

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON **XXIX**: THE RENEWED CHRISTIAN MIND RE: GOVERNMENT, LOVE AND OUR DAILY WALK — CHAP | 3: 1-14

PAUL'S "ALIEN BODY" — “In contrast to the loosely connected series of exhortations in 12:9-21, we find in 13:1-7 a coherent and well-organized argument about a single topic: the need for submission to governing authorities. This argument comes on the scene quite abruptly, with no explicit syntactical connection with what has come before it [e.g., there are no particles or conjunctions in 13:1 to link this and the following verses to the end of chapter 12. Such a situation is relatively unusual in Greek.] — and not much evidence of any connection in subject matter either. In fact, vv. 8-10, highlighting the centrality of love for the Christian ethic, seem to relate to vv. 9-21, which also focus on love and its outworkings. When we add to these points the allegedly un-Pauline vocabulary of the passage, we can understand why some scholars think that a redactor has added 13:1-7 to Paul's original letter to the Romans. Other scholars do not go so far. They think that Paul himself included this section here but that he was quoting an already developed Christian tradition. On either view, however, *Rom. 13:1-7 is viewed as an 'alien body' within 12:1-13:14. Not only does it interrupt Paul's elaboration of the nature and centrality of love, but it seems to give unqualified endorsement to an institution that belongs to an age that is 'passing away' (13:11-14) and to which we are not to be conformed (12:2).*

“But Paul's teaching about the transitory nature of this world might be precisely why he includes 13:1-7. His purpose may be to stifle the kind of extremism that would pervert his emphasis on the coming of a new era and on the 'new creation' into a rejection of every human and societal convention — including the government. Paul had had to respond to such extremism before. In fact, Paul writes to the Romans from the city in which this extremism appears to have had its boldest manifestation: Corinth (cf. 1 Corinthians). One can well imagine Christians arguing: 'The old age has passed away; we are "a new creation in Christ" and belong to the transcendent, spiritual realm. Surely we, who are even now reigning with Christ in his kingdom, need pay no attention to the secular authorities of this defunct age.' If Rom. 13:1-7 is directed to just such an attitude, Paul may have inserted it here as a guard against those who might draw the wrong conclusions from his concern that Christians avoid conformity to 'this age.' For all that is present in the world around us is not part of 'this age,' or at least not part of it in the same way. To the degree that this age is dominated by Satan and sin, Christians must resolutely refuse to adopt its values. But the world in which Christians continue to live out their bodily existence (see 12:1) has not been wholly abandoned by God. As a manifestation of his common grace, God has established in this world certain institutions, such as marriage and government, that have a positive role to play even after the inauguration of the new age.

“Recognizing how Paul's teaching about the need for Christians to respect governing authorities in 13:1-7 fits into his overall theology of the Christian's life in this world helps explain its presence at this point in Paul's exhortations. *Submission to government is another aspect of that 'good' which the Christian, seeking to 'approve' the will of God, will exemplify (cf. 12:2).* The specific contextual trigger for Paul's teaching about government and its role in this world may have been 12:19. Forbidding the Christian from taking vengeance and allowing God to exercise this right in the last judgment might lead one to think that God was letting evildoers have their way in this world. Not so, says Paul in 13:1-7: for God, through governing authorities, is even now inflicting wrath on evildoers (vv. 3-4).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 790ff]

SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT WAS AN ACCEPTED EARLY TEACHING — “Paul's teaching also has a number of striking similarities to 1 Pet. 2:13-17. This suggests that Jesus' teaching about the relationship of the disciple to the state was the basis for a widespread early Christian tradition, which Paul here takes up and adapts. Paul certainly casts this tradition in language drawn from Greco-Roman government; and submission to government was certainly encouraged in many Greco-Roman circles. But, as it usually the case, the concepts Paul teaches here have their roots in the OT and Judaism.... The 1 Peter text has a number of key words and concepts in common with Rom. 13:1-7: [hupotassō, 'order under, submit'] as the basic command; [huperechō, 'supreme'], used in denoting governing powers; the purpose of government as being [ekdikēsīn kakopoiōn, 'taking vengeance on evildoers'] and [epainon agathopoiōn, 'giving praise to doers of good']; the exhortation to give 'honor' [timaō] and 'fear' [phobeomai]. See also 1 Tim. 2:1-2, which commands believers to pray for kings and 'all those placed over [huperochē] us, in order that we might lead a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and godliness'; and Tit. 3:1, which exhorts us to 'submit' [hupotassesthai] to 'rulers, authorities' [arxhais, exousiais].” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 793f]

OVERVIEW — The line of thought in the paragraph is as follows:

General command: 'submit to the authorities' (v. 1a)

First reason ('for') submission: they are appointed by God (v. 1b)

Consequences ('so that') of resisting the authorities: God's judgment (v. 2)

Second reason ('for') for submission: rulers are God's servants to reward good and punish evil (vv. 3-4)

Reiteration ('therefore') of general command, with abbreviated reference to reasons for submission (v. 5):

'because of [fear of] wrath' and

'because of conscience'

Appeal to practice: the Roman Christians are paying taxes (v. 6)

Specific command ('because of this'): pay your taxes and respect the authorities! (v. 7) [Moo, *Romans*, pg 794]

The Christian and Secular Rulers (13:1-7)

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. (Rom 13:1-7 KJV)

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. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 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. 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. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. (Rom 13:1-7 NIV)

Let every soul to the higher authorities be subject, for there is no authority except from God, and the authorities existing are appointed by God, so that he who is setting himself against the authority, against God's ordinance hath resisted; and those resisting, to themselves shall receive judgment. For those ruling are not a terror to the good works, but to the evil; and dost thou wish not to be afraid of the authority? that which is good be doing, and thou shalt have praise from it, for of God it is a ministrant to thee for good; and if that which is evil thou mayest do, be fearing, for not in vain doth it bear the sword; for of God it is a ministrant, an avenger for wrath to him who is doing that which is evil. Wherefore it is necessary to be subject, not only because of the wrath, but also because of the conscience, for because of this also pay ye tribute; for servants of God they are, on this very thing attending continually; render, therefore, to all [their] dues; to whom tribute, the tribute; to whom custom, the custom; to whom fear, the fear; to whom honour, the honour. (Rom 13:1-7 Young's Literal Translation)

v 1 — EVERY SOUL — “Paul gets right to the point: ‘Every soul is to be submissive to the governing authorities.’ In typical OT and Jewish fashion, Paul uses ‘soul’ to denote not one ‘part’ of a human being (soul in distinction from body or spirit) but the whole person. The translation ‘every person’ (NRSV; NASB; REB) or ‘everyone’ (NIV; TEV; NJB) is therefore entirely justified. The basis of Paul’s own authority — an apostle of the gospel — as well as the audience of the letter indicates that his immediate reference must be to Christians. But we should probably not limit the reference to Christians only. *Submission to governing authorities is especially incumbent on Christians who recognize that the God they serve stands behind those authorities, but it is required even for those who do not know this.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 794]

GOVERNING AUTHORITIES — “‘Governing authorities’ (cf. also NRSV; NIV; NASB; NJB) translates a phrase that is central to the interpretation of the paragraph. Like our ‘authority,’ *exousia* refers broadly in secular and biblical Greek to the possession and exercise of (usually legitimate) power.... The NT refers to two different kinds of ‘beings’ who exercise authority: a person in government (a ‘ruler’; see, e.g., Luke 12:11; Tit. 3:1) and spiritual ‘powers’ (see Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15; 1 Pet. 3:22). A few scholars have argued that Paul may be referring at least partially to spiritual beings in Rom. 13:1. But this is unlikely.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 795f]

