



Who is the "higher power" according to Romans 13:1-7?

After the death of the apostles, ambitious, selfish, and deceitful ministers took over the christian congregations, and true Christianity suffered a great decline (**Acts 20:28-30**). Since that time, under the influence of satan the devil, the religious clergy of the so-called "Christianity" have falsely interpreted for their selfish gain that political rulers derive their power from Jehovah God. It was on this basis that the doctrine of the "Divine right of kings" arose, according to which catholic popes and orthodox priests anointed kings and tsars to rule over people. For many centuries, the rulers of the "christian" states, using the falsely given right to rule, forced ordinary people to give them honor and glory, as well as to show their loyalty and obedience, despite the enormous lawlessness of their orders and actions that were contrary to God's will. All this brought great dishonor to God's Holy Name, as people deceived by the clergy lost faith in the true God, Who, in their understanding, was responsible for the rulers and their iniquities.

Today, in so-called "Christianity", there are many different religious organizations that have discrepancies in understandings of God's Word. Still, their understanding of the question "who is the higher power" according to Romans 13:1-7, they have the same understanding, namely that the "higher power" is the political rulers and governors of this world. But is this conclusion correct according to the Scriptures? If so, why don't governments live among themselves in peace and love, as God's servants were commanded to do? (**Mark 9:50; Romans 13:8-10**). Why do they wage bloody wars, forcing people to kill each other, if the law of Jehovah and Jesus Christ forbids it? (**Matthew 5:21, 22; 1John 3:15**). Why do different so-called "christian" states have various laws? Why are same-sex marriages legally permitted in Canada, France, and Spain, while they are prohibited in Ukraine, Poland, and Russia? Why do the laws of Russia prohibit the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses on its territory, calling them an extremist organization, when at the same time in the United States and European countries the laws allow Jehovah's witnesses to preach and study the Word of God? Why do the laws in the UK and Iceland not force their citizens to do military service in peacetime, while in Ukraine, Belarus and many other countries military service in peacetime is mandatory for their citizens? Is God's law differ in different countries? The Bible says that Jehovah is unchanging (**Malachi 3:6**). His laws are unchangeable for faithful christians wherever they live on Earth. Therefore, a logical question arises: "Which of those states did God give the power to establish certain laws?" If we tell everyone, other questions arise: "Where does Jehovah say in the Bible that He approves of a certain action in one country and disapproves in another? Is it possible that Jehovah God would give power to these various states to establish rights and laws contrary to His will?" All of these logical questions, then, are indisputable proof that the world's government are not established by God, and therefore the words in Rom. 13:1-7 do not apply to them. Who then gave these various political rulers the power to rule on earth? This power was given to them by satan the devil, who is called in the Holy Scriptures the prince and god of this world (**John 12:31; 14:30; 2Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-2**). It was the devil who, testing Jesus Christ in the wilderness, promised to give Him all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory if Jesus worshipped him, as we read in **Matthew 4:8-10**. The devil is

the ruler of all human governments that exist on earth today, and it is he who, in his organization, gives the power to rule a person over a certain state, being symbolically represented in **Revelation 13:2** by the serpent.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the words of apostle Paul in Romans 13:1-7 refer to the authorities in God's organization. And we can see this by analyzing each verse separately with the help of Theocratic literature in the light of the Word of God.

"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God." – Romans 13:1

"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers..." Who is the "higher power" in God's organization to whom every "soul" (the original greek word used is "ψυχή" [psyche] – soul) must obey? The Holy Scriptures answer this question through the book of Isaiah, where we read the following words: **"For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us."** – **Isaiah 33:22**. So, every faithful christian must primarily obey God Jehovah, because it is to Him that all authority belongs, and this is what the apostle James in his epistle, saying: **"Be subject therefore unto God..."** – **James 4:7**. With this "higher power" Jehovah endowed His Son, and our Savior Jesus Christ, about which we learn from the words of the prayer of Christ himself: **"These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life."** – **John 17:1-2**. Also before His ascension to heaven, Jesus spoke to the apostles: **"... All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."** – **Matthew 28:18**. In this regard, apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says the following words: **"and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church,"** – **Ephesians 1:19-22**, and in another place we read: **"For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all."** – **1Corinthians 15:27-28**. Jehovah rewarded the perfect faithfulness of Jesus Christ by seating Him at His right hand and thus made Him supreme above all things – the Head of the Church.

