

THE NATURE OF THE ORDINATION OF THE STATE
IN ROMANS 13:1-7

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Throughout most of Church history Rom. 13:1-7 has been considered the central, most important biblical statement on government.¹ In History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, J. W. Allen claims that "the 13th chapter of Romans contains the most important words ever written for the history of political thought."² And, as John Howard Yoder has observed, "until the crisis of Nazism struck into the heartland of Protestant theological scholarship, there was little question about the centrality and adequacy of Romans 13:1-7 as the foundation of a Christian doctrine of the state."³

Since then there has been such an extensive reassessment of the meaning of Rom. 13:1-7 and its place in formulating a "doctrine of the state" by theologians and exegetes that there now exists a bewildering array of information and conflicting positions on this most important subject.

¹To say that it has been the most important text on government is not to say that it has always been considered the decisive, foundational text on government.

²As quoted in F. F. Bruce, Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 176.

³John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 193.

At the very heart of the controversy is the meaning of the first verse in the passage where Paul states that the existing authorities are "ordained" or "established" by God. Precisely how should this statement be understood? In what sense are the governing authorities (referred to from now on as the "state") "ordained?"

The purpose of this thesis is to decide in what sense the state is ordained (from now on referred to simply as "ordination," or "the ordination"). Later in this chapter a brief survey of the various positions which have been proposed as ways of understanding the sense of the state's ordination will be presented.

History shows Christians using these verses to support a number of diverse ethical positions. A large part of the early Church understood that rebellion and violence against Rome would be contrary to the teachings of Jesus on loving enemies and Paul's on the ordination of the state.⁴ As a result, they suffered persecution and martyrdom without retaliation.

At a later date in history Martin Luther used the Romans 13 passage to subdue the peasants in their revolt against evil nobility during the early stages of the Reformation.⁵

Medieval monarchs found it much to their profit to use

⁴Gerhard E. Caspary, Politics and Exegesis: Origen and the Two Swords (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 125-181.

⁵Gunner Hillerdal, "Romans 13 and Luther's Doctrine of the 'Two Kingdoms,'" Lutheran World 10(1963): 14.

the passage as a basis for the Divine Right of Kings doctrine, a defense of monarchical absolutism.⁶

More recently, Rom. 13:1-7 was used to give support to the Manifest Destiny conception where America was viewed as ordained of God to be a model society on the earth. This concept was used to justify American expansions into Texas, Oregon, New Mexico, and California. It was also the support for involvement in Cuba, Alaska, Hawaii and the Philippines.⁷

While the influence of Luther's interpretation of the passage has often been seen as being partly responsible for the rise of Hitlerism, it is probably more accurate to say that certain applications of his interpretation kept a large portion of the German Church passive towards Nazi evil at that time in history.⁸

The affect of Romans 13 on ethical situations has seemed to be, more often than not, negative. J. C. O'Neill has gone as far as to write that "These seven verses have caused more unhappiness and misery in the Christian East and West than any other seven verses in the New Testament."⁹

Perhaps one would want to qualify O'Neill's statement

⁶Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Divine Right of Kings."

⁷Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Manifest Destiny."

⁸Hillerdal, "Romans 13 and Luther's Doctrine of the 'Two Kingdoms,'" pp. 10-23.

⁹J. C. O'Neill, Paul's Letter to the Romans (Baltimore: Penguin, 1975), p. 209.

by noting that it is the interpretation and application of the verses that has caused the misery and not the verses themselves. Nevertheless, these verses have always been crucial in the formulation of Christian political ethics. They are even more crucial today in light of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the tense political relationships around the world.

Limitations

It is neither the purpose nor within the scope of this study to formulate ethical duties regarding the state. For the sake of clarification however, at various points of the discussion it may be necessary to mention how certain ethical duties are related.

Methodology

The first step of this study will be to survey briefly how various scholars have understood the nature of the state's ordination. This survey is included in chapter one.

The second step, covered in chapter two, is to examine the context and background of Rom. 13:1-7. This consists of studying the authenticity and integrity of the Book of Romans, its date, the purpose(s) of the book, the composition of the Church at Rome, the character of the Roman government, and a look at the relevant political thought of that age as it bears on the subject of God's relation to the nations.

Chapter two provides the background for a concise exegesis of Rom. 13:1-7 in chapter three. Chapter four concludes the study with a summary of the information covered and

how this data fits together in order to answer the research question.

The approach used throughout this study is exegetical and not theological; that is, only that which can be demonstrated to be Paul's intent or meaning is admissible. Attempting to interpret Paul in such a way that he fits into technical categories defined within present systematic theologies is invalid unless it can be demonstrated that Paul held to the same system.

Survey of Positions

The following survey is not meant to be a comprehensive, historical presentation. Its purpose is to provide enough exposure to many of the different ways ordination has been understood by biblical scholars so as to understand better the nature of the problem involved in the interpretation of Rom. 13:1-7.

A list of exegetes representing each of the following positions is provided. These lists are not meant to be exhaustive. The criteria used for selection are two: 1) The relevance the author might have for the theological community. 2) Clarity of the author's position on ordination. Often, an exegete has assumed a particular view regarding ordination but has not stated it explicitly, making it difficult to know with certainty his interpretation. This writer has tried to include only those scholars whose positions were clear enough to be certain of their meaning.

The terminology used to describe the following posi-

tions is not necessarily that employed by those holding that position. The positions are as follow:

1) That the ordination was given at creation and refers to a phenomenon of relationship inherent in that creation by its very nature. The government is ordained in much the same way as matrimony, parent-child relations, community, etc. The dominion given to man over creation in Gen. 1:28 is often understood as referring to government. This ordination extends to all rulers, evil as well as good. Two authors preferring this view are William Shedd¹⁰ and William Stringfellow. The following quotes belong to Stringfellow who speaks of the ordination of the State as vocation:

In the biblical story [Genesis], the equation of vocation and worship is expressed in the preeminence attributed to human life. The Word of God bestows upon humans [Gen. 1:28] dominion over the rest of creation. It is not for the aggrandizement of human life that dominion is conferred, but for the sake of . . . service to human beings, the enhancement of human life in society . . .¹¹

The references in Romans to political authority as instituted by God and as God's servant recall that political authority--along with every other creature--has authenticity and fulfillment . . . in recognition and adoration of the sovereignty of the Word of God within the purview of human dominion [given in Gen. 1:28]. On the other hand, the profound distortion (though not obliteration) of that very vocation for the fallen political principalities is described, in Revelation¹²

¹⁰William G. T. Shedd, A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967; reprint ed., New York: Scribner's, 1879), p. 375.

¹¹William Stringfellow, Conscience and Obedience: The Politics of Romans 13 and Revelation 13 in the Light of the Second Coming (Waco: World Books Publishers, 1977), p. 29.

¹²Ibid, p. 35.

2) That the ordination is a "preservation order" extending to all rulers, evil as well as good. The state spoken of in Romans 13 received its ordination not at the creation of the world, as in the preceding view, but only after the Fall. The Fall made it necessary to have government to keep men in check, to preserve their welfare, due to the introduction of sin. This ordination extends to evil rulers because what is actually ordained is essentially authority (or power) itself which can be misused, but not with the obliteration of its ordination. Authority and power are necessary because men sin against each other.

