

# Ten Reasons Why Romans 13 is Not About Secular Government, Part 12

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

Following are the ten reasons that prove Romans 13 is *not* about secular government:

- **Reason #1:** Romans 12 does not allow for Romans 13 to be interpreted to reflect secular government.
- **Reason #2:** The Apostle Paul is not addressing God-established powers but God-ordained authorities.
- **Reason #3:** The God-ordained authorities are identified as ministers of God.
- **Reason #4:** The ministers of God are identified as a terror to evil.
- **Reason #5:** The ministers of God are identified as those who do good to the righteous.
- **Reason #6:** The government depicted by the Apostle Paul, which does good to the righteous and deters the wicked, does so continually.
- **Reason #7:** If Romans 13 is depicting a secular government, the Apostle Paul contradicts himself in 1 Corinthians 6 and 2 Corinthians 6.
- **Reason #8:** The Apostle Paul charges Christians to submit to the government he depicts from a Holy Spirit-convicted conscience.
- **Reason #9:** The government depicted by the Apostle Paul is due tribute, custom, fear, and honor.
- **Reason #10:** If Romans 13 is about secular government to which Christians must submit, the Apostle Paul contradicts the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5.

Not only do these ten reasons establish a biblical government, there is absolutely *nothing* in Romans 13 indicative of a secular government.

## Good intentions, but still wrong

There are many Christians who champion Romans 13 for noble reasons. However, many of them still fall short of expounding it correctly. They're often heard declaring Christians are obligated to keep only the laws that comport with Yahweh's<sup>2</sup> law. While this is true as it pertains to secular governments, it overlooks the fact that the biblical government Paul depicts is established *exclusively upon* God's perfect law and altogether righteous judgments.<sup>3</sup> Laws contrary to God's law are never an issue for Christians living under a Romans 13 government, because such

laws are nonexistent under such a government.

At any point government enacts legislation incompatible with God's law, it ceases to be a Romans 13 government. Only then does civil disobedience become necessary.

### **Our dominion mandate**

Romans 13 provides Christians with a template for establishing biblical governments under the New Covenant. Paul arms us with essentially the same commission in 2 Corinthians 10:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

In addition to Genesis 1:27-28,<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28:18-20,<sup>5</sup> and Mark 16:15-16,<sup>6</sup> *this is our commission*. For 21st-century American Christians, this mandate begins with proclaiming another King, Judge, and Lawgiver<sup>7</sup> than what's found in the United States Constitutional Republic's secular [Executive](#), [Judicial](#), and [Legislative](#) branches. This should, Lord willing, engender the same accusation leveled against the 1st-century disciples in Acts 17—that of turning [today's ungodly secular government](#) upside down.<sup>8</sup>

Romans 12:21 declares we're to overcome evil with good, which is in fact a synopsis of our 2 Corinthians 10 commission. 2 Corinthians 10 depicts the front lines for overcoming evil with good. Preachers and evangelists who preach King and kingdom are the point men in this battle for dominion. It's always been so. For example, in Judges 6, the unnamed prophet came before Gideon the general. Moses the preacher in Egypt came before Moses the lawgiver at Mt. Sinai and Joshua the colonizer in the land of Canaan.

When Moses went to Egypt preaching Yahweh as Sovereign God, he wasn't there merely to persuade Pharaoh but, more importantly, to prepare Israel to wholeheartedly serve God once delivered from Pharaoh. Israel's deliverance was not so much from their geographical slavery as from their mental and spiritual slavery to Pharaoh and his false gods. It's no different today.

### **Tangible effect**

At the same time we must be careful not to spiritualize the intended tangible effect of our dominion commission.

Whereas Paul *is* declaring our battle to be of a spiritual nature, he's not removing it from where you and I presently live. We walk in the flesh, but the battle is spiritual. However, this does *not* mean it's some kind of mystical, out-of-this world clash with unidentifiable forces.

