

# *"Let Every Soul Be Subject Unto The Higher Powers"*

## *A Study on Romans 13*

Matthew 22:17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18) But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19) Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. 20) And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21) 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. 22) When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way.

"What does the passage above have to do with Romans 13?" Let's find out.

### **Romans 13:1**

Romans 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.

To keep order and to prevent lawlessness, God ordained that we should be subject to higher powers. This would never have had to happen had sin not been introduced into this world.

### **Romans 13:2**

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

We all have free will to choose to obey the higher powers ordained of God or not, but should we not, we shall receive the consequences of disobedience. This truth is also found in the kingdom principles of God. As Romans 2 reveals, we treasure up unto ourselves wrath.

Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6) Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

### **Romans 13:3**

Romans 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:

The rulers are to keep lawful those who transgress the laws. Those that obey the laws are free of guilt and the consequences of transgression.

### **Romans 13:4**

Romans 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.

Paul again emphasizes that the rulers are ordained of God, they are His ministers to keep law and order to prevent wickedness from prevailing.

### **Romans 13:5**

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

If we would escape the guilt as well as the consequences of lawlessness, we will subject ourselves to the higher powers.

### **Romans 13:6**

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

The rulers need to be compensated for their work in keeping order. Interestingly, we understand from an Old Testament story of the first king of Israel, Saul, that it was not God's perfect will but His permissive will that He honored their request and chose a king for them.

1Samuel 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5) And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1Samuel 8:7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

1Samuel 8:9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

After Samuel spoke to Israel of all the control the king would have over their sons, their daughters, and their land, that they would be taxed and become servants, they still chose to have a king.

1Samuel 8:19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20) That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

### **Romans 13:7**

Romans 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.

It's only right that the rulers should receive dues and taxes for their support. They should be shown honour and respect as well as obeying their laws.

### **Romans 13:8**

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

Paul counsels us not to neglect to pay tribute, and that we should act out of love thus fulfilling the law.

John teaches that love for God is shown by our love for one another.

1John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Christ summed up the law of love in the following passage.

Matthew 22:37 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.

### **Romans 13:9**

Romans 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.

How would you answer the question, "What does the passage, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's,' have to do with Romans 13?" The ten commandment law is divided into two sections, love for God and love for one another. Which section of the law does the higher powers and rulers have jurisdiction over? Paul quotes the section of the commandments that have to do with our interaction with one another, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet;" .... He does not mention the first four commandments which have to do with our relationship to God in which we have been given liberty of conscience to choose to love Him or not. There should never be laws governing our freewill worship, and yet we read in Revelation 13 that will happen and when it does, we shall know it is not of God.

### **Romans 13:10**

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

If we love God and our brethren, we shall not be found breaking the law.

### **Romans 13:11**

Romans 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.

1Corinthians 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33) So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Matthew 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.

### **Romans 13:12**

Romans 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.

If we find ourselves preferring the darkness, it suggests that we are in sin and prefer the darkness than to having our sins revealed and suffer guilt and shame.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

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

1Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5) Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

1Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

### **Romans 13:13**

Romans 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering [cohabitation] and wantonness, [licentiousness] not in strife and envying.

### **Romans 13:14**

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

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

Ephesians 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

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

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Colossians 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.