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**SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT (ROM 13:1-7): BIBLICAL  
PERSPECTIVE WITH CHRISTIAN ETHICAL REFLECTION FOR  
PRESENT DAY MYANMAR**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BCE	Before Christian Era
BSPP	Burmese Socialist Program Party
CE	Christian Era
Cf.	confer with
e.g.	for example
i.e.	Exactra
MBC	Myanmar Baptist Convention
MCC	Myanmar Council of Churches
NLD	National League of Democracy
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
pp.	Pages
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
UN	United Nations
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party

## CHAPTER (1)

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Statement of Problem

Christians are made up of a small population in the pluralistic structure of Myanmar society.<sup>1</sup> Though it can hardly be said that the present military junta<sup>2</sup> has no hostile motives against living religions (Buddhism is exception) of Myanmar including Christianity, it is clear that it has been trying to show care and concern to religious groups including the Christian groups in order to create political unity. The reason for hostility can be traced in the history of Theravada Buddhism which entered into Myanmar in the first century of the Christian Era. Buddhism and Burman (the largest ethnic group) have been interwoven throughout the centuries. Therefore, the concept “the Burmans are the Buddhists” was originally rooted from Burma history. There is a saying “To be a Myanmar (Burmese) is to be a Buddhist.” And it is frequently repeated in the modern era. The relationship between the state and the Buddhist religion, thus has been strongly influenced by the political development of the country. Consequently, the government and majority Myanmar (Burmese) could hardly see the Christians as the loyal citizens.

In this situation, the government has been quoting Romans 13:1 to be *Submissive to the government* whenever they take fellowship with the Christian Churches. For instance, the above mentioned text has been usually quoted in the speeches by the Junta given to Christian congregation on special occasions such as the Church’s Jubilee celebrations and Christmas dinner. It has been said that according to this text, citizens are to be submissive to their respective government because God is the source of the authority of the government. But as it is widely and publicly known, the Myanmar government structure is unjust to the citizens. Human right violation, oppression and persecution are seen as their characters. If Romans 13

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<sup>1</sup> Officially Union of Myanmar (Burma) is geographically the largest country in Southeast Asia. Buddhists are majority and Buddhist culture integrated with the regional elements. <http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma> 11.09.2010. According to 1983 general census, among the 52 population and 135 ethnic groups, Buddhists are 89.3%, Christians 5.6%, Islamists 3.8%, Hindu 0.5% and primal religion (Spirit) worshippers 0.2%. This makes the country colorful and pluralistic society. Samuel Ngun Ling, *Communicating Christ in Myanmar: Issues, Interactions and Perspectives* (Yangon; ATEM, 2005), 11.

<sup>2</sup> The present military government `State Peace and Development Council, SPDC` is the latest government from a series of military regime started in 1962. In November 7, 2010 the Election will be hold in order to establish the Democracy government. However, the whole process has been handicapped by the present power holders. So, most people think that participating in this election is to help a change from direct to indirect military rule.

is taken at its face value or out of its context, it can be misunderstood that the notorious Myanmar military government is appointed by God. This begs the following questions: *Is God the source of Evil? Why God would appoint an unjust government? Should we give honour and submission to the evil government?* Reading it in this way makes the text sound very misleading and erroneous.

In 2007 (August-November) the Saffron Revolution demonstrated Myanmar's Economic desperation. Buddhist monks peacefully protested the government by overturning their bowls (means *to resist or to disobey*) and refused to receive alms from the Myanmar generals (means *not giving Buddha's blessing*). They demonstrated on behalf of the citizens, their donors of daily food who have been living in economic crisis. The uprising demanded the political and economic reforms from the government.<sup>3</sup> The uprising extended its tentacles to the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) and the Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), a member of MCC and the largest denomination in Myanmar. MCC and MBC chose to stand still as the loyal citizens to the government. MBC pointed out the Baptist doctrine of "Separation of Church and State" as her reason for not joining in the demonstration. When the neighbouring religion protested the unjust situation, the Churches went silent. Although the uprising could not transform the country to be just and order, it stimulated the Christians to consider what should the church do when it comes face to face with the tyrant government? Does Romans 13:1-7 mean total silence to the Myanmar Churches? At the same time, the question about the Baptist doctrine of Separation of Church and State comes to the Baptist Churches. Does this doctrine prevent the Churches from upholding Justice?

Indeed, the problem therefore stems from the misunderstanding or misuse of Romans 13:1-7 which is intentionally or unintentionally ignored by the present Myanmar Churches.

## 1.2 Aim

For the present Myanmar Churches in the political situation the research aims to find out the meaning of "Submission to the Government" within its wider biblical context, particularly in conjunction with two related texts: Revelation of John 13:1-18 and Matthew 22:15-22, and within the Christian Ethical context. It aims to get what biblical perspective of

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<sup>3</sup> In the beginning the uprising was happened in the streets of major cities only for economic crisis demonstration but soon they were joined by pro-democracy activists, nuns, and local residents. "Saffron" was named by following the color of the monk's robe. <http://uscampaignforburma.org/learn-about-burma/saffron-revolution>. 11.09.2010.

”Submission to the Government” based on Rom 13:1-7 means to the present Myanmar Churches under the totalitarian regime. How the Christian Ethical perspectives of ”Submission to the Government” based on Rom 13:1-7 were contextualized in the time of World War II will be studied after the exegetical part of the research. Karl Barth and Eivind Berggrav’s arguments will be emphasized. Finally, the research hopes to investigate the relevant Biblical message with Christian Ethical views for the Church and State relationship for the present day Myanmar context.

### 1.3 Methodology

Exegesis of Rom 13:1-7 will be the major part of the research. Romans 13:1-7 clearly refers to the Church and State relationship as it is clearly written ἐξουσία (13:1) means the restricted sense of official power or authority.<sup>4</sup> The Christians have to be submissive to the authority with conscience because it is instituted by God and they are working for good. Therefore, Christians have to give honour and pay taxes to the authority because they are due. However, Paul does not deeply discuss or clearly mention what sort of government or the duty and responsibility of the government. Romans 13:4 slightly mentions that the authority, which does good, is worthy to be honoured. What is the standard of good? The text is silent. So, can the text be easily seen as a direct application to the respective situation?

Based on Rom 13:1-7 the research will investigate the Biblical perspective of ”Submission to the Government” by studying the two relating texts Rev 13 and Matt 22:15-22. Revelation of John 13:1-18 talks about the two beasts or monsters (θηρία, wild animals which means for destruction and attack).<sup>5</sup> The first monster coming from the sea similar to the fourth beast in Daniel 7:3 which is explicitly identified by the eagle in vision of Fourth Ezra chapter 11-12,<sup>6</sup> inspired by the dragon, the Satan represents for the Roman government, which persecutes Christians. And the second monster coming from the land inspired by a lamb, the anti-Christ can be considered as the false prophet who is the faithful follower of the emperor and the betrayer of his people.<sup>7</sup> To the audience under the persecution the author gives his main message in Revelation 13:10. That is to endure the persecution. On the other hand, it can also mean to resist the evil by disobedience to what the oppressors demand. I will

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<sup>4</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1998, 760.

<sup>5</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford, 1975, 219.

<sup>6</sup> Fourth Ezra which was not preserved in Jewish tradition, is one of the apocalyptic books from Christian Apocryphal. Michael Edward Stone, 1990, 36-37.

<sup>7</sup> J.Massyngberde Ford, 1975, 211-221.



try to compare and contrast John's view and Paul's instruction "Submission to the Government".

Another related text Matthew 22:15-22 is concerned about Jesus' answer to Pharisees for paying tax to the Government. It is a plot to curb Jesus' popularity as well as to trap him for being disloyal to God.<sup>8</sup> Jesus says "Give to Ceasar what belongs to Ceasar and to God what belongs to God". Jesus acknowledges the legitimate demands of the state at the same time he also claims the superiority of God above the state which can demand more than the state (Matt. 6:24, 10:28). This is the political question that Jesus had to give answer. Does Matthew 22:15-22 highlight that Christians should make new decisions when they encounter with the conflict of political and religious issues?<sup>9</sup> Does it mean to be an encouragement for revolution to the government structure which is going beyond its limit and trying to take God's part? This text will also be helpful to the Biblical Understanding of Submission to the Government.

Romans 13:1-7 will be emphasized and other two texts will be supportive in the process of finding relevant biblical perspective of Church and State relationship for present day Myanmar. I will explore the texts by using exegetical methods and tools. Each text has their own unique background. Therefore, the socio-political background and the specific problems behind the text which are the force for the creating text will be studied first. Then, I will explore the intended meaning of the texts. Thus, textual criticism, literary analysis and hermeneutical interpretation will be necessary methods for the research.

On the other hand, the text is clearly seen as Christian Ethical concerns to the Church and State relationship. It comes across a text that could have been studied in-depth in the time of Second World War when tyrant government asserted injustice and restraint of conscience. How the text was criticised, interpreted and applied to the situation will be studied after Biblical interpretation. It is aimed to be helpful for implication of the biblical perspective on Church and State relationship in Myanmar Churches. Views of Karl Barth and Eivind Berggrav, bishop of Norway will be discussed.<sup>10</sup> Berggrav interpreted Romans 13 and he said that there is the Law between God and the government. If the government does not respect the

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<sup>8</sup> ἑξεστίν, Is it permitted/lawful might mean that paying taxes to Roman emperor is to disobey the law of God and to be disloyal to Him. John Nolland, 2005, 896-897.

<sup>9</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, 2002, 218.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Barth viewed Romans 13:1-7 as the consequence of 12:21 "To overcome evil with good." The evil is needed to be extinguished not by revolt or revolution. The evil can only be punished and ended by God alone. Thus he named the text as "the Great Negative Possibility." Karl Barth, 1933, 475-492. This view was changed later that the Churches need to disobey the government when the government does not have stature of Christ's peaceful kingdom where justice and love prevail.

sovereignty of God's law, the citizens have a right to revolt against the government. Theological Ethics and Christian Political Ethics will be part of the research.

#### **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

The research is basically trying to investigate what the bible says can be taken of Christian political ethical concern to the church and state relationship in present day Myanmar. Romans 13:1-7 will be the main text and it will be interpreted within its wider context of Revelation of John 13:1-18 and Matthew 22:15-22. It is expected that the background situation and the nature of the government seen in those texts are helpful to us to be able to see which nature of government is worthy to be honoured and due to give submission. The biblical concept of the role of the Church in the tyrant government situation will be explored and it will be expected in the mind of the Christians' conscience. Thus, the research is limited to the Church's perspective concerning the government. Different views of Christian political Ethics in the time of World War II will be studied in thinking the role of the Church in political situation. In the scope of Biblical Exegesis and Christian Political Ethics the research will investigate the relevant message to the present day Myanmar Churches.

#### **1.5 Possible Contribution**

Although Christians are a minority in Myanmar, they are accountable to the government since they are citizens of the country. Roman 13:1-7 encourages them to be submissive to the authority or government. But this is difficult in Myanmar to accept this message literally because the government we have to give honour cannot be seen as a just government. Therefore, this research will try to investigate the biblical perspective of "Submission to the Government" Rom 13:1-7 in the aim of getting the relevant biblical way of submission to the totalitarian government. Thus, it hopes to conscientize the Christian Churches what the biblical way of Submission to the government they should keep in mind and practice. Christian Theological contribution to Church and State relationship in the critical situation of Myanmar is hoped to help the Christians to become dutiful and responsible citizens for the peaceful society and to be a source of encouragement to those who are engaged in freedom fighting.

## CHAPTER (2)

### SITUATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN MYANMAR

Myanmar<sup>11</sup>, a pluralistic country because of its diverse religions and ethnic languages, is one of the Southeast Asian countries.<sup>12</sup> Population is estimated over 23 million and population growth is 1.8 percent. There are eight major ethnic groups: Kachin, Kaya, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine and Shan. Bamar, the largest national ethnic group, constitute 70%, Karen 9%, Shan 8%, Rakhine 5%, Mon 2.5%, Chin 2.5%, Kachin 2% and Kaya 1%.<sup>13</sup> Obviously, Myanmar which has been governed by a series of dictatorship government since 1960s, is one of the world's least developed nations. The country known as Golden land because of its innumerable goldern pagodas almost all over the country as well as a lonely planet for the country practiced closed government system, is indeed blessed with valuable natural resources. However, the country and the people have to live under the circumstances of totalitarian government and cannot have human rights. The Church has to live under this circumstances yet it has been surviving and slowly progressing day by day. Throughout Myamar history, the Church and the State have been instituted separately. In order to get the present situation of Myanmar it will be wise to start with its brief background of Modern Myanmar.

#### **2.1 Political Situation Since The Beginning Of Modern Myanmar**

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<sup>11</sup> Clark D. Neher, 1997, 161. On June 18, 1989, the martial law government of Burma declared that the country's official name (in English) would henceforth be Myanmar. Myanmar is a combination of two Burmese words: Myan+Mar. Myan means "Swift" and Mar means "Hard." Negatively, some people believed that the government wanted to erase the true history of Independent movement of Burma led by General Aung San (the Hero of nations who led the independent movement) because the country was called Burma in history. Positively, Myanmar is inclusive word when Burma only represents the majority Burmese or Burman ethnic group.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Ngun Ling, 2003, 6. Myanmar is situated between latitude 10' to 28' in the North and longitudes 92' and 120' in the East. Equivalent in size to France and England combined, and the largest piece of landmass on the penninsula of Southeast Asia. Off the total land area of 676,577 sq km (261.228 sq. miles), 45 million acrea are cultivable, and 67.6 million hectares (only about 13%) are under cultivation. There are snow-capped mountains (Mt. Kha Ka Borhazi, 6096 m at height in the north), lakes and sea beaches, with four major and about 30 minor rivers and a coastline of 2800km.

<sup>13</sup> Saw Hlaing Bwa, 2008, 1.

The Modern Myanmar (which is called Burma before 1989) started from the year she got independence from British colony on January 4, 1948. One of the most important facts that was the cause of the Myanmar politics is the Panglong Treaty on February 12, 1947 (also called the Union Day and celebrated from that time onwards). Panglong Treaty is the agreement of living together in a new country between the majority Burmese (Burmans) and the ethnic minority groups.<sup>14</sup>

Since the majority Burmese (Burmans) fulfilled the British demand through Panglong Treaty, Myanmar became free and achieved independence from British colonialism in January 4, 1948. Myanmar started to get the first experiment with full Democracy in the decade from 1948 to 1958. However, it was indeed the “Time of Troubles.” All the agreement facts on Panglung Treaty were violated and the ethnic minorities lost their identity, rights and autonomy. Democracy constitution could not be carried out in a practical manner. One of the Burmese consultants remarked this process as: “*Our constitution, though federal in theory, is, in practice, unitary.*”<sup>15</sup> As a result, all the seven ethnic minority groups started to oppose the move toward a national state and instead supported the establishment of autonomous states for each group. The political situation became more tense when the prime minister U Nu strongly concentrated on establishing Buddhism as the state religion instead of facing the internal security. When the Shan leaders made a proposal to the Parliament in 1961 that would make the true Union made up of Federal States with their local autonomy operate in accordance

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<sup>14</sup> Zau Latt, L. 2003, 65. After World War II, the Bahma united under the leadership of General Aung San and he went to see British Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee in January, 1946 and asked for the complete independence. The British prepared to give them the Independence, for the Burma Proper, the area held by the Bahma Kings when British first annexed Burma to the Empire. The British made clear to the Bahma leaders that without representation of Hill tribe people under the British Frontier Area Administration, they would not consider giving independence to the whole of Burma, i.e., the British Burma. In reality, among seven minority ethnic groups, only Mon and Rakhine were colonised by Burman Kings before British colony. Kachin, Kaya, Kayin, Chin and Shan had been living with each local government or own princes. Under British colonial government Mon, Rakhaing, Kaya and Kayin people together with Burmans were under the administration of Burma Proper. Kachin, Chin and Shan people were under British Frontier administration. The total land area of the ethnic minorities was about two-third of the British Burma. Since, the British colony’s demand, the Bahma leaders realized that getting independence without the native lands of Hill Tribes people would be incomplete. As a result, their concerns went to the ethnic minority groups in order to achieve their goal of having independence for larger British Burma. Within the sincere persuasion of General Aung San, all the ethnic minority leaders voluntarily agreed to accept independence from the British along with the Burmans or Burmese. The most important fact from the Panglung agreement that General Aung San was able to unite the ethnic minorities is to give an opportunity to administrate each own land. It was clearly reflected in the Clause Five of the Panglung Treaty: “It will not operate in respect of the Frontier Areas in any manner which would deprive any portion of these areas of the autonomy which it now enjoys in internal administration. Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle.”

<sup>15</sup> David I. Steinberg, 2010, 53.

with the spirit of the “Panglong Treaty,” General Newin seized power in a *coup d’état* on March 2, 1962.<sup>16</sup>

From that time onwards Myanmar lost any semblance of democracy government and came under the military based dictatorship regime. Ne Win established the Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP) and held power for the next 26 years. However, the main function was to legitimize army rule. Civil war existed in all seven states throughout the period of BSPP. The party’s policy is to keep Western “bourgeois decadent” ideas from infiltrating into Burma. Newin’s “Burmese Way of Socialism” moved toward a neutralist foreign policy took the form of isolationism. Newin arrested those who apposed his policy, expelled the foreign missionaries from Burma and restricted travel to Burma by foreigners, and ended academic freedom at the universities.<sup>17</sup> Resistance to the regime occasionally occurred. Student and worker demonstrations in the 1960s and 1970s were brutally crushed by torturing, punishing to the political imprisonment and in various forms of human rights abuses. The country's economy steadily deteriorated, and by mid-1988 the demonstrations across the country broke out spearheaded by university students that were soon joined by almost all the citizens including soldiers in cities and towns all over Myanmar. On the eighth of August - "8-8-88"-hundreds of thousands of people nationwide marched to demand the BSPP regime be replaced by an elected civilian government. Soldiers fired on crowds of unarmed protesters, killing about thousands.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, Newin resigned from the party but still controlled the politics. Under the order of Newin military couped the power again and established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which is renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in November 1997. SLORC organized the election in May 27, 1990 despite of the violations of human rights during several months. However, in reality it was just an election to ensure the pro-government forces would continue to prevail. The popular opposition leaders (eg. Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the National League of Democracy “NLD” was accused disqualified) were harassed and kept from participating in the election. Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest in July 1989. Her detention was about 15 years from over

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<sup>16</sup> Clark D. Neher, 1997, 162-163.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>18</sup> The military junta suppresses the demonstrations by open fire with machine guns on demonstrators in Rangoon and other cities. The carnage was immense. While the exact number will never be known, it is estimated that as many as 10,000 people were killed. Thousands more were arrested. Many were tortured. Amnesty International reported in December 2000 that about 1,700 political prisoners still remain jailed under harsh conditions and torture. <http://journalism.berkeley.edu/projects/burma/history.html> 25.3.2011.

20 years of her political life. Besides, many other senior NLD officials were jailed. In spite of the unjust measures, the NLD won more than 80 percent of the seats (396 of 485). However, the junta refused to let the elected parliament take power. The SLORC mainly argued that the military oriented administration was still needed to ensure the unity in the face of potential rebellion by minority ethnic groups and the Burmese Communist Party, though the vast majority of the Burmese could not accept this argument for they had experienced enough of the military junta's totalitarian ruling after independence.<sup>19</sup>

Sadly, their demonic dictatorship way of unifying the country has been in the form of uniformity but not unity in diversity. Thus, for ethnic minorities their way of ruling the country can be seen as "Burmese Nationalist Socialism" (this is the researcher's own words). The SLORC encouraged the business and signed it with a variety of international firms (especially China and Thailand), each of which provided a signing bonus to the government. However, that was pitifully short of foreign exchange. In addition, Chinese banned the logging and moved into Myanmar and repeated ecological damaged. The colleges and universities were closed for many years.<sup>20</sup> In short, no progress is seen under the rule of SLORC, even worse than BSPP.

In March 1992, general Than Shwe who became an unmasked dictator, later became SLORC chairman, prime minister and minister of defense. In 1993, the SLORC selected a national convention to start drafting a new constitution and told the convention to give the military a major government role. Obviously, since the convention was not being conducted democratically, the NLD party members walked out of the convention and as of 1998, a new constitution had yet to be completed.<sup>21</sup> Under leadership of Than Shwe, Myanmar gets a chance to hold its first multi-party elections on 7th November 2009. However, this election cannot be taken as a free and fair election for being equipped by the SPDC (the name changed from SLORC) and not only excluding the opposition parties such as NLD, led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi but also ignoring the ethnic minorities' rights. Moreover, the 2008 constitution legitimizes the military rule in Myanmar. From the background of unjust measures, Myanmar's Parliament on February 4 elected former army general Thein Sein (65 years old, is also chairman of the pro-junta Union Solidarity and Development Party "USDP") as the country's new president, replacing junta chief Senior General Than Shwe, who has ruled the country since 1992. USDP won 77 percent of the contested seats and the election

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<sup>19</sup> Clark D. Neher, 1997, 165-167.

<sup>20</sup> David I. Steinberg, 2010, 86.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/myanmar/pro-history.htm> 25.3.2011.

was handicapped by USDP. Myanmar's new president was sworn on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011, officially launching a new administration to replace the military junta that has ruled the country for the past two decades. Myanmar's new cabinet includes 26 ex-military men and only four civilians.<sup>22</sup> The final result of election, which is just to legitimize the military dictatorship, could not be hope for freedom and human rights to the people of Myanmar.

## 2.2 Relationship Between The Church And State

In this political turmoil like many other Asian countries, the minority population of the Christian Church has experienced a list of shortcomings until present time. Catholic, Baptist and altogether 14 member denominations are unified under Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) which was established in 1914 as a response to the visit of John R. Mott, on the continuation program for the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910.<sup>23</sup>

After independence, under the Parliamentary Democracy system the churches could have a privilege of serving the nation through their social institutions like schools and hospitals so that the Church could have a significant impact on the State. However, when the BSPP party took control of the country in 1962, the Churches could no longer have a significant impact on the State since all the Social institutions were nationalized and only the individual believers became the representatives of the Churches in their own respective vocations. By 1966, all the foreign missionaries had to leave Myanmar and thus the Church had to survive with Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson's three salient characters of selfhood: *self-propagation, self-government and self-support*.<sup>24</sup> However, the Christians are not fading in this situation but slowly progressed and could experience God's providence in the history of the Church.<sup>25</sup>

Why did the Christians have significantly low chances of impacting the society? And

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<sup>22</sup> [http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article\\_1628624.php/Myanmar-s-new-government-to-start-work-on-April-1](http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1628624.php/Myanmar-s-new-government-to-start-work-on-April-1) 1.4.2011 and

<http://cms.boloji.com/index.cfm?md=Content&sd=NewsDetails&NewsID=10081> 1.4.1011.

<sup>23</sup> Simon Pau Khan En, 2009, 6-18. The earliest Christian mission arrived in Myanmar in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century CE and the earliest existence of Christianity was around 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE. The Catholic mission arrived in 1554 and the Baptist (the largest denomination at present in Myanmar) Mission arrived in 1807.

<sup>24</sup> This is a quotation of Simon Pau Khan En. Ibid, 24.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, in December 1977 the Kachin Baptist Convention celebrated the Centenary of the Baptist Mission and there was a Baptism of 6215 on a single day. After the celebration "3/300 mission" to the Kachin people were done. 3 represents to 3 years and 300 represents to 300 Kachin missionaries. 300 missionaries did mission to Animist Kachins for 3 years. After that mission onwards, 96-98% of all the Kachins in Myanmar converted to Christians. This mission progress can be seen as one of the experiences that manifests God's providence and presence with the Churches in Myanmar.

did the government show any concern for the Christians? Needless to say, the Myanmar government has seen Christians as aliens because of three reasons. First, Christianity is seen as a partner of *Colonialism*. Since Christianity came to Myanmar along with Western colonialism that created the brutal history of colonial invasion and the end of Burmese kingship, the majority of the Burmese see Christianity in the same vein with the colonists, their enemies in history. So, some radical Buddhists especially the government see Christians as disloyal to the State. Second, because of *Nationalism* Christians are seen as aliens. In reality, there are very few Christians converted from Buddhism and the majority Christians are ethnic minorities who had been Animists or Spirit Worshipers before Christian mission, especially Chin, Kachin and Kayin (though 50% remains Buddhists and Animists). As it is already mentioned above, the ethnic conflict was one of the main issues for Myanmar's political turmoil for several decades, the government sees the Christians who can be identified with the minority ethnics as alien to them. As a negative result, persecution against Christians occurred in the form of church burnings, forced conversion to the state religion of Buddhism, banning children of Christians from school, refusing to give Church building permits and out casting the Christian officers especially in the military from decision-making bodies.<sup>26</sup>

The Third reason is *Cultural ground*. Christian message is needed to contextualize the current believers' culture. So, this necessity becomes a hindrance to see Christianity as an Eastern religion. Besides, Buddhism has been alive as Myanmar culture for centuries. cosmic religion Christianity (eg. God's revelation in human person Jesus Christ) is not easy to be accepted by the metacosmic religion Buddhism (eg. Buddhism is a path of practicing Buddhist's teachings and spiritual development) and it is also a challenging fact for the mission strategy and missiology for Myanmar. The government leading the country has been "the Burmese Way of Socialism" which can also be said in terms of "Buddhist Way of Socialism" since the time of U Nu is continuously going on until the present time. Thus, in general bird eye view, the Christians in Myanmar are aliens to the political area.<sup>27</sup> The Church has to be satisfied in participating the Christian individuals' contribution to the society but not as a Church. The state just recognizes the Church as a minority alien society which is subject to the State in any circumstances. Thus, the government does not pay much attention to the Church except for organizing the political unity. They used to attend the

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<sup>26</sup> Simon Pau Khan En, 2009, 10-13. & Saw Hlaing Bwa, 2008, 4. Bwa also asserts that Ethnicity, religion and politics combine to fuel a civil war between the government and minority ethnic groups.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 13-14. & Saw Hlaing Bwa, 2008, 7.



important celebrations or occasions from the Church and they have been quoting Romans 13:1 “to be submissive to the government...” in their speeches. (the present researcher have heard two times).

Biblically, it is the most appropriate text that describes the relationship between the Church and State. The Church has to submit the state. However, according to the historical evidence and present situation, the Myanmar government cannot be identified as fair and just government. They rule the country only for the benefit of the military junta and human rights are violated and people are persecuted. For the Church under this government, does this text mean “political quietists”? Now is the time to reconsider the Church’s concern for the political justice of the people of Myanmar. This situation alarmed the Church’s decision and stand in the event of the Monk’s demonstration or Saffron Revolution in 2007. In August 2007 the government made its fateful decision to raise oil prices and on behalf of the oppressed citizens under economic corruption thousands of monks protested the government by peacefully demonstrating. It was started in Pakokku, city in central Myanmar and it moved to the capital and other major cities. The monks stopped taking donations from military personnel and that meant that the military government would not earn spiritual blessings from donating to monks.<sup>28</sup>

The government suppressed this demonstration violently. According to UN Security Council, 31 monks died while the other foreign accounts stated about 100. This demonstration later transformed into political demonstrations across the country. The UN Security Council issued a presidential statement calling for restraint and the early release of political prisoners. ASEAN also issued a statement that it was “appalled” by the use of automatic weapons against the *sangha* (means Monk in Burmese).<sup>29</sup> While Buddhists were peacefully protesting against the unjust government, the Myanmar Council of Churches stood silently besides the monks. MBC as a largest member of the MCC strictly followed the doctrine of “the Separation of Church and State” and kept themselves apart from the demonstration while she was invited by the occasion. When this Monk’s demonstration made a great impact on the international scene and offered Myanmar a much needed opportunity to push for democracy, what was left to be seen was what will be the role of the Church in the formation of a democratic society?<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, there is the considerable question appears that does submission to

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<sup>28</sup> Diane Zahler, 2010, 117-118.

<sup>29</sup> Davis I. Steinberg, 2010, 138.

<sup>30</sup> Simon Pau Khan En, 2009, 24-25.

the unjust government mean biblical way of teaching? Is it reasonable that the present dictatorship government coded Roman 13:1 in their speech? What will be the intended meaning of Paul's instruction of Submission to the government in Romans 13:1-7? The next chapter will explore Paul's intended meaning of Submission to the Government in Romans 13:1-7.

## CHAPTER (3)

### EXEGESIS OF ROM 13:1-7 "SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT"

Rom 13:1-7 directly or indirectly influences the Myanmar Churches in its Christian Ethical views on Church and State relationship. The understanding of the intended meaning of Rom 13:1-7 is urgently needed for the churches in Myanmar under the authoritarian government. The research will proceed with the exegesis of Rom 13:1-7 as follows.

### 3.1. Historical Background

#### 3.1.1. Socio-political Situation

According to mythology, Rome was founded by descendants of Aeneas, Romulus and Remus (ca. 753 BCE). In the time of 60 BCE Rome was governed by the triumphant generals, Pompey, Crassus and Julius Ceasar. In 27 BCE Octavian (the title *Augustus*) became the emperor or dictator of the Roman world. He was succeeded by the emperors of the Julio-Claudian line: Tiberius Ceasar (14-37 CE), Gaius Caligula (37-41), Claudius (41-54), and Nero (54-68).<sup>31</sup> All scholars unanimously agree the time of Nero was the time Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans.

In Romans 13:1-7 Paul was condemning the disobedience to the authority. Why did Paul instruct to be submissive to the government? Mott sees that the ethical teaching of Paul in Romans 12-15 is an expression of his mature reflections upon problems encountered in his earlier missionary work, as in 2Corinthians. The statement concerning taxation is not basically aimed for the specific situation of Rome but it is dealing with a general problem of Christians in the Roman Empire.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, it is assumed that there were some incidents in Rome as the socio-political background of the text. Tacitus (*Annales 13.50-51*) reports that in the year of 58 CE, there were the repeated complaints of the people in the

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<sup>31</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 25-26.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Charles Mott, 1982, 146-148.

empire about the collection of the indirect taxes. At first Nero decided to abolish all the indirect taxation and present "the reform as the noblest of gifts to the human race." But his senators advised him not to do so for it can cause the fall of imperial revenue and further demands for the abolition of other taxation. Nero thus ordered that taxation to be publicly posted and strictly enforced.<sup>33</sup>

Both Suetonius and Tacitus presupposed that there were already complaints in Rome about taxation before the years of 58 CE. Claudius already gave the power to the provincial procurator in charge of *fiscus* (the name of the personal treasury of the emperors of Rome. The word is literally translated as "basket" or "purse" and was used to describe those forms of revenue collected from the provinces). In 56 CE Obutronius Sabinus, a *quaestor* (any of various public officials in ancient Rome responsible for finance and administration in various areas of government and the military) in charge of the *aerarium* (the money given in ancient Rome to the public treasury) was accused by the common people for the undue hardness of collecting taxes. Nero responded by replacing *queaters* with *praefecti* (the deputy of the superior magistrate) of praetorian (relating to the work of annually elected magistrate) rank. Therefore, the issue of heavy taxation to raise fund for increasing war effort mandated to all classes and even the Roman citizens should pay a direct income tax.<sup>34</sup> Due to this reason, in Romans 13:1-7 Paul's special concern to the Roman state is seen as the Roman Christians should be submissive to the government and should pay tax to the state.