Instead, it's spiritual because of the nature of the battle. It pits righteousness against unrighteousness, and thus God's kingdom against man's kingdom, and therefore biblical government against secular government.

### **Weapons of "mass destruction"**

Do not overlook the potent weapons God has put at our disposal—weapons powerful enough to demolish the opponent's strongholds. The battle begins and is principally waged for hearts and minds but, in so doing, we will likewise witness physical fortresses fall. For example, destroy today's fortresses of usury and false weights and measures in the minds of the people, replacing them with God's equitable economic laws, and the Federal Reserve's literal fortress and today's debt-laden fiat banking system eventually comes down as well.

*All* of the secularists' physical fortresses are vulnerable to the spiritual weapons at our disposal, particularly the sword:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Is not my word like as a fire? saith Yahweh; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (Jeremiah 23:29)

God's word is a hammer in the hands of His remnant. It demolishes strongholds and is a fire that burns up the refuse of those opposed to our God and His kingdom. What might be accomplished if only a remnant would prove faithful to their 2 Corinthians 10 commission in employing the powerful weapons God has provided us?

It does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen to set brush fires in people's minds. (Samuel Adams)

### **All-encompassing commission**

Note the words "every" and "all" in our commission:

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge *all* disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

*What's left?*

The inevitable complacency of those who teach that Romans 13 is about secular government is inescapably conflicted with 2 Corinthians 10's all-encompassing commission. Our job is not finished until every thought is taken captive for Christ and every opposing fortress built upon biblically adverse world views is razed and *all* disobedience is revenged. In short, until all evil has been vanquished by good. As Christ's objective, this must therefore be His subjects' goal as well:

For he must reign, till he hath put *all* enemies under his feet. (1 Corinthians 15:25)

### **Revenging disobedience**

What does revenging disobedience in 2 Corinthians 10:6 mean? It doesn't mean Paul is waiting for the church to get their act together and be obedient so he can punish *their* disobedience. That makes no sense whatsoever. But that's how it's usually interpreted by those who have no vision for dominion beyond the four walls of their homes and church buildings.

Why would Paul wait for the saints to become obedient to punish *their* disobedience? At the point someone becomes obedient, you don't punish them but reward them.

The key to this phrase is found in the word "revenge," or better "punish," as rendered in the New American Standard Bible:

[W]e are ready to *punish* all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:6, NASB)

The Greek word translated "revenge" in 1 Corinthians 10 is the verb form of its noun counterpart "revenger" in Romans 13:

For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a *revenger* [or punisher] to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. (Romans 13:4)

Romans 13:4 is describing biblical judges responsible for carrying out what's depicted in 2 Corinthians 10:6—that is, punishing *all* disobedience to God and His law.

At this point—as depicted in 2 Corinthians 10—the existing Christian *ecclesias* will already be fulfilling their responsibility of judging themselves, per 1 Corinthians 6:1, 4-5. When every thought of those opposed to Christ and their resulting strongholds have been taken captive, this will culminate in these same *ecclesias* adjudicating *all* societal violations of God's law, per Romans 13:3-6, 1 Corinthians 6:2-4, 2 Corinthians 10:6, and 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

The goal of Romans 12:21 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 is dominion: overcoming *all* evil with Yahweh's good as reflected in His moral law, to the end that the Romans 13 biblical government will become a reality over all society. In other words, in order that Matthew 6:10 and 33—that is, God's kingdom and righteousness here on earth as *it is in heaven*—becomes a reality, at least as much as is possible under human oversight. When every thought of those opposed to Christ and their resulting strongholds have been taken captive, this will culminate in these same *ecclesias* adjudicating *all* societal violations of God's law, per 1 Corinthians 6:2-4, 2 Corinthians 10:6, and 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

This will occur when, once again, the remnant becomes obedient to their commission in 2 Corinthians 10 and when their obedience is complete. In other words, this will occur when our obedience has matured and grown to the point we are able to install and administer the Romans 13 civil body politic over all of society in the fashion described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6. This was accomplished right here [17th-century Colonial America](#):

**The Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Compact, 1638:** We whose names are underwritten do hereby solemnly in the presence of Jehovah incorporate ourselves into a Bodie Politick and as He shall help, will submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given in His Holy Word of truth, to be guided and judged thereby.

