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## **Subjecting Ourselves to Governing Authorities?**

What does Paul mean when he says we should subject ourselves to governing authorities?

When we read Romans 13, it has been interpreted that we are to submit ourselves to any random government. While we do promote being a good citizen in the eyes of a secular government, it is likely that Paul was only speaking of governments that teach and obey the Torah.

First, let's read:

### **Romans 13:1-7**

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from Elohim, and those that exist have been instituted by Elohim. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what Elohim has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is Elohim's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of Elohim, an avenger who carries out Elohim's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid Elohim's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of Elohim, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

There are several points that need to be made clear.

### **1) The Torah Test**

As anyone who has read Deuteronomy 13 knows, all prophets and teachers must be tested to the Torah. If they add or subtract from the Torah (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:23) then they are to be considered false (Deuteronomy 13).

There is nothing in the Torah that commands us to obey governments that do not teach or obey the Torah. Could you imagine YHWH commanding us to obey Hitler or Stalin for example? Thus, either Paul is a false teacher, or he is stating we are to only obey leaders that teach and practice the Torah.

## 2) “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.”

What is good or bad (sin) is defined by the law of God, the Torah (i.e. 1 John 3:4). The prior verses talk about YHWH putting such rulers into place, and this verse talks about how these leaders do good (which means following Torah). Thus, this is one example on how we know that the context of Paul is referring to leaders that practice the Torah, or do good.

## 3) “Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is Elohim's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of Elohim, an avenger who carries out Elohim's wrath on the wrongdoer.”

As you can see, the subsequent verses continue in this same context. We are to do what is “good.” Again, “good” is defined as obedience to the law of God (the Torah). The leader put into place by YHWH also carries a “sword.” The “sword” in Scripture metaphorically refers to the “Word of God” in judgmental action. For example, see Hebrews 4:12:

### Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

We also see that Yeshua has the sword, for example:

### Revelation 19:15

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

All of these clues offer us insight to the understanding of Paul’s intent as it relates to

leadership and authority. At the moment, there is not one government on the planet that teaches and obeys the Torah in the way outlined in the Scriptures. Until that day, we should strive to obey the governments where they do not force us to break the Torah.

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.*

*Remember, continue to test everything.*

*Shalom!*

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

**EMAIL:** Info@119ministries.com

**FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/119Ministries

**WEBSITE:** www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

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