COMMAND: “SUBMIT” TO AUTHORITIES — “Paul calls on believers to ‘submit’ to governing authorities rather than ‘obey’ them; and Paul’s choice of words may be important to our interpretation and application of Paul’s exhortation. To submit is to recognize one’s subordinate place in a hierarchy, to acknowledge as a general rule that certain people or institutions have ‘authority’ over us. In addition to governing authorities (cf. also Tit. 3:1), Paul urges Christians to submit to their spiritual leaders (1 Cor. 16:16) and to ‘one another’ (Eph. 5:21); and he calls on Christian slaves to submit to their masters (Tit. 2:9), Christian prophets to submit to other prophets (1 Cor. 14:32), and Christian wives to submit to their husbands (1 Cor. 14:34 [?]; Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:5). It is this general posture toward government that Paul demands here of Christians. And such a posture will usually demand that we obey what the governing authorities tell us to do. But perhaps our submission to government is compatible with disobedience to government in certain exceptional circumstances. For heading the hierarchy of relations in which Christians find themselves is God; and all subordinate ‘submissions’ must always be measured in relationship to our all-embracing submission to him.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 797]

REASON #1 FOR SUBMISSION: RULERS ARE APPOINTED BY GOD — “Verse 1b gives the reason why we are to submit to governing authorities: ‘there is no authority except by God, and the existing authorities have been appointed by God.’ In light of *exousiai* [‘authority’] in v. 1a, ‘authority’ will refer to the individual ruler. Paul’s insistence that no ruler

wields power except through God's appointment reflects standard OT and Jewish teaching. Daniel tells the proud pagan king Nebuchadnezzar that God was teaching him that 'the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals; he gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of human beings' (4:17). Paul's dependence on this tradition and his all-inclusive language ('there is no authority except') make clear that he is asserting a universally applicable truth about the ultimate origin of rulers. **From a human perspective, rulers come to power through force or heredity or popular choice. But the 'transformed mind' recognizes behind every such process the hand of God. Paul brings home this general principle in the last clause of the verse. The believers in Rome are to recognize that the specific governmental officials with whom they have dealings — 'the ones that now exist,' as Paul puts it — are 'appointed,' or 'ordained,' by God.**" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 798]

V 2 — CONSEQUENCE OF RESISTING AUTHORITIES: GOD'S JUDGMENT — "In v. 1a Paul has stated a positive consequence of God's appointment of human rulers: we are to submit to them. Now he asserts two related negative consequence of the same theological truth. Since God has appointed human rulers, the person who opposes them is opposing, is 'in a state of rebellion against,' the 'ordinance' of God. And such opposition will ultimately lead to eternal condemnation. As submission denotes a recognition of government's position over the Christian by God's appointment, so resistance is the refusal to acknowledge the authority of government. It denotes the attitude of one who will not admit that government has a legitimate right to exercise authority over him or her. Those who take up this attitude 'will bring judgment on themselves.'" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 799]

RESISTS THE AUTHORITY — ἀνθέστηκεν [anthesēken] is *in a tense which denotes a state of resistance*. "The perfect participle [anthesēken] connotes a persistent refusal to recognize government's role in the divine hierarchy (and not just an occasional failure), as is clear not so much from the tense but the context." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 799]

BRING JUDGMENT (DAMNATION, KJV) — "Bringing judgment" could refer to the action of a secular ruler, with the implication (spelled out in v. 4b) that God's own judgment is present in the punishment meted out by the ruler. But Paul's argument has not advanced this far. It is better to understand the judgment here to be the eschatological judgment of God: **those who persistently oppose secular rulers, and hence the will of God, will suffer condemnation for that opposition.** ... Four of the five other occurrences of κρίμα [krima] in Romans refer to eschatological judgement (2:2, 3; 3:8; 5:16; the exception is 11:33, where the reference is to God's acts in history)." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 799]

V 3, 4 — REASON #2 FOR SUBMISSION: RULERS ARE GOD'S SERVANTS TO REWARD THE GOOD / PUNISH THE EVIL — "If 'bring judgment' in v. 2b refers to historical judgment that is mediated by secular rulers, then vv. 3-4 could further explain this situation.... Verses 3-4 might then explain the judgment of v. 2b (Meyer) or the prerogative of rulers to exercise that judgment (Haldane, Murray); or it might elaborate further the concept of a divinely ordained society (Dunn).... But if the judgment of v. 2b is God's final judgment, then we must view vv. 3-4 as a second reason why Christians are to submit to governing authorities (Calvin, Cranfield). Not only has God appointed them (v. 1b), but he has also entrusted to them an important role in maintaining order in society. **By punishing those who do wrong and rewarding those who do good, secular rulers are carrying out God's purposes in the world. Christians, therefore, are to submit to the secular rulers. For 'rulers,' Paul explains, are not a 'cause of fear' to those who are persistent in doing good but only to those who do evil. Christians need only do the good that they are called to do under the gospel (cf. 12:2, 9, 17, and 21) if they want to avoid fear of the authorities. In fact, Paul concludes, doing good will not only bring freedom from fear; it will even result in praise from the rulers.**" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 800]

GOVERNING OFFICIALS ARE GOD'S SERVANTS ("DEACONS") — "Verse 4 is framed by two assertions in which Paul characterizes the ruler as a 'servant of God.' The first elaborates the positive function of the ruler — praising those who do good — which Paul has described in v. 3b. The second explains the negative function of the ruler — punishing evil — which Paul touched on in v. 3 and explains in more detail in v. 4b. In both these functions, the secular ruler is carrying out God's purposes, as his *diakonos* [servant]. Paul usually uses this word to refer to a Christian in his capacity as a willing 'servant,' or 'minister,' of the Lord and of other Christians. But people can also 'serve' God, his purposes, and his people unconsciously. So it is with secular rulers, who, appointed by God (v. 1b), 'administer' justice in keeping with divine standards of right and wrong. On the positive side, rulers, by bestowing praise (v. 3b), encourage Christians to do what is good (v. 4a).... δῆκονος [diakonos, 'servant'] was used in secular Greek to denote a civic official; cf. its application to court officials in Esth. 1:10; 2:2; 6:3 and to King Nebuchadnezzar in Jer. 25:9. The outstanding OT example is, of course, the pagan king Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). The idea that secular rulers administer divine justice is not confined to Jewish or Christians circles; see, e.g., Plutarch, 'Rulers are ministers of God for the care and safety of mankind, that they may distribute or hold in safe keeping the blessings and benefits which God gives to man.' In light of this evidence, the argument about whether δῆκονος [diakonos, 'servant'] here has a purely secular meaning or a quasi-religious meaning is moot. The word *means* 'servant,' 'minister,' and no more; it is the qualifying genitive θεοῦ [theou, 'God'] that indicates the ultimately 'religious' significance of this service." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 801]

GOVERNING OFFICIALS WILL PRAISE THOSE WHO DO GOOD — "A few interpreters have thought that the 'praise' is from God (e.g., Origen, Augustine, Pelagius), but the antithetical parallel to 'fear' (which is clearly fear of the secular ruler) requires that it be the ruler that bestows the praise. Paul may be thinking specifically of the practice of Roman authorities of publishing on inscriptions the names of 'benefactors' of society. This being the case, Paul might intend the 'doing good' in this

verse to refer specifically to the activities of Christians as ‘good citizens’ in the societies where they live. While public benefaction should not be eliminated from the reference, the broader context of Rom. 12-13 suggests that it cannot be limited to this either.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 800f]

GOVERNING OFFICIALS WILL PUNISH THOSE WHO DO EVIL — “For the purpose of his argument at this point, Paul is assuming that the laws of the state embody those general moral principles that are taught in the word of God. The ‘evil’ that the civil authorities punish, therefore, is evil in the absolute sense: those acts that God himself condemns as evil. Only if this is so can we explain how Paul can see the government’s use of the sword as a manifestation of its role as ‘God’s servant.’ At the same time, this suggests that the ‘wrath’ that the governing authority inflicts on wrongdoers, the authority, acting as God’s servant, is ‘an instrument of vengeance’ through whom God is executing his wrath on human sin. For, as Rom. 1:18 shows, the final eschatological outpouring of God’s wrath on sin is even now, in the course of human history, finding expression. The ‘vengeance’ that is prohibited to individual Christians (12:19) is executed by God’s chosen servants, the secular authorities.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 802]