This is a very popular position on ordination among exegetes. Most notably, perhaps, Martin Luther held to this idea:

. . . there was no government of the state before sin, for there was no need of it. Civil government is a remedy required by our corrupted nature. It is necessary that lust be held in check by the bonds of the laws and by penalties.¹³

. . . there is no government that is not (divinely) instituted. Governments (at times) are only usurped and managed in ways not ordained (by God). So also other blessings (of God) are misused, and yet do not lose their value (by such misuse). Money, for example, does not become evil through (the evil use) of theft. Hence we must explain the words thus: Wherever there is governmental power, there it is instituted by God.¹⁴

Ernst Käsemann also holds this position:

¹³Martin Luther, Luther's Works, trans. George V. Schick, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1958), p. 104.

¹⁴Martin Luther, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, trans. J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), p. 165.

Paul is not [in Romans 13], however, reflecting on the process by which those powers that be of which he speaks in v. 1b came into existence. For him the man who has asserted himself politically has a God-bestowed function and authority simply as the possessor of power de facto. This is why I translate the Greek word *exousia* and its derivatives by power [German *Gewalt*], powers, holders of power: I want to include tyranny and despotism, which in any event reigned supreme over wide stretches of the Roman Empire.¹⁵

Others who interpret ordination this way are Emil Brunner,¹⁶ Philip Watson,¹⁷ Augustine,¹⁸ C. K. Barrett,¹⁹ and Herbert Gale.²⁰ The latter two, Barret and Gale, find an analogy to state ordination in the ordination of Divine Law: it also was instituted because of human sin and can be abused yet without destroying its ordination.

3) That the state was ordained when Christ subjected the angels as his servants through his death and resurrection. These angelic powers stand behind and control/influence the earthly powers. This ordination does not extend to evil rulers. This remarkable position is perhaps most often asso-

¹⁵Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 202.

¹⁶Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative: A Study in Christian Ethics (London: Lutterworth Press, 1937), pp. 445-48.

¹⁷Philip Watson, The State as a Servant of God (London: S.P.C.K., 1946), pp. 20-21.

¹⁸Augustine, Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans (and unfinished) Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, text and trans. Paula F. Landes (Chico, California: Scholar's Press, 1982), p. 43.

¹⁹C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), p. 245.

²⁰Herbert M. Gale, "Paul's View of the State," Interpretation 6(1952): 409-14.

ciated with Oscar Cullmann:

. . . in Romans 13:1ff Paul uses a Greek expression (exousiai) which, exactly like the designation "rulers of this world," refers in profane Greek to the earthly authorities, the State, but at the same time means to Jewish readers "invisible powers." [i.e., invisible angelic beings]²¹

. . . they [the angelic powers] have been brought into subjection and stand in the service of Christ [through his victory on the cross].²²

As long as they [angels and earthly governments] remain in bondage to Christ, however, they stand in God's order. Therefore it is proper to be subject to them to the extent that they stay within their limits; for to that extent they are God's servants²³

Also holding to a position quite similar to this are Karl Barth²⁴ and H. Berkof.²⁵

4) That the state is ordained only in the sense of God "using" it. In this understanding *τεταγμένα* would not be translated "ordained" or "instituted," or any word with that kind of nuance, but rather "ordered." John Howard Yoder best represents this interpretation:

God is not said to create or institute or ordain the powers that be, but only to order them, to put them in order, sovereignly to tell them where they belong, what is their place. It is not as if there was a time when there was no government and then God made government through a new creative intervention; there has been hierarchy and authority and power since human society existed. Its

²¹Oscar Cullmann, The State in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), pp. 65-66.

²²Ibid, p. 69. This position is explained more fully in chapter three of this thesis.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Karl Barth, Church and State, trans. G. Ronald Howe (London: S.C.M. Press, 1962).

²⁵H. Berkof, Christ and the Powers, trans. John Howard Yoder (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1962).

exercise has involved domination, disrespect for human dignity, and real or potential violence ever since sin has existed. Nor is it that in his ordering of it he specifically, morally approves of what government does. The sergeant does not produce the soldiers he drills, the librarian does not approve of the book he catalogs and shelves. Likewise God does not take responsibility for the existence of the rebellious "powers that be" or for their shape or identity; they already are. What the text says is that he orders them, brings them into line, that by his permissive government he lines them up with his purpose . . . It applies to the government of dictators and tyrants as well as to constitutional democracies.²⁶

A scholar who agrees generally with this interpretation is Archie Penner. His view is only slightly different. He sees God ordering the course of nations primarily (or exclusively) for effecting his wrath on other nations or groups.²⁷

5) That God ordains every government " . . . by virtue of an act of institution, i.e., a specific providential action The events whereby it came to rule are themselves providential."²⁸ This view understands that God has all events in history predestined, and if a government exists, it exists because he has decreed it. While those who prefer this position may differ among themselves as to the "degree" of predestination involved (and whether God is approving or not approving of what he has "decreed"), they are all in agreement that God does not allow governments to rise up of their own accord; in this sense all governments are ordained of God.

²⁶Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, p. 203.

²⁷Archie Penner, The Christian, The State and the New Testament (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1955).

²⁸Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, p. 200; Note that this is Yoder's description of this position, not his own interpretation.

This position is different from Yoder's. In Yoder's view the creation and development of governments on the earth is not necessarily always under God's direct, sovereign control (part of his decree, for instance), but that God intervenes and uses these "already existing" governments as he sees fit.

It is important to note that the first three positions in this survey could also be held by an interpreter who fits into the category under discussion, i.e., an exegete who has predestinarian presuppositions.

The following understand ordination as referring to God's providence:

Clinton Morrison:

If men hold authority in the State, they are God's servants, for the State is part of the world order whose beginning and end and powers are divinely established.²⁹

Charles Hodge:

Not only is human government a divine institution, but the form in which that government exists, and the persons by whom its functions are exercised, are determined by his providence.³⁰

Rudolf Schnackenburg:

The statement that the powers that be are ordained of God (v.1c) is especially significant, making it possible to refer the power of the state directly rather than remotely back to God, the primordial source of all power . . . Semitic thought was directed towards the historical and the concrete, the course of history as governed by God.

²⁹Clinton Morrison, The Powers That Be: Earthly Rulers and Demonic Powers in Romans 13:1-7 (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), p. 106.

³⁰Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953; reprint ed., 1886 rev. ed.), p. 406.

God deals with men and nations according to his preordained plan. The ideas propounded by Paul are already to be found in the Old Testament and later Judaism³¹

6) That the principle or concept of just governments is what is ordained and not necessarily individual governments. This ordination is held by some to have taken place at creation and others after the Fall. This theory appears to be the same as the first and second in this list, but it differs in that this ordination does not extend to governments that are, or become, "unjust:"

As long as a given government lives up to a certain minimum set of requirements, then that government may properly claim the sanction of divine institution. If, however, a government fails adequately to fulfill the functions divinely assigned to it, it loses its authority.³²

Among those who understand ordination this way are Herman Ridderbos,³³ Calvin,³⁴ Origen,³⁵ J. L. Garrett,³⁶ and L. H. Marshall.³⁷ Again, persons holding to this view may also

³¹Rudolf Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 240.

