¹¹¹ argues (contra Barrett)¹¹² that it parallels (by contrast) tw'/ toV kakoVn pravssonti and relates to the second person singular subject of the poivei in the preceding verse.¹¹³ This means that it is not a general reference to Christians in Rome as Dunn asserts,¹¹⁴ but refers particularly to "the one who does good." Cranfield would seem to be correct in his interpretation. The continuing of the second person from 13:3b and the parallel with tw'/ toV kakoVn pravssonti bear this out. Taken as simply a general reference to the readership in Rome would seem to downplay these obvious connections.

What, then, is the meaning of toV ajgaqovn? Does this refer to the government treating its citizens well resulting in personal prosperity, or, the government working for the common good?¹¹⁵ Or, does it have a more spiritual denotation as in 8:8? That is, does the state play a role in furthering God's eschatological purposes in salvation?¹¹⁶ Or, finally, does it refer to the government creating the conditions for people to live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness ([1 Tim. 2:2](#))?¹¹⁷

The term diavkono" does bring to the text a theological nuance and so the possibility does exist, as Cranfield points out, that here we have the idea of the state furthering God's purposes in salvation. The problem with this view appears to be the *kind* of ministry the state is to fulfill. [Romans 13:1-7](#) gives no indication that it is some kind of salvific role. This is to read too much soteriology into diavkono" in [Romans 13](#). There is no doubt that a sovereign God working out his purpose of salvation will use the state to those ends, but this is not made explicit here. It would seem that the other solutions proposed for the problem are not that far apart. Providing for the common good and maintaining order are related to each other. But, the government is not a welfare organization in Paul's mind and so the best solution would appear to be that the government is to maintain civil order. This seems to be the emphasis of the following clause wherein Paul says that the state will punish those who do evil. And, as Hendricksen points out,

this coheres well with Paul's teaching in [1 Timothy 2:2](#).¹¹⁸

After relating the positive function of the authorities, Paul goes on to indicate how they will deal with those who do evil (cf. the mild adversative *dev*). Continuing the diatribe style he says that "if you do evil, then fear, for it [i. e., the state] does not bear the sword in vain." The term **ejaVn** sets up a third class conditional statement,¹¹⁹ with the apodosis found in the imperative **fobou'**. In this context **toV kakoVn** refers to anything that is opposite to **toV ajgaqovn** and therefore renders society a dangerous place in which to live and undermines societal order. A person who causes such things, according to Paul, ought to fear because of the punitive function of the state.

Concerning the punitive role of the state, two further issues must be looked at in the interpretation of this verse. What is the meaning of **thVn mavcairan forei'** in verse 4b and what does **ojrghVn** in verse 4c signify? The connector **gavr** (v. 4b) is explanatory and introduces the reason why the person who does evil should fear, namely, because the state does not carry (**forei'**)¹²⁰ the sword for nothing. Therefore, the term **mavcairan** (i. e. sword) is a symbol¹²¹ which refers to judicial action carried out by the state against a person who has in some way opposed the state.¹²² The question that has often come up in the discussion of this term is whether or not it refers to such extreme action as capital punishment.

C. K. Barrett argues that the reference is to the state's right of capital punishment. Referring to **mavcairan** he says, "This last expression recalls the technical term *ius gladii*, by which was meant the authority (possessed by all higher magistrates) of inflicting sentence of death."¹²³ But, as A. N. Sherwin-White has pointed out, the comparison of *ius gladii* with the thought of general governing will not stand. *Ius gladii* referred to the right of a provincial governor to maintain military discipline among the Roman soldiers under his command without being hampered by the provisions of laws of *provocatio*.¹²⁴ There is not a sufficient analogy in [Romans 13](#) to *ius gladii* to base capital punishment on such a comparison.¹²⁵

Though the parallel to the *ius gladii* will not stand, this does not mean that the sword does not represent capital punishment. The "sword" is used in the NT on many occasions to refer to the authorities' right to take life if it is deemed that one has committed an offense worthy of such punishment (cf. [Matt 26:52](#); [Luke 21:24](#); [Acts 12:2](#); [16:27](#); [Heb 11:34, 37](#); [Rev 13:10](#)).¹²⁶ The sense here in Romans is precisely that, though Paul would include the magistrate's punitive authority in much less serious matters as well. Murray has correctly said:

The sword which the magistrate carries as the most significant part of his equipment is not merely the sign of his authority but of his right to wield it in the infliction of that which a sword does. It would not be necessary to suppose that the wielding of a sword contemplates the infliction of the death penalty exclusively. It can be wielded to execute punishment that falls short of death. But to exclude the right of the death penalty when the nature of the crime calls for such is totally contrary to that which the sword signifies and executes. We need appeal to no more than New Testament usage to establish this reference.¹²⁷

The fact that Paul says that the state does not "bear the sword in vain, i.e., to no purpose" (**eijkh'**) seems to further strengthen the fact that the state's authority over wrongdoers reaches to the point of capital punishment.¹²⁸

Insofar as the state does this, it is the servant of God (**qeou' diavkono'**) as an agent (**e[kdiko'**) of wrath (**ojrghVn**) on the one who practices evil (**tw'/ toV kakoVn pravssonti**). The **gavr** (v. 4c) is again introducing the reason why the person doing evil ought to fear, namely, because the state is God's servant; an avenger in the carrying out of divine wrath on the wrongdoer. The term **e[kdiko'** can be used in three distinct senses. First, it can refer to one who places himself outside the law by committing an offense against it.¹²⁹ Second, it can refer to a "legal officer" but this usage tends to be somewhat earlier than the New Testament.¹³⁰ The third sense appears to be closest to what we have in [Romans 13](#). By assimilation to **e[kdikavzw** (a Hellenistic development away from its root **e[kdikevw**) the term came to mean not one who is outside the law (i.e., a criminal), but one who decides a legal process, i.e., an "avenger."¹³¹ This is certainly the meaning in its only other Pauline use in [1 Thessalonians 4:6](#). In this text Paul is stating that the

Lord is an "avenger" (e[kdkiko]) against those who wrong their brothers in matters of sexual purity, that is, the Lord is the one who will *punish* those who commit this evil.¹³² The term is also used in this way in Jewish materials as well. In referring to a well brought up son who can take issue with his father's enemies, *Sirach* 30:6 says that "He [i.e. the father] has left behind him an *avenger* against his enemies, and one to repay the kindness of his friends" (italics mine). Josephus (*War* 5. 377), when he was exhorting the Jews not to fight against Titus, asked them this question, "And when was it that God, who is the Creator of the Jewish people, did not *avenge* them when they had been injured" (italics mine)?¹³³ In summary, the term as it is used here and in other places in the literature speaks of the active pursuit of those who do evil.

The fact that this strong interpretation of e[kdkiko] is fitting here is further confirmed by the fact that the state, as the servant of God, is an avenger eij" ojrg hvn.¹³⁴ We now look at the second major interpretive difficulty in the latter part of verse 4—the meaning of the term **ojrg hvn**. Paul has referred to the final day of judgment (ojrg hv) in [Romans 2:5](#) and 5:9 and has also spoken of another, present expression of God's wrath ejpiV pa`san ajsevbeian kaiV ajdikivan ajnqrwv pwn in 1:18 (cf. also 9:18). In this passage God gives men and women over to their sin thus fitting them even more for the final day of wrath. But in 13:4 the question arises as to whether it is divine wrath or simply the wrath of the state. J.C. O'Neill says that "the word wrath means not God's wrath but simply fear of the punishment able to be meted out by the ruler."¹³⁵ He argues that the word God is not repeated and if one inserts it, it renders the entire argument tautologous. O'Neill understands the idea of conscience (v. 5) to refer to God and therefore Paul would be saying that "the state is an avenger for God's wrath and we should submit because of God" (i.e., conscience). But this reading of the passage has at least two weaknesses. First, it is built on an either/or choice which, given the data (e.g. the fact that the state is established by God), is not entirely adequate. Second, conscience should not be identified that closely with God. Most commentators take it as referring to God's wrath meted out in punitive action by means of the state.¹³⁶ With this I agree (cf. also 12:19). Paul clearly says that the state is God's servant. O'Neill seems to have disregarded this point. Finally, there may be some merit in the idea suggested by both Barrett and Ziesler that the wrath executed by the state prefigures that which will come against all lawlessness in the end. Since the apostle has spoken of this eschatological wrath already in Romans (e.g., 5:9), perhaps this forms part of the rationale for the apostle's use of the term here.¹³⁷ He has been desirous of linking the state to God throughout the passage.