In the time of Gaius Caligula, the full-scale riots broke out during the summer of 38CE. Augustus had imposed poll tax on the Alexandrian non-citizens including the Jews. In reaction to this, wealthier Jews lobbied for their citizenship. So, this led to the uproar between the Jews and the Greek concerning the civic status of the Jewish community. The riot happened and its consequence was the dreadful action against the Jews such as the synagogue were desecrated, members of the Jewish council were arrested, Jews were ghettoized and they were deprived of civil rights. Many were tortured, crucified, and murdered.<sup>35</sup> Since Paul was familiar with this Jewish experience he might have wanted to sound a warning to the Jewish resistance and encourage them to be submissive to the government.

### 3.1.2 Roman Jews

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<sup>33</sup> Jeseoph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Mikael Tellbe, 2001, 178.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 181.

The arrival of the Jews in Rome is not clear but it is assumed to be the second century BCE.<sup>36</sup> About 160 BCE Judas Maccabee sent the envoy to Rome to "establish an alliance and peace" with the Romans (1Macc 8:17-22) and the Roman senate agreed to acknowledge "the nation of the Jews" (8:25, 2Macc 11:37). This incident is implied as Jews were living in Rome or they had been already living there at that time<sup>37</sup> Many Jews came to Rome as merchants, immigrants and slaves. Around the first century CE there were probably 40,000-50,000 Jews in Rome.<sup>38</sup> The presence of the Jews in Rome was augmented after the conquest of Pompey over Judea and his "triumph" in Rome two years later. Many Jews were brought to Rome as prisoners of war. Later they were given freedom and lived in Rome.<sup>39</sup>

The Jewish presence and influential size in Rome is also clear in the reference of Cicero in 59 BCE. Due to the defence speech of Cicero to Lucius Valerius Flaccus (*Flac.* 67-59 BCE) the Roman Jews were sufficiently organized enough to send temple tax to Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup> The Jewish and the proselytes had to send temple tax and it was Jewish distinctiveness and it distinguished Jewish people from non-Jews. Philo even states that physical and spiritual salvation will be brought to those who pay the tax.<sup>41</sup>

From the late Hellenistic period, according to Torah law all the adult male Jews, between the ages twenty and fifty, including freemen and proselytes, had to pay the annual temple tax of half a shekel or its equivalent, two Roman *denarii* or two Attic *drachmae* (ancient Greek currency or silver coin) for the maintenance of the cultic worship in Jerusalem. However, after the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE) the emperor Vespasian changed the temple tax of half shekel into a Roman tax – the *fiscus Iudaicus*. The tax was annually levied on all Jews from the ages of three to at least sixty, whether male or female, slave or free, and probably on the Jewish proselytes. So this put the Jewish families in a very strenuous financial situation. This taxation gave Jewish people a socially instigated kind of stigma and as a sign of Roman political, social and economic sovereignty over the Jews.<sup>42</sup>

The Jewish population was flourishing during the Augustan era. In 19 CE the Jews were expelled from Rome by the order of Tiberius. A few years later they came back to Rome in a great numbers. The expulsion of Jews also happened in the time of Claudius (41-54 CE) which is referred in Acts 18: 2 when Paul was in Corinth (probably in the late summer of 50

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<sup>36</sup> F. F. Bruce, 1985, 16.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Raymond E. Brown, 1997, 561.

<sup>39</sup> F. F. Bruce, 1985, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Mikael Tellbe, 2001, 148.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 182-184.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 185-186.

CE) a Jew named Aquila came from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.<sup>43</sup> After Claudius death many Jews including Jewish Christians probably returned to Rome.

Thousands of funerary inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome helped us to know the population of Roman Jews which was grouped in thirteen synagogues. The word *synagogue* on these inscriptions denotes not a building, but a grouping of Jews or a "congregation." The place they gathered for worship was called *proseuche*.<sup>44</sup>

Many Gentiles had been attracted to Judaism and attached themselves to the synagogues. Josephus and Philo recorded about the considerable attractiveness of the Jewish customs, including sabbath and food laws (Josephus, *Ap.* 2.213, 209-10, 280, 282; Philo, *Mos.* 2.17-20; 14:2 and 14:5).<sup>45</sup>

### 3.1.3 Christianity In Rome

The tradition says that the Church of Rome was founded by Peter or (Peter together with Paul). This cannot be right for Paul clearly mentions his principle that he will "not build on another person's foundation" (15:20). So, it was not possible for him to write his letter and planned to visit there (1:8-15). On the other hand, Peter could have been at Rome early enough to establish the Church there. The possible origin of Christianity in Rome started from the Roman Jews who were converted on the day of the Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:10), believed Jesus was the Messiah and came back to their home synagogues and initiated the Christian movement in Rome.<sup>46</sup>

Christianity thus began to exist in Rome about 30 CE mixed up with the Jewish community and so it appears that Jewish Christians and God-fearing Gentiles (*proselytoi*, Acts 2:11, also mentions in Roman Jewish funerary inscriptions) associated themselves with Jews in Rome. The Epistle to Romans itself manifests that Christians have been living in Rome for many years ago (15:23).<sup>47</sup> Roman Christians are still influenced of Jewish heritage without insisting on circumcision for the Gentile believers.<sup>48</sup> After the death of Claudius (54CE), many Jewish Christians together with the great number of Gentile Christians returned

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<sup>43</sup> F. F. Bruce, 1985, 16.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 28-29. The synagogues were often named after the patrons or protectors such as synagogue of the Agrippesians, Augustesians, Bernaclesians, Calcaresians, Campesians, Elaea, Hebrews, Herodians, Sekenians, Siburesians, Tripolitans, Volumnesians, and the Arca Libanou. The Jews in Rome also paid temple tax to Jerusalem and went on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem temple.

<sup>45</sup> James D. G. Dunn, 1988, xlvii.

<sup>46</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 29.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

to Rome and began House churches. It was expected Paul's letter would be circulated by the various house churches.<sup>49</sup>

Tacitus' report of persistent public complaints regarding indirect taxes in the year 58 CE was also an important incident for Roman Christians. Before the year of 58 CE the collection of taxes was a sensitive matter within the public domain. Jews who have a virtue of regarding the temple tax are the more open to charges of tax evasion. Christians themselves are in the same condition of whether they should complain or refuse to pay the tax and expose the legal action when the tax collector had demanded more than his right. Or whether they should pay up and say nothing to avoid drawing hostile attention to themselves. After the later year of Nero's regime, the Christians were hounded as scapegoats for the fire of Rome. Thus, Paul's advice to "keep a low profile" on such a politically sensitive matter as public taxation and his advice about the payment of taxes (13:6-7) is reasonable for this background situation.<sup>50</sup>

### 3.1.4 Roman Cult

Under the principate<sup>51</sup> Augustus (27BCE – 14CE) the Roman Empire was greatly improved. Augustus put an end to the civil strife at Rome and his provinces. His reign was recognized as *Pax Augusti* (the peace of Augustus) throughout the empire. During his time the senate decreed three times that the doors of the Shrine of Janus, which usually stood open in the time of war, be closed (Res Gestae 2.13).<sup>52</sup> The senate also ordered to construct the altar of goddess Peace dedicated to Augustus (*Ara Pacis Augustae*) (Res Gestae 2.12).<sup>53</sup> Augustus transformed the army and ordered to become the protectors of the people. He encouraged the improvement of the arts and literature. He also set up guards to prevent fire and instituted urban cohorts as a police force.<sup>54</sup> Augustus time was remarkable as era of Peace in history so as the later Christian authors saw an intrinsic connection between the birth of Jesus and the Peace under the emperor Augustus.<sup>55</sup>

During his time, Rome was transformed into a beautiful city of marble temples, extravagant recreational buildings, and artistic monuments with the grand *Forum Augustum* (the atrium of the Augustan state). Augustus was the head of both politics and the gods. Livy

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<sup>49</sup> James D.G. Dunn, 1988, liii.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, liii-liv.

<sup>51</sup> Princeps means 'chief', 'leader,' title taken by the emperor Augustus and adopted by his successors to indicate his constitutional position.

<sup>52</sup> G. P. Goold, ed, 1924, 365.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 364-365.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 26.

<sup>55</sup> Klaus Wengst, 1986, 7-8.

(20s CE) records that Augustus himself claims to repair 82 temples in 28BCE alone and names fourteen other temples in Rome that he built or renewed in his reign. As the *princeps*, the emperor was also the personification of Roman virtues such as *Victoria*, *Concordia*, *Iusitia*, *Libertas*, *Pax* and *Securitas* which was commemorating by minting in coins and the dedication of temples, statues, and the altars to the *Vitoria Augusta*, *Pax Augusta*, *Concordia Augusta* etc. Thus, many poets constantly flattered the emperor by assigning him the role of a god. Latin poet Virgil (70 -19BCE) composed that the emperor as a messianic ruler, and called him as a son of a god.<sup>56</sup>

The cult of the emperor was begun after his death. It was started from the time of Julius Ceasar and encouraged by Augustus.<sup>57</sup> And when Augustus died, the Julio-Claudian dynasty continued Augustus' Virtue of the *princeps* and carried on the emperor cult. Many Augustan poets flattered the emperor by assigning him the role of a god. Not all the emperors are worshipped as god. Even the emperor who ruled uprightly are shrined as the deity after their death. Cassius Dio comments that "still, even there various divine honours are bestowed after their death upon such emperors who have ruled with fairness and justice and shrines are built in honor of them" (51.17.8).<sup>58</sup>

The Senate passed a decree in 30 BCE that the drink-offering should be poured to Octavia at every banquet both public and private. This brought the emperor worship cult to the private life. This is aimed to express loyalty to the emperors. Thus, emperor worship mingled with the household gods and this practice was imperially propagated in the city of Rome and even among the common people in Roman citizens.<sup>59</sup>

In Romans 13:1-7 Paul instructs the Roman Christians to be submissive to the government. The government or the authority is ordained by God. In the Roman cult belief the emperor or the authority is honoured and altared as one of the Roman gods. As the Roman state is not Christians, does Paul want to say that they are ordained by God, not from pagan gods? Does Paul want to express his instruction in missional point of view? Besides, Paul encourages the Roman Christian to pay taxes to the authority as they are due. Does Paul want to warn the Christians to pay tax because he has already known the suffering of Jews based on the riots concerning taxation in the time of Caligula (38 CE)? After Paul's death, Nero haunted Christians as the scapegoats of burning half of the city of Rome. Does this event

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<sup>56</sup> Mikeal Tellbe, 2001, 143-145.

<sup>57</sup> Kevin M. McGeough, 2004, 199. Emperors were deified after they had passed away. During the cremation of the emperor's corpse, the senate witnessed the rising of the spirit of the emperor, then that emperor was decreed divine, and a mortuary-cultic service system was established (Fears 1988: 1014-1015).

<sup>58</sup> Mikeal Tellbe, 2001, 146.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 146-7.



relate to the critical situation of heavy taxation for Christians? The historical background of the epistle to the Romans is aimed at providing a supportive situation to interpret the scripture's intended message.

## 3.2 Literary Context

### 3.2.1 Large Context

Romans 13:1-7 is a section of the scripture within 12:1-15:13. Moo gives the title "The Transforming Power of the Gospel: Christian Conduct" for Paul shifts his writing from "indicative" (1:1-11:36) to "imperative." In Romans chapters 1-11 Paul talks about the truth of the Gospel and then teaches the Roman Christians to live due to its practical significances in 12:1-15:13.<sup>60</sup> Käsemann also names "The Righteousness of God in Daily Christian Life."<sup>61</sup> Overview of the contents will be studied as follows.

**12:1-2** These two verses are the introduction of the main course within 12:1-15:13. Paul exhorts those who are already Christians to live consistently with the gospel which they have received. They are encouraged to live as a living sacrifice (not animal sacrifice) in their concrete lives to be holy and well-pleasing to God. Paul also exhorts the Christians not to be conformed by the external world but to be transformed in inner mind. These verses can be implied as the Roman Christians in Rome were likely to be more inclined to value charismatic gifts than the ethical fruits of the Spirit. Thus, Paul reminds them that God wills the morally good.<sup>62</sup>

**12:3-8** This is about the ethical exhortation of the particular function of the members of the Christian community as the recipients of the various gifts from God. Each member has a different gift and those gifts should be held in high esteem of each other. Those different gifts (vs. 6-8) have to be exercised in the light of the gospel of Christ for the fulfilment of the service of God.<sup>63</sup> Here, in order to illustrate unity and harmony of Christian participation in the church Paul uses the figure of human body that he has already mentioned in 1Cor. 12:12-27. Each part of the body has each distinctive function and each has to work properly in order to become healthy body. So as, each individual Christian has to carry out or participate in the Service of the Church as the body of Christ.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 744.

<sup>61</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 323.

<sup>62</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, 1985, 292-298.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 299-308.

<sup>64</sup> F.F Bruce, 1985, 214.

**12:9-21** After describing the different gifts from God and different functions of the members of the Christian society in the preceding verses, Paul links those duties with the practical and concrete aspects of sanctification. They are written to cover different situations of life and to exhort everyone not to neglect them.<sup>65</sup> However, Cranfield makes a skeptical view of this connection that “Love in Actions” or “the Marks of Love ” in 12:9-21 is loosely connected to the preceding verses, so that it is a mistake to look too anxiously for precise connections of thought or for a logical sequence. The written construction also changes from verse 14 and it seems to start something a new beginning.<sup>66</sup> The practical instructions in this section are tending to recall the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, Matt 5:43-48 is basic ground for love to enemies and not to judge them 12:19-20.<sup>67</sup> In verses 9-13 Paul is concerned with the relations of the Christians with their fellow-Christians. And verses 14-21 refer to the relations of Christians with those outside the Church.<sup>68</sup>

**13:1-7** This is the text that the research will mainly study. There are different opinions about the interpolation of the text (which will be discussed later).The authorities in these verses are the pagan authorities. Thus, it can be understood as the continuation of Paul’s guidelines for the behaviour of Christians towards those who are outside the fellowship in the preceding verses.

**13:8-10** These verses about the all-inclusive command of love are the conclusion of Paul’s ethical instruction of Christian relation to the authorities or the state in the preceding verses. This is a good connection of vs. 1-7.<sup>69</sup> Paul instructs the Christians not to have debt except the debt of love. Within Jesus tradition (Mt. 22:37-40; cf. Mk. 12:28-34) Paul identifies that Love is the fulfilment of all the laws in quotation of Leviticus 19:18 “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” as a summary of God’s command. Paul mentions this as of being of immediate concern to Roman churches, the second commandment “to love your neighbour” which is the subject matter of the second tablet of the Decalogue. Christian love is not to harm the neighbours but to love the neighbours which means the fulfilment of the commandments of God.<sup>70</sup>

**13:11-14** The eschatological context where Christian obedience is done, has already set in 12:2 (“not to be conformed to this age... but to be transformed by the renewing of mind”). This context is also assumed throughout chapters 12-13. 13:11-14 is about the explicit

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<sup>65</sup> John Murray, 1965, 128.

<sup>66</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, 1985,308.

<sup>67</sup> F.F Bruce, 1985, 215.

<sup>68</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, 1985, 308-309.

<sup>69</sup> C.K Barrett, 1971, 229. Ernst Käsemann, 1980, 360.

<sup>70</sup> F.F Bruce, 1985, 226.

eschatological motivation of Christian obedience.<sup>71</sup> Paul tries to point out that the New Testament teachings are not simply the moral code to be added to the list of other philosophies and religions. They have to be bound up with the New Testament teaching about the age of salvation that God has brought into being through Jesus Christ. Thus, Christians should not conform their behaviour to the old age, which is passing away. They need to live out the values of the new age, to which they belong through Christ.<sup>72</sup>

**14:1-15:13** This section is about the Strong and the Weak in Christian Community in Rome. This is a special exhortation for the concrete situation after general exhortation to Roman Christians.<sup>73</sup> According to Moo, though he talks about the right and the wrong, Paul's emphasis is the unity of Christians (both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians). Thus, the problems mentioned in this section are seen as the reason for Church division.<sup>74</sup> The possible main problem of the Strong Christians and the Weak Christians is the problem concerning eating meat sacrifice to idols as in 1 Corinthians 8-10.<sup>75</sup>

The Strong Christians refused to continue the Jewish tradition as they are freed from old life through Christ and they judged to the weak Christians who continued to preserve tradition. Paul tries to instruct not to judge and condemn each other because we are all slaves of God and we are equal before God. We have to live in the Lord and die in the Lord. God alone has a right to judge and determine whether the practice meets his standard or not. The strong who do not avoid eating meat and wine, should not judge the weak and should not act without control, for it is acting out of love (14: 15). The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteous, peace, and joy in Holy Spirit (14: 17). For the true Kingdom of God the strong and the weak should not be divided upon the practices but have to accept each other as Christ has accepted us into the glory of God. So, the Christians should accept gentiles. This section thus refers to the particular situation of Roman Christians who are in need of reconciliation. Paul instructs both the strong and the weak to be reconciled in brotherly love.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, 1985, 330.

<sup>72</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 2002, 189.

<sup>73</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 364.

<sup>74</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 2002.

<sup>75</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 374.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 374.

Paul's theology of love of neighbours as summing up or fulfilling the whole law reflected in this passage.<sup>77</sup> Paul accepts both the strong Christians who reject the Jewish tradition and the weak Christians who still followed Jewish traditions. He suggests to them not to be divided upon concerning the Jewish laws because to fulfill the law of Christ is to fulfill the law including Jewish laws and traditions. Loving the neighbours is the summary of the fulfilment of the law. So, Paul instructs the Roman Christians in this passage to love each other or not to be in disunity. Paul's giving reason of Love in this circumstance can connect to the 13:1-7 that can be implied to have neighbouring love with the secular Roman state.

Without accidentally, Romans 13:1-7 is a well structured scripture within 12:1-13:15 which is under the theme of Love to the Neighbour. A more detailed context of Romans 13:1-7 will be studied as follows.

### 3.2.2 Immediate Context

There are contradictory views concerning the immediate context. It is hard to deny that the text can be seen as an alien section of its immediate context. The text is abruptly inserted between 12:21 and 13:8. 12:21 "Love about no vengeance" should be followed by 13:8-10 "Love about the fulfillment of the laws." Besides, the text has no eschatological reservation that is found in 12:11ff. Because of these criteria many scholars such as Käsemann, Cranfield, Morris and Jewett agree Romans 13:1-7 is interpolated or independent within the theme of Love because Paul may be stimulated by certain circumstance of the Christian community in Rome.<sup>78</sup>

Jewett gives two additional criteria. First, the most serious for an interpolation is the abrupt transition between 12:21 and 13:1. There is no conjunction in 13:1 to mark the transition to the new pericope. And there is also the shift of the second person plural dominations in 12:9-21 to the third person singular style in 13:1. Second, the writing of having fear of and receiving "praise" from the government strongly contrasts with Paul's statements

<sup>77</sup> James D.G. Dunn, 1998, 655-658. Paul has already had in mind the love command of Christ that is the command to love the neighbours. Thus, Paul does not teach that the law was to be discarded. Loving neighbors is fulfilling the law of Christ. Paul views that to fulfill the law of Christ is to fulfill the law. Paul clearly says that fulfillment of the law as something which evidently meets the requirement of the law (Rom 8:4). He emphasizes the "whole law" as still obligatory for the believers for he does not want to separate love command from the rest (Gal 5:14). In addition, Paul sees Love command as the summary of the whole law. He clearly mentions that faith operating through love is the commandments are to be kept including the necessity of circumcision (Gal 5:6, 15, 19). Moreover, Paul follows Jesus' tradition that is his offering acceptance and forgiveness to sinners during his own ministry, "welcome one another, as Christ also welcomed you..." (Rom 15:7), "forgave each other... as the Lord forgave you" (Col 3:13). Thus, Paul never separate the law from the commandment of love. The fulfillment of the law is the fulfillment of the command of Christ.

<sup>78</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 352-353. C.E.B. Cranfield, 1979, 651. Leon Morris, 1988, 457. Robert Jewett, 2007, 782-784.

in other letters (Gal 1:10; 1Thess 2:4) as well as with the formulation of Rom 8:15. Thus, he views that Romans 13:1-7 reflects the compositional circumstances of the letter dictated by Paul over a period of time while incorporating materials that may have originated earlier.<sup>79</sup> This is the view of Romans 13:1-7 as an interpolation or an independent blog in its immediate context but it does not deny Paul's authenticity of the letter.

On the other hand, there are some scholars such as O'Neill, Kallas and W. Munro who thought that Rom 13:1-7 has un-Pauline vocabulary so that this passage was added by a redactor to Paul's original letter to the Romans.<sup>80</sup> Pallis mentioned that this passage was inserted after 133 CE in order to distance Christians from Jewish zealotism.<sup>81</sup> This challenges Paul's authenticity of the letter. However, it cannot be taken as perfect reason because in Rome in the time of composition there was the rebellious tendency although which may not be exactly the same as Palestinian Zealots in the Jewish War. Thus, the text can also be interpreted as to distance Christians from the rebellious movement against the Roman authority of Paul's time.<sup>82</sup> Both Käsemann and Jewett reject the view that is against Paul's authenticity.

For me, it is also unreasonable to reject Paul's authority because the proof is not perfect and it has a danger of interrupting Paul's theology. In his epistles, Paul usually exhorts his audience to love one another or to love all the brothers and sisters of the believers. In 1Thes 4:10-12 Paul exhorts the Thessalonian Christians to love one another and to act properly. The Thessalonian Christians are apparently strong in the "love of the brethren". So, some of them stopped working for their living and were subsisting on the bounty of others. And it became very bad before the outsiders. So, Paul reminds them to be careful in their action to the others and be dependent on no one (v 12).<sup>83</sup> Paul's view to love one another and to act properly in action is going hand in hand. This flow of thought also reflects in Rom 12:1-15:13. In this large parenthesis Rom 13:1-7 is a practical concern to the neighbours who are the pagan Roman rulers. Paul clearly instructs to give tax to the state and that is clearly pointing to the fact that Paul's theological flow in 1Thess 4:10-12 is going on in his Epistle to the Romans. Thus, in order to prevent from the danger of interrupting Paul's theology, it will be wise to accept Paul's authenticity of Rom 13:1-7.

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<sup>79</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 182-784.

<sup>80</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 791.

<sup>81</sup> This is from Jewett's quotation. Robert Jewett, 2007, 784.

<sup>82</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 350-351.

<sup>83</sup> Leon Morris, 1958, 82-83.

Thus, I would like to view that the text as one with the connection and flow of Paul's thought and argument. Romans 13:1-7 should be taken not as the general ethical instruction of Paul but as part of Paul's situational ethics to the particular situation in Rome 12:1-15:13.<sup>84</sup> It is the political advice of Paul to the Roman Christians. Paul may know that the opposition and hostility naturally leads into an uneasy situation so that he seems to encourage the Roman Christians to be subjective to the authority. According to Dunn, this is the theme of quietist response which connects 12:14-21 and 13:1-7.<sup>85</sup>

He also points out the continuation of Paul's thought by putting the connecting terms in the paraenesis of 12:14-13:10.

ἀγαθος / κακός	12:21 ; 13:3-4
ὀργῆ	12:19 ; 13:4-5
ἐκδικεω / ἐκδικος	12:19 ; 13:4
πάντων ἀνθρώπων / πᾶσιν	12:17-18 ; 13:7
ὄφειλη / ὄφειλω	13:7, 8

This connection of terminology is against those who see Rom 13:1-7 as the interpolation or independent blog.<sup>86</sup> Christians should not overcome evil by evil but should overcome by good for the authority who has the right to use power will punish those who do evil (12:21; 13:3-4). The Christians should leave wrath to God for the vengeance is only for God. The authority can do vengeance over the wrongdoers so that the Christians should obey the government because of conscience (12:19-13:4-5). The Christians should pay respect to everyone whom is due. The Christians' manner of life in peaceful community is not only within the Christian community but also outside the community (12:17-18; 13:7). Except the debt to love one another Christians should not fail to do their duty and responsibility such as giving tax to the government (13:7,8).

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<sup>84</sup> Mikael Tellbe, 2001, 172.

<sup>85</sup> James D. G Dunn, 1988, 758. Quietist view on the government in the time of political oppression has a link to Jeremiah's warning to the Jews from Jerusalem to be submissive to the Babylonian rulers. The Jews from Jerusalem were questioning about the oppressive political rule of the foreign country and wanted to know how they should respond to this governance. Jeremiah's answer to them, that is found in Jer 25, is not to rebel against the King of Babylon for he is performing God's will to punish the Jews for their sins. So, rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar is rebellion against God for he is merely God's agent for their punishment. At the same time, Jeremiah's prophecy continues that God's allowance of Babylonians' dominion is only temporal. This empire will fall and the Jews will come back to Jerusalem with triumph and glory. Thus, Jeremiah's prophecy is to be quiet under the foreign oppression within the time that God had set for them, so long as it aims to the welfare of the Jewish people and so Jeremiah instructs them to pray and support for the conquerors. Shaye J.D Cohen, 2006, 20. This political quietism may be the background for Paul in his writing of Christian Ethics in oppressive political situation in Rom 13:1-7. So, this thematic link is suggesting the connection of Rom 13:1-7 to its preceding verses 12:14-21.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 758-759.

This ethical guideline of Romans 13:1-7 is already set within the idea of “love” in Paul’s exhortation Rom 12:1-13:14.<sup>87</sup> Paul starts his exhortation with the idea of “God’s will,” “the good,” “the acceptance” and “to be perfect,” which Christians are expected to be able to prove (12:2). This is the introduction or driving force to follow the ethical instruction within the section of 12:1-13:14. Here, the contrast of “good-evil” is the general idea of Romans 12-13.<sup>88</sup> Tellbe also sees the contrast of “good-evil” as the special connecting term of the section (12:9-13:10). This section is framed by the use of (ἡ ἀγάπη) love in the first word of 12:9 (love as to hate evil) and the last word of 13:10 (love as not to do evil).<sup>89</sup> So, it can be assumed that love is secularized as the contrast of “good-evil” in political ethics of Paul (13:1-7).

Paul views that Christian life is not only within the Christian community but also related to the pagan society.<sup>90</sup> Paul instructs the Roman Christians not to revenge against each other, not to do evil to neighbours but to love the neighbours. He may want the Christians to live in peace and harmony under the Roman governance that is also the general expectation of the government. To Wong this is a proof of Paul’s teaching of “Love your neighbours” and “never avenge neighbours” as de-radicalization of Jesus’s teaching of love.<sup>91</sup>

Terminological link and the theme of love suggest that Romans 13:1-7 is the continuation of its immediate context. Within the immediate context I will study the text in detail for getting the intended meaning of the text. Does the text mention the situation of church and state relationship in Rome? Does the text instruct the Christians to be quiet under any kind of government? Does the text only instruct the obligations of the state? Does the text mention the attitude of the government? With these questions I will proceed with detailed analysis.

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<sup>87</sup> Erick K.C Wong, 2001, 254.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>89</sup> Mikael Tellbe, 2001, 172.

<sup>90</sup> James Dunn, 1988, 759.

<sup>91</sup> Erick K.C. Wong, 251-255. According to Matt 5:44-45, 48. God takes care of both good and bad people. This is the reason for “love your enemy.” The aim of love your neighbor is to be perfect like God (vs. 45). Jesus’ teaching is very radical. On the contrary, Paul never follows this logic but says that God will avenge, and quotes 32:35 “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom 12:19). Vengeance is only for God and human beings should not take God’s role. Thus, human beings are not called to be perfect as God. Instead, Paul establishes minimum demands for the understanding of “love for enemies” (Rom 12:17-21).

### 3.3 Literary Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Textual Criticism

13:1 In order to avoid the Hebraic idiom involved in *πάσα ψυχη* several western witnesses (P<sup>46</sup> D\* F G it<sup>d\*, g.</sup> 61 Irenaeus<sup>lat</sup> Tertullian Ambrosiaster Speculum) read *Πᾶσαις ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτάσσεσθε*.<sup>92</sup> Due to Schreiner the reading of NA (Nestle Aland)<sup>27</sup> should be accepted. *Πᾶσα ψυχή ἐξουσία ἐπερχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω* is witnessed by *⊕* A B D<sup>2</sup> Ψ m 33. 1739. 1881 lat sy co. Superior external evidence supports this reading. In addition, internal evidence also supports the reading since the Semitic idiom was probably altered for stylistic reasons.<sup>93</sup>

*ὑπο* is replaced with *απο* by some witnesses D\* F G 629. 945 *pc*. The copyists probably insert *απο* for they see it might be more stylistic than *ὑπο*. But the two prepositions were converging onto one another's territory in Paul's day, and thus the use of *ὑπο* is not surprising.<sup>94</sup>

*ἐξουσιαι* is inserted after *οὔσαι* by some Byzantine manuscripts D<sup>2</sup> Ψ 33m sy. *οὔσαι* is present participle feminine plural and when it is used in *αἱ δὲ οὔσαι*, the phrase does mean *the existing ones* (authorities) or *those in existence*.<sup>95</sup> It seems to clarify the *authorities*. Thus, the insertion is natural and does not affect the meaning of the sentence since the term is implied. Moreover, the weight of the textual evidence (*⊕* A B D\* F G 0285<sup>vid</sup>; 6. 81. 1506. 1739. 1881 *al* latt co; Ir<sup>lat</sup> Or) points to its exclusion.<sup>96</sup>

*του* is inserted before *θεοῦ* by some witnesses (*⊕*<sup>s</sup> Ψ 33m; Ir). The witnesses seem to emphasize the doer as God. It is grammatically correct that genitive singular *τοῦ θεοῦ* follows *υπο*. However, it does not affect the meaning of the text. Besides, the weight of textual evidence (*⊕* A B D F G P 0285<sup>vid</sup>. 6. 81. 104. 365. 1506. 1739. 1881 *al*; Or) is reasonable for omitting the term.

13:3 *τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ* is replaced by *τῷ ἀγαθοεργῷ* "to the one doing good (dative singular)" of F\*. Another variant is that *των ἀγαθων εργαων τῷ* "of good works (genitive plurals)" of D<sup>2</sup> Ψ 33 m sy, and *τῷ κακῷ* is replaced by *των κακων* "to the bad (genitive plural)" (D<sup>2</sup> Ψ 33 m sy).

<sup>92</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, 2000, 467.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, 1998, 688.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 688.

<sup>95</sup> Max Zerwick S.J, 1996, 489.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, 1998, 688.



The use of τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ (to the good work) and τῷ κακῷ (to the bad) is embarrassing. So, some witnesses may try to revise the text so that the doers of good and evil are described substantively.<sup>97</sup> However, the text is strongly witnessed by P<sup>46</sup> ⋈ ι B D\* F<sup>c</sup> G P 0285. 6. 630. 1506. 1739.1881 *pc* (*lat*); Ir<sup>lat</sup> Cl and its internal evidence as harder reading makes the text acceptable.<sup>98</sup>

13:4 σοι is omitted by some manuscripts of F G bo<sup>ms</sup> θεου γαρ διακονος εστιν εις το αγαθον “For the servant of God is for the good” does not affect the meaning of θεου γαρ διακονος εστιν σοι εις το αγαθον “for the servant of God is (to you for the good /for your good).”<sup>99</sup> Because of the writing style σοι may be omitted by the manuscripts. Another variant το is omitted by a witness B *pc*. This might be the mistake to insert the article το.<sup>100</sup> According to NA<sup>27</sup> the text is strongly witnessed by the P<sup>46</sup> ⋈ <sup>c</sup> A B L P Ψ\* 048. 81. 104. 365. 630. 1505. 1506. 1739. 1881 *pm*; Ir<sup>lat</sup>. The text is thus acceptable for strong external evidence.

However, εἰς ὀργήν is omitted by D\* F G. Dunn views that the omission is probably meant not to allow for contributing the divine wrath to a human ruler.<sup>101</sup> Compared to the text this variant has not many external witnesses and it does not affect the meaning of the text.