³²Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, p. 201; Note again that this is Yoder's description of the position and not his own interpretation.

³³Herman Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of his Theology, trans. J.R. DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 322-323.

³⁴John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 479.

³⁵Caspary, Politics and Exegesis: Origen and the Two Swords, pp. 141-145.

³⁶J. L. Garrett, "The Dialectic of Romans 13:1-7 and Revelation 13: Part One." Journal of Church and State 18(3, 1976): 433-42.

³⁷L. H. Marshall, The Challenge of New Testament Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 347.

have various predestinarian presuppositions.

7) That the ordination applies only to the Roman government existing at the time that Paul wrote. Marcus Borg argues for this interpretation:

[Paul] approaches the Old Testament (and perhaps New Testament) idea of pagan governments as God's instruments of wrath. Just as Assyria and Babylon in the eighth and sixth centuries before Christ were God's ministers of judgment against Israel at a specific moment in history, so now Rome is God's minister of judgment against that particularity which separates Jew and Gentile. This suggests that Paul is not speaking generally of the status of civil government but, by analogy to Jeremiah and Isaiah, of a particular task assigned to this particular government at this time in history.³⁸

Summary

This survey reveals that there can be several issues involved in understanding ordination. The first is the time at which the ordination occurred. There are three options here: it was either before the Fall or after it, or it was at that specific time in history when God wanted to use Rome for a specific purpose (as in Borg's view, above).

A second issue, affecting the first, is the question of who or what is ordained. Is something abstract established, such as authority, power, a principle or concept, or something concrete, i.e., governments which actually exist in history? Answering this question decides whether a government can "lose" its ordination status or not (by reaching a certain level of sinfulness, for instance). Also, the problem of whe-

³⁸Marcus Borg, "A New Context for Romans xiii." New Testament Studies 19(2, 1973): 216.

ther all levels of "government" are included, such as (at the time Romans was written) provincial government, city, religious, Rome, etc., is affected by settling the issue of who or what is ordained.

The third and most difficult issue concerns God's providence or sovereignty in the whole matter. Does God ordain/cause all things and approve of them, or ordain all things and yet not approve of some? Does God allow governments to arise on their own and just use them as he sees fit? Is God the remote Ordainer of government because it is inherent in his creation?

These are some of the issues which must be addressed if the nature of the ordination of the state in Rom.13:1-7 is to be understood.

CHAPTER II

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF ROMANS 13:1-7

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine a number of issues concerning the background and context of Romans which are necessary for the proper exegesis of Rom. 13:1-7. These issues include the authenticity and integrity of the Book of Romans, its date, the purpose(s) of the book, the composition of the Church at Rome, the character of the Roman government, and an examination of relevant political thought of that age as it bears on the subject of God's relation to the nations (with special emphasis on material which most closely parallels Paul's thought and predates it).

Authenticity and Integrity

On the whole there has been very little doubt that the book of Romans is a genuine product of the apostle Paul.¹ Externally there is strong evidence of the authenticity of the book from the Muratorian fragment and the canon of Marcion; internally there is the support from both the style of writing

¹W. G. Kummel, ed., Introduction to the New Testament, rev. ed., trans. by P. Feine and J. Behm (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), p. 314.

and the content.²

Concerning the integrity of the book, there has been more disagreement. A few passages, 1:9-2:1, 3:25, 7:25b, 13:1-7, and chapter sixteen have been thought to be interpolations by a number of scholars, but again, the opinion of the majority is against such suggestions.³ The proposal, offered by James Kallas,⁴ that Rom. 13:1-7 is an interpolation, deserves a closer look.

Kallas' argument is based on several observations. First, he thinks that since the textual history of chapters fifteen and sixteen show reworking of the text, it is not unreasonable to suppose that such could have taken place with chapter thirteen as well.

Second, since Paul nowhere else discusses church-state relations, it is at once alien and suspect to find it in chapter thirteen.

Third, Rom. 13:1-7 is a self-contained unit of thought, independent of context and abruptly introduced, with no logical reason for being there.

Fourth, Kallas claims that the section interrupts the normal flow of the context. If Rom. 13:8-13 are read immediately after the closing of chapter twelve there is very smooth progression in thought; verses one through seven break this

²E. F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 303.

³Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 314.

⁴James Kallas, "Romans xiii.1-7: An Interpolation," New Testament Studies 11(4, 1965): 365-74.

flow.

Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, Kallas argues that verses one through seven contradict basic Pauline ideas and forms of expression. One area in which contradiction can be seen is that the passage assumes the world will continue on indefinitely and therefore the church needs to have its relationship to temporal authority defined. But Paul's eschatology, in distinction to this, was that Christ's second coming was near at hand.

Another area of contradiction is supposedly found in the assertion that in every other place where Paul speaks of authorities and rulers he means spiritual-angelic beings or demonic authorities, while in Rom. 13 he is obviously referring to earthly authorities. Furthermore, Paul everywhere else treats these rulers and authorities as evil, rebellious spirits who act not as God's servants but as enemies of God and his people.

Kallas's final point is that in Paul's usual view ". . . it is the innocent one who suffers most of all in this world, it is the Christian who is most abused in this evil age ruled by malignant celestial hosts opposed to God."⁵ This appears to be in contradiction with the statements in Rom. 13:1-7 that the authorities reward the good and punish the evil.

Kallas's contention that Rom. 13:1-7 is an interpola-

⁵Ibid., p. 371.

tion does not have wide support among scholars⁶ and his arguments can be shown to be less than decisive. His first observation regarding the textual history of chapters fifteen and sixteen really has no force since chapter thirteen has no comparable textual history. He might just as well have argued that Rom. 13:1-7 could be an interpolation because interpolations are found elsewhere in ancient literature. There is no textual evidence that the Book of Romans ever circulated without 13:1-7 or with a different set of verses.⁷

The second observation is an argument from silence and is therefore quite weak. An argument from silence which supports Pauline authorship is just as easily formulated. For instance, one might argue that Paul does not mention church-state relations in his other letters because he had already taught the Christians in the cities he had visited about such an important issue. Since he had not yet visited Rome, it would be quite natural that he should include it in his letter.

Another point worth mentioning concerning this second argument of Kallas' is that in a number of instances Paul teaches on an important subject which only appears in one letter. One example in particular concerns Paul's teachings on

⁶Among those who consider Rom. 13:1-7 an interpolation are H. Windisch, M. Dibelius, A. Pallis, A. Loisy, E. Barnikol, and J. O'Neill.

⁷It is only fair to note, though, that no external evidence to the section has been found prior to a quote by Origen of Heracleon and also that Epiphanius' and Tertullian's versions both apparently omit it. See E. Barnikol, "Der Nicht-paulinische Ursprung der absoluten Obrigkeitsbejahung von Römer 13:1-7," Studien zum Neuen Testament und zür Patristik, 72 (1961):65-133.

marriage and divorce in First Corinthians. These are quite important issues and yet they only appear in that letter.