13:5 dioV ajnavgkh uJpotavssesqai, ouj movnon diaV thVn ojrg hvn ajllaV kaiV diaV thVn suneivdhsin.
"Wherefore (dioV) it is necessary to submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience."

The term **dioV**¹³⁸ draws out a conclusion based upon the preceding argument in 13:1-4. In verse 5, Paul summarizes what he has argued by saying that submission to the authorities is grounded in their punitive capabilities and in a man's conscience. That this verse does indeed form a summary of verses 1-4 will be demonstrated in the following exegesis.

The reference to submission (**uJpotavssesqai**) once again takes us back to the imperative in verse 1. The term **ajnavgkh** needs further definition. In Greek literature and thinking it was understood to be the force that "defies all knowledge, which controls all things and which conditions reality."¹³⁹ It lost this sense, however, with the increasing amount of rationalization in Greek thought and became instead the rational concept of an imminent necessity. Later in Hellenism, ajnavgkh was associated with certain deities and surfaced as a personified concept once again. It was also understood in a dualistic world to be that which constrains and opposes the spirit. There are many ajnavgkai which arise from the ajnavgkh, according to Aristotle, and these must be controlled as they are hindrances to the soul.¹⁴⁰

The term is also used in the LXX (2 Macc 15:2), Josephus (*Ant.* 3.223; *War* 5. 568), the *Epistle of Aristeas*, Philo (*De Aeternitate Mundi* 21; 52), and the *Didache* 12:2 to refer to the idea of "necessity"¹⁴¹ but in no way does it carry the idea of a personified force of some kind.

ajAnagkhv is used in the NT approximately 18 times.¹⁴² It can refer to a present moral crisis (1 Cor 7:26), to negative coercion (1 Cor 7:37; 2 Cor 9:7; Phlm 14) or positive compulsion as in the case of Paul's need to preach the gospel (1 Cor 9:16). It is also used to denote the idea of distress which results from divine judgment (Luke 21:23), from unjust persecution (1 Thess 3:7) or simply from the hardships which arise in the course of the apostolic mission (2 Cor 6:4; 12:10). And in certain texts it conveys the idea of logical necessity; as in the case of the New Covenant superseding the Old (Heb 7:12, 27; 9:16, 23). Thus, there emerges from this survey the two basic ideas stated above. The term is used in the NT to refer to either a "necessity" or a "distress or calamity." Perhaps the best parallel usage to that in Romans 13 (which is clearly a reference to "necessity") is Matthew 18:7 where Jesus says that "things (skavndalon) that cause people to sin must (ajnagkhv) come. Here Jesus is conscious of living in a fallen world, *where just as blue is to sky, so temptations are to people in a fallen world*. If you have one, you *de facto* have the other. The rule is intrinsic to the state of affairs. So it is in Romans 13. Paul is not saying that there is an impersonal law that governs the world that requires that all submit to governmental leaders, but through the use of ajnagvkh he is elevating the idea of order as essential to the nature of the way in which the world is to run as God would have it. God will certainly always punish the wrongdoer. This is the way it is and always will be.¹⁴³

The possibility of incurring wrath is not the only reason the Apostle enjoins lawful living, but also because of **suneivdhsin**. In regard to this term, two important questions surface: 1) what is the meaning of the term? and 2) how does it contribute to the preceding argument? The term itself occurs 30 times in the New Testament in Acts (2x), Romans (3x; 2:15; 9:1 and 13:5), 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews and 1 Peter. Paul uses it 22 times.¹⁴⁴ In a study done in the mid-fifties, C. A. Pierce concluded that the Pauline use of suneivdhsin always refers to knowledge one possesses about oneself in the light of acts committed in the past. It is knowledge that is mostly always painful as it is concerned with bad acts from which the suneivdhsi" produces guilt. In this sense argues Pierce, Paul stands in the tradition of Classical and Hellenistic writers.¹⁴⁵ But both Christian Maurer and Margaret Thrall have shown that such an emphasis on past acts alone, and personal knowledge, as in Greek literature, is not accurate in terms of Pauline usage.¹⁴⁶ In our passage most commentators see the term as a reference to prospective acts which weakens Pierce's argument.¹⁴⁷ That future acts are in view is made quite clear when one considers the fact that Paul uses the present tense to urge continuous (obviously future from the standpoint of the readers) submission to the authorities (vv.1, 5). Suneivdhsin, then, refers to the conscience and in this context refers to knowledge a Christian possesses of God as the ultimate author of the state's authority. To then go and deliberately break the laws of the state would be to incur a pang of conscience.¹⁴⁸

Therefore suneivdhsi" refers to the conscience in a Christian and provides direction for life in relation to the state. Its contribution to the argument has been carefully demonstrated by Stein. He has shown that Paul has not introduced a new argument here by his reference to conscience, since he does not develop it at length. What we have in verse 5, argues Stein, is a summary by way of chiasm, of verses 1-4.¹⁴⁹ In verses 1-4, Paul has exhorted believers to submit to the state for two reasons: 1) *God* has established the state and 2) the state will punish wrongdoers. In verse 5, Paul says obedience is necessary because of wrath (i.e. the state will punish wrongdoers) and conscience (*God* has established the state).¹⁵⁰ The chiasm looks like this:

A: God is the one who establishes authority

B: The State will *punish* those who do evil

B': The state will carry out *wrath* against those who practice evil

A': All should obey due to conscience; the knowledge that God has established the state and to disobey the state is to disobey God.

Now that Paul has clearly reasoned out the Christian's relation to the state in the first five verses, in verses 6 and 7 he is going to outline practical areas of submission taken in by the command.

13:6 diaV tou'to gaVr kaiV fovrou" telei'teleitourgoiV gaVr qeou' eijsin eij" aujtoV tou'to proskarterou'nte". "For this reason (diaV tou'to gavr) you pay taxes, for (gavr) [those in authority] are God's servants who persist in this very thing."

The expression **diaV tou'to** looks backward, not to conscience alone,¹⁵¹ but to the entire argument Paul has been making regarding the origin and function of the state.¹⁵² The **gaVr** is explanatory indicating that Paul is here laying out a case (i.e., the payment of taxes) that demonstrates that the rulers are from God and deserve obedience. This is obvious he says, because **fovrou" telei'te**. The Roman Christians paid taxes and this is an indication that the state has been appointed by God. As Fitzmyer says, "Paul takes it for granted that the Christians of Rome have been paying taxes."¹⁵³ The term fovrou" means "taxes" or "tribute" (land or poll tax, but in either case, a direct tax)¹⁵⁴ and the presence of the gavr renders almost certain that telei'te is to be taken as an indicative not an imperative.¹⁵⁵ Stein indicates that there are 22 other instances in which gavr occurs with adverbial kaiv and none of the following verbs are in the imperative.¹⁵⁶

The second **gavr** is explanatory and indicates that Paul is going on to give a reason for the collection of taxes. Taxes are collected by the authorities because they are **leitourgoiV. . . qeou' eijsin**. The term leitourgoiv means "servants," but appears to always have a sacral connotation. It is used to refer to angels as God's servants (Philo, *De Virtutibus Prima Pars* 74; [Heb 1:7](#); 1 Clement 36:3), to priests (1 Clement 41:2), including the Great High Priest ([Heb 8:2](#)); to the prophets (1 Clement 8:1) and here in Romans Paul refers to himself as such in 15:16. The use of the term continues the emphasis on the state's relation to God, an emphasis we saw in verses 1-4 and especially in the term diavkono". The state is closely connected to God via God's appointment and thus her authority is delegated, not absolute. It is not going too far to claim for the state, then, a sacred function in the outworking of God's plan. The state is to promote peaceful living and punish evildoers.¹⁵⁷

