

Ten Reasons Why Romans 13 is Not About Secular Government, Part 6

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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)¹

Reason #5

The Ministers of God Are Those Who Do Good to the Righteous

The Apostle Paul identifies the rulers he's writing about in Romans 13 as [authorities rather than powers](#) and as [ministers of God](#) who are a [terror to the wicked](#). Paul is even more explicit in that he also characterizes these same civil leaders as those who do good to the righteous.

For he *is* the minister of God to thee for good ... a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. (Romans 13:4)

Consistent vs. sporadic fulfillment

Paul is not describing what such authorities are *supposed* to be, but instead what they *are*:

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. (Proverb 29:2)

With secular government, this is the exception not the rule:

...[Yahweh's] law is slacked, and judgment [justice, NASB] doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth. ...their judgment and their dignity [authority, NASB] shall proceed of themselves. (Habakkuk 1:4, 7)

The best we can hope for from a secular government is that it would do good to the righteous sporadically whenever it happens to enforce a biblical law. Thus, at whatever point a government ceases to do good to the righteous, it ceases to be the government described by Paul.

Doing good by punishing the wicked

One of the ways government does good to the righteous is by executing [Yahweh's² prescribed civil sanctions](#) on the wicked, which, in turn, results in a safe, peaceful, and robust society:

But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. (Proverbs 1:33)

How much more so when government does the same?

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment [justice, NASB].... He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. (Psalm 72:1-2, 6-7)

Converting sinners

The government advanced by Paul—which results in God's manifold blessings on the society it governs³—also aids in the conversion of sinners to Christ:

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as Yahweh my God commanded me.... Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as Yahweh our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)

The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul.... (Psalm 1:9:7)

[F]or when thy [civil] judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (Isaiah 26:9)

This will never be said of secular government.

Praying for government

The government depicted in Psalm 72 is the same as what Paul charged Timothy to pray for:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Those who maintain that Paul advocates secular government must, in turn, teach that we're obligated to thank God for government that is often the opposite of Paul's description in Romans 13—government that by its rejection of Yahweh's perfect law of liberty⁴ alone jeopardizes the peace and security of those it governs.

In Psalm 19, King David depicts Yahweh's moral law as perfect, sure, right, pure, and altogether righteous.⁵ It provides mankind with the most rewarding, prosperous, and peaceful of societies, governed by the least abusive and intrusive of civil leaders.

On the other hand, secular governments often bear out that "No man's life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session."

Our prayers for a quiet, peaceful, and honest society are largely for naught unless they culminate in a biblical government established upon [God's triune moral law](#),⁶ administered by biblically qualified judges:

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers.... And let them judge the people at all seasons.... (Exodus 18:21-22)

In addition to the qualifications above, such men are to represent Yahweh rather than other men. They are to write out their own copy of God's law, study it daily, and scrupulously observe it. They are also to seek righteousness, declare only the truth, render impartial judgment, shun bribes, and abhor dishonest gain.⁷ In short, they are to be

ministers of God for our good:

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.... And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. (Isaiah 32:1, 17-18)

Do the qualifications for God's ministers no longer concern Him? Did Paul forget about these qualifications? *Of course not!* Instead, Paul is merely reinstating those same instructions for godly government under the New Covenant. He depicts a government instituted, executed, and maintained by God-established, biblically qualified authorities—particularly judges—for the deterrent and punishment of the wicked and for the good of the god-fearing man.

The Apostle Peter's Validation

As one would expect, the Apostle Peter depicts the same Romans 13 government:

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (1 Peter 2:13-14)

Peter proclaims the submission due to this government is "for the Lord's sake." Submission to governments that repudiate Yahweh and reject His law cannot, *by any stretch of the imagination*, be described as "for the Lord's sake." Instead, this phrase is reminiscent of King Jehoshaphat's declaration to the biblically qualified judges he restored:

And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for *ye judge not for man, but for Yahweh* [i.e., for the Lord's sake], who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of Yahweh be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with Yahweh our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. (2 Chronicles 19:5-7)

Jehoshaphat understood the judges he appointed would judge for Yahweh's sake. Thus, he warned them of their responsibility to adjudicate God's law, which would result in the punishment of the wicked and the praise of those who do good.

Neither Paul nor Peter advocated secular powers that randomly do good to the righteous (if at all). Instead, they depicted the same authorities as did Jethro in Exodus 18 and King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 19. They did *not* advocate secular government but instead a biblical government, presided over by biblically qualified judges who serve on behalf of Yahweh to the good and praise of those who likewise serve God.

Stay tuned for Part 7.

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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. See Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

4. See Psalm 19:7-11, 119:44-45, and James 2:12.

5. “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. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (Psalm 19:7-11)

6. For more on how Yahweh’s moral law applies and should be implemented today, see [Law and Kingdom: Their Relevance Under the New Covenant](#).

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

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

7. See Exodus 18:19-21; Deuteronomy 1:16-17, 17:18-19; Ezra 7:10; and Ecclesiastes 19:5-7.