



THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS "The Christian Attitude to Authority" Romans 13:1-7

No. 297

Stuart Briscoe

Having dealt with the Christian's behavior in the church, Paul turns his attention to the way a person with a renewed mind functions in a secular society, with particular reference to their response to governmental authority.

I. The Principles of Authority. vv. 1-2

A. God's authority demonstrated.

1. In creation. Romans 4:17
2. In legislation.
 - a. The law given. Romans 2:12-13
 - b. The consequences determined. Romans 1:24, 26, 28
 - c. The ultimate jurisdiction. Romans 3:19
3. In resurrection. Romans 1:4

B. God's authority delegated.

1. To Christ. Romans 2:16; Acts 17:31
2. To parents (Ephesians 6:1-3); Church leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17) etc.
3. To "governing authorities." v. 1
 - a. Man is to live in societies.
 - b. Societies need authorities to maintain order.
 - c. God has ordained (a) and (b). See Acts 22:10
 - d. To resist is to resist what God established.

II. The Purpose of Authority. vv. 3-4

Note: Preamble to Constitution of U.S.A.

A. Rulers as God's servants. vv. 4, 6

Note: Gk. "Leitourgos." Romans 15:16, 27; Hebrews 8:2

B. Rulers as encouragers of good. See also 1 Peter 2:13-14

1. To commend.
2. To do good. See 1 Timothy 2:2
3. To protect.

C. Rulers as punishers of evil.

1. Holding terror for wrongdoers.
2. Bearing the sword (not for nothing).
3. (God's) agent of wrath.

D. Rulers as governors. vv. 6-7

1. To fully govern.
2. To finance by taxation.

III. The Problems of Authority.

A. The necessity of submission. v. 5

1. Submission to regulation.
2. Acceptance of punishment.

B. The exercise of conscience.

1. Developing a sense of what is "right."
2. Is it right to dissent? See Acts 5:29
3. Is it right to resist? See Matthew 22:21
4. Is it right to rebel?
 - a. Against the expenditure of taxes?
 - b. Against the use/abuse of sword?
 - c. Against the deification of the State?