The expression **eij" aujtoV tou'to proskarterou'nte"** has caused interpreters some difficulty. The participle **proskarterou'nte"** has the idea of "adhering to" or "persisting in" something.¹⁵⁸ It usually takes the dative direct object, but here it is followed by the accusative.¹⁵⁹ Thus the authorities give themselves persistently and persist **eij" aujtoV tou'to**. To what does eij" aujtoV tou'to refer? The nearest antecedent for the phrase would refer to the collection of taxes paid by the those living in Rome.¹⁶⁰ Barrett,¹⁶¹ on the other hand, suggests that the reference is to the government's promotion of the good and punishment of the evil as outlined in verses 1-4. Stein suggests that the antecedent is to the fact that the state has been appointed to be ministers of God. He bases this interpretation on the fact that the two references in this verse to tou'to are identical and both refer to the argument of verses 1-4.¹⁶² As Cranfield indicates, it is not easy to choose between these options. Perhaps the best one is the payment of taxes. It is the nearest and therefore most reasonable antecedent, all other things being equal. In this case, Paul is saying that the state is a minister of God committed to the process of collecting taxes.¹⁶³

13:7 ajpovdote pa'sin taV" ojfeilav", tw'/ toVn fovron toVn fovron, tw'/ toV tevlo" toV tevlo", tw'/ toVn fovbon toVn fovbon, tw'/ thVn timhVn thVn timhvn. " Give back to all people what is owed; taxes to whom taxes are due; revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due and honor to whom honor is due."

In conclusion Paul gives a broad, sweeping principle that directs the Christians in Rome to give back (**ajpovdote**)¹⁶⁴ *whatever* they owe (**taV" ojfeilav"**).¹⁶⁵ **Pa'sin** refers not to all people per se, but as the following *kinds* of debt make clear, (i.e., tax, tribute, respect, honor), it refers to all those "in authority." The Christians are to give back to the authorities **fovron** (direct taxes),¹⁶⁶ **tevlo"** (custom duties or indirect taxation),¹⁶⁷ **fovbon** (respect)¹⁶⁸ and **timhvn** (honor).¹⁶⁹ Cranfield argues that the term fovbon refers to the fear of God based on a parallel with [1 Peter 2:17](#) and the use of fobei'sqai and fovbo" in the NT, but this does not appear to fit very well in the context of [Romans 13](#). He does not seem to have sufficiently overcome his own objections to the view, namely, that pa'sin becomes very

awkward if God is in view and indeed Paul has been quite a bit less than clear.¹⁷⁰ Some have further observed that **fovbōn** may indicate a higher form of respect than **timhVn** and may refer to those higher up in government.¹⁷¹ As Stein has indicated, this may be difficult to maintain.¹⁷² In any case, the point Paul is making is simply that there is an outward submission to authorities (paying taxes) and an inward attitude (fear and respect) concomitant with that outward expression.

Some have seen in this text a reference to the tradition found in [Mark 12:17](#) and parallels. Two facts seem to support such a conclusion. First, the term *ajpovdote* in [Romans 13:7](#) recalls that same term spoken by Jesus in [Mark 12:17](#): "TaV Kaisaro" *ajpovdote* Kaivsari. Second, the reference to *taV" ojfeilav*" recalls a similar expression in [Mark 12:17](#): *kaiV taV tou` qeou`*. There is also the observation that the indicative mood in 13:6 presupposes that the Christian community to whom Paul was writing knew that it was their responsibility to pay taxes. Where did they get this knowledge? Perhaps from the tradition of this dominical saying of Jesus, a saying which was also recorded by Mark. Peter appears to have picked up on this tradition also (cf. [1 Peter 2:17](#)).¹⁷³

In summarizing these verses Barrett says:

Honour and respect are due to earthly rulers not because they are powerful and influential *men*, but because they have been appointed by God. It follows that to treat them with less than their due of honour is to dishonour God; and honour without its practical corollary of the due payment of taxes for the maintenance of the authority would be a mockery.¹⁷⁴

Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17: A Brief Comparison

The point of this section of the paper is to briefly overview some of the similarities and differences between the civil instructions recorded by Paul and Peter in an attempt to understand the traditions employed by both writers.

Similarities

Structural Similarities

The Asyndetic Nature of the Passages

Both [Romans 13:1-7](#) and [1 Peter 2:13-17](#) stand grammatically unconnected to their immediately preceding contexts. This may indicate that they were both pulling on a well known tradition that needed no special introduction.

The Overall Structure of the Passages

First, both writers issue the command exhorting believers to a certain posture before civil authority. Second, they proceed to relate the command to God or Christ—thus they relate it to the Christians' faith. Third, most of the remainder of the material is concerned with giving the rationale in each of the two situations for the command. In this regard, while Paul is longer both argue for the retributive function of the state as well as its role in promoting the good by praising it. Fourth, both writers end with universal appeals describing the kind of posture Christians are to maintain before all people.

Linguistic Similarities

The Use of uJpotassevsqw/ujpotavghte

Both authors employ the verb *uJpotavssw* as the controlling idea in terms of the Christian's relationship to the state. Paul uses the present imperative, while Peter uses the aorist imperative. The result however, is virtually the same. As indicated in the commentary, the undefined action inherent in the aorist is further defined as ongoing by the use of the participle *ajgaqopoiou'nta*". Thus both writers are setting out what they believe to be the norm in this area. The use of this term as opposed to some other suggests that they may be following a certain common tradition. Although Paul wrote some eight years earlier there does not appear to be direct literary dependence on Peter's part.

The Use of uJperecousai" and uJperevconti

The use of *uJperevcw* once again suggests a common tradition from which these writers are drawing. They both render to Caesar and his governors the highest possible human court. Their Christianity has not caused them to dismiss worldly structures as unimportant and of no consequence in the lives of believers. In fact, both Peter and Paul argue that from the foundation of their Christianity Christians are to recognize world leaders and governmental authorities.

Eij" ejkdivkhsin and ejkdiko"

Paul and Peter both lived under and witnessed the penal authority of the Roman government. That they both refer to the government and its retributive justice with the same language of "revenge" or "avenger" would seem to point to a common understanding and tradition.

The Use of ajgaqopoiw'n/poivei ajgaqovn and epainon

Once again, both Paul and Peter use similar language, albeit not identical, to refer to the Christian's behavior in the world and before the state. The Christians are to do good and the result is, under normal conditions, that they will have praise from the authorities.

The Injunctions in [Romans 13:7](#) and [1 Peter 2:17](#)

The injunctions in both [Romans 13:7](#) and [1 Peter 2:17](#) are universal in their appeal. Both writers use the term "all" (*pavnata*" in Paul and *pavsini* in Peter) as the object of the first verb of the commands. Peter issues four commands which eventually end in the last command to honor all men. Paul states one command and then follows it up with a fourfold list of "things owed." He ends the list focusing on honor. To be sure, there are differences that will be discussed below, but the place of this verse at the end of the passages as well as its similar structure, seem to indicate a common tradition between Peter and Paul.

Contextual Similarities

It is a matter of no little debate concerning the role of Christology in these passages. Often times in this discussion, the broader literary and historical contexts of the writers are forgotten. The point I want to make here is that both Paul and Peter, insofar as *Romans* and *1 Peter* are concerned, demonstrate quite clearly that they have similar theologies regarding salvation and Christian living. Both of them are therefore writing from a similar soteriological context and perspective. This is important when trying to assess the relative weight to be placed upon differences in these texts. Differences do not have to be taken as incompatibilities, unless of course there is genuinely a material contradiction.

Differences

Overall Content

Paul saw the need to communicate almost twice as much material on the subject of the state than did Peter. This, of course, is not a serious difference, but one that raises the question as to the nature of the extra material, as well as the redaction question and the nature of the original tradition. The former question will be looked at below, but the latter will have to await further study.