The arguments having to do with 13:1-7 being independent of and interrupting the context are untenable for a number of reasons. One, Paul is free to be multi-directional and even somewhat compulsive in his writing and indeed this can be seen in several of his letters. This is especially true concerning his paranetic material: ". . . the structure of the Pauline parenthesis in its detail is built up by co-ordination and not by subordination and deduction, by association of ideas and not by logic."⁸ Also, it is possible that he is quoting or paraphrasing a source that he respected and which he decided best expressed his thought. Moreover, Paul is free to amend his compositions and perhaps 13:1-7 was added by him after an initial draft. Finally, not only can good hypotheses be offered as to why Paul would have wanted to include the section,⁹ but there are also convincing arguments demonstrating contextual congruence.¹⁰ These arguments are reserved for chapter three.

The assertion that Rom. 13:1-7 is not in line with

⁸Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 199.

⁹See the various propositions discussed by C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), 2:651-655.

¹⁰See John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 197-200, for one excellent argument.

Paul's eschatological views since it implies an indefinitely long continuation of the world has no demonstrable exegetical support. On the basis of Kallas' logic on this issue it would appear that one could also argue that a large portion of paraneptic material found in Pauline letters is not really authentic. Again assuming Kallas' reasoning, it would appear that Paul's teaching in First Corinthians seven concerning marriage or his exhortations in Ephesians five and six regarding husband-wife, parent-child and master-slave relations also imply an indefinite continuation of the present order. Yet even in the midst of his discussion of marriage in First Corinthians seven Paul mentions that the time is short!

It seems more reasonable to think that Paul wrote what he did in Rom. 13:1-7 for the similar reason of meeting an ethical need: how should Christians, who are answerable only to the ultimate authority, i.e., God, relate to earthly authorities and why? The need is similar to other relationships that Paul addresses.

It is probably the case that Kallas' argument is actually based (perhaps unconsciously) on a particular interpretation of the nature of the ordination mentioned in Rom. 13:1-7 which appears to be out of tune with Paul. If this is so, then it is pertinent to note that Kallas has not demonstrated that such an interpretation is the correct one.

The contention that Rom. 13:1-7 is not Pauline because only here are the rulers and authorities earthly and good whereas in all the rest of Paul's writings they are spiritual

and evil is a complicated issue and will be fully explored in chapter three of this thesis. It is sufficient at this point to note the following: One, it has been well-argued by others¹¹ that when Paul mentions rulers and authorities he understands a particular relationship that includes both celestial and earthly parties and that Rom. 13:1-7 fits in quite well with this thought. Two, again it seems that Kallas has a particular interpretation of how the state is ordained and it is this interpretation which is at the heart of his reasoning. He apparently thinks that the author of Rom. 13:1-7 understood an ordination in such a thoroughly positive way that it stands in direct contradiction to Pauline thought elsewhere. But as can be seen in chapter one of this paper, there are a number of different ways that the ordination can be understood, ways which do not see an inherent contradiction. Kallas has assumed, but not demonstrated, that his interpretation is correct. This point also applies to his argument that Rom. 13:1-7 contradicts the Pauline teaching that it is the good person who suffers, usually at the hands of the rulers and authorities. There are ways of understanding Rom. 13:1-7 which harmonize well this apparent contradiction. Again, a full discussion of this is reserved for chapter three.

¹¹Both Oscar Cullmann, The State in the New Testament, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), and G. B. Caird, Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937) spend entire books in such arguments.

Date

According to C. E. B. Cranfield and most scholars, it is certain that Romans was written sometime during Winter or early Spring between late A.D. 54 and early A.D. 59.¹² This can be ascertained by comparing information found in Romans and Acts with extra-biblical information concerning the political activities of Gallio and Porcius Festus.

The divergence of opinion within the above dates is due to a number of factors, but largely to the difficulty associated with pinning down the exact dates of the relevant reigns of Gallio and Festus.¹³ Although opinion varies concerning exact dating, most scholars seem to favor either A.D. 56 or 57.

Purpose

It seems reasonable to suggest that Paul had more than one purpose for writing Romans. A practical reason can be seen in his concern that he have a base of operations for his anticipated Spanish mission. A doctrinal reason can be seen in his careful "laying out" of the Gospel as he preaches it. A conciliatory purpose can certainly be seen in chapter fourteen and perhaps also in chapters nine through eleven. A pastoral purpose can be seen throughout the letter, but especial-

¹²Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 1:12.

¹³For a detailed explanation of the factors involved in the dating of Romans, see Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary, 1:12-16, and Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, 3d ed. rev. (Downers Grove, Il.: Intervarsity Press, 1970), pp. 396-97.

ly so in chapters twelve through fourteen. Many reasons can and have been suggested, and many have argued for one reason as being primary.¹⁴ For the purposes of this paper, it is not necessary to wade through the complex ins and outs of this issue; it is sufficient to note that Paul's overall reason was the propagation of the gospel and the building up of the believers.

Composition of the Roman Church

The majority of present day scholars agree that the Church at Rome was a mix of both Jewish and Gentile Christians, with the Gentiles comprising the majority.¹⁵ There may have been more Gentiles than Jews due to the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius in A.D. 49. The ban was no longer in effect when Paul wrote, since Nero was in power, but it is possible that many either had not yet returned or decided not to. A statement by Ambrosiaster suggests that Jews formed the core of the Church at first, but Gentiles came to be more numerous later on.¹⁶

¹⁴See Karl P. Donfried, ed., The Romans Debate (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1977) for a complete study of this issue.

¹⁵Alfred Wikenhauser, New Testament Introduction, trans. by Joseph Cunningham (New York: Herder & Herder, 1958), p. 403. Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), is a notable exception. For full discussions on this see Wikenhauser, New Testament Introduction, 2 vols., 1:403-405, and Kummel, Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 309-311.

¹⁶Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 302.

The Roman Government

Rome's rise to power was impressive. In just fifty-three years (221-168) Rome rose from a mere city to become the "mistress of the Mediterranean world."¹⁷ By 63 B.C., when Rome conquered Palestine, she was in control of all the territories bordering the Mediterranean as well as many of the lands beyond.

Initially, Rome fought merely to gain independence from the Etruscans. Later, she engaged in battle to insure her continued independence. But after becoming master of all of southern Italy following the defeat of Pyrrhus, Rome began her "campaign" to dominate the whole Mediterranean world for reasons other than her own independence and security.¹⁸ It is not possible to be certain of why Rome followed a course of expansion as she did. Possible reasons are hunger for power and military dominance, increased wealth, or possibly an awareness of some political "mission."¹⁹

During the expansion of Rome under the republic, her conquered territories were subject to unbridled exploitation by unregulated governors. It was not until the imperial period that this excessive abuse and exploitation was brought under control.²⁰

¹⁷F. F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 285.

