

Respect for Authority (2:13–3:7)

To Rulers (vv.13-17)

VERSE 13 Submit yourselves (ὑποτάγητε [*aor.pass.imper.2.p.*, ὑποτάσσω, *hupotasso*, *subject, subordinate*]) **for the Lord's sake** (διὰ τὸν κύριον [*prep.w/def.art.w/acc.m.s.*, *kurios*, *lord*; “for the Lord's sake”]) **to every human institution** (πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει [*adj.dat.f.s.*, *pas*, + *adj.dat.f.s.*, ἀνθρώπινος, *anthropinos*, *human*, + *dat.f.s.*, *ktisis*, *creation*; “institution”]), **whether to a king as the one in authority** (εἴτε [*conj./subor.*, *whether*] βασιλεῖ [*dat.m.s.*, *basileus*, *king*] ὡς ὑπερέχοντι [*conj./compar.* + *pres.act.pt.dat.m.s.*, ὑπερέχω, *hupecho*, *be better than*; *govern, have authority over*]),

VERSE 14 or to governors (εἴτε ἡγεμόσιν [*conj.*, *whether*, + *dat.m.p.*, ἡγεμών, *hegemon*, *governor, ruler*; 20X: *Mt.*, *Mk.*, *Lk.*, *Acts.*, and here in the epistles]) **as sent by him** (ὡς [*conj./compar.*] πεμπομένοις [*pres.pass.pt.dat.m.p.*, πέμπω, *pempo*, *send*] δι’ αὐτοῦ [*prep.* + *pro.gen.m.s.*, *autos*, *him* {*king*}]) **for the punishment of evildoers** (εἰς ἐκδίκησιν [*prep.w/acc.f.s.*, ἐκδίκησις, *ekdikesis*, *punishment*] κακοποιῶν [*adj.gen.m.p.*, κακοποιός, *kakopoios*, *evildoer*]) **and the praise of those who do right** (δὲ [*conj.*] ἔπαινον [*acc.m.s.*, *epainos*, *praise*] ἀγαθοποιῶν [*adj.gen.m.p.*, ἀγαθοποιός, *agathopoios*, *one who does what is right*; 1X]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 13,14

1. The imperative “Submit yourselves” (ὑποτάγητε, *aor.pass.imper.2.p.*, *hupotasso*) directs our attention to the establishment chain of command (ECC).
2. It is used of the subjection:
 - a. of demons to the power of God (Lk.10:17; 1Pet.3:22).
 - b. of children to parents (Lk.2:51).
 - c. of wives to husbands (Eph.5:24; Col.3:18; Ti.2:5; 1Pet.3:1,5).
 - d. of employees to bosses (Ti.2:9; 1Pet.2:18).
 - e. of believers to the RCC (1Cor.14:34; 16:16; Eph.5:21; 1Pet.2:18; 5:5).
 - f. of believers to God (Jam.4:7).
 - g. of all things to Christ (Rom.8:20; 1Cor.15:27,28; Eph.1:22; 5:24; Phil.3:21; Heb.2:5,8).
 - h. of Christ to the Father (1Cor.15:28).
 - i. of believers to the government (Rom.13:1,5; 1Pet.2:13).
 - j. of the fact that the STA is not subject to +R (Rom.8:7).
3. The other principle verb used in the N.T. with respect to authority is ὑπακούω (*hupakouo*, 21X).
4. It is used of:
 - a. God's power over nature (Mt.8:27).
 - b. God's power over demons (Mk.1:27).

- c. the salvation adjustment (Acts.6:7; Heb.5:9; cp. Rom.10:16; 2Thess.1:8).
 - d. following the ISTA (Rom.6:12).
 - e. application of BD (Rom.6:16,17; Heb.11:8).
 - f. children to parents (Eph.6:1; Col.3:20).
 - g. employees to bosses (Eph.6:5; Col.3:22).
 - h. believers to their under-shepherd (Phil.2:12; 2Thess.3:14).
 - i. wives to husbands (1Pet.3:6).
 - j. events to exhale faith (Lk.17:6).
5. The cognate noun (ὑπακοή, *hupakoe*) occurs 15X:
 - a. of positive volition to BD (Rom.1:5; 15:18; 16:19; 1Pet.1:2,14,22; Philm.21).
 - b. of Christ to His kenosis (Rom.5:19; Heb.5:8).
 - c. of believers to the ISTA or HS (Rom.6:16).
 - d. of saving faith (Rom.16:26).
 - e. of spiritual leadership (2Cor.7:15).
 - f. of bringing the strongholds of human viewpoint to the captivity of divine viewpoint (2Cor.10:5).
 6. The object of the imperative “Submit” is “every human institution”.
 7. The adjective “human” (ἄνθρωπίνῃ) occurs with the noun κτίσις, which in every other N.T. use refers to a creature or creation of God.
 8. Peter’s phrase is in reference to human authorities within the ECC.
 9. The reference includes the laws that individuals appointed to various offices are commissioned to uphold.
 10. Any officer of the government is in view in this expression.
 11. These individuals are worthy of respect because the authority of DI #4 (nationalism) is ordained of God (Rom.13).
 12. The phrase “for the Lord’s sake” (διὰ τὸν κύριον) references the real basis of Peter’s appeal.
 13. When believers honor those responsible for law and order within a civilization, they are honoring the One who authored nationalism.
 14. Without the ECC we could not live quiet and peaceful lives.
 15. The final phrase of v.13 directs our attention to the chief officer within the ECC.
 16. For the readers, this refers to the emperor, or Caesar.
 17. The noun “king” is used in the Bible for the man at the top of the ECC.
 18. The Romans did not refer to their leaders as kings.
 19. When Peter mentions the “the king (emperor)” as sovereign (“the one in authority), there is no doubt who he means.
 20. The emperor at the time of Peter’s letter (63AD) was none other than Nero.
 21. In 64AD the Great Fire in Rome was blamed on the Christian community.
 22. During this decade, Peter and Paul were martyred.
 23. The Roman emperors were absolute dictators who were corrupted by their lack of accountability and immense power.
 24. Yet, believers are told to “Submit” to these men “for the Lord’s sake”.
 25. The ECC derives its authority from God (Rom.13:1).
 26. To resist officers within the ECC is to go up against God (Rom.13:2).
 27. In v.14 Peter continues to be specific as he brings his appeal closer to where his readers actually live.

