

## Romans 13:1-3 NASB

1Every aperson is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. 3For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

## Romans 13:1-3 NLT

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. 2 So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. 3 For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you.

**\*\* God ordains authority as an institution, not every individual who occupies it.**

**\*\*Authority (Greek: *exousia*) refers to *ordered power*, not personal virtue. In other words, Paul is talking about the *structure that restrains chaos*, not baptizing whoever happens to sit in the chair.**

**\*\*God is the source of the concept of authority, not the moral sponsor of every officeholder.**

- God establishes authority
- God judges rulers relentlessly
- The *institution* of authority is ordained
- The *person* in authority is accountable
- The *people* in a democracy share responsibility

### **Acts 16:37**

35 The next morning the city officials sent the police to tell the jailer, “Let those men go!” 36 So the jailer told Paul, “The city officials have said you and Silas are free to leave. Go in peace.”

37 But Paul replied, “They have publicly beaten us without a trial and put us in prison—and we are Roman citizens. So now they want us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to release us!”

38 When the police reported this, the city officials were alarmed to learn that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. 39 So they came to the jail and apologized to them. Then they brought them out and begged them to leave the city. 40 When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left town.

### **Acts 25:10–11**

8 Paul denied the charges. “I am not guilty of any crime against the Jewish laws or the Temple or the Roman government,” he said.

9 Then Festus, wanting to please the Jews, asked him, “Are you willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there?”

10 But Paul replied, “No! This is the official Roman court, so I ought to be tried right here. You know very well I am not guilty of harming the Jews. 11 If I have done something worthy of death, I don’t refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me. I appeal to Caesar!”

12 Festus conferred with his advisers and then replied, “Very well! You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you will go!”

**\*\* Paul names systems and structures (“powers and principalities”), not just personal demons.**

### **Ephesians 6:10-13 NLT**

10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

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### **Exodus 3:7-8**

7 Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

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### **Proverbs 31:8-9 NLT**

8 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves;  
ensure justice for those being crushed.  
9 Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless,  
and see that they get justice.

**\*\* Prayer that refuses responsibility is disobedience, not devotion.**

### **Ezekiel 34:1-4 (NASB)**

Then the word of the Lord came to me saying,

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?”

You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.

Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost;

## Ezekiel 3 4:1–4 NLT

**Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn’t shepherds feed their sheep? 3 You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. 4 You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured.**

Ezekiel is prophesying **during exile**. Israel is not suffering randomly; they are suffering because **those entrusted with power abused it**. God does not first blame foreign nations. He indicts Israel’s own leaders.

The “shepherds” here are **kings, nobles, priests, and administrators** and anyone exercising authority.

**\*\* God frames injustice not merely as personal immorality, but as malpractice of leadership.**

The word translated “*ruled*” (“with force and with cruelty”) comes from:

- **ḥāzaq** – to dominate, overpower
- **perekh** – harshness, ruthless oppression  
This same word *perekh* is used in **Exodus** to describe Egyptian oppression of Israel.

## Zechariah 7:8–10

8 Then this message came to Zechariah from the LORD: 9 “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. 10 Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each other.

**\*\* Justice in Scripture always centers the vulnerable because power asymmetry creates moral obligation.**

“Execute true judgment” = **mishpat emet**

- **Mishpat** – justice as fair order, legal protection, accountability
- **Emet** – truth, reliability, faithfulness

**\*\* Religion that ignores oppression is not neutral it’s false.**

## Luke 10:30–37

30 Jesus replied and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

31 “And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 “Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 “But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,

34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35 “On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’

36 “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?”

37 And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

17The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

18And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

19“Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

20“Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”

The Samaritan is “moved with compassion”:

- **splagchnizomai** – gut-level mercy, visceral response