

# Ladies Bible Study

## Week 20

(Week 19 in your lessons)



March 3, 2026

Romans 13:1 – 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.

Our study of Romans has now taken us to the subject of the Christian and his \_\_\_\_\_ . It is amazing that so many Christians are not aware of the truth of verse 1. They do not know that “the powers that be are ordained of God,” so that ultimately “there is not power but God.”

It is true that we are living under “the dispensation of the grace of God” (Ephesians 3:1-4), but we are also living under the dispensation of Human Government. This dispensation, instituted in Noah’s day (Gen. 9:5,6), has never been brought to a close. God ordained human government, holding man responsible for the life of his brother. The decree: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. 9:6), makes man responsible even to execute capital punishment and this, of course, includes all lesser penalties.

More than this: the particular “powers that be” are God-ordained. Generally God gives nations exactly the kind of rulers they deserve. Some of these are wicked and immoral, “the basest of men,” yet they are “ordained of God” (Dan. 4:17) and responsible to Him. To the pagan and arrogant Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel said:

“...the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory” Daniel 2:37.

And to this king, in his pride, a voice later came from heaven condemning him to insanity until he should learn the lesson that,

.....the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” Daniel 4:32.



Our Lord said to Pilate:

....Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above....John 19:11.

Indeed, \_\_\_\_\_ times in this one brief passage in Romans, the apostle Paul declared that the governments over us are ordained by God.

Thus earthly ruler may be arbitrary or oppressive or corrupt, but God says: "Be subject," just as He directs the wife to be subject to her husband, the child to his parents, the servant to his master. Abuse of authority in any of these cases does not change the established order of God, for without such order all would be chaos. This is not the popular philosophy of the day, but it is the path to harmony and to man's greatest happiness. The affirmation that we are responsible to obey only "reasonable" laws leaves the question of subjection open to each man's interpretation. This philosophy has driven many a nation to anarchy.

Peter confirms Paul in this matter and, indeed, both proclaim God's Word to us:

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" 1 Peter 2:13,14.

First, Paul tells the Roman believers to "Let every person be subject to higher powers." The Greek verb translated "let be subject" is in the imperative mood and middle voice, which means that Paul is commanding them to subject themselves, to subordinate themselves, and to arrange themselves under the authorities ruling over them. The Greek phrase translated "higher powers" may also be rendered powers holding above them or rulers above them. Summarizing, every believer is to arrange himself under the civil authorities who are above him.

Second, Paul informs them that "there is no power but of God." Many translations convey the thought that there is no authority except of or from God. The issue at stake is the Greek preposition "**υπο**" which basically means under as the following \_\_\_\_\_ indicate.

Romans 6:14 says, "you are not under (**υπο**) law but under grace."

First Corinthians 15:25 says, "For it is necessary for him to reign until when he may place all the enemies under (**υπο**) his feet."



Ephesians 1:22 says, "and all things he subjected under (υπο) his feet."

Summarizing, this verse is not saying that the civil authorities of Paul's day were from or of God, but that they occupied a position under God, i.e., underneath Him.

Third, in speaking of authorities, Paul says, "the powers that be are ordained of God." As Paul scanned the authorities on the Roman horizon, he says that those being, existing, and who are presently ruling have been arranged under God. The Greek proposition "under" (υπο) denotes the rank of these authorities, and not the source or origin of their power and authority.

Summarizing, if all the authorities in this world were assembled together, Paul affirms, they would all be under God.

Romans 13:2 – Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

The Greek conjunction translated "whosoever," when looked at as a particle, may also be rendered with the idea of consequently or therefore. The phrase "they that resist" speaks of one who arranges himself in opposition or who is averse to the authority.

Now let us consider the statement that "whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." The verb translated "resisteth" is in the perfect tense and means that he has stood against and opposed "the ordinance of God", i.e., God's injunction and order. God's arrangement and injunction is for the authorities to be under Him, but, if one opposes those authorities, he is thereby making himself superior to them; hence, he has resisted God's arrangement.

Paul warns believers that "those having resisted will receive to themselves judgment." The people \_\_\_\_\_ God's order of authority, not only resist God, but also will receive judgment against themselves from the authorities. Summarizing, the two reasons for subjection to civil authorities are:

- 1) they are under God in the chain of command, and
- 2) they hold the fear of judgment over the people.