28. It is often easier to honor the emperor from a distance than to respect the authority of his local representatives.
29. The term “governors” was applied to provincial magistrates within the empire, variously called legates, procurators, or consuls (e.g., Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, who sought counsel from the emperor Trajan on the question of how he should deal with Christians accused of subversion: *Epis.* 10.96).
30. Christians are told to submit to the emperor because he is sovereign and to the magistrates because they are commissioned by him within the ECC.
31. For the responsibility of civil government to punish “evildoers”, compare Paul’s statement in Rom.13:4 “...an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil”.
32. Civil government exists for the express purpose of punishing crime.
33. The use of “evildoers” (κακοποιῶν) provides the opportunity to introduce its opposite, “those who do right” (ἀγαθοποιῶν).
34. In agreement with Paul (Rom.13:3 “Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same”), Peter mentions praise as well as punishment.
35. It was important to Peter (and Paul) that Christians who were conspicuous in the empire gain a reputation as law-abiding before the Roman authority.
36. The “praise” is the result of the good reputation Christians earn before the governing authorities in the face of reckless charges of sedition.

Overcoming Slander (v.15)

VERSE 15 **For such is the will of God** (ὅτι [conj.] οὕτως [adv., such] ἐστὶν [pres.act.ind.3.s., eimi] τὸ θέλημα [def.art.w/n.nt.s., thelema, will] τοῦ θεοῦ [def.art.w/gen.m.s.]) **that by doing right** (ἀγαθοποιούντας [pres.act.pt.acc.p., ἀγαθοποιέω, agathopoieo, do good, do what is right]) **you may silence the ignorance of foolish men** (φίμωδν [pres.act.infin., φιμόω, phimoo, silence] τὴν ἀγνωσίαν [def.art.w/acc.f.s., agnosia, ignorance; 2X: 1Cor.15:34] τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων [def.art.w/adj.gen.m.p., ἄφρων, aphron, foolish, ignorant, + gen.m.p., anthropos, man]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 15

1. Peter gives a reason for, and adds to, what he has just said.
2. “For such is the will of God” refers back to the injunction to “submit” to the governing authorities.
3. God’s will for Christians is the same as for all men with respect to DI #4.
4. All men are to obey the laws of the land and respect those appointed to administer them.
5. The “will of God” is the standard of conduct required of believers before the authorities.
6. Peter’s teaching is that “by doing right” Christians will expose the lie that they are subversive to Roman rule and good order.
7. Peter still has the accusations of 2:12 in view.
8. What must be “silenced” is the reckless talk of that verse.
9. Peter’s confidence is that the good works of Christians will bring some to saving faith.

10. Peter's best hope, short of that, is to shut the mouths of those who make trouble for the Christians.
11. The means are the same: "doing right" corresponds to "your good deeds" in 2:12.
12. The only way to "silence the ignorance of foolish men" is with the help of the emperor's appointed representatives.
13. At some point, they will affirm the good character of the Christian community.
14. The "ignorance" of the accusers is their inability to appreciate the beliefs and practices of the Christians over against their pagan frame of reference.
15. "Ignorance" here corresponds to the ignorance of the Christians before their conversion (1:14).
16. In itself, the term is descriptive, not derogatory.
17. It becomes derogatory only in association with "foolish".
18. There is nothing wrong with ignorance of a particular tradition or subject, but on subjects on which one is ignorant one ought not to speak, and "foolish" makes it clear this was an ignorance in which men were quick to speak.
19. Reckless speech was what made it for Peter "the ignorance of foolish men".
20. Although ἀγνοσία is not derogatory, ἄφρων is.
21. This is about as close as Peter comes in trading insults with his readers' enemies (something he expressly forbids in 3:9).
22. Peter is counting on Roman justice to resolve any problems raised by reckless charges leveled against the Christian community.
23. Believers should take heart in the knowledge that what is "good behavior" in God's sight also benefits society; even more to the point, it will be recognized as such by the emperor and his appointed magistrates.
24. Two factors should be taken into account before this view is dismissed as naively optimistic.
25. First, Peter is aware that his readers' difficulties are with unruly elements in the general population, not with the governing authorities.
26. These authorities are his readers' first recourse, and Peter's strategy is to view them in a positive light.
27. Second, he wants to foster in his readers a pattern of behavior that gives the lie to all possible charges of subversion.
28. In their service to God, they must be careful not to offend needlessly the civil authority.
29. To start with the assumption that their responsibilities to God and to the empire must inevitably come into conflict is the surest guarantee that this will be the case.
30. Should it happen that these obligations conflict, the last recourse is before the head of the ECC – God.