The apostle goes on to say: *"...for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God"*. What are these powers that Jehovah God "ordained" (the original greek word used is «τάσσω» [tasso] – *to set, appoint, establish*) in His organization? In the previous chapter of this letter, the apostle Paul explains that the Church is made up of the members of the body of Christ (**Romans 12:4, 5**). The Head of the Church is Jesus Christ (**Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22**). Together, they constitute God's Theocratic organization,

where each member holds a different position and authority appointed by Jehovah, as we read: **"But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. ... And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."** – **1Corinthians 12:18, 28.** It is worth noting that the apostles also belong to the "higher power" because it is to them Jesus Christ gave the power to establish certain laws or rules in God's organization. In this way, He made them rulers, whose instructions the apostle Peter emphasized to all faithful christians: **"Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord 's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well."** – **1Peter 2:13-14.** The apostle Paul, testifying to the authority given to the apostles, said: **"For though I should glory somewhat abundantly concerning our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down), I shall not be put to shame:"** – **2Corinthians 10:8.**, and elsewhere we read the following words of his: **"For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down."** – **2Corinthians 13:10.** It is also worth noting that Jesus Christ gave authority to the apostles, and later to their disciples Timothy and Titus, to appoint ministers (overseers and their assistants) in the christian congregations through the laying on of their hands (**Acts 14:23; 1Timothy 5:22; Titus 1: 5-9**). Such ministers were also given authority in certain matters and to a certain extent: to watch over the order and pure worship of the brothers and sisters, to strengthen them spiritually and to guide them on the path of truth (**1Peter 5:1-3**). All brothers should cooperate well with elders who faithfully lead them in the service of God. In this regard, apostle Paul wrote: **"But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work 's sake. Be at peace among yourselves."** – **1Thessalonians 5:12-13.**

"Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment." – Romans 13:2

Let's pay attention to the clear, specific words: *"Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God..."* These words do not say to a certain extent or relative opposition to the authorities. Still, they say unequivocally and clearly that any resistance to the instructions of the authorities – is resistance to God's command. There is no justifiable reason for a faithful christian to oppose the orders, directions, and laws given by God's authority. Knowing the laws of governments, we can say with certainty that the words of this verse do not apply to them because their regulations are often contrary to the laws of God. Faithful christians, in order to please Jehovah, must resist such laws because their author is the devil (**James 4:7**).

Read on: *"...and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment"*. Whose "judgment" (the original greek word used is «κρίμα» [krýma] – *court decision, sentence, conviction*) will they accept? Of a human being? Most certainly not. No one in or out of God's organization has the right to judge someone who is in the organization we read about:

"Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judges another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. ... And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" – Romas 2:1, 3, and it also says: "One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?" – James 4:12. So the words: *"and they that withstand"* apply without exception to every member of God's earthly organization, as the apostle Paul, saying: **"I have confidence to you-ward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." – Galatians 5:10. Therefore, we must conclude that the *"judgment"* mentioned in Romans 13:2 is the judgment of Jehovah, which He executes on His organization through its Head, Jesus Christ, and those whom the Lord has appointed for this work: **"For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?"** – 1Peter 4:17.**

"For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:" – Romans 13:3

"For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil". Is it reasonable to assume that earthly rulers are a terror to the wicked who commit at least one of the following sins: **"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."** – Galatians 5:19-21. We can say with certainty that the political authorities are not a fear for those who do this. Rather, they are the ones who shamelessly practice it. Who, then, authoritatively warns christians that such iniquities will not allow them to enter the Kingdom of God? The Apostle Paul, authorized by the Lord, is one of those who belonged to the "higher power".

The apostle goes on to say: *"...And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same"*. Do Jehovah's witnesses, who proclaim the day of vengeance of Almighty God, receive praise from the rulers of this satanic world for such worthy work? Of course, no! In many countries around the world, the authorities explicitly impede or ban faithful Jehovah's witnesses and severely persecute them. Therefore, we can be convinced that the authority mentioned in the third verse is Jesus Christ and those who have been given the power in God's organization to root out evil deeds and praise good ones. A vivid example of this conclusion is the words of the apostle Paul, who said: **"Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God."**; **"Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you."** – 1Corinthians 4:5; 11:2, and in another place he writes: **"And we have sent**

together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches;" – 2Corinthians 8:18; 9:1-3.

