

Romans Chapter 13

Before we begin studying Romans chapter 13, please review what we learned in Romans chapter 12 by circling the correct answers.

1. Romans 12:1 - presenting our bodies to God a living sacrifice, is: **a.** the duty of every unsaved person, **b.** the duty of every church member, **c.** the Christian's response to God's amazing grace.

2. Romans 12:1 - Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice is: **a.** The way to get saved, **b.** The way to get rid of our sins, **c.** The way to get power in the church hierarchy, **d.** The way to give God our reasonable service.

3. Romans 12:1 - Can I be a good Christian if I refuse to present my body to God a living sacrifice? **a.** Yep, God doesn't care about that stuff, **b.** Sure, as long as I'm religious, **c.** Certainly, as long as I help my fellow man, **d.** No way dude. You can't disobey God and still be a good Christian.

4. Romans 12:2 - Okay, being transformed by the renewing of my mind, means: **a.** I'm still allowed to think like a hell-bound unsaved man, **b.** I don't have to submit my mind and thoughts to God, **c.** I don't need to be serious about my Christian walk, **d.** I should live and think like a Bible believing Christian because my mind is renewed and that is exactly what I am.

5. Does Romans 12:2 leave room for Christians to be conformed to this world? **a.** Yes, it does, **b.** No, it does not, **c.** Depends on whether or not words have meaning, **d.** I'd give the skeptical side eye to any saved person who says Yes.

Introduction to Romans 13

Romans 1-3 is doctrinal truth about the unrighteousness of the human race and God's provision of a righteous sacrifice. Romans 4-5 is doctrinal truth about God's provision of perfect righteousness for all who believe on Christ. Romans 6-8 explains the practical application of the imputed righteousness of Christ and how that provision works in the body of Christ.

Romans 9-11 is about how God runs things related to Israel, His peculiar treasure, Exodus 19:5-6. Romans 12 is about how God wants things to run in the church and how Christians are to relate to each other and to people outside the church. Romans 13 is about who is going to run things in the world, how

God wants things to run in the world and how Christians are to relate to the government which God ordained.

God actively runs His Universe

- 1. God Judges Sin And Sinners** - Genesis 3:1-24
- 2. God Judges The World** - Genesis 6:1-13, 7:1-24
- 3. God Judges Nations** - Genesis 11:1-9
- 4. God Blesses Individuals** - Genesis 12:1-3
- 5. God Blesses Israel Above All** - Deuteronomy 32:7-15, Exodus 19:4-6
- 6. God Is Judge Of All The Earth** - Genesis 18:25
- 7. God Knows The World Is Wicked** - 1 John 5:19
- 8. God Knows Satan Is the god Of This World** - 2 Cor 4:4, Luke 4:5-8
- 9. God Has Authority Over Everything** - Psalm 135:1-12, Daniel 4:17, Proverbs 8:15, Romans 13:1

Romans 13 follows naturally from what Paul wrote in chapter 12. Remember the historical and political context of mid-first century Rome. Nero is the Roman Emperor and in AD 58, we are nine years past the AD 49 edict of Claudius Caesar, that all Jews must depart from Rome, Acts 18:1-2, and four years past AD 54, when Emperor Nero allowed Jews to return to Rome.

Romans 13 is crystal clear:

1. Citizens have a duty to government, Romans 13:1-2.
2. Government has a duty to citizens, Romans 13:3-4.

Romans 13 describes not only the duty of citizens to government but the duty of government to citizens. Romans 13 is not a one way street; it's a two way street. In Romans 13, Paul describes the kind of government to which citizens should be subject. Good government is not a terror to good works but to the evil. When citizens do that which is good, government should praise them. That is the kind of government to which Romans 13:1-2 tells us to be subject.

The Roman Emperor Nero was a young authoritarian ruler and certainly no friend of Christians yet Paul supported the higher powers which constitute human government. And because he was a free born Roman citizen, Acts 22:25-29, Paul felt free to appeal to Caesar for government protection against the Jew's plot to murder him, Acts 25:1-12, 23:12.

Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, sees it as the duty of every Christian to pray for kings and for all that are in authority because praying for our leaders paves the way for evangelism and the glorious gospel of Christ, 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

*"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.*

There is OT precedent for praying for those in authority, Ezra 6:10, Nehemiah 1:11, Jeremiah 29:7. God expected the Jews of the captivity to pray for their captors. Paul expects the Roman Christians to pray for Emperor Nero and the Roman Senate and us to pray for our leaders no matter how despotic.

VII. Application: The Behavior of God's Righteousness (12:1–15:13)

- I. The duty of citizens to government - Romans 13:1-2.**
- II. The duty of government to citizens - Romans 13:3-7.**
- III. The duty of Christians to each other - Romans 13:8-10.**
- IV. The duty of Christians and the second coming of Christ -
Romans 13:11-14.**

"As Americans, we were first united by our common belief
that rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

13:1 - 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.

Notice that Paul doesn't mix the church of God, with its spiritual powers and the government of the state, with its physical powers. The church is a spiritual entity while the government is a temporal physical entity. The church and the government work in different realms and are not to be combined. Some churches believe in mixing the church with the state, for example, Roman

Catholicism and the Anglican church and the Lutheran church in Germany. On the other hand, in the United States, separation of church and state is part of our political DNA.

There are three proof texts for the belief that Christians must always obey the government and never resist the government. These are the verses.

*“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.”*
Romans 13:1-2.

*“Put them in mind to be subject
to principalities and powers,
to obey magistrates,
to be ready to every good work,
To speak evil of no man,
to be no brawlers, but gentle,
shewing all meekness unto all men.”*
Titus 3:1-2.

*“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.
For so is the will of God,
that with well doing
ye may put to silence
the ignorance of foolish men:”*
1 Peter 2:13-15.

Let every soul - As we study Romans 13, we will explore whether God, Paul and the Bible have given absolute commands about government, from which no Christian may ever deviate. First of all, it is important to notice that when Paul says: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers*, every soul includes

kings and rulers, Psalm 2:7-12. Romans 13:1 is not orders for peasants from which kings, rulers and government officials are exempt. God created human government to restrain evil and reward good. That is the stated purpose of government in Romans 13. That is how government ordained by God is expected to operate and should operate.

Second, in Romans 12:1-2, Paul expects every saved person to present your bodies to God a living sacrifice. Third, here in Romans 13:1-2, Paul expects every soul to be subject unto the higher powers, Hebrews 13:7. Every soul includes rulers, kings and government officials. Those people are not exempt from Romans 13, therefore, they also are to submit to *the powers that be* which are above them in the hierarchy of delegated authority. Fourth, this recognizes the rule of God, over saved people in the church and over the entire human race outside the church.

God didn't save us to be subjects of the state, under the authority of the state, to be told by the state how, when and where we can live out our Christianity. Romans 13 does not place the government over the church or running the lives of Christians or the church under the government.

There will always be tension between our duty to God and our duty to human government. Sometimes that tension can be difficult to sort out. The decisions we make depend upon our individual conscience before God. Paul mentions the conscience 27 times in the NT and our decisions also depend upon our knowledge or lack of knowledge of what the Bible says in context. Jesus was absolutely clear that everything does not belong to Caesar, Matthew 22:21.

Keep This In Mind About Romans 13
God's authority is absolute.
Caesar's authority is not absolute.

1. Did God intend to tell us, in Romans 13, that the government should run the church?
2. Did God intend to tell us, in Romans 13, that the government should run the spiritual lives of Christians?
3. Did God intend for Paul to tell us, in Romans 13, that Christians must never resist or disobey the government?
4. Did God intend for Paul to tell us, in Romans 13, that God's church must never resist or disobey the government?
5. Does Romans 13 say that Christians must always obey the government?
6. Does Romans 13 forbid Christians to ever resist the government?
7. Is it ever right for Christians to resist the government?
8. Are there examples in the OT where believers resisted the government?

9. Are there examples in the NT where Christians resisted the government?
10. Do those OT and NT examples help us understand the limits of Romans 13?
11. Does Romans 13 give the government the right to run the church?
12. Does Romans 13 give the government control over the church?
13. Is it sometimes right for a church or Christians to resist the government?
14. If the apostle Paul, the greatest Christian who ever lived and who wrote Romans 13, resisted the government, how does that impact our understanding of Romans 13?
15. If the apostle Peter, who quoted Romans 13 in 1 Peter 2:13-17, resisted the government, how does that impact our understanding of Romans 13?
16. What options do we have in answering those last two questions?

Options For Answering Question 15.

- a.** We can ignore everything else in the Bible and read Romans 13 in isolation, as if the rest of the Bible doesn't exist.
- b.** We can say Paul got it wrong in Romans 13 or Paul and Peter got it wrong when they personally resisted the government.
- c.** We can say that a shallow surface reading of Romans 13 leads some people to assume Paul says things he really doesn't say and consequently, their false assumptions cause some people to misunderstand what Paul is saying.
- d.** We can say our method of interpreting scripture must be biblical, meaning, we rightly divide the word of truth, 2 Timothy 2:15 and we use spiritual discernment by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, 1 Corinthians 2:13, to understand the meaning of Romans 13.

In Matthew 22:21, Jesus tells us that some things belong to Caesar and some things belong to God, What is God's is not Caesars and Jesus expects us to have enough spiritual common sense to know what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. Do you have enough spiritual common sense to discern that difference? _____ Would Jesus say what He said in Matthew 22:21 and then have Paul, writing under inspiration of God, say the opposite in Romans 13? _____ What is your reasoning? _____

How do you decide what belongs to Caesar? I decide: **a.** Based on whatever I think in the moment, **b.** Based on what my friends think, **c.** Based on what my priest says, **d.** Based on the most recent Papal Bull, **e.** Based on the fact that I've very opinionated, **f.** Based on what my pastor says, **g.** Based on what the Bible says in context.

*“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king:
and meddle not with them that are given to change.”
Proverbs 24:21.*

*“I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment,
and that in regard of the oath of God.”
Ecclesiastes 8:2.*

*“They say unto him, Caesar's.
Then saith he unto them,
Render therefore unto Caesar
the things which are Caesar's;
and unto God the things that are God's.”
Matthew 22:21.*

*“And Jesus answering said unto them,
Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,
and to God the things that are God's.
And they marvelled at him.”
Mark 12:17.*

*“And he said unto them,
Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's,
and unto God the things which be God's.”
Luke 20:25.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ was absolutely clear about this topic. Everything does not belong to Caesar because Caesar's authority is not absolute. Caesar operates under delegated authority, not with absolute authority. We are not to render everything to Caesar. We are only to render to Caesar what is Caesar's.

That is precisely what Jesus told us to do, therefore Paul writes Romans 13 under inspiration of God, with the words of Jesus in mind. In no way does Paul give Caesar carte blanche to run Christians, run churches or run Christianity. Some things belong to God and do not now and will never belong to Caesar. Is that a clear and thoughtful way to understand Romans 13:1? _____

If some things belong to Caesar and some things belong to God, then the things that belong to God do not belong to Caesar. That being true, God does not want us to render to Caesar the things that are God's. It would be sinful of us to give God's things to Caesar. Does that make sense to you? _____

**I can go any distance on the right road with anyone
but it would be a sin to go
any distance on the wrong road with anyone.
- Bob Jones Sr.**

In plainer words, Caesar does not have exclusive rights to anything he wants from us and Romans 13 does not give Caesar absolute authority or the right to usurp the things that belong to God. That is clear from the teaching of Jesus therefore, Paul, who followed Christ, 1 Corinthians 11:1, is not teaching us in Romans 13 that Caesar is always right and we must never resist anything Caesar demands.

You do not have the right to give the things of God to Caesar, under the guise of obeying Romans 13:1-2. If you do that, you are not obeying Jesus or Romans 13 in context. Is that a truth that is clear to you? _____ Jesus and Paul and Peter are in agreement on this issue.

Paul echoes Jesus in Romans 13 - "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*" Mark 12:17, therefore Paul is not, in Romans 13, giving Caesar or Caesar's government free rein to do anything they want. Jesus restricted Caesar to the things that belong to Caesar and Paul restricts Caesar in a similar way.

Romans 13:3 - "*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil*" and Titus 3:1 - "*to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.*" The focus of Jesus and the focus of Paul is on government doing good, not the government doing evil or compelling you to do evil.

If you are following Jesus and Paul, when Caesar demands that you give government the things that belong unto God, your Christian duty is to resist *the powers that be*. When push comes to shove, you side with Jesus, not with government. The delegated authority of government is never absolute. God's authority as Creator of everything is always absolute.

Peter agrees with Paul on this issue and quotes Paul in 1 Peter 2:13-16, written AD 60-65, several years after Paul wrote Romans. We are to submit, Titus 3:1, and pray, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, when God's institution of human government does what God intended it to do. We are never expected by God to submit to wicked decrees and unbiblical, unChristian, ungodly laws. Jesus, Paul and Peter view our subjection to government as subjection to a government that is doing good.

*“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.
For so is the will of God,
that with well doing ye may
put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:
As free, and not using your liberty
for a cloke of maliciousness,
but as the servants of God.”*
1 Peter 2:13-16.

We are not required to submit or be subject to an evil government when it goes off the rails and praises evil and punishes good.

**You can have anything you want in life but
you have to take everything that goes with it.**

Your decisions have consequences. If you decide not to submit to an evil government, you must be willing to bear the consequences of your refusal to submit and the consequences of resisting, whatever those consequences may be. When you resist evil, God will be with you, as we discover in Daniel 3 but that doesn't mean there will be no consequences.

Daniel and his young companions are the perfect example of doing the right thing in resisting a wicked ruler and then submitting to capital punishment as a result of their decision, Daniel 3. In their case, God rescued them and kept them safe. As Foxe's Book Of Martyrs makes clear, sometimes the consequence of resisting *the powers that be* may include martyrdom.

**When the higher powers forbid what God commands
or command what God forbids,
we must obey God rather than men, Acts 5:29.**

be subject unto the higher powers. - We must define what it means to be subject if we are ever to understand the meaning of this verse. Does, *be subject*, mean that individual Christians and the church must comply with every command or demand of government or obey every order from government? If that is the meaning, then Romans 13 puts worldly human government in charge

of the church and in charge of the spiritual lives of all Christians. Since that is never taught anywhere in the Bible, that cannot possibly be the meaning of Romans 13.

The Greek word which we translate, *be subject*, is ὑποτασσοέσθω hypotassō, pronounced hoop-o-tas'-so. Paul uses this word eight times, in Romans 8:7 - *not subject to*, 8:20 - *hath subjected*, 10:3 - *have not submitted*, 13:1 - *be subject unto*, 13:5 - *needs be subject*.

Be subject does not mean that Caesar runs God's church or that Caesar rules God's church or that Caesar decides what God's church believes or that Caesar decides how God's church will fulfill the great commission or how God's church will preach and serve the Lord Jesus Christ or where or when God's church may meet or how many people may attend services in God's church or what the seating arrangements are in God's church.

Can we be biblically subject to the higher powers without always obeying the higher powers or while sometimes resisting the higher powers? _____
Is it possible for us to respect the higher powers and submit to them when they are doing what God intends them to do? _____ Is it possible to do what our spiritual ancestors did in the Bible, and biblically resist the higher powers when they are going against God? _____ What is your reasoning? _____

Romans 13:1 tells us to be subject unto the higher powers, with the unstated but understood qualifier, when the higher powers are doing what God created them to do, i.e., when the higher powers are praising good and executing wrath upon him that doeth evil. We are to be subject when government is doing what the Bible says government should do.

**When the higher powers forbid what God commands
or command what God forbids,
then we must obey God rather than men.**

Why? Because our first obedience is to God.

