

Romans 13:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Analysis

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God—Hōste ho antitassomenos tē exousia tē tou theou diatagē anthistēken (ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν). The verb antitassō (resist/oppose) is military—to set oneself in battle array against. Resisting government authority is resisting God's diatagē (ordinance/arrangement), His ordained ordering of society. This doesn't mean blind obedience to evil commands (Daniel 3, Acts 4:19-20) but recognizes government as God's instrument.

And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation—Krima lēmpsontai (κρίμα λήμψονται, 'will receive judgment'). Krima is better translated 'judgment' than 'damnation'—the context is temporal consequences (prison, punishment) not eternal condemnation. The future tense lēmpsontai warns of inevitable consequences for lawless rebellion. Paul grounds civil order in divine authority, making anarchy a theological issue, not merely political.

Historical Context

In the 60s AD, Jewish revolt against Rome was brewing (erupting in AD 66-70, ending in Jerusalem's destruction). Paul writes against revolutionary fervor, establishing that Christianity doesn't promote violent overthrow of government. This passage was later debated during the Reformation—when is resistance to tyrants obedience to God? Reformers like Calvin and Knox developed theories of

'lesser magistrates' who could resist tyrannical kings, but not private individuals acting vigilante.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between civil disobedience (refusing unjust laws) and rebellion (*antitassomenos*, armed revolt against authority)?
2. How does understanding '*krima*' (judgment) as temporal punishment rather than eternal damnation affect your reading of this verse?
3. When government authority conflicts with God's law, how do you determine the faithful response—submission, civil disobedience, or active resistance?

Interlinear Text

ὥστε	ὁ	ἀντιτασσόμενος	τῇ	ἐξουσίᾳ	τῇ	τοῦ
Whosoever therefore	G3588	resisteth	G3588	the power	G3588	G3588
G5620		G498		G1849		
θεοῦ	διαταγῇ	ἀνθεστηκότες	οἱ	δὲ	ἀνθεστηκότες	
of God	the ordinance	resisteth	G3588	and	resisteth	
G2316	G1296	G436		G1161	G436	
ἑαυτοῖς	κρίμα	λήψονται				
to themselves	damnation	shall receive				
G1438	G2917	G2983				

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:13 (Parallel theme): Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

Titus 3:1 (Parallel theme): Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

James 3:1 (Parallel theme): My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

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