Romans 13:3 – 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 the same:



As a consequence of what Paul had said in the previous two verses, he explains that the person doing that which is good does not fear judgment, but the person doing what is evil has reason to fear judgment. The principle is very simple, if one does not want to fear judgment from the authority, let him do what is good, or you could say, let him be in subjection. On the other hand, if one wants the commendation of the authority, let him do that which is good.

Summarizing, not subjecting results in fear of judgment, while subjection results in praise. First Peter 2:13-14 affirms the same truth as this verse. "Be arranged under every human injunction because of the Lord; whether to a king as supreme, whether to governors as sent through him to avenge evil-doers and praise good-doers."

Romans 13:4 – 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 his the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

As Paul writes this epistle to the believers at Rome, the majority of them were probably a part of the original Roman Empire which had subdued the surrounding nations. Many of them undoubtedly considered themselves part of a victorious empire rather than captives of that empire. Whatever the situation of the various individuals who constituted the church at Rome, one thing is certain, the attitude of the Roman government toward Christians was going to deteriorate increasingly.

The Apostle Paul must have had \_\_\_\_\_ feelings about this government. His people, Israel, were captives under it, grating under its harsh policies and heavy taxation. On the other hand, when a number of Jews vowed to put him to death, the Roman government protected him, and Roman prisons became a place of refuge for him.

In this verse Paul speaks of civil authorities in ideal terms; i.e., ideally speaking they are ministers of God for the good of the citizens under them. Also, they are ministers of God to avenge with the sword those practicing evil which is harmful to the citizens under them. Under the circumstances, a frank treatise on the Roman government written by Paul could have possibly resulted in the annihilation of the Gospel of God's Grace. There is often a vast gap between what governments and the Word of God designate as good and evil, an issue on which Paul is silent for a good reason.

Romans 13:5 – Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.



The Greek word translated "wherefore" means that on account of what Paul previously said it is "necessary," imperative, and essential that believers be in subjection to the Roman government. They are to do this not only on account of "the wrath," judgment and possible death, but also because of "the conscience," that aspect of a believer which senses what is right and wrong primarily on the basis of what is fed into it. The dual implication is:

- 1) that the truth of the Gospel would form a conscience submissive to civil government;
- 2) and that insubordination could bring persecution on other believers.

Romans 13:6 – For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

The two main things an ideal government does is:

- 1) to \_\_\_\_\_ an environment in which its citizens can do that which is good;
- 2) to \_\_\_\_\_ its citizens against internal and external evil and harm.

To do these two things, with the many aspects associated with them, requires money; therefore Paul says, "For this cause pay ye tribute also." Strictly speaking, it is used with reference to the load subject and dependent people are required to bear (Luke 20:22; 23:2). Considering the way Herod spent money on both his personal and public projects, to mention only one of the Roman authorities, the tax burden must have been excruciating.

After having instructed believers to pay taxes to the authorities, Paul adds, "For they are ministers of God persisting unto this very thing." It appears to us that this statement may be interpreted as having a double emphasis. First, that the authorities are ministers of God to enhance the good and deter the evil. Second, that they are ministers of God unto the end of collecting taxes and tribute. In an ideal government they continuously persist and persevere in doing both of these things, for they mutually depend upon and support one another.

Romans 13:7 – Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

The Greek verb translated "render" means that Paul is strongly commanding them to give what is owed, to discharge their obligations, and to pay their debts to the respective authorities. They should pay their tribute and taxes to the one collecting them. They should pay custom and tariffs levied against goods. They should above all render fear to the Lord (Eph. 5:21; Col. 3:22) and to those in authority (v. 3). They should honor God (1 Tim. 1:17) and honor kings (1 Peter 2:17).



Again we emphasize, in the foregoing verses Paul is asking believers to be subject to ideal authorities, those praising good doing and judging evil doing. His purpose is to keep believers from being targeted for unnecessary persecution.

Romans 13:8 – Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

In the preceding verse Paul told the Roman believers to take care of all their obligations, i.e., to pay all their debts. He said this with respect to their relation to civil government authorities and taxes. In this verse he affirms again that they are not to owe anyone anything, but adds, "except to love one another." The reciprocal pronoun translated "one another" means that I am to love you and you are to love me. Each one is to take the initiative in loving the other, i.e., in starting the love-ball rolling. Seven times Paul indicates that believers are to love one another reciprocally. Five times John uses this same reciprocal pronoun to indicate that believers are to love one another.