13:5 ἀνάγκη is omitted and ὑποτάσσεσθαι is replaced by ὑποτάσσεσθε in the witnesses of P<sup>46</sup> D F G it; Ir<sup>lat</sup> Ambst. ὑποτάσσεσθαι, second person imperative, might be written in the same style as ὑποτάσσεσθω, third person imperative, in vs. 13:1a.<sup>102</sup> The witnesses may want to have coherent imperative writing style. In addition, if ἀνάγκη is written with ὑποτάσσεσθε, it will become a superfluous word. So, it seems to omit ἀνάγκη for this reason.<sup>103</sup> There is no problem in internal evidences because of textual variance. Thus, the external evidences in NA<sup>27</sup> (⋈ A B Ψ 048. 33. 1739. 1881 *m* (*vg*) *sy co*) can be taken to be strong enough for the text as authentic.

Generally, there are some variances in the text of Romans 13:1-7, however, the variances do not make major changes in the text. The text according to internal evidences and external evidences of NA<sup>27</sup>, is taken as original.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 689. However, James Dunn, 1988, 758, Dunn views that variants of this part does not affect the sense of the text and the editors seem to merely attempt to improve the meaning of the text. See also C.E.B. Cranfield, 1979, 664.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 689.

<sup>99</sup> Max Zerwick S.J, 1996, 489.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 781.

<sup>101</sup> James Dunn, 1988, 758.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, 1998, 689.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 689. & James Dunn, 1988, 758.

### 3.3.2 Structural Analysis

According to Tellbe, the structure of Romans 13:1-7 is argumentative that is developed in dialogical form (using second person singular, 13:3). The structure revolves around three different roles: the roles of the authorities (υπερεχουσαις, 13:2), the role those (“everyone”) who are subject (υποτασσεσθω, 13:1) to the authorities, and the role of those who are not subject (αντιτασσομενος, ανθεστηκεν, 13:2) to the authorities.<sup>104</sup>

My understanding of Tellbe’s view on argumentative structure of Romans 13:1-7 as Paul’s flow of thought as follows:

#### 13:1-5; Exhortation to be subject to the authorities

*First/General Exhortation:* first imperative (υποτασσεσθω)

everyone must submit to the civic authorities (13:1a)

*Argument (1)* (γαρ): all authorities are from God (13:1b)

*Warning (1):* Judgment on those who resist the authorities (13:2)

*Argument (2)* (γαρ): the authorities resist those who do evil and approve those who do good (13:3a)

*Warning (2):* Fear over those who do evil and praise for those who do evil (13:3b)

*Argument (3)* (γαρ): the authorities are God’s servants to promote good things (13:4a)

*Warning (3):* punishment over those who do evil (13:4b)

*Summary* (διο): Submit to the authorities (because of God’s wrath and your conscience) (13:5)

#### 13:6-7; Practical Implication of the Exhortation

*Practical Affirmation/Implication* (δια τουτο γαρ): you therefore pay taxes/pay therefore taxes (13:6a)

*Argument (4)* (γαρ): the authorities are God’s servant to collect taxes (13:6b)

*Final/Specific Exhortation* (final imperative, αποδοτε):

pay all your dues, whether you are due direct taxes, indirect taxes, fear or honor (13:7)

The Structure of Romans 13:1-7 are generally divided into two parts. The first part is the thematic exhortation and its instruction is to be subject to the authorities (13:1-5), imperative υποτασσεσθω vs. 1a. Then, Paul gives three coherent arguments or reasons for submission to the authorities. It can be clearly seen by observing the using of word (γαρ) three times. The linking words in this part are seen as follows:

<sup>104</sup> Mikael Tellbe, 2001, 174.

ὑποτασσεσθω (imperative)	(13:1a)
γὰρ	(13:1b)
γὰρ	(13:3a)
γὰρ	(13:4a)
διὸ	(13:5)

The authorities are due to be subjected because/for (γὰρ) “they are from God, vs.1b,” “they resist those who do evil and approve those who do good, vs.3a” and “they are God’s servants who do good, vs.4a.” Paul also gives three warnings to who do not submit to the authorities: “the authorities can judge who resist them, vs.2” “they can render fear over those who do evil and approve those who do evil, vs.3b” and “they can punish those who do evil, 4b.” Then, Paul summarizes the above mentioned reasons (διὸ, through which) by repeating exhortation to be subject to the authorities not because of fear but because of conscience.

This first part, therefore, can be seen as the doctrine of Christian contacts with the authority of the secular government because of the phrase ἐξουσία τεταγμέναι refers to the prominent Roman officials.<sup>105</sup> That authority or powers are from God and instituted by God (13:1). Thus, the Christians have to obey the authority for they have power to judge and punish those who do evil and to approve those who do good. The passage does not discuss the structure or function of the authority. Paul is also silent about the nature of the government whether they are good or bad and just or unjust. And Christians in relation with the authority are also expressed as mostly passive.

The second part is the practical implication of exhortation or explicit exhortation to pay tax to the authority (13:6-7). It definitely has the connection with the first part for the linking phrase (διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ, for that is why, vs. 6a). Paul adds another argument or reason to pay tax “the authority are God’s servant to collect tax, vs. 6b.” Finally, Paul gives final or specific exhortation to pay tax and to give honor and fear to the authority. This exhortation is not connected with any conjunction. But this syndetic writing of the imperative in vs. 7 matches that of 13:1a and provides the effective conclusion of the passage. Besides, the final parallel expressions “taxes,” “customs,” “fear” and “honour” can be taken as a paronomastic style and it provides the compelling conclusion of the passage.<sup>106</sup>

The second part almost certainly reflects the knowledge of current affairs in Rome and it is the Hellenistic ideal of the state and the citizens. Paul adopts this secular ideal as the

<sup>105</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1980, 353.

<sup>106</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 782.

place where the Christians will meet the will of God.<sup>107</sup> Thus, paying taxes to the authority becomes an important action or proof for the whole passage of submission to the authority.

In the argumentative structure of Romans 13:1-7, the first part is designated to all the people whether they are Christians or non-Christians. Paul instructs (Πᾶσα ψυχῆ, every person/soul, third person singular, 13:1a) to be subject to the authority. It can be implied that Paul does not want to limit his instruction within the Christian circle. Universal view on relation to the state is distinct. Here, Paul also differentiates his audience as those who do good and those who do evil. However, Paul turns to emphasize the Christians in the second part. He writes (τελεῖτε, you are paying, second person plural, 13:6a) as the conversion to the Christians as group of people. It may be implied as the Christians are paying taxes to the authority at that time. Thus, Paul's ethical view is changed from universality to specific Christian concern.

In order to know the meaning of Rom 13:1-7 within this structure, the labour of analytical work has to be done. And this will be proceeded with the detailed exegesis of Rom 13:1-7 as follows.

### 3.4 Detailed Analysis

The passage of Rom 13:1-7 is the continuation within the large and immediate contexts and cannot definitely be said to be independent of Paul's thought (as it has been already discussed above). The passage opens in gnomic style with an admonition and that also sets the tone for the entire pericope.<sup>108</sup> The admonition is aimed at every Christian in Rome according to the word Πᾶσα ψυχη (Rom 13:1).<sup>109</sup> ψυχη mean the soul as the center of the earthly life, the lower half as it were of the πνευμα and stands for the whole person by metonymy.<sup>110</sup> The following will be the exegesis of Rom 13:1-7 "Paul's instruction to the Christians in Rome to be submissive to the authorities" with some specific topics.

#### 3.4.1 Paul's Intended Meaning Of Authorities

Paul uses the word ἐξουσία for the authorities. This usage has both the meanings of the authorities for civil government and religious sense. Paul also uses another word ἄρχοντες as

<sup>107</sup> James Dunn, 1988, 759. & Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 359.

<sup>108</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 787.

<sup>109</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, 2000, 467.

<sup>110</sup> James Dunn, 1988, 759.

the meaning of authorities and it can be implied as the angel powers. Thus, the authorities in this passage of Paul's instruction are opened to different interpretations. The intended meaning of Paul from the views of authorities as the civil government or the synagogue authorities or the angel powers will be discussed as follows.

### 3.4.1.1 *The Civil Authorities*

Most scholars view ἐξουσία as restricted sense of "official power or authority" (cf. Luke 7:8; 19:17; 20:20). And it naturally comes to mean the bearers of such authority "authorities, government officials" (Luke 12:11; Plutarch, *Philopoemen* 17; Josephus, *War* 2.350; BGD, *TDNT* 8:29-30 and *NDIEC* 2:83-84, in the LXX: Wis Sol 6:5 and 2Macc 3:11). This language is also clearly used in the Christian paraenesis of concerning relation to the power of kings and rulers in the Pauline letters (1Pet 2:13 and 1Tim 2:2).<sup>111</sup>

Thus, "Human Authorities" is preferred as the interpretation here. Paul is also using the vocabulary of Hellenistic political administration:

τεταγμένοι, set up	(13:1)
διαταγή, institution	(13:2)
ἄρχοντες, rulers	(13:3)
λειτουργοί, servants	(13:6)

This usage of vocabulary supports the interpretation of ἐξουσία as human civil authorities.<sup>112</sup>

Interpreting ἐξουσία as authorities which are the Roman administrators is also found in the writings of early Church fathers. For instance, in the post-apostolic period, Clement of Rome prays for human "rulers and governors upon the earth" to whom God has given "power of sovereignty (1Clem. 60.2-61.2)". This testimony clearly continues in the same line of Paul's thinking.<sup>113</sup> In the light of this incidences, ἐξουσία in this verse is referring "of political and civil authority as it would actually bear upon his readers". And they are understood as the local magistrates in Rome.<sup>114</sup>

### 3.4.1.2 *The Synagogue Authorities*

ἐξουσία as the synagogue authorities in Rom 13:1-7 is strongly viewed by Nanos. He agrees that ἐξουσία is used in the administration of the Hellenistic style of government to

<sup>111</sup> Bauer's, 2000, 277. & James D.G Dunn, 1988, 760.

<sup>112</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 666.

<sup>113</sup> Walter Wink, 1984, 15.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 788.

describe those who interfaced with the people on their behalf. However, he sees Paul's usage of ἐξουσία here as the authorities from the synagogue. Synagogue is the institution that derives from God's gift to Israel: the "ordering" of the covenant with Israel or the Torah or the very word of God. There were gentile Christians in Rome and they had to associate with the synagogue and which made them the recognition of a new authority. Paul thus gives here calling for (willing) subordination in view of the synagogue's responsibility to interpret God's word on matters of proper behavior (good and evil).<sup>115</sup> Nanos defends his view by referring Luke's use of ἐξουσία as the authorities of the syangogue (Acts 9:14; 26:10-12; Luke 12:11).<sup>116</sup>

He also interprets ἄρχοντες in v 3 as referring to the authorities of the synagogue and it helps his interpretation of ἐξουσία as synagogue authorities more clearly. Based on Käsemann's view Nanos sees ἄρχοντες as used for both religious and political leader. To Käsemann, ἄρχοντες is not the representative of cosmic harmony or a moral ideal. They are disciplinarian in relation to individual and group emancipation, which presupposes human autonomy or religious based equality.<sup>117</sup> Based on this possibility Nanos views ἄρχοντες as religious authority by pointing to its usages. In the case of synagogue, the "ruler" entrusted with the conduct of worship was called an ἄρχισυναγωγος while the one concerned with non-religious affairs was elected annually and referred to as an ἄρχων. He again refers to Luke's usage of the term ἄρχοντες in the synagogue situation (Acts 7:27, 35; 14:5; Luke 12:11, 8:41; 14:1; 18:18; 23:13, 35; 24:20).<sup>118</sup>

The most obvious word that supports Nanos's view is λειτουργοὶ θεοῦ in v 6 "for they are ministers of God engaged in this very task". He sees λειτουργοὶ as referring to the temple ministers or temple authorities. He explores the usage from Paul's application of λειτουργος as a "minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles" (15:16), which he inextricably linked with his own "continual devotion" to the collection for the Jerusalem saints as an example of the Christian gentile's inddevotedness to the suffering of Israel (1:10-15; 15:15-33). Moreover, Paul's exhortation to the gentiles to donate for the poor in Jerusalem (2Cor 8-9) also makes clear the situation that the gentile Christians are weak to share material blessing to the Jews although they have shared spiritual blessing together with Jews (Rom 15:72). Nanos perceives this as a clue to the historical usage of λειτουργος in the context of the Temple tax.

<sup>115</sup> Mark D. Nanos, 1996, 302.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 303-304.

<sup>117</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 356-357.

<sup>118</sup> Mark D. Nanos, 1996, 304-305.

This would make sense of their "continual devotion" to the collection of taxes as "servants of God."<sup>119</sup> This makes the view of Nanos clear that λειτουργοι as the temple ministers are responsible to the collecting the temple tax.

Nanos makes a reasonable conclusion that the authorities in Rom 13:1-7 are the synagogue authorities who are responsible for disciplining people's behavior and temple taxation. And his interpretation of the whole pericope of Rom 13:1-7 is within Christianity and synagogue context.

### 3.4.1.3 *The Angel Power (ἄρχοντες)*

Contrast to Nanos's view, ἄρχοντες can be interpreted as angel power. This view is largely defended by Cullmann in the Jewish understanding of authorities and Pauline theology. For instance, in 1Corinthians 2:8, it is written that "None of the rulers of this world understood the wisdom of God, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". For Jewish audience this term, the rulers ἄρχοντες of this world, will mean "demonic invisible powers which stand behind all earthly happenings and use human beings as their effective agents."<sup>120</sup> In this current Jewish thinking Paul might also have in mind of invisible powers behind the state. In Acts 3:17 and 13:27f Paul's writing about Pilate and Herod in Christ's crucifixion history, can be understood as the world rulers or the agents of the demonic powers. To Paul, thus, "the rulers of this world" denotes for the earthly Roman rulers or administrators of Palestine at that time, the effective agents of the invisible forces or powers. This belongs to the idea Paul has of the State.<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, the abstract meaning of ἐξουσία has the authority or power and it designates equally to both God and Devil in the bible (the divine: Acts 1:7; Jude 25; Mark 1:22; Matt 7:29; Mark 2:10; Matt 21:23; 28:18; the Satanic: Luke 22:53; Eph 2:2). So it is not easy to define ἐξουσία as originally good or evil. So, it is also not false to interpret ἐξουσία as the angel powers ἄρχοντες. At the same time, ἐξουσία both designates the abstract authority and the agents which execute. Thus, for Cullmann the truth is that ἐξουσία is referring to the abstract power of divine and devil but personally conceived agents of this authority. Here in Rom 13:1 ἐξουσία can be taken to be referring to the angel powers behind the state or the state as the agents of the angel powers.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 308.

<sup>120</sup> Oscar Cullmann, 1963, 51.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 80.

Clinton Morrison also has the same view as Cullmann. In his book *The Powers That Be*, he argues that Paul presupposes the Jewish notion of angelic representatives for each nation in the heavenly council; he never feels compelled to make this conception explicit. But he certainly does subscribe to the broader Greco-Roman conception of spiritual forces behind all earthly institutions, of which the Jewish notion of angels of the nations was a special adaption.<sup>123</sup> Winker also has the same idea but he sees here in Romans 13:1-7, Paul's primary concern is the practical issue of the Church's behavior towards bureaucratic officials (ἐξουσία) in the interim before the end of the time of expectation for eschatology.<sup>124</sup>

Concerning ἐξουσία, Nanos' view is very distinct from others'. The linguistic usage of the term ἐξουσία clearly means the rulers in Hellenistic administration. Romans 13:1-7 itself is the general obedience to the Roman rulers but not about the national or regional law. Moreover, it is also important to observe that similar exhortations in the NT relate to governmental authorities (Titus 3:1; 1Pet 2:13-17).<sup>125</sup> Thus, ἐξουσία as present Roman administrator is more reasonable than ἐξουσία as synagogue authorities. However, the abstract meaning of ἐξουσία has the meaning of both referring to the Divine and the Satanic so that authorities in Rom 13:1-7 can have the possibility of angelic powers or the agents of angel powers as Cullmann has been strongly made emphasis. This interpretation of authorities as the angel powers will give Paul's view of submission to the government within the wider perspective of Romans and other Pauline epistles. This view will be discussed later.

### **3.4.2 Be Submissive To The Government For They Are Ordained By God**

Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὐσαὶ ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσὶν. "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Rom 13:1).

Paul instructs the Roman Christians to be subject to the government for the government is ordained by God. God's ordination of the government is drawn from fundamentally OT teachings together with Hellenistic Jewish teachings (2Sam 12:8; Prov 8:15-16; Jer 27:5-6; Isa 45:1; Dan 2:21, 37; Wisd Sol 6:1-3; Sir 4:37). For instance, Isa 45:1 "Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus." Josephus also describes the same teaching to

<sup>123</sup> This is the quotation of Wink. Walter Wink, 1984, 46-47.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>125</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, 1998, 681.



the Essenes: "for not apart from God does anyone rule" (*J.W* 2.8.7, 140).<sup>126</sup> By depending this tradition Paul uses the universal language "there is no authority except" and makes clear that he is asserting a universally applicable truth about the ultimate origin of rulers, that origin is God.<sup>127</sup> In addition, Paul repeats this view in changing his position into positively "established by God." It thus means although Rome may not recognize it or may be reluctant to admit it, it is undeniable that Rome's authority comes from God. It can also mean that Civil authorities may not agree with God's will, but their authorities still come from God.<sup>128</sup>

This becomes questionable for the Roman authorities under Pontius Pilate who crucified Jesus Christ. How this government who are responsible for Jesus' death be ordained by God? Jewett gives a good reason for this problem in the scope of the divine plan for salvation. Paul criticizes the Laws in his first eight chapters in Romans but there was no mention of Roman government's propaganda that its law-enforcements system was redemptive, producing a kind of messianic peace under the rule of gods Justitia (Roman goddess of Justice) or Clementia (Roman goddess of forgiveness and mercy). He stated that Christ alone is the fulfillment of the law (10:4), not the emperor or the Roman gods. Christ alone is Lord and who believes him with the heart will be justified and confesses with the mouth will be saved (10:9-10). The answer is the simple fact of divine appointment, a matter justified not by the virtue of the appointee but by the mysterious mind of God who elects she will as the agents of her purpose (9:14-33; 11:17-32). Thus, Roman authorities are seen as the divine appointees for the reason of Christ's crucifixion and this is the reason for the Roman Christians to give submission to the Roman authorities.<sup>129</sup>

Paul clearly mentions that the divine appointment of the government is the main reason for the Christians to be submissive to them. Then, what is the meaning of Submission for the Roman Christians? And how should they submit them?

For the meaning of submission, the word study of ὑποτασσέσθω becomes necessary. ὑποτασσέσθω is imperative passive and it means be subject or submit.<sup>130</sup> ὑποτασσέσθω is the early Christian usage in exhortation because it is natural that ἐξουσία and ὑπερεχω are implied each other in the Bible and early Christian letters in the case of authority in question – whether of husband (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1Pet 3:1,5), of parents (Luke 2:51), of

<sup>126</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 667.

<sup>127</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 798.

<sup>128</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 667.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 789-790.

<sup>130</sup> Max Zerwick S.J, 1996, 488-489. Dunn also translates clearly by differentiating prefix and suffix of the term that ὑποτασσω ὑπο under; τασσω place, order has the clear sense "subject, subordinate". James Dunn, 1988, 760-761.

masters (Titus 2:9; 1Pet 2:18; *Did.* 4:11; *Barn.* 19:7) or of the secular authorities (1Chron 29:24; Titus 3:1; 1Pet 2:13; *IClem.* 61:1; and Romans 13:1-7). Thus, this means that Christian submissions in the social cases are related to God and the Christians are appealed to accept the reality of social status as such a social inferior. This teaching was a regular part of early Christian exhortation.<sup>131</sup> So, the instruction to be subject can be implied as the Christians have to be subordinate to the government and it is the will of God.

In 1 Cor 16:16 it is also written in reference to the believer`s voluntarily subjecting themselves to their congregational leaders, a matter of their willing decision when legal, coercive powers had not yet arisen in the Church. Thus, in the light of these incidences, in Romans, Paul`s usage of ὑποτασσέσθω can be implied as Paul may want to encourage the believers in Rome to make in accordance with this guideline of willing subordination are subject to the premise set forth in the introductory pericope of the fourth proof (12:1-2), not to "be conformed to this world" but to be "transformed" as the congregation assesses "what is the will of God" in particular situations (Rom 16). That means the Christians` submission to the government is the will of God and it is aimed to transform the Christian community into an ethically good society. So, this is more than the authoritarian ethics of obedience. Paul`s instruction of subjection is willing or voluntary submission and it also has spiritual insight.<sup>132</sup>

Paul is instructing the Roman Christians to be willingly submissive to the Roman government (or any governments) for they are ordained by God though they themselves may not know or agree with divine appointment. This submission is in accordance with the early Christian teaching of subordination to the authorities as well.

### **3.4.3 Those Who Resist Authority Resist What God Has Appointed And They Will Incur Judgment**

V 2a ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν, "so then, he who opposes to the authority has resisted the ordinance of God."

In verse 1 Paul mentions about God has ordained and appointed the ruling authorities and then the conclusion drawn in verse 2 follows naturally. Those who resist such an authority oppose that which God has ordained.<sup>133</sup>

Here, the word, ἀντιτασσόμεναι "oppose, resist" a person is only used in 1Kings 11:34, Hos. 1:6 and James 5:6. However, there is the word ἀνθιστημι which is nearly synonymous to

<sup>131</sup> James D. G Dunn, 1988, 761.

<sup>132</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 788-789.

<sup>133</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, 1998, 683.

ἀντιτασσόμεναι and it means "set oneself against, oppose, resist, withstand." And it is prominent in its typical usage in LXX and it has the meaning for a resistance which was unavailing before superior strength (Lev 26:37; Duet 7:24; Josh 1:5; Judg 2: 14; 2Chro 13:7; Jud 6:4; 11: 18) or for a resistance to God which was inconceivable (Job 9:19; Ps 76:7; Jer 49:19; Jud 16:14; Wisd Sol 11:21; ).<sup>134</sup> And Paul uses ἀνθιστημι twice in verse 2 and also in Rom 9:19 with the same sense as opposing God the creator. Thus, without doubt ἀντιτασσόμεναι simply means "resist or oppose."<sup>135</sup>

The divine ordination of the Roman authorities is clearly seen through the word διαταγη. διαταγη occurs in only two other passages in biblical Greek (Ezra 4:11 and Acts 7:53) but it is well attested in papyri and inscriptions (MED MER, *TDNT* 8:36).<sup>136</sup> The term usually is not used for official decrees and appointment, but the colsely associated terms such as διαταξις or διαταγμα are used instead (in the NT only in Heb 11:23).<sup>137</sup> Recently, G.H.R. Horsley cites a Trajan inscription "in accordance with the ordinance (διαταγμα) of the emperor Nerva Trajan...". This evidence confirmed διαταγμα as the "standard terminology" for official use so that it settles the dispute over the terms about ordinance. Thus, it can be implied from the use of the isolated word διαταγη that Paul wants to mention Roman rule is from God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, it can be concluded that διαταγη refers to "the actual basis of submission under governmental authority as an order willed by God for Christians."<sup>138</sup> At the same time, Paul states that since the authority are ordained by God, whoever opposes the authority, has already opposed ordinance of God. Paul continues that "and those who have set themselves to resist will incur judgment" (οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται) v 2b.

ἀνθεστηκότες, perfect present participle, "those who have set themselves to resist" indicates a determined and established policy.<sup>139</sup> Or it can also imply that the problem of opposition against Roman authorities was a matter of the past with continuing present relavance.<sup>140</sup> In any case, Paul says that who have set themselves to resist will incur judgment κριμα, judgment. Just as divine wrath works through the make-up of the human species

<sup>134</sup> James D. G Dunn, 1988, 762.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 790-791. However, Dunn's interpretation includes both against God and superior authorities. To him Paul's implication is that resistance is not only against God's ordering of society, but also a wasteful of time and energy, because a state of affairs or a structure of society cannot be changed since God appoints them. James D. G Dunn, 1988, 762.

<sup>136</sup> James D. G Dunn, 1988, 762.

<sup>137</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 791. James D.G Dunn, 1988, 762 & Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 667.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 791.

<sup>139</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 762.

<sup>140</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 791.

(1:18-32), Paul might have readily conceived of divine judgment working through the structures of (divine ordained) human society.<sup>141</sup> Thus, κρίμα can be seen as earthly judgment. In addition, the words “fear” and “wrath” in vv 3ff, (will be discussed in the following topics) also supported earthly punishment of the government.<sup>142</sup>

Here, Paul clarifies that God ordains the authorities or specifically the Roman authorities even if they do not know. Since, God ordained the authorities, the real authority or power is God alone. Paul’s view is, thus, anyone who resists the existing authorities, is resisting God. Thus, Paul instructs the Roman Christians not to resist the government but to give voluntary subjection to God by doing good work and especially obeying the Roman law of taxation. As far as taxation is concerned, Paul emphatically instructs to observe practical obedience to the government (vv 6-7).<sup>143</sup> In addition, Paul also clearly states the duty of the government to punish those who do wrong and to promote good. This legitimizes the Roman Christians to do good and to give taxes to the government. Paul’s instruction of doing these two things will continue to be discussed in the following two divisions.

### **3.4.4 Do Good And You Will Be Praised By The Government For They Are Good For The People Though Fear To The Bad**

Here, Paul mentions the general character of the government that is doing good for the people and even praise to the good works of the citizens. On the other hand, they also punish the bad. Based on this view Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to do good.

#### ***3.4.4.1 Government Is Good For The People Though Fear To The Bad***

Paul clearly says in v 4, θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. “for he is God’s servant to you for good.” The government is the servant of God for the Roman Christians for good. The servants of God mean the rulers are under the Lordship of God because God is Lord of the rulers (Isa 45:1; Jer 25:9).<sup>144</sup> The institution of being good for the citizens conveys that this is the divine will that only a civil government properly fulfilling its functions.<sup>145</sup> The word διάκονός here, has the sense “(civic) official or functionary”. Esth 1:10; 2:2; and 6:3 record royal attendants with no indication of a sacral or cultic reference (*TDNT* 4:231). This is

<sup>141</sup> James D.G. Dunn, 1988, 762-763. & Robert Jewett, 2007, 791.

<sup>142</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1980, 357. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 667. C.E.B. Cranfield, 1979, 664. John Murray, 1965, 149.

<sup>143</sup> James D.G. Dunn, 1988, 762.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 764.

<sup>145</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 668.

equivalent to Paul's concern to desecralize the idea of divine service (1:9; 12:1; 15:16). Thus, as breaking down the barrier between cult and everyday this desecralization of minister remains a preoccupation in the back of Paul's mind.<sup>146</sup>

In the time of Greco-Roman government, *διάκονός* is also used as the governmental term. For instance, in *Laws 12.c*, Plato claims that friendship and honor are due to anyone who serves the state and to prevent basic motives, "those who are performing any act of service (*διάκονούντες*) to the state must do it without gifts." A statesman thus becomes a "servant of the state." There is also the first century inscription where the city officials dedicating a statue to Hermes are described as *διάκονοί*. Thus, the use of this title "servant of God" would correspond to one of the Roman official titles who served municipal cults and formed part of the imperial bureaucracy.<sup>147</sup>

Thus, it is clear that Paul's usage of "servants" for the government is easy to be understood by the Roman Christians. These servants or ministers of God who will be God's agents in the civil official or civil functionary are doing the good for the Christian readership as the residents of Rome.<sup>148</sup> What kind of good the government can do for the Roman Christians? Dunn views the good as more civic well-being than spiritual well-being.<sup>149</sup> Käsemann also sees the good as referring to the general well-being of the citizens in addition to security against attacks.<sup>150</sup>

On the other hand, Paul does not miss to mention the government's judgment concerning the bad. The governments are also the servants of God to judge the wrong doers v 4c, θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν ἕκδικος εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι. "for he is God's servant, an avenger for wrath against the evildoer." Here, authorities are also seen as the representatives of God to perform vengeance. This is God's wrath and the prominent theme in earlier chapters of Romans 1:18; 2:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19. The idea here is that the governmental law enforcement carries out divine wrath against evildoers.<sup>151</sup> Paul legitimates for the governmental "servants of God" the task of vengeance that is explicitly forbidden to believers acting on their own behalf (Rom 12:17, 19).<sup>152</sup> The government has a right to have anger to the wrong doers or a right to judge the wrong doers, so that the bad have to fear the government.

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<sup>146</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 764.

<sup>147</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 794.

<sup>148</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 764.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 764.

<sup>150</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1980, 358

<sup>151</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 796.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 796.

This view is clearly explained in his usage of good-bad formula. οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ "For rulers are not a cause for fear to good work but to bad." (Rom 13:3). How far the government can judge the bad? Paul's view on the limit of Government's judgment can be seen in v 4, οὐ γὰρ εἰκῆ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ, "for he does not bear the sword without proper consideration."

To measure the authority of the government μακαίρα has been interpreted diversely. According to Nanos, μακαίρα could be used symbolically or metaphorically (Prov. 5:4 for the effect of a harlot; 12: 18 for words; 24:22 for ruin; 25:18 for false witness; 30:14 for the teeth of the wicked; Isa. 49: 12 for the Lord's mouth; Eph. 6:17 for the word of God, Heb 4:12). This usage of μακαίρα is fitting in the function of the synagogue "authorities." There were some gentiles who believe that Jesus is the Christ and become equal coparticipants in the blessings of the One God promised to Abraham's seed. But they are denying becoming Jews. Thus, synagogue authorities have every right to remove gentiles making such claim if they were unwilling to adopt the "proper behavior" of "righteous gentiles," including the payment ("rendering") of two-drachma Temple tax (for the support of the community sacrifices in Jerusalem) to demonstrate their fidelity to the holiness of God, the Law, and his people. Thus, μακαίρα can be implied as the synagogue authority's right to discipline the gentile believers.<sup>153</sup>

Nanos views that Paul may use μακαίρα as another metaphor "the word of God." The "authorities" of the synagogue are the interpreters of the Torah (God's words to Israel, the Law). So, they are responsible for the application of the Law to the community. Heb 4:12 spoke out the word of God as "living as active and shaper than any two-edged sword (μακαίρα), and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrows, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." The synagogue authorities are carriers of the sword that is the word of God. Indeed, they are also "the servants of God" on the "seat of Moses" (Matt 23:2ff) so, they have to interpret Torah and Halakhot (any of the laws or ordinances not written down in the Jewish Scriptures but based on an oral interpretation of them) for the community. Thus, the sword here can be implied as the synagogue authorities have a responsible for the "proper behavior" of the "righteous gentiles" leaving behind the behavior associated with idolatory and pagan culture ("the deeds of the darkness" Rom 14).<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Mark D. Nanos, 1996, 310-311.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 312-313.