Romans 13 does not install Caesar as head pastor of God's church. Caesar is in charge of the secular government; he is not in charge of spiritual things and he is not in charge of God's church. Romans 13 does not place Caesar in charge of the things of God. When the higher powers forbid what God commands or command what God forbids, then we must obey God rather than men. Is that clear to everyone? _____ Please raise your hand if that is not clear to you. Is

that an honest, biblical, Godly, obedient way to understand Romans 13:1?
Why? _____

**Unqualified obedience to Caesar
is an invention of the devil.**

There is a chain of command in the universe, a hierarchy of delegated authority and delegated powers *ordained of God*, referred to here as *the higher powers*. The powers or offices are ordained by God, not necessarily the particular individuals who hold the office that God ordained. In the Bible we can trace human government and nations all the way back to Genesis 10:5.

Human government is on the list of delegated powers but is not now and never has been the highest power in God's universe. God is the highest power and the ultimate authority in the universe He created. Whenever human government usurps the authority of God, *we ought to obey God rather than men*, Acts 5:29.

*“For by him were all things created,
that are in heaven,
and that are in earth,
visible and invisible,
whether they be thrones,
or dominions,
or principalities,
or powers:
all things were created
by him, and for him.”
Colossians 1:16.*

*“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,
We ought to obey God rather than men.”
Acts 5:29.*

In Romans 13, Paul has particularly in mind the higher powers of human secular government. Higher powers is abstract. In vs. 3-4, Paul gets more specific and refers to the higher powers as *rulers* and as *the minister of God to thee for good*.

Here is how the Bible tells us God has arranged things in His universe and in our world, from the top down. Please note that God did not run this by you or me when He made these arrangements and delegated these powers. Our opinion was not considered or consulted because it was completely irrelevant. What we think about it and any objections we may have, don't matter a whit to God. God

doesn't care what you and I think about it. He expects us to believe and obey what the Bible says.

What Are The Higher Powers?

1. The Almighty God, JEHOVAH - is the highest power, the One ultimately in charge of everything, the ultimate and absolute authority in the universe. God's authority is inherent, supreme and undelegated, JEHOVAH being the One who delegates authority to those beneath Him, Genesis 17:1, Exodus 6:3, Psalm 83:18, 135:6, Daniel 4:32-37, according to His wise purposes. There is no one above JEHOVAH, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, Revelation 19:16.

*“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine,
the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him,
I am the Almighty God;
walk before me, and be thou perfect.”*
Genesis 17:1.

*“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob,
by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH
was I not known to them.”*
Exodus 6:3.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ - in His humanity as Messiah, the Incarnate Word, God in the flesh, had and exercised delegated authority, Matthew 28:18 - *all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*, John 5:19-27, 30, 1 Corinthians 15:27, Ephesians 1:20-23, Philippians 2:9-10, from God the Father.

This primarily has in view, not the eternal relationship between the three persons of the Godhead but God the Son, the Incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ when He *became flesh and dwelt among us*, John 1:14, 1 Timothy 3:16, Revelation 19:11-16. Of course, as the second member of the Trinitarian Godhead, the crucified, buried and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ retains His authority.

- a. *all power is given unto me* - Matthew 28:18.
- b. *The Son can do nothing of himself* - John 5:19.
- c. *the Father... hath given him authority* - John 5:26-27.
- d. *I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me*, John 5:30.
- e. *he hath put all things under his feet* - 1 Corinthians 15:27.

3. The Holy Spirit - as the third member of the Trinitarian Godhead, has delegated authority. He reproves the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, John 16:7-11. The Spirit led, ministered to and empowered Christ in His earthly ministry, Luke 4:1, 14, 18. After the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit baptizes (no water involved) all who receive Christ into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13 and gifts the individual members of the body of Christ with spiritual gifts, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and spiritual blessings, Ephesians 1:3.

4. The devil - Satan operates under delegated authority, Mark 13:34 - *and gave authority to his servants*, Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7, Luke 4:6, Revelation 2:13, also called *the prince of this world*, by the Lord Jesus Christ, John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, aka, *the god of this world*, 2 Corinthians 4:4, aka, *the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*, Ephesians 2:2.

5. Principalities - operate under delegated authority, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 1:16-17, Daniel 10:1-21

6. Powers - operate under delegated authority, Acts 26:18, Matthew 10:1, - Jesus gave His disciples power against unclean spirits. Mark 13:25.

7. Rulers of the darkness of this world - operate under delegated authority, Luke 22:53, John 19:11, Colossians 1:13.

8. Spiritual wickedness in high places - operates under delegated authority, Luke 11:39, Romans 1:29.

9. The powers that be, meaning, human government and sometimes, religious authorities - also operate under delegated authority from the Creator of the Universe, John 19:11, Romans 13:1.

As you think about that, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of the universe, John 1:1-3, is the God who delegated authority to human government, and submitted Himself to human government and allowed the Roman government to scourge Him, John 19:1, and crucify Him on a wooden cross.

Jesus submitted His own life to the government to whom He had delegated authority, 1 Timothy 6:13. That is a truth worth pondering, Proverbs 5:6, 21:2, 24:12. God ponders your goings and your heart. Do you ponder God's actions?
_____ What are your thoughts about that? _____

*“And led him away to Annas first;
for he was father in law to Caiaphas,
which was the high priest that same year.”*

John 18:13.

*“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas
unto the hall of judgment: and it was early;
and they themselves went not into the judgment hall,
lest they should be defiled;
but that they might eat the passover.”*

John 18:28.

*“Then saith Pilate unto him,
Speakest thou not unto me?
knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee,
and have power to release thee?”*

John 19:10.

*“Jesus answered, Thou couldest have
no power at all against me,
except it were given thee from above:
therefore he that delivered me
unto thee hath the greater sin.”*

John 19:11.

Who delivered Jesus to Pilate? _____ Jesus blames Annas and Caiaphas and the mob, Matthew 27:25, 41, Luke 23:1, 13, John 18:35, Acts 4:27, more than He blames Pontius Pilate, governor of Judaea, Matthew 27:1, Luke 3:1. That *the powers that be* operate under delegated authority from God does not mean they are always right, does not mean they always make Godly decisions that please God, does not mean they must always be obeyed.

**Sometimes there are good
biblical reasons to resist.**

*“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.”*

Romans 13:1-2.

There are good and godly reasons why we must sometimes resist *the powers that be*. Sometimes Christians are compelled: **1.** by common sense, **2.** by conscience, **3.** by God, **4.** by truth and **5.** by the written word of God, to resist the powers that be. We will expand upon those truths in practical reality as we continue our verse by verse study of Romans 13.

For there is no power but of God: - God created *the powers that be* and in His infinite wisdom, Romans 11:33, Isaiah 55:6-8, Job 9:1-4, 36:5, Jeremiah 51:15, Proverbs 2:6, Daniel 2:20, delegated a measure of authority to *the powers that be*. The Bible does not explain God's reasoning nor are we to infer ill motives or mistakes on God's part, as to why He set up His created universe and the world the way He set it up or quibble with God about why He delegated authority to *the powers that be*, including human government and including the devil and his angels.

God not only created *the powers that be*, He created the universe. It is His special creation, filled with His goodness, utilizing His holiness, His knowledge, His power and His wisdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is the particular member of the Godhead, Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9, who created everything, John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16, Isaiah 42:5, and *without Him was not anything made that was made*.

there is no power but of God: - Any power or authority possessed by anyone below God is delegated power and delegated authority. Anyone below God only has power because God, in His wisdom, allows them to have delegated power. It is good to remind ourselves that God has ultimate authority over Satan, Job 1:12, 2:6.

The authority God has delegated to the devil and his minions is temporal, taking place in time but not in eternity. When God's wise and holy purposes are accomplished, He will put Satan in his place, *the lake of fire and brimstone*, to be *tormented day and night for ever and ever*, Romans 16:20, Revelation 20:1-2, 7-10.

the powers that be - God created *the powers that be* and God has delegated authority to *the powers that be* John 19:11. *The powers that be*, as Paul uses the phrase here, describes mostly government powers or government authorities although *the powers that be* can include religious authorities, Acts 4:19, 5:28-29.

That delegation of authority doesn't give *the powers that be* authority from God to compel Christians to do evil or to go against God and the Bible, Matthew

22:17-21. When Satan tempted Christ to commit sin, Christ rejected the temptation and refused to submit to Satan's delegated authority even though Satan quoted scripture to emphasize his delegated authority as the god of this world, Luke 4:1-14.

are ordained of God. - Does the fact that *the powers that be are ordained of God* imply that God intends *the powers that be* to do what He ordained them to do? _____ Did God ordain the powers that be to do evil? _____ Has God authorized the powers that be to do wickedness? _____ Since God did not authorize the powers that be to do wickedness or give them authority to compel others to do wickedness, does that place limits on our submission to the powers that be? _____ Why? _____

It doesn't say: The powers that be are given unlimited authority by God. It doesn't say: The powers that be can compel Christians to go against God or, The powers that be can run the church. This delegation of authority is based solely on God's will and wisdom, not man's contrary opinion.

God didn't explain why He set up the nations and their governments the way He set them up. God didn't share with us His reasoning and He didn't ask our opinion. Don't gripe, moan and complain if God set up His universe in a way you don't approve. In this as in all else, we are called to trust God's goodness and wisdom and *walk by faith, not by sight*, 2 Corinthians 5:7.

**Are you willing to trust God and the way
He set up His universe and our world?**

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:8-9.*

*"Whatsoever the LORD pleased,
that did he in heaven, and in earth,
in the seas, and all deep places."
Psalm 135:6.*

The powers that be are only *the powers that be* because God delegated to them the authority to be *the powers that be*. Human government exists because God intended human government to restrain evil and praise good. According to Romans 13, that is the purpose of human government. Our rationale for obeying

government is because government derives its powers from God, to restrain evil and praise good. God has not authorized government to restrain good and praise evil. **Discuss.**

When government oversteps its authority and restrains good and praises evil or demands that believers sin against God or obstruct God's will, we follow: **1.** the example of Rahab and the two Jewish spies, Joshua 2:15, **2.** the example of David, 1 Samuel 19:11-12, **3.** the example of John the Baptist, Mark 6:17-18, **4.** the example of the apostles in Acts 4:13-20, 5:12-14, 18-29, and **5.** the example of the apostle Paul, Acts 9:23-25, 2 Corinthians 11:32-33.

Factoring In Biblical Precedent vs. Boarding The Crazy Train

Those examples provide biblical precedent for not submitting to *the powers that be* when *the powers that be* are going against God. No Christian should board the crazy train in Romans 13 and insist that God has given secular government absolute power over God's church or absolute power over Christians. If that is your paradigm and the way you view Romans 13, you need to adjust your paradigm to make your views line up with what the Bible says in context.

Christians need to develop the skill of critical thinking instead of having a non-critical, non-judgmental, never object to anything the government says attitude. To think critically you need to know what the Bible says in context. To know what the Bible says in context, you need to read and reread the Bible so you are familiar with what the Bible says in context.

Sometimes it is biblical and Godly to resist the powers that be.

*"But Peter and John answered and said unto them,
Whether it be right in the sight of God
to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."*
Acts 4:19.

*"Saying, Did not we straitly command you
that ye should not teach in this name?
and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine,
and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.
Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,
We ought to obey God rather than men."*
Acts 5:28-29.

13:2 - Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Whosoever therefore - Here we have another of Paul's therefore's. Remember that Paul uses the word, *therefore*, 27 times in Romans. Because God set things up to use delegated authority to accomplish His wise and holy purposes, therefore, it naturally follows that if you resist the powers that be, when they are doing what God intended them to do, you are resisting the ordinance of God.

Refusing to do evil does not equate to resisting the ordinance of God. You are not resisting the ordinance of God when you refuse to do evil or when you refuse to submit to an unbiblical ungodly demand of the government. It also naturally follows that when *the powers that be* tell you to disobey a clear command of God in the Bible, you are not resisting the ordinance of God when you resist them.

Let us be crystal clear: When you resist anti-biblical, anti-Christian, anti-God commands from *the powers that be*, that is the biblical choice, the Christian choice, the God-honouring choice, for which there is biblical precedent.

Is there ever a time when Christians should resist the powers that be?

What happens when the powers that be are wicked and are oppressing followers of God, when *the powers that be* are praising evil and persecuting good? What is our Christian responsibility in that situation? _____

Remember, specific rules override general rules. A general rule usually applies but not in all situations. There are specific rules for specific situations which sometimes override general rules for some situations. There are specific instances which deviate from the general rule. That truth is sometimes called the hierarchy of specificity. Here are OT and NT examples to guide our thinking about submission to government.

We should remember as we study Romans 13, that the apostle Paul, who wrote Romans 13 and the apostle Peter, who quoted Romans 13 in 1 Peter 2:13-17, were both executed by the Roman government they tell us to obey and submit to. For that reason, we approach this topic biblically, carefully, paying attention to context.

We will ask and answer the question: Are there any exceptions to Romans 13? If there are exceptions to Romans 13, then Romans 13 is not an absolute and

inviolable command of God. Instead, Romans 13 is a carefully and masterfully nuanced general rule, not an absolute command.

13 Biblical Examples Where It Was Right To Resist The Powers That Be

1. Exodus 1:15-17 - The Hebrew midwives resisted the command of the king of Egypt to kill the male babies. Who was born because the Hebrew midwives resisted the king of Egypt, Exodus 2:1-10? _____

Were the midwives right to resist or were they disobeying God? _____

2. Exodus 2:1-2 - Moses' mother hid him from the people who would have killed him. Was the mother of Moses right to resist that powers that be? _____

3. Joshua 2:1-16 - Rahab sheltered Israelite spies, hid them from the king of Jericho and helped the spies escape to safety. Was Rahab right to resist the king of Jericho and hide the Israelite spies? _____ If you had that dilemma to deal with, what would you do? _____

4. 1 Kings 18:1-16 - Obadiah resisted King Ahab and Queen Jezebel cutting off the prophets of the LORD and fed and protected one hundred of them in two caves. Was Obadiah right to resist Ahab and Jezebel? _____ Should we resist the cruel commands of wicked leaders? _____

5. Daniel 3:8-18 - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego resisted the decree of King Nebuchadnezzar which required all to worship the golden image whenever music was played. Were those three men right to resist the decree to worship an idol of gold or a golden image? _____ Is resisting *the powers that be* sometimes the right thing to do? _____ Why? _____
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are Bible heroes because they resisted *the powers that be*. What do you think of that? _____

6. Daniel 6:6-13 - Daniel resisted the decree of Darius not to pray to God for thirty days and kept praying to God. Was Daniel right to resist the decree to stop praying to God for thirty days? _____ What options did Daniel have in that situation? _____ How would you handle that if it happened to you today? _____

7. 1 Kings 11:29-31 - The prophet Ahijah declared that God would strip ten tribes from the kingdom of Solomon and give them to Jeroboam, clearly an open rebellion against the powers that be, meaning Solomon and Rehoboam,

Solomon's son. Was it right for Jereboam to resist the powers that be and rebel against Solomon and Rehoboam? _____ Why? _____

8. Acts 4:15-21, 5:18-20, 29, 40-42 - Peter and John resisted the orders of the rulers of the people and the elders' command that they stop preaching in the name of Jesus. Did Peter and John's resistance contradict Romans 13, rightly divided? _____ Do *the powers that be* have the right to stop believers from preaching in the name of Jesus? _____ Why?

*“And laid their hands on the apostles,
and put them in the common prison.
But the angel of the Lord
by night opened the prison doors,
and brought them forth, and said,
Go, stand and speak in the temple
to the people all the words of this life.”*
Acts 5:18-20.

*“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,
We ought to obey God rather than men.”*
Acts 5:29.

*“And to him they agreed:
and when they had called the apostles,
and beaten them,
they commanded that they
should not speak in the name of Jesus,
and let them go.
And they departed
from the presence of the council,
rejoicing that they were counted worthy
to suffer shame for his name.
And daily in the temple, and in every house,
they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”*
Acts 5:40-42.

1. Were the apostles right to walk out of prison, resisting the powers that be who put them in prison? _____ 2. Were they right to resist the order of the high priest? _____ 3. Were they right to stand in the temple and speak all the words of this life? _____ 4. Were they right to obey God rather than men? _____ 5. Does the inclusion by God of their story in inspired scripture give

us insight about the meaning of Romans 13? _____ What does it teach us?

