



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Romans 116

### Christian & Government – Part 03

### Romans 13:1-7

**Romans 13:1-7**, *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. <sup>5</sup> Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.*

Christian's responsibility to government.

- First, normally we obey, respect, and do everything in response to and to please those in authority. We are to be model citizens, obedient not only outwardly, but obedient in spirit.
- Secondly, we resist and disobey only when we are commanded to do something the Word of God forbids or are forbidden to do something the Word of God commands.

## **1. The powers that be are ordained by God.**

*V 1, Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

All, government is by divine decree.

Civil authority in any form comes directly from God.

It's an institution like marriage is an institution.

In a sense, it doesn't matter who the couple is, it doesn't matter what their lifestyle is, it doesn't matter the level of their commitment, marriage is an institution of God.

God designed for the passing on of society's preservation and meaningful relationships.

## **2. Resistance to government is against God.**

*V 2, Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

If you resist the government, you resist the institution of God. Because God is the power behind all government.

Whosoever has and continues the permanent attitude of resistance against the government, by refusing to support, by disobeying, resists God.

So, government is divinely decreed, and to resist it is to resist God.

## **3. Punishment from God for rebellion.**

*V 2, Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

Not only judgment from the government, which has been given the right to exact punishment for those who violate its law, but it is the judgment of God who is behind the government as well.

If you resist the government, you are going to be punished.

The Greek word is *krima* means judgment.

It is used in **1 Corinthians 11:29**, *For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

Primarily here it is used in reference to the punishment that comes from God through civil authorities.

God has ordained government to punish evildoers. If you resist the government, you are going to get punished.

**Daniel**, had a higher command, then accepted the punishment. But if it's not in that situation, if it's just a choice you make to resist, of course, you are going to receive the punishment.

Now that was true in the Old Testament economy.

In the Old Testament and see how criminals were punished.

**Restitution was one.**

Whatever you took that you had to bring back.

The Old Testament that punishment was invariably physical and bodily.

It was a matter of whippings, lashings, so that pain came instantaneously, and shame was public. You paid with your punishment for your crime.

You commit another crime then you are going to get it again. Of course, if the crime was worthy of death and there were nearly **35** different crimes for which death was a prescribed penalty you died, and you died very fast.

So, their punishment system was very simple. For any of the lesser crimes, it was physical punishment and restitution.

For the greater crimes, it was death. Their objective in punishment was multiple.

- It was a matter of justice.
- It was a deterrent to crime.
- It was a restraint on criminals.
- It allowed them rehabilitation.

They didn't go and sit in some cell and learn how to be a better criminal.

This kind of immediate judgment and punishment is a prevention of private vengeance. There were no prisons in Old Testament Judaism.

There is nothing in the Old Testament text to indicate that Israelites should ever have had a prison.

There is no command of God in all the commands that are given for Levitical social law, for the life of Israel, for them to establish a prison.

- They created no prisons.
- They operated no prisons.
- They were a part of Roman social order and other pagan social orders.

There was one occasion in **Jeremiah 37** where they wanted to get rid of Jeremiah. They didn't know what to do with him, so they wanted to imprison him. So, they made a prison in a home, which indicates that they didn't even have one.

Prisons are not that which is endorsed biblically. Instantaneous payment of the criminal was exacted in severe punishment. Lashes and whippings were given, Physical punishment, and then the opportunity for restitution, which restored the man's dignity.

Where the crime was very severe, it could be banishment, and the most severe crime then execution.

God has given government the right to punish. Now we hear all the time about advocating the rights of prisoners.

Prisons are fast becoming country clubs. Some people don't mind being there. They get free meals, and they are cared for by the state.

But in the Old Testament economy, the government had swift right to punish.

- They punished materially,
- They punished immediately,
- They forced restitution which allowed a person to gain back his dignity and pay his debts.

The restitution process was usually conducted by assigning that man to a family. He lived in that family and was cared for by that family while he worked out his restitution.

### **What a dignified way to restore a man's character?**

Whatever the crime demands, the punishment was to be given **swiftly/speedily**.

**Ecclesiastes 8:11**, *Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

If you don't bring about sentencing speedily, then men will do evil. We have come to that place where it's anything but speedily done in our society.

Any punishment of an evildoer is a God-given right, given to the government.

When a person violates the law, they should expect that they be punished, because God has given the state the right to do that. So human authority punishes violators.