**Fundamental Agreement of the Colony of New Haven, Connecticut, 1639:** Agreement; We all agree that the scriptures hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in duties which they are to perform to God and to man, as well in families and commonwealth as in matters of the church; so likewise in all public officers which concern civil order, as choice of magistrates and officers, making and repealing laws, dividing allotments of inheritance, and all things of like nature, we will, all of us, be ordered by the rules which the scripture holds forth; and we agree that such persons may be entrusted with such matters of government as are described in Exodus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 1:13 with Deuteronomy 17:15 and 1 Corinthians 6:1, 6 & 7....

Anything else is defaulting to another king and is thus sedition against the King of kings.

## A kingdom vision

The battle we're engaged in as Christians is principally for the hearts and minds of the people, beginning with equipping the Christian remnant with a kingdom vision.<sup>9</sup> Without this, we all but perish as God's distinct people.

Where there is no vision, the people perish [lit. are uncovered, and thus unprotected]: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (Proverbs 29:18)

Without a kingdom vision, Christians become all but culturally impotent—that is, savorless salt. Case in point: what used to be Christendom (Christians dominionizing society on behalf of Christ their King) in 17th-century America is now predominantly saltless, four-walled Christianity, good for nothing but to be trampled under the foot of man:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (Matthew 5:13)

Romans 12:21 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 depict Christians taking back dominion of the kingdom from those who have usurped it.<sup>10</sup> This, in turn, begins with establishing Romans 13 *ecclesias*. This will never be accomplished by

those who teach Romans 13 is about secular government and who are thus content with the status quo of governments based upon man-made capricious laws.

This perverted doctrine only strengthens the resolve of Christ's enemies. It is, arguably, the secularists most-beloved theology.

### **Coming out *and* taking over**

As servants and ambassadors of the King of kings, we're charged with both coming out *and* taking over, with both separating from the world *and* overcoming the world. Balancing these two commands is challenging to say the least, especially when under secular government ruled by ungodly powers (which is precisely where we find ourselves in America today). Failing to balance these two commands turns separation into isolation. Isolation effectively removes us from the battle altogether, or at least limits our impact for King and kingdom:

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.* (John 17:14-18)

When separation results in isolation, it's an extreme that is comparable to rapturists, antinomians, antidominionists, and those who render themselves ineffectual via their belief that Romans 13 is about secular government. God has not called us to be isolationists, but rather both separatists and dominionists. Each man must biblically determine for himself and his family where God intends the lines to be drawn in accomplishing these two mandates under ungodly powers.

### **A three-pronged response**

Today's secular Constitutional Republic is of same nature as was the 1st-century Roman Republic. As such, it requires a three-pronged response: First, we're to *reprove* its evil per Ephesians 5:11.<sup>11</sup> Second, we're to *resist* its evil per 1 Peter 5:8-9.<sup>12</sup> And third, we're to *overcome* its evil per Romans 12:21.<sup>13</sup> The first response involves being a light to the world by exposing its evil, and the second and third responses involve being the salt of the earth by both purifying and preserving—that is, restoring kingdom control to its rightful heirs and safeguarding it for future generations.

Establishing a Romans 13 government based upon Yahweh's triune moral law, under the oversight of God-ordained authorities, begins on small local levels. It will not be complete until Isaiah 11:9 becomes reality:

[T]he earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)

This will initially be realized by local *ecclesias*. However, as with Gideon's father's idol, today's national idol and its central government—the United States Constitution and its secular Republic<sup>14</sup>—must someday be replaced in order for us to have a more inclusive dominion impact. Nevertheless, the last thing we want is to replace its central government with another national central government.