The Historical Context for Application

It is difficult to ascertain the exact context in which Paul is applying this tradition. Perhaps it has to do with taxes, but this is in no way a certainty. The best that can be said is that his audience is in Rome and Paul had no doubts that Christians and the state would soon have dealings; especially in the capital city. For this reason he instructs the church on the relationship they must maintain with the state.

Peter on the other hand, is dealing with false accusations arising from the populace and directed at Christians (2:11, 12). He appears to take Christian tradition on church-state relations and applies it to the Christians so that the state will not entertain the accusations and decide to persecute the Church. That is, the Christians are to silence the slander by doing good and in this way the state will not be provoked to disciplinary measures (cf. 2:15).

Paul's Theology of the Divine Origin of the State

Paul maintains a solid commitment to originating all civil authority in God's appointment (13:1-2). Peter does not explicate such ideas as clearly. But, with the presence of *ktivsei* (1 Pet 2:13), it is possible to see traces of this idea. For Peter, because the authorities are created human beings, they owe their origin to the Creator God. Paul goes much further than Peter does in expanding on these ideas. He refers to the state as the *diavkono* and *leitourgoiv* of God. This is absent in Peter. On the other hand, Peter urges submission to the state, based in part on the theology of the Christian's freedom (cf. 1:18; 2:16).

The Ultimate Jurisdiction of the State

Both Paul and Peter materially agree on this as pointed out above. But Paul goes much further than Peter does. He talks about the power of the state to legitimately determine life and death. For Paul the state does not bear the sword for nothing, and, as such, acts as God's avenger for the meting out of punishment. Perhaps such an idea is inherent in *ejkdivkhsin* in 1 Peter 2:14, but it is not spelled out as clearly as in Paul.

Preliminary Conclusions

There are a fair number of further similarities and differences that were not mentioned as they seem to be relatively minor to the task at hand. The similarities that are mentioned, however, are enough to demonstrate that while there does not appear to be literary dependence (though such a possibility is open on chronological/historical considerations), both Paul and Peter appear to be drawing on a similar Christian tradition. The differences in emphases concerning the rationale for the command to submit can probably be accounted for on the basis of the different historical situations to which each was writing. The overall structure of the passages is similar and both emphatically maintain that the Christian's relation to the state is to be one of submission. This is an important fact. Thus, both Paul and Peter agree in large measure on the origin (i.e., in God), nature (i.e. rulers invested with authority) and function (i.e. to punish and to praise) of the state and certainly on the Christian's relationship to it (i.e., submission).

Given the strength of the similarities it would seem that Paul and Peter are drawing on a common stock of paraenetic material for their instruction, but the differences appear to rule out any direct literary dependence, i.e., Peter using

Romans as a direct source. The origin of this material appears to be found in the LXX and Jesus' teaching in the Synoptic tradition (cf. [Mark 13:13-17](#)). Questions concerning the Christians' relationship to the authorities was addressed in the early church (cf. [Acts 4](#), 7, 19:23ff, 25, 26, 28) and ultimately the traditional material we find in Peter and Paul seems to have been molded as catechetical material in the Hellenistic context of the mission to the Gentiles.

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1 Cf. Karl Paul Donfried, "A Short Note on Romans 16," in *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed., ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 43-52.

2 Consult Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 33 (Toronto: Doubleday, 1993), 663, 64 for a list of commentators who reject the passage due to the lack of Christological emphases. C. H. Talbert, "A Non-Pauline Fragment at Romans 3:24-26," *JBL* 85 (1966), 287-96, is an example of one who sees other possible interpolations in the epistle. A quick review of the textual data on 3:25, 26, listed in the NA²⁶ reveals that the reading is most likely original and Pauline. The only substantive problems concern the definite article th` in 3:25 and the addition of Cristou` in 3:26. For a more detailed survey of textual issues in Romans, cf. H. Gamble, Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism*, Studies and Documents, 42 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977). There are those who go further yet and claim that the entire

epistle is a compilation from two and in some cases many different sources. For reference to those who make such claims see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 426, n. 6 and 427, n. 1. Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 14th rev. ed., ed. Werner Georg Kümmel and trans. A. J. Mattill, Jr. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), 226, say that "the supposition that the original text of Romans contained 1:1-16:23 . . . explains the textual tradition the most convincingly."

3 James Kallas, "Romans xiii. 1-7: An Interpolation," *NTS* 11 (1965), 365-74.

4 Gamble, *Textual History*, 91.

5 F. F. Bruce, "Paul and 'the Powers That Be,'" *BJRL* (Spring 1984), 80.

6 References to civil authorities in the Pastorals include [1 Timothy 2:1, 2](#) and [Titus 3:1-2](#).

7 Perhaps it is just such contacts with the state, that forms part of the rationale for Luke writing to Theophilus, if indeed, Theophilus is a high-ranking official in the Roman government as some claim ([Luke 1:3](#); [Acts 1:1](#)). See Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 253; I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. R. V. G. Tasker, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1980), 55.

8 Kallas, "Interpolation," 367.

9 In this very book Paul uses *novmo* to refer to the O.T. as a whole (3:19); to the Pentateuch (3:21) and to the principle of law in general (3:27). Note the use of *oijkonomiva* in [Ephesians 3:2, 9](#). The first use in 3:2 refers to Paul's personal responsibility to make known the mystery of the gospel. The second use in 3:9 refers to unification of Jew and Gentile in one body as the expression of God's plan in Christ.

10 Other commentators doubt Pauline authorship due to the lack of a Christological foundation in the passage. But as Ksemann says, "it is characteristic of our chapter that any Christological, as well as any eschatological, patterning is found wanting. To ignore this is to build castles in the air and to betray oneself in so doing by the Christology and cosmology one employs." See Ernst Ksemann, "Principles of the Interpretation of [Romans 13](#)," in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 206. With this conclusion I must agree, but it does not lead to doubtful Pauline authorship.

11 Cf. Bruce Metzger, ed., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 528, 29.

12 Perhaps they are due to a process of "tidying up the text." See James D. G. Dunn, [Romans 9-16](#), Word Biblical commentary, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 38b (Dallas, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1988), 758, note b. On the variant *tw' ajgaqoergw'* in 13:3 see W. L. Lorimer, "[Romans 13:3](#)," *NTS* 12 (July 1966), 389-91. Lorimer, on the basis of Greek writers' reluctance to repeat a compound, argues for the authenticity of *tw' ajgaqoevrgw*. Given the strength of the manuscript tradition this is highly unlikely and may be a later scribal attempt to focus on the "one who does good," rather than on the "works" themselves as Paul appears to be highlighting. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:664, n. 5, sees it as an attempt to improve the text. He does not say in what particular fashion.

13 Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 529.

14 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:758, note d.

15 Bruce, "Paul and 'the Powers That Be,'" 78, n. 2.

16 See the exegesis for the explanation for the comparison of conscience with God and wrath with the state. The two major underlying questions concern why and how to submit to the civil authorities. The question of how has been subsumed under the subject in the subject/complement statement and the emphasis has been put upon the why

(complement).

17 F. F. Bruce, "Christianity Under Claudius," *BJRL* 44 (March 1962), 318, writes: "Christian and non-Christian Jews alike were expelled from the capital. But it is plain that, before many years had passed, both Christian and non-Christian Jews were back in Rome in full force, together with many Christians of Gentile stock. When Paul writes to the Roman Christians in A. D. 57, he obviously writes to a flourishing community which includes many Gentiles, although it is not forgotten that its base was Jewish."

18 Suetonius, *The Deified Claudius*, 25.4, writes concerning Claudius: "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of *Chrestus*, he expelled them from Rome." Though the meaning of Suetonius's words is disputed, it appears to be a genuine reference to Christ. The fact that he refers to Christ as *Chrestus* only indicates that the two spellings would have been pronounced the same. And, if it were some other person other than Christ one would expect him to have used *quodam Chresto*. See n. a in J. C. Rolfe's translation. For an opposing view see E. A. Judge and G. S. R. Thomas, "The Origin of the Church at Rome: A New Solution?" *RTR* 25 (Sept.-Dec. 1966), 85-88.