BEAR THE SWORD — “Scholars have argued about the exact background and significance of the phrase ‘bear the sword,’ but none of the specific connotations seems to be well established. *Probably, then, Paul uses the phrase to refer generally to the right of the government to punish those who violate its laws.* ... Several scholars point to the Roman *ius gladii*, the ‘authority (possessed by all higher magistrates) of inflicting sentence of death.’ But this practice seems to have been confined to the power of Roman provincial governors to condemn to death Roman citizens serving in the military; it would hardly be relevant to the Roman Christians. Others cite Philo’s use of ... ‘sword-bearers’ to refer to Egyptian police officials; still others, the military power wielded by Rome.... *The phrase does not, then, directly refer to the infliction of the death penalty; but in the context of first-century Rome, and against the OT background (Gen. 9:4-6), Paul would clearly include the death penalty in the state’s panoply of punishments for wrongdoing.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 801f]

V 5 — REITERATION OF THE GENERAL COMMAND — “Paul sums up his argument in vv. 1-4: *Therefore* it is necessary to be submissive [to governmental authorities], not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.’ The two ‘because of’ phrases summarize the reasons for submission that Paul has developed in vv. 1b-4. ‘Because of wrath’ encapsulates Paul’s reminder in vv. 3-4 about the punitive function of secular rulers. It is the Christian’s recognition of this function, and the consequent fear of suffering wrath at the hands of the secular official, that should motivate submission (cf. NIV: ‘because of possible punishment’). But this is only the minor reason for Christian submission, as Paul’s ‘not only ... but also’ sequence indicates. A more basic reason for Christian submission is ‘because of conscience.’ *‘Conscience’ refers here to the believer’s knowledge of God’s will and purposes. Christians know what Paul has just taught: that secular rulers are appointed by God (v. 1b) and that they function therefore as his servants (v. 4) The ‘necessity’ for Christians to submit to government is therefore no mere practical expedient, a means of avoiding punishment; it arises ultimately from insight into God’s providential ordering of human history. Such submission is part of that ‘good, well-pleasing, and perfect’ will of God discovered by the renewed mind* (cf. also 1 Pet. 2:13, where the believer is to submit to ‘every human institution’ ‘because of the Lord’). *‘Not being conformed to this world’ does not require Christians to renounce every institution now in place in society. For some of them — such as government and marriage — reflects God’s providential ordering of the world for our good and his glory.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 802f]

V 6 — PAUL APPEALS TO PRACTICE: PAYING TAXES SHOWS SUBMISSION — “‘Because of this’ could be parallel to the ‘therefore’ at the beginning of v. 5 and refer to vv. 1b-4: because God has appointed secular rulers and they are his servants, ‘you are paying taxes.’ However, while it amounts to the same thing (since ‘conscience’ summarizes these points from vv. 1b-4), it is better to see ‘because of this’ picking up the immediately preceding phrase: ‘because of conscience’ ‘you are paying taxes.’ ... Paul is suggesting that the Roman Christians should acknowledge in their own habit of paying taxes to the government an implicit recognition of the authority that the government possesses over them.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 803f]

GOVERNING OFFICIALS ARE GOD’S SERVANTS (“TEMPLE SERVANTS”) — “In the second part of the verse Paul reiterates the fact that this authority stems ultimately from God and that paying taxes is therefore a matter of ‘conscience.’ Paul again calls secular rulers ‘servants of God’ (see v. 4), but now he uses a different term, *leitourgos*. This word was used frequently in the LXX to refer to people who served in the temple, and in the NT it always refers to those who are ‘ministering’ for the sake of the Lord. *Paul may therefore choose to use this word to indicate that secular rulers, even in unknowingly, are performing a religious function.* This may, however, build too much on the use of the word *leitourgos* since it was used widely in Greek at the time to denote public officials of various kinds (cf. our ‘public servant’). In any case, as in the case of *diakonos* in v. 4, the addition ‘of God’ makes clear the ultimately sacred nature of the ‘secular’ ruler’s ‘service.’ *Therefore the payment of taxes becomes a responsibility that the Christian owes to God himself. This is underscored in Paul’s additional description of the rulers as those who ‘devote themselves to this very thing.’* Paul may think of the ‘thing’ to which the ruler devote themselves as their promoting of good and restraining evil (vv. 3-4), their collecting of taxes (v. 6a), or, perhaps most likely, their service itself (‘servants of God’).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 804f]

V 7 — DIRECT COMMAND: PAY TAXES AND SUBMIT TO THE AUTHORITIES — “Verse 7 has no explicit link to the context, but its call for the discharge of one’s obligations is probably intended to bring the general call for submission to rulers

in vv. 1-6 to a practical conclusion. This makes it likely that the ‘everyone’ to whom we are to ‘pay back’ our obligations is limited by the context to secular officials and rulers. By using the language of the discharge of debt, Paul suggests that the ‘service’ that government renders to us places us under obligation to the various authorities. Paul spells out four kinds of ‘obligations’ that we may owe to the authorities: ‘direct’ taxes, ‘indirect’ taxes, ‘respect,’ and ‘honor.’ Paul’s call to ‘give back’ taxes to the secular rulers is reminiscent of Jesus’s demand that his disciples ‘give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s’ (Mark 12:17).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 805f]

TRIBUTE, TAXES — φόρος [phoros], cf. the previous verse and Luke 20:22; 23:2

CUSTOM DUTIES — τέλος [telos] which also has this meaning in Matt. 17:25. “‘Indirect’ taxes would include custom duties, fees for various services, and so on. The two words for taxation that Paul uses here are found together in other texts.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 805]

HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND PAUL’S TEACHING CONCERNING OUR DUTIES TO GOVERNMENT?

“It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the history of the interpretation of Rom. 13:1-7 is the history of attempts to avoid what seems to be its plain meaning. At first glance, and taken on its own, this passage seems to require that Christians always, in whatever situation, obey whatever their governmental leaders tell them to do. Almost all Christians recoil from this conclusion. Our own sad experience of situations like the Holocaust during World War 2 suggests that genuine Christian devotion to God must sometimes require disobedience of the government. Moreover, this sense finds support within the NT itself. The classic text is Acts 5:29, in which Peter and John respond to the Jewish leaders’ order to stop teaching in Jesus’ name: ‘We must obey God rather than men’ (see also Acts 4:18-20). Equally important is the book of Revelation, in which keeping the commandments of God in the face of governmental pressure to the contrary is the central demand placed on loyal believers.

“Clearly, a willingness to resist the demands of secular rulers, when those conflict with the demand of the God we serve, is part of that ‘transformation’ of life which Paul speaks about in these chapters. But how, then, can Paul apparently speak so absolutely about our need to ‘be submissive to the authorities’? Theologians and exegetes who have wrestled with this question have come up with several answers, which we will now survey briefly (moving from the least to the most likely).

(1) Paul does not demand such submission at all. The text is a late addition to Romans, put in when the original radical demands of the gospel had been lost sight of and Christians were seeking accommodation with the world. This desperate expedient has no textual basis.

(2) Paul is naive about the evil that governments might do or demand that we do. The apostle’s experience with governmental authorities, as Acts makes clear, had been rather positive: on several occasions, secular rulers acknowledged Paul’s right to preach the gospel. Moreover, Paul was writing Romans during the early years of Nero’s reign, a period of Roman stability and good government (quite in contrast to Nero’s later bizarre and anti-Christian behavior). But Paul knew the history of the often harsh treatment meted out to Israel by pagan nations, recorded both in the OT and in inter-testamental Jewish literature. And he certainly knew that it was governmental leaders who put to death Jesus the Messiah, his Lord. Moreover, many of the Christians to whom he writes in Rome had recently been forced by the Roman emperor to leave their homes and businesses and live in exile. Surely Paul was not so naive as to ignore these blunt reminders of government’s capacity to do evil.

(3) Paul was demanding submission to the government only for the short interval before the kingdom would be established in power. ... Such an interpretation does not do justice to the NT and must read into Rom. 13:1-7 an eschatological focus that is simply not there.

(4) Paul demands submission to ‘authorities,’ interpreted as both secular rulers and the spiritual powers that stand behind them, only as long as those authorities manifest their own submission to Christ. We have already argued that this interpretation is linguistically impossible.