On the other hand, there is another view of the Sword as the civil government's authority. To Cranfield, it seems clear that in Paul's time (and, in fact, for the first two centuries of the Empire) the phrase *jus gladii* (literally means "the right of the sword") denoted the power given to provincial governors having Roman citizen troops under their command to enable them to maintain military discipline: it was the right to condemn to death a Roman citizen serving in the forces under one's own command. Thus, this "sword" means the power of life and death over citizens as well as others possessed by the Emperor. Thus, for Cranfield the sword in verses Rom 13:3-4 means either as a quite general statement concerning the authority's possession of military power (wears the sword) or else the emperor's possession of military power and/or of his powers of life and death.<sup>155</sup>

Murray also sees "the sword" as referring to death penalty by pointing to some NT scriptures that are mentioning the sword is frequently associated with death as the instrument of execution: Matt 26:52; Luke 21:24; Acts 12:2; 16:27; Heb 11:34, 37; Rev 13:10. Thus, for him these texts are supporting Paul's inclusion of the authority's power of capital punishment in Paul's view in Rom 13.<sup>156</sup> Dunn also agrees with Murray and sees that the sword concerned to the power of life and death, refers to the ultimate sanction for government.<sup>157</sup>

However, to Jewett the phrase "bear the sword" is referring to police powers and governmental coercion in a broader sense more than the right of provincial governors to execute Roman citizens convicted of crimes. This view is related to the immediate background of Neronian propaganda which is about the replacement of the sword with peace. Jewett referred to the record of Seneca who served in the Nero administration, boasted that the present emperor proclaimed, "the sword is hidden, nay is sheathed; I am sparing to the utmost of even the meanest blood." Due to this Neronian propaganda, the execution of citizens was carefully restricted by law. Thus, to Jewett this seems to manifest that it is impossible to understand to "bear the sword" as to execute the Roman citizens.<sup>158</sup>

However, the *μακαίρα* in this verse was not a ceremonial dagger worn by high public officials but the military sword, the classic symbol for governmental coercion as it is noted in 8:35. In addition, the word *φορει* is written as the present tense form so that it can implied as, the Roman law enforcement officials are carrying the sword as a routine. There is also the record in the papyri which is contemporary to Paul's letters, which says the police officers as *μακαίροφοροι* "sword-bearers". Moreover, although there was no law for execution of the

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<sup>155</sup> C.B.E Cranfield, 197, 667.

<sup>156</sup> John Murray, 1965, 152-153.

<sup>157</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 764.

<sup>158</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 795.

Roman citizens, noncitizens and slaves were routinely killed, often as a form of public entertainment. Thus, it can be implied that Paul's intention of using "the sword" may refer to the execution or destruction or bloodshed is carried out to the evil doers despite of Neronian propaganda. Thus, Jewett views the sword refers to police powers that has the destructive sense to the evil doers and they can even carry out the capital punishment as well.<sup>159</sup>

To Yoder the "sword" is the symbol of judicial authority. It was not to the instrument of capital punishment, since the Romans crucified their criminals. The sword was not the instrument of war but it was the long dagger. Thus, the sword symbolizes the way that the Roman government exercises dominion over its subjects by appeal to violence rather than the execution of the capital offenders. On the other hand, at that time Rome was not carrying on major hostilities against other nations. There was not meaningfully war to the neighboring nations, thus the hostilities along the frontiers were more like police action than like war. Thus, the "sword" that Paul wants to refer is the judicial authority of the government but not for the capital punishment or war.<sup>160</sup>

Here, "the sword" is interpreted in diverse views. Nanos based on the synagogue context sees the sword as the right of the synagogue authorities to discipline the gentile Christians to live the proper behaviors of the obligation to pay temple tax (Rom13:1-7) and renewed living (leave the pagan associated behavior, Rom 12:1-15:13). However, due to the usage *jus gladii*, Cranfield, Murray and Dunn assume that the government is responsible for the capital punishment to the wrongdoers. Jewett recognizes the capital punishment but Paul's intended meaning of "the sword" is more concerned to the political powers and government coercion.<sup>161</sup> Yoder is completely disagree with capital punishment authority of the government. By observing some views of these scholars, the probable solution is that there was no actual practice of *jus gladii* (because of Neronean propaganda) and there was no war to the neighboring countries in Paul's time. Since, there is no war the usage of "sword-bearers" cannot affect the meaning of "the sword" here.<sup>162</sup> Thus, Paul may want to point out the Roman governmental coercion in judicial work on the Roman citizens and non-citizens although they were not practicing capital punishment in the mean time.

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 795.

<sup>160</sup> John H. Yoder, 1972, 206.

<sup>161</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 1993, 668. Fitzmyer also sees "carry a sword" could be a symbol for capital punishment, however, Paul's statement seems to have a broader scope and it is also referring to the authority of the civil guards and those who enforced taxation.

<sup>162</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 802. "Sword-bearers" mean the military power wielded by Rome while others use it as referring to Egyptian police officials.



In short, Paul is clearly stating that the government is promoting good and punishes the bad. The government is doing the civic wellbeing with security against attack to the citizens. At the same time, the Roman government's punishment to the wrong doers was very horrible as mentioned above. So, the bad should fear the government. Generally, the Roman government promoted good for the citizens because of the witness *Pax Romana*. However, it is problematic when we think about how much they do justice and punish the wrong doers. Emperor Nero killed many innocent Christians because the fire that torched up half of Rome. Paul may not write the Roman state is promoting good and punishing wrong doers if he knows the persecution of Christians under Nero ca. 64 CE. The epistle to Romans was written in the time when Christians were not suffering from Roman injustice. Thus, for me Paul's statement here, is just presenting the degree of the government's judgment over the citizens. It may not be the principle.

#### ***3.4.4.2 Do Good And You Will Be Praised.***

Since the government is the ministers of God not only to do good for the citizens or particularly for the Roman Christians but also to judge the bad, Paul exhorts his readers to do good,  $\nu\ \zeta\epsilon\ \tau\omicron\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\omicron\nu\ \pi\omicron\iota\epsilon\iota\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\iota\nu\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ , "do good and you will have its commendation". What is good that Paul may want to refer?

Dunn interprets that Paul's emphasis on "the good" is general sense that good citizenship and moral quality are to be commended for there are some translations in the place of "good," "do right" (NEB, NIV) and "live honestly" (NJB). It means "the good" includes not least for good works, it also includes good moral character. And there will be  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , "praise, approval, applause, commendation" for those who live in good or do right or live honestly.<sup>163</sup> However, Dunn's view is too much innocent for how the government can know who is morally right and worthy to be praised. What will be the norm for their morally right in the eyes of the government? To be more detailed, the Christians under the reign of Nero were probably not be seen as very good and obedient people. And the government may not also be interested in watching the Christians to be morally good or bad for Nero blamed the Christians to set fire on the half of Rome. It is not reasonable that the Roman government will watch the Christians as morally right and praise them.

Indeed, Paul's meaning of "to do good" probably be linked with peace and welfare of the city due to the ancient Graco-Roman practice of praising the benefactors. The Christians'

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<sup>163</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 763-764.

contribution to the city is, somehow, in the important role for the welfare of the city. This view can be seen according to the usage of ἔπαινος “praise” that has been recorded in the Greek benefaction inscriptions from the fifth century B.C through to the second century A.D.<sup>164</sup> The rulers praised and honored those who undertook good works which benefited the city. This “good work” is to pay for public works from their private resources in order to enhance the environs of their cities and, in times of famine, to ensure the supply of grain at a cost affordable to every citizen. Thus, the one who does benefaction to the public was praised or honored and crowned, and was declared as he was “good and noble”.<sup>165</sup> The government also made the conventional promise to honor publicly those who in the future would undertake similar benefactions.<sup>166</sup> Sandnes also recommends that “Doing good” in terms of offering public services was accompanied by future promise of public praises conferred by the rulers.<sup>167</sup>

Thus, Rom 13:3 can be taken as referring to doing benefaction to the city and it can be implied that this verse is aimed for the noble. Winter also points to the usage of “you,” σοι (second person, singular) in Rom 13:4 that is addressed to the individual rather than the whole Church because the cost of benefaction is very considerable and limited to some wealthy Christians. So, this means that Paul’s instruction to do good is the ethical imperative to some of the noble Christians in Rome that have to fulfill within the aspect of *politeia* (the conditions and rights of the citizens).<sup>168</sup>

In reality, the aim of this praise is to acknowledge the benefactors.<sup>169</sup> Here, Paul’s instruction to “do good” can be interpreted as to get acknowledgement of the Roman government by doing benefaction by some noble Christian benefactors and that is hoped to convey recommendation and good intention of the Roman government to the Christians in Rome at that time in order to refute unfounded rumours against a Christians as being a man of ill-will or a threat to the peace and welfare of the city.<sup>170</sup> This is reasonable that Paul’s large context is encouraging the Christians to transform the society by loving the neighbours. Since, the epistle to Romans was written in between Claudius expulsion and Nero’s persecution to

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<sup>164</sup> Bruce W. Winter, 1994, 26-29.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 35-40. Winter also quotes Rom 5:7 where Paul refers to “the good man”. Paul’s argument is that for a righteous man one would hardly be prepared to lay down one’s life, “although perhaps for a good man one will possibly dare to die”. The righteous comes first and the good comes later. Paul believes that the later is more possible because of obligations established through receiving of a benefaction and it rightly refers to one’s private benefactor. These incidence manifests “the good” as doing benefaction to the city.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 26-29.

<sup>167</sup> Karl Olav Sandnes, 2004, 384.

<sup>168</sup> Bruce W. Winter, 1994, 35-40.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 39. & Karl Olav Sandnes, 2004, 384. In 1 Peter 2:12-16, Paul instructs the Christians to silence the ignorance of the foolish by doing good.

Christians, we can infer that the relationship of Roman Christians and the state was not very good at that time. Thus, Paul might instruct the Roman Christians to do good or to do benefaction to the city and get the good impression from the state. And this ethical exhortation may be hoped to prevent the Roman Christians from unwanted Roman persecution.

Paul is clearly stating that the government is the ministers of God to promote good and punish the wrongers. So, the Christians must fear and submit the government for their judgment is actual and horrible. Paul also instructs to good as a sign of submission to the government and a way of good Christian expression to the government. Then, he repeats his exhortation to be submissive to the government not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.

### **3.4.5 Be Submissive To The Government Not Only Because Of Wrath But Also Because Of Conscience**

V 5. διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. "Therefore, it is necessary to be subject not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience."

Paul repeats his argument of to be submissive to the government for the reasons he gave in the preceding verses. Since the Roman government has a right to judge the bad and they have done judgment to the people who resisted the Roman laws, the Christians should mind the government's wrath (this view has been discussed above). Paul's emphasis on the government's wrath can be seen in v 3b, θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν; "do you want to be without fear of the authority?"<sup>171</sup>

Paul is asking the members of the congregations who had experienced the unfair burden of the verdicts in connection with their banning in C.E 49 (the Claudius Expulsion) when many of them witnessed or experienced governmental brutality of the Roman rule. Thus, Paul might want to appeal his congregations with close ties to the government, to impose public disturbances that may draw out miserable consequence like before. Besides, Paul may take up his own good experience of the Roman authority: beatings, imprisonment, tumults (2Cor 11:6-5), three times "beating with rods" (2Cor 11:25) and his involvement in riots and imprisonments (Acts 16:22ff).<sup>172</sup> Therefore, he advises a fearful imaginary

<sup>171</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 763.

<sup>172</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 793. & C.E.B Cranfield, 1979, 664.

conversation partner how to avoid such threatening encounters with the authorities: to be submissive to the government.

Another reason is “conscience” *συνείδησις* which means a Christian’s political conduct of submission should not be motivated by fear alone but it should be from the conscience that has a motive of obedience to the authority and that will be no longer servility. *συνείδησις* represents the thought that the morally responsible person and good citizen will recognize the need for government in society as a divine ordinance. If a person resists to this divinely ordered authority, he will have a sudden sharp feeling of emotional distress of conscience and prospect of such moral discomfort should deter from civil disobedience. In this role conscience can serve as a positive guide of moral conduct as “sense of responsibility, consciousness of obligation.”<sup>173</sup>

Moreover, *συνείδησις* is relating to the fact that as it is written in 1:18-2:16, Paul’s appeal to the moral sensibility of the ancient world. The specific Christian guide to social conduct is provided by love (13:8-10) and faith (14:22 and 23). Thus, the texts appear to witness Paul’s view that is the Christians would be seen as socially responsible and as sound common sense (pragmatic). Paul does not separate moral obligation from civic responsibility and political reality. Thus, conscience here can be seen as a guide to moral conduct to be subjected to the authority which is understood as civic duty has the force of moral obligation.<sup>174</sup>

As mentioned above Paul’s instruction to be submissive to the government should be done not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. Since, the government is the avenger of the wrong doers and the Christian citizens have had experienced of the wrath of the government, Paul instructs to be fear and submissive to the government. In addition, the submission also has to be done with conscience which is seen as a force of moral obligation to obey the civil duties. Giving taxes as the practical way of submission to the government of Paul will be continued to discuss.

### **3.4.6 Pay Taxes To Whom Taxes Are Due.**

Finally, as a practical way of obedience to the Government, Paul exhorts the Christian audience in Rome to pay taxes to the Roman Government, *ν βα διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους*

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<sup>173</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988, 765.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 765-766. However, Käsemann sees conscience as critical judgment that may be made between uprightness and its opposite, and the political obedience demanded may be rendered accordingly while he does not deny a Christian’s political conduct should not be motivated by the fear alone. Ernst Käsemann, 1980, 358-359.

τελείτε, "for because of this you also pay tribute". The Roman Christians should acknowledge in their own habit of paying taxes to the government because obedience to the authorities is divine will and the government also possesses over the Christians.<sup>175</sup>

φορος means "tribute" (*tributum*) which is the direct taxes paid by the subject nations: taxes like property tax and poll tax. The φορος was exempted to the Roman citizens. τελος is "tax" (*vectigalia*): the indirect taxes comprised initially of revenue from rents on state property but in Paul's time also including customs duty, tax on slave sales and manumissions, and death duties.<sup>176</sup> Paul's usage here of both of these words are the same as Josephus, φορος τελειν "pay tribute" (*Ant.* 5.181; 12. 182) and (vs.7), also φορον/φορους απο διδοναι "pay tribute" (*Ant.* 14.203; *Ap.* 1.119).<sup>177</sup> According to these usages, the tax and tribute here are clearly referring to the Roman official terms and thus Paul's instruction is relating to the paying all taxes to the Roman authorities should not be doubted.

Φορους τελειτε is not only pointing to the power of the state concerning to the taxation most rudely impinges on daily life but also the circumstance of tax avoidance of the Christians. There was the context that taxes and tax collectors were a constant source of injustice and embitterment (Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2.92-95; 3.159-63; Josephus, *1Ant.* 16.45, 160-61; Mark 2:15-16 pars.; Matt 11:19 // Luke 7:34; Matt 18:17; 21:31-32; Luke 18:11; 19:7) Thus, tax avoidance of the Christians is relating to the repressive taxation of the Roman authorities. For instance, in the time of Tacitus (ca. 58 CE) there was a persistent complaint against the companies farming indirect taxes and the acquisitiveness of tax collectors, so that some reform became essential.<sup>178</sup>

Another incident is that the immigrants to Rome were being compelled by the Nero administration to pay the tribute levied by the provinces in which they resided at the previous census, which would have been in 54/53 CE, prior to the writing of Romans. This means that the tribute tax could have been levied on all those exiled from Rome by the Edict of Claudius in 49 CE., because they were elsewhere in the empire at the time of the last census. Although it is not clear that this tax administration crackdown included the Roman citizens in Rome, but there were evidences that many localities fled for the repressive taxation.<sup>179</sup> Thus, these

<sup>175</sup> Douglas J. Moo, 1996, 803-804.

<sup>176</sup> Thomas Schriener, 1998, 686. & James D.G Dunn, 1988,766.

<sup>177</sup> James D.G Dunn, 1988,766.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 766.

<sup>179</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 799.

incidents manifest that the tax repression was going on while there was the complaint about taxation.

In this situation, within the Roman Church there might be individuals who might have hoped to avoid paying taxes though some of who were subject to the tribute tax.<sup>180</sup> On the other hand, Jews who are regarding the temple tax as above all in the matter of taxation, would have been in an especially sensitive position (Cicero, *Flacc.* 28.67; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.1, and the Josephus). And the Christians, still largely identified with the Jews, would share that vulnerability.<sup>181</sup> Based on this background, in the purpose of his mission Paul may remind the congregation of Rome were not to become involved in the emerging conflict over tax resistance. And his instruction will be undoubtedly welcomed by the Roman Churches within the Roman bureaucracy.<sup>182</sup>

Paul strengthens his view of Taxation to the Roman government by mentioning the work of taxation is the work of the ministers of God, v 6b, λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσιν, εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες, "for they are ministers of God engaged in this very task." Here, λειτουργοὶ means as designated which enhances the dignity attaching to the ministry of rulers. This means that the officers for tax administration are the "ministers of God's service."<sup>183</sup> This view seems to justify the Roman tax repression, however, Paul does not discuss tax repression here. He just instructs the Roman Christians ethical response to the tax issue.

Paul's view can be taken that no matter what the tax issue is repressive or not repressive, the duty of the Christians have to pay taxes to the government. He may want to differentiate the tax as the unavoidable duty of citizens to the government whether the tax system is good or bad. He strengthens to give tax by justifying that the government are God's ministers to collect taxes. So, this view of Paul can make conscious clear of some Christian bureaucrats in the Church (there might be some Christian bureaucrats who have responsibility in tax administration) and will help the good relationship with the rest of the Church members. Paul repeats his instruction to pay taxes in v 7 through exhorting more inclusive and wide perspective, "Pay to all what is due them." With honor, fear and respect the Christians have to pay taxes to the Roman Government.

In short, in this paraenesis Paul is exhorting the Roman Christians to be submissive to the government for they are ordained by God. They are ministers of God to do good for the people and to judge the bad things. Thus, the Roman Christians have to be subject to them not

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 799.

<sup>181</sup> James D. G Dunn, 1988, 766.

<sup>182</sup> Robert Jewett, 2007, 799.

<sup>183</sup> John Murray, 1965, 154-155. & Bauer's, 2000, 471.

only because of fear but also because of conscience. For practical life of Submission, Paul is instructing the Roman Christians to do good and pay taxes in honor and respect. We can conclude that Paul's practical way of submission to the government here is emphasizing the tax issue. Thus, his submission to the government here cannot be seen as absolute submission for the text is silent on other practical ways of submission. However, there is a different view on Paul's submission to the government when the text is interpreted in its wider perspective within Romans and the rest of his epistles. This will be discussed as follows.

### **3.5 Submission Within A Larger Theological Perspective In Romans And In Paul's Epistles**

In Rom 13:1-7 in its immediate context, Paul is instructing the Roman Christians to be submissive to the government by giving taxes. This is the minimalist interpretation<sup>184</sup> of the text. How does Paul's view of submission fit into the maximalist interpretation<sup>185</sup> of the text that is the interpretation of the text within a larger theological perspective in Romans and in his epistles? Is it uncritical submission to the Roman empire or critical submission? The research will continue as follows.

It is not debatable that the authorities in Rom 13:1-7 are the civil authorities. However, according to Cullmann, there is a possibility that the authorities can also be the angel powers or the agents of the angel power. Studying the word ἄρχοντες in a wider Pauline perspective, the authorities can be the angel powers behind the state or the angel powers which have a tendency to be harmful to the humankind. Käsemann also agrees that angel powers are not spoken of as servants in the work of the divine creation but as forces, which are hostile or dangerous to the community and the faith.<sup>186</sup> In Pauline thought, Bauer also views that ἄρχοντες refers to evil spirits in "ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου" 1Corin 2:6-8 and "τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος" Eph 2:2.<sup>187</sup> Thus, in a wider perspective of Pauline theology a state may become the agents of evil powers.

How can the Christians subject to the angel powers? The probable solution is that Paul's instruction here can be connected to God's will which is revealed in his creation "for

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<sup>184</sup> Minimalist interpretation is interpretation of the text which is only meaningful for sociopolitical context of the text in the time of its composition.

<sup>185</sup> Maximalist interpretation is interpretation of the text which is not only meaningful for sociopolitical context of the text in the time of its composition but also meaningful for the socio-political context of any time.

<sup>186</sup> Ernst Käsemann, 1973, 353.

<sup>187</sup> Bauer's, 2000, 114.

he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” (Matt 5:45). God makes his sun rise and makes it rain as a natural processes are in accordance with biblical tradition, directly assigned to the hand of God (Gen 2:5; Job 38.12-41; Ps104; Isa 5:6; Amos 4:7; Mt 6:26; 30, 2Cor 9:10). Looking at nature makes it easy to draw inferences about God’s character from the natural order. God is the author and sustainer of not only the nature but also the moral and spiritual (Ps 19; Rom 1:19; 1Cor 11:13-16). Here, God’s sovereignty and sustainability are for both of the good and the bad at the same time. Thus, the implication of the text within the pericope of Matt 5:43-48, is that the Christians have to love not only the good but also the enemies. This moral practice has to be done in the aim of to be like God (*immitatio Dei*).<sup>188</sup> This incidence should be applied in Paul’s instruction in Rom 13:1 that the Roman Christians have to be submissive to the authorities not for the reason that they are good. The Christian’s subjection should pay to them though they are not necessarily good. Thus, according to God’s creation theology, Paul’s instruction of submission to the government is uncritical and unconditional for God ordained the authorities and God’s sustainability is upon them whether they are evil or good.

However, Paul’s view of uncritical or unconditional submission has no meaning of favouritism of evil. It can be proved in the theology of the Lordship of Christ. According to Cullmann, in the early Christians’ understanding or almost entire New Testament the present Lordship of Christ and his consequent victory over the angel powers are mentioned as standing side by side. This Lordship of Christ stems from Psalms 110 that originally refers to the Lord’s victory over the earthly enemies of Israel.<sup>189</sup> However, when it is cited in the New Testament, the early Christians understand ”enemies” with the invisible powers. This early Christian faith is evident as early confessional formula in the New Testament (for instance, 1Pet. 3:22, Philip 2:6 and 1Tim 3:16) and among early Church fathers, for instance, Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp (Trallians 9.1 and the Letter of Polycarp 2.1). Thus, in the light of this evidence, the subjection to the ἄρχοντες can be interpreted as subjection to the evil powers, however, that is not truly subjecting to the evil because Christ is lord over the evil powers. In other words, subjecting to the evil powers is subjecting to the Lordship of Christ.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> W.D. Davis, F.B.A and Dale C. Allison, 1988, 555-556.

<sup>189</sup> Oscar Cullmann, 1963, 75. Psalms 110 is the clearest example that the New Testament citation of the Old Testament in order to clarify the Lordship of Christ. Rom 8:34; 1Cor 15:25; Col 3:1; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:13; 1Pet 3:22; Acts 2:34; 5:31; 7:55; Rev 3:21; Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42; 22:69.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 75-77.



God's sustainability is the same over evil and good because he created all living things. On the other hand, God is also absolute being who can decide his creation to continue or to end. That is clearly manifested in the Lordship of Christ. Through Christ God limited his sustainability to the evil doers. The triumph of Christ is being and will be upon the evil. In other words, the judgment of God is there for the evil things. But Judgment is the work of God alone, not for human beings (Rom 12:17-19). And it is done and will be done in the Lordship of Christ.

The Lordship of Christ has already defeated this evil force and will defeat it till the very end. In the letter of Romans 10:9 Paul wrote that "because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Paul assured that someone who believes and confess Jesus as Lord, he/she will be saved. This text clearly points to the victory of Christ and the saving power of the lordship of Christ. Thus, it can be implied that subjection to the state is subjection to the Christ because Christ is and will be over the state. Thus, we can conclude that Paul's instruction of Submission to the Government has the meaning of Submission to the Lordship of Christ who is Lord over all creatures.

N.T Wright finds Paul's view of Lordship of Christ in his announcing "the gospel" which is the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's Messiah and the world's Lord in Rom 1:1-5. The Israel people believe that Israel's king was always supposed to be the world's true king "His dominion shall be from one sea to the other; from the River to the ends of the earth" (Ps 72:8). And they also believe that the Israel's God is also the creator who will do for his people what they long for, the nations will be brought into the action, either for judgment or blessing "The root of Jesse shall rise to rule the nations; in him shall the nations hope" (Isa 11:10, Rom 15:12). Paul is adapting this Jewish self-understanding of messianic kingship in his announcing the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, his gospel is announcing the Jewish Messiah as a king who will bring the just and peaceful rule of the true God to bear on the whole world: both for the Jews and gentiles.<sup>191</sup>

In Rom 1:1-5, Paul says that he was set apart for the gospel of God which had already been prophesized beforehand. It will be descended from David and will become "the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord" through his death and resurrection. Through Christ not only the Jews but also the gentiles will have "obedience of faith".<sup>192</sup> Paul uses of the word ὑπακούειν

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<sup>191</sup> N.T Wright, 2000, 163-168.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 167.

which has the meaning of “obey, follow, be subject to”.<sup>193</sup> Because of the word usage “obedience of faith” can mean obey to Jesus Christ or subject to Him.

The text 1:1-5 summaries what Paul means by “the gospel” and the Davidic messiahship of Jesus was found at the heart of the gospel. Then, Paul confirms this by quoting prophet Isaiah’s prophecy “The root of Jesse shall come...” (15:12).<sup>194</sup> These verses manifest that Jesus was the messiah that the Jews were long waited for and he is the Lord to be subjected. This is the royal proclamation of Paul that is challenging other royal proclamations when it is put in the political context rather than the religious context. If Jesus is the messiah, he is also *Lord* (κυριος). This title κυριος will obviously challenges the Lordship of Ceasar in a political context because Ceasar demanded worship as well as “secular” obedience: not just taxes, but sacrifices. And it is true that Ceasar by being a servant of the state had provided justice and peace to the whole world. He was therefore to be hailed as Lord and trusted as Savior.<sup>195</sup>

How does Lordship of Christ contrast and challenge to this lordship of Caesar? Wright states that the Gospel of Paul in Romans includes God’s righteousness δικαιοσυνη θεου (1:16-17) that means God’s faithfulness to the Abrahamic covenant with his people Israel. Here, God promised not only to deal with evil but also to help with people. It means God will put upright the injustice.<sup>196</sup> Wright’s view on gospel of Paul is what Kim called *inclusio* (an envelope structure, which consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section).<sup>197</sup> Paul is announcing that Jesus is Lord and messiah at the beginning of the epistle of Romans. Rom 3:21-4:25 are about God has been faithful to the covenant with Abraham and so Rom 5-8 will be logically about God has thereby been true the implicit covenant with the whole of creation. And in 8:18-27 Paul finally shows how what God has done in Jesus the Messiah, in fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham. In Jesus’s death and resurrection, God’s faithfulness to the covenant of his people is seen and God’s restorative justice is found in his creation. Thus, God’s covenant faithfulness has put the world to rights.<sup>198</sup>

Through that message God’s justice was unveiled once and for all, to Rome, which is, the capital of the Roman empire prided with its Justice, the source from which Justice flows throughout the world. Thus, this view of the gospel is challenging Caesar’s Empire. The real

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<sup>193</sup> Bauer’s, 2000, 837.

<sup>194</sup> N.T Wright, 2000, 163-168.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 170-173.

<sup>197</sup> Seyoon Kim, 2008, 16-17.

<sup>198</sup> N. T Wright, 2000, 170-173.

justice flows from only the throne of Jesus to the world. Thus, in this wider context, Rom 13:1-7 may have a meaning of sovereignty of the Roman state. However, the emperor remains answerable to the true God who is righteous. Thus, though Paul instructs us to be submissive to the state, it is also reminding that the emperor is not the supreme. The true and righteous governance is only God. Thus, it can also mean that the imperial arrogance is not from God and the subjects should not be counted for him.<sup>199</sup> Thus, within a wider perspective of the book of Romans submission to the government can be seen as critical subjection.

Paul's challenge to Caesar's lordship is also found in Philippians 3:20-21. He clearly states that Jesus Christ is the only true savior and Lord and calls Jesus as "a savior, the Lord" v 20. For the Greco-Roman context, the title "savior" σωτήρ is unquestionable in pointing towards the Emperor. In the political context of Paul's time, the σωτήρ is an eagerly awaited figure who comes, from the state to which his people belong, to the state where they are living, in order to rescue them. Such leader are likely to be thought of was the Emperor. Many inscriptions testify that using the title σωτήρ for the emperor was widespread in early Greco-Roman era. For instance, the precursor, Julius Caesar, is celebrated in an inscription from Ephesus, dated to 48BC "the god made manifest, offspring of Ares and Aphrodite and common savior of human life."<sup>200</sup> Philippians thought that they already had a savior who was their lord since the battle of Actium. And they had become subordinate to the Roman colonial army veterans as their government of Philippi.<sup>201</sup>

To the Philippians in this situation, Paul is differentiating that Jesus is Lord and Caesar isn't. Wright views that Paul is differentiating Caesar's empire where the Philippi is a colonial outpost is a parody; Jesus's empire where the Philippian church outpost, is the reality. As the Roman emperor comes and rescues his loyal subjects when they are in danger, our Lord Jesus will come and save his subjects. Thus, "citizenship in heaven" in v 20 does not mean that one might eventually retire and go home to the mother city. It is here, on earth refers to Christ's subjects. And Paul mentions Christ's future saving action as the echoes of imperial eschatology as in 1Cor. 15:25-28. V 21 continues the saving action of Christ in the future and that also carry the echoes of several other Pauline passages (Rom 8:29; 1Cor 15:43-53; 2Cor 3:18; Eph 1:19-22).<sup>202</sup>

This challenge to imperial-cult is clearly written as a code in Philippians. The Lordship of Jesus in vv 20-21 have a very close thematic link with the Christ Hymn or poem

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 170-173.

<sup>200</sup> Peter Oakes, 2001, 138-139.

<sup>201</sup> Richard A. Horsley, 1997,141.

<sup>202</sup> N.T Wright, 2000, 173-175.

in 2:5-11 that is about Jesus Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation. Paul clearly states that Jesus is Lord of the whole world in 2:5-11, then, he compares Jesus with the Caesar-cult in 3:20-21. He also gives his personal conviction by telling his own story, the story of how he had abandoned his status and privileges in order to find the true status and privilege of one in Christ in 3:7-11.<sup>203</sup>

In God's salvation plan, Jesus as a Messiah had obeyed the covenant plan of God through death and resurrection and this crucified messiah was identified as the Lord of the world. Thus, Jesus is the true Lord and God and has unveiled his true kingdom in Jesus. God's kingdom stands to all other empire, Caesar's included. When God's true kingdom is shown up, the arrogant and blasphemous claims of the emperor himself is shown up as being "the mutilation." Thus, Paul was instructing the Philippian Christians not to see the emperor, Caesar as the true Lord, the true savior and the true great benefactor although Philippi prided itself on its colonial status and could expect benefaction from Rome. Paul reminded the Philippians not to compromise the Caesar cult but to walk in suffering with the messiah Jesus who is the true Lord and the true savior who would rescue them and give them the glory and liberation.<sup>204</sup>

Within a larger theological perspective of Paul in Romans, Philippians and in his other epistles, Paul knows and recognizes the imperfection of the imperial governance or the possibility of arrogance of the emperor. On the other hand, Paul does not deny the benefaction and security that the people can get from the Roman Empire. However, he does not see the emperor's power as being true. Jesus Christ only is the true savior and Lord. Jesus' death and resurrection means defeating the enemies including all kinds of tyranny. Lord Jesus' resurrection is more than overcoming evil, it is inauguration of the new world, a new creation which has already begun to take over the present creation with the creator God (1Cor 15:20-28; Col 2:14-15). In Paul's theology, thus, the crucified messiah functions in this salvation history of God.<sup>205</sup> Paul is instructing to obey or submit to the true Lord and not to submit the emperor parody. However, Paul does not instruct clearly to resist the arrogant emperor although his message is anti-imperial. He differentiates which savior is the true lord and who is not. He instructs to follow the path of suffering like the messiah Jesus. Thus, we can assume that Paul's view of submission in his wider theological perspective can be taken

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 173-175.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 173-179.

