

ROMANS 52 – 13:1

Subject to Higher Powers

1. The Context

- a. Paul is talking about those who would do evil - Rom 12:18-21
- b. Why? They might use their liberty as an occasion to the flesh – Gal 5:13-14
- c. The Corinthians did, and went to judgment before unbelievers - 1 Cor 6:1-12
- d. Our duty is to live at peace, do good, and avenge not, because it is not our place.
- e. The place of wrath toward evil is with God ordained rulers – Rom 13:1-4

2. Errors to Avoid

- a. Might makes right: unlimited submission to every tyrant, despot, wicked ruler
- b. Justifying oppression: Psa 33:12 (Manifest destiny, British Israelism, American exceptionalism, racial prophecies)
- c. Divine “elections”: God changes the ballots, and directs their decisions Prov 21:1

3. “Let every soul ...”

- a. Christians are not excepted from subjection notwithstanding 1Cor 4:3, Rom 6:14
- b. This includes the souls who are rulers and given authority – Pro8:15, Dan 4:32-35
- c. “*There is no power but of God*” – God has power over all - Dan 2:21, 1 Sam 2:8
- d. “*every soul*” matches the “*every man*” of Rom 2:2, 2:6; Rom 3:4 and 14:12

4. “be subject unto higher powers”

- a. We are in Christ... but are subject to him – Col 2:9-10, Eph 1:22, 5:22-24, 6:1, 6:5
- b. There are ordinances (for proper order) and proper headships – 1 Cor 11:3
- c. God instituted ordinances: marriage, family, nations (Acts 17:26), church
- d. Positions in the church: 1 Cor 12:28, Paul was one ignored – 2 Cor 11:5, 12:12
- e. Family: nurture/admonish; church: grace/truth; governments: peace/justice

5. “powers that be are ordained of God”

- a. All powers that be are ordained by God – Col 1:16-18, Eph 1:20-21, Phil 2:10
- b. They are not ordained with authority over all, but are limited in their scope
- c. They were all ordained for good and not evil – Rom 12:21
- d. Fire is powerful and created by God, but for use for good, not evil.
- e. Robbers have power, but they were not ordained by God, because they do evil.
- f. Satan has power of this world – Matt 4:8-9, Eph 2:2, 2 Cor 4:4
- g. His power is usurped, and must be stood against – Eph 6:11-12
- h. When people with power do evil, it is outside what God ordained (abusive husbands, abusive parents, false teachers, thieves, crooks, evil politicians)
- i. We are ambassadors, Peter’s flock were strangers in other lands – 1 Pet 2:11-17
- j. Paul is teaching the church not to be usurpers or rebellious against God