(5) Paul is demanding submission to secular rulers only of the Romans Christians and only in the immediate situation they are facing. Finding in the passage a universal applicable norm for the Christian’s attitude toward government is simply an overinterpretation that fails to take into account the specific local nature of the text. There is, of course, some truth in this point; and vv. 6-7 are thought by many to suggest that Paul is especially concerned to address an immediate problem in the Roman community. But even if this is the case (and it is not clear either way), vv. 1-2 are hard to get around. Paul here goes out of his way to emphasize the universal scope of his demand: ‘every soul’ is to submit; there is ‘no authority’ except by appointment of God. The text does not clearly teach the divine ordination of government in general; for Paul speaks throughout concretely of governmental authorities and not about the concept or the institution of government. But, in keeping with the OT and Jewish tradition, he does make clear that God stands behind every governmental authority whom the Christian encounters. Application to situations beyond those in Rome in Paul’s day is entirely valid.

(6) Paul demands submission to government only as long as the government functions as Paul says it should function in vv.

3-4. The government that rewards good and punishes evil deserves Christian obedience; but the government that begins doing the reverse forfeits its divine prerogative, and Christians are free to disobey it. To be sure, Paul does not explicitly make our submission condition on the way government acts: vv. 3-4 are simply descriptive. But we must ask why Paul can describe government in such an unrelieved positive light when he knew very well that many governments do not, in fact, behave in this manner. And the answer may be that Paul is describing government as it *should* be. Perhaps, then, we are justified in thinking that Paul would require Christians to submit to government when it behaves in the way God intended it to behave. Thus, when a government arrogates itself divine powers (as in the Revelation), Christians are no longer bound to it.

(7) Paul demands a ‘submission’ to government: not strict and universal obedience. ‘Submission,’ as we have pointed out in the exegesis of v. 1, denotes a recognition of the place that God has given government in the ordering of the world. The Christian submits to government by acknowledging this divinely ordained status of government and its consequent right to demand the believer’s allegiance. In most cases, then, Christian submission to government will involve obeying what government tells the Christian to do. But government does not have absolute rights over the believer, for government, like every human institution, is subordinate to God himself. The ultimate claim of God, who stands at the peak of the hierarchy of relationships in which the Christian is placed, is always assumed. This means, then, that Christians may continue to ‘submit’ to a particular government (acknowledging their subordination to it generally) even as they, in obedience to a ‘higher’ authority, refuse to do, in a given instance, what that government requires. In a similar way, the Christian wife, called on to ‘submit’ to her husband, may well have to disobey a particular request of her husband if it conflicts with her allegiance to God.

Balance is needed. On the one hand, we must not obscure the teaching of Rom. 13:1-7 in a flood of qualifications. Paul makes clear that government is ordained by God — indeed, that every particular governmental authority is ordained by God — and that the Christian must recognize and respond to this fact with an attitude of ‘submission.’ Government is more than a nuisance to be put up with; it is an institution established by God to accomplish some of his purposes on earth (cf. vv. 3-4). On the other hand, we must not read Rom. 13:1-7 out of its broad NT context and put government in a position relative to the Christian that only God can hold. Christians should give thanks for government as an institution of God; we should pray regularly for our leaders (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-2); and we should be prepared to follow the orders of our government. But we should also refuse to give to government any absolute rights and should evaluate all its demands in the light of the gospel.” [Moo, Romans, pg 806ff]

I would like to add the following *opinions* to Moo’s comments:

- **the church proper is not a political institution** — one should feel welcomed within any assembly whether they be democrat, republican, independent or whatever. While those of like minds tend to gather together (therefore churches tend to be either liberal or conservative politically), we must be aware of our scriptural limitations concerning our political beliefs.
- **while the church is not a political institution, it does have every right (and duty!) to proclaim moral convictions regardless of the political fray** — to deem some issues “political” and therefore not the responsibility of the church is merely an excuse to limit moral discussion.
- **there is a distinction between the church proper and individuals within the church** — while we should not allow the church *as a church* to be political, church members are *strongly* encouraged to become politically aware and active. I believe that is part and parcel of this very passage by Paul. Good citizenship demands our praying and voting knowledgeably, *at the minimum!*

Also, see the attached appendix.

Love and the Law (13:8-10)

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom 13:8-10 KJV)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom 13:8-10 NIV)

To no one owe anything, except to love one another; for he who is loving the other — law he hath fulfilled, for, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false testimony, Thou shalt not covet;’ and if there is any other command, in this word it is summed up, in this: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;’ the love to the neighbor doth work no ill; the love, therefore, [is] the fulness of law. (Rom 13:8-10 Young’s Literal Translation)

“Paul cleverly uses the idea of ‘obligation’ to make the transition from his advice about governing authorities (vv. 1-7) to his exhortation to love for the neighbor (vv. 8-10). In v. 7 Paul urges, ‘pay back what you owe to everyone.’ Paul then repeats this exhortation in v. 8a, but adds to it a significant exception: the obligation of love for one another. In this demand for love, Paul suggests, we find an obligation that can never be discharged, a ‘never-ending debt.’ We will never be in a position to claim

that we have 'loved enough.' Yet, while joined to vv. 1-7 by means of the notion of obligation, vv. 8-10 are connected by their content to 12:9-21, where Paul expounded the meaning and outworking of 'sincere love.' These verses therefore return to the 'main line' of Paul's exhortation after the somewhat parenthetical advice about government in 13:1-7. But these verses look forward as well as backward. In their insistence that love for others fulfills the law, Paul lays groundwork for his rebuke of the strong and the weak (14:1-15:13), who are allowing debates about the law to disturb the love and unity that they should be exhibiting (see esp. 14:15 — 'if your brother is grieved because of a dispute about food, you are no longer walking according to love' — and the reference to the 'neighbor' in 15:2).

"The obligation of love for another (v. 8b) is the key point in the paragraph. Paul highlights the importance of love in vv. 8c-10 by presenting it as the 'fulfillment' of the law. This point also serves the larger purpose of the letter — the explanation and defense of the gospel — by guarding Paul's gospel at a potential point of vulnerability. For the claim that Christians are 'not under the law' (6:14, 15) could open the way to the assumption that Paul's gospel leads to a 'do whatever you want' libertinism. Paul rejects any such conclusion by asserting that obedience of the central demand of the gospel, love for the neighbor, provides for the law's complete fulfillment.

"In a manner typical of the exhortations throughout Rom. 12-13, Paul fashions these verses from traditional material. The emphasis on love for the neighbor as a central obligation of the law may have its roots in the Hellenistic synagogue. But far more important for Paul is the fact that Jesus himself singled out the love command (Lev. 19:18) as one of the two commandments on which 'all the law and the prophets hang' (Matt. 22:34-40 || Mark 12:28-34 || Luke 10:25-28; cf. also John 13:34-35). Paul, then, undoubtedly depends on Jesus' teaching in these verses. The traditional character of the connection between love and the law is seen also in the parallel to this text in Gal. 5:13-15. Following a pattern typical of Rom. 12-13, then, Paul here reiterates in his general exhortation of the Roman Christians a point he has made before." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 810f]

V 8 — OWE NO MAN ANYTHING — "The need for Christians to discharge their obligations forms the transition between vv. 1-7 and vv. 8-10. In v. 7a, Paul urged Christians to 'pay back' their 'debts' to everyone, especially (in that context) to the governing authorities. In v. 8a, Paul repeats this demand: 'Owe nothing to anyone.' ***This command does not forbid a Christian from ever incurring a debt (e.g., to buy a house or a car); it rather demands that Christians repay any debts they do incur promptly and in accordance with the terms of the contract.*** Prompt payment of debts, however, is simply a transitional point in these verses. Paul's real interest emerges in the next clause: that Christians 'love one another.' What is the relationship between this demand for love and the preceding demand that Christians 'owe nothing to anyone'? The words that connect these two commands could be adversative; we would then translate v. 8a, 'Owe nothing to anyone; *but* you ought to love one another.' However, the words can also denote an exception; and, from early times, commentators have generally preferred this explanation, translating as in the NRSV, 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another.' I also prefer this explanation, since it gives the debated words the meaning they usually have in Paul and creates a transition between the two commands that is both natural and striking. As Origen put it, ***'Let your only debt that is unpaid be that of love — a debt which you should always be attempting to discharge in full, but will never succeed in discharging.'***" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 812f]