<sup>205</sup> N.T Wright, 2005, 70.

as unconditional submission though it is skeptical about the evil or arrogant character of the government.

### 3.6 Summary

Paul is clearly instructing the Christian Church in Rome to be submissive to the Roman government in Rom 13:1-7. His instruction can be seen as two parts – general instruction to be submissive to the government and specific instruction to give tax to the government.

Paul's view of submission to the government is not absolute submission. He gives several kinds of motivation to the Roman Christians to be submissive to the government. God ordains the authorities so that they are due to receive subjection from the citizens (v1). Paul clearly points out that the government is from God so that any body who resists them are resisting God. Thus, though the Roman authorities may not know, their powers are coming from God. Moreover, the authorities are the servant of God who have a duty to promote good and punish the wrong doers (vv 3,4). Here, the authorities' responsibility to do good is the civil welfare and security of the people. On the other hand, the authorities have to carry out judgment on the wrong doers. However, their power exercise over the jurisdiction is limited. God gives them the Sword μακκαιρα (v 4) to punish the wrong doers but this Sword does not allow the authorities to kill people. Thus, Paul gives the motivations to be submissive to the government: the government as the ordination of God and they are servants of God who are doing good and punishing evil. Paul may write this opinion upon the Roman Government since the time of writing the epistle was quite peaceful because the Christian persecution of Nero (ca. 64CE) has not come yet.

After giving some motivations Paul instructs the Roman Christians to do good, to subject to the state with conscience and to give tax to the state. Because of the word ἔπαινος which is also used as a word of praise to the nobles who did public good works to the ancient Greco-Roman cities, Paul may encourage the Christians referring to do public benefaction to the cities. Those who do good will be praised (v 3). Paul may hope that because of this good works done by the elite Christian nobles, the Roman government will recognize the Christians as good citizens and this will somehow prevent the Christians from the suppression from Rome like Claudius expulsion (ca. 49 CE). Then, Paul also instructs the Christians to be subject to the State with not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. The

Roman government's punishment was horrible and Paul himself suffered so that he reminded the Roman Christians who still cannot forget their bitter experience in CE49. On the other hand, the Roman Christians are God's servants thus, the Christians must submit them with conscience that encourage the Roman Christians to be morally responsible persons with willingly submissive mind towards the state.

Finally, Paul instructs the Roman Christians to give tax to the government (vv 6-7). The Roman taxation at that time is very repressive and heavy burden for the citizens. However, Paul wants the Christians to give tax to the government with honor and respect. Here, we can see that Paul's emphasis is very clear that the Christians should be faithful to give taxes although the government's taxation system is whether good or bad. The duty to give tax to the government is the unconditional duty of the citizens. This instruction of Paul concerning taxation is the climate of Paul's practical instruction within Rom 13:1-7. In short, we can assume that Paul is constructing his motivations to be submissive to the government and then concluding with giving tax to the government. Thus, Paul's intended meaning of submission to the government clearly emphasized giving tax to the government. In other words, Paul does not say that his instruction in the passage of Rom 13:1-7 covers all the situations of Church and state relationship. Thus, we cannot take Paul's view of submission to the government in this passage as absolute submission. Indeed, the text itself is critical.

However, in a wider perspective of Paul in the epistle to Romans itself and the rest of Paul's epistles Paul's view of submission to the government is absolute submission. Paul uses ἄρχοντες (ruler) to refer to the authorities (v 3). The rulers have a possibility of angel powers or human authorities as the agents of angel powers. How does Paul's theology upon the angel powers? For Paul, Jesus Christ only is the only true Lord of the Jews as well as all the nations and creations (Rom 1:1-5). Everything is God's creation including evil angels and God allow all of them to be living in this world for a certain period of time. God will completely judge the evil powers in the final day because Jesus Christ's victory over the death and resurrection is the supreme example of Christ's victory over the evil power. Thus, the Roman authorities may be the angel powers, however, the Christians should not judge and resist to them because the judgment on the evil power is the work of the Lordship of Christ (1Cor 15:15-28). The Roman emperors can give salvation to the people, however, it is only temporal and parody. Christ's salvation is only true salvation for it can give both physical and spiritual salvation (Philip 3:20-21). Thus, Christians have to be faithful to the true Lordship of Christ. However, it is not the inner force for rebellion against the evil authorities. They will be judged by the Lordship of Christ on the final day. Thus, it is the Christians' responsibility to show Christian

love to the authorities by considering them as our neighbors. In short, according to maximalist interpretation, Paul's view of submission to the government is absolute and conditional.

According to minimalist interpretation Paul's view is very critical to the government and according to maximalist interpretation his view is unconditional submission to the government. There are other related texts to Rom 13:1-7 that also talk about Christian's ethical concern for the government. How Revelation 13 and Matthew 22:15-22 are stating their respective views concerning the relationship of Church and State will be studied in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER (4)**

**THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT FOR CHURCH AND STATE**

**RELATIONSHIP FROM REVELATION OF JOHN 13:1-18 AND**

**MATTHEW 22:15-22**

**4.1 Revelation Of John 13:1-18**

**4.1.1 Socio-political Situation**

According to tradition, the book of Revelation indicates the prophetic message addressed to "the seven churches that are in Asia" (1:4) \_ that is, the seven churches to whom the seven letters of 2:1-3:22 are addressed.<sup>206</sup> Asia is the name of the Roman province located on the western coast of what is present day - Turkey. And Christian churches probably have been established there by Paul and his co-workers during the fifties of the first century.<sup>207</sup>

It is not easy to get the concrete social situation of the book of Revelation because the book itself gives little information about the actual social world.<sup>208</sup> However, in the book we can see that Emperor worship or emperor cult is one of the primary problems of the believers in Asia (13:4, 14-17; 14:9; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).<sup>209</sup> Christians faced the challenge of the cult of emperor worship in the province of Asia. The churches were persecuted because of their refusal to participate in veneration of the emperor. Thus, it is true that the Christians were suffering persecution under Roman rule. How the Christians in this critical situation needs to be considered in order to study Revelation 13.

The pagan witness of the interchange of the official letters between Pliny and the emperor Trajan about 112 CE (which is the nearest date to the book of Revelation) records the possible attitude of the Roman government to the Christians (*Ep. 10.96*). The Roman government allows to pay respect to the official religion so long as the local residents can choose local gods or that which they prefer. However, the Jews had worked out a satisfactory arrangement with the government, so they could exclude themselves from emperor worship and that was the major problem for the Jews and Christians who worshipped only one God (monotheism). Christians could also make a good relationship with the government as they were considered a sect of Judaism. However, when it became apparent that Christians were no

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<sup>206</sup> Richard B. Hays, 1996, 170.

<sup>207</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 8.

<sup>208</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, 1997, 21.

<sup>209</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 6.



longer a sect of Judaism, the emperor declared the Christianity as illegal and started to root it out. However, Pliny's documentation does not confirm the full-scale persecution of the Christians by the state. Persecution is locally.<sup>210</sup> No one can deny that Persecution occurred because of emperor worship. What was the context of the emperor cult in John's time?

The Roman emperor worship started by the deification of Julius Caesar and Augustus, followed by Claudius and Vespasian. The practice was to deify the emperors after they died.<sup>211</sup> The first temple to the god Caesar had been dedicated in Pergamum in 29 BCE, it might be *the throne of Satan* mentioned in 2:13, the second was in Smyrna 21 CE and Ephesus was the third.<sup>212</sup> The Roman world considered the emperor cult as the civic gods and they believed that the safety and welfare of their states depended on the proper observance of the civic gods.<sup>213</sup> The emperor worship was also considered an act of political loyalty and act of gratitude.<sup>214</sup> The first beast mentioned in 13:1-10 is Rome and her emperor. However, it is not clearly mentioned who this emperor John wants to refer to. There are some suggestions of who the emperor is in Rev 13.

The first suggestion refers to Gaius (Caligula 37-41CE), the first emperor who takes his own divinity seriously. In 39 CE he stupidly insisted to erect his image in the Jerusalem temple that then became a source for the terrible war between the Jews and the Romans. Fortunately, Caligula died before that occurred (*War 2.184-5*).<sup>215</sup> Although Caligula demanded to be worshipped, he was not recognized as divine by the senate.<sup>216</sup>

Second suggestion refers to emperor Nero (54-68CE). Nero himself did not announce the divine but his subjects made him divine. And he used the expression himself as "Nero, Lord (*κυριος*) of all the earth." Nero was the first emperor to persecute the Christians. He blamed Christians for the disastrous burning of half of Rome as a result of his dream of Roman urban renewal. The Christians were persecuted in an inhumane and cruel way (Tacitus, *Annales 15:44*). Nero's legend was still living after he committed suicide in 68CE. The rumor spreads that Nero was not really dead but had fled beyond the eastern boundary of

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<sup>210</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 13-16. In Pliny's letter (Pliny, the governor of Bithynia) he asked the emperor Trajan to direct him how to handle the Christians who refused to worship emperor cult and who have superstition and are very faithful to their God and Jesus as Lord. On the other hand, those Christians do not violate the laws and commit crimes. They are flawless except their vulgar and excessive superstition. In the mean time, Pliny execute the Christians who deny to worship Roman gods. The emperor recommend Pliny's action and ordered not to persecute the Christians even if they do not deny being Christians and demonstrate the appropriate act that is the worship of the Roman gods.

<sup>211</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 6.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 7. & Margaret Barker, 2000, 232.

<sup>213</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 15-16.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>216</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 6.

the empire to the Pathians, of whom the Romans had an almost pathological fear of (Tacitus, *History* 2.8; Seutonius, *Nero* 57).<sup>217</sup> The scholars unanimously refers to the second beast mentioned in Rev 13 is interpreted as Nero. They assume that the beast recovered from the wound (Rev 13:14) and the number 666 (Rev 13:18) point to the emperor Nero.<sup>218</sup>

The third suggestion refers to emperor Domitian (81-96). Domitian decreed that all government proclamations must begin "Our Lord and God Domitian commands..." It was reported that he had many people executed for "atheism," failure to worship the gods of Rome, of whom he was one (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 67.14).<sup>219</sup> Domitian decreed that even his wife was called the mother of the divine Caesar.<sup>220</sup> Thus, Domitian put police power behind the state's claim to absolute loyalty and religious veneration. He decreed that the death would be the only kind of punishment meted out to the people who dishonored his deification. Indeed, limited persecution probably occurred in Domitian's time. The imperial cult was apparently much more developed and prominent in Domitian's day than it was in Nero's time.<sup>221</sup>

Roman emperor cult is meant for showing gratitude to the benefaction of the emperor at the same time it aimed at the Pax-Romana. When some emperors are deified after they are died, some claimed their deification when they are alive. John is referring the emperor cult among the Roman emperor gods but to which emperor John wants to refer in Rev 13 as being unclear. The reality is that the Christians partially suffered persecution for the reason of refusing the emperor worship. And Revelation is written under the Roman socio-political situation. How John wants to mention the resistance of Christians to the emperor cult that he indirectly refers to "the beast" in Rev 13, will be continued in next division.

#### 4.1.2 Interpretation

In Rev 13, John talks about the two beasts: the beast from the sea (vv 1-10) and the beast from the earth (vv 11-18). To whom these beasts refer to? What is their function and power and from whom they get these authorities? How they are threatening to Christians? And how John instructs the Christians to resist this power? The following will explore John's intended message in Rev 13.

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<sup>217</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 20.

<sup>218</sup> Magareth Baker, 2000, 233.

<sup>219</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 18-19.

<sup>220</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 7.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 2002, 7.

John wrote that he saw the beast (θηρίον) rising out of the sea. Here, the sea is representing the Jewish tradition of Leviathan, a female monster (1Enoch 60:7-11, 24; 3Exra 6:47-52).<sup>222</sup> So, the beast from the sea has nothing more than a representation of evil power. The beast from the sea has ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems and on its heads were blasphemous names (v 1). The beast was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's and its mouth was like a lion's mouth (v 2).<sup>223</sup> This imagery alludes to Dan 7. The seven heads are the sum of the heads of the four beasts in Dan 7 (the third beast had four heads). The ten diadems on the ten horns of the beast refer to the ten horns of the fourth beast in Dan 7, and those ten horns are ten kings (they are pagans) who follow him (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24). The four beasts and the ten kings portray nations who attack and persecute Israel. In 7:23-25 the ten kings and another king (the little horn of Daniel, also represents the Antichrist) both blaspheme "the Most High" and persecute "his saints." The first beast in Rev 13 also has "a name of blasphemy" written on each of the heads. So, the beast from the sea follows suit of the fourth beast in Daniel.<sup>224</sup>

Thus, this first beast in Revelation can thus be alluded to the political situation and it represents the oppressive Roman authorities in the mind of John's readers.<sup>225</sup> This view is confirmed by the interpretation of the eagle vision from IV Ezra 12:10-32 where it is explicitly identified with the fourth kingdom of Daniel 7 that is the Roman empire. Its symbolism is also similar to that of the first beast in Rev 13. The resemblance of the eagle and the beast can be seen as follows:

<i>Eagle Vision</i>	<i>Sea Monster Vision</i>
12 wings = 12 kings	7 heads = 7 kings or emperors
voice from body = contention	wound = contention
8 underwings = 8 kings	10 horns = 10 provinces or their governors
3 heads = 3 kings	crowns = imperial majesty
lion = Messiah	lamb (ch.14) = Messiah. <sup>226</sup>

Through in comparison with the four beasts in Dan 7 and Eagle Vision in 4Ezra, the first beast in Rev 13 can be considered as the Roman empire and its emperors. The seven heads of the first beast in Rev 13 refer to Rome and its emperors because the seven heads are seven hills probably on the seven hills on which Rome was built (17: 9, 10). The seven emperors may be Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Titus, Vespasian and Domitian. And ten horns of the beast may be the ten provinces of Rome: Italy, Achaea, Asia, Syria, Egypt,

<sup>222</sup> David E. Aune, 1998, 732.

<sup>223</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 490.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 2002, 490-491. & J. Massyngberde Ford, 1993, 220.

<sup>225</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 160.

<sup>226</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford, 1993, 220.

Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain and Germany. The diadems on the crown are royal crowns, not the victor's wreaths.<sup>227</sup>

The beast also has "a name of blasphemy" written on each of its heads. This blasphemous names probably allude to the titles of divinity attributed to the Roman emperor ("lord", "savior", "son of god", "our lord and god"). Traditionally, the Romans declared that their emperors were to be gods after their death. However, it was more for the case in Rome itself, and the living emperors were deified in its provinces especially in Asia where there existed temples for the living emperor, for instance, emperor Domitian himself changed the rules and demanded the divine titles and asked for sacrifices to himself in Rome. John may be calling the Roman emperor as the beast and may want to identify them with emperor cult that is Antichrist.<sup>228</sup>

One of the beast's heads is "a fatally wounded head" (13:3). Since the beast has series of emperors, the wounded head may refer to Nero because the text continues that "its mortal wound had been healed" (v 3b). Nero died but according to popular legend "*Nero Redivivus*" ("Nero Revived" from the dead) he was expected to return to power with the Parthians, the enemies of Romans (Tacitus, *History* 2:8; Suetonius, *Nero* 57). John may have believed the return or rebirth of Nero occasioned the writing of this letter.<sup>229</sup> On the other hand, the wound may refer to the anarchy of 69 CE which followed Nero's death, the year of the four emperors (Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian) and the healing to the accession of Vespasian who ruled until 70CE.<sup>230</sup>

Though there may be diverse views on which the emperor that John wants to point out exists, the symbol of the beast's wounded head and healed wound has the meaning of antichrist. "Its head seems to have received a death-blow" (v 3) can be literally translated as "as slain unto death." This is the imitation of the Lamb that was "as slain" in Rev 5:6. The wound (πληγή) was inflicted by the sword (*ius gladii*) that executes Christ (13:14; 2:12). These incidences refer to the parody of the passion of Christ. The wound that had been healed means

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 220. & M. Eugene Boring, 1980, 180. Boring has the same view as Ford and he sees "the seven heads" represents both "the seven hills" that had been for generations the trademark of Rome and the "seven kings," the full line of Roman emperors (Rev 17:9-10). G.K. Baele, 1999, 868. However, Baele has different view on "the seven heads" of the beast in (Rev 17:9-10). "The Seven heads" initially identifies "the seven mountains" which is referring to seven individual kings or kingdoms, not referring only to Rome and its emperors, and this identification is confirmed by the additional clause "they are seven kings" (v 10). It is also confirmed by Dan 7:4-7, where seven is a total number of heads of the four beasts (= kingdoms). Daniel 7 is a source of the seven heads in Rev 13:1. That kings who represent kingdoms are thought of is apparent from Dan 7: 17 LXX (the great beasts are four *kings*) and 7:23 (the fourth beast will be a fourth *kingdom*).

<sup>228</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 491.

<sup>229</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, 1997, 157. & Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 496.

<sup>230</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford, 1993, 221.

the parody of resurrection of Christ because the word "live" (ζῆσαι 13:14) is the very term used for Jesus' resurrection in 2:8. So, it is clear that the beast pretended to be Christ and pretend to revive from disaster.<sup>231</sup> These are the abilities and characteristics of the beast and they are pointing to the fact that the beast is the parody of Christ or Antichrist. How this Antichrist character of the beast relating to the Old Testament model will be discussed in verse 5 below.

This beast from the sea got the power, that the throne and great authority from the dragon (Rev 13: 2c). The dragon is the deceiver of the whole world (12:9) and the beast carries out its deception through the healing of the beast's mortal wound and producing amazement to the world (v 3). And they lead people to worship them (v 4).<sup>232</sup> Throughout the apocalypse the dragon is Leviathan (12:3) and it was the sea monster from the deep and this symbolises the real evil. This dragon or the evil monster or Satan waited on the seashore for the upcoming of the beast from the sea for reason of calling forth his agent for the final battle (12:18). So, they are on the same side. They also have the same appearance "ten horns and seven heads (12:3)." This similar imagery with the dragon shows that the beast is united with the dragon in a separate role.<sup>233</sup>

The beast got power from Satan and can perform amazing things, however, neither Satan nor the beast can do anything without permission from God. This is clearly seen on account of the word εδοθη, "there was given" (13:5; 6:2, 4, 8, 11; 7:2; 8:2; 9:1, 3, 5; 11:1, 2; 12:14). Their power is limited for God allowed them to exercise power for only forty-two months (13:5). The beast was uttering proud and blaspheming God, his name and the heaven-dwellers. Blasphemy against God may refer to the assumption of the divine names by the emperors in public documents and inscriptions. For instance, emperor Caligula attempted to set his statue in the temple (*War 2.184-87, Ant. 18.261*).<sup>234</sup> Taking God's name in vain is the greatest blasphemy of all for Jesus commended to keep "God's name sacred" (Matt 6:9; Lk 11:2) and this is the major teaching of the OT as well (Exd 20:7; Ps 111:9; Isa 5:16; Ezek 20:41).<sup>235</sup> The blasphemy can imply that the beast is frankly against God and Christ.

Here, the beast's utterance of haughty and blasphemous words represents its authority against God but this authority is only for "forty-two months" that is, three and a half years which is a collective allusion to Dan 7:6, 8, 20 and 25. Generally, the three illusions are seen:

<sup>231</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 495-496.

<sup>232</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, 1997, 159.

<sup>233</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 489-490.

<sup>234</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford, 1993, 222-223.

<sup>235</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 499-500.

a blaspheming mouth ” a mouth speaking great things” (Dan 7:6,8 // Rev 13:5), an authorization clause ”it was given to him” (Dan 7:6 // Rev 13:5) and a decreed period of time ”two times, and half a time or forty two months” (Dan 7:25 // Rev 13:5). Thus, it is assumed that Antiochus IV Epiphanes whose defilement of Jerusalem temple and violent persecution to the Jews during 167-164 BCE may have been the first fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy and the figure in the Revelation text is another fulfillment.<sup>236</sup> John may refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the OT model of Antichrist who blasphemed God and persecuted the Jews.

The beast is not only allowed to use God’s name in vain but also allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them (Rev 13:7). It means that persecution was given to the people who do not worship Antichrist. However, this authority also has spatial limitation that the beast can only control those who are following after him. The beast cannot control who are not worshipping him because his authority is only over everyone whose names are not recorded in the book of life of the Lamb (13:8). Though the persecution is not mentioned explicitly in v 7, it can be implied by the prophetic appeal in v 10 where the Christians are persecuted or killed by the sword.<sup>237</sup>

John thus appeals the Christians in Rev 13:10: to endure persecution and to be faithful to God. Captivity and death have always been the symbols of the Christians in the time of persecution (Jer 15:2; Rev 2:10; 24:21, Matt 24:9). John insists perseverance and martyrdom as the Christian response to the persecutors (2:13; 6:9-11; 7:14; 11:2,7; 13:7; 14:13; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 20:4).<sup>238</sup> John’s view of resistance is non-violence resistance or accepting the persecution like Christ as the Lamb of God. Like Christ’s victory on the resurrection, the saints will have victory and their names will be in the book of life (13:8). Here, John may have Daniel (13:15; Dan 3:5-6) in mind. The faithful are saved from the fiery in Dan 3 and saved from the lion’s den in Dan 6. John may have already understood God’s saving action to the ones who are faithful to God (though Daniel does not emphasize faithfulness) and inserts his message of non-violence resistance.<sup>239</sup> John’s call for patience and resistance covers the persecution of both of the first beast and second beast although this v 10 is inserted in the middle of the chapter.<sup>240</sup>

John continues his view on the beast. Rev 13:11-18 is about the second beast or the beast from the earth. The beast has two horns like a lamb and it speak like a dragon. And he

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<sup>236</sup> G.K. Beale, 1999, 695.

<sup>237</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, 1997, 159.

<sup>238</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2001, 505-506.

<sup>239</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 160.

<sup>240</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, 1997, 167.

exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast (v 11-12). This second beast is interpreted as the false prophet for it looks like a lamb and can perform the great signs (13:13) because Jesus also predicted that false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt 7:15) who would work signs and wonders which would lead people astray before the day of Christ's return (2Thess. 2:9).<sup>241</sup> Here, the change of the authority will be seen: the dragon gives his authority to the first beast (13:2b), and the beast gives his authority to the second. They are united in power but different functions. While the dragon seizes the role of God, the beast from the sea usurps the role of Christ (with second beast of "false prophet,"). Then, the three become the false trinity 16:13.<sup>242</sup>

The second beast performs the miracles under the authority of the first beast. The first beast has already been mentioned as the Antichrist in great imitation of Christ. The false prophet or the second beast continues and makes all the inhabitants worship the Antichrist. In the background of the "Commune of Asia," a council representing the major cities of the province of Asia, whose president was called the Asiarch. This group especially promoted the emperor cult and demanded that citizens participate in it. And those who would not worship the image of the beast were killed (13:15). Domitian especially encouraged this, calling himself *Dominus et Deus noster* ("our Lord and God"). Thus, there is the possibility of seeing Domitian as the second beast who perform idolatrous practices to worship Antichrist.<sup>243</sup> However, there is also the different view that the second beast may be emperor Nero that will be discussed later.

The false prophet of the second beast led to marking of everyone: small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, on the right hand or the forehead. No one can buy or sell if he or she does not have the mark that is the name of the beast or the number of its name (13:16-17). This is imitating a sign and ownership and security of the Lamb who marks his followers on the forehead with the seal of the living God, his name and the name of his Father (7:1-8; 14:1-5). The false prophet commanded to bear the mark. For Christians, this is the "dualism of the decision" whether Christ or Antichrist. There is no middle-of-the-road and the Christians have to bear a mark whether of the false prophet or the Lamb. Those who do not bear the mark of the false prophet are economically sanctioned from Roman administration's gift of peace and

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<sup>241</sup> Margareth Barker, 2000, 236.

<sup>242</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 490. & M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 160-161.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 512-513.

prosperity. Thus, John's churches have to face the economic pressure if they choose the sign of lamb of God and Christian commitment.<sup>244</sup>

Who is that name of false prophet due to the number of its name? John clearly mentions the number of the name is 666 (13:18). The interpretation of emperor Nero has been commonplace among scholars. Due to an Arabic document found at Murabbaat dated the second year of the emperor Nero, his name was recorded as "Neron Caesar." In John's time, the languages presented numbers by letters of the alphabet. For instance, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet was used for 1, third for 3 and so on. Due to this process known as a gematria, the name "Neron Caesar" spelled in Hebrew letters sums up 666.<sup>245</sup>

However, if the name in Greek form "Nero Caesar" is translated, the final N of the Greek form being dropped and thus the gematria number being reduced by 50 to 616.<sup>246</sup> Then why did John write 666 to refer to Nero? The possible solution is that John the author is coming from the Palestine and his wordplays involve the Hebrew language (9:11; 16:16) so that his calculation of the name Nero might involve Hebrew language and spell the name "Neron".<sup>247</sup> Thus, there is the possibility that John may want to present emperor Nero as the second beast who urges every one to worship him and bear his name as a sign of worship and security.

However, as the numbers can identify the names of the persons, we can also find out the significance of the number. Boring asserts that John's audience may have already known who is the emperor that number 666 refers to. The important thing is what the number wants to say something about its significance. That is about the second beast is empowered by Satan.<sup>248</sup> John may refer to the second beast as evil and opposite of Christ. So, for this case John uses 666 as imperfection that is one deducted from the perfection number 7. He uses this threefold 666 as similar to "holy, holy, holy" in Rev 4:8 as the counterpart of Jesus' ultimate perfection 888.<sup>249</sup> The 888 number of the name Jesus could be seen as the ultimate completeness to three fold 7+1.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 20161-162.

<sup>245</sup> Margaret Barker, 2000, 233-234.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 233-234.

<sup>247</sup> M. Eugene Boring, 1989, 163.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>249</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 521.

<sup>250</sup> J. Massyngberde Ford, 1993, 226.



*Neron Caesar in Hebrew*

N = 50  
 R = 200  
 W = 6  
 N = 50  
 Q = 100  
 S = 60  
R = 20  
666

*Jesus in Greek*

I = 10  
 E = 8  
 S = 200  
 O = 70  
 U = 400  
S = 200  
888

It can be assumed that John used the number 666 in order to refer to emperor Nero. However, he may not directly say the return of the dead Nero but may refer to the coming of Antichrist would be a Nerolike figure who would be the antitype of that evil anti-Christian.<sup>251</sup> To clarify the incompleteness of the Antichrist John uses 666. Thus, the second beast is representing evil that the Christians need to resist.

In short, John mentions the two beasts in Rev 13: the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth. Satan gave authority to the beast from the sea so that the beast can perform miracles and wonders and lead all the people to worship him. Thus, it can be identified with the Roman emperor worship turning everyone under Roman rule. Although we cannot clearly identify which Roman emperor in John's thought, from his writing we can get the characteristics of the emperor cult that are parody of Christ and the emperor worship which is related to the Antichrist. The emperors gave persecution who refused to worship and the Christians were suffered persecution. The second beast is the false prophet who performs religious duties on behalf of the first beast and gave pressure to every inhabitant of the earth to worship the emperor cult. People are expected to participate in emperor worship as well as suffer under economic repression. The second beast endangered the Christians putting them at the risk of economic sanction and loss of life. The two beasts are different in appearance, however, they are the same in desire and ambition. They also present the evil power or Satan or Antichrist behind them. This evil power appearing as the emperor worship demands Christians to worship him and kills them if they do not. For this situation John appeals the Christians to resist the evil power through receiving martyrdom that has the meaning of rejecting evil and being faithful to God or Christ, the Lamb of God.

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<sup>251</sup> Grant R. Osborne, 2002, 521.

### 4.1.3 Theological View

In Rev 13, John is mentioning the two beasts which are related to each other and oneness in aim and purpose. These beasts are representing the Roman political situation and the religious arrogance of the emperors. John portrays this imperial Rome in Rev 13 as "in terms of the totalitarian, self-deifying, all-embracing power of the state."<sup>252</sup> The Roman government persecuted or slaughtered the Christians who deny to participate in emperor worship (13:8, 10, 15). They can do wonders and mighty works and can lure almost all of the people from Asia where the people had already practiced the worship of the dead leaders as their gods. So, the introducing of worship of the deified dead emperors and living emperors as the gods, was not so difficult to be adapted in their context. However, this was the problem for the Christians whose theology was based on the monotheistic worship of Jewish belief. Therefore, the Christians faced persecution when they refused to take part in emperor worship for it appeared as the unfaithfulness and act of disloyalty to imperial Rome.

On the other hand, emperor worship is challenging the Christians to choose which side they will be: God's side or Satan's side. The emperor can give salvation that is well-being or peace and security of the people under Roman rule. John points to this as the parody of Christ whose salvation through the cross and resurrection is only perfect and complete. So, he uses the number 666 for the emperor in order to identify his incompleteness. His work is deceptive. He is challenging the Christians' economic welfare by sanctioning the trading opportunity to those who do not have a sign of the emperor on their hands or heads. That is definitely opposing the authority of Christ and the possession of Christians' commitment to Christ (7:1-8; 14:1-5). Thus, we can obviously see the totalitarian governance of the Roman state relating to the religious consideration. John is boldly criticizing the imperial Rome as the Antichrist or Satanic evil or evil power and appealing the Christians "to have patience endurance and faithfulness to God" (13:10). His appeal is not to be faithful to the evil but to God, not to follow the Satan's deception but to endure the faithfulness in Christ. John's view on the Christians relating to the totalitarian Roman state is to disobey what they demand and willingly receive the martyrdom.

Does John's ethical view on the Christian's attitude to the totalitarian or the tyrant government mean quietism (concerning with quietism see chapter 3)? No, it is not for his instruction is to resist the evil state by disobeying them and willingly choose the different way of the evil power that is faithfulness to Christ and acceptance of the killing of the evil state.

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<sup>252</sup> Arnold T. Monera, 128.

The power of beasts can overwhelm the whole earth and they are able to convince the whole world to worship them. But their ability is deceptive and limited in power. Their power is only temporal (for God allowed only forty two months 13:5) and limited spatial (for he only control those who bear his name 13:16-17). John encourages the Christians to defeat the evil power of the Roman imperial rule. That is to worship God, not the emperor; to refuse to receive the mark of the Beast by excluding themselves from the normal activities of the economic system. That is to imitate Christ's example of powerless suffering and refuse to succumb to the illusion made by the evil power.<sup>253</sup> That is the defeat of the Christians over the evil power. It is John's view of the Christian's stand on the evil government that is not quietism but active non-violence or resistance through disobeying the evil power. Thus, it is the victory of the Christians over the evil power or the totalitarian government by accepting martyrdom with willingness and dignity.

## **4.2 Matthew 22:15-22**

### **4.2.1 Background Situation**

#### *4.2.1.1 Pharisees And Herodians*

In Matt 22:15-22 the initiators of the event who entrapped Jesus, are Pharisees with Herodians. Pharisees, one of the three Jewish Religious philosophical sects (Pharisees, Saducees and Essenes) in Palestine, were a much larger group, and probably be the most influential group during Jesus' lifetime. Some were fulltime students of the Scriptures, but a majority of them had ordinary jobs. They followed the Law of Moses and their religious traditions.<sup>254</sup> Concerning the public with politically motivated intentions, they were quietists (quietists related to the Jewish religious view on politics from the time of prophet Jeremiah, see chapter 3) who resented the Roman occupation but accepted it as a necessary evil. So, they gave submission to the government as long as Rome did not interfere with the practice of religion.<sup>255</sup> They (except a zealous minority) paid tax to the government though they were resented of taxation to Rome.<sup>256</sup>

Herodians were partisans, not the Jewish religious philosophers, of the Herodian dynasty and the supporters of Herod Antipas who ruled Galilee and Perea at the time of Jesus.