¹⁸Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 1:285.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 286-288. For a more detailed discussion

With the coming of Caesar Octavianus, civil wars were brought under control and the Greek and Roman worlds finally had peace. This peace continued, with the exception of a few small wars (including the Jewish Revolt) and many small scale, localized "skirmishes," throughout the period during which Jesus and Paul lived.²¹ This permitted unrestricted travel, increased trade, and in general, "an adequate subsistence in a relatively stable economy for a very large population,"²² although by present standards this "adequate subsistence" would be labeled as barely above the poverty level.²³

The Pax Romana has been considered one of the greatest gifts Rome gave to the world and one of the most important factors contributing to the expansion of Christianity.

Alfred Gross notes this and identifies a number of Rome's other graces:

Her policy protected the West from the constant peril of the Orient. It extended Greek culture, forwarding the social and political ideas of Greece. It consolidated the Empire, thus restoring peace and security to society. It unified the world and destroyed the barriers of nationalism--a fact of immense importance in preparing men for the reception of the Christian Gospel.²⁴

on this, see E. T. Salmon, A History of the Roman World from 30 B.C. to 138 A.D., 6th ed. (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 79-82.

²¹Herbert G. May, ed., Oxford Bible Atlas, 2d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 88.

²²Jacob Neusner, Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 23.

²³E. T. Salmon, A History of the Roman World from 30 B.C. to 138 A.D., 6th ed. (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 23.

²⁴Alfred J. Gross, The Development of Pauline Paraenesis on Civil Obedience. (Ph.D. dissertation, University of

Origen, in Contra Celsum, written about 248, states that Rome is a beneficial phenomenon, providentially arranged by God for the propagation of the Gospel:

So he did, for righteousness has arisen in his [Christ's] days, and there is an abundance of peace which took its commencement at His birth, God preparing the nations for his teaching, that they might be under one prince, the King of the Romans, and that it might not, owing to the want of union among nations, caused by the existence of many kingdoms, be the more difficult for the Apostles to accomplish the task enjoined upon them.²⁵

Rome was at its best, perhaps, during the first five years of Nero's rule, the so-called "quinquennium neronis." It was within this period of time that Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. During this time, Nero brought about many commendable changes in government:

He forbade contests in the circus involving bloodshed, banned capital punishment, reduced taxes . . . accorded slaves to bring civil complaints against unjust masters, pardoned writers of epigrams against him and even those who plotted against him . . . more independence was granted the Senate . . . assistance was granted to cities that had suffered disaster and at the request of the Jewish historian Josephus gave aid to the Jews.²⁶

While there was much that was positive about Rome at this time in history, there was also much that was negative. It is important to go into some detail about this negative side of Roman rule since so much exegetical material on Rom. 13:1-7 tends to emphasize only the positive.

First, although the Roman government had established

Chicago, 1947), p. 101.

²⁵Origen, Contra Celsum, 2:30.

²⁶Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., S.v. "Nero," p. 965.

peace throughout its realm and was, in general, maintaining "law and order" within its provinces, it must be remembered, as Paul was certainly aware, that the "Pax Romana" was primarily a result of Rome's having beaten the Mediterranean world into submission (and consequent taxation) and that the law and order was often characterized by terror and excessive, unwarranted violence.

Second, due to their monotheism and their "theology of the land," the Jewish people experienced a great deal of suffering at the hands of the Roman government as that government maintained law and order in Palestine. A short account of some of these sufferings is in order here.

At the end of the Hasmonean era, during the civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the Romans entered Jewish history at the "invitation" of Hyrcanus. Pompey defeated Aristobulus, killed twelve thousand Jews and then desecrated the Temple by entering it. The Land of Israel lost its political freedom and was stripped of the territory it had conquered under the Maccabaeans.²⁷

The suppression of Jewish resistance did not end with the initial Roman siege of the Temple. There were numerous battles fought until Herod the Great came to his throne in 37 B.C. Thousands of Jews were killed without trial and without mercy.²⁸ Joseph Klausner describes a part of the Roman brutal-

²⁷Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times and Teaching (New York: Menorah Pub. Co., 1925), p. 138.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 141-145. The majority of Klausner's

ity under Herod's rule, beginning with the attack on Jerusalem:

Large numbers were killed in the course of it, and the long siege culminated in a final attack, the terrible nature of which appalled even Herod's stony heart. When the Romans entered the city they spared none, men, women, and children, old and young, tender girls and aged women; in the houses, markets, streets and even in the Temple they slaughtered human beings like sheep. By the time that Herod "the Great" came to the throne (37 B.C.E.) not only the royal city, Jerusalem, but the entire Land of Israel, was a wilderness. During the thirty years which had elapsed from the death of the queen Shelom-Zion till Herod became all powerful (67-37) far more than a hundred thousand Jews were killed.²⁹

During the thirty-three years that Herod ruled, he "drained the blood of the Jews" both literally and figuratively. Josephus sums up Herod's rule as follows:

He was not a king but the most barbarous of tyrants who had ever sat on a throne. He had slain men innumerable, but the lot of those which survived made them envy those that were slain. He not only tortured his subjects individually but oppressed entire cities. Foreign cities he adorned but his own he destroyed; foreign peoples he enriched [through taxation] with the blood of the Jews. So, in place of the former wealth and good laws, there came utter poverty and bad laws. In short, the Jews suffered more in a few years from Herod than their fathers had suffered since they left Babylon and returned in the reign of Xerxes.³⁰

In the Gospel of Matthew it is this Herod who is responsible for the slaughter of the babies in his attempt to kill the King of the Jews.

Although Herod did develop the economy somewhat, by building port cities and roads, he also taxed heavily and un-

information comes from Josephus.

²⁹Ibid., p. 144.

³⁰Josephus, as quoted in Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times and Teaching, p. 148.

fairly, often using the money to gain favor in other countries.³¹

One of Herod's successors, Archelaus, began his rule by killing three thousand Jews in the Temple area, "mingling their blood with their sacrifices," and continued it with more killing and oppressive taxation, finally being exiled by the emperor because his conduct was so bad.³²

When Archelaus was removed, Judaea came under direct Roman rule. Pontius Pilate was the fifth prefect in the new Roman rule and was anti-Semitic. Pilate initially outraged the Jews with his "idolatry" of bringing images of the emperor on his soldiers' standards into Jerusalem and setting up votive tablets in the palace of Herod on Mount Zion.³³ The emperor ordered him to back down on both occasions. Later he seized some of the temple treasury money to pay for the cost of building an aqueduct, and when the Jews began to riot, Pilate applied great brutality and slaughtered many of them.³⁴ Still later he again used unnecessary violence on the Jews when many of them were gathering around a Samaritan prophet

³¹Carl David Soule, "The New Testament and War and Peace," New Testament Studies: Critical Essays in New Testament Interpretation with special reference to the meaning and worth of Jesus, ed. by Edwin P. Booth (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1942), p. 233.

³²Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 153-159.

³³Ralph P. Martin, New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975-78), 1:66-67.

³⁴Ibid. p. 67.

who appeared (to Pilate) to be making messianic claims.³⁵ Shortly after this Pilate was recalled by the emperor because of his brutish ways.