After telling them that they are to love one another, Paul adds, "For the one loving another has fulfilled the law." Paul makes a similar statement in Galatians 5:14, where he says, "For all the law has been fulfilled in one word, in that 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" These statements must not be interpreted to mean that Paul felt that he was \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill the Law, for he makes a big issue of the fact that we are not under the Law, but totally under Grace (6:14-15; 7:4-6). The reason he indicates that the person who loves has fulfilled the Law is to show that love is a basic universal principle, and if it had been exercised as it should have been it would have produced better human relations among the Jews than the Law even advocates.

Romans 13:9 – For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, 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.

Having affirmed that the one loving has fulfilled the Law, Paul Now clarifies what he means. The one loving will not commit adultery, for this is not an act of love. The one loving will not murder another person, for murder is an act of hate, not of love. The person loving will not steal, an act condemned by the Word of God (1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 4:28). The one loving will not "covet," lust and desire that which belongs to another (Exod. 20:17; Col. 3:5).

After citing four commandments from the Law of Moses, which love would have fulfilled apart from the Law, Paul adds, "and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself."



Having used four commandments to \_\_\_\_\_ how love fulfills the Law, Paul says that all the rest of the commandments are fulfilled in the same manner, by proper love toward one's "neighbor," one who is near. As one loves his neighbor and is concerned for him even as he loves and is concerned for himself, love will propel him to fulfill the precepts of the Law toward his neighbor.

Romans 13:10 – Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Love can only produce that which is good; therefore, it cannot work that which is "evil," bad or harmful to its neighbor. Since the Law, as given by God to fulfill a given purpose, was holy, just and good (7:12), it logically follows that love which works only good is the fulfillment of the Law. The Law was given to Israel as God's standard of good for them at that point in time. Due to the weakness of the flesh, it was not fulfilled during the 1400 years it was in effect. However, during this present age of Grace, when the Holy Spirit is producing the fruit of love, believers are enabled to fulfill the universal principles of the Law which are applicable to this church age.

Summarizing verses 8-10. The emphasis in this paragraph is on believers mutually and reciprocally loving one another. Even though the Mosaic Law was laid aside, annulled and abrogated some 27 years before the writing of this epistle, Paul still uses it in the background to show the superiority of love. He points out that the principle of love is a dynamic force capable of conforming the thoughts and actions of believers to the will of God. Actually, if Israel had been living in a proper love relationship with God and one another, there would have been no reason for God to give them the Law. Due to Israel's failure to walk in love, God gave them the Law, which failed to make them righteous due to the weakness of the flesh (8:3). Today, however, as believers are energized by the Spirit to love one another reciprocally, the universal principles common to the Law and Church are capable of being fulfilled.

Romans 13:11 – 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.

Paul Now begins to deal with the spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ of the believers at Rome. With the phrase "And this" he calls their attention to the lateness of the time. They need to be "knowing the time." They need to be perceiving and seeing "the time," the particular time, the point in time that is on God's prophetic time clock. As Paul looks at the time, in the light of God's eternal purpose, he says "that it is already the hour for you to be raised out of sleep." It appears that he is telling them the time is "already" past, it has come and gone, when you should have been raised out of "sleep." In plain language, Paul is prodding them, "You are late, be raised out of your spiritual sleep and slumber."



It is important to note that the Greek verb translated "be raised" (εγερθηναι) is in the aorist tense and passive voice. The aorist tense reinforces our point, that they should have already been raised before Paul wrote this epistle to them. But even more significant, the passive voice indicates that one other than themselves is involved in raising, arousing, and awakening them from their spiritual stupor.

As those who are in a state of spiritual hibernation, someone has to arouse them, namely, God the Holy Spirit.

Those to whom Paul is writing are believers; they are spiritually alive in Christ, and as such, their spirits need to be stimulated and aroused by the Holy Spirit. Instead of being in a state of spiritual slothfulness, they need to be boiling in the Spirit, energized by the Holy Spirit (12:11).

As the minutes, hours and days become history, Paul says, "for Now our salvation is nearer than when we believed." In Ephesians 5:16, Paul says that we are to be "redeeming the time," buying up every opportunity to serve the Lord, because the days are evil. In this eleventh verse he is trying to arouse believers to serve the Lord because time is fleeting, the time when Christ will return for His own is coming nearer each day. Paul says that when we believed we began looking forward to the great event, the day of our salvation. This points to the time when believers will meet the Lord in the air, will have their lowly bodies changed to conform to His glorious body, and will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15-17; Phil. 3:21).