"for he is a 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 a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." – Romans 13:4

"for he is a minister of God to thee for good". From everything we have read and said above, we have become convinced that satan and his rulers are not God's servants for the good of faithful christians. Jehovah has not given authority to satan or anyone else in his organization to be the executor of the punishment of criminals in God's organization. Therefore, this verse refers to the authority that Jehovah has established in His organization for the good of those who obey Him and for the judgment and punishment of those who commit iniquity.

Read on: *"...But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil"*. The word *"sword"* used by apostle Paul symbolically represents the executive power that God uses to punish those who do evil in His organization. Jesus Christ, the true King of Jehovah, is symbolically depicted in the Scriptures with a sword, which speaks of the authority given to Him to execute God's vengeance on the nations at Armageddon: **"And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."** – Revelation 19:15-16. It is Jesus Christ who is the main executor of the judgments of Jehovah God Who is the Great avenger who punishes the criminal, and this is evidenced by the apostle Paul, who says: **"that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified."** – 1Thessalonians 4:6, and in another place we read: **"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works."** – 2Timothy 4:14. Jehovah also entrusted the apostles with the authority to express His judgments and sentences against the lawless in the christian assemblies, which in some cases were immediately followed by their punishment. As an example, let us recall how Ananias and Sapphira fell to the ground and died when apostle Peter pointed out to them that they had not told a lie to men but to God (Acts 5:1-11). Let us recall the story of how the apostle Paul pronounced the Lord's judgment on the fortune-teller, the Jewish false prophet Elijah, who opposed the message of God (Acts 13:6-12; Acts 8:18-24). It is also worth noting the words of apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian congregation when he heard that someone had taken his father's wife as his wife: **"It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father 's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord**

Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." – 1Corinthians 5:1-5. Thus, God's power, which the apostles represented, carried a "*sword*" for a reason. It is worth noting that the executive power to punish the guilty in God's organization is to some extent vested in ministers, since they have the duty to maintain order and purity in the christian assembly by excommunicating those who commit iniquity or by accepting back those who repent of their evil deeds (**1Corinthians 5:2; 2Corinthians 2:5-8**). Regarding such older apostle Paul wrote to the faithful christians: "**Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. ... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you.**" – Hebrews 13:7, 17.

"Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake." – Romans 13:5

In these words, apostle Paul draws the attention of the faithful christian to the real reason why he should restrain himself from doing evil, namely: "*for conscience' sake*". Not only because he is afraid of the punishment that he will sooner or later suffer for showing disobedience to God's requirements, for such a motive is selfish. The apostle advises us to abstain from evil and to do good, guided primarily by the fact that we love Jehovah God and want to please Him. Such a motive will be right and pure, and therefore his conscience will be clear, for as it is written: "**But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned:**" – 1Timothy 1:5.

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

The very fact that the apostle gave the example of paying a tax is considered by many religious leaders to be a strong argument and proof that the first seven verses of the thirteenth chapter of Romans refer to the forces of this satanic world. But let's be frank, such a conclusion would be contrary to the wise and logical explanations of the texts in this chapter we have read above, which have full support in the Holy Scriptures.

It is worth noting that the apostles did not divide their epistles into chapters and verses. This division of God's Word was introduced by the translators in the middle of the IV A.D., and has come down to our days in the form we have today. Knowing this important fact allows us to understand that the words of apostle Paul: "*For this cause ye pay tribute also...*" have a semantic and logical connection with the words of verse five of this chapter. To see this, let's look at these words in different translations of the Bible:

"For because of this are ye paying tribute also." (Rotherham)

"For the same reason as you pay taxes." (Moffatt)

"Why, this is really the reason you pay taxes also." (Weymouth)

"For on this account also you pay taxes." (Diaglott)

From these translations, it becomes clear that the apostle Paul used the words about taxes as an example of the right motive – good conscience. It was for this reason that local christians paid taxes to the Roman authorities. Or how we today pay certain taxes, duties, or necessary payments for services that we receive from the modern caesar in the particular state where we live, realizing that this is approved by Jesus Christ himself, Who said "render unto caesar the things that are caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (**Matthew 22:21**). Therefore, with this in mind, the apostle also emphasizes to faithful christians not only for fear of punishment but also for the sake of good conscience to obey the representatives of the "higher power" in God's organization. The apostle Paul goes on to argue why this should be done, saying: "*...for they are ministers of God 's service, attending continually upon this (Overseeing order and clean worship at christian gatherings) very thing*".