**Is this the human authority punishing?**

Yes, in a sense representative of God.

The instruments of punishment are human. The laws source is God.

**Do you see when this all begins to break down, when we forget that government is an institution of God?**

The powers that be are ordained of God for whatever His purposes may be, when we begin to allow evil to go unpunished, then the whole instrument of government begins to break down.

There is only one way to change that, and that's not by political action. That is by the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our priority and we must be committed to. So, we submit to the government.

### **Why?**

- The government is from God.
- To rebel, is to rebel against God.
- To resist brings punishment.

## **4. Government serves to restrain evil.**

Even a communist Chinese government restrains evil.

The Russian government restrains evil.

Any of the iron curtain governments that we look down on, restrain evil. Any government does that. There is no government on the face of the earth that will punish you for failure to rape somebody.

There is no government in the world that will punish you for failure to rob somebody.

No government will punish you for failure to murder somebody.

Government is in place to restrain evil.

**V 3**, *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.*

- Government is designed to put fear in the hearts of people who do evil things,
- Not to put fear in the hearts of people who do good things.

The last idea about punishment of verse 2, is about fearing the government if you do evil. The word “fear,” is the word ***phobos***. We get “***phobia***” from it.

It has to do with a certain terror.

It tells us that that terror is not to people who do the good works. But it is a terror to those who do the evil works.

The people in society against whom the government moves are those,

- who do the evil deeds,
- who defy the law,
- who break the law, and
- who violates the law.

The apostle says they have reason to have a certain amount of terror to those who do evil.

In other words, the government must put fear in the hearts of evildoers.

We are aware of what happens in a government that doesn't put fear into the hearts of evildoers. Rulers should be causing evildoers to be afraid.

Rulers who are just secular, not speaking about those who know the Lord or know biblical truth or any of that, but rulers in general know the difference between good and evil.

They know the difference between the class of deeds that could be categorized as good, and the class of deeds that are categorized as evil.

**Genesis 2:15-17**, *Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you<sup>[1]</sup> shall surely die."*

**What did Adam do?**

**What did Eve do?**

Disobeyed God and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Therefore, Adam and Eve, when they sinned, entered a knowledge of good and evil. That knowledge has been passed down through all the sons and daughters of Adam.

Every man and woman coming into this world has an inherent and basic knowledge of good and evil.

**Romans 2:14-15**, *for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)*

The unregenerate world has the law of God written in their heart.

The knowledge of good and evil. That is part of conscience. We call in theology "natural revelation," as opposed to special revelation, which is Scripture.

The government of man knows the difference between good and evil.

Even pagans understand basic morality through human reason, through natural revelation, through common grace.

They understand what a basic morality is.

Basic morality may find itself eroding over a period of time, as we see it even in our own society today.

But nonetheless, there are some bottom-line principles of good and evil that all society recognizes, regarding the preservation of life and property.

Society recognizes that they are essential for any kind of quality of living. You cannot go around and take other people's property.

You cannot go around and take other people's life or injure other people. So, there is a basic sense of good, right, and wrong built into the heart of even unregenerate people. That is reflected in the government that God has set for the protection and preservation of man.

Even the evillest society, even the worst government will hold to a basic preservation of property and life.

Even the poorest government is a blessing compared to no government.

**Can you imagine what would happen in a society where no one in control?**

It would be an instant self-destruct.

If no one could protect his or her life, except by himself, no one could protect his or her property, except by himself, you had constant war.

So even in a corrupt government, there has been built in by God to the heart of man a sense of what is right and wrong, at least in very basic terms.

Government then is placed by God for the preservation of life and the protection of property, and that it functions in doing. It then becomes a terror to those who will do evil, who steal property, who take lives.

**It is not a terror to those who do good.**

Government is designed to create this fear and terror by taking swift action against those who do evil.

It talks about a murderer, someone who's taken a life.

**Deuteronomy 19:13**, *Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.*

If you don't punish that murderer what he has done to someone else and put away the guilt of the innocent bloodshed. If not then we know that nation will not prosper.

God's promise.

This thing is to be **dealt with without pity**.

A government is to act against an evildoer without pity.

**Deuteronomy 19:21**, *Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*

**Why?**

**Deuteronomy 19:20**, *And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.*

If you do not exact punishment without pity, then people don't have that fear that restrains them from doing evil.