9. Acts 9:25, 2 Corinthians 11:33 - Paul resisted the orders of Aretus the King. Was Paul right to resist the attempt by Aretus the King to arrest him? _____
In similar circumstances, what would you do? _____

Do the personal actions of Paul in resisting *the powers that be*, as recorded in scripture, shed light on how we should understand and interpret Romans 13?
_____ What do Paul's actions teach us? _____

10. Acts 12:1-18 - God helps Peter resist and not submit to the government of Herod the king by jailbreaking him from prison. Peter didn't say, *Not so Lord*, like he did in Acts 10:14, but went to another place, where Herod couldn't get him. Was Peter right to resist *the powers that be*? _____

11. Acts 16:9-10, 19-23 - Paul and Silas taught customs in Philippi that, allegedly, were not lawful for Romans to receive or observe. Were Paul and Silas sinning against God and violating Romans 13 by teaching unlawful customs?
_____ What is your reasoning? _____

12. Revelation 13:1-17 - The message of Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:1 tells of believers in the future who will resist *the powers that be* and refuse to worship the image of antichrist and the beast. Will those believers in the future who resist antichrist be violating Romans 13? _____ Why? _____

13. Revelation 14:9-12 - This passage requires believers to resist the government and when they resist, they are not resisting the ordinance of God, Romans 13:2. In plainer words, God-followers must resist the government and must resist worshiping the beast and resist taking the mark of the beast. Anyone who obeys *the powers that be* in the tribulation will be going against God and will suffer the wrath of God. What do you think about that? _____

This is yet another situation in the Bible where God requires His followers NOT to obey *the powers that be*, in fact, to resist *the powers that be* or go to the lake of fire if they decide to obey *the powers that be*. Does this truth teach us that God expects us to read and interpret the Bible in context? _____

What We Learn From These Biblical Examples 1 Corinthians 10:6-12

What this shows us is that Romans 13 is not an absolute command which allows no deviation, no critical thinking about specific circumstances, no exercise of the conscience, nothing but mindless obedience. God gave us our conscience, Romans 2:15, and a mind capable of critical thinking, as well as the indwelling Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us on issues which are not specifically addressed in the Bible. Do you view that as a blessing? _____

The powers that be say: Worship the beast, Revelation 13:15. God says, If you worship the beast you will spend eternity in the lake of fire, Revelation 14:9-11. What choice would you make if you were enduring the tribulation? Would you resist or obey the powers that be? _____
In that situation, if you resist, would you be violating Romans 13? _____

*“And the third angel followed them,
saying with a loud voice,
If any man worship the beast and his image,
and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,
The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,
which is poured out without mixture
into the cup of his indignation;
and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone
in the presence of the holy angels,
and in the presence of the Lamb:
And the smoke of their torment
ascendeth up for ever and ever:
and they have no rest day nor night,
who worship the beast and his image,
and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”
Revelation 14:9-11.*

Whosoever therefore - *Whosoever* means anyone who resists government when government is doing what God intends government to do, praise the good and punish the evil. Be careful not to read more into the text than the text says. Paul does not write and the Bible does not say: If you resist an evil government intent on making you do evil things, then you are resisting the ordinance of God.

The ordinance of God has nothing to do with government compelling you to do evil or to sin against God. What did we learn from Revelation 14:9-11 on this topic? Is that clear from the examples in Revelation? _____ What do you think? _____

*“Put them in mind to be subject
to principalities and powers,
to obey magistrates,
to be ready to every good work,”
Titus 3:1.*

Paul had expert knowledge of the OT. He knew the examples we cited above, therefore, in no way did Paul intend to teach that Christians must always obey an evil tyrannical government. In Titus 3:1, being subject to principalities and powers and obeying magistrates requires us *to be ready to every good work*.

We are not told to be ready to every evil work. Our obedience and submission is linked to every good work. Romans 13 does not state or imply that a Christian must cooperate with and obey and submit to evil, unbiblical, unChristian, ungodly mandates from *the powers that be* of a wicked government. **Discuss.**

resisteth the power, - The power here is the power of government, not principalities and powers, not spiritual wickedness in high places. Since *the powers that be* hierarchy of delegated authority includes Satan as the god of this world and his wicked principalities and powers, God certainly doesn't intend us to think that we must yield to Satan and his wicked principalities and powers.

God never tells us to be subject to demons and devils and unclean spirits or to the antichrist and the beast. Is that clear to everyone? _____ Paul's focus in Romans 13 is on human government when it is doing what God intends human government to do. The focus here in Romans 13 is not on Christians obeying a corrupt and evil government which compels us to worship the beast or his image or any other unbiblical, unChristian command from a wicked government. Who has first claim on your submission, God or government? As Christians, our first duty is always to God.

We need to get the order of submission right.

*“Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
James 4:7.*

Ultimately our first submission is to God. Our submission to God is primary and always comes before submission to government or any other entity. We can secondarily, be subject to *the powers that be* as long as *the powers that be* line up with our submission to God. When we are told to be subject and not to resist

the power, God is not telling us we are free to do wrong, free to do evil, just because the government tells us we must.

We are told to submit to God but Christians are never told to submit to Satan. About Satan we are told: *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*, James 4:7. Our first duty as Christians is to *present your bodies to God a living sacrifice*, Romans 12:1, and again, *Submit yourselves therefore to God*, James 4:7.

The command is: *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*. No one, saved or lost, is told in Romans 13 to submit to the devil or to demonic principalities and powers or to demonic human government. In James 4:7, to whom do we submit? _____ In James 4:7, whom do we resist? _____ What do you think about that? _____

resisteth the ordinance of God: - Romans 13:3 makes it clear that Paul is talking about people who resist doing the good works or the good things government tells them to do, without any implication that we must commit sin or obey an evil wicked government which tells us to do evil wicked things. Of course, Christians will not always agree with what government tells us to do. As long as government is punishing evil doers and functioning in some semblance of the way God intends government to function, we as Christians can submit.

When government compels us to violate the word of God and the will of God, that is where we draw the line. Of course, if we choose not to obey a wicked government, we must be prepared to suffer the consequences of our actions and, there will be consequences, Proverbs 29:2, 1 Peter 3:13-17, 2:15, 4:15, 19.

and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. - *They that resist* means, resisting a government that wants you to do right, that is operating as God intended government to operate, that praises good works and is a terror to evil works. The damnation is for resisting a government that wants you to do right and you refuse to do right. Refusing to do right, Paul calls it *resisting*, that is what gets punished or receives damnation. Romans 13 does not say that we receive damnation for doing what is biblical, what is Christian and what is godly. Sometimes it comes down to: resisting the devil = resisting the government.

The context is not damnation for resisting an evil wicked government that compels you to sin against God. The damnation here is whatever punishment the government decides to mete out. Paul is not speaking of eternal damnation or eternal punishment in the lake of fire for resisting an evil government. Resisting the devil when the devil is running an evil wicked government is the duty of every Bible believing Christian.

13:3 - 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:

For rulers are not a terror to good works, - This reveals the kind of government God has in mind. Rulers in the government God has in mind *are not a terror to good works*. You may need to read that ten times until it sinks in. God is the ultimate Author of scripture. If rulers in the government are a terror to good works, then that is not the government which God has in mind and is not the government to which we must submit. The intention of God is that *rulers are NOT a terror to good works*.

The government to which we must submit, the government we must not resist, is the government where *rulers are not a terror to good works*. Is that clear in Romans 13:3? _____ How do we know that for sure? We know that for sure because that is precisely what the text says. Believe the text as it stands, in context. If rulers are NOT a terror to good works, then that is the kind of government God intends. When government gets that backwards, we are not required to submit; we are required to resist, under the authority of Acts 5:29.

If rulers ARE a terror to good works, they are going against God's intentions and God's will for government. Is that a clear, logical and thoughtful way to read Romans 13:3? _____ In the government God envisions, *rulers are not a terror to good works*. That is why we have Romans 13:2, so that we can know what kind of government God is talking about. Are there biblical examples of resisting a government that goes against God? _____

In the system of government God envisioned, no one who does good works should fear rulers being a terror to their good works. How do we know that for sure, Romans 13:3? _____

Good government is friendly to truth and righteousness and good works instead of being a terror to good works. Good government and good rulers, as God envisions them, are not a terror to good works, are not a terror to doing right, are not a terror to evangelism, are not a terror to obeying God and the Bible, are not a terror to living as God-fearing, Bible believing Christians.

On the other hand, an evil wicked government is the enemy of truth, the enemy of righteousness, the enemy of Christianity, the enemy of God, the enemy of God's good intentions for government. Government that is not a terror to good works is how God intends human government to operate. The God ordained

purpose of human government is to not be a terror to good works. That is the common sense understanding of Romans 13:3, right? _____

The power of human government is never intended by God to be a scourge against the righteous. *Good works* here means anything that is not evil, anything that does not go against God's truth as found in the Bible, anything that is intrinsically good.

Good works in this verse does not refer to people trying to use good works to earn their way to heaven or people trying to create their own righteousness by *good works* so they can save themselves. The *good works* here refer to obeying a good government that praises your good works as a citizen, good works like, paying your taxes, obeying good laws, obeying God, honoring the King, praying for those that are in authority.

but to the evil. - As God and Paul see it, the role of human government is to restrain evil works by being a terror to evil works and by praising good works. We believe that because that is what the text says. When government restrains evil works, it is performing its God ordained purpose.

When government praises evil works and prosecutes good works, it is violating its God given purpose. God does not make a god of government in Romans 13. Remember our delegated powers list. Government is not at the top of that list. Government and people who run the government are also under *the powers that be*. God never authorized the powers that be to commit sin or compel others to commit sin.

Romans 13 does not in any way give carte blanche to an evil government to do evil things nor does Romans 13 compel Christians to cooperate with the evil work of an evil government. Some misread and misapply Romans 13 that way but that is not what Romans 13 says.

Do not read into this more than inspired scripture says and do not read into this something scripture does not say. And do not read Romans 13 in isolation from the rest of the Bible. Romans 13 does not say that government is always right or that every evil edict of a wicked government must be obeyed. God and Paul are not saying that at all.

Romans 13 does not say that Christians must cooperate with all of the evils perpetrated by tyrannical governments and representatives of tyrannical governments. Anyone who uses Romans 13 to compel you to cooperate with government mandated evil and government mandated wickedness has misread and misunderstood Romans 13.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? - This is the power of human government when it is doing what God intended it to do, being a terror to the evil. Is that a subjective interpretation or is that what the text says? _____

This is not talking about the power of a wicked government that rewards vice and punishes virtue. When human government does what God intended it to do, it is good to fear government as the minister of God to thee for good and allow that fear of punishment to keep you walking clean, straight and honest.

The power of good government in being a terror to the evil induces citizens to do right and live right. Doing right and living right should be a deeply ingrained habit in all of us. If you delight in seeing how much worldly filth you can get into because you think you can manage the fallout from your flesh, you will end up the loser in that contest. We are told to flee youthful lusts, not to indulge youthful lusts, not to chase youthful lusts. Are you fleeing youthful lusts or are you chasing youthful lusts? _____ Why? _____

Good government encourages good citizenship. The virtue of good government is, it encourages honest people to be good citizens. Under good government, truth and righteousness flourish, the gospel flourishes and world evangelization is encouraged and unhindered, Ezra 1:1-11, 7:21, 24-28, Daniel 4:1, 25, 32-37.

Under good government, missionaries can be sent to their mission fields, evangelize the lost, win souls and make disciples for Christ. That is part of what it means when Romans 13:3 says: *do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.*

do that which is good, - It doesn't say: Do that which is evil because an evil government told you to. It says: *do that which is good.* Doing *that which is good* is our responsibility as Christians and citizens. Because God tells us to do good, we know that Romans 13 is not telling us to never resist the government. Not doing evil is also our responsibility as Christians and citizens, no matter what an evil government tells us to do.

and thou shalt have praise of the same: - Under the government envisioned by God and by Paul, you will be praised for doing good, not punished for doing good. Romans 13 is not an absolute mandate for evil governments to compel anyone to do evil and no mandate from God, Paul or the Bible that compels us to do evil just because the government says so.

**It is the job of governments instituted by God
to reward virtue and punish vice.**

Understand what Paul is saying. It is the job of governments instituted by God, to praise good and punish evil doers. Is that searing truth clear from Romans 13:1-4? That is what good government does. That is what bad government fails to do and refuses to do. Paul knows that King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, 1 Kings 21:1ff., did the opposite, rewarding vice and punishing virtue.

Paul isn't defending wicked governments or the wicked male and female rulers who lead wicked governments, not in the OT past, not back in the first century when he wrote Romans, not in our times and not in the future. Nothing in Romans 13 tells us to support the wicked actions and demands of an evil government. God does not contradict His holiness and righteousness in Romans 13.

Paul is telling us it is always safe to trust God. He isn't telling us that trusting God is easy and he isn't saying, If you trust God, nothing bad will ever happen to you. He is saying that God is the avenger of evil, Romans 12:17-21. Romans 13 continues Paul's teaching from Romans 12:17-21. Do you leave it up to God to right the wrongs in your life? _____

13:4 - 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.

Responsibilities Of Human Government

For he is the minister of God - *He* refers to the rulers and *the power* mentioned in Romans 13:3. The Greek word here is the word we translate as, deacon, the same word Jesus used in Mark 10:43, translated there and here and in Romans 15:8 as, *minister*. This gives insight into the responsibilities of a deacon in a church and a minister in the government. They are supposed to be servants, not lords, not despots, not tyrants, not dictators, not authoritarian rulers. They are servants.

This clearly states God's intention for human government and the ministers of human government. Their purpose is to restrain evil and praise good, reward virtue and punish vice. That is what God expects human government to do. The freedom and righteousness which good government fosters go hand in hand with God's intention to evangelize the world, Matthew 28:18-20.

Have you ever thought of the Roman Emperor Nero as the deacon of God or the minister of God? Nero operated under the authority God delegated to him.

*“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,
as the rivers of water:
he turneth it whithersoever he will.”*
Proverbs 21:1.

*“And he changeth the times and the seasons:
he removeth kings,
and setteth up kings:
he giveth wisdom unto the wise,
and knowledge to them that know understanding:”*
Daniel 2:21.

Is there, in the Bible, an example of the kind of human government God intends for us? Yes, ancient Israel under the law of Moses, before King Saul, is an excellent example of what Paul is talking about in Romans 13. The problem with a theocracy, where God is in charge, is that God's people, Isaiah 45:4, didn't like that kind of freedom and responsibility and were intensely dissatisfied with it.

God's elect people Israel, Isaiah 45:4, wanted a king, demanded a king, with rules and regulations other than the law of Moses and someone beyond themselves to take responsibility and tell them what to do. They were tired of being responsible for their own character, their own self-regulation, their own spirituality, their own duty to trust God.

By asking for an earthly King, they were rejecting God, their heavenly King and delegating their personal responsibility. Israel couldn't handle moral, physical and spiritual freedom, 1 Samuel 8:1-22, and that failure has cost Israel dearly for more than 3000 years.

Human government as originally envisioned by God, is not communism, fascism or socialism. Biblical human government was never intended to be despots and tin horn dictators and tyrants ruthlessly ruling the downtrodden. Human government is intended to be laissez faire, meaning, let do, or, hands off, meaning, as little government intervention as possible.

Government should be a free enterprise system in which individuals are responsible for regulating their own behavior under God and government, without a human king reigning over them, with only God reigning over them. Israel chafed at the freedom God gave them, then rebelled against God, then rejected Jehovah, just as Israel would eventually reject Jesus their Messiah.