IS PAUL TELLING CHRISTIANS TO LOVE ONLY OTHER CHRISTIANS? — "Pauline use of 'one another' in similar contexts shows that the command to love here is restricted to love for fellow Christians. Nevertheless, the universalistic language that both precedes — 'no one' — and follows — 'the other' — this command demands that ***the love Paul is exhorting Christians to display is ultimately not to be restricted to fellow Christians. We are called to love 'the other'; and, as Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan so vividly illustrates, this 'other' may be someone quite unknown to us or even hostile toward us (Luke 10:25-37). As Paul has already made clear, 'sincere love' (12:9) means that we are to 'bless our persecutors' (12:14) and seek to do good to all people (12:17).***" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 813]

OWE — "The verb ὀφείλω [opheilō] that Paul uses here often refers to financial obligations but was at an early time extended to include moral and religious obligations as well. It can therefore mean both 'owe' and 'be obliged to.' Paul generally uses the word in the latter sense. Only here and in Philem. 18 does he use it in the sense 'owe,' with that which is owed stated in the accusative." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 812]

LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW — "In the second part of the verse, Paul explains why love for one another is the Christian's outstanding debt: 'the one who loves the other person has fulfilled the law.' By using the phrase 'the other' to specify the object of our love, Paul emphasizes that we are called to love specific individuals with whom we come into contact. At the same time, he hints that these individuals may be people who are different from us (the article specifies — we are to love that particular 'other' person with whom we come into contact — while [heteros] suggests distinction or difference). As the repetition of the point in v. 10 makes clear, Paul's claim that the one who loves the other 'has fulfilled' the (Mosaic) law introduces a central point in this paragraph. What does Paul mean by this claim?

(1) He may simply be highlighting the centrality of love *within* the law. On this view, Paul is teaching that loving other people is necessary if we are to claim truly to have 'done' what the law demands. Paul's purpose is not to minimize the importance and continuing relevance of the other commandments but to insist that love must ever be the guiding principle in our obedience to these other commandments. But I question whether this view does justice to the word 'has fulfilled.' Paul reserves the word 'fulfill' for Christian experience; only Christians, as a result of the work of Christ and through the Spirit, can 'fulfill' the law.

(2) The word ‘fulfill,’ then, suggests that Paul is thinking about a complete and final ‘doing’ of the law that is possible only in the new age of eschatological accomplishment. Christians who love others have satisfied the demands of the law *en toto*; and they need therefore not worry any other commandment (Paul is thinking, in this context, only of the law as it dictates our conduct toward other human beings). *We must emphasize, however, that such complete and consistent loving of others remains an impossibility, even for the Spirit-filled believer: we will never, short of glory, truly love ‘the other’ as we should. This means that it would be premature to claim that love ‘replaces’ the law for the Christian, as if the only commandment we ever needed to worry about was the command to love. For as long as our love remains incomplete, we may very well require other commandments both to chastise and to guide us. What the source of those commandments may be is, of course, another question; and this Paul touches on in the next verse.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 813ff]

v 9 — “Paul now supports his contention that loving others fulfills the law by arguing that the commandments of the law are ‘summed up’ in the ‘word’ found in Lev. 19:18: ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ Paul cites as illustrations of the commandments he has in mind abbreviated references to the seventh, sixth, eighth, and tenth commandments from the Decalogue. His addition ‘and if there is any other commandment’ makes clear, however, that he includes other commandments: probably, as the context would suggest, all those commandments of the law that relate to our relations with other human beings. Various Jewish authors refer to the commandment to love the neighbor in Lev. 19:18, but it was given no special prominence in Judaism generally. Probably, therefore, the central position that Paul gives the commandment echoes Jesus, who paired Lev. 19:18 with Deut. 6:5 as the commandments on which ‘all the law and the prophets hang’ (Matt. 22:34-40). Paul undoubtedly also follows Jesus in interpreting the ‘neighbor’ in the commandment to refer to other persons generally and not (as the original text of Lev. 19:18 might indicate) to the fellow Jew. The ‘as yourself’ in the commandment does not command or give an excuse for egotism or selfishness. It simply recognizes that people do, as a matter of fact, love themselves. It is this deep concern for ourselves that should characterize our attitude toward others.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 815f]

SUMMED UP — “The Greek verb is ἀνακεφαλαιόω [anakephalaioō]. The term occurs in the NT only elsewhere in Eph. 1:10, where Paul describes the plan of God for the fullness of times as consisting in the ‘summing up’ in Christ of all things; it does not occur in the LXX. The word was frequent in literary Greek, where it often refers to the summation or conclusion of a book or speech.... Paul denotes the relationship of the love command of Lev. 19:18 to the rest of the commandments with the verb ‘sum up.’ The imprecision of this term is reflected in the contradictory theological conclusions that are drawn from Paul’s assertion.... At issue, then, is whether, in ‘summing up’ the OT commandments about our relation to others, the love command *replaces* these commandments or whether it simply *focuses* them by setting forth a demand that is integral to each one of them. When we remember that Paul has earlier in *Romans* proclaimed the Christian’s freedom from the ‘binding authority’ of the Mosaic law (6:14, 15; 7:4; 8:4), the former alternative seems to be closer to the truth. The Christian, who belongs to the New Covenant people of God, is no longer ‘under the [Mosaic] law,’ the law for the Old Covenant people of God; he is under a ‘new law,’ ‘the law of Christ’ (see Gal. 6:2 and 1 Cor. 9:19-21). And central to this command that Christ himself took from the Mosaic law and made central to his new demand: the command to love our neighbors as ourselves (cf. Gal. 6:2 with 5:13-14).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 816f]

v 10 — “While not explicitly connected with v. 9, the first statement in v. 10 clearly explains what Paul has asserted in that verse. The reason why the love command can ‘sum up’ the law is that ‘love does no wrong to the neighbor.’ For not doing wrong to others or, positively, doing good to others, is exactly what the OT commandments about our relationship with other human beings aim at. ‘Therefore,’ Paul concludes, ‘love is the fulfillment of the law.’ ... It is also likely that v. 10b repeats the idea of v. 8b: that the Christian who loves, and who therefore does what the law requires (vv. 9-10a), has brought the law to its culmination, its eschatological fulfillment.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 817]

Living in Light of the Day (13:11-14)

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Rom 13:11-14 KJV)

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Rom 13:11-14 NIV)

And this, knowing the time, that for us, the hour already [is] to be aroused out of sleep, for now nearer [is] our salvation than when we did believe; the night did advance, and the day came nigh; let us lay aside, therefore, the works of the darkness, and let us put on the armour of the light; as in day-time, let us walk becomingly; not in revellings and drunkennesses, not in chamberings and lasciviousnesses, not in strife and emulation; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the flesh take no forethought — for desires. (Rom 13:11-14 Young’s Literal Translation)

“Paul brings to a close his general exhortations to the Roman Christians by focusing on the same point with which he began: a call

for a totally new way of living in light of the eschatological situation. In 12:1-2, Paul urges Christians to give themselves as living sacrifices, adopting a lifestyle in keeping with the new era to which they belong. In 13:11-14, he exhorts Christians to clothe themselves with Christ himself (v. 14) and with that behavior (v. 12b) fitting for those who live already in the light of the great ‘day’ of final salvation that is soon to dawn (vv. 11-12a). The earlier text encourages Christians to look at the present in light of the past: by virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, the ‘old age’ has been transcended by a new one. The Christian is to live out the values of that new age, appropriating the power available in the gospel to renew the mind and transform conduct. The text now before us shifts the perspective, encouraging Christians to look at the present in light of the future. For, while transferred by God’s grace into the new realm of righteousness and life, Christians still await full and final salvation (cf. 5:9-10), ‘the redemption of the body’ (cf. 8:23). The transformation that the gospel both demands and empowers flows from the work of Christ already accomplished. But it also looks ahead to the completion of the process on that day when we will be fully ‘conformed to the image of [God’s] Son’ (8:29). Christians are not only to ‘become what we are’; we are also to ‘become what we one day will be.’

“Verses 11-14 fall naturally into two parts: the ‘indicative’ section, in which Paul reminds us of the nature of the ‘time’ (vv. 11-12a); and the ‘imperative’ section, in which he summons us to action in light of the ‘time’ (vv. 12b-14). The imperatives occur in three pairs of contrasts:

‘put off ... / put on ...’ (v. 12b);

‘walk decently ... / not in ...’ (v. 13);

‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ / make no provision for the flesh’ (v. 14).