**Deuteronomy 17:12-13**, *Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. <sup>13</sup> And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.*

When someone does not obey those in leadership, they must be sentenced without pity, and sentenced in a way that causes other people to fear the same thing if they act the same way.

Government not only to act **without pity**, but it is to act by God's design **without partiality**. There is no one set apart because of some respect of persons or some preference.

**Deuteronomy 13:6-10**, *“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, <sup>7</sup> of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, <sup>8</sup> you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; <sup>9</sup> but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. <sup>10</sup> And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

Israel was under Theocracy.

The crime was leading people to the worship of a false god. But in the restriction of bringing death, there was a clear word that it doesn't matter if it is your brother, or your son, or your wife, or your friend, or whoever it is, there is **no partiality** in exacting the law of God.

**Deuteronomy 13:11**, *“So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.*

If government would act **without pity and without partiality**.

It would go a long way to convince evildoers to change their ways.

**Government should act instantly.**

**Deuteronomy 25:1-3**, *“If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked,<sup>2</sup> then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.<sup>3</sup> Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.*

When he finds him guilty, he puts him down right on the spot, and he beats him and gives him what retribution is due. This means government is to act **without pity, without partiality, and without delay.**

It needs to be an immediate kind of punishment, an immediate response, so that it is apparent and obvious to all that there is fast judgment.

**Ezra 7:26**, *Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether it be death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.*

You can take his life.

You can banish him from the country, confiscate his goods, that is to fine or put him in prison in some way so that he would be under some supervision.

Where he has made to pay consequences for what he did, until he has paid back what is right. But judgment is to be executed speedily.

If government acted **without pity, without partiality, and without delay**, it would be a terror to evildoers!

Unfortunately, we have seen the erosion of that kind of principle.

Very often, we hear all the hue and cry of pity for the criminal, and we understand the need for mercy.

So, we are to submit to God's ordination of government.

- It is from Him.
- To rebel is to resist Him.
- To resist Him is to bring punishment.
- Government is designed to restrain evil.

Certainly we, as Christians, want to hold up anything that restrains evil. We don't want to tear down what God has put in place to uphold goodness and restrain evil.

**What if government treats you badly?**

**What if government takes your freedoms?**

**What if government encroaches upon you in ways that you feel are unfair, or unjust, or inequitable?**

Look at the example of the apostle Paul.

The apostle Paul was put in jail in Philippi. He didn't do anything to deserve it. He was accused.

*Acts 16:20-24, And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;<sup>21</sup> and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."<sup>22</sup> Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.<sup>23</sup> And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.<sup>24</sup> Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.*

**What did they do?**

**What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight?**

Singing praises!

They were treated badly by a government.

They were treated unfairly and inequitably and unjustly, absolutely.

But it's the same Paul that was treated that way who said that we are to submit to the government.

The apostle Paul knew what it was to endure injustice.

In fact, Paul endured it frequently from place to place. Three times he was beaten with rods, once stoned.

Still, the truth stands although there are those times when government oversteps its bounds, and beyond its limits. There are those times when there is injustice and inequity. Still, the principle stands.

**Acts 19:35-41**, *And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus?"<sup>36</sup> Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.<sup>37</sup> For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.<sup>39</sup> But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly.<sup>40</sup> For we are in danger of*

*being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.”<sup>41</sup> And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.*

Just on one hand, we see in **Acts 16** where government acts against the apostle Paul.

So, we don't want to obviate the principle.

There are times when government may overstep its bounds. There are times when we may be very dependent upon its provision.

**Acts 22:23-26**, *Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air,<sup>24</sup> the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.<sup>25</sup> And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?”<sup>26</sup> When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, “Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman.”*

Paul pulled rank!

He reached out for his Roman citizenship as a protection against what they were going to do to him.

Whether government is protecting us or whether government seems to be overstepping its bounds, and acting unjustly toward us, we need to be submissive.

## **5. Government serves to promote good.**

We are to be submissive because government serves to promote good. It serves to promote good.

**V 3**, *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.*

Our government is in place to bring praise to those who do good.

If you enjoy a quiet and peaceful life, if you live a life of goodness, if you demonstrate the love of Christ and godliness and virtue, and if you are not a troublemaker and you will find that you will receive praise.

**V 4**, *For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.*

Not only to be a terror to those that do the class of deeds called evil, but to be a praise to those who do the class of deeds called good.

