

PREVIOUSLY IN CHAPTER 12

- Our Response to the Age of Grace | Romans 12:1-2
- The Humility of Being Part of a Team | Romans 12:3-5
- The Exercise of Spiritual Gifts | Romans 12:6-8
- Instructions on Christian Deportment | Romans 12:9-13
- Instructions on Christian Interaction | Romans 12:14-18

INSTRUCTION FOR INTERACTION WITH ENEMIES | ROMANS 12:19-21

- Verse 19 - This verse shows us that **wrath** belongs to God. Even Jesus did not judge when it was not his place to do so (John 12:47).
 - The word **avenge** is a verb (revenge is normally a noun, the thing you got when you *avenged*).
 - The KJV is consistent in translating the word *avenge*. As an example of the interpretive work of translators put into other “literal” translations, consider:
 - NASB:
 - Luke 18:3 & 5 - “give me legal protection”
 - Romans 12:19 – “take your own revenge”
 - 2 Cor 10:6 – “punish”
 - Revelation 6:10, 19:2 – “avenging” and “avenge”
 - ESV:
 - Luke 18:3 & 5 - “give me justice”
 - Romans 12:19 – “avenge”
 - 2 Cor 10:6 – “punish”
 - Revelation 6:10, 19:2 – “avenge” and “avenged”
 - NKJV:
 - Luke 18:3 & 5 - “get justice” and “avenge”
 - Romans 12:19 – “avenge”
 - 2 Cor 10:6 – “punish”
 - Revelation 6:10, 19:2 – “avenge” and “avenged”
 - It can be argued that the translators were trying to make the passage more readable. However, readability should not be the priority for the advanced or precise reader. Furthermore, “legal protection” and “justice” are not the same as *avenge* in the English language.
- Verse 20 - A quote from Proverbs 25:21-22.
- Verse 21 - A reminder and a summary.

THE CHRISTIAN AND GOVERNMENT | ROMANS 13:1-7

- Verse 1 –
 - The term **higher powers** should not be interpreted in a spiritualistic, new age way.
 - The Greek simply says *the authorities above you*. This would, naturally, vary from one circumstance to another. This only applies to authorities that have been **ordained of God**, not voluntary associations or authorities which go beyond their God-given jurisdiction.
 - The Declaration of Independence seems to understand this verse well. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator**

with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — **That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed**, — That **whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it**, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes" [emphasis mine].

- Note that the NLT got it wrong, saying, "those in positions of authority have been placed there by God." The verse does not say this, only that the positions themselves are of God.
- Verse 2-
 - It requires maturity to determine when you are **subject unto the higher powers** (v. 1) and when those powers have moved beyond God-given authority.
 - It invites judgment to resist authority that God has given.
 - Note that judgment is a better word than **damnation**, because eternal judgment is not in mind. This particular Greek word always requires an interpretive translation based on context. Compare the same word in Romans 11:33, where it is **judgments**.
- Verses 3-4 –
 - Paul speaks of **rulers** (rather than parents, pastors, spouses, etc), that is, those who have an official role. The Greek is ἀρχων [archon] from which we get *monarch*.
 - Paul says the one in the official position is **the minister of God**, and **minister** is διάκονος [diakonos], from which we get *deacon*, although here is not in the role of a deacon but a servant. The word **minister** is here used in the non-American sense of governmental ministers.
 - The **ruler is a revenger to execute wrath**, which is likely the **damnation** (judgment) spoken of in verse 2, and the **vengeance** spoken of in Romans 12:19.
- Verse 5 - If the judgment of God through the **minister** is not sufficient motivation for obedience, Paul adds another motivation: **for conscience sake**, that is, because you *see what is right* and therefore do it.
- Verses 6-7 - The **tribute** is payed **for conscience sake**, knowing that **they are God's ministers**. The **tribute** (pheros) was an annual tax levied upon persons, not a sales and use tax, which uses a different word (telos), which is in verse 7.

THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATIONS | ROMANS 13:8-10

- Verse 8 –
 - This is not a prohibition against debt but rather an instruction concerning the one obligation we should have, and that is **to love one another**.
 - In what way has **he that loveth another...fulfilled the law**? Furthermore, why does it matter, if we are **dead to the law** (Rom. 7:1) and **delivered from the law** (Rom. 7:6)?
 - No law is fulfilled in love alone. However, love for God and for others will keep a person from breaking any law (see vv. 9-10).
- Verses 9-10 - Paul gives a quick summary of the Ten Commandments and says they are **briefly comprehended** in the command to **love thy neighbor**. It would be a mistake (that many have made) to assume that love toward others is a *full comprehension* of the Law.