The procurator in power when Paul wrote Romans was Felix, who ruled from A.D. 52 until A.D. 60, when he was replaced with Festus.³⁶ Although the New Testament seems to paint a somewhat sympathetic picture of Felix, he was, in fact, a despot. He is perhaps most notorious for his use of excessive violence and unfairness in dealing with the Zealots, killing even those who were merely suspected of association with the Jewish revolutionaries. Tacitus states that his unjust disciplinary measures were the cause of public revolts and describes his rule with this biting comment: "plunging into every form of cruelty and lust, he exercised the power of a king with the spirit of a slave."³⁷

The economy under direct Roman rule did not improve much since the Romans cared little for stimulating the economy (as had Herod).³⁸ Also, Jews had to pay a water tax, city tax, meat tax, salt tax, road tax and a house tax, in addition to their temple tax.³⁹ It has been estimated that the total

³⁵Ibid. Naturally, Rome viewed Messianic claims as being tantamount to revolt.

³⁶Ibid., p. 68.

³⁷Tacitus. Ann. 12.54; Hist. v,9, as quoted in F. F. Bruce, New Testament History (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1980), p. 345.

³⁸Neusner, Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity, pp. 21-22.

³⁹Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 188.

taxation of Judea and Samaria ranged from between twenty-five to forty per cent of all income, with very little of the money being used to benefit those taxed.⁴⁰ And of course, as previously mentioned, there were times when rulers seized money from the people or taxed them beyond the desires of the emperor.

Roman abuses were serious and numerous. Her treatment of the Jews has been compared to the terror of Bolshevism and the French Revolution.⁴¹ The following statement by Joseph Klausner summarizes the negative side of Roman Rule in Israel:

Such was the political condition of affairs during Jesus' lifetime and during the generation that preceded him . . . from 67 B.C. to 39 A.D. Scarcely a year went by during this century without wars or other disturbances; wars, rebellions, outbreaks, and riots Were we to count up one by one those who fell in the wars and rebellions and those murdered by Herod and the Procurators during this dreadful century, we should reach a total of not less than 200,000 men--and⁴² a appalling number for such a comparatively small country.

Although Rome did allow the Jews a certain amount of self-government, as well as granting them a large measure of religious liberty (especially by exempting them from many of those civil duties which were irreconcilable with their reli-

⁴⁰Soule, "The New Testament and War and Peace," p. 233. There are others though, who believe that the taxation was considerably lower. See Neusner, Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity, p. 22. For a more detailed discussion of provincial taxation, see especially Salmon, A History of the Roman World from 30 B.C. to 138 A.D., pp. 89-93.

⁴¹Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 151.

⁴²Ibid., p. 167.

gion),⁴³ this was not done with benevolent intent. It was not necessary for Rome to have complete control of Israel to carry out its plans.

The same indifference to local sensitivities that very occasionally permitted a procurator to bring his military standards into a city pure of "graven images" likewise encouraged him to ignore territorial affairs of considerable weight.⁴⁴

Rome simply wanted Palestine as a bulwark against Parthia, for the protection of her bread-basket, Egypt:

For Rome, therefore, Palestine was too close to the most dangerous frontier of all to be given up. Indeed, among all the Roman frontiers only the oriental one was now contested by a civilized and dangerous foe. Palestine lay behind the very lines upon which that enemy had to be met. Rome could ill afford such a loss. Egypt, moreover, was her granary, the foundation of her social welfare and wealth. The grain of Egypt sustained the masses of Rome herself. Economic and military considerations thus absolutely required the retention of Palestine. Had Palestine stood in a less strategic locale, matters might have been different.⁴⁵

A third negative issue is that Rome was a thoroughly pagan government, both morally and religiously, with its national devotion to the cult of divi (emperor worship) and its Olympian gods. ". . . the ruling powers [Rome] promote the pagan cultus with all their might (on this cf. R.1:21-25), [and] in practice their official acts are inseparably bound up with this."⁴⁶ Although emperor worship was at first allowed

⁴³Ernest G. Hardy, Christianity and the Roman Government (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894), pp. 23-24.

⁴⁴Neusner, Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity, p. 30.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 33

⁴⁶Gerhard Delling, s.v. "τῶστω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. 8:30.

only of deceased emperors who had benefited the empire, ruling emperors came to be treated as divine also, even before the time when Paul wrote Romans.⁴⁷

In conclusion, the character of the Roman government at this time in history was both good and bad. It was an imperialistic government, doing as it pleased with whom it pleased.

Exact modern analogies to Roman rule of Palestine during Paul and Jesus' lifetimes cannot be attempted; governments are too complex and therefore too unique. General analogies however, do seem legitimate. A modern government that has forcefully taken control of another country for the purpose of having a "bulwark" against potential foes and then allowed that country approximately similar measures of freedom both politically and religiously would compare in a general way to Rome. With this in mind, the relationship of Russia to Poland could be, broadly speaking, a legitimate analogy to Rome's rule of Palestine.

Political Thought

This section examines the political thought and teaching of several sources relevant for this thesis. These sources include the Old Testament, Apocrypha, literature of the Pseudepigrapha (especially apocalyptic), Rabbinic teaching, Josephus, Philo, the Zealots, Jesus, Essene and Stoic thought.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Old Testament

In light of the fact that such a large part of the Old Testament deals with the three party relationship between God, Israel and foreign powers, and that Paul derives a significant portion of his theology both directly and indirectly from the Old Testament, it is important to attempt to understand what this segment of the Bible has to say regarding God's relation to the nations. Such a topic would certainly have been a much discussed issue for those who, like Paul, desired to become teachers and leaders in Roman-controlled Israel.⁴⁸

The overall teaching in the Old Testament regarding God's relation to the nations is that God is the ultimate authority from which all the nations derive their authority and existence.⁴⁹ God is the One who both "makes" the nations and gives them their boundaries as an inheritance.⁵⁰

All the nations thou hast made shall come and bow down before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name.⁵¹

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.⁵²

⁴⁸For a general introduction into Rabbinic discussion on this issue, see George Foot Moore, Judaism in the First Three Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 2:112-118.; and David Polish, "Pharisaism and Political Sovereignty," Judaism 19(4, 1970):415-422.

⁴⁹Deut. 32:8; Ps. 9:17-19, 22:27-28, 33:10-16, et. al.

⁵⁰The exact process whereby God "makes" or "establishes" the nations or their boundaries, is of course, not stated and could be understood in a number of ways.

⁵¹Ps. 86:9.

⁵²Deut. 32:8 (RSV). All passages quoted are Revised

God is also spoken of as setting up nations and ordaining or establishing them:

But when his [Belshazzar] heart was lifted up and his spirit has hardened . . . he was driven from among men . . . until he knew that the Most High God⁵³ rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will.

O LORD, thou hast ordained them [foreign nations] as a judgment; and thou, O ROCK, hast established them for chastisement.⁵⁴

God not only "makes" and "establishes" the nations, but rules over and guides them.⁵⁵ It appears that this rule and guidance of the nations has two main aspects, an active and a passive.

God's active involvement with the nations is seen most clearly perhaps in his using nations for specific purposes such as testing and punishing Israel⁵⁶ (and other nations), and for revealing his glory.⁵⁷ It is also seen in passages that speak of God communicating directly to those in power⁵⁸ or simply causing his will to be done by rulers apparently apart from their being aware of such.⁵⁹

Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

⁵³Dan. 5:22-21 (see also 4:32).