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<sup>253</sup> Richard B. Hays, 1996, 176.

<sup>254</sup> John Drane, 2010, 34-36.

<sup>255</sup> Douglas R.A. Hare, 1993, 253.

<sup>256</sup> Robert H. Gundry, 1982, 442. & Ulrich Luz, 2005, 63.

They held their power by Rome's favor and hoped for the full restoration of Herodian authority.<sup>257</sup> Indeed, Herodians can be seen as pro-Romans because they knew that they needed to depend on Rome for every governor or procurator must need Rome's approval to rule any segment of Roman empire.<sup>258</sup> Thus, they favored to pay tax to Antipas, the procurator because his power was under Roman authority. These Herodians from the territories ruled by Galilee came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and they entrapped Jesus with the question concerning taxation.<sup>259</sup> Generally, Pharisees and Herodians though they have different intentions, they have already been submissive to the Roman government and their question about giving tax to Ceasar was only meant to entrap Jesus.

#### *4.2.1.2 Jewish Attitude To Give Taxes To Rome*

In the lifetime of Jesus, the Israelites had to give taxes to Rome for Palestine was one of the regions under Rome. The Roman money that had the emperor's image and his deified inscription became idolatory or emperor worship for the Israelites (Exod. 20:4; Deut. 5:8). This situation became tense when the radical religious feeling of the Jews entered the picture and formed the revolutionary question.<sup>260</sup> This became a good reason for Zealot revolution movement (the Zealots are Jewish people who were involved in the direct conflict against the Romans) led by Judas the Galilean in 6CE.<sup>261</sup>

Due to Judas the Galilean, founder of the Zealots, paying tax was imposed by the emperor and should not be done because it is against the first two laws from the Ten Commandments. He interpreted that God is the only Lord of Israel so that the tribute paid to the foreign ruler could be seen as worshipping an idol for the emperor venerated himself as Lord. So anyone paying taxes to the emperor ceased to be regarded as a true Israelite and could only be regarded as "a gentile and a tax-collector."<sup>262</sup> So, the earnest Zealots refused the tax, left their towns, went into the hills, and became guerilla fighters using violence against

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<sup>257</sup> Craig S. Keener, 1999, 524. J.M Dougherty, 803. After the deposition of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, CE 7, Judea was placed under a Roman procurator. The Jews resented this foreign rule because of the cruelty of the governors after Archelaus. Their resentment grew bitter and started to regard the reestablishment of the Herodian rule over all the Palestine as necessary for the nation's preservation. And their hope was even extended for the Palestine's eventual full independence.

<sup>258</sup> Douglas R.A. Hare, 1993, 253.

<sup>259</sup> Robert H. Gundry, 1994, 442.

<sup>260</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 397. Martin Hengel, 1989, 330. Archelaus was exiled and Judea became a third grade province of empire (John Drane, 2010, 34) under the new legate of Syria P. Sulpicius Quirinius and procurator Coponius who had been sent in place of Archelaus. This fortune was linked to the census and a registration of landed property. It was firmly rejected by the people except the high-priest Joazar b. He was able to persuade them to let the census take place. However, this incidence gave Judas the effective idea for Jewish freedom movement.

<sup>261</sup> Martin Hengel, 1989, 330.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid, 139.

the pagan colonialists and its collaborators (*J.W* 2.118; 433; 7:253-57; *Ant.* 18.4-10, 23-25, 102).<sup>263</sup> Thus, it is clear that no entire Israel willingly gave taxes to the emperor. There were some Jews who resisted taxation to the Roman emperor based on Jewish religious teachings and revolutionary purpose. In this situation Jesus was asked the question about paying taxes to Ceasar. Jesus allowed himself to be called Son of David (Matt 20:30-31; 21:9) so that he might even share revolutionary convictions if he rejected to pay tribute to Ceasar. Jesus was entrapped with the politically volatile question by Pharisees and Herodians.

#### ***4.2.1.3 Political Situation***

Tiberius Caesar was the Roman emperor (CE 14 – 37) in the lifetime of Jesus. He was one of the cruel and tyrannous Roman emperors.<sup>264</sup> His cruelty can be seen in his suppression of foreign religions, the Egyptian rites and the Jewish rites, and persecution to those who participated in those religions.<sup>265</sup> The following happened during Tiberius' reign: the mission of John the Baptist, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and the death of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60).<sup>266</sup> The coin of tribute shown to Christ (Mt. 22:19) was a silver piece decorated with the image of the emperor Tiberius and inscription: Ti(berius) Caesar Divi Aug(usti) F(ilius).<sup>267</sup> Thus, in the perspective of Jews the idolatry worship which is strictly warned against in the Jewish religious teaching was carried out during his reign. Due to the above incidences, we can infer that Tiberius was not a good emperor.

Roman procurator of Judea was Pontius Pilate (26-36 CE). He was appointed by emperor Tiberius, as a procurator of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, subject to the legate (governor) of Syria. It is clear that Pilate executed Jesus for all four Gospels describe Pilate's unfair judgement on Jesus. They portray him as superstitious, vacillating, and hostile to the Jews. Philo also recorded Pilate's cruelty and the Jewish attitude towards Pilate was clearly shown in a letter from herod Agrippa I to Caligula, describing him as inflexible, merciless, and corrupt, and accusing him of executing men without proper trial (Philo, *Leg. ad Gaium*, 38).<sup>268</sup>

Under the reign of Tiberius and Pilate, the execution of Jesus and Stephen happened. Like Jesus and Stephen many innocent victims were suppressed and executed. In this political situation Jesus was asked whether the tax should be given to Caesar or not. Should the public

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<sup>263</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 397. & David L. Turner, 2008, 528.

<sup>264</sup> M.J Costelloe, 2003, 69.

<sup>265</sup> C.K Barrett, 1987, 10.

<sup>266</sup> F.J Burckley, 2003, 339.

<sup>267</sup> M.J Costelloe, 2003, 69.

<sup>268</sup> F.J Buckley, 2003, 339.

submit to the Roman government, who can be accused of their brutality and cruelty? In reality, it is not an easy question to give answer. How Jesus answered this question concerning government or politics? And what will be his view on Church and State relationship will be proceeded.

#### 4.2.2 Interpretation

The pharisees were coming to entrap Jesus in Matt 22:15. The encountering of Jesus and Pharisees are frequently mentioned in Matthew. In this event, Pharisees heard that Jesus was referring to them in his parable of Tenants in 21:45 and now they regroup and confer on how to trap Jesus in his word. Indeed, Pharisees are usually trying to test Jesus (12:14; 16:1; 19:3; 22:35) and so this entrapping Jesus in 22:15 is not new development.<sup>269</sup> What is their main purpose to entrap Jesus? Since Pharisees might hear Jesus' cleansing of the temple (21:12-17) as a revolutionary act against religious authorities. So, they wanted to provoke Jesus into a revolutionary remark against civil authority. This was their reason for entrapping Jesus and based on this reason their main purpose was to alienate the people from God.<sup>270</sup> So, it is clear that the Pharisees are the initiators to ask the politically dangerous question to Jesus.

The pharisees sent their disciples to Jesus, along with the Herodians (22:16a). The disciples of Pharisees are mentioned only here in NT. And the Pharisees in the link with Herodians are also mentioned only here and in Mk 3:6. It is clear that the disciples are carrying out the purposes of the Pharisaic leadership.<sup>271</sup> As mentioned in the background situation Pharisees are religious people who seriously practice laws and their traditions, however, the Herodians are the people who are supporters of the Herod family and have good relationship with the Roman militia for they want to have peace and status quo in Palestine. Here, different parties with their respective power bases collaborated to attempt entrapping Jesus. So, Jesus was put between these two opposite views or between hard options.<sup>272</sup>

The Pharisees and Herodians opened their question by using flattering words (Matt 22:16b). They called Jesus "teacher" (διδασκαλος), a title of respect that is used regularly in Matthew when non-disciples address Jesus (9:11; 12:38; 17:24; 22:24, 36). And they said "we know that you are sincere", "teach the way of God in accordance with truth," "you do not

<sup>269</sup> David L. Tuner, 2008, 527.

<sup>270</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 397.

<sup>271</sup> Donal A. Hagner, 1995, 635. Schlatter sees that the older Pharisees had publicly come out against the revolutionary tax-resistance movement, but their younger disciples could appear, more plausibly, as tempted by the revolutionary option, so they were sent to ask Jesus this question. (This is the quotation of Brunner.)

Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 397.

<sup>272</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 397. & Donald A. Hagner, 1995, 635.

regard people with partiality.” These words are designed to flatter Jesus as boldly as possible.<sup>273</sup> If they really know and accept Jesus’ sincere and righteousness, they would not attempt to flatter him.<sup>274</sup> In their words, they hope that if Jesus did not respect of the wealth, position, or power of a person, he might well speak critically of the emperor’s taxation of the Jews.<sup>275</sup>

The mixed group asked Jesus “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” (v 17). Here, we can see that the Pharisees challenge to Jesus from the religious background. “Is it lawful?” means “Is it biblical and in accordance with right doctrine?” As it has been already discussed in the background context in Rom 13:1-7, the Caesars are considered as gods. Some emperors are deified after their death though some are deified themselves as gods while they are still alive (eg. Gaius Calligula). Therefore, submission to these emperors or paying taxes to them contributes to emperor worship or idolatry worship that are absolutely contradictory to the Jewish religious teaching. Therefore, if Jesus says “Yes,” he is already violated religious teaching and he will become unpopular among his people. On the other hand, if he says “No,” he will be in a dangerous position of violating Roman taxation law.

The tax κηρσον here in v 17 is “poll tax” or “annual head tax” paid by all adults.<sup>276</sup> At Jesus’ lifetime many people resented this poll tax which is collected directly for Rome. Every individual who is living in Roman Empire had to contribute in the amount of one denarius which is equal to a day’s wages. In addition to “poll tax” people are burdened with τελος (indirect tax) to Rome and temple tax collected by Jewish religious authorities for the temple and for their other institutional expenses (17:24-27). Thus, people are suffering under exhausting taxation. Some estimate that a Jewish family paid approximately 49-50 percent of its annual income to these various taxes. If Jesus says “Yes,” he will be put in disfavor of the burdened people and he will be viewed in the same breath with the Roman oppression.<sup>277</sup> If he answers “No,” he will be in a dangerous situation of seeing him as radical revolutionary for the refusal to pay taxes meant a call to revolution after the revolt of the Galilean Judas in 6 CE. Thus, the question of the Pharisees with the Herodians is merely to jeopardize Jesus’ ministry.

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<sup>273</sup> Donald A. Hagner, 1995, 635.

<sup>274</sup> David L. Turner, 2008, 527.

<sup>275</sup> Donald A. Hagner, 1995, 635.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 636. & Bauer’s, 2000, 542.

<sup>277</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, 2004, 720.

However, Jesus noticed their malice (Matthew used "evil," τὴν ποιηρίαν αὐτῶν, the only use of the noun in Matthew)<sup>278</sup> and said "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?" (v 18). Here, Matthew uses the word πειραζῶ which is a common word for "tempt" and "test." Thus, the Pharisees intention is merely to test Jesus and tempt him to incriminate himself.<sup>279</sup> Jesus' confrontation of the opponents is with his great sovereignty. He knows their plot (12:15; 16:8) and answers accordingly.<sup>280</sup> Thus, he calls them hypocrites (Jesus' opponents are often described as hypocrites in Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 23:13, 15, 23,25, 27, 29; 24:51)<sup>281</sup> because their question is not genuin for they merely want to test him. Jesus follows up his answer with demonstration. He asks them to show the coin used for the tax that is a silver denarius (v 19).

Jesus asked them whose image and title on the coin and they answered that it is Caesar's (vv 20-21a). The silver coin is especially for payment of the tax and it has an image of a laureled head of Tiberius Caesar on one side, and an image of his mother Livia on the other. With image of Caesar there is also the inscription on the coin "Ti(berius) Caesar Divi Aug(usti) F(ilius) August," means "Tiberius, Caesar, worship son of the divine Augustus." On the reverse side, there is an inscription "Pontif(ex) Maxim(us)" means "High Priest" with the image of mother of Caesar as the Roman goddess of Peace.<sup>282</sup>

Thus, it is Tiberius' coin and it means the coin is the property of Ceasar. The reason of asking the owner of the coin is clearly seen in Jesus' next sentence "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." He used "therefore, οὖν" that mentions that Pharisees have already paid tax to Caesar. Thus, this is just the challenge of Jesus to them to do what they do anyway. "The things that are Caesar's" (τὰ Καίσαρος) imply that the money or coins that invested with the emperor's symbols of power already belongs to him. So, it is reasonable to give him back his property. There is no statement from Jesus that the imperial authority is granted by God like in Rom 13. Moreover, Jesus did not give biblical justification offered for paying taxes.<sup>283</sup>

Indeed, the political view of Jesus can be taken from his answer in v 21bc. According to 21b Jesus seems to support his opponents, the Herodians who are willing to give taxes to the emperor. As Jesus is not a Zealot, his answer seems to go against Zealots and he seems to accept the Roman tax administration. Therefore, there can be a question that "Does Jesus

<sup>278</sup> Donald A. Hagner, 1995, 636.

<sup>279</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, 2004, 720.

<sup>280</sup> Ulrich Luz, 2005, 65.

<sup>281</sup> David L. Turner, 2008, 528.

<sup>282</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 398. Michael J. Wilkins, 2004, 720. & Ulrich Luz, 2005, 65.

<sup>283</sup> Ulrich Luz, 2005, 66.



agree to tax repression or agree to submit the rulers with cruelty alluded with idolatory worship?" The view of Jesus on politics could not be complete without v 21c, "to God the things that are God's." Matthew also records that when Pharisees and Herodians heard Jesus' complete answer they were amazed, left him and went away (v 22).

Honestly, the Herodians expected a positive answer and the Pharisees expected a negative answer from Jesus. Jesus does not support the Pharisees by opposing Caesar's tax laws, but neither does he support the Herodians by affirming total loyalty to Rome.<sup>284</sup> The response of Jesus to the Pharisees has two areas of concern: to Caesar and to God. Generally, this text was less interpreted than Rom 13:1-7 in the ancient Church, however, it started to be concentrated in the interpretation of Church and State relationship from the reformation period.<sup>285</sup> The diverse views of exegesis on this text can be seen as dividing three periods: ancient period, reformation period and recent time.

The ancient Church interpreted Matt 22:15-22 as the sovereignty of God over the spiritual life of the Church and the State. This idea started with the view of Tertullian; he states that the coin that bears Caesar's image belongs to Caesar, but the entire person who is God's image belongs to God (Tertullian *Idol.* 15.3s).<sup>286</sup> Gen 1:27 clearly mentions that "in the image of God he created them." Since God created man and women in His own image, human beings are God's creations and His belongings. In Gen 9:6, we can see that God values human lives very much and the text can be taken as a legitimate text to revenge murderers because human beings are valuable and human life is sacred because of God's image in humankind "for in his own image God made humankind."<sup>287</sup> This is a very reasonable biblical view to accept Tertullian's view.

Tertullian's view was reasonably drawn as a conclusion that the power of the Church is sovereign over the State thus submission to the Church is far exceeded than the submission to the state. Hilary (Hilary in *Commentary on Matthew* 23.2 = SC 258.154) also asserted that God owes human body, mind and spirit that is the whole person, however, Caesar's ownership on us is ended when our wealthiness is gone.<sup>288</sup> The ancient Church clearly differentiated God's reign and the State authority and the State authority is always limited and subordinate to God. They interpreted Matt 22:21 as a basis for the Church's superiority to the State.

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<sup>284</sup> David L. Turner, 2008, 529.

<sup>285</sup> Ulrich Luz, 2005, 63.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>287</sup> Alan Richardson, 1953, 110.

<sup>288</sup> Ulrich Luz, 2005, 63.

In the reformation period, the text was interpreted in terms of the doctrine of the two kingdoms. Due to Calvin (3:26), Christ makes "a clear distinction... between spiritual and civil government." Though these spiritual and civil government are differentiated, there is no external constraint from holding a clear conscience in the sight of God. His view is, thus, obedience to the state or civil authority should not be separated from obedience to God. In other words, disobedience to the state is rebellion against God.<sup>289</sup> These two realms are related to each other but should not be confused because the government is within the kingdom of God. God is present in both the spiritual kingdom and civil government, but the civil government cannot have authority in the spiritual realm.

In the recent century, Matt 22:21 is interpreted as Jesus' response between rebellion and revolution, and the mythologizing, apotheosis and glorification of Caesar and his empire. It is undebatable that this view has to be seen together with the experiences of the German Third Reich and the misuse of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms. This experience had left clear traces in the German-language Protestant exegesis of the modern period. And its interpretation is approaching to the Catholic exegesis of the inequality of the two parts of v 21. In reality it is aiming to reject "serving Caesar" and the old protestant interpretation of "both ... and", serving Caesar and serving God. For instance, based on eschatological view Albert Schweitzer interprets the text that the state belongs to the earthly, antigodly things that will end with the coming of God's reign. Thus, how could Jesus "waste time with such things"? Schweitzer and many scholars after him see the command of Jesus "give to Caesar's that are Caesar's" as an ironic statement.<sup>290</sup> The recent interpretation of the text is done on the text as a combination of the two opposite stance and thus it put more emphasis on the obedience to God more than obedience to the state. The roles of the Church and the State are different and should not be confused although they still have relationship. In other words, the Church is the final authority.

On these diverse interpretation backgrounds, what will be the text's intended meaning for Church and State relationship? In this story, Jesus' answer confounds both the Pharisees and Herodians for he challenged them to give God the things that are God's. This is a completely incomparable command of Jesus. The two commandments in v 21bc are connected with the conjunction *καὶ* which literally has nothing more than the normal meaning of "and." Thus, the two have different meanings, however, "to give God the things that belong to God" is superior than the former one. It has to be interpreted from the biblical and Jewish

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 64-65.

tradition: God is the one who "casts down nations before and overthrows kings" (Isa 41:2). To him belongs "the earth and all that is in it, the world and all who live in it" (Ps 24:1). This command thus means everything belongs to God – heaven and earth, all people, and, of course all empires and all emperors. Paying taxes to the emperors also included as an element in this command but not next to. Thus, paying taxes to Caesar is penultimate level.<sup>291</sup>

In Matt 22:15-22 Jesus was against the revolutionary intention of the Pharisees by commanding Caesar the things that are Caesar's at the same time, he challenged the Herodians' quiet response for unjust administration of the government system by commanding to God the things that are God's. From these commands, we can see the sovereignty of God. Thus, Jesus' view on the Church and State relationship is mutual under the sovereignty of God. Jesus' perspective of Church and State relationship does not mean that the worlds of politics and religion are separate spheres, each with its own governing principles. God is all embracing and the state is within God's reign. Thus, the obligations due to the state are within the divine order.<sup>292</sup>

Thus, Brunner's assertion is reasonable here, he said that half of Jesus' answer means the honor of the State and the last half means the limitation of the State.<sup>293</sup> We have to respect the State as it is under God's ownership, at the same time, we should not forget that it is only one part of God's property so that the State has always limitations. God the only is supreme over the State and his creation. This view clearly influences Peter and John that is clearly reflected when they talked to the council that the true salvation is only found in Jesus Christ. They obviously asserted that there is no other human name that people can be saved (Acts 4:12). Peter and John's conviction clearly mentions that their submission is only to God. Thus, for me the interpretation based on doctrine of Two Kingdoms and the recent exegesis of God's supremacy over the state are more attached to Jesus' intended perspective of Church and State relationship in Matt 22:15-22.

### **4.2.3 Theological View**

Matthew 22:15-22 is the trap that the Pharisees together with Herodians set up to trap Jesus with a question whether is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not. If Jesus says "Yes", he will be one of the Herodians who supports Roman government and will become unpopular among the people under heavy taxation. If he says "No", he will be considered one of the

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>292</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner, 1990, 401.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 400.

revolutionists who rebelled against Rome. However, Jesus' response was able to transcend the critical question of the Pharisees so that their trap to to trick him failed finally. The answer of Jesus is broader and more complete than they expect. He commands to give taxes to Caesar and challenges to give God the things that are God's. From his answer we can understand that Jesus wants to differentiate the State's authority and God's authority.

It appeared that Jesus thought that the emperor's authority belongs to people's material or cultural or the external realms that deals with the kingdom of the world and, on the other hand, God's authority belongs to people's spiritual, personal and inner life. This is Jesus' distinction between the emperor's realm and God's realm. In deed, the authority of the State and the authority of God are different in realm and concern. However, when we consider the scope of God's realm and property, his realm is more than spiritual, personal and inner life.<sup>294</sup> Since, God is creator God is superior than the State for the scripture clearly manifests that the State is only one part of God's creation or ownership (Is 42:2; Ps 24:1).

Thus, Jesus articulates a fundamental principle that people are living in God's kingdom that is living in a yet imperfect world governed by secular authorities.<sup>295</sup> The civil authority are merely the temporal rulers of this visible and imperfect world. God allows them to rule the world so that people have to subdue to the government or have to pay tax. However, this government has limited in power because they are subordinate to God. Thus, people have to respect the State not because it is the supreme authority but because it is God's creation and property. If the government is the creation and the property of God, it should have godly character and administration. If they do not have a godly demeanour, it automatically means that they are alien to God. This can imply we only need to submit to the godly government. Jesus also clearly instructs that that God is the Lord of all things and our final obedience has to be to God alone. Thus, we can conclude that the Christians' Submission to the government has to be judged with Submission to God for our supreme Submission is only to God alone.

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<sup>294</sup> Ullrich Luz, 2005, 67.

<sup>295</sup> Donald A. Hagner, 1995, 637.

### **4.3 Summary Of Theological Insights From Revelation 13:1-18 And Matthew 22:15-22**

Revelation 13 and Matthew 22:15-22 mention the Church's relationship to the State, they have their own unique thoughts and views based on their own situation. However, there is a possibility that Jesus' view may influence the rest of the NT writers including John, the author of Revelation. Matthew 22:15-22 depicts Jesus' ethical concern for the Roman emperor due to paying taxes. Pharisees are blaming the coin of the emperor as idolatry that is directly against the teaching of the Jews.

Their attitude is clearly seen in their question to Jesus "is it lawful to pay taxes to the Caesar, or not" (Matt 22:17b). So, to the Pharisees paying taxes in coins which have the image of Caesar and its deified inscription, means emperor worship and idol worship which is strictly prohibited in the second commandment (Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8) of Israel. Thus, they hope that Jesus will reject to pay taxes to Caesar. However, Jesus does not reject to pay taxes to Caesar. In addition, he even appreciates Caesar and his government by commending the Pharisees with Herodians to continue their practice of paying taxes to Caesar. Jesus views the case different from the Pharisees' perspective. Jesus did not criticize the Caesar's coin and taxation system of Roman government at that time. He even recognized the emperor's authority.

When we study the book of Revelation, its main theme is the resisting emperor worship. John is writing to the Christians who are suffering persecution under Roman governance. John clearly criticizes the evil and demonic character of the Roman emperors or Roman government by comparing them with the two beasts: the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth which received evil power from the dragon (the Satan) (Rev 13:1-6; 11-12). He clearly mentions and reminds his readers about the emperor worship is the idolatry worship and that is totally against the way of God for the beast "utters blasphemies against God" (Rev 13:6). Revelation 13 is not a taxation context like Matthew 22:15-22. Revelation is the persecution context concerning the religious violations so that it can be called a "Do or Die" situation. In deed, the context of Revelation is more critical than Matthew's context though they have the same reason of idol worship.

For the critical and more practical context of Revelation, John is bluntly critical in his response to the situation that is to resist the Roman State or the persecution. His resistance is backed by his desire to be faithful to God "to have patience endurance and faithfulness to God" (13:10). That is denying to participate in the idol worship or emperor worship. Since

Christians refused to join in the emperor cult, they will be punished to death. John clearly encourages them to endure the death punishment from the government. Thus, John's view of endurance is to accept persecution willingly. This is John's view of resistance that is to overcome the satanic force by resisting what they want and demand. In other words, the government in Revelation 13 can be defined as totalitarian or tyrant government for they suppress or persecute the people who do not listen to them and for they do not allow the people's different opinions and rights. For that kind of government John's Christian Ethical view is not to submit them but to resist them. However, John's denial of submission is not fighting or rebelling but refusing what they demand. In other words, his resisting against the totalitarian government is not following their commands but willingly admit their repression and persecution.

Thus, generally John's views seem to obviously resonate with concern for the submission to the totalitarian government. And Jesus seems to be silent in the relationship with the tyrant Roman government of his time for Tiberius Caesar and procurator Pontius Pilate can not be seen as good leaders as it is mentioned in the background political situation. Religious persecution and execution of innocent victims were carried out under their rule. Indeed, Jesus was not voiceless for this totalitarian type of government though he appreciates the authority of Rome. His response in the second part in Matt 22:21 "to God the things that are God's" is the main point for the Christian ethical view for this kind of government. This sentence is not just a challenge of Jesus to the Herodians not to forget to pay God the things that are God's. The ancient Church interpreted that Jesus is differentiating the realm of human emperor that is visible and material under government order, and the realm of God that is spiritual, personal and inner life.

In reality, it is not just differentiation of human realm and God's realm. This is just human's neglect of God's kingdom including both visible and invisible, both physical and spiritual. Because God is the creator and he is Lord over all things. It means he is Lord of the emperors, the worldly powers and all kinds of governance. Jesus appreciates the Roman emperor for it is within God's order. But he did not neglect God's superior over the emperor. Submission to the government and submission to God are not the same. We have to respect the government at the same time we should not forget that the government's authority is limited. God is the only one who is limitless. Thus, if the government is practicing its authority not in accordance with God's way or not in godly manner, the Christians have a chance to choose unsubmission to the government for God's ownership. Thus, Jesus' view of

submission concerning the totalitarian government can be taken as more radical than that is in Revelation.

Certainly, Resistance to the government mentioned in Revelation has some connection to Jesus' view of submission to the Government in Matt 22:15-22. Jesus' recognition of the government institutions in Matt 22:21b is interpreted more deeply by the rest of NT writers including John in Revelation 13 and Paul in Rom 13:1-7. Paul clearly theologizes that the Government are the ministers of God. Like the readers of John, the readers of Romans and the audience of Jesus in the first century CE, the critical situation between the Church and the State have been happening time to time until now. How the Church submitted to the State in the time of World War II? How they interpreted the scriptures and applied to the situation of the Third Reich? The research will proceed with the next chapter.

**CHAPTER (5)**

**CHRISTIAN ETHICAL VIEWS ON "SUBMISSION TO THE  
GOVERNMENT" (ROM 13:1-7) BY KARL BARTH AND EIVIND  
BERGGRAV IN THE TIME OF WORLD WAR TWO**

### **5.1 Introduction**

After studying Biblical perspective on "Submission to The Government" based on the three related texts Rom 13:1-7, Rev 13 and Matt 22:15-22, this chapter will explore the contextualization of Christian Ethical views grounded on Romans 13: 1-7 in the Time of World War II. Rom 13:1-7 is the ethical instruction of Paul to the Roman Church and it has been an important text concerning Church and State relationship from time to time. The tyrant government who violated human rights and argued this text as the legitimation of their injustice in the Third Reich, is similar to the present tyrant government of Myanmar. Thus, this chapter is aimed to show how the Churches of World War Two context comprehended the Christian Ethical perspective of "Submission to the Government" based on Rom 13:1-7 will help to get the relevant message to the present Myanmar Churches under the dictatorship regime.

### **5.2 The World War Two Context**

In the time of world war two, when the crisis of Nazism struck into the protestant doctrine of the Church, reading of Romans 13 became an important text or the centrality of the protestant Church doctrine.<sup>296</sup> As the government is ordained by God it has a duty to do good and the citizens have a duty to obey the government. However, when the government misuses its duty by killing innocent human beings in the name of goodness of the government, the text becomes reason for the safeguard of the government's arrogance.<sup>297</sup> Should obedience be given to nationalistic purpose than to the divinely ordained government? The text became problematic.

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<sup>296</sup> John H. Yoder, 1972, 193.

<sup>297</sup> Water E. Pilgrim, 1999, 3. Due to literal interpretation of this text, the repeated failure of the church and the individual Christians happened in the German Churches in the mid-twentieth century. Pilgrim admitted "*In the case of German Evangelical Christians (my own heritage), it became far too easy to equate being a Christian with loyalty to one's nation or government.*"



The interpretation of the text has been related to the Lutheran Doctrine of the two Kingdoms. It is evident in Ulrich Duchrow's book, entitled *"Two Kingdoms – The Use and Misuse of A Lutheran Theological Concept."* He mentions that Luther never formulated any systematic "Doctrine" of the two kingdoms rather he studied and stressed particular problems related to this concept – problems concerning society and the church's position within the society. However, in 1930s, the German Lutheran made use of a political interpretation of the "doctrine of the two kingdoms" to justify National Socialism.<sup>298</sup>

The use of doctrine of the Two Kingdoms by the German Christian theologians based on the doctrine of Law and Gospel. They affirmed two revelations: first the Law, which confronts man in all human obligations including social-political duties, and the second is the Gospel. They believed that the Natural Law or Divine Law is revealed in human history and nature. So that God is the Lord of history and He speaks to man in "the Laws of earthly existence" and God's will is known in "reality" that is the reality like the nation and the fatherland. Thus, the original power thus is revealed in a particular nation and it is the Law of God. This is the source to provide the content for good and evil or for all ethics. Thus, faith in the civil Law amounts to faith in the God of creation.<sup>299</sup>

The second Law or the revelation through Gospel comes after the revelation through natural Law and the German Christians believed that Christ's obligation is to fulfill God's revelation through natural Law. The revelation through natural Law itself is independent of the Gospel or Christ. The function of Christ is to forgive man his transgressions of the law which he already knows and to enable him to fulfill the Law gladly in the future. Tiefel's quotation of Elert clearly points to this fact that the gospel is a-political, and no demands can be made upon the state in the name of the gospel. Thus, the Church rejected the normative influences of the Gospel and it simply shared the ethos of the *Volk* (People).<sup>300</sup> This legitimized the rise of National Socialism in Germany.

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<sup>298</sup> Ulrich Duchrow, 1977, 9. Duchrow briefly traces the beginning of this problem. Needless to say, the separation of the sphere of life has begun in the time of middle Ages. And the two universal powers; emperor and Pope became less capable of combining the sphere together. Consequently, the princes got the opportunity to seize their autonomy. In the time of early and middle of 19th century, the traditional feudalism and monarchical orders were subjected to criticism. The representatives of confessional neo-Lutheranism defended that the existing order is always from God (by interpreting Romans 13:1-7). In the beginning of 20th century, both German Confessional Lutherans and liberal theologians had reached a position that the secular and spiritual were kept apart. This Lutheran ideology of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms became the legitimating ideology for the accommodation to the worldview and politics of National Socialism. This ideology especially based on the doctrine of the Law and Gospel.

<sup>299</sup> Hans Tiefel, 1972, 331-332.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid, 332.