For he is the minister of God to thee for good - Is this coming in loud and clear yet? Government and people in government are supposed to be doing

good, not evil. *For he is the minister of God to thee for good.* If words have meaning, then God has told us with crystal clarity His view of the purpose of government. *He is the minister of God to thee for good.* If you still believe that Romans 13 commands us never to resist the powers that be, then you need to write this phrase out in longhand at least one hundred times, until it sinks in. *For he is the minister of God to thee for good.*

Paul wrote this to Roman Christians while Nero was Rome's Emperor yet he in no way conveys the belief that Christians must do whatever Nero and an evil government dictates. When Paul writes Romans 13, he comes at it from the viewpoint of a saved, scripture believing, conservative, consummate Jewish Torah scholar, personally tutored by Gamaliel, Acts 22:3, and therefore, familiar with and expert in the law of Moses.

Incidents where the Roman government was the minister of God to Paul for good.

1. Acts 16:35-40 - The government released Paul from prison.
2. Acts 18:12-18 - Gallio the deputy of Achaia released Paul.
3. Acts 19:35-41 - Townclerk dismissed the people in favor of Paul.
4. Acts 21:27 - The chief captain rescued Paul from death.
5. Acts 23:12, 19-24 - The chief captain saves Paul from assassination.
6. Acts 24:23 - Paul in captivity had freedom to be visited
7. Acts 25:1-5 - Festus protects Paul from assassination by the Jews.
8. Acts 25:11-12 - Festus accepts Paul's appeal to Caesar.
9. Acts 28:16, 30-31 - Paul was allowed to dwell in a house with a soldier.

The law of Moses conceives of government as good and holy and just, an extension of the arm of God, not government as evil and against God. That is the approach Paul takes here in Romans 13, even with Nero on the throne. Romans 13 is not an excuse to give up on God or do evil or cooperate with a wicked government that opposes biblical truth and the justice of God. Personal accountability before God requires us to think critically, to examine the demands of government and then make a decision based on truth and our responsibility to God, James 4:7, which supersedes our responsibility to government.

*“That be far from thee to do after this manner,
to slay the righteous with the wicked:
and that the righteous should be as the wicked,
that be far from thee:*

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Genesis 18:25.

*“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment:
thou shalt not respect the person of the poor,
nor honour the person of the mighty:
but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.”*
Leviticus 19:15.

*“And I charged your judges at that time, saying,
Hear the causes between your brethren,
and judge righteously between every man and his brother,
and the stranger that is with him.
Ye shall not respect persons in judgment;
but ye shall hear the small as well as the great;
ye shall not be afraid of the face of man;
for the judgment is God's:
and the cause that is too hard for you,
bring it unto me, and I will hear it.”*
Deuteronomy 1:16-17.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; - The warning is against doing *that which is evil*. If you do evil, be afraid of the government. That presupposes that the government: **a.** is doing good, not evil, and **b.** the government will punish those who do evil, not reward those who do evil. It would be evil and wrong to do any evil that a wicked government compels you to do.

This fear, when you're doing evil, is lacking in much of society. Every citizen of human government should fear to do evil because they fear being punished by government. No citizen of human government should fear to do good because they will be punished by human government. What should a Christian citizen do when an evil government is set on punishing good and rewarding evil?

According to Romans 13:4, when should we be afraid of government? **a.** When we do good, **b.** when we do something biblical, **c.** when we do something godly, **d.** when we do something evil.

for he beareth not the sword in vain: - This presupposes that government is praising good and punishing evil. In plainer words, this presupposes that government is doing exactly what God intends government to do. This is also implicit acknowledgment of and biblical support for capital punishment, meaning, understood or implied without being stated in those words. The sword speaks of the power of government ordained by God to execute *wrath upon him*

that doeth evil, not wrath upon him that doeth good. The sword is an instrument of death for those who do evil.

Let's look at Moses in Exodus 2:15, 12:31, Hebrews 11:27, and see how and where this applies. Pharaoh was the head of the Egyptian government. He tried to use the sword of government to kill Moses. Did Moses resist being murdered by Pharaoh? _____ What do we learn from that? _____
In Exodus 12:31, did Pharaoh give in or did Moses give in? _____

*“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing,
he sought to slay Moses.
But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh,
and dwelt in the land of Midian:
and he sat down by a well.”*
Exodus 2:15.

*“And he called for Moses and Aaron by night,
and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people,
both ye and the children of Israel;
and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.”*
Exodus 12:31.

*“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.”*
Romans 13:4.

*“By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt,
not fearing the wrath of the king:
for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”*
Hebrews 11:27.

Moses was not afraid of Pharaoh or the government of Egypt and that causes us to ask the question: Why was Moses not afraid? Why didn't Moses fear the wrath of the King? _____

**Moses didn't fear the wrath of the king
because he knew God didn't require him
to obey the evil commands of an evil government.**

If Romans 13 had existed while Moses lived and Moses knew what Romans 13 said, Moses still would have been wrong to apply Romans 13:1-4 to his situation in ancient Egypt. The truth is, Moses did the opposite of what Romans 13 says and he was right to do so.

for he is the minister of God, - Has this sunk in yet? Why does he not bear the sword in vain? Because he is the deacon/minister of God and he is a revenger to *execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*, not wrath upon him that doeth good. In plainer words, he operates under authority delegated by God and within the limits of the authority God has delegated.

God never delegates authority to government to punish good, to compel evil or to do wickedness. Governments are made up of men and women, just like society is made up of men and women, just like the church is made up of men and women. The authority God delegates to government is limited and is never authority to commit sin or compel others to commit sin or go against God.

The people who govern are deacons/ministers of God, as long as they operate within the parameters of government set up by God in the Bible. These government people are never free to compel anyone to do evil or to sin against God or to go against the Bible. The people whom these ministers govern are never compelled by God to commit sin or be subject to the the evil orders of evil ministers of government.

They are *the ministers of God*, Paul says twice in Romans 13:4. The idea is that God is holy and just and good. God is not evil, therefore the government God envisioned is not evil. In Romans 13, God does not enshrine evil to dominate the church and Christians. *He* - the man from the government - *is the minister of God to thee for good*. He is not the minister of God to thee for evil.

When he ceases to be *the minister of God to thee for good*, when he compels you to do evil, he forfeits his God ordained right to expect Christians to be subject and he forfeits his mandate from God. How do we know that? We know that because Romans 13 tells us the kind of government God envisions, a government that praises good and punishes evil. Nothing in Romans 13 describes or compels us to obey or submit to a government that punishes good and praises evil.

a revenger to execute wrath - This word is used only twice in the Greek NT, here, revenger, and in 1 Thessalonians 4:6, where it is translated, avenger. Please follow Paul's logic back to Romans 12:19. Christians must trust God enough to wait on Him to execute wrath on those who persecute us, Romans

12:14. God instituted human government to do good, not to do evil, Genesis 4:7.

Human government should punish evil doers, Romans 13:3-4, not those who do good. God is good. God never presents Himself or human government as a revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth good. God's wrath is against him that doeth evil and government should always follow God's lead.

In Romans 13:4, what is the biblical purpose of government? **a.** to execute wrath upon him that doeth good, **b.** to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Does the Bible say that executing wrath upon him that doeth good is the God ordained purpose of government? _____

Human government is an extension of God's desire to reward virtue and punish vice, to praise good and punish evil. In that sense, rulers are put in place by God to provide good government so that the rest of God's deacons/servants can do God's will. In plainer words, rulers are supposed to act responsibly and do what God intended them to do.

So when human government goes off the rails and rewards evil and punishes good, exactly the reverse of God's intention and God's will in Romans 13, that human government loses the authority of God, the blessing of God, the mandate of God. It cannot be any other way.

If we interpret Romans 13 as God compelling us to do the evil wicked bidding of any corrupt government, then we are making God the author of sin because in that view, God has commanded us to obey the evil and wicked bidding of a corrupt government. Do that make sense to you? _____

To teach that we must always obey government, even when it compels us to do evil, is to make God the One who ultimately compels us to do evil and the Bible never teaches that about God. Just the opposite. The Bible is full of examples where God blessed His people when they resisted government compulsion to do evil, as we have already seen.

upon him that doeth evil. - God intends the punishing power of government to be directed against evil doers, not against those who do good, 1 Peter 2:14. According to the Bible, government is never said to be a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth good. There is no sanction in Romans 13, for government persecution of Christians and those who do good. Does everyone see that? Does everyone understand that distinction? _____ Why is that important? _____

According to Romans 13:4, who should get wrath from the government? **a.** him that doeth good, **b.** him that doeth evil. When the wrath of government falls upon him that doeth good instead of him that doeth evil, is government operating as God intended? _____ What is our duty then? _____

**When we read the Bible,
we don't throw our mind out of gear and
jump to conclusions which are unbiblical.**

13:5 - Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, - There is a biblical way to be subject to the governmental *powers that be*, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-17. Do you agree that it is important to be biblical about our subjection to government?

According to 1 Timothy 2:1-2, what are four ways a Christian can be biblically subject to government? Please go by what the verses actually say.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

According to 1 Peter 2:13-17, what are four ways a Christian can be biblically subject to the government? Please go by what the verses actually say.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

not only for wrath, - Do you know the reason for wrath? _____ Are you aware that: **a.** the power of God and **b.** the will of God and **c.** the wrath of God support and undergird good government? _____ Wrath and fear of wrath are excellent motivations for doing right and living right, Deuteronomy 4:5-10, Ecclesiastes 12:13. *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,* Proverbs 1:7. *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,* Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 9:10.

*“And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord,*

*that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil
is understanding.”*
Job 28:28.

but also for conscience sake. - Here is Bible truth. Since the powers that be are ordained of God, a Christian can only have a good conscience toward God when he is biblically subject to the powers that God ordained. Paul is always concerned about having a good conscience toward God.

Paul mentions the conscience 27 of the 31 times it is mentioned in the NT. One way to have a good conscience toward God is to submit ourselves to the human governments that God ordained, for they are the *ministers of God to thee for good*, Romans 13:4.

God gave you your conscience to help you differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil. If your conscience doesn't convict you to submit to good government, your conscience may be seared with a hot iron, 1 Timothy 4:2. You can sharpen, refine and restore your conscience, much like you sharpen the blade of a knife, by reading, believing, obeying and practicing what the Bible says in context.

The more you read, believe and obey the Bible, the sharper your conscience should get. If you are saved, your conscience should respond to the truth of God in the Bible. If your conscience doesn't respond affirmatively to God's truth in the Bible, you have a problem that needs to be fixed, and soon.

The problem may be that you approach the Bible with a skeptical, doubting, unbelieving heart. If that is how you read the Bible, then ask God to give you a believing heart. Pray: *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*, Mark 9:24, and then start believing and obeying the Bible as you read it.

13:6 - For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

For for this cause pay ye tribute also: - *For this cause*, meaning, because of your conscience. *For this cause* refers to your conscience - *but also for conscience sake*. You should pay dues, tribute and custom and fear and honour *for conscience sake*, so you can keep a good clean conscience before God. If you're living in sin and your conscience doesn't bother you, you need to examine yourself, to see if you are in the faith, to see if you are saved.

pay ye tribute also - In the Bible a tribute is a tax, a small percentage, as in Numbers 31:28-30, where the LORD's tribute was 1/20th of one percent, Numbers 31:30, and the Levite's tribute was 2%. There is an OT basis for collecting tribute, Numbers 31:30, and there is a NT basis for collecting tribute, Matthew 17:24.

for they are God's ministers, - Think about that. Tax collectors are God's ministers/deacons. In the United States, do you ever think of the IRS as God's deacons or ministers? That is the biblical reason to pay taxes, because the people to whom you pay tribute, the tax collectors, *are God's ministers*. If you pay a lot of money in taxes it can be difficult to view the taxman as God's minister yet that is precisely what the Bible calls them and that is how God views tax collectors.

attending continually upon this very thing. - Collecting taxes was vitally important to ancient governments in Bible times and is vitally important today. As ministers of God, tax collectors were important ministers of government. The money they collected paid for the government to do what God intended it to do, which is, *execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*, Romans 13:4.

13:7 - Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Render therefore to all their dues: - *Therefore*, because of Romans 13:6, because tax collectors are God's ministers, we should pay our taxes. *Render therefore to all their dues* means, pay what you owe. It doesn't mean pay bribes and cheat on your taxes and it doesn't mean, pay more than you owe or less than you owe. *To all their dues* means, pay what is due them, pay what you actually owe.

Dues here means, that which is owed according to the laws where you live. In Matthew 18:32 the same Greek word is translated, debt. So, *dues*, can mean paying your tax debt or paying that which is owed in taxes or paying back what you borrowed, in the sense of customs duties or taxes or some kind of fee imposed by government,

therefore to all their dues - This probably means, all levels of government. Pay the local magistrate, the town and city taxes, the township, the parish, the county, province or state taxes and the taxes levied by the national government. Joseph and Mary paid their taxes to the Roman government, Luke 2:1-5.

tribute to whom tribute is due; - The Greek word translated *tribute* here, is only used one other time in the NT, by Jesus in Matthew 18:32, where it is translated, debt. *Tribute* was: **a.** payment to God, Numbers 31:26, 37-40, Deuteronomy 16:10, or to a King, 2 Kings 23:33, 2 Chronicles 17:11, Esther 10:1, or **b.** to a government, Joshua 16:10, Judges 1:28, Ezra 4:13, 20. In Matthew 17:24-27, Jesus paid the taxes he and Peter owed with one coin from the mouth of a fish.

Jesus set the example for us by paying His taxes and helping Peter pay his taxes. Obviously taxes were much lower in the first century, since one coin could pay the taxes for two people. Jesus was not a tax cheat since He paid His taxes and publicly instructed His hearers to pay their taxes to Caesar, Matthew 22:15-22. In Romans 13:7, Paul is encouraging Christians to follow Jesus and do what Jesus did. Pay your taxes - Don't make excuses - Just pay them.

custom to whom custom; - A publican was a tax collector, collecting import duties and customs fees from farmers, merchants and traveling trade caravans, Ezra 4:13, 20, Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, 3:18, Luke 5:27-29.

Matthew and Levi are two names for the same apostle in those verses. His original name was Levi, Λευὶν leuis, pronounced lay-weese, which means, joined, Mark 2:14, which may indicate he was a Levite Λευίτης leuitēs, pronounced lay-wee-tase, from the tribe of Levi. After he gets saved, Levi is renamed Matthew, meaning, gift of Jehovah, Mark 3:18. In his gospel, Matthew always refers to himself as Matthew, never by his original name Levi.

fear to whom fear; - In the context of Romans 13, the fear is connected with government in v. 3 - *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?* and the word, *terror*, in Romans 13:3, is the same Greek word for *fear*, here in Romans 13:7. The *fear* is linked to the minister who executes *wrath* as a revenger against evil doers in v. 4-5. This *fear* is based on Deuteronomy 4:6, Job 28:28, Ecclesiastes 12:13 and Proverbs 1:7.

Modern Christians sometimes fear nuclear war or global warming or the latest pandemic or saying the wrong thing and offending the woke crowd. It is good to be aware of the danger of what is going on in the world but in the Bible, we are told to fear God, Luke 12:5, Hebrews 10:30-31, and to fear the government, Romans 13:4, if we are doing evil. We should never have to fear the government if we are doing good, Romans 13:3-4.

honour to whom honour. - In the context of Romans 13:7, honour refers to money. In the Bible, the word, honour, can be a price paid, as in Matthew 27:9, where the same Greek word for honour, in Romans 13:7, is translated, *price*, in

Matthew 27:9. *Honour* can also refer to the way a prophet should be honoured, as used in John 4:44. The same Greek word can also refer to money, as in Acts 7:16, 19:19.

In 1 Timothy 5:17, *the elders that rule well* are to be counted worthy of double honour, meaning, pay them twice as much money, *especially they who labour in the word and doctrine*. Double honour is: **1.** for the elders who rule well and, **2.** for elders who labor in the word and doctrine.

The Bible never says to pay someone more money because he builds a mega church or because he has the oratorical gift of keeping the hell bound spell bound. A church is to give double honour to the elders who rule well and who labor in the word and doctrine.