Appealing to the imminence of Christ’s return as a basis for exhortation is a common NT pattern, rooted in Jesus’ own teaching. And the specific parallels in wording between this paragraph and other Pauline texts (esp. 1 Thess. 5:1-10) confirm the traditional nature of what Paul is here telling the Roman Christians.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 818f]

v 11, 12a — “The ‘this’ could refer back immediately to the love command in vv. 8-10, but it probably alludes to all the exhortations in 12:1-13:10. All that Paul has set forth as the will of God for our sacrificial service in the new age of redemption is to be done because we understand the ‘time,’ or ‘opportune moment,’ in which we live.

“Paul then adds three statements in which he explains just what he means by the ‘time.’ His first and third assertions share the metaphor of night giving way to day: ‘it is already the hour for you to rise up from sleep’ (v. 11b) and ‘the night is far along’ the day is drawing near’ (v. 12a). In a society governed by the sun rather than by the convenience of artificial lighting, people rose at dawn. Only slackards would keep to their beds after the first glow of daylight. Early rising was especially necessary in the Near East, where the bulk of work needed to be done before the heat of midday. **Paul wants no slackards among his readers. Christians are to be alert and eager to ‘present their bodies as a living sacrifice.’** But Paul does not use the darkness / light, night / day imagery simply as an illustration drawn from daily life. For in using these contrasts, Paul is drawing on a broad tradition in which these contrasts were used as metaphors for moral and eschatological conditions. Basic to Paul’s application is the OT / Jewish ‘the day of the Lord,’ adapted by the early Christians to denote the time of Christ’s return in glory and the believer’s final redemption. ‘The day’ of v. 12a is certainly a reference to this ‘day of the Lord / Jesus Christ.’ The ‘night,’ then, probably also hints at, by contrast, ‘the present evil age’ (cf. Gal. 1:4). While not as certain, it is also possible that ‘the hour’ in v. 11b has eschatological connotations. **To ‘rise from sleep,’ then, means to reject ‘absorption in the present night-age,’ to avoid conformity with the present evil age (cf. 12:2).** ... Both Rom. 13:11-14 and 1 Thess. 5:1-10 use the day / night and light / darkness metaphors together with both eschatological and moral reference; and both speak of salvation as future and call for the ‘putting on’ (of virtues and Christ in Romans; of spiritual ‘armor’ in Thessalonians). The need to ‘wake from sleep’ (v. 11) also resembles the puzzling ‘saying’ of Eph. 5:14: ‘awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’ Many think this saying could stem from early Christian baptismal liturgy and suggest accordingly that Rom. 13:11-14 also reproduces, at least in part, this liturgy.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 819f]

OUR SALVATION IS NOW NEARER — the reference is probably to the entrance into belief; cf. NRSV, ‘when we became believers’; REB, ‘when we first believed.’ “The central explanatory statement of ‘the time’ is a straightforward assertion of what these metaphors hint at: ‘our salvation is now nearer than when we believed.’ Some Christians might find it puzzling that Paul places ‘salvation’ in the future for believers. But, in fact, Paul regularly uses ‘salvation’ and its cognates to denote the believer’s final deliverance from sin and death. Some commentators argue that salvation here refers to each individual believer’s entrance into heaven at death or at the time of the parousia. But Paul’s imagery in this passage is not individual but salvation - historical. The ‘salvation’ must be the completion of God’s work on behalf of the church at the time of Christ’s return.

“Many scholars think that Paul’s statement here, along with many similar ones in the NT, shows that the early Christians were certain that Christ was going to return within a very short period of time. And, since Paul’s imperatives are, to some extent, based on this premise, the failure of Christ to return as soon as Paul expected requires that we critically evaluate the continuing validity of those imperatives. Paul certainly betrays a strong sense of expectation about the return of Christ (e.g. Phil. 4:5) and can even speak at times as if he will be alive at that time (e.g., 1 Thess. 4:15). But nowhere does he predict a near return; and, more importantly, he does not ground his exhortations on the conviction that the parousia would take place very soon but on the conviction that the parousia was always imminent — its coming certain, its timing incalculable. **‘On the certainty of the event, our faith is grounded: by the uncertainty of the time, our hope is stimulated, and our watchfulness aroused.’ Christ’s return is the next event in God’s plan; Paul knew it could take place at any time and sought to prepare Christians — both in his generation and in ours**

— *for that ‘blessed hope.’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 821f]

THE “DAY OF THE LORD” — “Paul uses several variations of this common early Christian reference:

‘the day of the Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor. 1:8);
‘the day of our Lord Jesus’ (2 Cor. 1:14);
‘the day of Jesus Christ’ (Phil. 1:6);
‘the day of Christ’ (Phil. 1:10; 2:16);
‘the day of the Lord’ (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2);
‘the day of redemption’ (Eph. 4:30);
‘the day of wrath’ (Rom. 2:5);
‘the day when God judges’ (Rom. 2:16);
‘the evil day’ (Eph. 6:13);
‘that day’ (2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:12, 18; 4:8);
‘the day’ (Rom. 13:12, 13; 1 Thess. 5:4).

These phrases all go back to the OT ‘day of the Lord,’ the time of eschatological judgment and salvation (cf., e.g., Isa. 27; Jer. 30:8-9; Joel 2:32; 3:18; Obad. 15-17).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 821]

v 12b — FIRST PAIR OF IMPERATIVES: “PUT OFF ... PUT ON” — “The first pair of imperatives that Paul builds on the imminence of Christ’s return uses the imagery of changing clothes: ‘putting off’ one set in order to ‘put on’ another. This language was widely used with metaphorical associations in the ancient world, and the NT writers adopt it as a vivid way of picturing the change of values that accompanies, and is required by, conversion to Christ... Equally common as an image of morality is the contrast between darkness and light that Paul uses to characterize what Christians are to ‘put off’ and ‘put on.’ Particularly significant here is that in the OT, Judaism, and the NT, the contrast is extended into eschatology, with darkness characterizing the present evil age and light the new age of salvation. The darkness of night, as the time when those bent on evil and mischief are particularly active, becomes an image for the evil realm, that ‘old age’ which continues to exert its influence and to which Christians are not to be conformed (12:2). The light / darkness contrast is, of course, a natural extension of the day / night imagery of vv. 11-12a; cf. also 1 Thess. 5:4-5: ‘But you, brothers, are not in *darkness*, that *the day* [the ‘day of the Lord’; cf. v. 2] should overtake you as a thief. For you are all sons of *light* and sons of *the day*. We are not of *the night*, neither of *the darkness*.’ The ‘works of darkness’ that Paul urges us to renounce are therefore those activities that are typical of that evil realm. In their place, we are to put on ‘the weapons of light,’ weapons appropriate for those who have been ‘delivered from the dominion of darkness’ and been ‘qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light’ (Col. 1:13, 12). We need such weapons both to defend and to extend the light. Paul switches from the term ‘works’ to ‘weapons’ because, as Calvin writes, ‘we are to carry on a warfare for the Lord.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 823f]

ARMOR, WEAPONS — “ὅπλα [hopla] could mean ‘instruments’ but the parallel text in 1 Thess. 5:8 strongly argues for the meaning ‘weapons.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 824]

v 13 — SECOND PAIR OF IMPERATIVES: “WALK AS IN THE DAY” — “Paul now derives a second pair of contrasted commands from his teaching about the nearness of the Lord’s return. This contrast employs the very popular imagery of ‘walking’ as a way of speaking about one’s daily conduct. Our manner of life, Paul urges, is to be ‘decent,’ a word that suggests a decorous and ‘becoming’ deportment, a lifestyle ‘appropriate’ to those who live in the full light of the day. Paul’s addition of the phrase ‘as in the day’ may simply accentuate this metaphor, but the use of the same term in v. 12 with reference to the ‘day of Christ’ strongly suggests that Paul intends more than a metaphor. But it is not clear whether Paul is also carrying over from v. 12 the futurity of the day — in which case he would be urging us to ‘walk decently as if we were in the day’ — or whether he has shifted to the present element of that ‘day’ — in which case, he is exhorting us to ‘walk decently as those who are in the day.’ The latter alternative is, however, more in keeping with Paul’s typical combination of the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ in his eschatological perspective. Christians eagerly wait for the coming of the day (in its final phase) even as they experience, by faith, the power and blessings of that day in its present phase.