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

The word "to all" refers both to God's organization and those outside it. Therefore, the words "tribute" and "custom" refer to the obligations imposed on christians by the political government where they live. Faithful christians, following the advice of Jesus Christ, give it all to the authorities there: **"And he said unto them, Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar 's, and unto God the things that are God 's."** – **Luke 20:25**.

The words: "*... fear to whom fear...*" show to whom faithful christians should treat with fear. The Holy Scripture gives an answer to this: **"Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling."** – **Psalms 2:11**; **"Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."** – **Isaiah 8:13**; **"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."** – **1Peter 2:17**.

The words: "...honor to whom honor" draw the attention of faithful christians to whom they should honor, and God's Word specifically answers: **"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."** – **1Timothy 1:17**; **"For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him."** – **John 5:22-23**.

From the above explanations, we can see that the apostle Paul is not addressing his letter to people who are outside the Theocratic organization to stop and reflect on political power with them. He wrote a letter to the faithful christians who agreed to do Jehovah's will, so he addressed them with these words: **"To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."** – **Romans 1:7**.

The religious clergy of the so-called "Christianity", for the sake of selfish gain, cite the words of the apostle Paul, written in the first letter to Timothy 2:1-2, where the apostle asks christians to pray for all people, for kings and those in authority, so that they may lead a quiet and peaceful life. Based on these words, the clergy are trying to prove that the "higher power" is still the political rulers for whom one must pray. But let's ask ourselves: is it proper to pray for those who deliberately reject Jesus Christ as the King of the New World

and prevent the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom? (**Psalms 2:1-6**) It is safe to say that praying for such ruling powers of the earth is a violation of Jehovah's will, for God's Word says: **"If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request."** – **1John 5:16**. And what is a sin unto death? It is the fulfillment of a conscious sin against the Holy Spirit, that is, against the activity of Jehovah God, which He performs through His Son Jesus Christ (**Matthew 12:31, 32**). Therefore, there can be no proper prayer for the salvation of those who are doomed to destruction in Armageddon for committing conscious sin: **"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee."** – **Jeremiah 7:16**.

The apostle Paul addressed his letter to those in God's visible organization, reminding them to pray that all its members would lead quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and purity. Faithful Christians should lift up their prayers and requests to Jehovah God that the ministers in the congregation, who He authorized in His organization, will lead in a way that promotes peace, spiritual health, and prosperity for the entire community (**Psalms 122:3-9**). Also today, God's people pray for Jehovah's King, Jesus Christ, as was predicted in the prophetic words of David: **"...and men shall pray for him continually; They shall bless him all the day long. ... His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun: And men shall be blessed in him; All nations shall call him happy."** – **Psalms 72:15, 17**. Jehovah God is the eternal King, and Jesus Christ is His anointed King of the New World. As they await the vindication of Jehovah's name at Armageddon, faithful Christians continue to pray for these Kings, saying: **"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."** – **Matthew 6:10**. Therefore, the words of the apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy must be reconciled with the above explanation of Romans 13:1-3.

As a rule, the religious clergy, and especially the class of the "evil servant" and its representatives, as their last argument that Jehovah gives power to rulers over earthly states and recognizes them as His servants, quote from the Holy Scriptures prophetic words about king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and king Cyrus of Persia (**Daniel 2:37, 38; 5:18, 19; Jeremiah 27:5-13, 17; 2Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1, 2**). However, God's Word denies this conclusion because kings Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus were only prototypes of Jesus Christ in the prophetic picture that Jehovah was creating (see example **Galatians 4:21-31; Hebrews 7:1-28; 9:1-28; 1Corinthians 10:11**). Faithful Christians do not neglect Bible prophecy and its significance (**1Thessalonians 5:20**).

Often when people cannot justify their beliefs based on God's Word, they try to justify themselves by saying that priests, pastors, and elders taught them this way and that they all graduated from theological seminaries, and therefore cannot be wrong. Others say that this is how they were explained by a "faithful and intelligent servant" or "governing body". It should be noted that no person, organization, or society, regardless of their name or time of existence, is important to Jehovah if their teachings contradict God's Word. That is why the apostle Paul gave the following warning to faithful Christians: **"But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."** – **Galatians 1:8**.

On the basis of the above, we must conclude that the apostle Paul in the thirteenth chapter of Romans, writes about authority in God's organization. The "higher power" mentioned in it is Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, and the apostles, whom the Lord gave the greatest authority in His organization. It is this understanding of God's Word that vindicates, glorifies, and exalts God's Holy Name, preventing the slightest compromise between His consecrated people and the organization of satan the devil.

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