

As I stated on page 149, these verses are controversial and what they mean has been explained in many different ways. Here are some comments from Alford's Greek Testament on this passage. The underlined words are the translation of Scripture.

"For there is no authority (in heaven or earth—no power at all) except from God; and those that are (the existing powers which we see about us), have been ordained by God."

"His [Paul's] precepts regard an established power, be it what it may. It, in all matters lawful, we are bound to obey. --- If the civil power commands us to violate the law of God, we must obey God before man. If it commands us to disobey the common laws of humanity, or the sacred institutions of our country, our obedience is due to the higher and more general law, rather than to the lower and particular."

This, of course, leaves the choice of whether or not to obey up to the opinion of each individual. Further, this nullifies what is written further in the passage.

Living New Testament

OBEY the government, for God is the one who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power.

2 So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow.

3 For the policeman does not frighten people who are doing right; but those doing evil will always fear him. So if you don't want to be afraid, keep the laws and you will get along well.

4 The policeman is sent by God to help you. But if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for he will have you punished. He is sent by God for that very purpose.

5 Obey the laws, then, for two reasons: first, to keep from being punished, and second, just because you know you should.

These verses have been understood in a way you might understand in USA; but hardly, in Russia, Poland, India, Lybia, and the rest of the world.

China, Russia etc?
Ccdof., Hitler,
Andropov, etc.?

How would you
understand this
of the Russian KGB?

Good News For Modern Man.

13 Everyone must obey the state authorities; for no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. ² Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. ³ For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of the man in authority? Then do what is good, and he will praise you. ⁴ For he is God's servant working for your own good. But if you do evil, be afraid of him, for his power to punish is real. He is God's servant and carries out God's wrath on those who do evil. ⁵ For this reason you must obey the authorities — not just because of God's wrath, but also as a matter of conscience.

Rom. 13 KJ

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.

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

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 of the same:

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 he is the minister of God, a 'revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.'

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

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

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 Bible Commentary, p. 212

"His [Paul's] argument applies to all forms of government, and to Heathen as well as Christian rulers; [I personally know of no Christian rulers.]

it has 'a general validity based on the divinely ordained position of the magistracy, and not annulled by their injustice in practice' (Meyer) There is as little reason for Renan's sarcastic exclamation that 'Nero was proclaimed by St. Paul a minister, an officer of God, a representative of Divine authority!' - as for

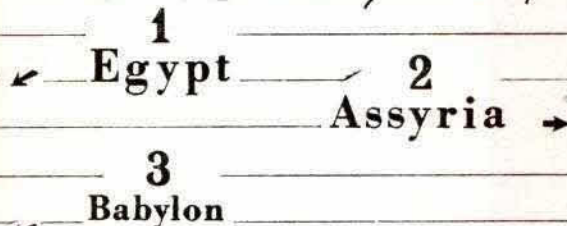
Volkmar's wild conjecture that the second beast in the Apocalypse (XIII. 12), who caused 'the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast,' represented St. Paul here recommending obedience to civil government." You see a glimpse of the chaos.

I have tried to make a consistent translation of these verses and now propose a totally different solution to the problem.

Ex. 9 ASV

13 And Jē-hō'vāh said unto Mō'sēs, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Phā'raōh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jē-hō'vāh, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For I will this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For now I had put forth my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth: 16 but in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

God has chosen Israel above all the nations. (Deut. 28:13, 44 Is. 60:12 Ex. 19: 5, 6) Because of this God takes a hand in all nations that in any way touch Israel.



Dan. 2 ASV

2 And in the second year of the reign of Nēh-ū-chād-nēz-zār, Nēh-ū-chād-nēz-zār dreamed dreams;

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; 38 and whosoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.

If God placed all world powers everywhere in their authority it is easy to see why people would blame God. (see vs. 35-37 also)

II Kings 19 ASV

20 Then I-sā'iāh the son of A'mōz sent to Hēz-ē-kī'āh, saying, Thus saith Jē-hō'vāh, the God of Is'rā-ēl. Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sēn-nāch-ē-rīb king of As-sy-rī-a, I have heard thee.

