

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Romans: Charter Of Salvation Grace
Part VI: The Practical Application Of God's Spiritual Provisions To Living
D. Applying God's Spiritual Provisions To Government Relationships
(Romans 13:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. The current political climate and upcoming national elections has many people in America concerned!
- B. Though we do not know what the results of the election will be, we do know how we are to function in relation to government officials after the election from Paul's admonitions in Romans 13:1-10 as follows:

II. Applying God's Spiritual Provisions To Government Relationships, Romans 13:1-10.

- A. When the Apostle Paul gave his Romans 13:1-10 directives to believers in the city of Rome, it was the late winter or early spring of A. D. 57 or 58, and the emperor was Nero, a man who had come to power in A. D. 54 three to four years earlier, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 436; Z. P. E. B., vol. Four, p. 410.
- B. Though Nero's first five years were marked by peace and order for the outlying provinces as he then let "the able Seneca and Burrus run the empire", *Ibid.*, "murder and intrigue" marked the events close to the emperor in the city of Rome itself; this evil Nero would later brutalize Christians when he conveniently blamed them for the fire that would sack half of the city seven years after Paul had authored Romans, *Ibid.*
- C. Thus, Romans 13:1-10 was directed to Christians who were concerned about their government, making Paul's words carry weight for how concerned believers are to relate to their flawed governments today!
- D. As such, Paul told believers who were concerned about their government to recall God's sovereignty had set up the current rule, and so they should function as loving, responsible citizens, Romans 13:1-10:
 - 1. Paul urged that every believer should submit to the government authorities, Romans 13:1a, and then he gave his reasons for this order in Romans 13:1b-5 (as follows):
 - a. There is no governmental authority in power except it be of God's permissive will, so every existing authority has been ordained to exist and so rule by the Lord Himself, Romans 13:1b!
 - b. Accordingly, resisting governmental authorities in any way makes the believer resist what God Himself has ordained of His permissive will, and that can only bring divine discipline, Rom. 13:2!
 - c. To explain why God permitted even imperfect rulers like Nero to come to power, Paul further stated that God intends the rulers He allows to come to power to be a terror to bad conduct, not to good conduct, Romans 13:3a. Thus, it is foolish for believers not to respect and heed officials, 13:3b!
 - d. Accordingly, believers must do what is upright in line with the will of government officials to be approved by them in accord with God's will for the role of the government, Romans 13:3c.
 - e. Government officials are God's servants in their respective offices for the good of citizens, so the believer, a citizen of his secular government, must be afraid of disobeying the government over him as the government does not bear the sword, the power of capital punishment, in vain, Romans 13:4.
 - f. Thus, a believer must also submit to the government not only out of respect for its power, but out of reverence for the Lord Who has ordained that the government counter godless anarchy, Rom. 13:5.
 - 2. To make his application specific, Paul directed believers to pay their taxes, for officials need the money for support to do their job of keeping order, Romans 13:6; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 490.
 - 3. Besides taxes, the believer should supply whatever he is legally obliged to supply to the government, be it at the national, regional or local levels, and be it in taxes or respect toward officials, Romans 13:7.
 - 4. Indeed, believers should not fall behind in any indebtedness but love, for love fulfills the whole Law of God that the believer in Christ should reflect in Spirit-empowered living, Romans 13:8-10 with 8:3-4!

Lesson: *Even in times of trouble regarding his secular government, the believer must recognize God's sovereignty in the affairs of all men, and so exercise loving, respectful submission to the government and to its officials. [Of course, the EXCEPTION to such civil obedience must occur if the government calls us to disobey God, Acts 4:19; 5:29! In such a time, we must respectfully heed God over man!]*

Application: *May we believers ALWAYS trust God's sovereign control of even the secular government, and so remain PRODUCTIVELY and LEGALLY SUPPORTIVE of it and its officials!*