

VI. Laws of Divine Establishment and the Royal Family Honor Code: Establishment Morality Compared with Establishment Integrity

Romans 13:3 takes up the subject of the proper function of human government and the citizen's responsibility to his nation.

The verse begins with the explanatory use of the post positive conjunctive particle: *gar* - "for," followed by the plural subject, the noun: *archon* - "governing authorities."

All the major Bible dictionaries and lexicons define the term as a designation of Roman or Jewish officials without specifying the particular office.

The origin of the term goes back to ancient Greece. Let's note this interesting information from: **A Dictionary of Ancient Greek Civilization. London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1966; p. 51:**

ARCHON. The Greek word archon meant someone who commanded and this somewhat vague term was also used to denote the supreme magistracy of certain cities. In the beginning, the archons were two officials chosen by the nobles to govern together with a king whose sole, absolute sovereignty they were no longer willing to recognize.

The king was not deposed but was deprived of all political powers and left with only his religious attributes. Of the two archons, one was the real leader of the government and the other, known as the polemarch, commanded the army.

In 686 [b.c.], the three personages combined to form a college of archons which was open to all the nobles and which was renewed annually. The most important of the three was the archon who presided over the political life of the state; the fundamental idea of the office was vested in him and his name figured in all official decrees.

But the social upheavals of this period, the weakening of the aristocratic families, the development of an economy that was no longer exclusively dependent on agriculture, and the need to protect a whole class of the population from famine and poverty all created so many problems that by the middle of the 7th century b.c. the number of archons was raised to nine by the appointment of six qesmoetai, thesmothetai ["junior archons," Liddel & Scott, p. 795a]. These thesmothetai were responsible for the introduction and application of new legislation that answered the needs of the times and by their appointment the judiciary powers, which had formerly been in the hands of the heads of families, were transferred to the state.

By the time of first-century Rome the word referred to any ruler with delegated responsibility.

In our context in Romans, it refers to rulers who have received their delegated responsibilities from God and who possess and exercise governmental power.

"Governing authorities" is followed by the present active indicative of the verb: *e'imi* + the negative *o'uk* - "are not."

present - Duration; the principle of establishment was begun in the past and continues to the present time.

active - Legitimate governing authorities produce the action of the verb. In our government this refers to elected officials. However, all elected officials plus all those to whom they delegate power, e.g., agents and bureaucrats, are shackled by the Bill of Rights amended to our Constitution.

indicative - Declarative; a statement of doctrinal fact regarding what governing officials are not to do under the Laws of Divine Establishment.

This is followed by the predicate nominative subject from the noun: *phobos* - "a cause of fear."

CTL: "*For governing authorities are not a cause of fear*"

Duly established authorities are delegated authority to administer the laws which were agreed upon by the citizens through elected representatives.

If there is any fear associated with their authority it is perceived by those who break the law, not by those who order their lives in accordance with the laws of divine establishment.

Those who are a part of this latter group are indicated by the dative of advantage from the adjective: *agathos* - “good;” + the noun: *'ergon* - “work.”

CTL: “*For the governing authorities are not a cause of fear for the function of good work .*”

Agathos means “good of intrinsic value” as is indicated by:

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. “agathos”:

inner worth, esp. moral; what is good and right; what is intrinsically valuable or morally good; advantageous.

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. “ergon”:

the deeds of men which exhibit a consistent moral character.

And so *agathos ergon*, or “good work” can very easily be translated in this passage by our vocabulary term, “establishment morality.”

Romans 13:3 - For the governing authorities are not a cause of fear for the function of establishment morality.

Establishment morality is the expected modus operandi of every citizen and is the fulfillment of the opening mandate of this passage:

Romans 13:1 - All mankind: keep on subordinating yourselves to governing authorities.

Willing subordination is classified in Romans 13:3 as “good work” which does not cause one to fear governing authorities.

Fear is the emotion which emerges in the minds of those who are in opposition to the laws of divine establishment.

This fear is stimulated by the penalty or punishment clauses attached to the laws of the commonwealth and imposed whenever laws are violated.

Governing authorities are the ones delegated the authority to impose these penalties under due process of law.

This takes us back to the last phrase of Philippians 2:12 which referred to the mature believer’s attitude toward God as “reverence and respect.”

The citizen who willingly submits to the laws of divine establishment does so with reverence and respect.

Whenever he violates the civil or criminal codes, he has lost his respect for the law and thus becomes fearful of the law’s penalty clause.

It is only upon such violation that the governing authorities turn their attention to the citizen. That which causes them to become a cause of fear is stated next. First of all, we have the adversative conjunction which sets up a contrast: *'alla* - “but;” then, the dative of disadvantage from the adjective: *kakos* - “evil.”

In our context, governing authorities administer punishment to those who express their opposition to the fourth divine institution by means of breaking the law.

Their violation of the law is referred to as, *kakos*, and is translated “*evil*,” but the best translation is “*crime*.” And so, our corrected translation reads this way:

Romans 13:3 - For the governing authorities are not a cause of fear for the function of establishment morality but for the function of criminality.

Criminal activity according to the laws of our country does not include discontent and argumentation and even some forms of civil disobedience.

However, as we have noted from our study of Philippians 2:14, this kind of opposition to authority is prohibited the Christian.

Thus, again we see the differentiation between morality and integrity emerge from the Scripture.

Whereas the unbeliever can maintain his morality while expressing discontent and argumentation and even in the function of certain forms of civil disobedience, the Christian is under orders to avoid all these.

The rights of the unbeliever to do so are protected by our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

However, for the believer, Scripture overrides the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Doctrine demands that the Christian not engage in discontent and argumentations, much less civil disobedience.

We have classified such compliance as establishment integrity.

Now get this: if we are to take a stand against human laws which would have us violate inflexible Biblical mandates, then we are also to submit to Biblical mandates which restrict our activities beyond that which human laws require.