13:8 - Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Owe no man any thing, - This is often used as a proof text for not going into debt. That is not what Paul is talking about here but it can be used devotionally, not doctrinally, to encourage people to avoid taking on debt. So far in Romans 13, Paul has written some difficult things, which Christians have wrestled with ever since, in their conscience and in their hearts. Now Paul reveals our Christian motive for doing what he tells us in Romans 12 and 13.

Do what God requires of you, which is to obey the legitimate laws of legitimate government and pay your taxes and remember why you're obeying the government and paying your taxes. Your Christian motive is love. Read and reread 1 Corinthians 13 because the charity in that chapter is love in action. Genuine biblical love is active, not passive. Love isn't lazy; love works.

Owe no man - In Romans 1:14, Paul says: "*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.*" Isn't that interesting? Paul says, *Owe no man anything* but he also says, *I am debtor* to all men. Romans 1:14 is the gospel debt - Paul had a dual commission from God, to Jews and to Gentiles, Acts 9:15.

Paul was specifically, the apostle to the Gentiles, Romans 11:13, 15:16, and he had a debt to pay, which he paid by taking the glorious gospel of Christ to all men everywhere. Do you love people enough to work at and financially support getting the gospel to them? _____ Why? _____

Do you agree that you personally owe a gospel debt, meaning that you should be part of getting the gospel to people who need it? _____ What are you doing to get the gospel to lost people around the world? _____

Owe no man anything in this context seems to be a warning about not paying your taxes or getting behind on paying your taxes and customs fees. In plainer words, it is another admonition to pay your taxes, because, when you pay your customs and dues and taxes, financially speaking, you will owe no man any thing.

When you have paid your taxes and tribute and customs and honour, is that enough? Are your obligations fulfilled? Paul is about to teach us a startling truth that has greater impact than simply paying our taxes. There's still something to do, says Paul, even after you've paid your taxes.

**You also need to love one another
in the body of Christ and the local church.**

If you pay all of your debts and dues and taxes and don't love one another, you're no better than an unsaved man who pays his taxes. Christians should be better than and different from unsaved people. Why? Because we have the indwelling Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit to energize, empower and motivate us.

You can pay your taxes and still have a heart that is not right with God. You need to pay your taxes - that's one kind of debt but you also have a gospel debt which needs to be paid. The gospel debt is to love one another and be a soul-winning witness for Jesus and loving one another is possible through the power of the Holy Ghost.

but to love one another: - Why do Christians have such a difficult time with loving one another? _____ We have a gospel debt to the lost folks around us. We are supposed to love them with a love energized by the Holy Ghost, Romans 5:5. We are supposed to evangelize those who don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 28:18-20.

for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. - Now that is a shocking absolute truth, by way of inspiration, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, from God the Father, from the Lord Jesus Christ and from the Holy Spirit, revealed to us through the apostle Paul. Did anyone else in the Bible know that before God gave it to Paul to write down in Romans? Do you believe that is God's truth, *he that loveth*

another hath fulfilled the law? _____ Paul is about to double down on this truth, to emphasize it so that no one can possibly miss it.

*“36 Master, which is
the great commandment in the law?
37 Jesus said unto him,
Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,
and with all thy mind.
38 This is the first and great commandment.
39 And the second is like unto it,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
40 On these two commandments
hang all the law and the prophets.”
Matthew 22:36-40.*

*“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour:
therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
Romans 13:10.*

he that loveth another - What does it mean, to love another? Your actions will show your love more than your words. Don't be a mouthy Christian who talks about loving the brethren but rarely puts his love into action. Genuine love works to bless and help the ones who are loved. If your love never gets busy and works up a sweat being a blessing to the ones you profess to love, then your love is all talk and no walk. Genuine love doesn't just talk the talk, it walks the walk.

hath fulfilled the law - How does loving another fulfill the law? If you love someone, you will treat them right. You will not be guilty of violating the Thou shalt nots in the Ten Commandments. You will not try to hurt them. You will not steal from them. You will be joyful when they are successful and will weep with them when they weep. You will not covet what God has blessed them with.

13:9 - For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, - It is not loving to commit adultery so God, Moses and Paul say, Cut it out! Committing adultery is the opposite of love. There is nothing loving about committing adultery. The Bible never makes

any exceptions to: *Thou shalt not commit adultery* so don't try to weasel your way around the commandment and delude yourself into thinking adultery is okay in your case.

Paul now gets down to the nitty gritty practicalities of the Christian life. The church at Rome was made up of saved Jews and saved Gentiles who all should have moved on from being saved Jews and saved Gentiles to being the church of God, 1 Corinthians 10:32. Instead of moving on, they were still focused on their petty differences, still squabbling about non-essential things.

What is difficult to understand about, Thou shalt not? Don't reinterpret this verse to mean, Adultery is okay in some situations. Don't try to find a way to tailor this verse so that it doesn't apply to you and your adultery. The verse says, *Thou shalt not commit adultery* and it means what it says. Don't be messing with another man's wife or husband. Our problem is often in our mind. We try to figure ways around what the Bible says not to do. Do you remember what Jesus said about this, Matthew 5:27-29? Do you control your mind and live like Jesus says to live in Matthew 5:27-29? _____ How do you obey that? _____

Paul is making a point that only he as a biblical author can make since he is the apostle to the Gentiles, Acts 9:15, and God first revealed to Paul, that saved Jews and Gentiles would be one body in Christ, Ephesians 2:11-17, 3:1-11.

Thou shalt not kill, - It is not loving to commit murder so God, Moses and Paul say, Cut it out! This is not a biblical argument for or a Christian statement of ahimsa (non-injury), the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain teaching that, no living thing should be harmed. The principle of ahimsa supports the false teaching of reincarnation. If you might eventually be reincarnated as an animal to pay your karmic debt, you would tend to want everyone to avoid killing animals.

Biblical context and common sense tell us Romans 13:9 applies to not killing other people. It does not apply to killing fleas, flies, mosquitoes or roaches, rodents and cows, or lambs, goats, bullocks and oxen. Buddhists go to great lengths to avoid killing insects because even insects are considered by Buddhists to be sentient beings. Rest assured the apostle Paul is not teaching Buddhism here in Romans 13.

In Matthew 19:18, we take our instruction as to the meaning of, Thou shalt not kill, from Jesus, who interprets, *Thou shalt not kill*, to mean, *Thou shalt do no murder*. There is not in any way a prohibition of capital punishment by the government or self-defense in Romans 13:9. It is helpful to remember that we can violate this commandment without physically committing murder if we hate our brother in our heart, 1 John 3:15.

Thou shalt not steal, - It is not loving to steal so God, Moses and Paul say, Cut it out! The eighth commandment of the Ten Commandments is God's law of love about property. The Bible instructs us that God believes in private property rights, and thus He says: *Thou shalt not steal*. It is wrong to take someone else's property, 1 Kings 21:1-14. The reason thou shalt not steal is, it belongs to someone else. It isn't yours. It doesn't belong to you so don't steal it.

This seems straightforward and easy to understand yet some readers question what it means to steal. To steal means to take that which does not belong to you. If it belongs to someone else, it is not yours to take. Understanding and obeying the eighth commandment is part of what it means to be a NT Christian on the resurrection side of Calvary. We are not under the OT Law but we are also not allowed to steal just because we are not under the law.

*"Let him that stole steal no more:
but rather let him labour,
working with his hands the thing which is good,
that he may have to give to him that needeth."*
Ephesians 4:28.

*"Men do not despise a thief,
if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;
But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold;
he shall give all the substance of his house."*
Proverbs 6:30-31.

Thou shalt not bear false witness, - It is not loving to bear false witness so God, Moses and Paul say, Cut it out! This precise phrase is found three times in the Bible. It is the original ninth commandment given to Moses, written upon two stone tablets by the finger of God, Exodus 20:16 (Exodus 24:12, 31:18, 32:15-16, Deuteronomy 4:13, 5:22), the same commandment repeated by Jesus in Matthew 19:16 and repeated by Paul here in Romans 13:9. It is interesting to note that Jehovah Himself wrote the Ten Commandments portion of the Bible in His own hand, with His own finger.

*"Thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbour."*
Exodus 20:16.

*"Neither shalt thou bear false witness
against thy neighbour."*
Deuteronomy 5:20.

*“And the judges shall make diligent inquisition:
and, behold, if the witness be a false witness,
and hath testified falsely against his brother;”
Deuteronomy 19:18.*

*“These six things doth the LORD hate:
yea, seven are an abomination unto him:
A proud look,
a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,
feet that be swift in running to mischief,
A false witness that speaketh lies,
and he that soweth discord among brethren.”
Proverbs 6:16-19.*

*“He that speaketh truth
sheweth forth righteousness:
but a false witness deceit.”
Proverbs 12:17.*

*“A faithful witness will not lie:
but a false witness will utter lies.”
Proverbs 14:5.*

*“A false witness shall not be unpunished,
and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.”
Proverbs 19:5.*

*“A false witness shall perish:
but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.”
Proverbs 21:28.*

How does God view liars? _____

*“A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour
is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.”
Proverbs 25:18.*

*“Now the chief priests, and elders,
and all the council,
sought false witness against Jesus,
to put him to death;” Matthew 26:59.*

*“For many bare false witness against him,
but their witness agreed not together.
And there arose certain,
and bare false witness against him,
saying, We heard him say,
I will destroy this temple that is made with hands,
and within three days
I will build another made without hands.
But neither so did their witness agree together.”*
Mark 14:56-59.

*“He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said,
Thou shalt do no murder,
Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not bear false witness,”*
Matthew 19:18.

*“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not kill,
Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not bear false witness,
Thou shalt not covet;
and if there be any other commandment,
it is briefly comprehended in this saying,
namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”*
Romans 13:9.

*“Thou knowest the commandments,
Do not commit adultery,
Do not kill,
Do not steal,
Do not bear false witness,
Defraud not,
Honour thy father and mother.”*
Mark 10:19.

*“Thou knowest the commandments,
Do not commit adultery,
Do not kill,
Do not steal,
Do not bear false witness,
Honour thy father and thy mother.”* Luke 18:20.

The ninth commandment is amplified and stated in greater detail in these verses.

“Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.”
Leviticus 19:16.

“If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.”
Deuteronomy 19:16-20.

When we compare scripture with scripture, we get a fuller picture and a better understanding. Deuteronomy 19:16-20 ties in with Paul's statements in Romans 13:2 - *receive to themselves damnation*, 13:3 - *terror to the evil*, 13:4 - *if thou do that which is evil, be afraid*, 13:4 - *he beareth not the sword in vain*, 13:4 - *a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*.

This is an important theme throughout the Bible over the span of world history. God hates lying and false witnesses and says:

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
Revelation 21:8.

That is a serious statement of God's hatred of liars. He classes liars with murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers and idolaters. That's some nasty rough company. When Paul quotes Moses and Jesus, *Thou shalt not bear false witness*, he has a wise purpose. Paul is reminding the Roman Christians that loving each other as brothers and sisters in Christ is better than keeping the Ten Commandments.

He is saying that if you love each other, you will treat each other right and treating each other right means you won't be breaking the Ten Commandments. This is probably aimed at saved Jews who thought they were keeping God's law but who were not loving toward their saved Gentile brothers and sisters. If you're not breaking the Ten Commandments because you love each other, you are fulfilling the purpose of the law and therefore, you are fulfilling the law.

Thou shalt not covet; - It is not loving to covet anything that is your neighbour's so God, Moses and Paul say, Cut it out! This command is different than the other commands in that it is focused more on the thoughts and desires of your heart than on your words or your outward physical actions. Coveting starts off as a sin of the mind or a sin of the heart. In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus explains how sin begins with what the eyes see and the sinful heart wants.

*“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,
thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife,
nor his manservant,
nor his maidservant,
nor his ox,
nor his ass,
nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”
Exodus 20:17.*

One of the great lessons we learn from, *Thou shalt not covet*, is: God expects us to govern or rule over or be in charge of our desires, our feelings, our inclinations, our passions, our proclivities, our thoughts. Ungoverned lust has serious life changing heart breaking consequences.

*“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,
Thou shalt not commit adultery:
But I say unto you,
That whosoever looketh on a woman
to lust after her hath committed adultery
with her already in his heart.
And if thy right eye offend thee,
pluck it out, and cast it from thee:*

*for it is profitable for thee
that one of thy members should perish,
and not that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.”
Matthew 5:27-28.*

It is our responsibility as Christians to obey 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. That is our moment by moment, daily Christian responsibility. It is not the pastor's job to make you think right or to clean up your dirty thought life. That is no one's responsibility but yours. Will you take responsibility for your thoughts? _____

Garbage In Garbage Out

You've heard the saying, Garbage in - garbage out. Will you start living up to your Christian responsibility to stop feeding your mind garbage and start feeding your mind the Bible? _____ List two or three garbage things you should stop feeding your mind. _____

*“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;”
2 Corinthians 10:3-5.*

This *thou shalt not covet* command covers a lot of territory. God, Moses and Paul knew human nature pretty well. The particulars in the following verse are not the whole list of things we are not to covet. This verse doesn't say, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors pick up truck but we all know God wouldn't bless coveting your neighbour's pick up truck. In plainer words, just because it's not specifically listed doesn't make it okay to covet it.

*“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,
thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife,
nor his manservant,
nor his maidservant,
nor his ox,*

*nor his ass,
nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”*
Exodus 20:17.

and if there be any other commandment, - There is nothing loving about living a life that shows no love for your neighbours so God, Moses and Paul say, Cut it out! To make sure we understand what he is saying, Paul writes: *and if there be any other commandment.* Paul didn't misspeak when he said that in Romans 13:8. He wasn't guesstimating theologically. He said precisely what he meant, precisely God's truth for us to believe and obey.

Quit your foolishness and start living and loving for Jesus! *“For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”* How is that even possible? That is possible because of Romans 10:4 - *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

This section of Romans 13 is not aimed at unsaved folks. Paul is not giving a new plan of salvation that says, Love your neighbor and that will get you saved and into heaven. No, what Paul writes here is written to already born again and justified by faith, sanctified by faith, spiritually circumcised believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. He points out the practical reality of what it means to be a genuine Christian instead of being a CINO - a Christian In Name Only. CINOs are like the Laodiceans of Revelation 3:14-22. They talk the talk but they don't walk the walk.

it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, - Any commandment that isn't listed in the Ten Commandments, anything the law of Moses doesn't say in its 613 commandments, anything that is right and godly, good, biblical and true, is covered by what Paul is about to write next.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. - Paul quotes Leviticus 19:18 here and also in Galatians 5:14, to make his point about love. Jesus also quoted Leviticus 19:18 in Matthew 22:39 and so, yet again, Paul is following Jesus when he teaches about love. James the apostle tells us that if you love your neighbour as yourself, Leviticus 19:18, you do well and you've fulfilled the royal law, James 2:8.

Romans 12:9 struck the same note. Romans 12:9 and 13:9 are linked. Paul's purpose is to explain how Christianity works. Living the Christian life is all about exhibiting genuine love. This is important because Paul is getting ready to tell us something shocking. What Paul is about to write comes direct from the heart of the Godhead.

What Paul writes in Romans isn't *the additions of Paul*, as if what Paul wrote is on a lower level than the rest of scripture. Romans 13:9 is the key to glorious freedom from the law for every Jew and Gentile who will believe it. This is not an OT teaching. This could only be taught in the NT, on the resurrection side of Calvary.

13:10 - Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: - This amplifies Paul's purpose in listing commandments about how we relate to our neighbor. The Ten Commandments are designed to help us love God wholeheartedly, live a life that is pleasing to God and and love our neighbor wholeheartedly. If we love our neighbor, we will automatically keep the Ten Commandments. Breaking the Ten Commandments, any of them except the Sabbath commandment, indicates we are not loving our neighbor properly.

