

## **We Must Bless America If We Expect God To Bless America**

Romans 13:1-7

*1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. (NIV)*

These 7 verses fall directly in the context of love, and it is applied in uncomfortable situations. It just may make sense that this is an illustration that tells the Christian how to apply love in a real life situation. If the date of this book is to be placed right before Nero's great persecution, then the church may well be tempted to respond to that evil with evil. However, we see Paul stating these things right after he says, "*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*" (Rom. 12:21) (NIV)

This has become a difficult passage to fully appreciate. Does this passage support blind government submission? Does this passage support the idea of total passivity? Let us take a look at what the passage states unequivocally and go from there.

God establishes governments, therefore submit to them. Authorities exist to accomplish God's designed purpose. This much we do know: that none of us have divine knowledge of all that God has planned, and is in the process of carrying out. We have the advantage of God's great record book, the Bible. In many ways, the Bible proves just how God has utilized governments and authorities to accomplish His will. We know it is true, now it is important to let God do His work. We get frightened at the thought of America's collapse. Why? Do we not trust God rather than the governments?

Paul makes another divinely inspired statement in verse 7. "*Give everyone what you owe him.*" (NIV) The King James Versions states it this way. "*Render therefore to all their dues:*" This is reminiscent of Luke 20:25 where Jesus says to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. The exact same word is used by Jesus and Paul. Both agree that we are to give back to those whom they belong.

Paul lists four things that you possess that belong to the government, **and** that you must give back. Tribute, taxes, respect (literally fear) and honor are the four listed. The following will illustrate the use, in Paul's time, for these words. **Tribute** was paid by a subjugated peoples (city, nation), to a nation that is in control of them. It is used in whatever way the nation in control sees fit to use it. **Taxes** were moneys that were used within the confines of a people group. Their use would be toward local benefit.

The word phobon is literally translated **fear**. This is where we get our word for phobia. Depending upon the context, many translators will substitute the word **respect**. There appears to be room for both applications within this context. There should be fear on the part of the law breaker. God gives government the authority to punish those who will not submit to the law. For the one who submits, this fear does not rule. Nevertheless, the act of submission does show respect.

Finally the term **honor** is used. This word can be understood from the idea of esteem. Esteem has to do with an appreciation of value. Paul is teaching that the government has value, because God has given government purpose, power and authority. **Government's values are not always to be esteemed. But the fact that God is in control of all governments, is where their value comes in.** Every government will rise and fall according to God's time table. Ironically, we believe that America has lasted so long because we have controlled it by doing certain things. Ultimately, God is the one who has made America last. When America has fulfilled its purpose, it is God that will determine whether it continues or not.

We know, based upon God's word, that the nations who submit to God will be blessed by God. We also know that God will punish those nations who refuse to submit to Him. It only makes sense that God will bless America, if America submits to Him. We need to continue to pray and pursue the blessings of God by choosing obedience to Him. Our actions (individually) will determine whether we are blessing America or cursing America. We must bless America if we expect God to bless America.

There is so much more we could say... isn't there.....

May God Bless America According to His Will!!!!