



[Romans 13:1-7](#)

(1) 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. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (3) 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: (4) 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. (5) Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

King James Version

The subject of government in the Bible is indeed extensive. As we begin, notice that Paul writes that "there is no authority except from [God](#)" (verse 1). Though this statement appears in relation to civil authority, God's oversight is broad and deep. Even Satan's authority, as ruler of [this world](#) ([John 14:30](#)), is assigned by God. [Jesus](#) tells Pilate in [John 19:11](#), "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above." Those in the church with a position of authority also receive it from God ([1 Corinthians 12:18](#), 28). These are important statements on God's overall sovereignty.

In verse 2, Paul mentions "the ordinance of God." God's ordinance states His will, and He clearly establishes civil government. Therefore, we are

responsible for obeying civil authority also, for in doing so we are obeying God. These verses do not imply that we must always obey civil government. Other verses show that we must obey it as long as the civil authority does not contradict God's laws. In verses 3-4, Paul comes close to stating that the civil authority somewhat parallels the Old Testament "avenger of blood."

In verses 5-7, God extends our responsibilities to submit to government as a means to keep our consciences clear, as well as to pay taxes, not only so the state can afford to employ these civil servants of God, but also to submit to community customs regarding them and even to give them honor.

These seven verses show three general reasons why humans must be governed. First, law-abiding citizens must be protected. Paul's life was saved in [Acts 21:30-32](#) when Roman soldiers stepped in to save him from the murderous intent of angry Jews. Second, evildoers must be restrained. Third, the general welfare is promoted by helping to establish [peace](#). In [I Timothy 2: 1-3](#), Paul commands us to pray that this function is carried out.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Fully Accepting God's Sovereignty \(Part Four\)](#)

Related Topics:

[Avenger of Blood](#)

[Civil Authority](#)

[Civil Law](#)

[Conscience](#)

[Fully Accepting God's Sovereignty](#)

[Government](#)

[Honor the King](#)

[Satan's Authority](#)

[Submitting to Authority](#)

[Submitting to Government Taxes](#)

Commentary copyright © 1992-2020 [Church of the Great God](#)