

Salt Church

Romans 13:1-7

“Conquering Evil with Good”

April 26, 2026

The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy (June 6-14)

Recap

Romans 12:17-21

¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

“I will take revenge;

I will pay them back,”

says the Lord.

²⁰ Instead,

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them.

If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap

burning coals of shame on their heads.”

²¹ Don't let evil conquer you but conquer evil by doing good.

The transition from “conquer evil by doing good” to government and government leaders is striking.

Under the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul points to one of the most difficult concepts for most to understand.

- **We must put ourselves in the 1st century Christians place.**
- Rome was ***the most powerful*** government in the world.
- They looked down on those that were not Roman citizens.
 - They ruled harshly when they wanted.
 - But they also had leaders that understood the value of keeping the peace.
- In their minds (***The Roman government***) Christianity was just another sect of Judaism.
 - Even though Rome could be harsh, they had given a certain amount of freedom to the Jews.
 - They didn't get involved with Jewish customs
 - They didn't enter the Holy Temple
 - Nor did they get involved with temple taxes and priestly judgements.
 - **The only time the Romans got involved were:**
 - When Roman taxes were not paid
 - Insurrections were attempted
 - When anyone spoke against the Romans leaders
 - **But there were some really bad Romans leaders:**
 - Herod the Great and his sons were awful
 - Killing babies, slaughtering Jews just for the sake of instilling fear.
 - And the Jews, as a whole hated Roman rule

- This is why everyone was so happy when Jesus showed up because **they thought He would deliver them from Roman rule.**
 - But Jesus was not concerned with the temporary rule of Rome.
 - His concern was for the Glory of God.
 - And the permanence of eternity.
 - They (the Jews) killed Jesus because He would not do as they wanted.
 - And Rome (killed Him) because they saw Him as a threat because of the rumors. (King of the Jews)

Now, with all of that in mind we transition to how a Christian should respond to government and authority.

- I am assuming this will surprise most of you.

Romans 13:1-7

13 Everyone must submit to governing authorities.

- In the Greek it is “***every soul should be subject to the authorities.***”
 - For most of us this is not an issue.
 - In Paul’s day this was a real issue.
 - I would guess that for some in our group there was a real issue with the last administration.
 - After all, this country was founded on a rebellion against government.

- Paul knows nothing about our government only his, and his was much worse than ours.

So, why would Paul say this?

We continue:

For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.

- The Greek says, “***There is no authority that has not been instituted by God.***”
- **Wait a minute, Pastor!**
 - Are you saying that **God placed Hitler** in his position of authority?
 - **No!**
 - **The Bible is saying that!** “***For all authority comes from God***”
 - ***What are we supposed to do with that Pastor?***

When people turn their backs on God and begin to walk in their own ways He turns them over to their sin. (Romans 1)

- **That is God’s judgement**
 - The power behind Hitler’s reign was a worship of the nation of Germany.
 - Hitler’s promise was to make “Germany great again.”
 - And he did but at what cost?

I feel you, Salt Church!

- Our current president’s mission in life is to “make America great again.” (MAGA)
 - **Let me ask you**, is it wrong to desire that the country that you live in should be great?
 - **No**
 - **The issue is how that country becomes great again.**

Throughout the Old Testament we see the rise and fall of the nation of Israel.

- King David and his son King Solomon (flawed as they were) made Israel great by leading according to the will and wisdom of God.
- But as soon as Solomon is dead his sons begin to lead in a way that God disapproves and eventually the kingdom is torn apart.

Pastor, we do not serve an earthly king.

- You are correct.
 - We are a **democratic republic** which means we have certain freedoms like choosing presidents.
 - When we suffer under a bad president it is because we got exactly what we asked for. (We voted him in)

Moses understood that this would be the ebb and flow of the nation of Israel.

- **Good leaders then bad leaders**
 - **Faithful children of God** then **rebellious people of God.**
- Therefore, Moses instructed the people of God to not rebel, and when they did, **he instructed them to repent and cry out for God’s mercy.**

Later it would be written in

2 Chronicles 7:14

¹⁴ Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

The same can be said for America.

- God is not asleep at the wheel.
- He hears the cry of His people.
 - God speaks and leaders are installed, He speaks and leaders are taken away.

So, what should be our understanding as it relates to government leaders and those in positions of authority?

Verse 2

² So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

- This is a very clear mandate by God to submit to the authorities placed over us.
 - Okay Pastor but what if the government calls me to sin?
 - The Bible is very clear that when that happens, we submit to God rather than men.

Acts 5:26-29

²⁶ The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them. ²⁷ Then they brought the apostles before the

high council, where the high priest confronted them. ²⁸ ***“We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man’s name!” he said. “Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!”***

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than any human authority.”

- **Clearly God must be obeyed over man.**
 - The same occurred with Daniel and the lion’s den
 - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with the fiery furnace.
 - ***All of them stood against the governing authorities to do what God had instructed them to do.***

But we must be very clear that we only do this when it is clear that whatever the government has called us to do is a direct violation of scripture.

We continue:

³ For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong.

- **For most governments that is a correct statement.**
 - When that is the case, the expectation from the Lord is that we **submit to those governing authorities.**

³ For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong.

- Did you notice that Paul points to the fact that there is ***“right and wrong?”***

- Where do we get our ideas about what is right and what is wrong?
 - God and the Bible.

Now if you fear the police or authorities Paul has a solution to your problem:

Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you.

- Now, who determines what is right?
 - God does
 - Almost all our governmental laws are based upon the word of God.
 - So, if the laws of man agree with the laws of God, then the expectation is obedience to the government.