It is important to know who Jesus - God in the flesh, John 1:14, 1 Timothy 3:16 - viewed as our neighbor. Jesus gave a perfect answer to the question, *Who is my neighbor?* in Luke 10:25-37. After reading that passage of scripture, how would you answer the lawyer's question, Luke 10:29, 36-37? _____

A wise student of the Bible will answer that question as Jesus answered it in Luke 10:36-37. Love sees the neighbor's need, has compassion, takes the time to go to the one in need, does something affirming by binding up the wounds of the one in need and provides for the future needs of the neighbor. Often in life, the people we think would be the best neighbors turn out to be the worst neighbors. And too, the people we think probably wouldn't be a good neighbor turn out to be the best neighbors. Isn't that interesting? _____

**Love is not neutrality
and neutrality is not love.**

Love seeks to do good to his neighbor instead of doing him harm. Love is not neutrality and neutrality is not love. Love is active and affirmative. Love is never malevolent or malicious. Love never willfully injures the object of its affection. Love is not mean, selfish, hateful, spiteful or envious. Love is not wicked or cruel or devious.

Love is not looking for ways to insult, hurt or destroy someone. Love is not scheming and planning the downfall of others. Love isn't trying to figure out how

to take what someone else built or created or worked on for years. Love is not angry and full of wrath. Love is focused outward, on others, not inward on self.

**Love is not an outward smile
hiding inward malice.**

Love is the more excellent way. Love is better than keeping the law, better than lip service, better than acting like you love when you really don't, better than faking it till you make it, better than neutrality. Love isn't an outward smile hiding inward malice. Fake love isn't what Paul has in mind here. The charity/love Paul talks about is not a counterfeit, a sham, a fake, a forgery, a fraud, a faux emotion, a hoax, a masquerade, an imitation. Love must be genuine and if it is anything less than genuine, it isn't love.

Five years before he wrote Romans 13, Paul wrote the charity chapter, aka, the love chapter, to the Corinthian church, 1 Corinthians 13. To one of the most carnal congregations in the NT, Paul showed *a more excellent way*, 1 Corinthians 12:31. Roman 12-14 explains the practical, rubber meets the road reality of this more excellent way, how God expects saved folks to live and how saved folks should interact with those around them. We will answer the question: *More excellent* than what, to better appreciate what Paul is showing us.

*“But covet earnestly the best gifts:
and yet shew I unto you
a more excellent way.”
1 Corinthians 12:31.*

**Charity, meaning, love in action
is the more excellent way,
1 Corinthians 13:1-13.
More excellent than what?**

1. More excellent than following men - 1 Cor 1:12
2. More excellent than worldly wisdom - 1 Cor 1:20-2:6
3. More excellent than excellency of speech - 1 Cor 2:1
4. More excellent than immaturity and carnality - 1 Cor 2:6-3:4
5. More excellent than being planters and waterers - 1 Cor 2:5-6
6. More excellent than being instructors in Christ - 1 Cor 4:15
7. More excellent than empty speech - 1 Cor 4:19-20
8. More excellent than unity with leaven - 1 Cor 5:6-13
9. More excellent than spiritual gifts - 1 Cor 12:1-11

The implication is that we can keep all of the commandments Paul mentioned in a cold, sterile way, without love, without charity, without a loving heart, without the Godly motive of love but God doesn't intend us to live a cold, sterile, loveless life. Now, here in Romans 13, about five years after he wrote 1 Corinthians, Paul continues the same theme, *a more excellent way*, this time in the context of how saved Jews and saved Gentiles should treat each other in the Roman church and how they should treat folks outside the church.

Love-charity is *a more excellent way* and charity (active love or love in action or love that works to the betterment of the one who is loved) must mediate all of our interactions hour by hour, day by day, in the church and in the world. Love is the Christian way and we love, not by our own power but as Christ compels us to love by the power of the Holy Ghost, Romans 5:5. Am I open to the Holy Ghost speaking to me in the scripture and in my mind and heart? _____

therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. - The Greek word translated, love, here, is ἀγάπη agapē, pronounced, ag-ah'-pay, stressing the first syllable. English speakers tend to pronounce it, a-gaa-pay, stressing the second syllable. The word agapē is found 116 times in 106 verses in the NT. It is translated, *love* 86 times, *charity* 28 times, *dear* 1 time, *charitably* 1 time and *feasts of charity* 1 time, depending on the context.

Agapē has a wide semantic range so that agapē describes the agapē of God, translated as *the love of God* in Luke 11:42 and John 5:42, the love of Christian disciples for each other, John 13:35, the love of Jesus for His disciples, John 15:9, the love of God the Father for Jesus, John 15:10, 17:26, the love of Christ for Christians, Romans 8:35, the love of the Spirit, Romans 15:20, and charity, 1 Corinthians 8:1, 13:1, the active love Christians should have for each other.

Genuine Christian love does not break the law of God, meaning the Ten Commandments. Paul isn't saying, It's okay to break the Ten Commandments as long as you also love people. And Paul isn't giving the plan of salvation here. He isn't saying, the way to get saved is by keeping the law and you keep the law by loving and so, anyone who loves is saved.

**For anyone who is unsaved,
love is not the fulfilling of the law.**

Love in the context of Romans 13:10, is a work done by someone who is already saved. It isn't a work you do to get you saved or to keep you saved, Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5, Romans 3:20, 28. Love is what you do because you are already saved. It is the natural outgrowth of being saved; love is what saved

people do. Love is an evidence you are saved, not what you do to get saved. After the glorious resurrection of Christ, salvation is always by believing the gospel, always by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

the fulfilling of the law - We remind ourselves here that Romans 6:14 and 10:4 are still true. Christians are not under law but under grace and Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. When Paul talks about the law here, he has in view the Ten Commandments, five of which he has just listed. He isn't saying, Instead of not committing adultery, just love people. He isn't saying, Instead of not killing, just love people. He isn't saying, Instead of not stealing, just love people.

He is saying: If you love your neighbor, you will not commit adultery with his wife. If you love your neighbor, you will not kill him. If you love your neighbor, you will not covet what he has and steal from him. If you love your neighbor you will treat him justly, with kindness and compassion because that is what love does; that is how love acts.

Keeping the commandments doesn't necessarily fulfill the law if you don't also love your neighbor, Leviticus 19:18, 34. God is interested in us having the right motive, the right heart about what we do in life. How does love fulfill the law? We're talking about the OT law, the law of Moses. How does love fulfill the law? Paul explains how that works in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Love means you will do what the law says, out of love, from a motive of love, because you love your neighbor, not just out of duty, not out of grudging, cold-hearted compliance, absent love. You will honour God, you will not worship idols, you will not bear false witness, you will not kill, you will not steal, you will not commit adultery, you will not covet anything that is your neighbors.

13:11 - And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

And that, knowing the time, - Christians are capable of *knowing the time* in which they live. Time here isn't a reference to keeping time by the minute or by the hour. The word used for time here refers to time in the sense of an age or an epoch or a period of time. It is a period of time in the sense of Matthew 16:1-3 and 1 Chronicles 12:32.

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It

will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?
Matthew 16:1-3.

*“And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.”
1 Chronicles 12:32.*

Christians often have a difficult problem knowing what time it is. Paul says that Roman Christians know the time. Roman Christians are not ignorant of what time it is. Spiritually speaking, Do you know what time it is? _____
According to what Romans 13:11 says, What time is it? _____

that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: - Too many Christians go through life like zombies, in motion and moving and doing something but not quite with it, wondering and wandering about like they are alive but having not a clue about what time it is or what it means to serve the Lord every day.

Because you have the NT and the indwelling Holy Spirit, you have no excuse for being a clueless Christian or a sleep walking Christian. Paul tells you to wake up. Don't be a clueless Christian. Why should you never be a clueless Christian?

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.”
Matthew 25:5.

How does Matthew 25:5 interface with Paul telling Roman Christians it is high time to awake out of sleep? _____

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:14-16.

Does God want Christians to sleep and be lazy or does he want us to wake up?

For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. - *For now* - There's an urgency in Paul's writing. If it was urgent almost two thousand years ago when Paul wrote it, it is more urgent now because we are two thousand years closer to Christ coming for us in the Rapture.

now is our salvation nearer - Doctrinally this refers to Romans 7:24, 8:15, 23, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Galatians 4:5, Ephesians 1:5, 13-14, 4:30 and the time in the future, when we are glorified, Romans 8:30, and get our glorified body and our adoption is complete.

Did you see it in Ephesians 1:5? Once we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and got in Christ, then, at that point in time, we were predestinated to the adoption of children - our adoption is when we get our glorified body. It hasn't happened yet. It will happen in the future, at the rapture or the resurrection. But you have to be in Christ before you can be predestinated. Paul isn't saying the Romans are not saved or the Romans are not justified by faith but he is saying they are closer to getting their new body. He is talking about Romans 8:15, 23.

Every day of your past is one less day to live for Jesus. Opportunity isn't behind you; opportunity is before you, today and tomorrow. Whatever you wish you had done yesterday and last week and last month, it's too late now. Yesterday is gone and you can't change that. What you can do is, do something for Jesus today and do something for Jesus tomorrow.

Every day you live you are one day closer to eternity. Every day you live you are one day closer to the rapture. *Our salvation* in this verse doesn't refer to the day you got saved. Salvation here means salvation from this present evil world, salvation or deliverance *from the body of this death*, Romans 7:24, Romans 8:23, Philippians 3:21, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

How do we know that? Because Paul addressed the book of Romans to those who are *the called of Jesus Christ*, who are *called to be saints*, Romans 1:1-7, in other words, to people who are already saved. Their physical salvation from this world, via the rapture, is what Paul has in mind here.

13:12 - The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: - In the mid-first century AD, the night was already far spent and the day was at hand. The coming of Christ was imminent - *the day is at hand* - in Paul's lifetime.

Remember Paul's perspective as he writes Romans 13. There are two giant spiritual truths looming over the great apostle's life and ministry. **1.** Christ can return at any time to catch up the body of Christ in the rapture. **2.** God is within four years of kicking unsaved national Israel to the curb, leaving national Israel on the ash heap of history for 2000 years. Time for Israel to get right with God

was running out as Paul wrote Romans and the return of Christ could happen at any moment, was imminent, thus the dual urgency of Paul's message.

When talking about the return of Christ, what does imminent mean? **a.** About to happen, **b.** Possibly soon, **c.** *At hand*, **d.** Getting close, **e.** Happening soon, **f.** Possible at any moment, **g.** Forthcoming, **h.** On the way, **i.** On the verge, **j.** In the offing, **k.** Expected soon, **l.** Getting near, **m.** Perhaps today, **n.** Impending, **o.** Drawing near, **p.** All of the above.

the day is at hand - The first century church was alive with the doctrine of imminence - that Christ could return in the near future or at any moment. Rather than the return of Christ being a distant event centuries in the future, NT writers, readers and believers viewed the return of Christ as possible at any moment or in the near future. The doctrine of imminence can be described as follows.

The Doctrine of the Imminent Return of Christ

1. The NT is certain that the return of Christ is imminent, happening soon.
2. The NT is uncertain as to the precise moment of Christ's return.
3. The NT cites no specific event that must happen before Christ's return.
4. The NT never tells us to look for the tribulation or the great tribulation.
5. The NT tells us to look for the coming of Christ.

Bible Verses About Christ's Imminent Return Does each verse below teach Imminency?

*"Be patient therefore, brethren,
unto the coming of the Lord.
Behold, the husbandman waiteth
for the precious fruit of the earth,
and hath long patience for it,
until he receive the early and latter rain.
Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts:
for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.
Grudge not one against another, brethren,
lest ye be condemned:
behold, the judge standeth before the door."*
James 5:7-9.

*"But the end of all things is at hand:
be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*
1 Peter 4:7.

*“And let us consider one another
to provoke unto love and to good works:
Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,
as the manner of some is;
but exhorting one another:
and so much the more,
as ye see the day approaching...
For yet a little while,
and he that shall come will come,
and will not tarry.”
Hebrews 10:24-25, 37.*

*“Little children, it is the last time:
and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come,
even now are there many antichrists;
whereby we know that it is the last time.”
1 John 2:18.*

*“The Revelation of Jesus Christ,
which God gave unto him,
to shew unto his servants
things which must shortly come to pass;
and he sent and signified it
by his angel unto his servant John:”
Revelation 1:1.*

*“Henceforth there is laid up for me
a crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous judge,
shall give me at that day:
and not to me only,
but unto all them also that love his appearing.”
2 Timothy 4:8.*

*“For this we say unto you
by the word of the Lord,
that we which are alive and remain
unto the coming of the Lord
shall not prevent them which are asleep.
For the Lord himself shall
descend from heaven with a shout,
with the voice of the archangel,
and with the trump of God:*

*and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
Then we which are alive and remain
shall be caught up together with them
in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:
and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation
hath appeared to all men,
Teaching us that,
denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
we should live soberly, righteously, and godly,
in this present world;
Looking for that blessed hope,
and the glorious appearing
of the great God
and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”*

Titus 2:11-13.

*“And, behold, I come quickly;
and my reward is with me,
to give every man
according as his work shall be.”*

Revelation 22:12.

The Importance Of Christ's Imminent Return

*“And every man that hath this hope in him
purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”*

1 John 3:3.

*“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved,
what manner of persons ought ye to be
in all holy conversation and godliness,”*

2 Peter 3:11.

*“And that, knowing the time,
that now it is high time to awake out of sleep:
for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

*The night is far spent, the day is at hand:
let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,
and let us put on the armour of light.
Let us walk honestly, as in the day;*

*not in rioting and drunkenness,
not in chambering and wantonness,
not in strife and envying.
But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make not provision for the flesh,
to fulfil the lusts thereof."*
Romans 13:11-14.

In 1 John 3:3, what effect should Christ's imminent return have on the way we live? _____

In 2 Peter 3:11, what effect does the Second Coming of Christ have on those who are saved? _____

In Romans 13:11-14, what two things should happen in the life of a Christian in view of Christ's imminent coming? _____

2 Reactions To Christ's Imminent Return

1. Unbelief - 2 Peter 3:4.
2. Belief - 2 Peter 3:11-12.

Reasons Christ Has Not Yet Returned Even Though His Return Has Been Imminent For Two Thousand Years

*"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,
as some men count slackness;
but is longsuffering to us-ward,
not willing that any should perish,
but that all should come to repentance.
But the day of the Lord will come
as a thief in the night;
in the which the heavens
shall pass away with a great noise,
and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,
the earth also and the works
that are therein shall be burned up."
2 Peter 3:9.*

*"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness
and forbearance and longsuffering;
not knowing that the goodness of God
leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4.*

Four Important Reasons Why The Rapture Hasn't Happened Yet

- a. God is longsuffering to sinners.
- b. God is good to sinners.
- c. God is not willing that any should perish.
- d. God wants all to come to repentance.

let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, - *Cast off* translates the Greek word, ἀποθώμεθα *apotithēmi*, pronounced ap-o-teeth'-ay-mee. It occurs eight times in eight verses in the Greek NT. It is translated as, *laid down*, in Acts 7:58, *put off*, in Ephesians 4:22, *putting away*, in Ephesians 4:25, *put off*, in Colossians 3:8, *lay aside*, in Hebrews 12:1, *lay apart*, in James 1:21 and *lay aside*, in 1 Peter 2:1. Here in Romans 13:12, it is translated, *cast off*. It means, preparing for battle, getting ready to fight, getting in the fight by casting off things, activities, behaviors which hinder you from fighting for God.

After all, Paul views Christians as soldiers in the army of the KING OF KINGS, 2 Timothy 2:3, Revelation 19:14-16. Do you approach the Christian life as if you have a deadly enemy called Satan? _____ Do you approach the Christian life as if you are a soldier in a real spiritual battle? _____ What do you need to do to change the way you view your Christian life, so your Christian life matches up with what the Bible describes? _____

**The works of darkness are fleshly sins
often related to alcohol
drunkenness and sexual immorality.**

If you are reading your Bible and walking in the Spirit, you will easily recognize the works of darkness. Darkness refers to the sins of the flesh, whether that is exalting self or chasing fleshly desires, the appetites, lusts and passions of the flesh. Darkness is contrasted with light here in Romans 13. The sins of darkness are not of God, they are against God and in fact, the sins of darkness lead you inexorably away from the paths of righteousness, away from where the LORD leads you, Psalm 23:3.