19 Cf. [Acts 18:12](#). See also Bruce, "Christianity Under Claudius," 310, 16.

20 Suetonius, *Nero*, 16.2 states: "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition." A "class" of men seems to imply a distinction from other groups at this point, including Jews.

21 Cf. Guthrie, *Introduction*, 405.

22 Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 283. See also [Romans 9:10](#).

23 Cf. Feine, Behm, Kümmel, *Introduction*, 219.

24 Cf. Guthrie, *Introduction*, 405-06. It is also possible that the expulsion applied only to Jews who were not Roman citizens; cf. M. Reasoner, "Rome and Roman Christianity," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 853; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), xii-xiii.

25 See William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902), 370.

26 Tacitus, *Annals ab excessu divi Augusti*, 13:50, 51, writes: "In the same year, as a consequence of repeated demands from the public, which complained of the exactions of the revenue-farmers [Companies of Roman Knights] Nero hesitated whether he ought to decree the abolition of all indirect taxation and present the reform as the noblest of gifts to the human race." That this does not form the background to the passage has been argued by Winsome Munro, "[Romans 13:1-7](#): Apartheid's Last Biblical Refuge," *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 20 (Winter 1990), 164, 5.

27 Though the origin of the church in Rome is a matter of great debate, it seems reasonable that the Jews who heard Peter's sermon in [Acts 2](#) :1-13 (cf. v. 10) carried the good news back to Rome with them.

28 Marcus Borg, "A New Context for Romans XIII," *New Testament Studies* 19 (April 1972), 205-18.

29 Ernst Ksemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 351.

30 See also Hermon Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 323, who says: "Was there not in the fact that Christ was the church's Lord the possibility of dissociating itself from every "worldly" bond. ..." See also Günther Bornkamm, *Paul*,

trans. D. M. G. Stalker (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 213.

31 The passage is somewhat asyndetic, a feature common in Pauline style (see [Rom 9:1](#); [Eph 3:1, 2](#)). Cf. BDF, *463. See also Stanley E. Porter, "[Romans 13:1-7](#) as Pauline Rhetoric," *Filologia Neotestamentica* 3 (Nov 1990), 119.

32 Cf. *ajgaqov*"/*kavkov*" in 12:21 and 13:3, 4; *oJrghv* in 12:19 in 13:4, 5; *ejkdikevw/e]kdiko*" in 12:19 and 3:4; *pavntwn ajnqrwvwn/pa`sin* in 12:17, 18 and 13:7; *ojfeihv /ojfeivlw* in 13:7, 8. There are also many linguistic parallels to 2:7-11. See Dunn, *Romans*, 2:758.

33 For a nice description of the growing circle of relationships as one moves from [Romans 12:1](#) to 13:1-7 see Porter, "Romans," 118.

34 For a brief summary of the problem as it currently stands see, Günter Klein, "Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed., ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 29-43. See also L. Ann Jervis, *The Purpose of Romans*, JSNTS 55, 1991.

35 See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 341.

36 This is yet another link that renders this section relevant to the argument of the book.

37 Compare [1 Cor 15:45](#)— and [Genesis 2:7](#)— *.hY:j' vp,n<l] !d;a;h; yhiyw*".

38 Gerhard Delling, *TDNT*, VIII, 41; cf. also Porter, "Romans," 120, n. 22.

39 Concerning *taV" ajrcaV" kaiV taV" ejxousiva*" as a reference to Roman officials see, John Nolland, [Luke 9:21-18:34](#), Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 35b (Dallas, TX: Word Book, Publisher, 1993), 680.

40 This is the participial form of the verb *uJperevcw*. It is functioning here adjectivally with respect to the noun *ejxousiva*.

41 Porter, "Romans," 123, 24.

42 Several scholars have held this view which seems to have its modern impetus from Martin Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus* (Göttingen, 1909). Dibelius later changed his view. See idem, "Rom und die Christen im ersten Jahrhundert," *SAH* (1942), 7. Other examples include K. L. Schmidt, "Zum theologischen Briefwechsel zwischen Karl Barth und Gerhard Kittel," *TB* 13 (1934), 328-34 and "Das Gegenüber von Kirche und Staat in der Gemeinde des Neuen Testaments," *TB* 16 (1937), 1-16; G. Dehn, "Engel und Obrigkeit," *Theologische Aufsätze Karl Barth zum 50. Geburtstag*, ed. E. Wolf (Munich, 1936), 90-109, developed Dibelius's ideas. Cf. also R. Walker, *Studie zu Rm 13:1-7* (Theologische Existenz Heute; Munich: Kaiser, 1966), 12-15. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary, ed. J. A. Emerton and C. E. B. Cranfield (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), 656-57 cites some of these commentators. For our discussion here see Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), 191-210. This view was also held in the patristic period; see Ernst Bammel, "[Romans 13](#)," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day*, ed. E. Bammel and C. F. D. Moule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 365.

43 Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 194.

44 This statement of course is built on Cullmann's dating of Daniel. He does not say when this is, but probably it has a date sometime after the temple desecration perpetrated by Antiochus IV (i.e. 167 B. C.-164 B. C.)—around 160-140 B. C. In the long run, it really does not matter, only that Daniel is sometime before the writing of the New Testament and that Daniel's writing influenced Paul in the way Cullmann asserts.

45 Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, 191.

46 Ibid., 193.

47 For the interpretation that only men are in view, see, W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1976), 200, 22.

48 See Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 248.

49 Susan Boyer, "Exegesis of [Romans 13:1-7](#)," *Brethern Life and Thought* 32 (Autumn 1987), 209. I list this point as a possible rebuttal to Cullmann's view. Although it could be said that Cullmann never argues that only angels are in view, he clearly argues for a double referent—both men and angels. Therefore, the command to pay taxes is not necessarily out-of-line with a double referent. At best, the focus on paying taxes is a corroboratory argument for human rulers only.

50 Ksemann, "Principles of the Interpretation of [Romans 13](#)," 204. Ksemann is following A. Strobel, "Zum Verstdnis vom Rm, 13 *ZNW* 47 (1956), 67-93, at this point. His idea about Hellenistic sources is true to a point and can be seen in the use of *uJpotavssw*. But, the rationale Paul gives for obedience to the secular authorities, seems to come from Jewish OT and intertestamental materials. This is pointed out in the exegesis of verse 2. Ksemann's argument is raised here simply to show that it is by no means certain as Cullmann would have us believe that angels are also in view in [Romans 13:1](#) for even the background of the passage is difficult to discern with absolute certainty.

51 Cranfield, writing in 1965, suggested that he was not certain that the authorities spoken of in [Romans 13:1-7](#) were angelic or not. Then in his commentary, written in 1979 and his shorter commentary written in 1985, he argued that such an identification was not likely and that Paul only had in mind the civil authorities. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, "Some Observations on Romans xiii. 1-7," *NTS* 6 (1959), 241; idem, *Romans*, 659; idem, *Romans: Shorter Commentary*, 320. See also William Hendricksen, *Romans*, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 429-31; Ernst Ksemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoeffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 353; Everett F. Harrison, *Romans*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 140; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 666; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:760. Clinton D. Morrison, *The Powers That Be: Earthly Rulers and demonic Powers in Romans 13:1-7* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1960), 63-100, argues that the Greco-Roman period as well as the Jewish people assigned angelic beings to rulers over nations. Just because, he says, it is not clearly mentioned in the New Testament does not mean that it is not there. The problem with this view is that it proceeds by way of silence as regards NT data. It is at best a hypothesis without a lot of internal support.

52 Cf. BDF, *252 (1) and the generic use of the article.

53 On [1 Peter 2:14](#) see, Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, *New International Biblical Commentary*, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 78; Ernest Best, *1 Peter*, *New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 114.