His title is one of great honour.  
He is a servant of God.

**The president/ Prime minister is a servant of God.**

The assembly members, the justices, all the way down into the states, the mayors and the people who function in the city level of government, they are all servants of God.

Not necessarily a believer, not in the sense of one who ministers in the church, but in the sense that they carry out a God-ordained service. They uphold a divine institution.

They may not know God at all, but they represent Him.  
They represent His desire for peace and safety among men.

We do all we can to keep peace, to live honourably, to live with sobriety and dignity, to cultivate harmony, to be model citizens, that those who are carrying out a service to God in government may honour us.

We as Christians who really hold the name of Christ up should be the model of what a citizen should be in society. Those who

are in the government are the servants of God may see in us something utterly unique and attractive.

When you see a coup in a country, or you see the country overturned, or a revolution, it will never be the elimination of government. It will only be the exchange of government because man cannot survive without that.

So, Paul is still building his case.

- We are called to submission because God is a source of government.
- To rebel is to resist God.
- To resist God brings judgment.
- Government is set to restrain evil.
- We want to uphold a government that restrains evil.
- Government is there to promote good.
- We want to be good so that we might enjoy the benefits of government.

## **6. Rulers are empowered by God to inflict the severest punishment.**

**V 4**, *For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.*

If you do what is evil, be afraid. You have every reason to be afraid because God has given to government the right to bear the sword, and he does not bear the sword for nothing.

Government is given the right to inflict final punishment, irremediable and irreversible punishment, the punishment of death.

Civil government is not just a symbol of power.  
It is not just a weak threat.

**God has ordained that civil government bear the sword.**

The sword means nothing other than death.

If you ever question whether capital punishment is biblical, this verse should end that questioning. Indeed, it is. **The sword is always the symbol of death.**

**Genesis 9:6**, *“Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.*

Man is so sacred, having been made in the image of God, that if you take the life of a man, you forfeit your own life. Without pity, without partiality, and speedily that should be carried out by government.

**Leviticus 20:9**, *'For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him.*

**Leviticus 20:27**, *A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them.'* ”

So, the pattern is the same all the way through the early part of the Old Testament that blood was required for the shedding of blood.

**Matthew 26:51-52**, *And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. <sup>52</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.*

What Jesus meant was, "If you take a life, Peter, then you will die." Because that is the law.

**Acts 25:11**, *For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."*

**Why does Paul say that?**

Because he knows that's God's standard.

God ordained principle. Paul affirms the right of government to take his life if he has violated law.

The Old Testament prescribes the death penalty for murder, for striking your parent, for blasphemy, for witchcraft, occult, false prophecy, rape, immorality, homosexuality, kidnapping, idolatry, a blasphemous violation of the holiness of the Sabbath. God has ordained that government has the right to take a life.

**V 4**, *For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.*

Taking the life of a murderer, bringing capital punishment against one who has committed a crime of that magnitude, is a matter of an avenging. It is an avenging that God requires.

God has ordained government to bear the sword. Vengeance belongs to God and comes often through the government.

**Romans 12:19**, *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

God says he must channel his vengeance through the government. We as Christians can thank God for government. We can thank God that government has the right to use the sword.

We don't like to think of people losing their lives. If you take a life, you will immediately lose yours. That protects the sanctity of life.

When this is not satisfied, a nation comes under blood-guiltiness.

**Genesis 4:9-10**, *Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"*<sup>10</sup>*And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."*<sup>11</sup>*So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.*

He was not only a murderer, but a liar. Satan was the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. Cain was mirroring the one who had no doubt inspired him to do this.

When Cain killed Abel, Abel's blood cried out to God.

- It was unrequited blood.
- It was unsatisfied.

- It was a life taken with no life given.
- There was no retribution.
- The blood cried out to God.

**Genesis 9:6**, *“Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.*

God later puts down the principle that a murderer is to lose his life. That alone will satisfy the unrequited blood. That alone will satisfy God.

**Genesis 42:**

Remember the brothers had sold Joseph.

Of course, they were concerned and feeling guilty by now in the story.

**Genesis 42:22**, *And Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.”*

Until there is a life for His life, God is unsatisfied. They realized the principle that had been established in Genesis, blood for blood.

**Joshua 2:19**, *So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head,*

*and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.*

Whenever there was guilt in the loss of a life, somebody was to pay, somebody was to shed blood.

