

Ten Reasons Why Romans 13 is Not About Secular Government, Part 7

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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 #6

The Government Depicted by the Apostle Paul, Which Does Good to the Righteous and Deters the Wicked, Does to *Continually*

Proskarterio

For he is the minister of God to thee for good ... 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 they are God's ministers, attending *continually* upon this very thing. (Romans 13:4-6)

The government depicted by the Apostle Paul is not one that rarely or even occasionally fulfills its mandate. Rather, it fulfills the mandate during the entirety of its existence.

James Strong defines the Greek word *proskarterio* translated "attending continually":

[T]o be earnest towards, to persevere, be constantly diligent....²

The New American Standard Bible translates *proskarterio* as "devoting themselves to this very thing"—that is, to doing good to the righteous and constraining the wicked. This is only possible from a government devoted to Yahweh's³ immutable moral law.⁴ This eliminates *any possibility* Paul is referring to government *not* devoted to God and His law (aka, a secular government):

Woe to them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! (Isaiah 10:1-2)

The *best* one can hope for from a secular government, based upon finite man's fickle edicts, is that it *occasionally* punishes the wicked and does good to the righteous. Without Yahweh's immutable law as his standard, it is impossible for man to sustain righteous government on any consistent basis.

This is but one of many reasons why God's law order is imperative under the New Covenant⁵ and why every Christian should be promoting it as government and society's standard.

Fickle traditions

The following exposes the inherent volatile nature of man's *ever-changing* standard and why secular government can never be counted on to do what's right:

Two people could have walked down any U.S. street in 1930—one with a bottle of whiskey under his arm and one with a bar of gold in his pocket, and the one with the whiskey would have been a criminal whereas the one with the bar of gold would have been considered a good law abiding citizen. If the same thing happened in any U.S. city in 1970, the one with the whiskey would be the law abiding citizen and the one with the gold bar would be the criminal.⁶

In a mere forty-year period, man's standard had completely reversed itself.⁷ The United States Supreme Court reversed itself in 219 cases in its first 212 years.

The same transposition of ethics has occurred innumerable times under all governments based upon the fickle traditions of man. There's no enduring continuity in such capricious traditions. They provide a never-ending cycle of volatility.

Moreover, whenever a *biblical government* ceases to perform in the fashion Paul details, it ceases to be the government depicted in Romans 13. It has ceased to uphold what made it a biblical government—that is, its devotion to God's law. It then becomes a secular government, based upon man's capricious edicts—the polar opposite of the government described in Romans 13.

Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?... Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, ... in vain they do worship me, teaching [and, in many instances, legislating] for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:6-9)

To claim Paul was promoting secular government in Romans 13 is to make him complicit in the type of government condemned by Christ. It would, in effect, make Paul a Pharisee all over again.

No moral vacuums

There are no moral vacuums. Thus, there are no constitutions or procedural manuals void of their own inherent ethics. These procedural ethics are either moral or immoral depending upon whether or not they're established upon God's moral law.⁸ Government either promotes Yahweh's morality as reflected in His triune moral law⁹ or it promotes finite man's immorality as reflected in man's surrogate edicts.¹⁰

Unless government is established to perform Yahweh's will and persists in the same, it is *not* the government to which Paul declares we're obligated to submit ourselves.

Stay tuned for [Part 8](#).

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1. [Christian Duty Under Corrupt Government: A Revolutionary Commentary on Roams 13:1-7](#)
 2. James Strong, "Dictionary of the Greek Testament," *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, s.v. "proskarterio" (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990) p. 61.
 3. 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](#)."
 4. [A Biblical Constitution: A Scriptural Replacement for Secular Government](#)
 5. 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 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](#).
6. W.W. Turner, *The Amazing Story of the British Sovereign* (Nashville, TN: 1970) p. 4.
 7. Under biblical law, neither the bottle of whiskey nor the bar of gold is unlawful.
 8. [A Biblical Constitution: A Scriptural Replacement for Secular Government](#)
 9. "[H]e [Yahweh] declared unto you his covenant [law], which he commanded you to perform, even *ten commandments*.... And Yahweh commanded me [Moses] at that time to teach you *statutes and judgments*, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it." (Deuteronomy 4:13-14)
 10. The United States Constitution is a perfect example of a procedural manual rife with man-made decrees, which, in turn, created a secular government. See [Bible Law vs. the United States Constitution: The Christian Perspective](#), in which every Article and Amendment is examined by the Bible.

What makes government secular is its rejection of Yahweh as its sovereign and thus His moral law as society's standard.