54 Robert H. Stein, "The Argument of [Romans 13:1-7](#)," *Novum Testamentum* 31 (October 1989), 326.

55 For the view that [Romans 13](#) and [1 Peter 2](#) share a common heritage in early Christian paraenetic material, see S. Lgasse, "La soumission aux autorits d'aprs 1 Pierre 2. 13-17: Version spcifique d'une parnse traditionnelle," *NTS* 34 (July 1988), 378-96.

56 Cf. Ernst Ksemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 199.

57 The "one doing the subjection" is not mentioned here. Some have postulated sinful Adam, others Satan, etc. It seems however, that most would agree that God is in view here. See Cranfield, *Romans: Shorter Commentary*, 196,

97; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:471; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 508; Harrison, *Romans*, 93-95; Hendricksen, *Romans*, 266-68.

58 Delling, *TDNT*, 8: 40.

59 Porter, "Romans," 120, 21.

60 See George L. Carey, "Biblical-Theological Perspectives on War and Peace," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 57 (April 1985), 169, who says concerning unconditional obedience to the state: "Paul would have been horrified by such an inference."

61 See Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 461.

62 Some commentators, due to the strong use of subjection language in the passage seem to imply an obedience to the state which is rendered without question. See Morrison, *The Powers that Be*, 113. This fails to recognize the import of [Mark 12:13-17](#) (Caesar and God) and the underlying premise in [Romans 13](#), namely, that the state is permitting one to be and live as a Christian.

63 The magistrates (perhaps these rulers make up part of the *eJxousiva* Paul is talking about in [Romans 13](#).) treated Paul and Silas unlawfully. They violated their own laws by beating a Roman citizen. Paul may have made such an issue out of it in order to protect the Christians in Philippi from any further unnecessary harassment from the authorities, but at the bottom of it lies the just protest of one who was unjustly handled by the state. On Paul's rights as a Roman citizen, see I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 274, 75; Richard N. Longenecker, "Acts," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 466, 67.

64 Cf. J. I. H. McDonald, "[Romans 13.1-7](#): A Test Case for New Testament Interpretation," *NTS* 35 (October 1989), 543.

65 Ksemann says that obedience to the state "ends when further service becomes impossible." One cannot deny their Christianity, but he says, this is not the same thing as having to adopt a new form of worship because of the state. See "Principles of the Interpretation of [Romans 13](#)," 214-216.

66 So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 667, who recognizes that the sense is *ajpov* but that the manuscript evidence for it is basically Western with its tendency to smooth out the text. The preferred reading is *uJpov*.

67 The use of the perfect *tetagmevnai* conveys a sense of the permanence of the governmental authorities. See Morris, *Romans*, 461, n. 15.

68 Gerhard Delling, *TDNT*, 8:27f.

69 This does not in anyway negate the cross or bring into question the Pauline authorship of this segment. Paul is simply applying truths from the OT and his background which he felt illuminated the Christian church's responsibility in the world, as a witness for Christ. For further discussion of this issue, see N. T. Wright, "The New Testament and the State," *Themelios* 16 (Oct/Nov 1990), 14.

70 See Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 194-200; G. W. Grogan, "Isaiah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1986), 270, 71.

71 John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 75, 76.

72 For Rabbinic examples consult Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus*

Talmud und Midrash (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926), 304, who cite GnR 94 which says, "R. Judan (um 350) hat gesagt: Wer sich frech gegen den Knig benimmt, ist wie einer, der sich frech gegen die Sch^ekhina (Gottheit) benimmt." Cf. also Midrash on [Psalm 2:2](#).

73 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:761; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:663. Several other commentators agree with an OT, Jewish background to Paul's rationale here. See C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), 245; Matthew Black, *Romans*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 160; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 667; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 366, 67; John Zeisler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPI New Testament Commentaries (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 30.

74 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:762.

75 Porter, "Romans," 126, 27.

76 The construction is w{ste plus the indicative—a construction found only 6 times in the Gospels and 15 times in Paul, three of which are in Romans. In [Romans 7:4, 12](#), Paul uses the term w{ste in a similar way. BDF *391 (2) state: "w{ste is used in the NT to introduce independent sentences, too (as in classical), and may take the indicative, imperative, or hortatory subjunctive. . . ." See also BAGD, 899 *1a; Dunn, *Romans*, 1:361; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 667; Morris, *Romans*, 462; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 367.

77 [1 Kings 11:34](#) in the LXX reads: "kaiV ouj mhV lavbw o{lhv thVn basileivan ejk ceiroV" ajntou', diovti ajntitassovmeno" ajntitavxomai ajntw/ pavsa" taV" hJmevra" th"" zwh"" ajntou', diaV Daudid toVn dou'lovn mou, o}n ejxelexavmhn ajntovn." It appears that the participle is being used to enforce the certainty of the future form of the verb, i.e. ajntitavxomai. This is certainly a highly interpretive rendering of the MT.

78 The MT reads .!h,l; aC;a, acon:AyKi while the LXX renders the phrase: ajll! h] ajntitassovmeno" ajntitavxomai ajntoi". This use of the participle with the finite future verb is exactly the same construction in [1 Kings 11:34](#).

79 See BAGD, 189.

80 Ksemann, *Romans*, 356. He says that "diataghv means 'structure' . . . and the "result is that even the fallen world can point to manifestations and instruments of the order which God has set up."

81 The genitive construction th/ tou' qeou' diatagh' could be taken as a subjective genitive (see Porter, "Romans," 128), but the emphasis on the permanence of the government (cf. tetagmevnai) favors a more static idea, i.e. "institution" and the genitive appears to reflect more the idea of "source." God is the source of the governing authorities. See also Morris, *Romans*, 462. He also references the work of Deissmann who "cites a second-century inscription which he thinks read tw`n qeivwn dia[tag]w`n and meant "imperial ordinances", "a most exact parallel to the celebrated passage in the Epistle to the Romans, which also refers to the Roman authorities." Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 667, refers to Deissmann's work and says the text should have been reconstructed as tw`n qeivwn dia[tagma]tw`n.

82 Herbert M. Gale, "Paul's View of the State: A Discussion of the Problem in [Romans 13:1-7](#)," *Interpretation* 6 (1952), 414. Gale recognizes the exalted position Paul affords the state and its incredible authority—which has been read by some to mean absolute authority. He argues that the idea of "being divinely instituted" is used of the Law in Galatians (which was only limited authority and jurisdiction) and therefore the authority possessed by the state is not final and absolute. Gale's argument could more easily be made by an appeal to the language of diavkono" (13:4) which clearly indicates derived authority and concomitant responsibility.

83 It is always used in the sense of the middle voice: "to set oneself up against." (cf. Morris, *Romans*, 462, n. 18).

84 See Bruce, *Romans*, 223 and Dunn, *Romans*, 2:762, who says, "ajnqevsthken is nearly synonymous and may be

introduced for reasons of stylistic variation."

85 Porter, "Romans," 128.

86 The expression *krivma lhvmyontai* appears to be a Semitic locution: "to receive judgment." See [Matt 12:40](#) [Luke 20:47](#); [James 3:1](#); cf. Black, *Romans*, 160; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:664; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:762.

87 The use of the perfect emphasizes the resolve involved in resisting the authorities (see Dunn, *Romans*, 2:762).

88 The idea of God meting out judgment through human instruments is a familiar Jewish as well as Hellenistic concept ([Isa. 13:17-19](#); [Dan 7:9-14](#); [Zeph 1:14-2:3](#); [Mal 4:1](#); [Wisd Sol 12:12](#)).

89 Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 2:762.

90 Barrett, *Romans*, 245. Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:664 argues that both the eternal judgment as well as a temporal judgment are in view. His emphasis though is on the divine judgment and he takes the *gavr* of 13:3 as introducing another reason for obedience to the state. This, however, appears to disrupt the flow of the passage. Other commentators who hold to the judgment as both that of the state and God include: Porter, "Romans," 129; Ksemann, *Romans*, 357; Morris, *Romans*, 462. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 367 limit it to the state: "There is no reference here to eternal punishment." For the tension that exists between the age of God's grace in the gospel and the punishment of the state on wrongdoers, see Stephen A. James, "Divine Justice and the Retributive Duty of Civil Government," *Trinity Journal* 6 (Autumn 1985), 199-210.