“In contrast to the ‘decent’ conduct that we are to exhibit, Paul lists three pairs of vices that we are to avoid. It seems evident that Paul has chosen the first two pairs especially to match the metaphor of darkness / night that he has been using; for excessive drinking and sexual misbehavior are especially ‘sins of the night.’ ‘Strife’ and ‘jealousy’ do not so naturally fit here; and Paul may have chosen them with a view ahead to his rebuke of the Roman Christians for their divisiveness and mutual criticism (cf. 14:1-15:13).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 824f]

RIOTING, ORGIES, REVELLING, CAROUSING — κόμος [kōmos] originally referred to a festal banquet, but took on a negative meaning, ‘excessive feasting,’ ‘carousing’ (cf. also Gal. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:3).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 825]

DRUNKENNESS, DRINKING BOUTS — “μέθη [methē] means ‘drunkenness.’ The close association (hendiadys) here between κόμος [kōmos] and μέθη [methē] may suggest that the former refers here specifically to a ‘drinking bout.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 825]

CHAMBERING, SEXUAL IMMORALITY, SEXUAL EXCESSES — κοίτη [koitē] = ‘sexual intercourse,’ here, ‘sexual excesses’

WANTONNESS, DEBAUCHERY, LASCIVIOUSNESS, LICENTIOUSNESS — ἀσελγείαις [aselgeiais] = ‘acts of licentiousness,’ a general term for ‘unseemly’ behavior of all kinds, though often with reference to sexual immorality; cf. Mark 7:22; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 4:9; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:2, 7, 18; Jude 4.

STRIFE, DISSENSION — ἔρις [eris]; cf. also Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4

ENVYING, JEALOUSY, EMULATION — ζήλος [zēlos] can have a neutral or even positive meaning, ‘zeal’ (cf. John 2:17; Rom. 10:2; 2 Cor. 7:7, 11; 9:2; 11:2; Phil. 3:6; Heb. 10:27), but it also refers, as here, to ‘jealousy’ or ‘envy’ (1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:20; Jas. 3:14, 16). [Moo, *Romans*, pg 825]

v 14 — THIRD PAIR OF IMPERATIVES: “PUT ON CHRIST ... MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH” —

Paul’s final pair of contrasted imperatives are not so obviously related as those in vv. 12b and 13. The positive command picks up the verb ‘put on’ from v. 12b. Now, however, what we are to put on is not a suit of armor but Christ himself. The exact meaning of what Paul intends is not easy to pinpoint. But perhaps we should view the imperative in light of his understanding of Christ as a corporate figure. As a result of our baptism / conversion, we have been incorporated into Christ, sharing his death, burial, and his resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6). Our ‘old man,’ our corporate identity with Adam, has been severed (Rom. 6:6); and in its place, we have become attached to the ‘new man’ (Col. 3:10-11; Eph. 2:16), Jesus Christ himself (cf. Eph. 4:13), whom we have ‘put on’ (Gal. 3:27). But our relationship to Christ, the new man, while established at conversion, needs constantly to be reappropriated and lived out, as Eph. 4:25, with its call to ‘put on the new man’ makes clear. Against this background, Paul’s exhortation to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’ means that we are consciously to embrace Christ in such a way that his character is manifested in all that we do and say. This exhortation appears to match the exhortation at the beginning of this section, ‘be transformed by the renewing of your mind,’ suggesting that it is into the image of Christ that we are being transformed (cf. 8:29).

“As the negative counterpart to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ,’ Paul warns us, ‘make no provision for the flesh, to carry out its desires.’ ‘Flesh’ might have a neutral meaning here, Paul’s point being that we should not pay special attention to the demands of our human nature so as to let them dominate us. But the term more likely lies more toward the negative end of its spectrum of meaning: ‘flesh’ as that principle and power of life in this world which tends to pull us away from the spiritual realm. As he does in Galatians (cf. 5:13-26), Paul implies concern that his proclamation of freedom from the law (vv. 8-10) might lead to a licentious lifestyle. Thus he urges his readers, in place of the law, to embrace Christ — who, through the Spirit, provides completely for victory over the flesh.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 825f]

APPENDIX: DAVID LIMBAUGH RE: JUDGE ROY MOORE

A clashing of principles and jurisdictions — by David Limbaugh; August 23, 2003

While everyone is focusing on the propriety of Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore’s refusal to remove a Ten Commandments monument from his courthouse, we are giving the federal courts a pass — and we mustn’t.

Undeniably, the federal constitution’s Supremacy Clause makes the federal constitution and constitutional federal laws supreme over state constitutions and laws and binding on state judges.

So should our analysis end here? That’s what some conservative pundits are saying. The federal courts have ordered Justice Moore to remove the monument under authority of the United States Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land. The U.S. Supreme Court is the final arbiter of what the Constitution means, having arrogated to itself that authority in 1803.

Since the high Court declined to hear the case, the ruling of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals ordering Judge Moore to remove the monument now stands. Thus, Justice Moore must comply, notwithstanding his belief that to do so would violate his oath of office affirming that the state government was established under God.

This is a very difficult case for me because my sympathies are with Justice Moore, yet I am also a staunch believer in the rule of law — and an equally strong opponent of anarchy.

My allegiance to the rule of law leads me to believe that we cannot permit a state court judge -- no matter how righteous his cause — to violate federal appellate court rulings. He should vigorously oppose the wrongheaded feds at every phase and exhaust all possible remedies, but once they are exhausted, he must obey. Our entire system of ordered liberty depends on the integrity of our legal system, which in turn depends on government officials, especially judges, obeying the law. Indeed, state judges also take an oath to uphold the federal constitution.

On the other hand, our liberties also depend on two other very important concepts that are at issue in this case. The Framers believed that our Constitution was grounded in the principles of the Christian religion and that without that foundation neither our Constitution nor the liberty it guarantees could survive. Justice Moore is fighting laudably to preserve that tradition.

The Framers also believed that liberty could best be achieved and sustained through a system of federalism — which they quite specifically established, dividing governmental power between the federal and state governments. To be sure, they made the federal government supreme as to those matters on which they conferred it authority — but the 10th Amendment expressly reserved the balance to the individual states.

Justice Moore is aware that the federal courts have egregiously exceeded their authority, usurping power properly reserved to the states. He is fighting to preserve the principle of federalism in furtherance of the cause of liberty.

Here's where it gets messy. The First Amendment contains two religion clauses, the Establishment Clause: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"; and the Free Exercise Clause: "or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The federal courts have ordered Justice Moore to remove the monument on the grounds that it constitutes an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

Their ruling is flawed on a number of grounds, but unfortunately seems to follow the precedent of earlier lamentable Supreme Court decisions. As you can see, the Establishment Clause, on its face, prohibits only the U.S. Congress from "establishing" a religion. Sadly, the Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the Establishment Clause is also applicable to state governments through incorporation in the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment.

But the 14th Amendment was never intended to make the federal Establishment Clause binding on the states. Nor did the Framers intend that the Establishment prevent the federal government, much less the states, from all support for religion.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph Story wrote, "Thus, the whole power over the subject of religion was left exclusively to State governments, to be acted on according to their own sense of justice and the State Constitutions." And, "Probably, at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, and of the (First Amendment), the general, if not universal, sentiment in America was that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the State, so far as such encouragement was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience, and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation."

The federal courts have greatly eroded states rights and religious freedoms through renegade decisions in the most cynical tradition of judicial activism. So while our federal law is certainly entitled to supremacy, at what point do citizens stand up and say that federal courts have claimed supremacy in areas over which they were never given authority? What can be done about their obscene misinterpretations of the Constitution?

Congress could selectively limit the Court's jurisdiction. And, we should fight for constitutionalist federal judges with the courage to preserve our religious liberties. In the meantime, we should honor the Court's rulings.

Justice Moore, Part 2 — Ready for a Revolution? — by David Limbaugh; August 26, 2003

I took more heat for my last column (defending Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore yet concluding he should obey the federal court order) than any other. It's a good sign when your political opponents disagree, but much of this criticism was from fellow conservatives.