32 Therefore thus saith Jē-hō'vāh concerning the king of As-sy-rī-a, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. 33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jē-hō'vāh. 34 For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

World powers have practised evil rather than good.

Is. 45 ASV

45 Thus saith Jê-hô'vâh to his anointed, to Cî'rûs, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut: 2 I will go before thee, and make the rough places smooth; I will break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3 and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that it is I, Jê-hô'vâh, who call thee by thy name, even the God of Is'ra-êl. 4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Is'ra-êl my chosen, I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. 5 I am Jê-hô'vâh, and there is none else; besides me there is no God. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me; 6 that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me: I am Jê-hô'vâh, and there is none else.

4
Medo-Persia

5
Greece →

Dan. 8 ASV

20 The ram which thou sawest, that had the two horns, they are the kings of Mâ'dî-â and Pâr'sî-â. 21 And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Alexander the Great →

Dan. 2 ASV

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush.

6
Rome →



It was this 6th world power which stood in Paul's day. Paul wrote to the "church" (?) at Rome.

- ▶ Rom. 1:7 * To-all the cherished of-God being in Rome,
- ▶ Rom. 13:1 * Let every soul be-subjecting-himself to-superior authorities. (Every soul among the cherished of-God in Rome? why read in the idea that these are instructions beyond the 6th power?)
- ▶ Rom. 13:1 * But the authorities being, are having-been-and-still-are-assigned by the God. (Notice the perfect tense; the present authorities. Why should we read: All world authorities are always ones assigned by God?)
- ▶ Rom. 13:2 (page 151) Note the perfect tenses. Note, * the (one) arraying-himself-against THE authority. Why assume this is other than the Roman authority? Note, "arraying" rather than the KJ "resisting" carries the idea of revolution. Now put the perfect tenses together with other parts of the epistle as though you were reading the letter the day it was received. * To-all the cherished of-God being in Rome, --- the (one) arraying-himself-against the authority (of Rome) [note authority is singular] has-withstood-and-still-is-with-standing the order of-the God ---, etc.

- Rom. 13:3 "the rulers", of the Roman Empire. Why read in "the rulers" of U.S., Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia? Doing the good-thing in Russia or Iran does not insure your "not fearing the authority." Note again "THE" authority, which was unified under Rome, and is Acts 25 ASV singular. Note Paul's judgement by Festus, a Roman ruler, and

8 while Paul said in his defence, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæ'sar, have I sinned at all. 9 But Fes'tus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jê-ru'sa-lêm, and there be judged of these things before me? 10 But Paul said, I am standing before Cæ'sar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. 11 If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if none of those things is true whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæ'sar. 12 Then Fes'tus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæ'sar: unto Cæ'sar shalt thou go.

John 19 ASV

10 Pî'lât therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? 11 Jê'sus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above:

his transfer to Caesar. Even the Roman Empire at its best was limited by Jesus. ↘

Jesus also made clear that God was intervening in the Roman Empire.

↓ (Not "power" but "authority")

As the Jews were nearing the point of their total world wide dispersion

Matt. 22 ASV

15 Then went the Phâr'i-sêes, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk. 16 And they send to him their disciples, with the Hê-rô'di-ans, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæ'sar, or not? 18 But Jê'sus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? 19 Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Cæ'sar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæ'sar the things that are Cæ'sar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

Peter, by the Holy Spirit writes to Jewish Christians already dispersed.

1 Pet. 2:11 * "I-am-entreating (you) as dwellers-abroad and resident-aliens --- Having YOUR fine conduct among the Gentiles --- YOU-be-subjected to-every human creation because-of the Lord---"

- Rom. 13:4 Note: * "--- he-is not wearing the dagger at-random". Not, "he beareth not the sword in vain", as in KJ. This phrase is a direct reference to Caesar. Further, against, "the (one) practising the bad-(thing)".
- Rom. 13:6 * "YOU-are also finishing tributes". I believe the Christians were paying all the tributes due. See Matt. 22:17 "tribute" is κῆνσος (kēnsos) (above) but in Luke 20:22 it is tribute φόρος (phoros) as also in Rom. 13:6. κῆνσος (kēnsos) I have translated "poll-tax".
- * I conclude this passage applies to Rome, power #6, and is not a general instruction.