⁵⁴Hab. 1:12 (Habakkuk is speaking primarily of Babylon.)

⁵⁵Ps. 22:27-28, 67:4.

⁵⁶Judg. 2:20-25, Hos. 1:5-12, Isa. 13:17-19, Jer. 1:15-16.

⁵⁷Isa. 45:1-13

⁵⁸2 Chr. 35:20-21, Dan. 5:5-9, Gen. 41:1-7.

⁵⁹Isa. 45:1-13, 13:17; Ezra 7:27; Prov. 21:1.

That God's control is not always "active" is found in those passages which clearly state that nations often do things which God had nothing to do with or that he disapproves of.⁶⁰ Since God is ultimately sovereign, he is still in control, though "passively," in that he allows the nations, at times, to do what they will.

If anyone fiercely assails you [Israel] it will not be from Me. Whoever assails you will fall because of you.⁶¹

An important point regarding God's relation to the nations is that his involvement is not merely "utilitarian." God does not merely use nations for accomplishing a particular end such as testing or punishing Israel, but he is also genuinely concerned for nations for their own sake. He is concerned for their salvation, right to exist, and their material needs, in spite of the fact that they are "pagan."⁶² This concern even extends to the point, in one instance, that Babylon be "paid" for her work of punishing Tyre:

In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was rubbed bare; yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against it. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar King of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt as his recompense for which he labored, because they worked for

⁶⁰ Isa. 47:6-11, 54:15; Zech. 1:15; Hos. 8:4.

⁶¹ Isa. 54:15 (NASB).

⁶² Deut. 32:8; Jer. 46:26, 12:14-17; Gen. 12:3; Jonah.

me, says the Lord GOD.⁶³

This concern for the nations shows itself also in the way God judges nations. Several sections of the Old Testament reveal that God allows a nation to exist and exercise authority as long as he judges them worthy. As long as a nation rules justly (which at times seems to be considered the equivalent of recognizing Yahweh) God allows it to continue to exist as a sovereign nation which not even Israel has a right to touch. But when a nation begins to oppress other nations or its own people, or to practice evil in other forms, God puts them on "probation," giving them a certain amount of time to repent. If they do not repent within the appointed time they are punished or destroyed.⁶⁴

This phenomenon shows itself as early as Gen. 15:13-16 where God tells Abraham that his descendants will be slaves for a certain period of time because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete; that is, they had not yet sinned to the point of receiving the judgment of destruction.

A somewhat enigmatic area regarding God's relation to the nations in the Old Testament concerns the association of angels, celestial bodies and gods with earthly governments.⁶⁵ For the purposes of this study it is not necessary to research

⁶³Ezek. 29:17-20.

⁶⁴Gen. 15:13-16; Ps. 9:17-19; Isa. 24:1-13, 26:5-6; Prov. 14:34; Jer. 51:6, 46-47; Joel 3:1-3; Dan. 5:25-30, 11:27-29, 36.

⁶⁵There are a number of Scriptures which suggest such a relationship: Exod. 15:11; Ps. 29:1, 89:6-7; Judg. 5:20; Job 38:7; Deut. 4:19, 32:8; Dan. 10:13, 20, 12:1.

all the debatable and more complex points involved in this issue.⁶⁶ It is sufficient to note, though, that the Old Testament clearly indicates that angels are involved with the existence and even the deeds of earthly governments.⁶⁷ The clearest passages teaching this are from Daniel, the first of which shows (apparently) the angel of Darius the Mede explaining to Daniel that his delay was due to a fight with the angel (prince) of Persia and that his success in this fight was due to the help he received from the angel, or prince of the Jews, who is Michael:

Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia"⁶⁸

⁶⁶For discussions on this issue, see especially the following: G. B. Caird, Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 1-15; Clinton Morrison, The Powers That Be: Earthly Rulers and Demonic Powers in Romans 13:1-7 (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), pp. 17-21; Roy A. Stewart, Rabbinic Theology: An Introductory Study (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd), pp. 54-61; Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 2:194-202; Gerhard Kittel, S.v. "ἄγγελος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:80-87.

⁶⁷See Deut. 32:8; Dan. 10; Isa. 34:2, 4, 24:21. Note the parallelism between earthly rulers and the heavenly rulers in the Isaiah passages: both have sinned and both will be judged. Rabbinic tradition taught that God judged a nation's angel ruler prior to judging the nation itself. Cf. Hermann L. Strack und Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament Aus Talmud und Midrash, Dritter Band: Die Briefe Des Neuen Testaments und die Offenbarung Johannis (Munchen: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, MCMLXI), p. 49-52.

⁶⁸Dan. 10:12-13.

The second passage mentions that Greece also has a guardian angel (prince) which Gabriel, with the help of Michael, must also fight:

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I am through with him, lo, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends ⁶⁹by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

In context, the function of the angels seems to be that of influencing the kings of the domains over which they rule (Persia, Greece, Israel, etc.). The Persian prince was influencing the Persian king so as to prevent Israel's return to their land; Gabriel and Michael work against the Persian prince to see to it that Israel be allowed to return.⁷⁰

One Biblical statement linking angels to the ordination of nations deserves special comment. Deut. 32:8 (quoted above) suggests that when God [initially] gave the nations their inheritance (consisting in their boundaries), he did so "according to the number of the sons of God." Although this rendering is not that of the Massoretic text, which reads "sons of Israel," it is considered by most scholars (and the translators of the Revised Standard Version) to be the meaning or intent of a tradition that is earlier than that of the Mas-

⁶⁹Dan. 10:20-21. Apocalyptic literature in the Pseudepigrapha that is very similar to Daniel includes the names of the foreign angel/guardians. See the section on the Apocrypha in this chapter.

⁷⁰This interpretation is offered by C. F. Keil in the Bible Commentary on the Book of Daniel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprint ed., 1977), p. 416. Note the similarity of this teaching with 3 Enoch 26:12.

soretic text.⁷¹ The Massoretic text reading suggests that ". . . the number of boundaries established by God for the peoples corresponded to the number of Israelites."⁷² Perhaps this is intended to indicate that God saw to it that Israel would have a place reserved for it that would be large enough to contain them. The meaning of the reading "sons of God" would be that while each nation was assigned a protector, a son of God (angel), Israel's protector was God himself.

Even if it cannot be conclusively proved which reading reflects the earliest tradition, it does seem apparent that the two readings are not stylistic variations but rather represent two independent traditions.⁷³ Also, the Septuagint reflects the understanding of the "sons of God" since it reads *κατὰ ἄριθμον ἁγγέλων θεοῦ* ("angels of God" is most often a synonym for "sons of God" in the Old Testament).

Taking the Old Testament as a unified whole, as Paul probably did,⁷⁴ its teaching about God's relation to the

⁷¹See G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective (Cleveland: Collins, 1977), pp. 204-205.; R. K. Harrison, Gen. ed., The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1976), The Book of Deuteronomy, by P. C. Craigie, pp. 204-205.; Patrick Skehan, "A Fragment of the 'Song of Moses,'" Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 136(1954):12-15.; G. B. Caird, p. 5.; Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black, gen. eds., New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), Deuteronomy, pp. 384-85.