There is no way I could answer the hundreds of emails I received, so this column is an attempt to clarify and expand on the previous one.

I believe passionately in religious freedom and that our society is selectively discriminating against Christians and suppressing our religious freedom — so passionately that I've just completed a book on the subject, titled "Persecution: How Liberals Are Waging War Against Christianity", that will be released in September.

To reiterate, I believe that nothing in the federal Constitution prevents Judge Moore from displaying the Ten Commandments monument. The First Amendment Establishment Clause prohibits Congress from establishing a national church. It also prohibits Congress from interfering with the right of individual states to establish their own churches if they choose (between seven and nine colonies had established churches at the time of the founding) — not that any would consider it today.

I also believe that the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment was never intended to incorporate the Establishment Clause as a prohibition against state governments. Incorporation is a regrettable legal fiction.

I further believe that the other religion clause of the First Amendment, the Free Exercise Clause, has been consistently eroded and often ignored by judicial misinterpretations. I also believe that nothing in the Constitution, or any of its Amendments, gives the courts the power of judicial review. But since 1803, the United States Supreme Court has been exercising that right — having established itself, by its own bootstraps, as the final arbiter of what the Constitution means. In 1824, the Court further declared that state courts are bound to honor Supreme Court decisions.

In my last column I essentially said that although Judge Moore is correct and the federal courts are wrong, he should not disobey the federal courts' order once all of his legal appeals and other remedies have been exhausted. That, I feared, could result in a breakdown of the rule of law. (It's still possible, though not likely, that the Supreme Court could decide to hear his case on the merits. It would be wonderful if it did and if it ruled, correctly, in his favor.)

Critics protest that we have no obligation to follow unconstitutional, unlawful or unjust laws. And Christians, especially, they say, must honor God above any man-made laws. Specifically, they say that Justice Moore had no duty to obey the federal order because it was itself unconstitutional, without jurisdiction and void. It is the federal courts, they say, not Judge Moore, that have undermined the rule of law.

I agree that the Courts have often undermined the rule of law through our history by judicially legislating and following their own dictates instead of the Constitution. And I believe there is a point at which people should disobey laws or orders. The American Revolution is an example.

The question is: When is enough enough? When is it time that we quit trying to work within the system and galvanize toward another revolution? Many of my e-mail critics seem to be implying that we should take the matter in our own hands. Let me explain my reservations about this.

By all means Christians should honor God's laws. But it is very easy for anyone people simply to assert that he is following God's laws. So easy, in fact, that every judge in every state, including closet Atheists and Agnostics, could make that claim. Then where would we be?

Of course our system of law is built on and derives its authority from God's law. But it is a system. We simply cannot have a system of law where everyone gets to decide whether he should obey the law based on his assertion that he's following God, or his interpretation of the Constitution. It's not Justice Moore that bothers me – I believe he is trying to follow God's law and I agree with his interpretation of the Constitution.

But what about charlatans? What happens when they invoke the same authority?

Well, you say, the deceivers will quickly be seen as the deceivers. Maybe by you, maybe by me, maybe by all with discernment. But it is the nature of deceit to fool people.

It's one thing for a person to exercise civil disobedience — (I realize Moore argues that technically he is not engaging in civil disobedience). And I'm personally glad Justice Moore has brought attention to the religious freedom issue. If you critics are merely saying he should exercise civil disobedience and stop there, I have no major problem with that. But are you further saying that federal and state authorities should do nothing then to enforce the law?

If so, then any judge would be free to ignore precedent, indeed to ignore the law altogether. The entire system could break down. Without order, freedom is impossible.

In other words, there has to be an enforcement mechanism in a legal system for that system to establish any order at all, which is a condition to freedom. If higher judges usurp their authority — and they have, in abundance — people and even government officials can choose to disobey. If they do, the system, to retain any semblance of integrity, must then act in its enforcement capacity.

That is, it must unless you are willing to draw the line and say the system has been so abused by activist judges, among others, that it is no longer worth preserving. Are you really ready for a revolution?

Why do I say this? These things haven't happened overnight. This is not a case of first impression. Our system — the way it has worked for the last 200 years at least, includes a process by which the constitutionality of laws is determined. Since *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803, the Courts have decided what the Constitution means in cases where its meaning is in dispute.

Since 1947, the courts have been applying the Establishment Clause against the states as well. And in the last few decades they have been greatly expanding its application way beyond the original intent of the Framers — just as they have other clauses, such as the Interstate Commerce Clause. There is no way the Framers (or the drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment) intended that the Establishment Clause prohibit many of the innocuous things it has prohibited, such as the displays of the Ten Commandments in state courthouses, or voluntary school prayer.

But under our system as presently constituted, whether we like it or not, the highest court says what is and isn't constitutional. And under this system the lower courts are bound to follow its rulings. You can say that the system shouldn't work that way because the Constitution doesn't contain the right of judicial review. But you can't say it doesn't in fact work that way, because it does and has — virtually without challenge — for two centuries.

In other words, under our system, at least since 1803 (and 1824) in case of a dispute over the meaning of a provision of the Constitution, the ruling of the highest court prevails.

Therefore, while I may be personally certain that some actions the courts declare unconstitutional (such as Judge Moore's display) should be constitutional according to an honest reading of the Constitution, by definition they are not, because the Constitution, under our system, means what the Court says it means.

This is not just semantics. It's the way the system works. Judges are people – many of whom unfortunately don't even believe in interpreting the Constitution according to its original intent. Or, they sometimes make mistakes. But under our system, the highest court's rulings are the law whether they are mistaken or not. (Similarly, jury verdicts are binding whether or not they are correct).

In the last column I suggested as possible remedies that we nominate and confirm constitutionalist judges or that Congress, under Article III, could limit the Court's jurisdiction. Since then I've thought of another one that I like even better. Why not propose a constitutional amendment to limit the Court's authority in other ways? It could even be divested of its power of judicial review. I'm not sure that would be wise. As a lawyer, I envision incredible chaos in the absence of a judicial body passing on the legal meaning of the Constitution – but that could be because of my perspective as a lawyer. Or we could provide that judges don't have lifetime appointments. There are arguments against this as well. Nevertheless, it would be gratifying if something positive did result from Justice Moore's actions; it would be wonderful if they could be a catalyst for meaningful change.

But there is a major obstacle to all of these proposed solutions, and it illustrates that our problem transcends the activist judiciary. To accomplish these changes you need widespread popular support. Good luck.

The root problem, in my view, underlying these unfortunate developments in our law, is a breakdown in the moral foundation of our society – a breakdown in our culture. That is, among other things, what the Framers meant when they said the Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. When our moral fabric begins to disintegrate, eventually, so will the Constitution. When judges rule according to how they believe the law should be rather than how the Constitution requires, the Constitution breaks down.

It's nearly impossible to get a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate to ensure that constitutionalist judges are confirmed. How much more difficult would it be to pass a constitutional amendment to rectify some of these problems? Just because you and I may believe that certain solutions are desirable doesn't mean they will be implemented.

Indeed, it may be impossible to fix the current flaws in the system without first correcting the problems in our society, because the breakdown of the system is a symptom of our problems, not their cause. While we should work vigorously to reform the system and to appoint constitutionalist judges, these remedies will be very difficult without some transformation in our society. And that transformation may just have to begin in our churches.

So I understand if you believe Justice Moore should disobey the court order. But if you believe that following such disobedience the enforcing authorities should not enforce the law against him, then be prepared for the potential consequences, including a complete breakdown in order and a consequent loss of our liberties. If you think the system is already broken and that our liberties are already lost, then it may be worth the risk to you. But please don't advocate these things unless you have thought them through thoroughly and are prepared for the consequences, which could be much worse than the present state of affairs.

Is this the hill you want to die on? I can understand you thinking the system, in many ways, is broken. But if we throw it away, what and who will replace it? Don't forget that there are hordes of people who don't agree with the conservative Christian worldview. Where will this revolution lead?

Those who keep citing Thomas Jefferson approvingly to the effect that a rebellion is healthy every 20 years — so be it, but be careful what you wish for.