⁴The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good.

- When was the last time you thought of government officials as God's servants?
 - All of them, not just the public safety guys
 - God says that He created government officials for our good.
 - Why?
 - They maintain order and create an atmosphere of peace and safety.
 - ***“sent for your good!”***

Now, Paul has a warning for those who refuse to submit to God's authority and government authority.

But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you.

- Based upon what we know so far, who has given them the power to punish people?
 - God the Father

We continue

They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong.

- "They are God's servants" **this is God's idea**, and those men and women have been selected by God to maintain order.
- **Rebellion against them is rebellion against God.**

⁵So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

- There is a wonderful gift in having a clear conscience.
 - Nothing to fear every time you see a police officer.
 - Nothing to fear when you submit your taxes
 - Nothing to fear when the code enforcement guy comes around.

⁶Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons.

Come on Paul, you know they are going to waste that money on sinful things!

- ***"I can't support a government that does those things!"***
- Abortion clinics
- Transgender operations

- Did you know this country has spent:
 - 20 million for Sesame Street in Iraq
 - \$87.9 million helping Afghan farmers, inadvertently supporting poppy cultivation, (Cocaine)
 - and \$6 million on tourism in Egypt.
- **Questionable Foreign Projects:** \$25,000 transgender opera in Colombia,
 - a \$32,000 comic book featuring a Trans hero in Peru,
 - and \$20,000 for drag theater in Ecuador.
- In 2013, the state department spent \$180,000 on liquor,
 - including \$5,625 on "gratuity wine" in Rio, just before a shutdown.
 - **WHY WOULD ANYBODY SUPPORT A GOVERNMENT THAT DOES SUCH THINGS?**
 - I have had Christian brothers in my life that refused to pay their taxes. (For years!)
 - They almost always were the same guys who never tithed as well.
 - The issue was not concern for how the money was spent it was always a love for money.

1 Timothy 6:10

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- **This is an issue for another day**

Allow me to simplify this for you:

- When you became a child of God you only have **1 decision** to make:
 - Obedience or disobedience.
 - God wants you to put your faith in him and not money.
 - This is why we pay our taxes and give to the church.
 - Both ensure that our faith is in Him and not the government or money.
 - Yes, the government is always going to have wasteful spending. (WHY?)
 - Because it is run by sinners!
- What have we learned?
 - The non-negotiable command on our lives as Christians is to pay our taxes.

Here's the why:

For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do.

- Both the government and the church have expenses.
- Both are serving God in what they do.
- If you believe that money is not going in the direction it should you should become active in leadership, whether it be in government or church leadership.
 - **All I am trying to convey is, we are not offered the option of not paying or giving.**

Paul continues:

7 Give to everyone what you owe them:

- Pay your debts, especially when it hurts, keep your word!
 - You represent your King, your Father, your Savior
 - Pay your debts!

Paul continues

Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them,

- This is a non-negotiable command from God!
 - And so is the next line

and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.

- **This may be difficult in this American culture that openly disrespects its leaders.**
 - But God the Father has called us to more, something higher, and it is found in **honoring His great name by faithfully doing what He commands.**
 - This is what faithful children of God do.
 - And we do it because He has determined that this is good and pleasing unto Him.

Final thoughts:

5 things

- 1st We “**conquer evil by doing good.**”
 - This is God’s plan for the salvation and redemption of the lost.
 - We, “the redeemed”, repay evil by doing good.
 - You and I are never more like Jesus when we do this.
- **2nd For all authority comes from God,**
 - **We can never forget this truth.**

- This goes for the president of the United States as well as the manager at Waffle House.
 - ***All authority comes from God and is established by God.***
 - This is also a wakeup call for everyone in a position of authority.
 - Authority is in itself a ministry, and it should be treated as such.
 - **To rebel against this authority is to rebel against what God has instituted and therefore is a sin.**
 - God’s people have a very long history of submitting to pagan leaders.
 - Joseph, Daniel, David, and Jesus just to name a few.
- **3rd There is “right and wrong”, and these are determined by God Himself.**
 - God has instituted government to maintain order.
 - As a result, God has empowered authorities with the sword.
 - **Meaning capital punishment is God’s idea.**
 - **When we study the Old Testament,** we find that there were no prisons.
 - **There was quick and just punishment**
 - “Eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth” ensured two things:
 - The punishment matched the crime
 - Meaning revenge was not allowed.
 - Also, once the punishment was paid the offender was allowed back into society with the debt paid.

- Yes, some of the beatings were awful but they were designed to prevent further crime from that person as well as those who watched.
- Murderers received the death penalty
- King Solomon warns that when punishment is put off it actually causes more crime to happen.
- **4th If we do what is right before the Lord, one of two things will happen:**
 - If we are punished for the cause of righteousness and not guilt this is good.
 - **This kind of punishment is greatly respected and rewarded in the Kingdom of God.**
 - This kind of punishment also comes with a clear conscience the other does not.
 - If we are punished because we have done wrong, then we deserve it and are shamed because of it.
- **5th We have been called by God the Father to pay three things:**
 - Pay your taxes because God commands it.
 - Pay your debts because your King commands it.
 - Pay honor to those in positions of authority for God has placed them there.

“This is how we conquer evil with good.”

Jesus conquered evil with good by going to the cross.

- **This is what we celebrate every time we partake of the Lord's supper.**
 - He submitted Himself to the authority of God the Father and the authority that the Father had put in place here on earth.
 - **His body was broken**
 - **His blood was shed**
 - So that the new covenant for the forgiveness of sins could be put in place.
 - ***Jesus conquered evil with good.***
 - **And so shall we!**