91 There is debate as to whether *gavr* gives a further reason for the command in verse 1 or introduces an explanation relating to the *krivma* of verse 2. Porter, "Romans," 129 understands the connection to the command in verse 1, but on better grounds Stein, "Romans," connects it with verse 2.

92 The change from *eixousivai*" (verse 1) to *oiJ a[rconte*" (verse 3) is probably stylistic to avoid a redundancy.

93 Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 367. The plural, though, cannot be used to substantiate the "generic character of the political situation," as Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 667, maintains. Simply because Paul is speaking quite generally at this point does not mean that there is no specific occasion in mind.

94 Cf. Ziesler, *Romans*, 312. The fact that Paul is referring to moral behavior that falls within the limits set out in the laws of the land, does not mean that he is speaking solely of political behavior; see Cranfield, *Romans*, 664, n. 5; Ksemann, *Romans*, 358.

95 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:763.

96 An example of a current problem concerns apartheid in South Africa. For the devastating use of this passage in a modern setting see Munro, "[Romans 13:1-7](#): Apartheid's Last Biblical Refuge," *BTB* 20 (1990), 161-67.

97 Bruce, *Romans*, 224; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:763; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 667 (notice his use of the term "legitimate" when referring to the authorities); Hendricksen, *Romans*, 434; Morris, *Romans*, 463; O'Neill, *Romans*, 210, 11; Porter, "Romans," 130, (Porter gets the idea of a "just" authority from the use of *uJpewc* in verse 1); Stein, "Romans," 333; Ziesler, *Romans*, 312.

98 See Morris, *Romans*, 463.

99 See BDF, *471 (3) refer to this text as an example of parataxis in the place of conditional subordination and says that (*494) "the resolution of a sentence into unconnected components produces a more powerful effect than would the periodic form proper." See also, Morris, *Romans*, 463; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 367.

100 J. C. O'Neill, *Romans*, 211, follows Rudolph Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-*

stoische Diatribe (Gttingen, 1910), 15ff, and argues for the diatribe style here.

101 Porter, "Romans," 131. See also S. Lgasse, "Paul et Csar, Romains 13, 1-7: Essai de Synthse," *Revue Biblique* 101 (October 1994), 520, who affirms that "La diatrib est caractristique de Paul."

102 Morris, *Romans*, 463, seems to understand the reference to toV ajgaqoVn in 13:3 as a reference to "law-abiding." See also, Black, *Romans*, 160. That this is certainly part of Paul's idea is clear from the command in 13:1. But he may have more in mind as well. The imperative poivei refers to actively doing good deeds as a member of society, not just passively keeping within the limits of the laws of the land. Not many people receive praise for staying within the law, but perhaps someone might receive praise for not only staying within the limits, but also going beyond the law in service to people (cf. [Gal. 6:10](#) and the toV agjaqovn, also, [1 Peter 3:13](#)).

103 Barrett, *Romans*, 246.

104 Hendricksen, *Romans*, 435. See also Bruce W. Winter, "The Public Honouring of Christian Benefactors," *JSNT* 34 (October 1988), 87-103.

105 This is also the case in its second, parallel use later in verse 4.

106 Morris, *Romans*, 463.

107 The expression occurs only in [2 Corinthians 6:4](#) where Paul says, ajll! ejn pantiV sunivstante" eJautouV" wJ" **geou' diavkono**i. Here, of course, he is speaking of the holy and blameless character of the mission he carried out for the Lord.

108 See Moulton and Milligan.

109 In these passages in Esther, the LXX translates the Hebrew term trev;m] as diavkono", although the LXX generally translates the term with leitourgov" (see H. Strathmann, *TDNT*, 4:231 n. 8).

110 Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 367;

111 Borg, "A New Context," 217.

112 Barrett, *Romans*, 246, simply ignores the presence of the pronoun soiv in his translation and commentary. Cranfield is responding to this generalized interpretation of the passage.

113 Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:666. Borg, "A New Context," 217.

114 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:764.

115 Ibid. See also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 668; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 367.

116 Barrett, *Romans*, 246; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:666.

117 Hendricksen, *Romans*, 435.

118 Ibid.

119 BDF, *371 (4). In other words the condition is very general with no necessary inference as to the fulfillment of the protasis. However, if the protasis becomes a reality, so also does the apodosis.

120 BAGD, 864 (1). The term is used in the NT only five times ([Matt 11:8](#); [John 19:5](#); [Romans 13:4](#); [1 Cor. 15:49](#); [James 2:3](#).) The reference in Matthew, John and James refer to wearing clothes (see also Josephus, *Ant.* 3, 153). The reference in 1 Corinthians refers to Christians taking on the likeness of Christ just as they had the likeness of

Adam while on the earth before glorification. See Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. R.V.G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), 230, 31. In each use of the word in the NT it has the idea of "continually bearing" (i.e. wearing) and that is the sense here in [Romans 13:4](#) as well. It is a continual function of the state to mete out punishment on those who do evil.

121 BAGD, 496 (2).

122 Working strictly from OT usage, Borg, "A New Context," 216-218, argues for the sword as a symbol of the war-making capabilities of the state—especially to put down Jewish rebellion. He has disregarded the context in [Romans 13](#) with its focus on the individual and his conclusion therefore seems highly unlikely. Paul's concern is not with rebellion *en masse*, but with the Christian as an individual living in a political world. Paul says the government is God's avenger unto wrath against *the one who does evil*.

123 Barrett, *Romans*, 247. He cites Tacitus, *Histories*, III. 68 as support for the comparison. The text refers to Vitellius, who after having suffered the humiliation of defeat offered his dagger to Caecilius Simplex, the consul standing beside him, in order that the consul might put him to death.

124 A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 10. He contends that "the term *ius gladii* has not been used in a technical sense for the power of the governor over either Roman citizens or *peregrini*" (p. 9).

125 Many commentators reject the comparison, including Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:666, 67; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:764; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 668; Morris, *Romans*, 464; Murray, *Romans*, 152 and Ziesler, *Romans*, 312.

126 See also Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 1. 25 which says, dikastou` gaVr dei`sqai aujta" xivfo" e]conte"— "For they needed a judge with a sword in his hand."

127 Murray, *Romans*, 152.

128 Cf. BAGD, 222 (3). Note *The Letter of Aristeas* 168: The text says that "no ordinances have been made in scripture *without purpose* or fancifully, but to the intent that through the whole of our lives we may also practice justice to all mankind. . . ." Stein argues on the basis of [Ex 21:12, 14](#); [Lev 24:17](#) and [Num 35:16-34](#) that perhaps the state exercised the sword in obedience to the command of God. This is highly unlikely. Ziesler, *Romans*, 312, says that just because the state is the servant of God does not mean that it is consciously cooperating with God.

129 Gottlob Schrenk, *TDNT*, 2:444.

130 See P Oxy. II 261¹⁴ (A. D. 55) which says sunestavkenai aujthn toVn progegravmmenon uiJwnwVn hjmovna e]gdikon e]piV pavsh" ejxousivai", "that she has appointed her said grandson Chaeremon to appear for her before every authority." Though somewhat later, see P Oxy. II 237^{vii} (A D 186). The term also carried this meaning into several patristic writers. See G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 427. See also *Wisdom of Solomon* 12:12: "Who will come before you to plead as an advocate for the unrighteous."

131 Cf. Schrenk, *TDNT*, 2:444; BAGD, 238.

132 See F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 45 (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 85 and Robert L. Thomas, "1 Thessalonians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1978), 272, who argues that the avenging is a future eschatological punishment.

133 Note also 4 Macc 15:29.

134 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:765, says that e]kdiko" is to be taken in its strongest sense. Its use with eij" ojrghvn "puts the question beyond dispute." For a different perspective on the force of the term see Ziesler, *Romans*, 313.

