

# The Place of Governing Authority

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Romans 13:1-7 (NASB-95) This passage is laid-out in a chiasm.

**<sup>1</sup> Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.** (Hosea 8:4a “They have set up kings, but not by Me.”)

**<sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.**

**<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; <sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.**

**<sup>5</sup> Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.**

**<sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.**

In a chiasm, the center point is like the bull's eye of a target. It is the focus of the passage. The surrounding points radiate out from the center and are explained by the center.

If we read Romans 13:1-7 linearly, as we do with most of our English writings, the passage, especially verse one, seems to teach a different doctrine from the *Declaration* of the founders of the United States. Romans 13:1 would also appear to disagree with Esther 3:1-4, Daniel 3 and 6, and Acts 4. But, when we recognize the non-linear, chiastic structure in Romans 13:1-7, we find that Paul is telling us what many other Scriptures teach (Deut. 17:14-18; 1 Sam. 8:5-18; Psa. 10:16; Pro. 14:35; 16:12-13; 20:8, 26, 28; 22:11; 25:5; 29:2; 29:4), that God's will for government is that it reward the good and punish the bad. This universal teaching of Holy Writ, as stated by Paul in verses 3 and 4 —being the focal point of a chiastic pattern—impacts and guides us as we interpret verse 1. Only God honoring governments come with the Lord's approval.

From the *Declaration of Independence*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

In the *Declaration*, the founders made a theological statement. Is this an accurate representation of what the Bible teaches and of what Paul is stating in Romans 13?

# GOVERNMENT

**The Lord is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land. Psalm 10:16**

## **Deuteronomy 17:14-18**

14 "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.

16 "Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.'

17 "He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

18 "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.

## **1 Samuel 8:5-18**

5 and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." 6 But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. 7 The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. 8 "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."

10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the Lord to the people who had asked of him a king. 11 He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. 12 "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. 15 "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. 16 "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. 17 "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. 18 "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."

## **Psalm 45:11**

Then the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him.

## **Proverbs 14:28**

In a multitude of people is a king's glory, But in the dearth of people is a prince's ruin.

## **Proverbs 14:35**

The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, But his anger is toward him who acts shamefully.

## **Proverbs 16:10**

A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

## **Proverbs 16:12**

It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, For a throne is established on righteousness.

## **Proverbs 16:13**

Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And he who speaks right is loved.

## **Proverbs 20:8**

A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes.

**Proverbs 20:26**

A wise king winnows the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them.

**Proverbs 20:28**

Loyalty and truth preserve the king, And he upholds his throne by righteousness.

**Proverbs 22:11**

He who loves purity of heart And whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend.

**Proverbs 24:21**

My son, fear the Lord and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change,

**Proverbs 25:5**

Take away the wicked before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness.

**Proverbs 29:2**

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, people groan.

**Proverbs 29:4**

The king gives stability to the land by justice, But a man who takes bribes overthrows it.

**Proverbs 29:14”**

If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever.

**Daniel 2:21**

It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.

**Daniel 4:17**

This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.”

**John 19:11**

Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

**Romans 13:1-7**

1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. 3 **For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil.** Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 4 for it is **a minister of God to you for good.** But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is **a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.** 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

**1 Timothy 2:1-3**

1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

**1 Peter 2:13-17**

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.