



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Chapter 13

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

- St. Paul now discusses a Christian's responsibilities towards government. (1-7)
- St. Paul then explains that love is fulfillment of the Law (8-10)
- St. Paul concludes by reminding them that time is short and it is important that Christians maintain moral purity (11-14)

Submit to Government (13:1-7)



- God is the source of all authority, and He has appointed human governments for the welfare of man
- The existing overseeing government is to be regarded as a divine arrangement
- He who seeks to destroy his government is fighting the ordinance of God, and shall be punished

Submit to Government (13:1-7)



- It does not imply obeying wicked rulers when they command us to disobey God (Acts 4:19)
- God by this preserves the good and punishes the wicked
- It is not the law-abiding, but the lawless, who fear the law
- The ruler, the guardian of order and the preserver of peace is, as a rule, a blessing

Submit to Government (13:1-7)



- It is the ruler's right to use the sword in the interest of order and justice
- We must obey the rulers, not only for fear of punishment, but much more because it is God's will that we should obey our civil rulers
- Hence, conscience should be a motive
- Because they are the ministers of God for the public good, so they must be supported

Submit to Government (13:1-7)



- Thee apostle now moves from rulers to other officials
- Taxes on your persons or estates
- Custom - For goods exported or imported
- Fear - Obedience
- Honor - Reverence
- All these are due to the supreme power



Love Your Neighbor (13:8-10)

- Not only pay taxes and customs, but all that is due to be paid by every man
- Let nothing remain due on any man, except that debt of mutual love, which, though fully paid, is still forever a due
- He who loves his neighbor will not do to his neighbor any of the things forbidden by the law; will not steal, kill, commit adultery, bear false witness, covet, thus fulfilling the Mosaic law



Love Your Neighbor (13:8-10)

- The whole law commands nothing else but that we love God and our neighbor
- St. Paul speaks of the second table of the ten commandments
- For the same love which restrains from all evil, stimulates us to all good
- All the divine law is fulfilled by love
- God requires nothing which is not comprehended in the word "love"



Put on Christ (13:11-14)

- Knowing the time: "the hour has already come."
- "To awake out of sleep": to abandon stupid, fatal indifference to eternal things
- Some have thought that St. Paul referred to the speedy second coming of the Lord
- He did not know the time of that event, nor did any man
- He meant that today our salvation is nearer than yesterday



Put on Christ (13:11-14)

- The night: period before the full salvation
- The day: the salvation (my departure or the second coming)
- The works of darkness: Such sinful deeds as men do under the cover of darkness, and all sinful deeds
- The armor of light: The armor worn in the light, and with which the Christian will be clothed when the day comes (Ephes 6:11)



Put on Christ (13:11-14)

- Walking properly implies an honest, upright, pure life, which is no concealment
- Revelry and drunkenness: night-time partying
- Lewdness and lust: varied forms of impurity; the one pointing to definite acts of profanity, the other more general
- Strife and envy: These followed naturally upon revels and drunkenness, and shameless sensuality



Put on Christ (13:11-14)

- This passage is referred to by St. Augustine as the cause of his conversion
- It rebuked his own sins, which were the common sins of his time
- Possess Christ, have Him in you, and you in Him, so Christ only may be seen in you
- Direct none of your attention to the cravings of your corrupt nature, how you may provide for their gratification



Conclusion

- Which word summarizes a Christian's responsibility to the government?
- From where do governments get their authority?
- What happens if we resist governing authorities?
- What is a major responsibility of government?
- What should serve as motivation for Christians' submission to the government?



Conclusion

- What else is required of Christians in regard to government?
- What one thing should we owe to others?
- What are we to put on?
- What are we not to provide opportunities for?