*"But if thine eye be evil,
thy whole body shall be full of darkness.
If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness,
how great is that darkness!"*
Jesus in Matthew 6:23.

Have you cast off the works of darkness in your life?

If you are reading your Bible but not really believing it and not really living it, you will gravitate toward the works of darkness and you may end up defending the works of darkness when another Christian calls you out on the way you're living. Christians tend to get defensive when someone points out how far into darkness they have walked and how enthusiastically they are pursuing darkness. What is it about the human heart that causes us to gravitate away from light and toward darkness, Jeremiah 17:9? _____

In the Bible, darkness is a metaphor for sin and for judgment. Darkness is the absence of light, meaning a lack of insight into spiritual truth and meaning a lack of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, John 8:12. Light comes from Jesus, the Bible, the gospel and the Holy Spirit.

Darkness represents the judgment of God, Jeremiah 23:12, Lamentations 3:2, Zephaniah 1:15, Matthew 8:12, 27:45, Luke 23:44-45.

People who are unsaved walk in darkness, John 1:4, 3:19, 8:12, 12:35-36, 12:46. Do we need to point out that, if you are saved, you should not be walking in darkness?

People who are unsaved do the works of darkness, Romans 13:12, Ephesians 5:11. Do we need to point out that, if you are saved, you should never do the works of darkness?

Christians should never do the works of darkness.

If you are a Christian you should cast off the works of darkness, put on the armor of light, Romans 13:12, and walk in the light, 1 John 1:7. If you're walking in darkness and doing the works of darkness, you may be saved but you are not living as a Christian. If that describes you, what can you do to correct your situation? _____ Do exactly what Paul says in Romans 13:12.

What are the works of darkness? The works of darkness are living like an unsaved man who walks in darkness by trying to satisfy his fleshly desires. Paul lists six works of darkness in Romans 13:13, which we will examine.

Remember that, when God saved us, He "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:" Colossians

1:13. Think about it. If you are saved, God has already delivered you from the power of darkness. Since you have already been delivered from the power of darkness, why do you insist on walking in darkness? If you are saved, why are you walking in darkness and doing the works of darkness? _____

What follows is the personal commentary of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on darkness and light. Paul always takes his lead from Christ because Paul was an ardent follower of Jesus, 1 Corinthians 11:1.

*“And this is the condemnation,
that light is come into the world,
and men loved darkness rather than light,
because their deeds were evil.
For every one that doeth evil hateth the light,
neither cometh to the light,
lest his deeds should be reprov’d.
But he that doeth truth cometh to the light,
that his deeds may be made manifest,
that they are wrought in God.”*
Jesus in John 3:19-21.

and let us put on the armour of light. - Put off the old man, put on the new man; cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. When you put on the armour of light, it means you are no longer walking in darkness. Jesus is the light of the world, John 8:12 so when you put on the armour of light, you’re following Jesus.

Paul warns Roman Christians to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. When someone tells you to stop walking in darkness or stop doing the works of darkness, they’re not being mean and they’re not getting in your personal business. Instead of viewing it that way, you should view it as God caring enough about you to send someone to tell you to get right with God.

13:13 - Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; - If you’re doing any of the six things listed in Romans 13:13, these are some of *the works of darkness* specifically mentioned in Romans 13:12. If you’re doing those things, you are not walking honestly, as in the day. Don’t try to sugarcoat it. Don’t lie to yourself. Be honest before God. Christians are not supposed to walk in darkness. Instead, we are to cast off the works of darkness. If you run with dogs, you will inevitably get fleas.

**If you run with the worldly crowd,
you will never pull them up.
The worldly crowd will always pull you down.**

If you run with the worldly crowd, you will never convert them. They will end up converting you to their worldly way of life. The fact that you are running with them in their venues, doing what they do, proves they have already converted you instead of you converting them.

Do you get it? They are not running with you in Christian venues. They are not coming to your Bible study, are not coming to church with you, are not hungering after righteousness with you, are not growing in their knowledge of Christ with you. You are hanging out with them in their ungodly venues with no reciprocation from them toward the things of God. Time to get a clue and stop being a dummy.

A wise Christian doesn't try to prove the Bible wrong by hanging out with the worldly crowd to pull the worldly crowd up. A wise man prays for the salvation of the worldly crowd and preaches to the worldly crowd but refuses to run with them, refuses to hang out in the bar with them, refuses to go bar hopping with them, refuses to drink alcohol with them, refuses to join in their rioting and drunkenness, refuses to indulge in their chambering and wantonness, refuses to be part of their strife and envying. A wise man separates himself from the worldly crowd and the activities of the worldly crowd. Are you wise? _____

*“Flee also youthful lusts:
but follow righteousness,
faith, charity, peace,
with them that call on the Lord
out of a pure heart.”*
2 Timothy 2:2.

not in rioting and drunkenness, - The apostle Peter referred to this sinful behavior as, *the will of the Gentiles*. He was describing how unsaved Gentiles behave, how they live, what they do. They exercise their freewill to do things that are not pleasing to God. We need to get this truth down deep in our hearts.

There is nothing neutral or honest or decent or clean or Christian about rioting and drunkenness. There is nothing neutral or honest or decent or clean or Christian about chambering and wantonness. There is nothing neutral or honest or decent or clean or Christian about strife and envying. Those are the works of darkness which we should cast off, lay down, put away, Romans 13:12, John

3:19. The works of darkness have no redeeming qualities and should be cast off by all Christians. Have you cast off the works of darkness in your life? _____

*“For the time past of our life
may suffice us to have wrought
the will of the Gentiles,
when we walked in lasciviousness,
lusts, excess of wine, revellings,
banquetings, and abominable idolatries:
Wherein they think it strange
that ye run not with them
to the same excess of riot,
speaking evil of you.”
1 Peter 4:3-4.*

**Sin never leaves you
better off than it found you.
Sin always leaves you worse off.**

Sin always leaves you dirty and defiled and worse off than it found you. Sin doesn't make you more sanctified or more holy. Sin never leaves you a better Christian or a better witness for Christ than it found you. Whenever you entertain sin, you are entertaining a monster and that monster will leave you scarred and wounded.

If you want to be a champion for Christ, don't hang out with the worldly crowd and act like one of them, whether or not they are genuinely saved or profess to be genuinely saved or unsaved. Use critical thinking and spiritual discernment. If they're leading you into drunkenness and worldliness, you need to develop a spiritual backbone and separate yourself from them. Learn to say: NO!

rioting - The word here translated, *rioting*, is translated, revellings, in Galatians 5:21 and 1 Peter 4:3. Rioting and revellings are the wild activities and crazy parties and sexual debauchery that accompany drinking alcohol and drunkenness and using drugs.

Notice that each of the three times this word occurs in the NT, it is linked with drunkenness or excess of wine. The link to alcohol is a warning. There is nothing blessed or biblical or godly about partying and drunkenness. Remember that Paul is warning Christians against this behavior. He isn't saying: It's okay for a while until you get it out of your system. If you are living like a drunken unsaved man, you need to get your heart right with God.

**Please don't miss the link
between alcohol and sexual immorality.**

drunkenness - The word here translated, drunkenness, is also translated, drunkenness in Luke 21:34 and Galatians 5:21. It means exactly what you think it means, some degree of intoxication where you are not sober, where your inhibitions are loosened, leaving you open to all of the lewd lustful activities and sins and immoral meanderings which accompany drunkenness or partial drunkenness. The human authors of the OT, under inspiration of God, put it this way.

*“Whoredom and wine and new wine
take away the heart.”
Hosea 4:11 KJV.*

*“to prostitution; old wine and new wine
take away their understanding.”
Hosea 4:11 NIV.*

*“Promiscuity, wine, and new wine
take away understanding.”
Hosea 4:11 BSB - Berean Study Bible.*

*“Harlotry, wine, and new wine
enslave the heart.”
Hosea 4:11 NKJV.*

*“Infidelity, wine, and new wine
take away the understanding.”
Hosea 4:11 NASV.*

*“And they loved fornication, and wine
and drunkenness have taken their heart”
Hosea 4:11 Aramaic Bible In Plain English.*

*“Sexual immorality, wine, and fresh wine
seduce the heart of my people.”
Hosea 4:11 ISV - International Standard Version.*

People who like to drink alcohol also like to make excuses for their drinking and like to quibble about what it means to be drunk. They argue that they didn't really get drunk; they only had a few drinks so Romans 13:13 doesn't apply to them because they were not falling down drunk or blind roaring drunk. Those of

us who are of full age, who *have had our senses exercised to discern both good and evil*, Hebrews 5:14, are not impressed by their self-justifying quibbling. There isn't anything good about drunkenness or any degree of drunkenness.

not in chambering - The word here translated, chambering, is κοίτη koitē, pronounced, koy'-tay. It literally means: a place for lying down, a bed or couch, used euphemistically to refer to adultery or to sexual cohabitation or to illicit sexual intercourse. Chambering is adulterous sex, illicit sex, recreational sex.

Chambering is not good fun, is not people simply having a good time, is not just being friendly, is not loosening up so they can enjoy life, is not normal behavior or godly behavior for Christians. Chambering is something Christians should cast off, put aside, walk away from. Paul is not commending chambering; he condemns it here in Romans 13:13. Chambering is one of the works of darkness, a kind of sexual immorality which Christians should cast off and never be associated with. Are you still, in your mind, defending the works of darkness?

Be absolutely clear about this. Paul in Romans 13:12, warns Christians to *cast off the works of darkness*, and in Romans 13:13, warns Christians against sexual immorality - chambering. If you are a saved and born again Christian, you should cast off the works of darkness and sexual immorality.

Have you noticed how these six sins, works of darkness, are listed together, because they are related and where you find one, you often find the other sins too? Drunkenness and sexual immorality, aka, chambering, go together.

and wantonness, - The word here translated, wantonness, is also translated, *lasciviousness*, in Mark 7:22, 2 Corinthians 12:21, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:19, 1 Peter 4:3, Jude 4, is also translated, *filthy*, in 2 Peter 2:7, and *wantonness* in 2 Peter 2:18.

Lasciviousness means, to be driven by lust; to be preoccupied with lustful desires. It means to be unnaturally sex focused or sex obsessed. Lasciviousness also means: carnality, illicit sexual desires, lewdness, lust, lustfulness, lechery, wantonness, not for your spouse but for people to whom you are not married, people to whom you are not committed.

Wantonness is linked to sex and means: unbridled lust, sexual excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, promiscuity, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness. *Wantonness* and *lasciviousness* are always works of the flesh. *Wantonness* and *lasciviousness* are never works of the Holy Spirit. The sins we

listed are fleshly sins; they are the opposite of biblical spirituality, the opposite of Christian spirituality. Good Christians don't get practice those wicked sins.

not in strife - The word here translated, *strife*, is also translated, *strife* in 1 Corinthians 3:3, Philippians 1:15, 1 Timothy 6:4, *debate* in Romans 1:29, *contentions* in 1 Corinthians 1:11, Titus 3:9, *debates* in 2 Corinthians 12:20, *variance* in Galatians 5:20. Those translations of the same Greek word give us the flavor of its meaning. It means to argue or be argumentative, to be disagreeable, to delight in a quarrel, to be difficult to get along with. Strife is fairly common behavior among professing Christians but should not be part of the Christian life or the Christian church.

and envying. - The word here translated, *envying*, is also translated, *zeal*, in John 2:17, Romans 10:2, 2 Corinthians 7:11, 9:2, *indignation*, Acts 5:17, *envy*, Acts 13:45, *your fervent mind*, 2 Corinthians 7:7, *jealousy*, 2 Corinthians 11:2, *envyings*, 2 Corinthians 12:20, *emulations*, Galatians 5:20, *great zeal*, Colossians 4:13, *fiery indignation*, Hebrews 10:27, *bitter envying*, James 3:14.

Some of those translations are in a good sense but in Romans 13:13, *envying* is not a good thing. Paul includes it in the works of darkness, as something that should be cast off from the Christian life. It is not Christian to envy others.

13:14 - But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

*“For as many of you
as have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ.”
Galatians 3:27.*

*“That ye put off
concerning the former conversation the old man,
which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
And that ye put on the new man,
which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”
Ephesians 4:22-24.*

*“And have put on the new man,
which is renewed in knowledge
after the image of him that created him:”
Colossians 3:10.*

*“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make not provision for the flesh,
to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*

Romans 13:14.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, - Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is the antithesis of the works of darkness. The idea is, the works of darkness are never Christian, never helpful to living a Christian life, should never be part of the life of any Christian. When you hear professing Christians defending the works of darkness, you know that, at best, you’re dealing with a worldly fleshly Christian. There is nothing spiritual or Spirit filled about the works of darkness.

How can a Christian cast off the works of darkness and get victory over the sins of the flesh? By putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is talking about practical Christian living here, to help Christians live for Christ every day. As a practical matter, put on Christ every day. If all you do is talk about it or if you keep silent about it, but you don’t live it, no one will know you are saved. Are you a Christian? Then memorize Galatians 2:20 and *by the faith of the Son of God*, live like a Christian every day. Have you memorized Galatians 2:20 yet? _____

People know you are a saved and born again Christian by the way you live. That is the sense Paul has in mind here when he says. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*. He means: living for the Lord, living as a committed Christian follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, living like you believe the Bible is true. It is the same thing Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 3:1-3.

Doctrinally speaking, you *put on Christ* when the Holy Spirit baptized you into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27. Romans 13:14 can be a doctrinal reference to the truth of Galatians 3:27 but it is far more than a cold doctrinal reference. It is a warm practical truth that believers need to reckon on every day, Romans 6:10-14.

Here, practically speaking, *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ* means to be Christ’s disciple, to live like Christ, to follow Christ as Paul followed Christ, 1 Corinthians 11:1. The phrase, to put on a person, was a Greek way of saying: to follow someone, to agree with someone, to live like someone who lived an admirable life, to be the disciple of someone worthy of being followed. We as Christians, are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what Paul says and that is what the Bible says. In other words, live every day as an all in disciple of Christ.

“Thus, in Dionysius Halicarnassus the expression occurs, "having put on or clothed themselves with Tarquin;" i.e., they imitated the example and morals of Tarquin. So Lucian says, "having put on Pythagoras;" having received him as a

teacher and guide. So the Greek writers speak of putting on Plato, Socrates, etc. meaning to take them as instructors, to follow them as disciples... Thus, to put on the Lord Jesus means to take him as a pattern and guide... to obey his precepts, to become like him.” - Barnes’ Notes On The Bible, Romans 13:14.

The context of Romans 13:14 is Romans 13:13 - *Let us walk honestly*. Paul says something similar two other times in his NT epistles, Ephesians 4:23, Colossians 3:10. Doing what Paul says has a positive side and a negative side.

*“That ye put off concerning the former conversation
the old man, which is corrupt
according to the deceitful lusts;
And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
And that ye put on the new man,
which after God is created
in righteousness and true holiness.”*
Ephesians 4:22-24.

You cannot put on the Lord Jesus Christ in your daily walk until you view your unsaved flesh the way God views your unsaved flesh, as corrupt - *the old man, which is corrupt* - and therefore, the old man must be put off. The only reason to put off the flesh - the old man - is because the old man is corrupt. The only reason to put on the new man is because the old man cannot please God but the new man can please God. Do you view your unsaved flesh the way God views your unsaved flesh. _____ Why? _____

It was never God’s plan to save you and then leave you to your own devices for the rest of your life. God has definite plans for you, Ephesians 2:10, to sanctify you and empower you to walk in the Spirit, Galatians 5:16, so you can *live by the faith of the Son of God*, Galatians 2:20. God gave you the indwelling Holy Spirit and the indwelling Christ so you can live out His plans for you.