**2 Samuel 4:11**, *How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?"*

You take a life then you give a life.  
Your blood is required for his blood.

**1 Kings 2:31**, *Then the king said to him, "Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed.*

What God says is to execute Joab, execute Joab for shedding innocent blood.

**Ezekiel 7:20**, *'As for the beauty of his ornaments, He set it in majesty; But they made from it The images of their abominations— Their detestable things; Therefore I have made it Like refuse to them.*

God is talking about the temple which they had desecrated.

**Ezekiel 7:21-23**, *'I will give it as plunder Into the hands of strangers, And to the wicked of the earth as spoil; And they shall defile it. <sup>22</sup> I will turn My face from them, And they will defile My secret place; For robbers shall enter it and defile it. <sup>23</sup> 'Make a chain, For the land is filled with crimes of blood, And the city is full of violence.*

When the Babylonians came in and took Jerusalem, they profaned the temple terribly.

Primary reason that God brought judgment on the nation of Israel, and the Babylonian captivity was because the nation was full of bloody crimes.

In other words, murders for which there was no retribution. The blood was crying out to God. The city is full of violence.

You show me a place where they don't deal with murderers, and they don't execute those who commit severe crimes, and I will show you a place full of violence.

**Ezekiel 7:24-27**, *Therefore I will bring the worst of the Gentiles, And they will possess their houses; I will cause the pomp of the strong to cease, And their holy places shall be defiled. <sup>25</sup> Destruction comes; They will seek peace, but there shall*

*be none. <sup>26</sup> Disaster will come upon disaster, And rumour will be upon rumour. Then they will seek a vision from a prophet; But the law will perish from the priest, And counsel from the elders. <sup>27</sup> 'The king will mourn, The prince will be clothed with desolation, And the hands of the common people will tremble. I will do to them according to their way, And according to what they deserve I will judge them; Then they shall know that I am the Lord!' "*

All the way through God requires the death penalty.

### **Is that so that God can kill people?**

No. So that people will not have to die.

There are no victims, and there are no criminals.

If you make the law of the land according to the law of God, it restrains the criminal. Therefore, there are not victims, and there are not perpetrators.

But where there is bloodshed, and where that blood is unanswered blood, the nation becomes guilty, and God moves into judge.

**Numbers 35:33-34**, *So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the*

*blood of him who shed it. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.’ ”*

The land will never be cleansed of the blood that is shed until the blood of the one who shed it is shed.

### **Why the nation on this earth is so bad?**

One major reason is that this nation is under the judgment of God for unanswered blood.

The ground of the nation cries out to God for retribution against murderers, robbers, and those who are worthy of death. Where they properly dealt with, there would be the minimizing of victims and perpetrators.

But instead, we do the very opposite, and our land is blood guilty.

## **7. Our Conscience's sake.**

**V 5,** *Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.*

You must needs be subject not only for wrath, not only because you fear God as God acts through the government.

- Not only because you don't want to feel the vengeance of God, but for conscience's sake also.
- Not only because you fear the consequence, but because you know what is right.

It isn't all negative. This should be the highest motivation.

- Yes, there must be a fear factor.
- Yes, there must be a judgment factor, a vengeance factor.
- Yes, there must be punishment that is without pity, without partiality, and without delay.
- Yes, there must be blood for blood, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot.
- Yes, we are to conform because we fear.

But on the other hand, a much higher motive it is that we conform in submission, not only for wrath's sake, but for conscience's sake.

That is, because we know it is right, because we have a conscious regard for love for the law.

A consciences commitment to obey God.

This is a higher motive.

This is a purer motive.

**1 Peter 2:13**, *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,*

Not just so you can avoid the consequences, but for the Lord's sake.

**When you think about obeying the law, you think about it because you are afraid of what will happen if you don't? Do you govern your life by fear, or do you think about not breaking the law for the sake of honouring your Lord?**

That's the higher motive.

We need them both, but I hope you have come to the commitment to the higher one.

The conscience is that, that inner voice. We have studied it in detail in Romans earlier.

The conscience is that little place inside of us where God speaks to us of what is right and wrong.

It is in that, in that conscience, that inherent sense of what honours God, that we should find our strongest motivation.

There is no place for rebellion on the part of a Christian, no place for lawbreaking, no place for uprising and resistance. We are to do what is right, to submit.