Based on the above mentioned doctrine of Law and Gospel, the exclusive biblical focus on Rom 13:1-7 supported that though the order may stand in danger of being demonic, it deserves unconditional acceptance for it is the created order through which God's revelation can be seen. In Rom 13:1 Paul asserted that the authorities are ordained by God. He does not discuss whether the government is good or bad. Paul just asserted to obey the Nero government whose atrocities were well known to the author of Romans. It means that Paul instructs the Christians to be subject to any authorities whether they are good or bad. Thus, this traditional interpretation of Rom 13:1 legitimated the subjection to the Nazi government was appropriate.<sup>301</sup> The crisis of German National Socialism or Nazism or the heathenism did not entirely go on unchallenged.<sup>302</sup> Karl Barth (1886-1968) quickly perceived the necessity of the right understanding of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and the Lordship of Christ concerning the function of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms during the time of the Third Reich.<sup>303</sup>

In 1934 the Berman Theological Declaration comprised six articles issued by German Protestant representatives in opposition to the Nazi supported "German-Christian" movement. The written led by Karl Barth and including other pastors, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was also among them. The Declaration has six articles and it stressed the headship and finality of Christ, and the pre-eminence of Scripture for belief and as the guide to practical action for Christians. It clearly repudiate the German-Christian subordination of Christ's Church to the state.<sup>304</sup> It is obviously mentioned in the article five that recognized Christ, the Word of God must be the Lord for both of the Church and the state (1Pet 2:17).<sup>305</sup>

In response to Berman Theological Declaration the National Socialist Federal Protestant pastors wrote Ansbach Proposal in June, 1934, to clarify the principles and the tasks of the German Christian Church. They mainly rejected Barth's view of God's revelation through Christ and asserted that God reveals himself not only in Christ but also in nature that

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid, 335.

<sup>302</sup> J. S. Conway, 1986, 157-167. There were indeed the protests and vigorous defence from the Church. While the Nazi government tried to identify the "Nazi ideology" with the "Christian religion" and asserted "the Positive Christianity," "the Confessing Church" from Evangelical Church and Catholic Church protested Nazism and suffered persecution. The Confessing Church chose theological loyalty rather than national loyalty.

<sup>303</sup> Karl H. Hertz, ed., 1976, 162.

<sup>304</sup> J.D Douglas, 1987, 76.

<sup>305</sup> Karl H. Hertz, 1976, 188-189. The state has the divine appointment that is the task of providing for justice and peace. The Church has to acknowledge the benefit of this divine appointment on the state in gratitude and reverence before him. The state must also trust and obey the power of the Word by which God upholds all things. Thus, the Lutherans rejected the false doctrine that causes the state goes beyond its special commission and could become the totalitarian order of human life. On the other hand, they also rejected the false doctrine that causes the Church goes beyond its special commission and legitimate the characteristics of the state and becomes the an organ of the state.

is family or nation or race. And they clearly stated that the Nazi order is God-given order or God's revelation to Germans so that they have responsible before God to assist Nazi government which is concretely recorded in article five.<sup>306</sup>

It cannot be deniable that Karl Barth's theological participation in German anti-Nazism movement was clearly manifested in Berman Theological Declaration and Ansbach Proposal in the beginning of the rise of German National Socialism. In respect to Barth's theological impact on anti-Nazi movement, the research will explore his interpretation on Rom 13:1-7 and its related theological political ethics will be studied as follows.

### 5.3 Karl Barth's Argument

Theology of Karl Barth<sup>307</sup> (1886-1968) is to listen to God's Words in the Bible only. Barth's theology on his commentary to the epistle to the Romans (1919 and 1921, first edition of Barth) mentions about the power of the Word of God which is coming to human beings vertically without the help of human beings. Men have to listen to the Words of God. This became the basis for his Christians Ethical view on Church and State relationship in the critical years of World War II.<sup>308</sup> Barth clearly criticized the tyrannical government as evil in his interpretation of Rom 13:1-7 which is written in his epistle to Romans. Barth's critical view on the totalitarian government was born out of the miserable situation of World War I

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<sup>306</sup> J. D Dauglas, 1987, 189-192. It is written in the article five of Ansbach Proposal: In recognition of this fact: as faithful Christians we give thanks to God the lord for bestowing the Fuhrer (i.e. Adolf Hitler) as "a pious and faithful chief of state" upon our people in their time of need, just as we thank God for desiring to grant us "good government," a government with "discipline and honor," in the form of the National-Social state. For this reason, we recognize that we are held responsible before God to assist the Fuhrer in his work through our respective vocations and professions.

<sup>307</sup> Karl Barth was born in Basle, Switzerland and studied in German universities and became assistant pastor in Geneva and pastor in the Swiss village of Safenwil (John Bowden, 1990, 13). Although he was educated from German liberal theological schools and involved in the social justice as part of the Christian Socialist Movement in Switzerland by helping the poor workers, he was disillusioned with liberal theology when ninety-three German academics signed a document supporting the German Kaiser and his policy during the First World War. Barth's theology developed during this crisis. Confronting the challenges of sermon preparation and biblical study, he wrote **the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans** in 1919 which has a great impact that he was offered a professor of Reformed theology at the University of Gottingen, (Justo L. Gonzalez, 2006, 40-41) from where he moved to Munster, then to Bonn. Barth's Theology is neoorthodox theology and dialectical in its characteristics. He was a leading light in the Confessing Church playing a major part in the drafting of the famous Berman Declaration of 1934 (J.S. Conwell, 1968, 83). Under the guidance of Professor Karl Barth, the Reich Council of Brethren decided to distinguish the concept of Christian involvement in the politics and the limits of Christian loyalty to the state. During the months when the church leaders are challenged to Hitler's pressure a series of meetings were held and the Barmen Declaration was established.) Since he was dismissed for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to Hitler, Barth was forced to return to Basle and there he spent the rest of his life by writing a multi-volume **Church Dogmatics** (1936ff) (John Bowden, 1990, 13)

<sup>308</sup> Will Herberg, 1968, 9. His Theology of Christian Political Ethics was written in his writings: "Gospel and Law" (1935), "Church and State" (1938) and "Christian Community and the Civil Community" (1946).

and it may have been the inner force for his more critical view on the dictatorship Nazi government in the Third Reich.

Karl Barth interpreted the Romans 13 as a consequence of 12:21 “*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*” He gave the title “The Great Negative Possibility” for the text within Romans 12:21-13:7. The chapter 12 instructs to love the enemies, not to revenge and leave room for God’s wrath upon them. This is his main view on Church and State relationship. A number of particular individuals are limited in the position of the Church and State or Law and Society. If the people obey the existing ordinances, the action will become legal and if they do not, the result can be taken as revolution.<sup>309</sup> Thus, based on this view his interpretation of Romans 13 also concerns to “True Revolution.”

“*To overcome evil with good*”: *evil* focuses on the individuals in the positions of the ordinances rather than the existing ordinances. These enemies can be called as Barth says “the incarnation of triumphant unrighteousness to the man who is seeking after God and his order”. Therefore, the existing ordinances can be resumed as reinforcement of men against God. The individuals are the main controllers of the ordinances and they are the ones who want to maintain their own authority. Barth writes:

Is not the existing order a reinforcement of men against God, a safeguard of the normal course of this world against its disturbance by the great ambiguity and its defence against the pre-supposition by which it is threatened on all sides? Are not the ordinances of men simply a conspiracy of the Many\_ far too many\_ against the One who manifest Himself, and can only manifest Himself, when the mature wisdom and authority of the Many crumbles in pieces? *Rulers!* What are rulers but men? What are they but men hypocritically engaged in setting things in order, in order that they may\_cowards that they are\_ensure themselves securely against the riddle of their own existence?<sup>310</sup>

This is the nature of ordinances or governments. Then, Barth talks about the revolution. There has been existing revolution to ordinances (Barth limited that this was started from Revelation of John’s time to the fulmination of Nietzsche, from the Anabaptist to Anachists). In reality, such resistance was not to correct the defect of the government but trying to go against the right of the governments to exist. It is just trying to remove the existing ordinance and trying to replace individual’s own right of existing another government. So, it is against the right of the existing order by trying to insert their right of existence. Even the Democracy government has this phenomenon.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Karl Barth, 1933, 476-477.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, 477-478.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid, 479.

In reality, the authority is ordained by God and they have nothing to do with what they want. God alone is the source or the real power. Thus, the existing governments have power but they are under the real power, God. They have to take leading role and sacrifice for the people under God's authority. The ordinance is the sign of the transcendent real power of God. God alone is the perfect being and individuals in the positions of the existing governments have the potentiality of weakness. Thus, if people try to criticize the good and the wrong of the government, he or she may become evil and wrong himself or herself.<sup>312</sup>

Every government can be assumed as based on the tyranny for the concrete structure of the ordinances rooted in the presupposition of the individuals of the position. The imperfection of the existing government is defined as evil. When there are people who resent with those evils, revolution is born. The revolutionary seeks to get rid of the evil which he resents and tries to replace the good. Actually, he tries to remove the existing ordinance in order to replace the other possible ordinance which he thinks good or depends on his opinion of right. He calls his revolution as *overcoming evil*, however, he has already taken the position of God who alone has a right to take over evil. At the same time, while he wants to establish the *new* he forgets that his thinking is also imperfect. Not man but God alone can give the perfect newness. Evil is not the answer to evil. Destroying the existing ordinance is not able to restore the genuine right. Therefore Barth, asserted: *Overcome evil with Good*.<sup>313</sup>

Barth's Revolution is to be taken as *Impossible Possibility* instead of hatred, insubordination, rebellion and demolition. The true revolution is the impossible possibility of contentment and satisfaction, of security and usurpation. The revolutionary aims to build up the true order; nevertheless, it is merely the reaction or revolt to the existing order. In reality, what he wants to do is the judgement upon what they will do. Judgement is only worthy to God. How does the revolutionary dispose his judgement like God who saves the world in the event of Christ's crucifixion? How can they die and do the judgement? The answer is to *overcome evil with good*. Barth does not give approval to the existing ordinances but there is endless disapproval of the enemy of it. His revolution is to overcome the unrighteousness of the existing ordinances. This is Barth's main background for interpretation of the ethical command in Romans 13.<sup>314</sup>

*Let every man be in subjection to the existing ruling powers.* Rebellion or radical revolution is the conflict between God's order and existing order. In reality, rebellion is on the

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid, 479.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid, 479-481.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid, 481.

side of the existing order because rebellion is merely the judgement of its existence. Every man should recognize his own incompleteness or falsity and should not judge other's existence. There is no true revolution done by man. True revolution is from God alone. Therefore, men must be obedient to God and leave the judgement to him. Men of this world have to give submission to the existing governments because men cannot do the true revolution. The judgement of men will never be identical to God's judgement.<sup>315</sup> Judgement will surely come to the unrighteous and it will be done by God alone.

According to Barth, Paul's instruction to *be submissive to the government* is transcendental or spiritual ethics. Human beings have to be submissive to the existing governments in any condition. Even when the governments are evil the revolution has not to be taken by human hands. Punishment and judgement has to be done by God. Barth is very spiritual in interpreting Romans 13. It seems that Barth's interpretation allows or justifies the oppressive evil structures. And it also seems that the unrighteous will be miraculously destroyed by God. In reality, he wants to emphasize the evil doers or the unrighteous of the ordinance. As the evil ordinances are built up by the evil men, his ethics is to transform the evil character of the people. The task of transforming human beings to become righteous can be carried out by God alone. Individuals in any ordinances are, therefore, to be righteous or godly persons. Then, we can build up the good government which is worthy to be given submission. Therefore, Barth's interpretation of Romans 13 can be taken as a maximalist interpretation although he is very critical to the evil government.<sup>316</sup>

However, in the time of the Third Reich, Barth realized the defect of German National Socialism and he obviously was against the Nazi ideology and German Christian theology. And his view of submission to the government is becoming more critical. He boldly asserted that ethics is not the separate discipline from the Bible. God's revelation can be seen in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ in history. Human beings can know and see God's revelation through Christ by participating and having personal knowledge but it is beyond access by historical investigation. Everything is begun from God so that he is the source and finality of everything. Barth's view is purely based on God's revelation through Jesus Christ.

Barth viewed that the German Socialism based on the two ways of Western thought of the state, related to the doctrine of Natural Law and the affirmation of the state as an order of preservation. Natural Law conception derived from Greek philosophy and Roman Law and

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid, 481-484.

that had been taken over by Christian rationalism. Thus, it means man has a specific nature, a rationally intelligible nature possessing a well-defined normality of functioning, which is the natural law of its being. Natural Law is both moral and political. Indeed, Natural Law derives ultimately from God and so that man is available to him, through the exercise of his reason, and understanding of the God-ordained principles which determine the proper ordering of society and the state. Thus, the state is seen as the highest of human communities and the expression of man's social nature where man may live a life of reason, virtue, and culture. Thus, the state can be seen as human-making community.<sup>317</sup>

Another philosophy of the state is based on the teachings of Church fathers' three orders of created beings: (1) the "order of creation", the order where the created beings are living, (2) the "order of preservation," that is the institution of social life in necessary to preserve society against the disruptive force of human sinfulness and (3) the "order of redemption," that is the Church which mediates the saving word of God to man estranged and lost in sinfulness. Here, the different orders of created beings have different functions and responsibilities. The state's duty is to preserve the society from man's sinful urge to self-aggrandizement. Since the time of Augustine and the Reformers, this view has been recommended by Rom 13, where it is written that the authorities are ordained by God and this view legitimates the state if it is properly serving its preserving the society by assuring justice and order. However, this Augustinian-Reformation view of the state as an order of preservation differs and differs radically from the Natural Law philosophy. In the later, the state becomes the very expression of human nature in its essential goodness instead of preserving the community from human nature of sinfulness.<sup>318</sup>

Karl Barth rejected both of these two thoughts because Natural Law doctrine appears to ignore entirely the pervasiveness of sin and the fallenness of creation and Augustinian-Reformation doctrine seems to separate creation from redemption, and therefore to falsify the radically Christocentric character of the Christian faith. Now, Barth boldly claims about the doctrine of the righteous State and the Church responsibility. His view can be seen as a hint in his *The Epistle to The Romans* (1919 & 1921). It came more explicit and concrete in *Church and State* (1937). Barth stated that the authority of State is seen as "included in the authority of Jesus Christ." The criterion of the state is Christ. So that the state is the image of Jesus Christ whose kingdom will be a kingdom of peace without frontiers and without end. Thus, the state is an allegory, as a correspondence or an analogue to the Kingdom of God which the

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<sup>317</sup> Will Herberg, 1960, 24-25.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid, 25-29.

Church preaches and believes in. Political action thus must be guided by the Church's reflection of the content of its own faith and gospel. Hence, the Church has not only the primary calling to preach the saving Word of God but also the responsibility to pray for it (the state), to intercede on its behalf, to speak to it in encouragement and admonition from out of its witness to Jesus Christ.<sup>319</sup>

In short, here, Barth's view becomes more radical than before and that is obviously more critical to the Nazi government and their misuse of the Christian political theology, then he asserted that Christ is only the norm of the State. It means when the state does not bear the peace and justice of Christ, the Christians should not submit to the government. Moreover, the Church has a responsibility to direct the state according the criteria of Christ. The Church's witness of Christ to the state was clearly challenged by Barth.

While Adolf Hitler and his National Socialism was hoped as the great leader for the power of Germany, the people of Norway were deprived of human right and occupied by German National Socialism. Like Karl Barth, Bishop Eivind Berggrav from Norway also interpreted Romans 13 from the perspective of Lutheran doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and asserted his Christian political ethics while he himself was leading the resistance movement to Nazi (Facism) government.

#### **5.4 Eivind Berggrav's Argument**

Bishop Eivind Berggrav (1884-1959) of Norway has been a protestant religious figure to be honored.<sup>320</sup> When the Nazi Germany occupied the Norway and the Quisling Government took place the position to rule country (1940-1945), Berggrav vigorously led the resistant movement to the government. His resistance was the resistance of conscience or

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 1960, 29-38.

<sup>320</sup> "Time" magazine of Monday, December 25, 1944. Berggrav was born in Stavanger, Norway. He was graduated from University of Oslo in 1908. He worked as editor and high-school teacher. After ten years, he became a pastor in a parish of Hurdalen. After six years he became a chaplain of Botsfengslet Prison in Oslo. In 1929 he was ordained as a bishop of Haalogaland at the northern tip of Norway. In 1937 he was elected to a diocese of Oslo, the primacy of Norway. He also worked as an editor of "Kirke og Kultur" (Church and Culture) and wrote many books. In 1938 he was elected president of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the churches. Edwin Robertson, 2000. Berggrav was a leading figure of resisting the Quisling government during the German occupation in Norway (1940-1945). In his book "Man and State," his theology and ideology of the church and state relationship will be found completely. On April 8, 1942 due to his leadership he was arrested into the prison by the government with other members of the Christian Council. As Berggrav was the chief leader of the resistance he was placed in a solitary confinement cell (a small cabin) until April 12<sup>th</sup> 1945. His ministry after liberating from arrest is ecumenical: he worked as a member of WCC and as a chairman of the UBS.



spiritual resistance with spiritual weapons.<sup>321</sup> The Nazi government wanted to separate the Church from the state in Norway. The government promised that they will not interfere with the religious issues if the Churches distance itself from the political issues. The Church's duty is only to preach the Gospel, not to discuss the political matters. Even if the government is unjust the Church had to keep silent. The right and justice was one of God's center points so that the authoritarian's claim was directly against God's will. Berggrav wrote that

The German had said to the Church: "Do not attempt to discuss law in general, or the law of nations... The Church should keep to the Gospel", a line of argument which was not altogether without response from ecclesiastical circles: "So long as they do not hinder us from preaching the Word of God, the Church is not endangered." That which decided us was the experience of *lawless* society \_ something which had never even entered our imagination\_ and we were enlightened by the Word of God and by the confession of our Church, that Right and Justice belong to God's own order in the world.<sup>322</sup>

The Church of Norway faced with the aggression of law and justice. It was enlightened by the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions that the aggression had to be resisted. The situation became serious when the Nazi government forced to indoctrinate Nazi ideology to the Norwegian youths and trained in camps and schools by issuing Quisling law on February 5th, 1942. Blessing of Jesus to the children is the necessary faith for Lutherans. So, Sacrament of Baptism is the fundamental duty of the parents. The Nazi government tried to force their philosophy in place of God's Word stimulated conscience of Norwegians. Therefore, the Norwegians had to struggle in the clash of Norway's constitutional law and God's own fundamental law.<sup>323</sup>

Berggrav views the Nazi government as the tyrant government which was developed from the philosophy of Machiavelli (1469-1527)<sup>324</sup> and followed with Spinoza (1632-

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<sup>321</sup> Edwin Robertson, 2000, 10.

<sup>322</sup> Eivind Berggrav, 1946, 7-9.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

<sup>324</sup> Eivind Berggrav, 1951, 6-12. Due to Niccolo Michiavelli the state is absolutely sovereign in its own realm and it is beyond morality. Like the citizens the state ought to be moral however it can be immoral or beyond moral when the occasion demands. The state can create its own moral code and act accordingly. Therefore, by nature and interest the state is amoral or beyond morality (good and evil). As the second principle, a consequence of the nature of the state, the citizens ought to live with this state's moral bound for the interest of the state. Based on his principles Machiavelli's idea of the leader is the beginning of the dictatorship. The leader ought to arise among the masses and he should have an extraordinary ability from others. In order to size and maintain his power he ought to act as a tyrant. He should have faithful men who are ready to support him at anytime. If they are seemed to betray him, they had to be killed mercilessly. The leader ought to be both feared and loved. This dictatorship state ought to assume itself as the providential destiny for the citizens. And it ought not to neglect the religion and morality not because of the significances in themselves, but because they are powerful means for gaining political goals. The maintenance of the power is the chief end of the state. There is no Sin in this state, only weaknesses and misfortunes.

1677).<sup>325</sup> Machiavelli viewed the sovereignty of the state as the concept of necessity. For Spinoza the reason is the simpler concept of security of the state but its philosophy was more dangerous for it can become the nature, the duty and function of the state and statemanship. Based on these ideologies the Nazism used Christianity and its belief of the Word of God as their ideological mask. This is the work of anti-Christ so that the citizens have to resist from the healthy instinct.<sup>326</sup>

Berggrav led the resistance movement: giving several lectures and leading to draw a confession and a declaration “The Foundation of the Church (Kirkens Grunn).” Berggrav’s idea is based on the Lutheran’s doctrine of the two kingdoms. He started with Natural law of Thomas Aquinas God’s revelation is seen in natural law. Natural law is eternal, universal and it is God’s law and superior than man made legislations. The source or giver of natural law is God alone. Gentiles can see this natural law through conscience. For Christians this natural law (which Berggrav also takes it as Conscience) could be recognized as God’s law and a biblical, a reveal law. After reformation the understanding of natural law was more and more separated from God because men wanted to get rid of God. Men thought that Natural law is independent and it can exist even if God does not exist. And they thought it was unnecessary to have the connection between the Church and the divine law (natural law). This thought influenced some philosophers like Machiavelli and Spinoza. As a consequence, the violation of the human conscience has been taken by the Nazism government in Norway. The state wanted to control the natural law.<sup>327</sup>

Thus, Berggrav tried to insert his understanding of the just state which is seemed to be as follows:

- 1) The just state is under the sovereignty of God to carry out the just and goodness for the people.
- 2) The just state is limited in authority temporally and does not interfere with the province of souls which is only concerned to God.
- 3) The just state’s power is only for carrying out its duty to create order, justice, and peace.
- 4) The just state can differentiate good and evil and choose to act justice.

Based on this idea Berggrav does not interpret the submission to the government in Romans 13 as unconditional. The supreme power is God alone and state is under God. State must perform the acts that are consistent to God’s will because God chose the rulers as his instruments to promote his will and to represent his order. If the state itself is subject to God

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 16-17. According to Baruch de Spinoza, Freedom of thought is the right of the individual however the Security of the state is the Law of the state. Statesmanship only commits Sin when they are not dutiful for the state’s security because it can lead to the downfall of the state.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, 3-29.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid, 43-49.

and carries out the justice, it will be worthy to receive submission by the people. The state must be good and constantly be under God's rule. If the state lusts for power, it becomes the devil. For the lust of the power the state will perform without any ethical norms and go beyond God's will and limitation set for the state. This will become Satanic in character. As a consequence, the state will invade God's realms by killing human souls and it means to rob God.<sup>328</sup>

Berggrav called this satanic state as tyranny. If the state sins, it is the duty of the Church to fight for the justice. The Church must do this not because of the Church's supreme over the state but because it is called for God. The Church must not exist in the mere worldly means because it can become the Satanic tool.<sup>329</sup> The Church has to fight for justice because of conscience. For Berggrav conscience is stronger than self-preservation and strongest animal instinct. If the State violated human rights and aroused the conscience, there will be a Right to Revolt to state with risk of lives.<sup>330</sup>

This conscience is already mentioned by Paul in his epistle to Romans. In Rom 13:5 Paul instructs the Roman Christians to subject to the authorities not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. For Paul the Law is a decisive instance between the citizen and the ruler and it is seen that "The Law is of God and transcends all mankind." This is evident that the Roman tribune escaped Paul from trial for Paul is a Roman citizen (Acts 22:24-29). Law is above the State and it is supreme. Consequently, where Paul writes "power" we ought to read "Law." It can be interpreted that the authorities who are ordained by God (Rom 13:1) are the ones who are practicing the Law. Thus, for Paul who opposes the Law resists the ordinance of God. One ought to be obedient to it not because of the fear of punishment but also for conscience's sake because there is no authority except that which is of the Law. Thus, Paul concludes that Christian's obedience to the authority of the state which is meant to be "a terror to the evil, but not to the good." On the other hand, Paul's view can be inferred that the tyrant powers or authorities who misused the Law are not worthy to receive obedience.<sup>331</sup>

Thus, Berggrav's contextualization of Romans 13:1-7 emphasized the State as institution of God who have not been the lawless authorities. When the State becomes lawless and it is acting contradictory to God's will, that state should not deserve obedience and it will

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid, 300-319.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 1951, 274.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid, 1951, 277-278.

be the responsibility of the Church to be the manifestation of God's Word in action that is to resist the lawless or unjust State and be ready to suffer for justice.<sup>332</sup>

It is the duty of the Church to be disobedient to the tyrant government. The Christians must not be reluctant to suffer for justice. The Christians have two weapons: the Word and suffering. God ruled both kingdoms: the visible and spiritual. In fact, he who preaches the Word of God must preach to both kingdoms. The worldly power must also hear the word of God even if they may reject brutally. The Church's duty is to preach the Word of God, the justice of God and must be prepared for suffering. However, Berggrav followed Luther's theology that the Church has to fight for justice in the name of Christians but not in the name of the religion or the Church.<sup>333</sup>

In short, Berggrav differentiated the just and unjust government, and then based on the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms and Rom 13:1-7, he asserted that the state has to be just government for it is ordained by God who is righteous. If the government becomes evil or Satanic in character, the Christians have a right to revolt government. If the government violated human rights and aroused the conscience of humankind, there is a right to revolt the government. Berggrav's resistance of conscience is uprising and resistance in action. Thus, it can be seen that Berggrav's interpretation of Rom 13:1-7 is minimalist view and he clearly asserted that the text should not to be taken as the proof text for the authority of the tyrant government.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The arguments of both Karl Barth and Eivind Berggrav have critical obedience to the tyrant government though Barth's former view of interpretation of Rom 13:1-7 is unconditional submission to the government. These views are important resources for the present Myanmar context under tyrant government. Romans 13:1-7 has been also one of the major sections of the State Theology for the Political Crisis in South Africa. This is clearly seen in the *The Cairos Document* issued in 1986. It states that Romans 13:1-7 has to be interpreted in its particular context. Its main target is to point out Christ Lordship over the state in the perspective of Paul's eschatological point of view. Thus, the text should not be misused for

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, 300-319.

the establishment of the tyrant government. And there is an important thing that the text has to be interpreted together with Revelation 13 which is mentioning about tyrant government.<sup>334</sup> Like South Africa, how the text should be interpreted and how it will be meaningful for the present day Myanmar context becomes necessary work for Myanmar Churches. Arguments of Karl Barth and Eivind Bergravv are hoped to be related to the Christian Ethics of the Church's submission to the government for present day Myanmar.

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<sup>334</sup> *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church* (A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa), 1986, 17-20.

**CHAPTER (6)**

**COMPRISING BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE AND TWO THEOLOGIANS’  
PERSPECTIVE ON SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND  
THEIR REFLECTION TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND  
STATE FOR PRESENT MYANAMAR**

After studying the biblical perspectives on the Church’s submission and relationship to the State based on three related texts Rom 13:1-7, Rev 13 and Matthew 22:15-22, and the Christian ethical views based on Rom 13:1-7 in the time of World War II, this chapter will bring together and interact with all of these views. It will explore: What are the different opinions? Which perspectives have the same view? After that the research will continue to find out their relevant reflections to the present Myanmar context: how they reflect to the Churches that they need to use the right biblical interpretation and Christian Ethical view of the Church’s political ethics and how they give the Theological inspiration to the Church’s encountering with the totalitarian government.

**6.1 Bringing Together Of Biblical Perspective And Two Theologians’  
Perspective On Submission To The Government**

It is the general truth that all the biblical perspectives of Submission to the government do not have the same view for the totalitarian government. Rom 13:1-7 and its related texts Rev 13 and Matt 22:15-22 have each distinctive message for each particular context. In Rom 13:1-7 Paul instructs to be submissive to the government for the government is instituted by God. Paul’s intended meaning of the text developed from Paul’s encouragement within the large context of the text that is exhorting the Roman Christians to properly behave and show their lives to be examples to the others. The large context within chapters 12-13 of Romans seems to have roughly structured as ABCB’A’ that is opening and closing with the theme of transformation (12:1-2; 13:13-14), inside which is the theme of Love.<sup>335</sup>

As Paul is instructing the Roman Christians to love their neighbors, the Roman government whether they may be good or bad, they are counted as the neighbors of the

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<sup>335</sup> David G. Horrell, 2005, 253.

Christians and the Christians have to show their love to them by following their demands and living in an obedient manner. Thus, Paul's immediate message wanted to emphasize the good Christian ethics more than political theology here in Rom 13:1-7. Paul does not discuss Nero's tyrannical regime. He just gives motivations to be subject to the government. The motivations are the government is the ministers of God who promote good and punish evil doers (v 4), and the Christians must subject to them from their conscience (v 5). The remarks of subjection to the government are doing good (v 3) to the community and giving tax to the government (v 6, 7). Thus, Paul's view of subjection to the government in Rom 13:1-7 is not absolute submission. It means the text is only emphasizing Christians ethical concern especially paying taxes, thus it should not be taken as an instruction to submit absolutely to the government in every relationship.

However, in a maximalist interpretation Paul's instruction of submission to the government is absolute obedience. Maximalists interpret Rom 13:1-7 under Paul's wider perspective within Romans and in his other epistles. Due to the word ἄρχοντες in Rom 13:3, the government that Paul wants to express can also have the possibility of the representatives of evil powers. Thus, it can be interpreted that Paul is instructing to submit to the government whether good or evil. Paul's instruction here can be seen as God is instituting the evil powers so that people should not resist the evil. People have to submit to authorities though they are not good. Judgment over evil will be done by the Lord Jesus Christ alone, it is not a task of human beings. The evil powers are only temporal and they will be defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ. This view is clearly seen in the Epistle to Romans 1-8 (already discussed in chapter 2), where Jesus was proclaimed as the Davidic messiahship who will be Lord over all creations whether Jews or gentiles, good or bad, righteous powers or evil powers.

Moreover, Paul clearly states Christ's true Lordship in Philippians 3:20-21. Though Caesar can give salvation, it is only temporal and parody. Salvation of Jesus Christ our lord is only true and perfect salvation for Christ's salvation is not only for this temporal world but also for the future life after death (imperial eschatology, Rom 8:29; 1Cor 15:43-53; 2Cor 3:18; Eph 1:19-22). We can see Christ's sovereignty is unlimited and it is beyond visible things. It mentions that Christ is true Lord of all things including Caesar. Christ governs the authorities and all things. The authorities govern only human beings. Thus, if the authorities are doing wrong, God will punish them for He has authority over rulers. Human beings' duty is just to submit to the human authorities. Thus, maximalist perspective (see chapter 3, division 3.5) of Paul's instruction of submission to the government is absolute submission and it

means that the Christians should not criticize or judge the government. Christ alone will judge the government for He is the true Lord of all.

Different from the context of Romans, the persecution context of Revelation 13 is mentioning about resistance to the totalitarian government. The Roman emperor is bluntly criticized as the two beasts: the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth, who are arrogant, selfish, satanic and idolatory. Indeed, the emperor is portrayed as Satanic evil in trinity for the second beast is the representative of the first beast, and they got power from the same source that is the Dragon or Satan. This Roman emperor practiced emperor worship as a sign of state loyalty. However, for the Christians this emperor worship is idolatory that is taken as a great treason to God. The Roman government persecuted the Christians who refused to take part in emperor worship (v.8). The Christians are outcasted from the society by sanctioning from marking (v.17).

The Christians have to choose under the critical situation of choosing whether the idolatory or Christ. Paul was writing his letter to Romans in the time that Nero's persecution has not come to the Roman Christians so that he may not criticizing Nero government in his letter. However, John is writing Revelation in the time of persecution. Now, John has lost confidence in the state. Instead of the state's executing God's wrath on wrongdoers in Rom 13, it will now be a case of God's executing wrath on the state.<sup>336</sup> And John's view is clearly seen in his instruction to the Christians to resist to the state that is to refuse what the state demands and to stand firm in Christian faith. Thus, John calls the Christians to endure persecution and to be faithful to God (Rev 13:10). For God limits the beasts' authority (v5), the Christians could not be hopeless under persecution. God knows them and judgement will be for them after the limitation of the time. Thus, John's instruction to the Christians is resisting the evil state by refusing to worship emperor cult and accepting the death as a consequence with willingness. This is the victory over the satanic state by disobeying their will and desire. Here, John clearly encourages to resist the totalitarian government through disobeying what they demand.