Are you using the spiritual resources God has given you to live out God’s plan for you? _____ How? _____

What does it mean to *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ* or, to *put on the new man*? In Romans 13:12, Paul has told us to *put on the armour of light*. Here in Romans 13:14, he tells us, *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Let’s Figure It Out Together

Romans 13:14 - Putting *on the Lord Jesus Christ* stands in contrast to making *provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*. Paul set them against each other in the same verse so we can understand what he is talking about. Instead of

making provision for the flesh, make provision for the spirit. Instead of preparing to serve the flesh, prepare to serve the spirit. Your saved spirit and your unsaved flesh are opposites.

You cannot serve both the flesh and the spirit at the same time so you have to make a conscious choice to *put on Christ* in your daily life. No one puts on Christ by accident. If you refuse to make a conscious affirmative choice to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are also making a negative choice not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. It's one or the other. There is no neutral ground, no middle ground. In the Bible, the lusts of the flesh are associated with the night, with darkness, with dishonesty, Romans 13:12.

In Romans 13:13, Paul has listed six negative things which the Bible identifies as lusts of the flesh, with which believers in Christ sometimes struggle. Those six fleshly negative things are: **1.** rioting and **2.** drunkenness, **3.** chambering and **4.** wantonness, **5.** strife and **6.** envying. These are deceptive sins because they get a grip on your fleshly nature and then seem to take on a life of their own. These sins are often defended by those committing them as being not so bad or even good for Christians because they are meeting needs and not hurting anyone.

Those sins should never be part of the life of a Christian and should never be part of the life of a church congregation. When those things are part of the lives of Christians, something is terribly wrong and needs to be set right. So Paul says, Wake up. Do you have enough spiritual common sense to listen to Paul and, Wake up?

When you're putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, you're not making provision for the lusts of the flesh. When you're making provision for the lusts of the flesh, including things like the six things Paul listed, you're not putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you understand that as God's truth? _____

**Your job as a Christian is
to put on the Lord Jesus Christ
every day.**

You have a functioning mind and a God-given conscience and you have freewill to obey and serve God. God will not make the choice for you. You must make the choice to put on the Lord Jesus Christ daily. Will you do that? _____

Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is a practical, common sense, daily habit, not a one time doctrinal thing like justification by faith. Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is about your personal daily sanctification. Paul is talking about the daily

practicality of Godly, holy, sanctified, Acts 26:18, Christian living, something we do moment by moment, day by day.

This is based upon the doctrinal truth, that as a sinner saved by grace, you are already justified by faith and already in Christ. That happened to us at salvation, yet Paul seems to be saying more than that. He isn't telling us to do something the Holy Spirit has already done for us, when He baptized us (no water involved) into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:27. If the Holy Ghost has already put us in Christ, we don't need to do that again.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ is aimed at getting us to: **a.** act like Christians, **b.** think like Christians, **c.** live like Christians, **d.** walk like Christians. *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ* is like saying: Get your head in the game, or, Keep your head in the game. It's like saying: Live like who you are in Christ.

Live like a Christian; don't live like a lost hell-bound you, because that's not what you are now. Paul is saying: Remember who you are in Christ, Remember what you are in Christ and remember the spiritual blessings you have in Christ, Ephesians 1:3. Then live every moment of every day as if all of that is true, because it is true.

Think and act like a born again, heaven-bound, saved winner. Don't think or live like a hell-bound unsaved sinner. Be what you are in Christ. Live as a genuine Christian every day of your life. Don't put on the uniform on Sunday and play for God's team and take off the uniform when you leave church and play for the devil's team the rest of the week.

**Every moment of every day,
you have a choice to make.**

**Every day put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
Renew the inner man every day.**

**Put off the old man which is corrupt.
Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.**

*“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make not provision for the flesh,
to fulfill the lusts thereof.”*

Romans 13:14.

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ,
he is a new creature:
old things are passed away;
behold, all things are become new.”
2 Corinthians 5:17.*

*“For which cause we faint not;
but though our outward man perish,
yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”
2 Corinthians 4:16.*

*“That ye put off
concerning the former conversation
the old man,
which is corrupt
according to the deceitful lusts;”
Ephesians 4:22.*

*“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
And that ye put on the new man,
which after God is created in
righteousness and true holiness.”
Ephesians 4:23.*

*“And you, that were sometime alienated
and enemies in your mind
by wicked works,
yet now hath he reconciled”
Colossians 1:21-22.*

*“Let no man beguile you of your reward
in a voluntary humility
and worshipping of angels,
intruding into those things which he hath not seen,
vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,”
Colossians 2:18.*

*“And have put on the new man,
which is renewed in knowledge
after the image of him that created him:”
Colossians 3:10.*

and make not provision for the flesh, - What does it mean to *make not provision for the flesh*? _____

Christians are warned: *make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.* When Paul says, in Romans 13:12, *let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,* that is what it means to *make not provision for the flesh.*

Cast off the works of darkness. Walk away from your old life of sin and self-indulgence. Recognize that your flesh is not saved. Recognize that if you indulge the lusts of the flesh, that indulgence works against your sanctification. Indulging the flesh doesn't make you a good Christian - It makes you a carnal, worldly, backslidden Christian. Learn to say NO to sin and lust, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. You say NO to sin by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the power of the risen Christ who dwells in your heart by faith, Galatians 2:20.

Recognize that your intentions, your freewill and your ability to say No to sin, play a big part in living for Jesus day by day. Living for the Lord is intentional, just like reading your Bible and learning your Bible and learning to witness are intentional. Casting off the works of darkness is intentional.

Sanctification and spiritual growth don't happen by accident. Learning the Bible and learning Bible doctrine happens when you get intentional about doing that. Stop drifting through life without a rudder. Make it your goal in life to live for Jesus, to be all that God intends you to be, Ephesians 2:10.

There is another practical daily aspect related to how you live. Don't knowingly put yourself in situations where you can easily fall into sin, where you can easily commit sin because you've already thought it out, because you've already planned it out, because you're willing to indulge your unsaved flesh and commit sin.

Don't subscribe to porn. Don't set up the Favorites Bar on your computer or the Home Screen on your phone with Short Cuts to porn sites and hook up apps. *Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.* Christians have a responsibility to not lead others into sin, to not facilitate sin for anyone.

Don't hang out in bars. Don't take saved friends or unsaved friends to bars. Never go bar-hopping or bar-crawling with anyone. Don't buy alcohol for people and help them get drunk or stay drunk. Don't be an enabler of the sins of others. You're a Christian so live like a Christian. Don't be an enabler of another man's drunkenness. If you are enabling others to drink and get drunk or providing them with an example of drinking and getting drunk, that is wicked and ungodly behavior.

Clean up your heart and your mind and clean up your life. God expects us to live what we profess to believe in the Bible. Professing Christians who talk the talk but don't walk the walk are a dime a dozen. They make God sick so don't be one of them.

Are you a biblical Christian?

If you are, then:

Think like a biblical Christian.

Act like a biblical Christian.

Live like a biblical Christian.

Talk like a biblical Christian.

Believe like a biblical Christian.

Love like a biblical Christian.

Serve like a biblical Christian.

Don't disgrace the name of Jesus Christ.

Always live clean, sober and above reproach.

Don't make it easy for others to fall into sin through your permissiveness and your spiritual laziness. And don't lead your saved and unsaved friends to the bars and the alcohol. Some day you will stand before God and your arguments for hanging out in bars and drinking alcohol being morally neutral activities or good activities for Christians won't carry any weight with your Savior. Those arguments won't pass muster at the judgment seat of Christ.

If you've had a [problem with porn](#), you need to quit porn and then, don't share porn with others. If porn was a problem for you, why make someone else's porn problem worse? If you've had a problem with picking up people in bars, stop going to bars and don't take others to bars.

If you have hook up apps on your phone or other devices, get rid of them and don't save the info anyplace. Trash all of your hook up app photos and hook up app info - trash it all. If you're a Christian, stop talking about being a Christian and start living like a genuine Christian.

If you've had a problem with alcohol or drugs, don't enable that sin in others by providing them with alcohol or drugs. Why enable and encourage sinful behavior in others that God has given you victory over? Do you see why Paul encourages us to, *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh* and to get our head in the game?

Don't lock yourself in the prison of porn.

to fulfil the lusts thereof. - Have you ever thought about sinning and made plans to commit sin? _____ That is making provision for the flesh. Making provision is planning it out, thinking about how you can do it, considering the angles to see if you can get away with it, so you can satisfy the lusts of the flesh.

For example, it is making *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof* to arrange for a designated driver so you can go out drinking, planning on drinking enough to get 1/4 or 1/3 or 1/2 drunk. Making provision for the lusts of the flesh makes you an errand boy for a corpse, Romans 6:3-7. You ought to have more respect for yourself than that. You will be better off if you skip that fool's errand. Never let yourself be an errand boy for a corpse.

Why not do the opposite of making provision for the flesh?

If you're a Christian, be a serious Christian and start making provision for the spirit, not the flesh. Make plans to obey what you read in the New Testament. Make plans to spend your life serving God. Instead of making sports your god, make Jesus Christ your God and your Lord. Give God your body, Romans 12:1-2, as a living sacrifice. That's a reasonable request. Are you a serious Christian? Then start living like a serious Christian.

Clean up your life.
Clean up your act.
Clean up your mind.
Clean up your music.
Clean up your thoughts.
Clean up your imaginations.

Live for a biblical purpose.
Live for a Christian purpose.
Live for a Godly purpose.
Live for a heavenly purpose.
Live for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanks so much for studying the Bible with us.

You are loved and appreciated. God bless you.

Review Questions for Romans 13

1. Did God tell us, in Romans 13, that the government should run the church?

2. Did God tell us, in Romans 13, that the government should run the spiritual lives of Christians? _____
3. Did God intend for Paul to tell us, in Romans 13, that Christians must never resist or disobey the government? _____
4. Did God intend for Paul to tell us, in Romans 13, that God's church must never resist or disobey the government? _____
5. Does Romans 13 say that Christians must always obey the government?

6. Does Romans 13 forbid Christians to resist the government? _____
7. Is it ever right for Christians to resist the government? _____
8. Are there examples in the OT where believers resisted the government? _____
9. Are there examples in the NT where Christians resisted the government? _____
10. Do those OT and NT examples show the limits of Romans 13? _____
11. Does Romans 13 give the government the right to run the church? _____
12. Does Romans 13 give the government control over the church? _____
13. Is it sometimes right for a church or Christians to resist the government? _____
14. If the apostle Paul, the greatest Christian who ever lived, and the man who wrote Romans 13, resisted the government, what does that tell us about the meaning of Romans 13? _____
15. If the apostle Peter, who quoted Romans 13 in 1 Peter 2:13-17, resisted the government, what does that tell us about the meaning of Romans 13? _____
16. Romans 13 describes not only the duty of citizens to government but the duty of government to citizens. In Romans 13, Paul describes the kind of government to which citizens should be submissive. T or F
17. Romans 13 - When the higher powers forbid what God commands or command what God forbids, *we must obey God rather than men*. Does Acts 5:29 make a strong case for sometimes resisting the powers that be? _____ Why? _____
18. Can we be subject to the higher powers without always obeying the higher powers or while sometimes resisting the higher powers? _____ How?

19. Romans 13 - Who is the highest power in the universe? _____
20. Romans 13:1 - List two reasons why Christians might resist the powers that be. _____
21. Romans 13:1 - Who ordained or gave authority to the government, aka, the powers that be? _____
22. Romans 13:2 - Did God's followers in the Bible sometimes resist the powers that be? _____
23. What can we learn from their example? _____

24. Romans 13:2 - List two biblical examples where God's people resisted the powers that be. _____
25. Romans 13:1-2 - Is that an absolute command which can never be disobeyed or is it a carefully nuanced general rule? _____
25. Romans 13:2 and James 4:7 - Who has first claim on your submission, God or government? _____ Why? _____
26. Romans 13:3 - What kind of government does this verse identify as the kind of government God expects? _____
27. Romans 13:3 - When government praises evil works and prosecutes good works, is it violating its God given purpose? _____ Why? _____
28. Romans 13:4 - Government officials are ministers of God. **a.** Yes, **b.** No
29. Romans 13:4 - Does the Bible say government is the minister of God to thee for evil? _____ What does the verse say? _____
30. Romans 13:4 - According to this verse, the revenger who executes wrath executes wrath against: **a.** him that doeth good, **b.** him that doeth evil, **c.** him that is really lazy, **d.** the Christian church, **e.** cults and false religions.
31. Romans 13:4 - Is the punishing power of government against people who do good or people who do evil? _____
32. Romans 13:4 - List three times when the Roman government was the minister of God to Paul for good.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
33. Romans 13:5 and 1 Timothy 2:1-2 - List three ways a Christian can be biblically subject to government.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
33. Romans 13:5 - What does it mean, we are to be subject to government for conscience sake? _____
34. Romans 13:6 - Does this mean that government tax collectors are also God's ministers? _____ How so? _____
35. Romans 13:7 - Is this verse about showing respect for people or is it about paying the taxes you owe? _____
36. Romans 13:7 + 1 Timothy 5:17 - Does honour sometimes refer to paying an elder twice as much? _____
37. Romans 13:8 - What does it mean, Owe no man any thing? _____
38. Romans 13:8 - What does it mean, to love one another? _____
39. Romans 13:8 - How does loving one another fulfill the law? _____
-
40. Romans 13:8 - Is loving one another just talking about it or is love about living it daily in the way we treat others? **a.** Loving one another means to blather

endlessly on about your love, **b.** Loving means to put your talk into action so that it is deeds instead of just empty words.

41. Romans 13:8 - What does this mean, *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law*? _____

42. Romans 13:9 - The Ten Commandments are summed up in the saying, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*. What does it mean to love thy neighbor as thyself? _____

43. Romans 13:10 - Why does love work no ill to his neighbor? _____

44. Romans 13:10 - What does it mean, that *love is the fulfilling of the law*? _____

45. Romans 13:11 - What is, salvation, referring to in Romans 13:10? Salvation: **a.** from our sins, **b.** from our persecutors, **c.** from the tribulation, **d.** from the wrath of God, **e.** physical salvation by the rapture.

46. Romans 13:12 - The day is at hand - Is that referring to the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ? _____

47. When talking about the return of Christ, what does imminent mean? **a.** About to happen, **b.** Possibly soon, **c.** At hand, **d.** Getting close, **e.** Happening soon, **f.** Possible at any time, **g.** Forthcoming, **h.** On the way, **i.** On the verge, **j.** In the offing, **k.** Expected soon, **l.** Getting near, **m.** Perhaps today, **n.** Impending, **o.** Drawing near, **p.** *At hand*, **q.** All of the above.

48. Romans 13:12 + 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 - Do you see imminence in v. 17? **a.** Yes I do, **b.** No I don't, **c.** not sure if I do, **d.** Yes, based on Paul's use of, *we*, meaning Paul believed the Rapture could happen in his lifetime.

49. Romans 13:12 + 1 John 3:3 - What does believing in the imminent return of Christ do in the life of a Christian? _____

50. Romans 13:12 - What does this verse mean, to *cast off the works of darkness*? _____

51. Romans 13:12 - What does this verse mean to, *put on the armour of light*? _____

52. Romans 13:13 - Why does Paul encourage Christians to *walk honestly, as in the day*? _____

53. Romans 13:13 - What does Paul warn Christians not to do? _____

54. Romans 13:14 - What does it mean, *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*? _____

55. Romans 13:14 - What does it mean, *make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*? _____

56. What is the theme of Romans 13? _____
57. What does Romans 13 say about government? _____
58. What does Romans 13 say about God's wrath? _____
59. What does Romans 13 say about love? _____
60. What does Romans 13 say about the human race? _____
61. What does Romans 13 say about the responsibility of government to citizens? _____
62. What does Romans 13 tell us that good government should do?

63. What is your favorite part of Romans 13? _____
64. What do you struggle with in Romans 13? _____
65. What is hardest for you to understand in Romans 13? _____
66. What most interests you in Romans 13? _____

We appreciate you studying Romans 13 with us.

Keep returning to and reviewing Romans.

Romans is a great book to love and learn and live.

God bless you!