

LESSON 14: ROMANS 13:1-14 GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN GOVERNMENT

I. Introduction

In Chapter 13, Paul addresses the believer's relationship with governing authorities, affirming that all authority is established by God (Romans 13:1). Paul's emphasis on submission ties into the Jewish understanding of God's sovereignty over all kingdoms (Daniel 2:21). He acknowledges that these authorities may not always be perfect, but they serve a necessary function in maintaining order and punishing wrongdoing. The command to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:14) alludes to baptism (Galatians 3:27) and ongoing sanctification.

The Roman Christians lived under Emperor Nero, known for his oppressive rule. Paul's instructions on submission were not an endorsement of tyranny but a call to demonstrate faith through peaceable living. Taxes, often seen as tools of Roman oppression, were to be paid as acts of obedience to God's order.

Paul admonished the Christians to obey laws, pay taxes (Romans 13:6-7), and show respect to leaders as acts of submission to God. Paul then transitions to the principle of love as the fulfillment of the law, emphasizing that love for one's neighbor encompasses all commandments (Romans 13:8-10). The call to love fulfills the Mosaic Law (see Leviticus 19:18) and reflects Jesus' teachings (Matthew 22:37-40). The chapter ends with a call to wake up from spiritual lethargy and live in the light, putting aside deeds of darkness and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Romans 13:1-14

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

III. Think Through the Following Questions:

1. How should Christians balance submission to authorities with standing for God's truth?
2. What does it mean that "love is the fulfillment of the law"?
3. How can we practically "put on the armor of light" in a world filled with darkness?
4. How does Paul's teaching on government challenge or affirm your perspective on authority?
5. Why is love central to living a Christ-like life?
6. How can we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" daily?
7. What does it look like to "owe no one anything except to love"?
8. How does the urgency of Christ's return shape the way we live each day?

IV. Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?

V. Application: How Do You think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?