

## CHRISTIAN SUBMITTING TO ROMAN AUTHORITY ACCORDING TO ROMANS 13:1-7

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**Abstract.** This study analyses a text from Romans 13,1-7 where the Apostle Paul presents six reasons for the Christian submission and obedience to the civil Roman authority at that time. Taking into account that the Roman Persecutions against to Christians have already made a lot of victims among them, Paul's exhortations to Roman Christians urging them to be obedient to secular authority, seemed to be extremely courageous. Paul argues his advices by affirming that governing authority that exists is established by God and it is, therefore, his "ministry" in the world rewarding the good deeds and punishing the wrong ones. According to this perspective the Christians motive for submission to the civil authority is not "the fear", but rather "the conscience" and "the love". Rom 13,1-7 constitutes, therefore, the key text of the entire New Testament on the subject of Christian's obedience and submission towards the State's civil authority.

**Keywords:** Roman authority, conscience, fear, submission, obedience, secular power, Pauline

### 1. Preliminaries

The text Rom 13,1-7 was and continues to be one of the biblical subjects that have provoked a lot of divergent disputes between biblical scholars reaching many contradictory results on the topic of its authenticity, respectively, of its Pauline authorship<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, one reading it quickly concludes an apparent discontinuity, not

<sup>1</sup> See more with regard to this topic, James KALLAS, "Romans XIII,1-7: An Interpolation", *New Testament Studies* 11 (1964/1965) 365-374; Walter SCHMITHALS, *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gerd Mohn, 1975, 191-197; Ernst BARNIKOL, "Römer 13. Der nichtpaulinische Ursprung der absoluten Obrigkeitsbejahung in Rom 13,1-7", in *Studien zum NT und zur Patristik* (FS E. Klostermann), TU 77, Akademie, Berlin, 1961, 65-133; M. BORG, "A New Context for Romans XIII", *New Testament Studies*, 19, (1973) 205-218; P. STUHLMACHER, "Zur historischen Situation und Intention von Röm 13,1-7", *ZThK* 73, (1976) 131-166; K.H. SCHELKLE, "Staat und Kirche in der patristischen Auslegung von Röm 13,1-7", *ZNW* 44 (1952/53) 223-236; V. ZSIFKOVITS, *Der Staatsgedanke nach Paulus in Röm 13,1-7. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Umwelt und der patristischen Auslegung*, WBTh 8, Herder, Viena, 1964; Ulrich WILKENS, *Der Brief an die Römer (Röm 12-16)*, EKK VI/3, Benziger/Neukirchener Verlag, 2003, 29-38.