The Constitutional Republic *will* eventually fall, but not because of any armed rebellion. That's how Christ, in John 18:36, informed Pilate His disciples would handle the situation *if* His kingdom were *of* this world. They would have stormed Pilate's palace and delivered Christ by force of arms. That's not the nature of the battle Jesus' servants are called to wage. Instead, it's principally won by preaching the gospel of the kingdom. This is the same gospel that turns the world upside down, which the disciples in Acts 17:6-7 were accused of preaching.

Even without this, the seeds of the Constitutional Republic's own destruction were sown at its inception by its 18th-century founders. See Matthew 7:26-27<sup>15</sup> and 12:25.<sup>16</sup>

America's Constitutional Republic *will* fall. Will Christians be ready to replace it with a [Romans 13 government](#) when it does?

## Conclusion

If Romans 13 is about secular government, Paul contradicts 2 Corinthians 10's comprehensive dominion mandate. It furthermore effectively eliminates the motivation to fulfill our privileged calling in manifesting ourselves as sons of God, whereby His righteous foundations are restored:

For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation, NASB] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.... Because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Romans 8:19-21)

It's in this calling that the world is turned right side up and ultimately the entire creation is delivered from the bondage endured under secular governments that have rejected Yahweh as sovereign and the restorative power of His law as supreme.

It's at the local *ecclesia* level that the sons of God begin to manifest themselves. This is accomplished in two ways: by means of individual liberty via Christ's blood-atoning sacrifice and resurrection from the grave<sup>17</sup> and national liberty via Yahweh's perfect law of liberty<sup>18</sup> as society's standard.

Do not miss out on participating in the thrilling commission we've been blessed with because of faulty and dangerous interpretations of Romans 13. Even the agnostic Will Durant recognized the dominionizing, world-altering power of the gospel of the kingdom:

There is no greater drama in the human record than the sight of a few Christians, scorned or oppressed by a succession of [Roman] emperors, bearing all trials with fierce tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generated chaos, fighting the sword with the word, brutality with hope, and at last defeating the strongest state that history has known. Caesar had met Christ in the arena, and Christ had won.<sup>19</sup>

We will win again in time and history if only the King's sons and daughters apply themselves to His kingdom work—to seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness *here on earth as it is in heaven*.

For the eyes of Yahweh move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.... (2 Chronicle 16:9, NASB)

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1. [Christian Duty Under Corrupt Government: A Revolutionary Commentary on Roams 13:1-7](#)

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

memorialize His name here in this document and in our lives. For a more thorough explanation concerning important reasons for using the sacred name of God, see [“The Third Commandment.”](#)

3. “The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of Yahweh are true and righteous altogether.” (Psalm 19:7-9)

4. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:27-28)

5. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

6. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved....” (Mark 16:15-16)

7. “For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; he will save us.” (Isaiah 33:22)

8. “[L]ewd fellows of the baser sort ... drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city [intending to criminally incriminate them at law], crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also ... and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another King, one Jesus.” (Acts 17:5-7)

9. [Law and Kingdom: Their Relevance Under the New Covenant](#)

[A Biblical Constitution: A Scriptural Replacement for Secular Government](#)

10. “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12)

“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.... But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” (Matthew 23:1-13)

11. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather *reprove* them.” (Ephesians 5:11)

12. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the [*diabolos*, i.e. slanderer], as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom *resist* stedfast in the faith....” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

13. “Be not overcome of evil, but *overcome* evil with good.” (Romans 12:21)

14. [Bible Law vs. the United States Constitution: The Christian Perspective](#)

15. “And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:26-27)

16. “[E]very kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” (Matthew 12:25)

17. John 8:32, 36; 2 Corinthians 3:17, etc.

18. Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119:44-45; James 2:12, etc.

19. Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ: A History of Roman Civilization and Christianity From Their Beginnings in AD 325*, *The Story of Civilization*, Part 3 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944) p. 652.