To the Church under the critical political context like the situation of Revelation eventhough not exactly the same, the view of Jesus in Matthew 22:15-22 also has the critical submission to the state. Jesus answers the Pharisees and Sadducees to continue to give tax to Caesar, at the same time he also challenges them to give the things that are God's (v.21). Jesus differentiates Caesar's property and God's property. The visible wealthiness of Caesar

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<sup>336</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, 1997, 161.



belongs to Caesar till he is alive and it will be no longer for his when he died. However, Jesus' property includes all visible and spiritual things in His creation including Caesar and his property. Thus, we can assume that Jesus appreciates the authority of Caesar, however, he limits his power. Though he recognizes the state's administration, he sets it as the visible kingdom of God under His ultimate kingdom whose realm is physical and spiritual. It can imply that the Christians have to submit to the government when it is administrating in godly way. If they are going far from godly way, the Christians will have a duty to obey God than them. All the human beings are the images of God so that we belong to God and under His realm. Thus, all human beings have to obey God rather than human rulers. God is the finality of all creations including Caesar. Thus, we can infer that Jesus' view is critical submission to the government with critical obedience that is more radical than John's view.

The maximalist interpretation of Paul's view of Absolute submission to the government is clearly seen in the first view of Karl Barth when he interprets Rom 13:1-7. For Barth Rom 13:1-7 is the consequence of the immediate context based on Rom 12: 21 "overcome evil with good". For him every government is not absolutely good and even the democratic government has its weaknesses. The authorities who misuse the power in the ordinance are usually seen as the enemies. However, no one can give guarantee to the reformers who will be perfect in ruling. No man is flawless except God for man is the existing incarnation of unrighteousness who is trying to harm God's righteousness and ordinance. Barth also views that there is the evil power behind human beings. Revolution to the present evil government is only justifying human right to replace the existing ordinance with his or her new ordinance which is also not perfect. Thus, his view can be taken as resisting or revolution to the present unjust government is not Paul's teaching in Rom 13:1-7. He interprets that Paul instructs to be submissive to any government at any time and to overcome evil with good. It means not to be evil as they are or not to revolt the evil government. The true revolution is only from God. God will judge the evil for He alone is ultimate and true Lord. Thus, spiritual or transcendental ethics, Barth's view of submission to the government is like Paul's view in a larger perspective.

However, Karl Barth's view on absolute submission to the government is changed to very critical later, in the time of Third Reich when Nazism was suppressing and slaughtering innocent victims. Barth does not agree both of the Western understanding of the political natural philosophy and the Augustian-Reformation view of the state as an order of preservation (see chapter 5, division 5.3). For Barth these views try to separate creation from redemption and, therefore try to falsify the Christo-centric character of the Christian faith. For

Barth Christ only is the norm of both politics and the Church. Thus, the authority of the state has to be judged when they are not inclined into the authority of Christ whose kingdom will be peace. If the state becomes unrighteous and depart from the nature of Christ's kingdom, the Church whose responsibility to redeem the sinfulness of human beings, has to be witness of justification which makes very critical submission to the state.

The limitation of the state is also clearly emphasized in Berggrav's interpretation of the power of the state. The state has to be always under the kingdom of God and it should not surpass God's authority. Berggrav assumed that the state is the ordinance of God due to Paul's instruction in Rom 13:1-7. This ordinance of God must be the "power" that is equal to the "Law". When God's ordinance becomes lawless then the Church has to be stimulated by the "conscience" and it has a duty to see the state's injustice and has to do justice. The Church has to differentiate who is the just state and unjust state. Then, the Church should participate in revolution, however, not in the name of the Church but as Christians. Thus, we can assume that Berggrav's view of submission to the government is very critical and practical. He boldly claims to revolt the tyrant government.

In short, Rom 13:1-7 is a text which can be seen as written for the ethics of Christians towards the state whether they are Christians or not. The text is not discussing the type and nature of the government. It is instructing the Roman Christians to submit to the state by doing good and paying taxes. So, Paul's instruction here is not absolute submission for his instruction does not concern to every relationship of Church and State. However, for the maximalists the text can be seen as the instruction of fully obedience. Judgement to the state is the work of God alone in the Lordship of Jesus Christ but not for the human beings. The first view of Karl Barth is the same in line with this absolute submission. However, John boldly instructs to resist the idolatry government in Rev 13. John also sees the Roman state in his time as the evil power like Paul and Karl Barth, however, his view is to resist the state by disobeying their commands. Jesus' view on Submission to the State in Matt 22:15-22 is the critical submission with critical obedience. The later view of Karl Barth and Eivind Berggrav's view have the same view of Matthean tradition. That is to obey God or Divine order rather than men. By exploring the political messages of these relating texts, it can be concluded that the bible is giving the different messages for different relevant contexts. How these biblical views on Submission to the government with Christian Ethical views can be taken as reflection to present Myanmar situation will be proceeded in the next topic.

## 6.2 Reflection To Present Myanmar Context

As it is already mentioned in chapter 2, the research emphasized the present situation of the Church under totalitarian government. From a wide range of biblical perspectives and Christian Ethical views on Church and State relationship, I would like to take some reflections from the above mentioned the biblical perspectives of submission or obedience to the government for Myanmar context which will be reflected in the limitation within the Christian ethical views.

### 6.2.1 A Critical Look At Present Myanmar Government's Use Of Submission To The Authorities According To Romans 13:1-7

The present Myanmar government has been quoting Rom 13:1 "To be submissive to the government for it is ordained by God" when they are communicating the churches. In reality, they use this text as the political purposes in order to get subordination of the Christians to the present authorities. Myanmar's political problem cannot be defined in one particular form. It is diverse in itself. Religion, Nationalism and Politics are always mixed. Generally, it can be said that the majority Buddhists Burmese are the present authorities from the dictatorship regime and the minority ethnics are normally seen as the Christians who have to be ruled under the Burmese government. Few Burmese Christians are also recognized as aliens to the government and outcasted from the government body. From the background of dictatorship ordinance that is mixed with Burmese Nationalistic Socialism and Buddhism, the government's encountering with the Christians can be seen as more political purposes than religious, social and cultural purposes.

In this situation, it is hard for the Christians who have been experiencing and have seen the injustice, the outcast and persecution from the government, to accept immediately Paul's instruction "to obey the government." Thus, without surprisingly the questioning of Paul's message comes from the hearts of the Christians. Pilgrim agrees that the most troubling problem of Rom 13 occurs when the state is apparently unqualified for the character of God's ordination.<sup>337</sup>

According to maximalist interpretation of Rom 13:1-7 where the authorities can also be interpreted as evil powers or agents of angel powers (*ἄρχοντες*), Paul's instruction of obedience to the government is unconditional. This view is linked with Paul's theology of Lordship of Christ. The victory over the evil of Jesus Christ is seen in his death through

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<sup>337</sup> Walter E. Pilgrim, 1999, 27.

crucifixion and his resurrection (see chapter 3). This Lordship of Christ is the victory over the evil powers or rulers of the world. To the first century Christians who are theologized by Paul that they are living in between this temporal world (1Cor 7:31) and the kingdom of heaven (Phil 3:20ff), the Lordship of Christ was the center of the theology. Since the Christians have been saved from the principles of the evil world through the atoning of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:4), they should not walk in the course of this world (Eph 2:2). However, the Christians are still living in this temporal world and have to encounter with the evil powers from the world (Eph 6:10-17). Thus, Paul instructs not to conform to this world but to transform the world (Rom 12:2) as their primary aim is to seek the things for the kingdom of heaven (Col 3:1).<sup>338</sup>

For the Christians in this background, Paul characterized Christian moral life as the suffering like Jesus Christ on the cross. Paul constructs Christian suffering based on Jesus' sufferings ("carrying in the body the death of Jesus" 2Cor. 4:7-11; "I carry the mark of Jesus" Gal 6:17). God's saving power becomes known in weakness, divine love in suffering, and divine wisdom in foolishness (1Cor 1: 18-25). In order to be faithful to this divine revelation, Christians have to accept suffering like Christ. Thus, Christian life can be characterized by willingness to accept the cost of discipleship.<sup>339</sup> Christ's example of victory over the evil through death becomes the moral character for Christian lives. Christians may encounter the political powers that will be evil for them. Christians have to suffer this political injustice or suppression from the rulers for Christians' enemies of evil will be crushed in the death and this Christian life has to be going until the second coming of Jesus when the last enemies will be defeated. Karl Barth's the first interpretation of Rom 13:1-7 is very much the same in line with this maximalist view where he said that the human beings should not judge each other and they should forgive their enemies, here he refers to the government, with love for every human being is imperfect. He also sees the government as the agents of angel powers whom will be judged on the last day of Christ.

Thus, Christians have to submit every government in any condition. Due to this maximalist interpretation, the Myanmar government's quotation of Rom 13:1-7 is reasonable for the Christians have to encounter government's persecution with suffering. Thus, Christians must be willing to suffer is considerable. However, if the Christians are silent when *others* are suffering unduly, the Christians may become the supporters of the injustice. St. Thomas Aquinas insertion is very reasonable here, he said

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<sup>338</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, 1975, 283-284.

<sup>339</sup> Walter E. Pilgrim, 1999, 34-35.

To bear with patience the evil which is committed against one is a sign of perfection. To be patience, however, with the evil which is done to *others*, is a sign of imperfection – yea, it is a sin.<sup>340</sup>

If the Myanmar Christians are patient with the evil done to them, it is reasonable for it is also in the same vain with Paul's submission view by maximalists. However if the Myanmar Christians are patient with the evil done to *others*, they may become the same party with this evil and Aquinas called it a Sin. I agree with this view. When the Myanmar government killed the monks and nuns who were peacefully demonstrating the economic deterioration on the streets and when the government killed many innocent victims such as women and children in civil wars, the Christians are silent to the evil done to others. Are the Christians supporting the evil work of government? The Christians' submission here is becoming questionable.

Paul's intended message about Submission to the government in Rom 13:1-7 can be taken as opposition to this absolute submission to government which is evil done to others. Undoubtedly, Paul is referring to the non-Christian Roman government or Roman government by using the word "authorities" (ἐξουσία). His instruction in Rom 13:1-7 is the pastoral concern to the Christians in Rome which cannot be alienated from its social political situation.<sup>341</sup> Christians are under the watchful eyes of the Roman government so that to live a good life and to follow the Roman laws especially giving taxes, will be the wise decision for the Roman Christians. Thus, Paul is instructing the Christians to be the good examples to the neighbors, here, the Roman authorities are concerned as neighbors and thus the Roman Christians are encouraged to be good in front of the Roman state. Paul does not discuss what is good government or what is bad.

Paul's message was aimed to the audience as it is already mentioned above, who were living in the hope of the kingdom of heaven and second coming of Christ, there will be some kind of state and the Christians have to subject some kinds of political authority within the interim. To the Christians in this background Paul is instructing to consider the Roman authorities as their neighbors and to show their love by subbodinating to them by doing good.<sup>342</sup> However, in Rom 13:1-7 Paul is especially emphasizing to give taxes to the government. Thus, Paul's instruction in this passage is very critical in submission to the government except tax issue. Paul does not mean to subject to the state unconditionally. Thus,

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<sup>340</sup> This is the quotation of Eivind Berggrav. Eivind Berggrav, 1945, 283.

<sup>341</sup> Arnold T. Monera, 2005, 112.

<sup>342</sup> *The Kairos Document*, 1985, 5.

for me this minimalist view of Rom 13:1-7 can be taken as manifestation that Paul is critical in subjection to the government who is doing evil things to the *others*.

At present the Myanmar government's quoting Rom 13:1 can be seen that in maximalist view, their quotation is reasonable and acceptable, however, in minimalist view the Myanmar government is violating the intended meaning of the text.

## 6.2.2 Theological Inspiration For Civil Disobedience

Before going into detail about theological inspiration, I would like to define my understanding of the Civil Disobedience. The American Lutheran Church makes a definition of civil disobedience on their view concerning *Commission on Research and Social Action* that

Civil disobedience is the **deliberate, public and nonviolent** disobedience of a law or a regulation having the effect of law. It may be individual or group action....Civil disobedience has been a frequent technique for challenging government action and policy... protesters cooperate with the authorities, work within the legal system, and expect to take any legal penalty for their actions as a valid step in the process of correcting what they regard as unjust or defective laws.<sup>343</sup>

Due to this definition, civil disobedience is private or public movement that is deliberate and nonviolence to disobey the government's law. It does not aim to get physical injury of the people and it also ready to get punishment from the government such as imprisonment. But it is really against the injustice of government's law and hope for transformation. I would like to accept this definition of Civil Disobedience, however, I want to add active nonviolence in Civil disobedience. Thus, for me Civil Disobedience means that the Church should denounce the government's unjust law, at the same time, the Church should have a tactic for struggle for all forms of injustice.

The Churches in Myanmar under the tyrannical government or a new sham Democracy government, will have been still needed to struggle under the continuous miserable situation like before. How will the Churches survive under this unjust situation? How will the Churches witness to the *unjust* society? What will be the Church's view and stand concerning this political situation? Does the Church still continue to submit absolutely to the tyrannical government? Now is the time to think the Churches' concern to the state. How the Biblical and Christian ethical views for civil disobedience and resistance to the state can be seen as the necessary choice for the Churches in Myanmar.

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<sup>343</sup> *Public Authority, Dissent, And Civil Disobedience*, 1969, 7.

Childress asserts two distinctive reasons for Civil Disobedience: Religious-Moral base and Moral-Political base. Religious-Moral base of disobedience counts on personal religious conviction and the witness of his conviction or his personal values. Moral-Political base involves a conception of public justice and the civic good based on moral principles and affirmations.<sup>344</sup> Depending on his view, the civil disobedience of Churches in Myanmar can be divided into two parts.

Due to Civil Disobedience based on Religious Moral base, the Christians have a right to disobey the government because of preservation of religious conviction. In present Myanmar the Christians are seen as aliens, outcasted from the government body and persecuted and suppressed by burning the Churches and Christian villages. It is the same as the situation in the time of the book of Revelation where the state is obviously mentioned as the enemies of God who is persecuting the Christians. The state ordered to worship them and if they do not obey them, the Christians are killed or outcasted from the society and marketing. The arrogance and evil character of the government is strongly resisted in the book of Revelation.

The Myanmar situation is very much similar to that critical situation in John's time. For instance, some cronies only get business and trading opportunities from the government. So that some Christian cronies become partners with the government and utilized in their political strategy and become rich, while the majority common people are suffering various kinds of poverty and even persecution. John's main message in Revelation is to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ until death (Rev 13:10). The Christians have to immitate the powerless suffering of Jesus Christ.<sup>345</sup> This message of John is challenging the present Christians in Myanmar to disobey the evil character government or the money idolatory. John is challenging to resist the opportunities from the tyrant government and to live as the righteous Christian lives though it may be powerless and poor like the suffering of crucified Jesus Christ.

Due to Political-Moral base, the Churches in Myanmar should see and judge the government's work on whether they are performing public good and public justice. If the government is violating human rights and suppressing the citizens instead of performing their duties of doing common good and justice, the citizens have a right to disobey the government. When we are looking up the Myanmar's political situation, it can be said that Myanmar has a new civil democratic government at present. It is a better condition than the situation before

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<sup>344</sup> James F. Childress, 1971, 22-27.

<sup>345</sup> Richard B. Hays, 1996, 176.

when there was under the military dictatorship regime. However, unfortunately, this new government is just a sham democracy government which is just a new form of dictatorship regime. Though some people believe that they can amend the government constitutions slowly by slowly or year by year, the dictatorship structure of this new government is still extremely strong and there is a possibility of happening the civil wars with all the ethnic minorities when the battles with Karens and Shans are initiating. There is still very dim hope for the true peaceful society for Myanmar. Instead of constructing National Reconciliation and building the Federal State regime, the new sham Democracy government whose strategy is a way of dictatorship Burmese Nationalistic regime will have been still going on and its miserable outfits are still overwhelming the whole country.

To a certain extent, the Myanmar government's use of Rom 13:1-7 to be absolute submission to the government is one of the factors that consciously and unconsciously encourages the Myanmar Churches to be silent before the unjust government. In reality, the Church can be seen as silent spiritual institution who has kept herself apart from the political situation although there is some participation of Church ministers in political area with their individual plan. The Christian congregations are starting to criticize the Church's existence and witness to this political situation. The criticism can be seen as pointing to how the situation under the government is full of physical and spiritual poverty, moral corruption and injustice because the citizens as the congregations of the Church are looking for the Church's voice to the unjust situation means they are mentioning their view that their final hope is the Church whose job is responsible for the physical and spiritual salvation of the human beings.

According to the historical evidences, Romans 13:1-7 has been taken as a proof text that the Church has to be silent to the tyrannical government or even to be supporting the totalitarian government especially during the Third Reich in Germany. The German Lutherans interpreted Rom 13:1-7 that all the existing authorities are ordained by God so that the Christians have to submit the authorities whether they are good or bad and the text also supports the totalitarian government. Austad asserts that the Lutheran wing took Romans 13 as a Christian obligation to submit to and obey every actual governing authority. This means Christians are not allowed to oppose and revolt if the state happens to be tyrannic.<sup>346</sup>

For the German positive Christians the text becomes the basic ground for Man becomes lord of Natural Law and Law of the Gospel. Thus, they were using Natural Law without Justice. As a consequence, they misused the Lutheran doctrine of the Two Kingdoms:

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<sup>346</sup> Torleiv Austad, 1990, 18.



the Kingdom of God (Gospel) and the Kingdom of the World (Natural Law). Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession asserted that the civil government and the powers of the Church must not be mixed. Each has distinguish duty and both must be honored and acknowledged as gifts and blessings from God. The power of the Church is to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. The powers of the civil government is secular authorities and they have the sword to punish those who do wrong. However, the sword does not protect the soul but it only protects body and goods from the power of others.<sup>347</sup> The German Lutherans misused this Lutheran doctrine as the reason for the absolute power of the civil government. They even legitimized to presume human souls in the name of Natural Law that is God allowed them to do so.

In deed, this Augsburg confession limits the state's power over the Church that is not to interfere and not to limit the Church's works. Due to the theological view from Matthew 22:15-22, God is the Lord of both spiritual and worldly kingdoms. Thus, human authorities are the institution of God or the servants of God who perform God's will (Rom 13:1-7). The civil authorities have authority over the visible things, however, they are still under the realm of God. They should not invade the realm of God. God is the sole authority. Berggrav clearly asserted that for Luther and for us there is only one kingdom and that is God's kingdom. Since there is only one God's kingdom, there is only one Lord and only one kind of obedience. He said "we are under God alone, whoever it may be that otherwise represents him."<sup>348</sup>

Austad also claims that

The state is an instrument which God uses in order to uphold the world until its end. It has neither divine nature nor a specific appearance. It does not have the eschatological quality of the kingdom of God and the gospel.<sup>349</sup>

The state and the Church are God's institutions with each respective functions and both are the instruments of God since Jesus himself recognized the state's authority and God's sovereignty in Matt 22:15-22. Berggrav, thus clearly asserts that the State and the Church are two orders who are united in the common tasks that are to promote Love and to oppose Satan and his rule. The two ordinations are different in domains but not their intention. They are living for the same purpose that is to do and perform the will of God (that is contrast to Satanic rule): justice, social order and social peace.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed., 2000, 93-94.

<sup>348</sup> Eivind Berggrav, 1951, 300-301.

<sup>349</sup> Torleiv Austad, 1990, 20.

<sup>350</sup> Eivind Berggrav, 1951, 304.

Barth's view of doctrine of the state more clarifies Berggrav's view based on Luther that both the State and the Church are serving the will of God under God's kingdom. For Barth Christ must be the criteria of the state that is to be the peaceful kingdom of Christ. The state thus should be the kingdom of God where justice prevails in the society in the stature of Divine revelation in Christ. If the state is against this Divine nature, it will become no longer the instrument of God who is deserved to be obeyed. Berggrav's interpretation of Rom 13:1-7 fitted here that if the state is ordained by God, it must have the Divine nature and Divine Law. Thus, the state and the Church are two different realms but they are common in God's work. If the state's work is not under God's work, the Church has a right to revolt the state from the conscience. Bonhoeffer rightly claimed while Nazi government exercised power against God's will:

Obedience is requiring, but his duty of obedience is binding on him until government directly compels him to offense against the divine commandment. But government violates or exceeds its commission at any point, for example by making itself master over the belief of the congregation, then at this point, indeed, obedience is to be refused, for conscience's sake and for the Lord's sake.<sup>351</sup>

However, due to Rom 13:1-7, the government has a certain extent to exercise its power to punish the wrong doers and to promote good. Bonhoeffer accepts a certain degree of this notion eventhough he had been hanged by the Nazi government for his faith and his concern to his people. He said

The Sword which God has given to the government is to be used by it in order to protect man against the chaos, which is caused by sin. Government is to punish the criminal and the safeguard life.<sup>352</sup>

The Sword (μάχαιρα) in Rom 13:4 represents the Roman governmental coercion in judicial punishment. However, its authority is limited. The Sword does not mean the allowance of capital punishment. The government are the representatives and servants of God, however they are not God. So that they do not have a right to take off human souls though they are instituted to judge the wrong doers. If the government are not allowed to kill the wrong doers, killing of the innocent people will be more strictly limited by Biblical teaching. If the Myanmar government are practicing capital punishment and killing the innocent victims, their power exercise is unbiblical and thus they are violating the role of God. For this reason they are not due to receive obedience. If the government still continue crime against human rights and continue to kill the political opponents and innocent victims such as women

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<sup>351</sup> Destrinch Bonhoeffer, 1955, 355.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid, 343.

and children in the civil wars,<sup>353</sup> the Church should not keep silent with full obedience to the government. The government is robbing God's power so that the Church has to disobey the government.

Thus, the Church's has a possibility to disobey the tyrannical government's ungodly works and to transform the society in order to be the place where God's creation is orderly preserved. Here, Richard Niebuhr's view of "Christ The Transformer of the Culture" should be applicable. He believed that Christ's salvation is never kept apart from culture for the Word of God became flesh in Christ. He asserted that the Church has to transform the society on account of conversion theology through Christ on the favor of three reasons: God as creator, redeemer and sanctifier. First, the conversionists in Christ are the creatures of God thus, they have to live under the rule of Christ and to maintain God's creation orderly. Second, conversion is agreeing God's redeeming power from the fall of human beings that leads to corruption. Third, conversionists have to be sanctified for the eschatological present and future. He said that the eternal life is a quality of existence in the here and now.<sup>354</sup> Richard Niebuhr, thus, contributed the Church's transforming role in the world of politics based on these theological convictions.

Thus, theological view based on Rom 13:1-7 is challenging the Myanmar government to do godly works. It is also inspiring the Christians to reconsider the Church's motive to the evil and unjust deeds of tyrannical government. The text should not be taken as the legitimation of the tyrannical government like the Nazi German regime in the time of World War II. The state should not be never lord of the Natural Law and the Law of the Gospel. God alone is the supreme lord of all. The Church should stand up for the justice of God more than human imperfect rulers(Acts 5:29). Thus, if the Myanmar government exercises the power against the Divine Law, it is the responsibility of the Christians to disobey the government.

In short, the Myanmar Churches have to show disobedience to the present totalitarian government for the Church itself has a right to preserve and defend its religious conviction. Besides, it is also the responsibility of the Church to know and realize the unjust society and it is God's mandate to disobey this tyrant government due to theological inspirations based on Rom 13:1-7 and its related texts.

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<sup>353</sup> Benedict Roger, 2007, 5-7.

<sup>354</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, 1951, 190-196.

### 6.2.3 A Critical Look At A Baptist Doctrine Of Separation of Church And State's Impact On Civil Disobedience

Baptist doctrine of Church and State is an important fact for Myanmar Churches's relation to the state. Lap Yan Kung clearly wrote that one of the characteristics of the Baptist traditions is the separation between politics and religion, and it may become an excuse for the Church in Myanmar to refrain from politics.<sup>355</sup> Of course, this Baptist doctrine becomes an excuse for the Churches keep apart from struggling for political justice. This doctrine is the doctrine that has confront with many questions from not only Myanmar Churches but also the Baptist Churches around the world. In reality, the doctrine of Church and State started due to religious freedom from the state dominance. Moehlman clearly states that

The survey of the principal Baptist confession of faith from 1611 to the present time indicates that Baptists throughout their history have merely pleaded with the state to permit them to follow their consciences in matters of faith and worship. They desired "soul liberty." Far from being radical in their interpretation of the state, Baptists have sought to conform to its demands even to the extent of blessing and actively participating in war.... The chief source of their simple political view has been the Bible.... The political corollary of soul freedom, namely, separation of church and state, was largely due to extra-Baptist forces of the modern age.<sup>356</sup>

The history and the original meaning of Baptist's separation from state is just because of the sake for religious liberty. Baptists never denied the complete separation from the state. He clearly points out that the Baptists simply follows the Biblical teachings concerning with this doctrine. Thus, the silence of the Baptist Churches in the time is necessary to participate in the struggle of political justice cannot be taken as the traditional or biblical right way of decision. Because the doctrine itself stands on the basis of many proof texts from the Bible. Walter points out the different biblical understanding of church and state relationship for different situation in his book "The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedom."

Romans 13:1-7 accents the legitimacy of the state since the people are not in the situation of danger. But during the persecution the Christian should resist the state as martyrdom (Revelation 13) but in Matthew 22:15-22 Jesus recognizes both legitimacy and limitation of the state.<sup>357</sup>

Due to Rom 13:1-7 the Christians have to be submissive to the State and give the taxes. The text is mentioning about the how the Christians should be subordinate to the State by paying taxes. Due to maximalist view, the text is instructing to give absolute submission to the government. Paul instructs the Roman Christians to obey the government since the Roman

<sup>355</sup> Lap Yan Kung, 2009, 93.

<sup>356</sup> Conrad Henry Moehlman, 1937, 32.

<sup>357</sup> Walter B. Shurden, 1993, 45.

government was not yet cruel to the Christians at that time. However, when the State becomes demonic, the Church's submission to the state is no longer valid. The Church has to involve in resisting movement to the state (Rev 13). Moreover, Matt 22:15-22 clearly recognizes different responsibilities of the State and the Church, however, the final authority is the Church and all the subordinations deserve to God alone. Acts 5:29 obviously supports the Christians' final obedience to God that "we must obey God rather than human authorities."

Thus, in the case of Myanmar situation it is unreasonable to use the doctrine of separation of Church and State as an excuse to be quiet before unjust state. In reality, the present Myanmar churches need to know what the real meaning of the doctrine of Separation of Church and state. The Churches need to realize there are many proof texts for different situations. Due to this texts' witnesses, the doctrine of Separation of Church and State should be better expressed as "a free Church in a free state" or Church and State *side by side*.<sup>358</sup>

#### **6.2.4 Theological Inspiration For Civil Obedience**

It is very much reasonable that the Church has to disobey and resist the injustice government when they are doing wrong in contrast to God's will and purposes. It is biblically and Christian ethically true opinion. However, due to minimalist interpretation of Rom 13:1-7, the Christians have a duty to pay taxes to the government whether they are good or bad. Paul's teaching does not encourage to stop paying taxes since the government is doing wrong. Christians' submission to the government has to be still going on in the practice of giving tax. In reality, the Myanmar government is misusing the tax such as buying the weapons to kill their citizens, using in their private business and investing in the nuclear weapon production. However, this is another ethical problem that the Churches have to transform in their political disobedience. At the same time, we can see the government's proper use of the taxes though it is still not much enough such as using in education, health, building dams and roads, transportation, electricity and media. Thus, regardless of the government's totalitarian management of the country, the Christians as the citizens still have to obey the government by giving the taxes dutifully. The Myanmar Christians need to recognize this civil obedience to the government inspired by the interpretation of the text Rom 13:1-7.

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<sup>358</sup> Walter B. Shurden, 1993, 51.

## **CHAPTER (7)**

### **CONCLUSION**

The misuse of the exegetical perspective of Submission to the Government in Rom 13:1-7 and the Baptist doctrine of the Separation of Church and State, consciously and unconsciously drives the Churches in Myanmar to be silent to the injustice of the totalitarian government. Thus, the right understanding of Biblical teaching and Christian ethical perspectives for this situation is becoming undoubtedly necessary. The minimalist exegetical perspective on Roman 13:1-7 is concerning the Roman Christians' ethical response to the Nero Government (54-68 CE). Due to the historical research Nero is not a good emperor and his government cannot be seen as a just government. Here, Paul does not discuss about the nature of the Roman government. Instead, he uses inclusive language "authorities" that is referring to not only Nero government but also all kinds of government. These governments are instituted by God thus, Christians have to submit to them. He sees the Roman government as the neighbors of Christians that they need to show love in order to live in a good Christian lives. The text itself is not mentioning the political theology but the Christian moral lives. The Myanmar Government and Myanmar Churches misinterpret Rom 13:1-7 as a political theology. The intended meaning of the exegesis of Rom 13:1-7 is needed to apply in present Myanmar Churches. According to maximalist interpretation of the text, Rom 13:1-7 is a proof text to be absolute submissive to the government. However, minimalist interpretation of text is very critical to the evil tyrannical government. It instructs only to submit the government by paying taxes. The Myanmar government use of the text in maximalist view is right, however, they are violating the minimalist interpretation of the text.

The Churches in Myanmar themselves suffered the injustice and persecution from the government. John, the author of Revelation clearly criticizes that kind of government as evil or Satanic power and thus Christians must obviously resist them. Revelation 13 is effectively challenging the Christians to be patient and faithful to God whenever they suffer persecution and various kinds of oppression. God is urging the Myanmar Christians to be faithful in Christian belief while experiencing the miserable situation. On the other hand, the Christians have to be the wounded healers that is to transform the unjust political situation while they themselves are suffering. The Christian Churches should learn how the German and Norwegian Churches under the Nazism government in the time of World War II: how they interpreted Rom 13:1-7 and how they applied to their critical context. Both Karl Barth and

Eivind Berggrav assumed that since the State is ordained by God, it must have the Divine Law which is revealed in Jesus Christ or the Gospel. If the state does not have Divine Law that is justice, love and peace, the Churches have to be critical in their obedience. Experiences and contextualization of Rom 13:1-7 in the time of the Third Reich are clearly giving theological inspiration to disobedience to the Myanmar's tyrannical government.

Besides, the Myanmar Churches who are mostly the Baptists need to reconsider their Baptist doctrine of Separation of Church and State. Basically, this Baptist doctrine simply takes proof texts from the Bible. The intended meaning of the texts Rom 13:1-7, Rev 13 and Matt 22:15-22 are clearly mentioning the importance of the Church's witness to the unjust totalitarian government. Every scripture is not radical by giving one view of disobedience to the unjust government. Myanmar Churches still need to obey the tyrannical government by paying taxes due to the minimalist view of Rom 13:1-7. It is the duty of Myanmar Churches under the tyrannical government to adapt and apply the biblical and Christian Ethical teachings of disobedience and obedience based on Rom 13:1-7.

By studying biblical perspective and Christian ethical view of submission to the government based on Rom 13:1-7, I come to realize some outputs for the Myanmar Churches. The Myanmar Churches have to be faithful to God even when the political situation is very critical and challenging. Jesus Christ only is our true Lord and our final victory. On the other hand, the Churches should not keep silent for the unjust situation when many innocent victims (*others*) are suffering from injustice. It is the mandate of God to the Myanmar Churches to participate in Freedom fighting through civil disobedience.

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