135 O'Neill, *Romans*, 212.

136 Black, *Romans*, 160; Calvin, *Romans*, 283; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:765; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 669 and Ksemann, *Romans*, 358, who says that "earthly punishment carries out God's wrath." See also Bruce, *Romans*, 224; Hendricksen, *Romans*, 436; Morris, *Romans*, 464; Murray, *Romans*, 153; Porter, "Romans," 132; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 368; Stein, "Romans," 336.

137 Barrett, *Romans*, 247; Zielser, *Romans*, 313. Stein, "Romans," 336, disagrees with this observation.

138 BAGD, 198, cite this reference as an example of an inferential conjunction meaning "therefore," or "for this reason."

139 See Walter Grundmann, *TDNT*, 1. 344-47. By Greek literature, Grundmann means Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 4. 5) and Plato for the most part.

140 Ibid, 344, 45.

141 The example from the *Didache* 12:2 is important for it has the same construction as [Romans 13:5](#), namely, ajnagkhv plus the infinitive. The term is also used in the LXX ([Ps 106:13](#); [Zeph 1:15](#)) and in Josephus (*War* 5, 571; *Test* 2:4) to refer to judgment or calamity, but not in any way in connection with a personified deity as in Greek usage.

142 Note the textual problem in [Luke 23:17](#).

143 So Dunn, *Romans*, 2:765; contra Ksemann, *Romans*, 358. There is more here than the simple idea of necessity. There is the implication as stated in the text that here we have the divine ordering of things. Perhaps it is not as deterministic as Dunn implies, but it is not just a necessity for those who want to share in the practical results described in verses 3, 4; so Porter, "Romans," 133.

144 This count includes six occurrences that come from the Pastoral Epistles.

145 C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament* (London: SCM press, 1955). Pierce argues, (p. 71) that Paul's concept of conscience is clear: "it is the pain a man suffers when he has done wrong." As to the origin of the term he states (p. 72) that "St. Paul takes the Greek idea and sets it firmly and brilliantly in a significantly but hardly, as will be seen, pre-eminent place in his Judeo-Christian *Weltanschauung*." See Paul Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 440, who also argues for conscience as a reference to acts already committed.

146 Christian Maurer, *TDNT*, 7:917; Margaret E. Thrall, "The Pauline Use of Suneivdhsi'," *New Testament Studies* (October 1967), 123, 125, says that conscience provides "guidance for future moral action and also as being able to assess the actions of others." For similar criticisms against Pierce, see J. M. Gundry-Volf, "Conscience," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 153-56; Page Lee, "'Conscience' in [Romans 13:5](#)," *Faith and Mission* 8 (Fall 1990), 88, 89.

147 Barrett, *Romans*, 247; Black, *Romans*, 160; Bruce, *Romans*, 224; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:668; Dunn, *Romans*, 2:765; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 669; Hendricksen, *Romans*, 437; Porter, "Romans," 134; Stein, "Romans," 337. But Dunn, *Romans*, 2:765, says that "Paul appeals to the moral sensibility of the ancient world." The background may lie here as Maurer has shown, but Paul has developed the concept more than Dunn is willing to allow.

148 W. J. Grant, "Citizenship and Civil Obedience," *The Expository Times* (1943), 80, 81, argues that inherent in the idea of conscience is the responsibility of the Christian to obey "just" authority, and to choose righteousness and God over the state should the two conflict.

149 The presence of the *diouv* in verse 5 lends further credibility to Stein's proposal that what Paul is doing is summarizing his previous argument in verses 1-4.

150 For a more detailed presentation see Stein, "Romans," 339, 40.

151 So Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:668; Hendricksen, *Romans*, 436.

152 The expression *diaV tou'to* occurs in [Rom 1:26; 4:16; 5:12; 13:6; 15:9; 1 Cor 4:7; 11:10, 30; 2 Cor 4:1; 7:13; 13:10; Eph 1:15; 5:17; 6:13; Col 1:9; 1 Thes 2:13; 3:5, 7; 2 Thes 2:11; 1 Tim 1:16; 2 Tim 2:10; Phlm 15](#). In all these instances it refers back to the previous argument not to a single term. See Stein, "Romans," 340, who understands the phrase to look backward to the preceding argument as well as forward to *leitourgoiV gaVr qeou' eijsin eij* "aujtoV tou'to proskarterou'nte". Porter, "Romans," 134, interprets it to refer only to the preceding argument, not to anything following it. This is a difficult decision to make and there does not appear to be enough clear evidence to be dogmatic on one side or the other.

153 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 669.

154 See Konrad Weiss, *TDNT*, 9:80-83; BAGD, 865; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 669 and Ziesler, *Romans*, 314.

155 Bruce, *Romans*, 225, seems to feel that it could go either way, but again, the presence of the *gavr* seems to rule out the imperative. See also Ksemann, *Romans*, 359, who takes it as an indicative.

156 Stein, "Romans," 341. Many commentators take *telei'te* as an indicative and an example therefore of the divine origin of civil government.

157 Dunn, *Romans*, 2:767, attempts to draw out of the term all cultic overtones and leave it as it is found solely in Hellenistic usage—a reference to one who serves the body politic. The heavy emphasis in the passage on God's appointment of the state and its direct connection to *qeou'* would seem to weaken such a conclusion. J. L. C. Abineno, "The State, according to Romans Thirteen," *South East Asia Journal of Theology* 14 (1972), 26, says that "this term (*leitourgos*) does not possess the cultic meaning it has in the Septuagint, so that gathering taxes is not the same as making an offering. Nevertheless, the term 'servant' is not to be given an everyday meaning. It means at least that the office of the government official, his *leitourgia* is from God. Consciously or not he works at God's direction. Thus Christians must obey him and pay their taxes."

158 BAGD, 715.

159 This presents a problem for translation, as Dunn, *Romans*, 2:767, comments. The sense, however, is clear from the context and if we take the accusative as reference/respect, then we could translate the clause as follows: "these *leitourgoiV* give themselves *with respect to* this very thing."

160 So Cranfield, *Romans*, 669; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 669; Morris, *Romans*, 467.

161 Barrett, *Romans*, 247.

162 Stein, "Romans," 342.

163 Ksemann, *Romans*, 359, takes exception to this interpretation arguing that the sense is as follows: "we take the verb to be active concern for something, the meaning might be that as rulers discharge their functions they remain within their divine commission." See also Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 368.

164 *jApovdote* is an imperative verb with a continuous nuance. For the idea of "give back" see BAGD, 90, *2. BAGD list the meaning of the term under *1 "give away, give up, give out." This does not seem to take into account that when the Christians in Rome are rendering to the state, they are giving back to God (as the author of the state) what has been entrusted to them.

165 The term means a "general obligation or duty;" so BAGD, 598, *2a.

166 BAGD, 865. Dues paid by a subject nation (cf. 1 Macc 10:33; [Luke 20:22](#)). See Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 368.

167 BAGD, 812, *3 (cf. 1 Macc 10:31; [Matt 17:25](#)).

168 BAGD, 864, *2b b.

169 BAGD, 817, *2b.

170 Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:670-72. See Morris, *Romans*, 467.

171 So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 670.

172 Stein, "Romans, " 342, points out that, "The parallelism and rhyme (fovron-fovbon; tevlo"-timhvn) should be noted. Due to the poetic nature of 13:7b-e one should probably not seek a precise or technical meaning in these four Greek terms." This means that the interpreter must be hesitant in referring one term (i.e. timhvn) to one kind of ruler and the other term (i.e. fovbo") to a lower ruler.

173 See Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:669, 70 and Dunn, *Romans*, 2:768, who also cites the fact that [Luke 20:22, 25](#) uses the term fovron. S. Lgasse, "Paul et Csar," 526, argues that [Romans 13:1-7](#) is pre-Pauline, but that it does not go back to Jesus' words in [Mark 12](#), some Hellenistic concept, or even to God as Creator, but rather to Christ's example of submission, even to the point of death. Note also Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn and trans. John E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 173, 80, who understands it to originate with Jesus.

174 Barrett, *Romans*, 248.