⁷²A. D. H. Mayes, New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) p. 384.

⁷³G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective (Cleveland: Collins, 1977), pp.204-05.

⁷⁴It seems reasonable to suppose that Paul understood the Old Testament as a unified whole, inspired of God, and did

nations can be summarized as follows: God is in ultimate control of all the peoples and nations of the Earth. Governments are allowed to exercise authority only because God's authority allows it. It is he who has, in some way, initially set their number and boundaries, maintaining and changing them as he sees fit, for the benefit of Himself, Israel, and the nations themselves. Changes usually take place as a result of sin, and, as Daniel (and most likely Deut. 32:8) indicates, angels are somehow involved in what the nations do.

God is always, in some ultimate sense, in control of the nations, dealing with, intervening, and directing them as he sees fit. But, even though he is sovereign over all, he still allows the nations to function autonomously to a certain extent. When this autonomy manifests itself in persistent sinful actions, especially the violence of oppression associated with pride, God appoints a time for judgment. If the nation repents during this period judgment will be withheld; if not, the nation is punished or destroyed.

A harmonization of all the teaching in the Old Testament as it pertains to the ordination (or institution, appointment, etc.) of nations could be stated as follows: Nations were initially established or appointed according to either the number of the sons of Israel, or the number of the sons of God (i.e., angels). The continuation of the existence of any particular nation was in the direct control of God, and, ap-

not think of exegeting each author in light of that author's own theology, background, etc.

parently primarily, dependent upon its conduct, especially as this conduct showed itself in pride and violence. Sirach has perceived the teaching of the Old Testament on this issue very clearly and his eloquent statement is perhaps the best summary that can be made:

The rule over the world is in the hands of God, and at the right time He setteth over it one that is worthy. In the hand of God is the rule of every man, and He investeth the commander with his dignity. Pride is hateful to the Lord and to men, and before both oppression is an offence. Sovereignty is transferred from nation to nation on account of the violence of pride.⁷⁵

If a nation exists, it does so because God has placed it there or allowed it to be. The very existence of a nation, according to the Old Testament, proves that it is set, or appointed, by God. This is true even if the nation becomes sinful and oppressive. Until the sentence of judgment actually begins on such a nation, and it has been chastised or toppled, it still has a right to exist. No one has a right to rebel or attack a nation until that nation's sin, as God told Abraham, is complete.⁷⁶ Those who were oppressed in the Old Testament were counseled to wait for the vengeance of the Lord. God had an appointed time for judgment and it would certainly come.

Apocrypha

Though the New Testament writers, as a rule, use the Greek version (which, of course, included the Apocrypha) when

⁷⁵Sir. 10:4-8.

⁷⁶Gen. 15:13-16. This teaching is found in the Apocrypha as well.

quoting Old Testament passages, direct quotes from the Apocrypha are either very rare or nonexistent.⁷⁷ This does not mean though, that New Testament writers were not influenced by books in the Apocrypha. Enough evidence has been found in close parallels between the New Testament and Apocrypha (particularly Tobit, Sirach and The Wisdom of Solomon), to justify such a claim.⁷⁸ At the very least it can be maintained that Paul was acquainted with the books of the Apocrypha, whatever his opinion might have been regarding their authority.

The teaching of the Apocrypha regarding God's relation to the nations is essentially the same as that found in the Old Testament. God is Lord of all the nations and it is he who gives them their dominion:

Give ear, ye that have dominion over much people, And make your boast in multitudes of nations. Because your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High⁷⁹

Sirach repeats this thought but also gives the reason for the transfer of sovereignty from nation to nation:

The rule over the world is in the hands of God, and at the right time He setteth over it one that is worthy. In the hand of God is the rule of every man, and He investeth the commander with his dignity. Pride is hateful to the Lord and to men, and before both oppression is an offence. Sovereignty is transferred from nation to na-

⁷⁷G. H. Box, "Sirach," in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, 2 vols., ed. by R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 1:294.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 294f., see also the discussions by D. C. Simpson, p.199, and Samuel Holmes, p. 526, in the same volume.

⁷⁹Wis. 6:2-3.

tion on account of the violence of pride.⁸⁰

The idea that "violence of pride" is the main reason for the transfer of authority is, as has been noted already, also taught in the Old Testament.⁸¹

As in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha also presents God as being concerned for nations for their own sake. In the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon one large passage in particular teaches that because God ". . . lovest all things that are, and abhorrest none of the things which [he] didst make . . .,"⁸² he did not destroy the Canaanites all at once, but gave them a place of repentance by judging them little by little. Since God loves all men and cares for all, no one will be able to accuse him for the destruction of the nations he made. He executes his vengeance with great patience, giving room for repentance, and does so for the sake of those who are oppressed.⁸³

The avenging sword imagery so common in the Old Testament is also found in the Apocrypha, as well as the teaching that God is in control of the very hearts of the rulers:

There are (winds) which are formed (for punishment), (and in their fury) remove mountains. In the season of destruction they pour out their force, and appease the spirit of their creator. Fire and hail, famine and pestilence--these also are formed for judgement. Beasts of

⁸⁰Sir. 10:4-8.

⁸¹Isa. 25:9-11; Ps. 59:8-12; Ezek. 16:49; et. al.

⁸²Wis. 11:24, see also 11:25-12:8.

⁸³Wis. 12:12-18. In context the writer is obviously referring to ALL who suffer oppression, and not merely Israel's sorrows.

prey, scorpions and vipers, and the avenging sword to exterminate the wicked--all these are created for their uses.⁸⁴

And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days, making merry before the Lord, for that he had turned the counsel of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the works of the Lord, the God of Israel.⁸⁵

Two more points concerning Apocryphal teaching regarding the nations need to be mentioned here. The first is the notion that angels have a place in God's order concerning the nations, a thought already found in the Old Testament (see above). This idea is found in Sirach: "For every nation He appointed a ruler [angel], But Israel is the Lord's portion."⁸⁶

The second point has to do with the command that God's people pray for the rulers of Rome--Vespasian and Titus--as found in Bar. 1:11-14.⁸⁷ Though it is difficult to fix the exact date of this book, so as to know what the precise historical circumstances were at this time, this passage and others suggest that some Jews at least viewed the Roman conquest in much the same way as others had viewed the Babylonian.⁸⁸

In summary, the teaching of the Apocrypha is essen-

⁸⁴Sir. 39:28-30.

⁸⁵1 Esdr. 7:22. Note the similarity of this passage to Isa. 54:15-17.

⁸⁶Sir. 17:17. Note that this was Borg's view as discussed in chapter one, page thirteen of this paper.

⁸⁷Bar. 1:11-14. According to most critics, Nabuchodonosor and Baltasar represent Vespasian and Titus. See O. C. Whitehouse, "I Baruch," in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. by R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1913), 1:569.

⁸⁸Whitehouse, p. 569.