Romans 13:12 – 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 armour of light.

In this verse Paul continues to emphasize the \_\_\_\_\_ time believers have to serve the Lord. He graphically portrays this by saying that "The night is almost gone." Paul is apparently using the Greek word translated "night" to depict this present evil age as a time of moral and spiritual darkness (John 13:30; 1 Thess. 5:5). The Greek verb rendered "almost gone" means that the night is far advanced, far spent and is almost over. The time Satan has to have authority and power over this world system is drawing to a close (Luke 4:5-6; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19). Paul's thrust is that in view of the short time left, he wants believers to live for Jesus Christ.

Following the thought that the night is almost gone, Paul says, "and the day is at hand." In contrast to the Greek word for "night" the word for "day" may also be used of believers who "are sons of light and sons of day" (1 Thess. 5:5; cf. v. 8). It appears that Paul's main point here is that a given day is near, already referred to as the time of our salvation, to be identified with what is commonly called the Rapture. With the consummation of the present night period, when Satan's power on this earth will have run its course, we expect that the day which is near will also usher in a day of spiritual light and righteousness under the supreme rule of Jesus Christ Himself.



In view of the fact that the night is almost gone and the day is near, Paul says, "let us therefore cast off the works of darkness" The Greek word translated "cast off" means that we ourselves should lay aside as a garment, put off and renounce works of darkness (John 12:46).

To put off the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light should be the \_\_\_\_\_ of every believer. According to the sixth chapter believers are to present their members as "weapons of righteousness of God" (6:13). Furthermore, in Second Corinthians 6:4-7, Paul commended himself as a minister of God "through the armor of righteousness on the right and left hand." The emphasis in this verse is on the responsibility of believers to put off the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light. Keep in mind, the Greek noun armor may also be translated weapons.

Romans 13:13 – Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

The Greek phrase translated "let us walk honestly" means that we should live and conduct ourselves in a manner becoming, befitting and in keeping with the standards of the Gospel of God's Grace. When we believers are in the day, when we are called sons of light, we are to live in accordance with our day status. As those who are spiritually of the day and light, we are not to be involved in "rioting." They are to have no part in "drunkenness," becoming intoxicated or inebriated. It is significant that the riotings and drunkenness are closely associated. As we see it, the drunkenness brings about an abandonment of the mental faculties which in turn results in uncontrolled behavior. Believers are to have no part in "sexual promiscuity" improper sexual conduct or sexuality in an evil context. Also, associated with this perverted sexuality is "wantonness," sensuality, intemperance, and licentiousness. The thought seems to be that uncontrolled sexual desires will result in many excesses, not the least of which are some of the awful incurable diseases which act as a stop sign against further indulgence. Furthermore, we believers are to be free from "strife and jealousy." The Greek noun translated "strife," means contentiousness, wrangling and quarreling. The Greek noun rendered "jealousy" conveys the idea of envy and malice. These two words constitute a single phrase, and they refer to faulty attitudes between believers and others. These sins are most destructive to the unity of the Spirit. Paul has much to say about them and against them (1:29; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20).

Romans 13:14 – But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

The following is an amplified translation which brings out more fully the implications of the Greek text. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not give previous thought to the things of the flesh, giving way to its lusts." In verse 12 Paul told the Roman believers to put away the works of darkness, and to put on the armor of light. In verse 13 he names some of the works of darkness, such as revelings, drunkenness, sexual sins, strife and jealousy. In verse 14 he emphasizes that in contrast (**αλλα**) to these evil works, they are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."



The Greek verb translated "put on" (ενδυσασθε) means that believers are to clothe, invest and array themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ as with an enveloping garment. The apparent thought is that Jesus Christ is to be put on as their "Lord" (κυριον) and Master, as their Sovereign Owner.

Negatively speaking, Paul says "do not make provision for the flesh regarding its lusts." The Greek phrase translated "do not make" (μη ποιεισθε) means that they are not to be engaged in any "provision" (προνοιαν), prior thinking and forethought for the things which belong to and relate to the flesh. Believers must not allow their minds to be reflecting and deliberating on the satiating of the lusts and desires of their flesh. The grammatical construction in the Greek makes it clear that they are not to be premeditating on the lusts and desires of those things associated with the flesh.

When I survey the wondrous cross,  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain, I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mind,  
That were a present far too small.  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

-Isaac Watts

